

Excerpts from Life-study of First Peter, Message 3

THE FULL SALVATION OF THE TRIUNE GOD AND ITS ISSUES (1)

Bible Verses:

1 Pet. 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has regenerated us unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

1 Pet. 1:4 Unto an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled and unfading, kept in the heavens for you.

In the writings of Peter a single word is often rich in meaning. Take, for example, Peter's use of the word "sprinkling" in 1:2. In this verse Peter speaks concerning the "sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." As Peter wrote these words, it seems he was saying, "You scattered Jewish

believers are familiar with the sprinkling of the blood of sheep and goats described in the Old Testament. However, you must realize that the sprinkling of animal blood is a type of the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. The old sprinkling, the sprinkling of the blood of animals, merely brought God's people into the Old Testament blessing. But the new sprinkling, the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, brings us into the full enjoyment of God's new covenant." By this example we see that in the Epistles of Peter a single word can indicate a great deal.

In 1:3 Peter goes on to say, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has regenerated us unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from among the dead."

From 1:3 we see that the Father has not only chosen us, but has also regenerated us. At the very moment we were sprinkled outwardly by the blood, we were inwardly regenerated by the sanctifying Spirit.

To be regenerated is to receive another life, the divine life, in addition to the human life. We all received the human life from our parents. But because of God's choosing, the Spirit's sanctifying, and Christ's redeeming, God begets us, regenerates us. As a result, we have a second birth.

In verse 3 Peter speaks not merely of hope, but of a living hope. But the enlivening which we have experienced through the life-giving Spirit results in a living hope, in the hope that everything related to us will become living.

When we were sprinkled with the blood of Christ, immediately the life-giving Spirit came into us to enliven us.

The regeneration of God the Father results in the hope that every part of our being and everything related to us will be lifed, enlivened.

At this point we need to ask an important question: Is this inheritance for us today, or is it only for the future? When I was young, I was taught that the inheritance in this verse refers to

the eternal blessing, the blessing of eternity, which we shall enjoy in heaven. I was also taught that this inheritance is not for our enjoyment today, but is for us to enjoy in the future, after we die and go to our “heavenly mansion.” Many Christians have been taught in this way. Others may think that in 1:4 Peter is speaking about an everlasting inheritance in contrast to the temporal inheritance of physical things. This kind of understanding is altogether natural; it is without light or revelation.

This verse does say that the inheritance is being kept for us in the heavens, but it does not say that the inheritance is for the future. However, as we read this verse, our natural mind may inject into it the thought of the future, even though this verse says nothing concerning the future. Often when we read the Bible we read things into it; we inject some element of our natural thought into God’s revelation. This is serious! We should not regard the inheritance in 1:4 as only for the future. This inheritance is for

us today, tomorrow, and for eternity. From the day we were regenerated this inheritance has been our portion.

An inheritance is a proper and legal possession. It is not gained by our energy, ability, or deeds. On the contrary, it is granted to us by another in a way that is legitimate. We do not work for an inheritance; we receive it. On the day we were regenerated, we were given the right to share an inheritance. This inheritance includes all the blessings related to eternal life.

In the same principle, through our second birth, regeneration, we have been born into a new inheritance. This inheritance is not on earth; rather, it is kept in the heavens. Although the new inheritance is kept for us in the heavens, we can enjoy it now on earth. We may use as an illustration the application of electricity. Although electricity is stored in the power plant far away, we apply it and enjoy it daily in our homes. Electricity is transmitted from the power plant to our homes for our enjoyment. Likewise, our

heavenly, divine, spiritual inheritance is kept in the heavens; yet it is continually being transmitted into our spirit for our enjoyment. Do you not enjoy the riches of the divine life?

As reborn ones, we can daily experience a divine transmission.

We need to be impressed with the fact that the inheritance in 1:4 is for us today. This inheritance is legal, proper, and legitimate, for Christ has died to purchase it for us. He paid the price of His precious blood, and we have been sprinkled with this blood. Therefore, every day we may enjoy the riches of the divine life. Daily we may participate in the inheritance that is ours today and for eternity.

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Note: This version is not intended to be printed as material for pursuit during the small group gathering. Instead, it is to be used as additional reference for brothers and sisters who want to prepare in advance for fellowship on the message. We include here notes from the commentaries of the brothers in the life-study radio program. The points from these commentaries can help enrich our understanding and, eventually, our fellowship with the saints on the selected portions of the life-study message. We still recommend that, if possible, the saints still listen to the [audio message](#) in addition to reading the [life-study message](#) for personal pursuit and for preparation for small group gatherings. We also wish to point out that these notes have not been fully polished.

[Commentary:]

Introduction

[CW:] In the books of 1 and 2 Peter, often a single word can add much richness and meaning to what is being said. For example, Peter begins his first epistle by pointing us to the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. This word, sprinkling, was surely used to remind the Hebrew believers, that he was writing to, of how the sprinkling of the blood of goats and sheep that they were familiar with in the Old Testament Jewish religion, was simply or merely a type, a foreshadowing of the real, eternal offering of the blood of Christ. His was the sprinkling that accomplished far more than the temporary atonement of the sacrifices in the Old Testament. For this sprinkling guarantees our full possession of all the benefits and blessings of the entire new covenant from now and for eternity. Bill Lawson has joined us as we come to the third Life-Study in this Life-Study of 1 Peter. It's really a rich portion we've opened up the first couple of days, Bill. I'm glad you're here as we kick it off this week.

[BL:] You're right, Chris. It's been a while since I've been here, so it's really good to rejoin you here in the studio as we get into this rich portion in 1 Peter.

[CW:] One of the things, it's been a recurring theme, we won't talk about it so much directly today, but even, I'd like to mention it as we sort of open the program, Bill. And that is what we see that has been wrought into the Apostle Peter, by the time he becomes the author, the writer of these two short, but very, very packed, loaded epistles. In both the first two programs, we saw the contrast between how Peter really was in the gospels, and a person who is, as Bob said yesterday, Bob Danker, he often would speak when he should be silent, and he was silent when it was time for him to speak. And I think we can relate to this. But the Lord really wrought a full salvation into Peter, didn't he?

[BL:] Right, just as like you say, Chris, when we look at Peter in the gospels, we just couldn't believe how many blunders one person could make. And, of course, no doubt the Lord referred to him both the time as the old creation name of Simon. He'd said, Simon, Simon, showing how much Peter lacked transformation. But it's amazing, I was considering one time that these Epistles that he wrote later in his life are not called 1 and 2 Simon, but 1 and 2 Peter showed he really had a degree of transformation. So the Lord really did work into him a particular work of grace and salvation to enable Peter to write such Epistles of 1 and 2 Peter.

[CW:] And you can't help but appreciate his language, his use of the language. And here he was this unlearned fisherman, you know, from Galilee, a kind of a despised region, hadn't had formal training that we're aware of, and yet, his expression in these two books is just marvelous. And even as we used this example, we'll hear about it in the first section that Witness Lee will bring forth today, his use of adjectives and modifiers is quite marvelous, very fine. I'd just like to read verse 2 from 1 Peter 1, and again, remind our listeners of just the language and the meaning and profundity that's really embodied in his use of the language here, "Chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and the

sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Grace to you, and peace be multiplied." It's quite marvelous. He didn't just say "the blood of Christ", but it's, "the sprinkling", and really targeted to his audience, wasn't it?

[BL:] Right, of course, he used terms that the Jewish believers could fully identify. With the matter of sprinkling, they knew the Old Testament. The sprinkling of the blood of the animals and so on. Now he's applying it to the New Testament. Of course, Peter, like you say, Chris, did not have the formal education that Paul did. Paul was quite profound. And his use of language having a... the Greek Philosophy, and being a Roman Citizen, and studying under the feet of Gamaliel. But Peter, although he was a fisherman, did not have formal education. Still the Lord really worked in his life to enable and even to use his heavenly, spiritual language at the end of his life. It's really quite, quite marvelous.

[CW:] Really is. Why don't we join Witness Lee, Bill, we'll come back and talk about these and some of the points that Witness Lee will introduce today.

Part 1

[CW:] Bill, in these early verses in 1 Peter chapter 1, we see the matter of God's choosing His selection of a certain entity in eternity past. And actually, there's a kind of a series of items that are referred to here: His selection, the Spirit's sanctifying, then the redemption that we saw, we see by the sprinkling of the blood of Christ. But it all seems to be culminating in this matter of regeneration, doesn't it?

[BL:] Really so, Chris. The span of time here is quite broad. You have the Father's choosing us in eternity. But in time, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, they have to carry out the action of that choosing. So, in time, the spirit comes to work on us, to separate us, to bring us to the point where we are willing to receive His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and that is the, based on the redemption of Christ, when He, of course, shed His blood, that redeemed us. So, the Father chose us in eternity past. Then, the Spirit, in time, right, He came to us to separate us, to touch us, to bring us to the point for us to be redeemed by the Son's redemption, and then, the work that the Lord did upon us, now, He regenerates us and brings His divine life into us, to make everything involved with us, life and living with the eternal life. So you have the choosing of the Father, you have the sanctifying of the Spirit, you have the redeeming of the Son, all of that is for the Lord to do, as the Spirit, to come into us, to regenerate us, to give us the divine life, with the divine birth, to make now everything full of life. And of course, the life there refers to the eternal life. So, now, our spirit that was deadened in the fall is regenerated by the life of Christ, and now, everything related to us is a matter of the rich enjoyment of that divine life.

[CW:] You know, these terms are often thrown about in sort of, theological contexts. We don't want to leave it in that realm, especially this matter of regeneration. It really is fundamental, isn't it, to our going on in the Christian life. To have a kind of a realization that just as in our first birth, we received human life. In our second birth, in our new birth, we received an entirely different life, don't we?

[BL:] Really so. Regeneration is not a small thing. It's the first experience, organically, of our enjoying and being united with the divine life of Christ. In our first birth, we're born with the human life, with a human nature. But in the second birth, we've receive something much better, much richer - a divine birth, a divine life, with a divine nature. And everything related to that divine life can now be enjoyed by the believers today. So regeneration is not a small thing. Brother Lee fellowshipped with us one time, and told us that the person that gave him the most help concerning regeneration is a brother who is now with the Lord, Brother T. Austin Sparks. And Brother Lee got a lot of help from him. Of course, Brother Lee went further than Brother Sparks, to really open up the divine birth, right, is the divine life entering into us. It's just being born of the Spirit, receiving the divine life, becoming children of God, and being born into God's kingdom, God's realm of light. So, regeneration is very

important because it's the first experience of God's life, actually coming into us, to eventually, make our whole being life, right? Regenerating our spirit, transforming our soul, eventually glorifying our body, to make our whole being a being of the divine life.

[CW:] Very significant. Peter opens his epistle by bringing in this matter of regeneration and of course, all that had transpired in the working of the Triune God, to bring that about. But it's a foundational element as he goes further. And I think that leads us to our next section. We go on, and read the next three verses in 1 Peter 1, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has regenerated us, unto a living hope, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled and unfading, kept in the heavens for you, who are being guarded by the power of God through faith, unto a salvation, ready to be revealed at the last time." Boy, these verses are packed, aren't they?

[BL:] They really are.

[CW:] Alright, let's go on. We wanna look at our divine inheritance.

Part 2

[CW:] Bill, he very directly comes right at our natural thought, our natural understanding, and I must say, our, sort of, natural interpretation of these verses... It does have this phrase in there, that the inheritance is kept in the heavens for us. But it doesn't say anywhere, does it, that this is for our enjoyment or our benefit in the future? But we supply those words, don't we?

[BL:] Right, because of our... mainly our traditional, even our theological understanding, we inject many times the wrong meaning into the Word. The Word is revealing one thing, but our natural understanding, and even background, would say another thing. It's interesting, Chris, in verse 3, Peter talks about a living hope, which could be rendered, "a hope of life", or "a hope of the divine life". Of course, in the human life, when we're born or when our children are born, we have a lot of hope for them. And a hope is in that life, that the child would grow in that life, would develop in that life, would be educated, maybe become a PhD or whatever, have a nice family, be healthy, and have a hope, even that the child would become someone great or someone very useful to society. In the same way, in the divine realm, when we received the Lord's life, this life is full of hope, much more than we can imagine. There's the hope that this divine life would enter into us, it would blossom in us, it would grow in us, and all of the divine rich attributes and virtues that are inherent in this divine life, would fully be expressed through us to make us exactly like Christ. This is a living hope. But after Peter touches the living hope, he doesn't stop there. In verse 3, he goes on, there's a comma at the end of verse 3, showing in verse 4, it's an inheritance, unto an inheritance. That means the hope of this divine life is also an inheritance. But naturally, we think of an inheritance, "I can only get it in the future. I can't get it now. I can not enjoy it now." But really in the divine things, we enjoy it now, *and* in the future. And this is hard for our human understanding to really grasp. That means, we should enjoy the riches of this divine life today, so that one day we will enjoy it in full. Similarly, Chris, in the human realm, when a human being is born, they're born with a human life, and right away with the human life, they enjoy the sunshine, the air, the water... all these things are theirs by birth. They inherit those things by being a human being. In the same way when we receive the divine life, and divine nature, we inherit all of the riches of that divine life and nature, *now*. Not just for the future, but we enjoy those things now, to such an extent that they become even our portion and our inheritance in the future. This is, I think, what Peter has in mind here.

[CW:] Wow. That's a great distinction to make between the idea that there is this special reward reserve for us that one day, we'll enter into this, and in a sense, there is that aspect that He is really presenting us with an

enjoyment of that inheritance that begins as we've just heard, from the moment we're saved, today and forever. Tremendous, isn't it?

[BL:] Right, really so. Because, if not, then how can we enjoy anything today? Today, we're just waiting to enjoy the inheritance. But everyday, we should enjoy that inheritance.

[CW:] In section 3 in our final section today, I think he has an excellent example, an illustration of the sense in which we are bettered to understand this phrase, "kept in the heavens for us". How about we join Witness Lee for that?

Part 3

[CW:] Well, Bill. I'm just marveling here, how this message has come full circle. We began with this matter of the sprinkling. He reminds the Hebrew believers of this at the beginning. But then he takes us through this marvelous progression and brings us to our inheritance which we have the ability to enjoy not just in the future but today, because of what He has secured with His sprinkling. It's too marvelous, isn't it?

[BL:] Right, without the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, Chris, there's no way for us to even receive the inheritance. Not only so, because of the shed blood, we can enjoy that inheritance. Not just once and for all, in my particular background, very fundamental Christian background, I was told that now that I'm redeemed, I'm saved, and now that I don't need anything more, I'm okay, and now I try to live like Christ or something. But this is, really, there's much more than this. This inheritance Peter's talking about, it's reserved, it's held some place, not on the Earth, but it's heavenly, it's spiritual, it's divine, so surely it's held in the heavens! But, it's enjoyed on the Earth! It's really a mystery! It's held in one place, in the heavens, but it's enjoyed by us here on the Earth. That implies a transmission. You know, like Paul in first chapter of Ephesians, he talks about this great power that operated in Christ, eventually, He was made Head over all things *to* the church. That shows a heavenly transmission of all that Christ is and did, transmitted to the church.

[CW:] This is the analogy he is making with the power plant and the electricity.

[BL:] Exactly, and the generator. Right now, we know that the electricity is kept in the generator, right now. If it were not in generator, we would not be receiving it. But it's not only in the generator, it's being transmitted to us moment by moment, and installed into our homes so we could enjoy it. It's the same thing with this rich inheritance, this treasure, this divine life, the divine nature, the grace, the glory, all of this is reserved in the heavens, but we could enjoy it now day by day in our spirit by the transmission of Christ. It's marvelous!

[CW:] It's secured and guaranteed by the payment of this shed, precious blood.

[BL:] That's right. Christians for centuries have misunderstood this matter of waiting for things to be enjoyed in the future. This very Christ, we've received as our inheritance, is not only our inheritance in the future, we'll inherit Him in full, but we can enjoy Him now. The more we enjoy Him now, the more we inherit Him in the future.

[CW:] Bill, I get the feeling, listening to messages like this, enjoying these verses like this, as believers, we're all guilty, I think, we really undersell the salvation we have don't we? And when we present it to people and we say, "you know, if you believe, your sins will be forgiven you". What a tragedy to just kind of reduce it to that. It's true, but as I said, this is a complete underselling. I think we got a glimpse today that what is secured in His shed blood is far, far beyond our common, natural thought.

[BL:] And substantially, Chris, this inheritance involves the coming salvation of our souls, right? Our spirit is saved now. We enjoy Him, our soul is saved. Eventually, when the Lord comes back, our body will be saved. So, in the future, and even now, we enjoy the salvation, right, of our soul. The grace to be received when the Lord is revealed. The glory to be revealed to us. The unfading crown of glory, and the eternal glory. All of these things are not merely for the future. It's for us to enjoy today.

[CW:] This is really a revelation.

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