

## The Salvation of the Soul, Part 2

The following is a summary of what we have learned about the salvation of the soul thus far.

- The spirit is saved instantaneously when one hears the Gospel of the Grace of God and responds in faith. That person is declared “innocent” by God. We call this justification.
- The soul is comprised of one’s mind, will, and emotions. It is also known as the “life,” or the “self-life,” being synonymous with our fleshly nature.
- The soul/life is saved in choices that are made now. This is “progressive sanctification,” where we yield to God’s will and He conforms us to the image of His Son.
- Humility is an indispensable attitude in the salvation of the soul.
- Jesus tells us that it is possible to lose one’s soul/life should he or she refuse to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Christ. This has no association with eternal damnation, which is a matter that is settled when one believes in the Person and Work of Jesus Christ. However, losing one’s soul/life has everything to do with having nothing to show for in eternity because our earthly lives were lived for ourselves and not for the Lord.

Summary: “The salvation of the soul is the triumph of faith in present trials for which glory is received in a future day.”<sup>1</sup> -Zane C. Hodges

### Pertinent Passages (cont’d.)

#### **1 Peter 1:9**

The Epistle of 1 Peter is another New Testament book which speaks to the subject of the saving of the soul. We must start in 1:1 for the sake of context and clarity. Peter is writing to believers throughout various regions of Asia Minor in what is today known as Turkey. These believers are addressed as “aliens,” emphasizing their citizenship in glory (Eph 2:19; Col 1:13; 1 Pet 2:11a). They are also designated as “chosen.” This word “*eklektos*” can also mean “elect.” While often understood as God choosing individuals to either be redeemed or to remain damned, there are three indicators that would speak against this conclusion.

First, it is often assumed that God’s foreknowledge necessitates His predestination of an individual for justification. This understanding reads into the meaning of “foreknowledge.”<sup>2</sup> Foreknowledge is never causative but means “a prior knowledge of what will come to pass.” This is not the same as “to determine beforehand to take place.” To read the text plainly, those who are “chosen” are those who were “known beforehand” by God.

Second, “those who reside as aliens” (1:1b) are those who are “chosen,” showing this to be of a corporate nature and not an individual selection. With five different provinces mentioned and the fact that they were “scattered” throughout, we do not have any indication that the “elect/chosen” ones are such on an individual basis. Rather, they are a conglomeration of believers.

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<sup>1</sup> Zane C. Hodges, *First Peter: The Salvation of the Soul* (Denton, TX: Grace Evangelical Society, 2017), 15.

<sup>2</sup> See David R. Anderson, *Saving the Saved: An Exposition of 1 Peter* (The Woodlands, TX: Grace Theology Press, 2020), 6.

Finally, 1:2 is clear that this audience was chosen for a purpose: “to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood.” The means identified is “by the sanctifying work of the Spirit.” While one is “sanctified” (“set apart”) positionally at the moment of faith, one is also “progressively sanctified” by the Spirit, being set apart for good works. Derickson writes, “Though good works do not produce or prove salvation, they are the goal of the Spirit’s ministry in the life of the child of God.”<sup>3</sup> Being “sprinkled with His blood” often draws from the same idea as being “set apart” or “sanctified.” “In the OT blood was sprinkled at the cleansing of the temple, the inauguration of the Law, the ordination of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood, the cleansing of lepers, and on the Day of Atonement. Each of these cleansings affected the believing Israelite’s fellowship with God. Their purpose was not to justify, but to sanctify by restoring fellowship broken by sin. In the same way Jesus’ blood cleanses (present tense) us and enables us to be in fellowship with God (1 John 1:7, 9).”<sup>4</sup> So we see that these believers were chosen for the purpose of obedience and sanctification, two concepts which walk hand-in-hand.

Peter praises the Lord because of the “born again” standing of himself and his readers through the resurrection of Christ (1:3). Because Christ lives, believers have a “living hope.” This “hope” entails much! Being “born again” gives way to an “inheritance” which is pure, unblemished, and unfading, waiting in heaven for the redeemed (1:4). Believers are then described as those who are “protected by the power of God” with “faith” being the key factor (1:5a). This inheritance is described as a “salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1:5b) clearly taking the reader far beyond justification to the quality of glorification that awaits the saints of God.

This grand exhibition of grace is worthy of rejoicing (1:6a)! Do we? Are we? Are we rejoicing in the living hope that we have in Jesus Christ our Lord? Are we praising God for His gracious provision of an illustrious inheritance? In the midst of temporal trials, the proclamation of future blessings should propel us forward (1:6b). Such trials are “necessary” for the “proof of your faith” (1:7).

The word “proof” does not mean that successfully passing through a trial is a “true indicator” that one is really justified. Such reasoning would be forced to conclude that Peter himself was never really saved until Acts 2 when Matthew clearly shows us otherwise (Matt 16:16). The word “proof” holds the meaning of “genuineness due to testing.”<sup>5</sup> Such testing develops one’s faith. “Just as the fire melts the gold, so that the refiner can skim away the dross, so persecution enables the Spirit of God to purify and make infinitely more precious the faith of the suffering saint.”<sup>6</sup> The “salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1:5b) is in view, not one’s initial conversion or the authenticity of their conversion. Those saints who endure this temporary affliction will receive commendation resulting in praise, glory, and honor for the faithful saint at the Judgment Seat of Christ from Jesus Himself (1:7c)! We see this fact in the words “Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master” (Matt 25:21, 23).

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<sup>3</sup> Gary Derickson, “The First Epistle of Peter,” in *The Grace New Testament Commentary*, ed. Robert N. Wilkin (Denton, TX: Grace Evangelical Society, 2010), 1145.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 1145–1146.

<sup>5</sup> BDAG, 256.

<sup>6</sup> John Phillips, *Exploring the Epistles of Peter: An Expository Commentary*, The John Phillips Commentary Series (Kregel Publications; WORDsearch Corp., 2009), 1 Pe 1:7.

Peter's audience had admirable qualities. Not having seen their Savior, they loved the Savior! This was more than likely identified by their obedience to the commands of Christ (John 14:15, 21) and their love for one another (1 John 4:12). Though they did not see Him, they still exercised their faith by greatly rejoicing in their coming glorification. These were people who were looking out ahead into glory and lived in the light of what God had secured for them. They were setting their minds on the things from above (Col 3:1-2). Theirs was a life of "worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus," putting "no confidence in the flesh" (Phil 3:3).

Such a life was giving way to the "outcome" of their faith (1:9a). The word "obtaining" here is *telōs* which means "that by which a thing is finished, its close."<sup>7</sup> Faith is meant to be brought to completion (Jas 2:22). What God began in justification, He will bring to a close in glorification, but it was the attitude, faithfulness, selflessness, and rejoicing of Peter's audience that was making much of their sanctification leading to a greater glorification. Their perspective and convictions were such that God could mold and move them as He deemed fit. They were humble and willing, full of joy, and waiting in anticipation for the Lord Jesus to return. This was resulting in the "salvation of your souls" (1:9b). Their lives would result in much glory to God because they were trusting His Word!

The proceeding verses (1:10-12) speak to the grand testimony of glorification which did not lie dormant in the Old Testament. Prophets investigated this subject thoroughly, which can be seen in Hebrews 11. The promise of glory to be shared in the presence of the Creator even caused Moses to reject a life of leisure and luxury (Heb 11:24-26). Such choices set the stage for the time of Christ, marking the beginning of the end (1 Pet 1:20; Heb 1:1-2) and has caused all who believe in the Messiah to live in anticipation of His return (Rev 22:12). This mindset finds far less reason to live for the here and now because of the abundant value of living for the Life to come.

Concerning the rest of the book, it is worth noting a few other pertinent verses. In **1:22** we see that Peter's audience was obeying the truth, and in doing so "purified" their souls for a sincere love for their brothers and sisters. "Purified" literally means "to set oneself apart, cleanse, dedicate." This is something that they were already doing, and by doing so, they were able to love their fellow believers without hypocrisy, of which Peter encourages them to do all the more!

In **2:2**, we see that these believers are to "long for the pure milk of the word" like newborn babies. It is often assumed that they are to long for the Word because they were newborn babies in the Lord, but everything surrounding this book tells us that they were vibrant and maturing believers. In their developed and growing state, they were to drink in the Word of God because it is the greatest necessary component to their continual growth "in respect to salvation." This is not speaking of justification, but glorification and the salvation of the soul. The Word of God grows the believer in truth and truth sustains us in trials leading to abundant glory.

In **2:11** we find that "fleshly lusts war against the soul in order to block its salvation."<sup>8</sup> This would refer us back to the five sense of the body seeking to convince our mind, will, and emotions (soul) that there is a better truth and a greater satisfaction found somewhere outside of what the Lord has given us. Trusting such temptations will result in a failure to abide in Christ, committing sin, and leading us to

<sup>7</sup> Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 620.

<sup>8</sup> Watchman Nee, *The Salvation of the Soul* (New York: Christian Fellowship Publishers, 1978), 48.

produce “nothing” (John 15:5b). The reiteration of his audience’s status as “aliens and strangers” (2:11; 1:1) reminds them that this present world is not their home.

**First Peter 2:25** exalts Jesus as the Shepherd and Guardian of our souls, reminding us that He is our Guide, Leader, and Provider. This is a summary statement that is linked to the points made in **2:19-20**. When one suffers because of godly convictions and actions, such convictions find grace with God. We are then told in **2:21** that believers have been called to suffering (Phil 1:29; 2 Tim 3:12). With Christ as our perfect example of suffering (2:21-24), His death for us makes it possible to die to sin in our daily experience and to live righteously amid unjust treatment.

In **4:19**, we read that the one who suffers according to God’s will does right because he or she has believed that God’s will is the greatest value for their soul/life. This is an excellent summary statement for the entire book, but particularly reflects the grand sentiment shared in **4:12-13**. By entrusting our mind, will, and emotions to the Lord, hardships are times of rejoicing because of the greater goal out ahead. Not only are we promised blessing in this life (4:14), but when Christ returns at the Rapture, we will have every reason to rejoice in His presence!

In **5:1-7**, Peter addresses the elders of the churches to whom he is writing. He speaks of “the glory that is to be revealed” (5:1b) and their role as “partakers,” which is the opportunity to share in this glory with Christ. Their diligence in leading God’s flock will result in “the unfading crown of glory” (5:4b) which may be a reward reserved only for faithful elders. The conversation then turns to young men, emphasizing the importance of humility (which is stressed 3 times in 5:5-6) as they submit to their leaders. The exaltation “at the proper time” is not our earthly lives, but at the time of the Judgment Seat of Christ. Humility is the attitude that paves the way for the salvation of the soul.

#### Other Pertinent Passage about the Saving of the Soul

Matthew 16:24-27. As with the parallel passage in Mark 8:34-37, Jesus is calling His disciples to self-renunciation, which is the present essence of what it means to “lose” one’s soul/life now in order to find it (“save it”) in the age to come. Of great importance is v.27 which speaks of “recompense,” being the reward that every believer will receive at Christ’s coming. Such repayment will be for those things done while in the body whether good or bad (2 Cor 5:10).

Luke 12:13-21. Jesus gives a parable of a man who hoards his crops thinking that he can enjoy the rest of his life in leisure and ease. He is declared a “fool” because his “soul” (“life”) was required of him that very night. Hodges writes, “This man’s life experience vanished the moment it was overtaken by physical death. The goods he was planning to hoard for his personal enjoyment over the years to come were totally lost to him. He left this world utterly impoverished.”<sup>9</sup> He was rich according to the world’s standards but impoverished in his work for God.

If one continues reading, Jesus encourages His disciples against the worries and anxieties of this life, knowing that the Father will supply (12:22-30). The chief concern of the disciples was to seek the kingdom, for the Father desires to give it to them (12:31-32). The call then comes to sell their

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<sup>9</sup> Zane C. Hodges, *A Free Grace Primer: The Hungry Inherit, The Gospel Under Siege, Grace in Eclipse*, ed. Robert N. Wilkin (Denton, TX: Grace Evangelical Society, 2011), 310–311.

possessions and give away the proceeds so that they will be rich in the life to come. Parting with such possessions reveals what consumes the heart (12:33-34).

Luke 14:25-33. Jesus teaches on discipleship. Following Jesus is costly! Jesus wants us to understand this from the start. The choice to follow Jesus will come in-between one's closest relationships if they are to remain faithful to Christ. The use of the term "hate" in 14:26a should be understood in comparison with the love that entails faithful obedience (John 14:15, 21; also see John 12:25). At the core of this teaching is the call to "carry his own cross" and "come after me" (14:26c), being synonymous with what has been seen in earlier passages that have been considered (Matt 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23).

He then gives two illustrations.

First, if anyone were to build a tower they would be wise to calculate the cost, using the estimate to determine if the funds are available to bring the project to completion. To fall short of completing the project was to invite public shame and ridicule.

Second, a king must consider whether he can win the battle when he goes to war. He finds that he has half the troops of the opposing army. Can the strength of his warriors overcome the numbers of the opposing forces? Should the king send forth word in asking for peace so that he is not humiliated?

Jesus then draws His conclusion: "none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions" (Luke 14:33). In relation to the illustrations given this truth emerges: it will take everything that we have to follow Jesus faithfully. All things- money, possessions, family, jobs, decisions, our very lives, and anything else that falls within our control must be relinquished to save our souls.

#### Verses Showing a Parallel Between "Soul" & "Life"

- Deliver my **soul** from the sword, My only **life** from the power of the dog. — Psalm 22:20
- Do not take my **soul** away along with sinners, Nor my **life** with men of bloodshed, — Psalm 26:9
- To deliver their **soul** from death And to keep them **alive** in famine. — Psalm 33:19
- For without cause they hid their net for me; Without cause they dug a pit for my **soul**. — Psalm 35:7
- Lord, how long will You look on? Rescue my **soul** from their ravages, My only **life** from the lions. — Psalm 35:17
- Do not deliver the **soul** of Your turtledove to the wild beast; Do not forget the **life** of Your afflicted forever. — Psalm 74:19
- Hate evil, you who love the Lord, Who preserves the **souls** of His godly ones; He delivers them from the hand of the wicked. — Psalm 97:10