

## Peter's Epistles #28

### Personal Salvation and Progressive Revelation

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1:8-12

(also available on-line at [ichthys.com](http://ichthys.com))

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#### Revised Translation of 1st Peter 1:8-9:

(8) Though you have never laid eyes on Him, yet you love Him. And though you cannot see Him at this present time, yet you have faith in Him. For this reason you rejoice with an inexpressible joy that bespeaks the glorious future to come, (9) when you shall carry off in victory the ultimate prize – the deliverance (lit. "salvation") of your lives (i.e., personal salvation) – which is the very purpose and objective of this faith of yours.

**The "Salvation of your Souls":** Following a longstanding (and misleading) convention, most English versions of the Bible (e.g., KJV, RSV, NASB, NIV) render the phrase translated above "deliverance of your lives" as "salvation of your souls". The main problem with the conventional rendition is that it plays into longstanding false theological notions and thus misleads the reader as to the truth of what these words actually mean. To begin, the human being is, as God has created us, a dichotomous creature, consisting of a material part (the human body) and a spiritual part (the human spirit).<sup>1</sup> Thus have we each been since the moment our lives began, and thus shall we ever be to the ages of the ages. In Genesis 2:7, when God breathed life (i.e., the spirit) into Adam's body, Adam became a "living being", or "living *soul*" (*nephesh* in Hebrew, with *psyche* being its Greek equivalent: cf. 1Cor.15:45 where Paul in quoting Gen.2:7 uses *psyche* to translate *nephesh*). That is to say, the *nephesh-psyche* "soul" is really the entire living *person*, the combination of the spiritual and material parts created by God Himself to form an individual human being (that is what a "soul" is in the Bible as opposed to popular culture). What the *nephesh-psyche* most definitely is *not* is a separate part or portion of the individual which is somehow only a portion of the person and not the complete human being – even though that is what most people assume when they hear the word "soul", thanks to Latin and Roman Catholic influence. In Greek and Hebrew usage, however, such is never the case. And while the word "soul" as used in scripture can emphasize the inner person (which is who we really "are", after all), the Bible never uses *nephesh-psyche* to refer only to a portion of the individual (whether immaterial, material, or some combination of the two) – that is a notion which stems entirely from extra-biblical speculation and theorizing and which has no place in orthodox Christian theology. Simply put, the *nephesh-psyche* is "the person" and therefore "the life" of the person

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<sup>1</sup> See in particular L.S. Chafer, Systematic Theology, v.2, p.162-199.

him or herself.<sup>2</sup> This is what is "saved" through faith in Christ – not part of us, but *all* of us (and that is very "good news" indeed).

Secondly, the Greek word, *soteria*, translated "salvation" in the versions named above, is, while not wrong, also potentially misleading, especially in combination with the rendering of *nephesh-psyche* as "soul". For "salvation of your souls" once again creates a mental picture for English speakers which is entirely unbiblical. This much should be obvious when the phrase is compared to the corrected "deliverance of your lives". We human beings "lose" or "gain" our lives on the basis of our attitude towards Jesus Christ (cf. Matt.10:39).

What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self  
(*psyche*)?  
Luke 9:25 NIV

Peter's teaching about salvation here is entirely consistent with every other scripture on the subject. Through our faith in Jesus Christ, our lives are "delivered" from the terrible prospect of an eternity apart from God. Through Jesus' sacrifice upon which we depend this brief temporal life will make way for a blessed eternal life from the moment our Savior calls us home to be with Him. This is the "victory" of verse nine (over death; cf. 1Cor.15:54-57), this is the "ultimate prize" Peter is speaking of to which we all aspire, eternal *life* in Jesus Christ in the presence of our heavenly Father forever and ever (cf. Rom.2:7), and *deliverance* from the alternative, the second death that awaits all who reject our Lord (Rev.2:11; 20:6). Thus with these verses Peter sums up his discussion begun in verse three at the beginning of the paragraph where our spiritual rebirth, the bestowing of this eternal life in time upon all who commit themselves to Jesus Christ, is contemplated as a reality fulfilled at the resurrection of the righteous at the return of our Lord.<sup>3</sup> Through our faith in Jesus Christ, we shall all attain this "ultimate prize", namely "the safe deliverance of our *lives*", that is, our safe arrival in heaven to begin an eternal life with Christ in contrast with those who reject Christ and "lose their lives" (i.e., are not rescued from death but instead suffer the "second death": Rev.2:11; 20:6; 20:14; 21:8). That is indeed "the very purpose and objective of our faith", eternal life in Jesus Christ and deliverance from the condemnation of eternal death.

It should be recalled (from lesson #20 of this series) that this eternal life we shall all enjoy with our dear Lord Jesus forever will be a very real and tangible existence in bodily resurrection. Within the ranks of the resurrected, however, the level of reward for our service here on earth

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<sup>2</sup> For a detailed discussion of this principle and extensive documentation, see [The Satanic Rebellion, Part 3: "The Purpose, Creation, And Fall of Man"](#), and [Bible Basics Part 3A: "Anthropology"](#).

<sup>3</sup> On the topic of spiritual regeneration and eternal life, see lesson #19 of this series, "Spiritual Rebirth", as well as [Bible Basics Part 4B: "Soteriology"](#).

will be widely disparate.<sup>4</sup> So not only is our anticipation of our Lord's return and our gathering together to Him in resurrection for eternal life an incredible solace in the midst of this world of tears and trouble, but our confident expectation of the wonderful rewards we shall receive for our faithful service to Him in spite of the devil's opposition is also a legitimate and necessary part of our "living hope" (Heb.11:6; cf. 1Pet.1:3). Only by persistent spiritual growth, faith in and application of the truth of the Word, and the ministering of that truth to others through the spiritual gifts and ministries we have been individually assigned can we both maximize our eternal recompense and avoid the trap of false teaching which stands to compromise not only our rewards but even endanger our salvation.

Finally, this wonderful salvation with all that it entails, a perfect eternal body, a place in the New Jerusalem, rewards that last forever, perfect fellowship with all our brothers and sisters, and the greatest blessing of all, enjoying the presence of our dear Lord Jesus and of the Father forevermore, is truly a prize worth winning – and a prize won in principle now well worth *preserving*. That takes perseverance of our faith, because only those who believe, those who endure with faith secure to the end, are saved (Matt.10:22; 24:13; Mk.13:13). For those marching forward on the high road to Zion the way Jesus would have us to do, the trials, troubles, suffering, tests and tribulation we encounter here on earth serve to temper and strengthen our faith. Even if these are no cause for rejoicing when we experience them, the experience of them successfully negotiated will indeed be a cause of great rejoicing in the presence of our Lord on that great day of evaluation (1Pet.4:13; Rev.7:17; 21:4). But for those who are drifting backwards or otherwise allowing the difficulties that must come to Christians in this life to discourage them and to turn them ever farther away from the Lord, there remains the danger that faith progressively weakened may not endure. Therefore let us make every effort to see these things with our Lord's eyes, understanding that He is for us and will bring us through whatever trouble may arise, trusting in Him no matter what our eyes see our ears hear or emotions feel (Rom.8:31). For in this way our faith grows unto the salvation of our lives unto life eternal promised here in our context, but for those who give up, the danger is that drifting away may result in an entire loss of faith (1Tim.1:19).

(35) So do not throw away this conviction of yours – it leads to a great reward. (36) You need to keep persevering so that you may carry off in victory what has been promised – after you have accomplished God's will. (37) For yet a little while, how short, how [short the wait], and He who is coming shall come, nor will He delay. (38) "Then shall my righteous one live by his faith, but if he shrinks back, My heart takes no pleasure in him (Hab.2:3-4)." (39) Now we are not possessed of cowardly apostasy which leads to destruction, but we have faith which leads to [eternal] life.

Hebrews 10:35-39

### **Revised Translation of 1st Peter 1:10-12:**

(10) Even as they foretold this salvation that was to come to you, the prophets of old

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<sup>4</sup> See "The Judgment of the Church", section I.7 of Coming Tribulation part 6, "Last Things".

diligently investigated and inquired about this [gift] of grace, (11) being eager to discover the precise time the Spirit of Christ within them was signifying as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories [of salvation, among other things] that would follow [the cross]. (12) For it was revealed to them that in prophesying these things, they were not so much serving themselves as they were you – and these same things have now been proclaimed to you through those who gave you the gospel through the Holy Spirit, sent from heaven – even angels want to look into these things.

**Progressive Revelation:** These verses are perhaps the clearest expression in the Bible of the doctrine commonly known as "progressive revelation". Progressive revelation accounts for the fact that not all divine truth knowable by believers today was always available, nor was it always knowable, in spite of being present in the scripture. What Adam and Eve knew about God's truth was, arguably, much less than what believers today may come to know – provided of course they devote themselves to the process of spiritual growth, reading their Bibles, seeking out a good source of truth and consistently exposing themselves to solid, doctrinal teaching on a regular basis, actually *believing* the truth they hear, applying this truth to their day by day Christian lives, and helping others do the same through the proper function of their own gifts once they become spiritually mature. What we can say from the mention of the coats of skin prepared for Adam and Eve by God in Genesis 3:21 is that even from the start of humanity's exit from paradise the gospel was presented: the sacrifice of the animals necessary to produce our first parents' new coverings represented our Lord's death for all sin, and was the standard way of presenting God's solution to the sin problem before and after the giving of the Law until the reality of the cross (for this reason Genesis 3:21 is often called the *protoevangelium* or "first giving of the gospel"). The fundamental difference between the gospel then and now is that before the cross mankind looked forward to God's solution without full knowledge of "the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow" (1Pet.1:11), but rather more "through a glass darkly" (1Cor.13:12 KJV), whereas now after the cross we see "Jesus Christ . . . clearly portrayed as crucified" (Gal.3:1 NIV). In either case, *faith* in God's salvation, trusting Him that He would deliver from sin all those who put themselves into His hands, is the essence of responding to the gospel so as to be saved.

(51) Behold, I tell you a mystery: not all of us will fall asleep, but all of us will be changed (52) in [that] moment of time, in the blink of an eye, at the final trumpet blast. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will rise incorruptible, and we too (i.e., believers still alive) will be changed [at that time (i.e., the Lord's Second Advent return)].  
1st Corinthians 15:51-52

The above is a "mystery" because prior to the revelation given to Paul (cf. 1Thes.4:13-18), scripture did not distinguish the phases and circumstances of the resurrection as it now does. It was merely revealed in the past that the dead would rise, some to life and some to condemnation.

For many who sleep in the dust will awake, some to eternal life, but the others to shame and eternal separation [from God].  
Daniel 12:2

Now, however, we know more as God has caused His revelation of these matters to us to

"progress", so that now we understand all about the phases of the resurrection of the righteous: 1) Christ; 2) the Church (including those departed and those alive at Christ's return); and 3) the millennial believers or "Friends of the Bride":

(23) But each [will be resurrected] in his own echelon. Christ [is the] first-fruits. Next [will be] those belonging to Christ at His coming (i.e., the 2nd Advent). (24) Then the end, when He will hand the Kingdom over to the Father, after He has brought an end to all rule, all power, and all authority. (25) For He must rule until He has placed all His enemies under His feet – (26) and death is the final enemy to be done away with.

1st Corinthians 15:23-26

Please note carefully, however, that the truth has always been the same. The truth has not changed. What has changed is that God in His grace has allowed us to know more details about the wonders to come as the revelation of His truth to the people of God through the Holy Spirit now given to us all has progressed from the shadows of the Law to the reality of His grace revealed in the face of Jesus Christ: "even angels want to look into these things" (Jn.16:12-13; 1Cor.2:12-16).

(4) When you read these things you will be able to understand my spiritual insight into this mystery of Christ, (5) which was not made known to mankind in previous generations as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. (6) [And the mystery is this]: that the gentiles are [now] fellow heirs, members of the same body, and equal partakers of the promise [of salvation to Israel] in Christ Jesus through the gospel, [the proclamation of His victory]. (7) It is of this gospel that I have been made a minister by the gift of God's grace given to me through His dynamic power. (8) To me, the least of all His holy ones, this gracious charge has been entrusted: to proclaim to the gentiles the unfathomable wealth that is Christ, (9) and to shed light on this mystery[, the calling out of the gentiles] which is now being brought to pass (lit., "the dispensation" of it), though it was once hidden from the ages in God who created everything. (10) **God [did this]** so that [His] enigmatically intricate wisdom might be made known to ***the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms*** (i.e., the angels) through the agency of the Church, (11) according to His plan for the ages (i.e., history) which He has implemented in [the person of] Christ Jesus our Lord.

Ephesians 3:4-11

### **Angelic Interest:**

"I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance."

Luke 15:7 NKJV

"Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

Luke 15:10 NKJV

Our Lord's words here make it plain that the spiritual battlefield through which we walk here on

earth is under very close heavenly observation, for the angels take great interest in every victory. More than that. Angels are also said to aid and assist believers in our spiritual combat:

Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?

Hebrews 1:14 NKJV

These matters have been covered before.<sup>5</sup> What concerns us here is not angelic interest in the tactical details of the unseen conflict raging around us nor their involvement therein, but the astounding wonderment they experience about the overall Plan of God which has wrought absolute victory in the coming and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Moreover, the key thing the angels find of interest is said to be "the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow". Now the spiritual death of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross for the sins of the entire world absolutely is the most interesting thing ever to take place in either human or angelic history. The cross, after all, is the foundation of the entire plan of God, and the least part of what Christ did for the least sinner when He died for the person's sins on Calvary surpasses in importance, awe and wonder the entirety of anything and everything in the totality of that creature history combined – to an unimaginable magnitude. All of Satan's efforts before the cross, therefore, were focused on preventing it – and all of his efforts after the cross are focused on diminishing its effect. And just as the angels were highly interested in how the problem of sin could and would be resolved by the sufferings of Christ, so they are now interested in the after effects of that supreme sacrifice, "the glories that would follow", which "glory" we all enter into when we follow the Lord the way He intends us to do, carrying our cross. When we "share His sufferings" (Rom.8:17; 2Cor.1:5; Phil.1:29-30; 3:10; Col.1:24; 1Pet.4:12-13; cf. Matt.10:38; 16:24; Mk.8:34; Lk.9:23; 14:27; Acts 5:41; 2Cor.4:10-11; Gal.6:17; 1Thes.1:6; 2Thes.1:4-5; 2Tim.3:12), we enter into the culmination of the plan of God which is set upon the Rock of the Savior and His death for us. This is indeed something which interests the angels, fallen and elect: the former are interested in stopping us from following Christ and are thus only too eager to do what they can to make us suffer; the latter are interested in the power of the sacrifice of Christ and in the powerful forward progress for Him believers who now have the Holy Spirit are making in His behalf, aiding us in all ways in which they are legitimately allowed. What we should take from this blessed insight given to us by the Word of God is that we are not merely isolated individuals plugging away here in the world; rather, we believers are all integral parts of the Body of Christ which is being opposed by the evil one and his legions at every step, but which is being aided in that struggle by the holy angels in just the right way: we are not only a part of the unseen angelic conflict swirling around us – we are the focal point as representatives of the One whose Bride we are, our dear Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Now I think that God has made us apostles appear to be the lowliest of men, as though we had been condemned to death, for we have become a sort of public amusement for the

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<sup>5</sup> In lesson #22 of this series, and also part 1 of the Satanic Rebellion series, section I.2.d, "Angels are similar to mankind in several important ways". For the possibility of similar heavenly observation of earthly events by departed believers, see part 2B of the Coming Tribulation series under "The Heavenly Sea".

whole world, both for angels and for men.  
1st Corinthians 4:9

(1) Since then we too [like the believers of chapter 11] have such a large audience of witnesses surrounding us [both men and angels], let us put off every hindrance – especially whatever sins habitually affect us – and run with endurance the race set before us, (2) turning our gaze unto Jesus, the originator and completer of our faith, who, for the joy set before Him, endured the shame of the cross, treating it with despite, and took His seat at the right hand of the throne of God. (3) Keep in mind all the terrible opposition He endured against Himself at the hands of sinful men, so as not to grow sick at heart and give up.

Hebrews 12:1-3

God's carrying out of His plan of salvation is a key point of interest to the angels, both elect and fallen, because mankind's salvation writ large (the work of Christ) and small (the salvation of individual human beings) is the proof of the mercy, grace, goodness and love of God, and therefore of the absolute fairness of His condemnation of Satan and his angels.

**Progressive Salvation:** Believers are saved. So how can Peter say in verse nine that we are presently awaiting the Lord's return in order to experience deliverance (literally, "salvation")? And how can Paul say "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil.2:12 KJV)? The answer is that while we have been delivered (we are saved, positionally, in Christ), and are being saved (delivered through this world wherein our faith is under constant assault), the fruition of all we hope for has not yet arrived. What is not seen must be hoped for (as Paul says at Romans 8:23-25). But our hope is not some intangible will-o'-wisp of a chance that may not pan out. Instead, our hope is an absolute confidence of what the Lord will do for us on that glorious day of His return. For believers, faith substantiates the reality of things we do not yet see (Heb.11:1); faith confidently looking forward *is* Christian hope, and that hope is fixed first and foremost on the resurrection:

(23) And not only the created world, but we too who have received the Holy Spirit as a foretaste [of the good things to come] agonize within ourselves as we eagerly await our adoption [to be completed], that is, the redemption of our body (i.e. resurrection). (24) This is the hope with which we were saved.

Romans 8:23-24a

Although not always explicitly mentioned, it is the resurrection that constitutes the final fulfillment of our Christian "hope of salvation", that great day when we pass from death to life not only by the glorious position we have today as believers in Jesus Christ, but in the complete realization of all of our God's promises to us: the possession of an eternal body with the rewards appertaining thereto and an everlasting inheritance in the New Jerusalem in company with all of our brothers and sisters in the presence of the Lord we love so much:

(8) But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet *the hope of salvation*. (9) For God did not appoint us to wrath, but *to obtain salvation* through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Just as we have observed in the case of sanctification (earlier in this series; see lessons #8, #13, and #19), wherein we are positionally sanctified at the point of faith in Jesus Christ (being considered "holy" by the Father because of our union with His Son our Lord), will be sanctified eternally at the point of the resurrection (at which point we will be, in our perfect new bodies, incapable of sin for ever more), and yet are called to live a sanctified life here on earth, modifying our behavior to walk in holiness with the Lord in conformance with our positional status of holiness and in anticipation of our ultimate sanctification on the day of the resurrection, so it is with our salvation. We have been saved/delivered as believers in Christ, but we will not experience that final deliverance and the full reception of our "salvation" until the day when we have it complete in our experience of the resurrection of the body and the commencement of eternity. Since that is the case, we are not only to set our hope on the salvation to come (even as we rejoice and rely on the salvation we have already obtained and experience as those who are one with Christ), but also to strive to ensure that nothing derails the critical connection between points "A" and "C". For "B", that is, our life in this present body, may last quite some time after we commit ourselves to Christ (although of course in the divine scheme of things it is but a blink of the eye when compared to eternity), and the ultimate salvation only comes to those who are saved, that is, to believers in Christ:

So then, my brothers, just as you have always been obedient [to the truth], not just when I was present [with you] but even more so now in my absence, go to work on your salvation with fear and trembling.  
Philippians 2:12

As a good Bible teacher who cared deeply about his flock, Paul tells the Philippians the "whole truth". As believers, our salvation is absolutely secure . . . as **believers**. However, there is a category of seed which, in the parable of the Sower, falls upon the rock. It does spring up for joy in its salvation . . . for a while. But disappointments and pressure cause this category of person to fade in faith until, in the end, faith is entirely lost:

"Those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away."  
Luke 8:13 NASB

These types are no longer saved after falling away **because** they are no longer believers. Salvation is the essential result of putting one's faith in Jesus Christ; but if faith is lost, so is salvation. That fact should indeed motivate us, like the Philippian believers who received Paul's heart-felt warning, to "work on" our salvation as the most important thing in this life. For if we are truly moving forward spiritually, growing in the Word and our faith therein, passing rather than failing the tests that come to those who love the Lord, and putting our spiritual gifts to work in service to the Body of Christ, we will have nothing whatsoever to fear: only those who are unconcerned are in danger, through spiritual apathy, of falling away. God is not trying to keep us from salvation. God forbid! He sent His Son to die that we might live through His sacrifice on our behalf (Jn.3:16); He sent Jesus to save the world, not to condemn it; as a result, all who do have faith in Jesus Christ are saved – and will be saved on that great day of days, just as long as

the faith which is the necessary counterpart of that salvation abides.

The one who believes in Him is not being judged, but the one who does not believe has already been judged on the grounds that he is not a believer in the Name (i.e., the Person) of God's only Son.

John 3:18

For everyone who has been born from God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world: *our faith* [in Christ]!

1st John 5:4 (cf. v.1)

**Serving Not Themselves But You:** There are many things which are wonderful and awe-inspiring about the plan of God and about the way that the Lord has so perfectly intertwined everything which happens in our lives and in the history of the world, but one of the most amazing is the perfect way in which scripture provides for believers the entirety of the truth needed for spiritual growth and sustainment here in the devil's world.

(2) He makes me to lie down in green pastures (i.e., for material support); He leads me beside the still waters (i.e., the water of truth: Is.55:1; Jn.3:5; Rev.22:17). (3) He restores my soul (i.e., physical and spiritual life); He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

Psalms 23:2-3 NKJV

God's perfect provision of the truth includes the provision of just the right information in scripture to demonstrate after the fact of the incarnation, spiritual death and resurrection of Christ that the cross and the One who bore our sins on it were all part of the plan from the beginning – in fact of course Jesus *is* the plan. What the prophets of old did not see and what we do see is Christ in the flesh, and we see Him all the more clearly because of the prophetic words they were given to write centuries before our dear Lord came into this world.

For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

Romans 15:4

The entire purpose of the Law is to lead to salvation (by demonstrating human sin and insufficiency: Rom.3:20; 7:7; Gal.3:24), but within it are contained the shadows which point undeniably to the coming of the Christ and His sacrifice on our behalf.

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

John 1:29 NKJV

**The Gospel:** One important aspect of progressive revelation and the one which Peter emphasizes in our context of 1st Peter 1:10-12 is that of the presentation of the gospel. The gospel has always been the same: trusting God for deliverance from sin, death and condemnation by putting one's faith in His Substitute for sin, our dear Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The

recipients of this letter are being reminded by Peter of the fact that their salvation was birthed through this presentation of the truth by those who first evangelized the communities in Asia Minor being addressed here. Since the contents of this epistle contain much rich and deep biblical truth, we may be sure that Peter, while speaking about "the hour they first believed" in the main, is also using the word "gospel" as it is often used in scripture, namely, for the entirety of the truth contained in scripture which constitutes the "good news" about Jesus Christ, not all of which is, of course, necessary to be saved, but all of which is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2Tim.3:16 NKJV). Simply put, while we are saved as spiritual infants, born again as spiritual babes through the seed of the Word of God, our growth should not stop in infancy but should continue through the sustenance of the milk of the Word until we all "attain to that standard of maturity whose attainment is defined by Christ" (Eph.4:13).

**The Agent of the Gospel:** Just as the true Agent of our salvation is the Holy Spirit, the One who makes the truth real and understandable to our hearts when we first believe in Jesus Christ, so also the Spirit is the One who has inspired the entirety of the holy scriptures. Moreover, He is the One who makes it possible for us to understand all of the other truths of the Bible when we hear them and are willing to believe them – something of which the unbeliever is incapable (1Cor.2:13-14). This growth of the Church individually and collectively, from infancy to spiritual maturity, in the midst of the devil's world and in spite of the stiff opposition of the evil one, is truly a miracle worth treasuring in our hearts – and something "angels [earnestly] desire to look into" (1Pet.1:12).<sup>6</sup>

**The Sufferings of Christ:** The glories to come are all built upon the One foundation, Jesus Christ, His perfect Person and His perfect work in suffering for us (1Cor.3:11). Jesus died for our sins and for the sins of the entire world. This truth is the bedrock of all we believe, of all our hopes and expectations. What He did in giving Himself up on our behalf can scarcely be appreciated by us now, but we do know that it was the greatest thing to have ever taken place in all of history, human or angelic. More than that, His entrance into the flames to bear the price for all sin is beyond anything imaginable. The smallest part of His sacrifice is beyond comprehension, and its value beyond estimation. Without Jesus, there would be no history – and no point to it. Without His willingness to suffer on our behalf, we would be lost, and the depths of that loss are horrific even to contemplate. Taking on a human nature, God though He is, walking through this world with a perfect walk, attacked as severely as He was by Satan's emissaries, human and angelic, suffering the pain and indignities of the crucifixion and all that led up to it – even though any aspect of any one of these sacrifices on our behalf should make us tremble with awe – none comes close to His entrance into the darkness for us to rise in the flames (Judg.13:20), to burn without being consumed (Ex.3:2) until He had rendered propitiation for all of our sins. We were not fit, we were not able, we were not willing (truth be told) to bear the slightest punishment for the least culpable sin – but Jesus did that for us, to save us, to win us for Himself as His very own Bride, the Church of Christ.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> See [Bible Basics Part 5: "Pneumatology: the Study of the Holy Spirit"](#).

<sup>7</sup> See [Bible Basics Part 4A: "Christology"](#), section II.5: "The Spiritual Death of Christ".

"Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready."

Revelation 19:7 NIV

**Conclusion:** The wonders of the truth now available to us are a solace for us in whatever suffering the Lord may allow to come our way, and these truths should, by learning, believing and applying them, help us to sustain ourselves mentally and spiritually through focusing our hope not on the temporal and temporary here and now, but on our eternal reward and the confident expectation of a good report from our Savior – the One who suffered for us that we might have eternal life with Him – when we see Him face to face at last.