

MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD

Which is the letter written to the church in Bithynia?

Purpose: Peter wrote this letter to Christians scattered throughout Asia minor (Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia). The basic theme of First Peter is the proper response to Christian suffering. Peter wrote this letter to give Christians a divine perspective on trials so that they would be able to endure them without wavering in their faith by clinging to future hope.

SCRIPTURE: I PETER 1:3-9, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.”

Who should be praised? v.3, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!”

Why must God be praised? v.3, “According to his great mercy, *he has caused us to be born again...*”

Note: When we were in a wretched state, God caused us to be born-again. Salvation is God giving birth to us, not we giving birth to ourselves.

Pastor and professor, Gregory Brown: When a child is born, does he have anything to do with the process of birth? It is something that begins in the minds of the parents and consummated through their bodies. The child has nothing to do with it. In the same way, spiritual birth is an act of God. It has nothing to do with the one who is born again. Yes, Scripture everywhere calls us to believe and repent, but the means to repent and believe does not come from man.

- ❖ **I John 3:10**, “No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God.”
How can John be so sure that a born-again person will not keep on sinning?
*Because it is God who gives birth (born of God). **When kind of children does God give birth?** He gives birth to children who cannot keep on sinning.*

On what basis God has caused us to be born again? v.3, “According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again...”

- ❖ **Titus 3:4-5**, “But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy...” PRAISE THE LORD FOR HIS MERCY!

To what did God cause us to be born again? v.3, “According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again *to a living hope*...”

Sad fact: People die without hope. But there is hope to born-again people. Someone said, “People who are born once have to die twice. People who are born twice have to die only once.”

- ❖ **What is hope? Romans 8:24-25**, “For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.”

GOD DOES OFFER A BRIGHT AND PROSPEROUS FUTURE BUT THIS HOPE IS NOT HERE!!!

What is our living (not dead but true and active) hope? I Peter 1:4, “to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,” THIS IS THE GREATEST AND ULTIMATE HOPE THAN ALL OTHER HOPES.

What is this inheritance? Salvation, Eternal life. Peter describes that this inheritance is:

- **Imperishable:** cannot be destroyed. Worldly inheritance is perishable
- **Undefiled:** cannot be polluted. Worldly inheritance is polluted
- **Unfading:** cannot fade away or decay. Worldly inheritance fades away

How did God give us this eternal inheritance? v.3, “he has caused us to be born again to a living hope *through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*.”

Note: It is through Christ’s death on the cross and the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead that we have this living hope. Apart from Christ, there is no hope.

- ❖ **I Corinthians 15:16-19**, “For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.”
- ❖ **John 11:25**, Jesus said . . . “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies”

Yes, we do have a living hope. But as we live in the sinful world, struggling continuously with temptations and trials, can we make it to the end?

I Peter 1:5-6, “According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, *who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*”

God's sovereign work: “*who by God's power are being guarded.*” When I fear my faith will fail, He will hold me fast. **OUR HOPE IS NOT THAT WE BY OUR OWN STRENGTH WILL MAKE IT TO THE END; BUT GOD IS ABLE TO KEEP US SAFE TILL THE END.**

❖ **Philippians 1:6**, “And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”

Man's Responsibility: “*who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*” **WE MUST HAVE FIRM FAITH IN GOD AS HE GUARDS US SAFE TILL THE END.**

What is faith? Trusting in God. Depending on God. Clinging to God. Looking to God.

I Peter 1:6-7, “In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

What do believers go through in this world? “Various trials”

What is our general reaction to trials? “Grieved by various trials”

What is the biblical reaction to trials? Peter says “In this you rejoice.” We don't rejoice *in* trials. We rejoice *under* trials knowing that God has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for us.

Why does God allow us to go through trials? “so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

Comment: Faith is more precious than gold. True faith is a pleasing aroma to God because it results in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ (**1:7**). Faith is also a powerful weapon against the enemy. Peter writes in 5:8-9, “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. *Resist him, firm in your faith.*” So God tests our faith and the enemy seeks to ruin our faith. It is easier to claim “I have faith in God” but remember that God tests our faith through trials. Therefore, guard your faith, which is more precious than gold. Genuine faith perseveres under trials and at the end brings praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ (when Christ is ultimately revealed). Remember what Christ said when He was on earth, “When the Son of Man comes (revealed), will he find faith on earth?” (**Luke 18:8**)

Superficial faith doesn't survive at the time of testing:

- ❖ **Luke 8:13**, “And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away.”
- ❖ **Hebrews 10:37-39**, “For, yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.” But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.

How long does God allow us to go through trials? v.6, “though now for a *little while*, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials” (as long as you live on earth). If life on earth is short, then trials are also short.

- ❖ **I Peter 5:10-11**, “And *after you have suffered a little while*, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

1:8, “Though you have not seen him, you love him.”

- **How can we love Him without seeing Him?** God caused us to be born-again to behold His love in the Gospel of Christ Jesus and He has sent His Holy Spirit within us to continually reveal His glory to us.

1:8, “Though you do not now see him, you believe in him”

- ❖ Jesus said to Thomas, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” (**John 20:29**)

We do not NOW see him, but:

- ❖ **I Jn. 3:2**, “We know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.”

1:8-9, “Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him **and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory** (Why? Because of the past—God caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and future—following verse), **obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.**

Application: Be strong in your faith in God, which is more precious than gold, rejoice in the Lord under trials and eagerly wait for the outcome of your faith, which is the salvation of our souls and glory to God!