

Standing Fast in the Grace of God

"Grace unto You"

1 Peter 1:3-5

The phrase at the end of verse 2 – “Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied” – forms a fitting bridge into the next three verses, which show us the wonderful blessings of salvation that belong to every child of God. Peter moves from how salvation was accomplished to what salvation provides: a living hope, a secure inheritance, and a steadfast assurance.

These truths were written to believers who were “scattered throughout” Asia Minor. They were most likely “scattered” because of the persecution at the time. This persecution is mentioned throughout the letter, referenced in 1:7; 2:12; 3:14-17; 4:12-16 as well as other portions. The believers faced public slander (“they speak against you as evildoers”), socially outcast and loss of livelihood, legal mistreatment under unjust magistrates, and the threat of suffering or death for the name of Christ.

Most scholars place the time of the writing of 1 Peter between A.D. 63-65, and if that’s the case, this places the letter near the end of Emperor Nero’s reign, which was the very period when organized persecution began in the Roman Empire.

Although these saints (specifically believing Jewish converts) were already scattered before the persecution began, their suffering for their faith seems to have intensified. As we stated in an earlier study, the readers of this letter would have been predominantly Jewish believers, there would have also been Gentile converts that would have been recipients of it as well, and they would have been equally persecuted because of their faith.

We may never face anything close to what they were going through in this country and in our lifetime (although there are many around the world that are), what we learn from this letter can still be applied to those situations where we need strength to serve the Lord during the trials we face.

Verse 3 begins with a praise to God – “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...” – so that the readers would know to ground their hope in what God has already accomplished for them. The intention seems to be to lift their eyes off their trials and suffering to the glory they have awaiting them because of their faith in Christ.

These verses remind us that our hope and security are not to be found in the changing circumstances that we go through, but are to be found in the unchanging work of God through Christ in salvation.

I. WE ARE SAVED – THE SOURCE OF OUR SALVATION – VS. 3

“Which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

Our salvation is from God the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Peter attributes the believer’s new birth entirely to the work of God. Salvation originates in His mercy and grace, not in any human merit.

[Ephesians 2:4-5](#)

⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, ⁵ Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

A. The mercy that moved Him

“According to His abundant mercy”

1. “According to” – this isn’t describing the source

(that would have been translated “out of”) but the measure or standard by which God acts.

- a) This means He acts in proportion to the greatness of His mercy, which is immeasurable.
- b) It emphasizes how much mercy governs His action, not just that mercy motivated it. God’s mercy is the *measure* of His saving work.

2. “His abundant mercy” – literally, “the much mercy” (τὸ πολὺ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος).

- a) The word for “abundant” (πολύ) means great, much, vast, or plenteous (see Eph. 2:4 under point A above). The idea is superabundance, something beyond measure.
- b) “Mercy” (ἔλεος) – this refers to compassion toward the miserable, especially those who cannot help themselves.

(1) This is not the same as “grace” (χάρις). Mercy comes from the compassion of God towards sinners in misery; grace comes from His desire to bless them.

“‘Mercy’ met our misery; ‘grace’ met our guilt” (J-F-B).

- c) In the context of 1 Peter, mercy is the basis of our new birth. God looked upon humanity in its lost condition, helpless and guilty, and “according to His abundant mercy,” He acted to bring about new life.

Mercy is the motive behind regeneration. It precedes regeneration, in other words. God’s mercy acts first; our new birth is the outflow of His mercy toward us. He did not save us because we were lovable, but because He is merciful.

Peter is writing to believers under severe hardship, and he points them first to the overflowing abundance of God's mercy.

B. The miracle that made us

"Hath begotten us again"

The verb for "hath begotten" (ἀναγεννάω), in the form it appears ("to cause to be born again") emphasizes a completed act initiated by God. Spiritual life begins with Him.

John 3:3-7

³ Jesus answered and said unto him, *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* ⁴ Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? ⁵ Jesus answered, *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* ⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

C. The hope that moves us

"Unto a lively hope" – a living, enduring confidence

1. The adjective "living" (ζῶσαν) comes from the verb "to live" (ζάω). It's not saying that our hope is "lively" in the sense of being energetic, but "lively" in the sense of living – vital, enduring, and incorruptible.
2. It stands in contrast to the dead hopes of the world. Our hope lives because our Savior lives.

1 Corinthians 15:20

²⁰ But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

D. The Master that motivates us

“By the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”

The resurrection is both the proof and power of our new life.

Romans 4:25

²⁵ Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

II. WE ARE SETTLED – THE SECURITY OF OUR INHERITANCE – vs. 4

“To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.”

The “inheritance” is seen as already settled (in the word “reserved”), already waiting for us. This seems to have been given to give hope to those going through so much here on this earth.

A. It is perfect in nature – “incorruptible” (ἀφθαρτον)

1. Our inheritance is not subject to decay or destruction – it is imperishable.

Matthew 6:19-21

¹⁹ Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: ²⁰ But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: ²¹ For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

2. Unlike treasures and possessions here on earth, our heavenly inheritance will never lose value.

B. It is pure in its character – “undefiled” (ἀμίαντον)

1. Our inheritance is free from sin, unstained by the world, morally pure, and perfect.

Revelation 21:27

²⁷ And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

2. Nothing impure can ever taint it.

C. It is permanent in its duration – “fadeth not away” (ἀμάραντον)

1. Unlike earthly things, our inheritance will never dim.

1 Peter 5:4

⁴ And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

2. God's promises never fade – never expire, never run out.

Isaiah 40:7-8

⁷ The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people *is* grass. ⁸ The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

D. It is preserved in its location – “reserved in heaven for you”

1. Our inheritance is kept by God Himself and nothing can change it. This points back to (in grammatical agreement) with “inheritance” at the beginning of the verse.
2. The word “reserved” (τηρέω) means much more

than simply “stored away” as we might think of the word today. It carries the idea of something guarded, preserved, and kept under watchful care. The tense indicates that God has already secured our inheritance (aorist tense), and it remains guarded in heaven even now. The believer is kept by the power of God (vs. 5), and the inheritance awaiting them is kept by the promise of God (vs. 4), leaving both secure because both are in His hands.

John 17:11-12

¹¹ And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. ¹² While I was with them in the world, I *kept* them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

Jude 1

¹ Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, *and* called:

3. “For you” – Peter uses the second person plural to emphasize the personal assurance his readers (and we today) have in what God has reserved for them.

III. WE ARE SECURED – THE STRENGTH OF OUR ASSURANCE – vs. 5

“Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

- A. The power that guards us – “kept by the power of God”

1. The word “kept” (φρουρέω) gives a visual of a garrison of soldiers guarding something. The idea is protective, not restrictive (like guarding a prisoner or prison).
2. God Himself surrounds (keeps, garrisons) the believer with His protective power.

John 10:28-29

²⁸ And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand. ²⁹ My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father's hand.

3. The word for “power” (δύναμις) points to inherent ability or might – the power of God that ensures our security.

B. The pathway that grounds us – “through faith”

1. Faith is the channel by which we experience God's keeping power.
2. Our security is not in the strength of our faith, but in the strength of the God our faith is in.

Ephesians 2:8-9

⁸ For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: ⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast.

C. The promise that gladdens us – “unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time”

1. Our salvation will one day be fully revealed, fully unveiled – body, soul, and spirit glorified.

Romans 13:11

¹¹ And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high

time to awake out of sleep: for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed.

Ephesians 1:13-14

¹³ In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

2. "Salvation" here looks ahead to when our inheritance is finally unveiled when Christ returns.

Conclusion:

These verses ought to be of great encouragement to us – especially if we are facing trials. The people to whom this was written were facing persecution and even death, yet Peter wrote, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that they would receive something far greater than anything on this earth when their life was over. What a tremendous blessing this should be.