

# WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A PERSON IS SAVED

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*By the Book™* A Chapter by Chapter Bible Study  
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## Let's Begin

*When a person is saved, Biblical faith saturates ones emotions, intellect, will, and heart. In short, every aspect of a person's life is transformed by Christ. A person is never saved by good feelings about Christ, or even good works for Christ. Instead faith is lived out each day transforming the old into the new. A person whose life is transformed by Christ is thoroughly affected in the deepest possible way.*

*The Apostle Peter picks this theme up in chapter four. He explains in the clearest way possible what happens when a person is saved. What does salvation bring with it? What does being saved add to our lives? Salvation brings three additions to each and every born again believer.*

*Therefore, as we make our way through chapter four, let's turn our attention to the outline below as our guide:*

- I. The Transformation Salvation Brings (vv. 1-6)**
- II. The Motivation Salvation Brings (vv. 7-11)**
- III. The Tribulation Salvation Brings (vv. 12-19)**

## I. The Transformation Salvation Brings (vv. 1-6)

The first thing salvation brings to our lives is a *thorough-going transformation*. Peter writes, "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God... [before] we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries... For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit" (vv. 1-6).

Peter begins this section by describing our old life prior to coming to Christ. First, we were *dominated* by sin (v. 1). Two spiritual facts are placed side by side. On the one hand, Christ was our *substitution*—*"Christ hath suffered for us"*

*Christ's substitution on our behalf remains the heart of the Gospel.*

Jesus died physically—"in the flesh"—to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (cp. Rom. 5:8; 6:23). He took our punishment upon Himself. Christ's substitution on our behalf remains the heart of the Gospel. In addition, there is a sense in which He "ceased from sin" upon the cross. Not that Christ ceased from His *own* sin. Jesus neither died *in* sin nor *under* sin. Instead He died *to* sin—that is, in relationship to sin--on our behalf (cp. Rom. 6:10).

The second spiritual fact to note, then, is *identification*. Note Peter's wording, "arm yourselves likewise with the same mind." Picture a Greco-Roman soldier putting on armor and taking up the weapons of war. Similarly, we are to strap on the same attitude Jesus had toward sin. He died to it; so should we!



### Reflection Connection

*If we have been delivered from sin, why do we still sin?*

Hence, as believers we are no longer dominated by sin. Before we came to Christ we were slaves to sin. Now that we have come to Him, however, we have been transformed. We have been released from sin's dominion.

Second, not only were we *dominated* by sin, Peter describes our being *dissipated* by sin (vv. 2-5). Peter contrasts two lifestyles. Before Christ came into our lives and transformed us, we followed the *will of the Gentiles* (vv. 3-4). In essence, this life is a wasted life. Peter laments "the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles" (v. 3a). And, what was the will of the Gentiles? To walk in "lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries" to name but a few moral un-pleasantries. Hence, the way of the old life was not only a *waste*, but Peter makes it clear it was also a *wicked* life we pursued. The Apostle specifically calls out several actions unbecoming of the believer we have become:

*lasciviousness*—behavior which is outrageous and shocks public decency.

*lusts*—desires run completely wild without inner checks and balances.

*excess of wine*—literally, the phrase means "to bubble up"; this would parallel our modern "cocktail" gatherings; the greatest problem with alcoholic consumption is not the drunkard but the social drinker.

*revellings*—perpetual feasting and party-going ending in lewd behavior.

*banquetings*—not church fellowships with fried chicken but drinking parties with uncontrollable consumption.

*abominable idolatries*—picture men and women wallowing in a pig pen.

Peter is highly colorful in his description of a life wasted, a life of wickedness. Nevertheless, he is correct.

The second lifestyle pursued is the *will of God* (vv. 2, 5). Peter encourages believers to know they have been transformed and thus that old chapter is forever closed! We should "no longer" crave the fleshly lusts to which we were once attracted. Christ is our life; He set us free from the law of sin and death. If anything, the old life should be considered "strange" to us. Indeed one day we will stand before the great and awesome God and "give account" of our lives. We were transformed by Christ. Does our behavior reflect that transformation?

Peter says the Gospel was preached "to them that are dead" (v. 6). At first, it appears Peter suggests the dead got the Gospel preached to them *after* they died. Not so. Instead, Peter means that those who are now dead had the Gospel preached to them while they were alive. Peter's main thrust is, though sin devastated our lives prior to coming to Christ, and even threatened to eternally destroy us, Christ's suffering for us delivered us from sin's devastation. We will always remain alive in Jesus Christ. Why? Because genuine salvation brings genuine transformation!



## II. The Motivation Salvation Brings (vv. 7-11)

The second addition salvation brings to our life is *deeply-rooted motivation*. The Apostle Peter describes it this way, “But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, *even so* minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God; if any man minister, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen” (vv. 7-11).

*Every moment the believer lives must be lived with the anticipation that Christ may return at any moment.*

Every moment the believer lives must be lived with the anticipation that Christ may return at any moment. The “end of all things is at hand,” Peter says. In other words, the world is winding down like a clock. And, it could be completely unwound this year, this week, this day, indeed this hour! Only our Heavenly Father knows for sure. Nonetheless, such an attitude toward Christ’s return moves us and motivates us in specific ways.

First, we are motivated in our relationship to God (vv. 7-9). Peter offers as the first motivating factor to, “be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer” (v. 7). To be sober means to possess a sound and balanced mind. We must stay cool, calm, and collected. The world through which we take our journey can be a maddening, chaotic jungle. But we are to live in contentedness, looking to our heavenly Father, “watching unto prayer.” Prayer becomes the fundamental tool by which the believer remains sane and balanced living among the wicked and wasteful.

In addition to watching unto prayer, we must develop and deepen our relationship with our family (vv. 8-9). Peter specifically notes we are to have “fervent charity among yourselves” offering “hospitality one to another.” Loving each other deeply and authentically is not an option; rather it is a command! It begins in our homes but extends to our church family. Love always bears three marks—love costs; lover covers; love cares.

Second, we are motivated in our obligation to do good (vv. 10-11). Peter insists every person receives “the gift,” by which he references spiritual gifts all believers receive when they trust Christ as Savior (cp. Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:11). Both your gift and the Holy Spirit Who endowed you with the gift serve as a powerful motivation to live expectant lives, useful lives, until Jesus returns.

First, a useful life is not useful unless it serves the *good of others*. Peter insists believers are to “minister the same one to another.” Our spiritual gifts are not

### Reflection Connection

*How does prayer develop our family relationships? Do you have a time when the family prays together? Be prepared to share your experience with the entire group.*



toys to play with but weapons to fight with. We are in spiritual warfare every day of our life. The devil seeks us, not to destroy our souls, but to ruin our testimony. Our soul is off his radar screen. However, if he can spoil our life for Christ, he will! Even more, the spiritual gifts we have been given are either for the edification of other believers or for bringing someone to Christ (cp. 1 Cor. 14:19). Spiritual gifts are not talents to brag about but tools to build with. So, we are motivated to do good to others, to possess a useful life.

Second, a useful life is not useful unless it seeks the *glory of God*. No matter how much good we may do for others, nothing counts unless behind everything, the ultimate motivation is to please our Lord and Savior. Salvation brings motivation to seek the glory of God in all.

### III. The Tribulation Salvation Brings (vv. 12-19)

Being saved brings to the believer many joyous blessings. However, being saved does not mean a life with no heartache, no worry, no burdens, no pain. Instead, Peter makes sure Christians understand that when we become followers of Jesus Christ, the last thing that should surprise us is experiencing suffering.

Peter offers us *four principles* to understand suffering. *First, we must understand the object of suffering.* Hear the Apostle Peter's words, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified" (vv. 12-14).

As we look at this passage, we note that suffering *purifies* us (v. 12). The picture of the "fiery trial" is a picture of a refiner's fire which was employed to burn away impurities. Rather than punishment, trials and suffering are ways God uses to burn the dross out of our lives. Suffering is like a carefully designed furnace God builds to edify us and glorify Himself. Suffering also *identifies* us (v.13a). In other words, we become partners with Christ in our personal sufferings (cp. Phil. 3:10). Suffering actually makes us closer to Jesus. Finally, suffering glorifies us (vv. 13-14). We become one with Christ. As He is glorified so too will we reign with Him eternally in glory.

*Second, we must understand the obligation of suffering* (vv. 15-16). On the one hand there is suffering which is *deserved*. That is, we bring it on ourselves. Peter carefully points out none of us should suffer because we *deserve* it, "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters" (v. 15). Instead, if we suffer, it should be *derived* suffering (v.

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#### Reflection Connection

*Do you think of suffering as a time of purifying? Or, is your first impression, "God, why are you punishing me?" Explain.*



16). Derived suffering is tribulation one receives just because one is a “Christian.” We are here neither to condone the world or condemn it; rather we exist to confront the world. And when we do, we will suffer for it.

*Third, we must understand the overview of suffering.* Peter writes, “For the time *is come* that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if *it first begin* at us, what shall the end *be* of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?” (vv.17-18). God’s judgment process begins with the saints, God’s people. Christians cannot avoid judgment (cp. Heb. 10:30). Judgment begins with us. Next, the judgment of sinners is noted—“the end *be* of them that obey not the gospel of God.” This may be one of the most horrific statements in the Bible.

*Finally, we must understand the outcome of suffering.* Peter writes, “Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls *to him* in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator” (v. 19). Committing ourselves to God is the only way we may finish well through suffering. When we “commit” we also “keep” our souls. Furthermore, we also commit to doing good. And, as we learned earlier, doing good to others edifies us and glorifies God.

### Golden Greek Nugget

Peter exhorts believers to have “fervent charity” toward one another “above all things” (v. 8). It is not just love but “fervent” love we are to show toward one another. The Greek term translated “fervent” is *ektenēs*, which means “stretched” or “strained.” The idea is a love which reaches beyond the norms, “stretched” to new heights and capacities. Our love for one another is not typical love but unusual love.

### Wrap Up

*Salvation brings Christians many things, joyous things. We are transformed by the power of Christ and motivated by the Spirit of Christ. Nevertheless, we also suffer tribulation when we decide to follow Jesus. God promises to deliver us and keep us safe throughout all eternity.*

