

The Old Paths

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“The Character Of The Saved”

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The first epistle of Peter is an interesting book. Within this epistle, we find Peter giving us a picture of the saved people in the first Century. Peter reveals that though they were strangers to one another, they were God’s elect (I Pet. 1:1-2). We also see that those who are saved have an inheritance reserved with God (I Pet. 1:4). They had trials to endure, but Peter showed that the end result would be bliss (I Pet. 1:6-7). These people, like us, had not seen Christ in person; yet they showed their love for Him as we must do (I Pet. 1:8; Jn. 14:15; I Jn. 5:3). The text we will study is where Peter concludes his thoughts in the first part of chapter one (I Pet. 1:13-16). Peter wrote: “Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.”

In saying, “gird up the loins of your mind” we learn that their minds were to be prepared so they could attend to the business of God, unencumbered by the world! They were to be sober and hope “to the end” (with no reservation), looking forward to Christ’s coming. How could they

do this? By being...

“As Obedient Children”

The people Peter wrote to had been born spiritually, thus they were children -- the children of God! We see this as he tells them that they were, “Born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (I Pet. 1:23). One is born again by being “born of water and the spirit” (Jn. 3:3, 5). In other words, one is born again when he believes that Jesus is the Son of God, repents of his sins, confesses his faith in Christ and is baptized for the remission of sins (Rom. 10:16; Lk. 13:3; Matt. 10:32; Acts 2:38). Based upon these things, one is born into the family of God, being a “joint-heir with Christ” since he has “put on Christ” (Rom. 8:16-17; Gal. 3:27).

Notice also that these children are described as OBEДИENT children, as opposed to the “cursed children” of II Peter 2:14. Obedient is defined as: “to listen, to attend, to submit” (Vine’s). “To hearken to a command” (Thayer’s, p. 638). By being obedient children, we are being like Christ. Remember, “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb. 5:8-9). Christ was obedient to the Father, and we must be as well. In so doing, we are following in His steps, or following

His example (I Pet. 2:21-22). Are we the kind of children we ought to be? Every Christian should decide right now to be an obedient child!

“Not Fashioning Yourselves According To The Former Lusts In Your Ignorance”

The reason we should be obedient children is because of our past! We stood as filthy sinners before God and Christ! We were steeped in lusts and were ignorant! The apostle Paul describes our condition outside of Christ in Ephesians 2:12: “That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.” Not only were these things true, but Peter shows that we were ignorant as well. One outside of Christ is ignorant of many things, including God’s glory, God’s truth, and God’s mercy!

When one becomes a Christian, a child of God, he or she is the recipient of many spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3, 2:13). This includes having the opportunity for spiritual understanding (Eph. 3:4, 5:17). In Christ, there is no reason to be ignorant about spiritual matters. All who wish for spiritual understanding in Christ have the opportunity to receive it! They begin by following and accepting the Lord’s plan for salvation we studied above!

“But As He Which Hath Called You Is Holy”

Here we see the reason that Christians are (and can be) righteous. It is not because of something we have or have not done, but because our holy God has called (invited - Thayer’s) us to be this way! We find that God calls

all men the same way -- through the gospel (II Thess. 2:13-14). Unfortunately, not all respond. As a result, there are those who will not be holy in the sight of God. It is not because they "cannot" be holy, it is because they refuse to be holy!

The fact that our holy God called us to Him through the gospel message should truly humble us! As we consider what it is to be holy, Mr. Thayer defines the word "holy" as: "in a moral sense, pure, sinless, upright" (p. 7). John describes the holiness of God by saying: "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (I Jn. 1:5). Later, in discussing the Father, John says, "in him is no sin" (I Jn. 3:5). We know that Christ is described in the same manner (I Pet. 2:22).

Therefore, we see a being of pure holiness calling to a world of filthy sinners, and offering them the opportunity to be clean and holy like Him! What a wonderful thought!! How we ought to thank God every day for the salvation He has given to us.

"So Be Ye Holy In All Manner Of Conversation"

This statement ties it all together! Once I see the way that I used to be, I understand and humble myself before the God who has called me "out of darkness into his marvellous light" (I Pet. 2:9); I will obey Him wholeheartedly and be holy. Seeing that God is holy, we must be as well. Not in a few things, but "in all" conduct, manner, or living.

Remember that among other things, we learned that to be holy is to be separate from certain things! Paul discussed this in II Corinthians 6:14-18. Paul wrote,

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (II Cor. 6:14-18). God is not unequally yoked with sinners and the baser sort, and we must not be either!!

"In all manner of conversation" is a comprehensive term. "Conversation" includes our thoughts, words, and deeds! As Peter continued his epistle, we see emphasis placed upon the fact that our lives as a whole must be focused upon Christ and be holy. For example, he told the brethren, "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers,

they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." (I Pet 2:11-12). Again Peter writes, "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear." (I Pet 3:1-2). In this same chapter, Peter discusses one's manner of life and says: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ." (I Pet 3:16). Brethren, are we ready, willing, and able to live holy in the sight of God? Remember, I Peter 1:13-16 is not an option, nor a suggestion, but a command!

Conclusion

I Peter 1:16 really sums it all up! "Be ye holy; for I am holy." It is similar to the thought in Matthew 5:48. In light of what we have studied in this text of I Peter 1, I challenge all of us to do that which is right, live that holy life for God that one day we might see Heaven together (Col. 3:1-4; Phil. 3:13-14)!

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