

Holiness: The Result of Salvation  
1 Peter 1:13-17

### Introduction

**Jeremiah.** In my Bible reading this week I have been going through passages that tell of the events that happened after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. Gedaliah had been appointed by king Nebuchadnezzar to be governor over the small remnant that had been left in the land, and Jeremiah had chosen to stay with him instead of going to Babylon. Seven months later, a man named Ishamel who was of royal lineage along with ten men murdered Gedaliah and his officials both Jew and Chaldean with the intention of taking the remnant of people back to Ammon with him. His plan was foiled when Johanan the son of Kareah stopped him at Gibeah causing Ishmael and his men to flee. The people were rescued, but what were they to do now? Surely king Nebuchadnezzar would be mad about Gedaliah and his people being murdered, so should they stay or flee to Egypt. The asked Jeremiah to pray to Yahweh for an answer (Jeremiah 40-41).

After ten days, Jeremiah received an answer from Yahweh and in no uncertain terms told them that they were not to fear the king of Babylon and that they were to stay in Judea for Yahweh the God of Israel had compassion on them to save and deliver them and build them up. Jeremiah then continued to warn them that if they gave into their fears and fled to Egypt, then the very things they feared - sword, famine and pestilence - would find them there and kill them. Jeremiah then forcefully summarized his warning again saying, *“Yahweh has spoken to you, O remnant of Judah, ‘Do not go into Egypt!’ You should clearly understand that today I have testified against you”* (Jeremiah 42:19). Jeremiah 43-44 then recount that they did exactly what Jeremiah had warned them not to do and what he predicted happened to them.

Their disobedience was not surprising in one sense since Johanan and those with him had previously fled to surrounding nations trying to avoid the Chaldeans, but it surprising in another sense in that they asked Jeremiah to seek Yahweh, then when they got an answer they did not like, they accused Jeremiah of lying to them. It then got worse after they arrived in Egypt taking Jeremiah captive with them, and Jeremiah warns them that it was their idolatry that was bringing Yahweh’s judgment. Their answer back was that they were not going to listen to Jeremiah, but rather they would continue *“burning sacrifices to the queen of heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, just as we ourselves, our forefathers, our kings and our princes did in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; for then we had plenty of food and were well off and saw no misfortune.”* They then continued on to blame the bad things that happened to them on stopping their idolatrous practices instead of it being the judgment of Yahweh against them just had Jeremiah and other prophets had warned for years going back to what Moses’ said in Deuteronomy 27-28 before the conquest.

**Self-Wisdom vs God’s Revelation.** They were going to stick with their own interpretation of their experiences and the reasons for them and reject what Yahweh had told them. That is the nature of man’s pride among all people even to this day. I have lost track of how many people I have known over the years that have shown this same pattern, and that includes many who have come and sat among us in this church. They come wanting to know what God has said, and they will nod in agreement and even get involved in church life until something comes up that requires them to walk in faith and either do what they do not want to do or refrain from what they want to do. Things can then quickly fall apart as they lean on their own understanding and experiences to justify their desires even when they are contradictory to the clear teaching of God’s word.

All of us are susceptible to this pitfall which is why we need to be diligent students of the Scriptures. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 tells us that *all Scripture is God breathed and profitable for teaching* (showing us the path of life), *reproof* (telling when we stray from the path of life), *correction* (guiding us back on to the path of life), and *training in righteousness* (instructing us how to stay on the path of life) *so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work*. We also need to walk humbly with other believers who will help keep us in check from falling into this trap. We need to be encouraged and helped in righteousness and admonished when we stray (1 Thess. 5:14). Ephesians 4 explains that the whole body working together brings about maturity and protection from false beliefs.

**The Need for Holiness.** This open rebellion against God described in Jeremiah has an underlying root that is the same for those in our own day among those that profess to be Christians but walk according to their own wisdom instead of God's word. In Exodus 19:5-6, Yahweh told the Jewish people that came out of Egypt that they were to be His own possession, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. 2 Peter 2:9 applies that same thought to Christians. Multiple times Yahweh told the Jewish people that they were to be holy for He is holy (Lev. 11:44-45; 19:2, etc.) and the passage we will be studying this morning, that same command is applied to Christians.

If holiness had been a priority among the ancient Jews, they would not have fallen into idolatry and all the other sins that go with it. They would have instead reaped the blessings God had promised to those who follow Him. But their priority was their own sinful desires starting with being so wise in their own eyes that they rejected God's revelation. If those who profess to be Christians will keep holiness as a priority in their own lives, they will not fall to either their own selfish desires or the winds of false doctrine that blow across our land. Every Christian is to be in a pursuit of holiness because it is the natural outcome of salvation.

Turn to 1 Peter 1:13-16. <sup>13</sup> *Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.* <sup>14</sup> *As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance,* <sup>15</sup> *but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior;* <sup>16</sup> *because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."*

### **Therefore - 1 Peter 1:13**

This passage begins with "therefore" which immediately points you back to what had been just said as the reason for what is about to be said. They were to obey the commands that Peter then gives because of what God had done for them in salvation. According to God's foreknowledge He chose them and by the means of the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit they were brought to the obedience of faith and cleansed by the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ as the atonement for their sin. He caused them to be born again to a living hope due to their faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and through that to be given an incredible inheritance far beyond anything in this world for it is imperishable, undefiled and unfading reserved in heaven for them and guaranteed for it is guarded by God Himself. This living hope enabled them to greatly rejoice though they were currently distressed by the various trials they were experiencing that were proving out the genuineness of their faith. This salvation by God's grace through faith in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ was something that the prophets sought to understand better so they made careful search and inquiry into the prophecies. Even the angels have sought to understand it better that they might fulfill their purpose better in giving glory to God.

It is this salvation which is promised in the present and will be fully revealed and experienced at the return of Jesus that is the basis for the commands that Peter will be giving throughout this passage.

### **Prepare your Minds - 1 Peter 1:13**

The first command is that they were to set their hope fully on the grace to be brought at the return of Jesus Christ, but in order to do that they needed to prepare their minds. A literal translation here is "*gird*

*up the loins of your mind.*” Gird your loins was a common metaphor using what a man had to do with his tunic in order to be ready for action. The ancients did not wear pants as we do today. While a soldier’s tunic might only come down to the knees, most men wore one that extended past the knees and so in order to be able to run and move about quickly without being hindered, the edges had to be brought up and tucked under the belt freeing up the legs to move without any incumbrance. You ladies would understand this, but you men will have to imagine running in a long dress. Girding up your loins enabled you to be ready for action. This is an aorist middle participle signifying it is to be a single action that you do in your own interest. Gird up the loins of your mind and keep them girded so that you are ready for action for it is in your own best interest.

Peter uses this metaphor in conjunction with the mind. The word used here, διάνοια / *dianoia*, refers to the mind with a basic sense of thought, reflection, ponder. Its root is the Greek word νοῦς / *nous* for which it can function as a synonym referring to the mind, the total inner or moral attitude, the ability to think, reason and understand. Jesus uses this word in Matthew 22:37 in explaining the greatest commandment, *And He said to him, “ ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ ”* Here in 1 Peter it is used in reference to the mind as the faculty of thought, understanding, desire and feeling, and having such a mind is critical in walking with God as expressed here in the great commandment. This is in contrast to having a mind that is proud (Luke 1:51), darkened (Eph. 4:18) alienated and hostile to God (Col. 1:21). Peter is directing them to be prepared for mental action, to think clearly and pursue understanding by setting aside the things that would hinder that, and there are many things that can make it difficult to have the needed mental focus to properly understand something and take action. Here are a few.

Audio and visual noise would have been fairly minor back then - the sounds in the street, the movement of people and things that would distract attention away to what is extraneous - but this is a major problem in our own society and even more so with multimedia blaring around us so much of the time. Jesus would go out to secluded places to pray in order to avoid such distractions. It could be some place in the wilderness (Luke 5:16), or just getting up while it was dark before the busyness of a day would begin (Mark 1:35). If Jesus needed to do that, even more so we need to find ways to find time to be in places where we can avoid distractions to be able to concentrate and focus in both prayer and on God’s word. It is hard to meditate - think deeply - when there is a lot around you causing distractions.

Another area of hindrances to godly thinking is having wrong priorities in your goals in life. While it is fine to desire to be successful in business, work, finances, hobbies, social relationships, family, etc., if any of those are greater than loving God or not in a godly order of priority, your mind will be preoccupied with what is extraneous to your actual purpose of existence. Life is actually about bringing glory to our Creator and fulfilling His will (1 Cor. 10:31; Matthew 6:10).

Emotional hindrances include fear, anxiety and worry for they consume the thoughts of the mind due to a lack of trust in God. God’s perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:18). We are commanded to not be anxious about anything, but by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving we are to make our requests to God which results in His peace which passes all comprehension (Phil 4:6-7). Jesus commanded us not to worry pointing out that worry chokes out godly life (Luke 8:14), it does not produce anything positive (Matt. 6:25-34), and God already knows your needs before you ask (Matt. 6:8; 32).

The Christian is to *“take every thought captive to obedience to Christ”* (2 Cor. 10:5). You are to *“be transformed by the renewing of your mind”* (Romans 12:2). Gird up the loins of your mind.

### **Keeping Sober - 1 Peter 1:13**

The second related directive to the command for them to set their hope fully on the grace to be brought at the return of Jesus Christ is being or keeping sober. This is a present active participle signifying it is a state you are to continue to remain. The root meaning of sober is a negative contrast to being drunk. Being sober is the opposite of being intoxicated and therefore is a general description of

being in control both mentally and physically. You are not allowing a negative outside influence into your life whether that be something physical such as drugs, alcohol and the desires of the flesh, or something spiritual such as the philosophies of men, false religion or demons. It is being self controlled and mentally alert. Christian sobriety is related to *“the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation”* (1 Thessalonians 5:8).

### **Fixing your Hope - 1 Peter 1:13**

Both of Peter’s directives here, girding up the loins of your mind and keeping sober, are directly related to the command he gives following them: *“fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”* Hope here is the verb form (ἐλπίζω / elpizo) of the word for hope (ἐλπίς / elpis), and hope is a confidence in the future which is good and beneficial. Hope always has an object, a basis for the confidence in the future, and it will be the ability and trustworthiness of that object that determines the level of confidence. In this verse, that hope is set fully or completely on the grace God has promised to the believer for the future. This is a reference back to the “therefore” which pointed back to all that God has done in bringing salvation from sin to them.

It is by God’s grace we are saved through faith in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:8-9). This hope must be fully or completely set on this hope in God’s grace for there is no other means of salvation (Acts 4:12; 15:11; Romans 3:20). Notice that even in accordance with the meaning of the word grace (an undeserved kindness, favor), it is something that is brought to them and not something they can earn or achieve. And while there are aspects of God’s grace in salvation that we have and get to experience in the present time such as forgiveness of sin, adoption into God’s family, access to God in prayer, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the fellowship of other believers, we will not have the fullness of that salvation until Jesus is revealed from heaven at His return.

The fullness of that grace will include glorified resurrection bodies that are incorruptible and immortal (1 Cor. 15:50-54). 1 John 3:2 refers to this saying that *“We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.”* The pains and sorrows of this life will be behind us and we will dwell in God’s presence forevermore. This hope for Jesus’ return will also have an effect on the present life of the believer, for 1 John 3:3 continues, *“And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”*

Peter states this is hope instead of faith for it is trust in what is still to come in the future. The timing of it is *“at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”* This is the same as in verse 7. Revelation here, ἀποκαλύψις / apokalupsis, refers to taking something out of hiding and therefore revealing, disclosing, making it known. 2 Thessalonians 2:7-8 describes this, *“the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire”* at which time He will *“deal out retribution to those who do not know God and those who do not obey the gospel”* while also bringing blessing on His redeemed people beginning with the rapture (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

### **Obedient Children - 1 Peter 1:14**

As I already stated from 1 John 3:3, those who have their hope fixed on Jesus’ return and becoming like Him will pursue purity in their own lives because He is pure. Peter addresses this same truth in verse 14 with another directive based on the command to fix their hope on God’s grace in verse 13 and the command to become holy in verse 15. <sup>14</sup> *As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance.”*

Obedient children, or more accurately, *children of obedience*, is a description of their character. It is quite a contrast to Paul’s description of the non-believer in Ephesians 2:2; 5:6 and Colossians 3:6 as sons of disobedience. Disobedience to parents is a demonstration of sin and depravity (Romans 1:30; 2 Timothy 3:2). Here the reference is used as a description of their character and relationship with God. Obedience to God is a demonstration of love for Him for those who love Him will keep His

commandments (John 14:15, 21; 1 John 5:2-3). The apostle John in his first epistle makes this characteristic of obedience to God a hallmark of being born of God as contrasted to the sinner who loves the world and the things in it instead of God. Here that same contrast is found in whether the person is or is not being conformed to their former lusts.

The pressures to be molded into the behavior patterns of the world are extremely strong. It will take both knowledge of the differences between right and wrong and an unnatural strength of character to resist the pressure of the world to conform. That knowledge comes from the word of God and that unnatural strength of character comes from the Holy Spirit who indwells and changes the believer. Paul makes a similar command in Romans 12:1-2 in which based on the mercies of God which had brought them salvation, they were to be living sacrifices and not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of their minds. Sons of disobedience becomes children of obedience as their ignorance is removed through the truth of God's word and they then repent from their sin to place their faith in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ and walk with Him.

The contrast between being conformed into the image of the world or the image of Christ is pointed out in many passages. Colossians 3 contrasts the characteristics of the old self with those of the new self and Galatians 5 contrasts the deeds of the flesh with the fruits of the Spirit.) The deeds of the flesh include *“immorality, impurity, sensuality, <sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, <sup>21</sup> envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these.” <sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law”* (Galatians 5:19–23).

### **The Holy One - 1 Peter 1:15-16**

Going back to our text, verse 15 gives the reason for his injunction against being conformed to the strong worldly desires they had in their ignorance before they became obedient children. That is the flip side of the coin of his command in this verse, <sup>15</sup> *“but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; <sup>16</sup> because it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”*

I will get to the command to be holy in a minute, but first I want to stress that the reason for it is that the God who Created us, redeemed and called us to salvation by His grace through faith in Jesus Christ is holy. God is both the reason and the pattern for personal holiness. I have given several sermons on the holiness of God, the most recent was just this past March, so I am only going to go over a few basic truths as way of reminder (Trusting God, Part 4: The Holy God March 13, 2022).

The root idea of the words for “holy” in both the Hebrew (קָדוֹשׁ / qadosh) and Greek (ἅγιος / hagios) is to “be set apart,” “to be separated unto.” God is holy because all His attributes or perfections set Him apart from His created works. His position as the Creator and His infinite attributes related to time, space, power, knowledge and ability set Him apart as something very different from anything that has been created for all created beings and matter have their origin outside themselves and are limited, but God is self-existent and unlimited. Even the moral attributes of God set Him apart from man, for though man can reflect them to some degree, God is perfect in each of those attributes while man only dimly reflects them. God's perfection in knowledge and wisdom separates Him from all angels. His perfection in righteousness sets him apart from all sin and sinners. God is a being who exists in a dimension beyond our own and is without flaws of any kind and lacks nothing. God is holy, and that defining characteristic is connected to every other moral attribute of God,

### **Be Holy - 1 Peter 1:15-16**

The basis of the command in verse 15 about being holy in all of your behavior is because God is holy with Peter citing that it is written in the Scriptures, *“You shall be Holy, for I am Holy,”* which occurs in Leviticus 11:44-45; 19:2 & 20:7, 26; 21:8. But what does it mean for humans to be holy in the here and now? To what degree can we be holy since we cannot be like God in any of his infinite or non-moral

attributes, and we can only be dim reflections of Him in the moral attributes? There are three aspects to humans being holy - positional, personal and perfect.

God's purpose in election before the foundation of the world is that they would be holy and blameless before Him (Ephesians 1:4). That purpose is fulfilled in time when God by His grace calls a person to faith in Christ and then justifies him on that basis imputing Christ's righteousness to him. You are set apart to God at salvation and therefore properly called a saint, a holy one, from that point on. That is positional holiness. It cannot be changed once God has decreed it for the gifts and call of God are irrevocable (Romans 11:29). That is positional holiness, the first step of sanctification. (See Romans 3:21-26; 4:5).

Personal holiness is the practical outworking of the inner changes in someone that occur because they are saved and given positional holiness. Such a person will strive to increasingly live according to that position throughout the course of their lives. Or to state it another way, the person that saved will want to be more reflective of Jesus Christ living in and through them as they live out their life. Paul stated the radical nature of this in Galatians 2:20, *"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."* Such a life is lived in the power of the Holy Spirit, but the individual also does his part as Peter explains in 2 Peter 1:3-8. God by His power has *"granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness,"* and having become *partakers of the divine nature* and escaping the *corruption in this world through lust* you who are saints are to be *"applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge,<sup>6</sup> and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness,<sup>7</sup> and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love."* The development of these qualities makes you useful and fruitful in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus. This is the second step of sanctification by which you are being conformed into the image of Christ. This quest for personal holiness is a defining characteristic of a Christian.

The final step of sanctification is perfect holiness when our positional and personal holiness become the same at glorification which occurs at the return of Christ for His people. We can have absolute confidence that this will be done for *"He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 1:6). Or as Romans 8:29-30 explains,<sup>29</sup> *"For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;<sup>30</sup> and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified."*

(See: Holy & Blameless: Positional & Practical - February 23, 2020. And the Holy & Free Series - 2003).

## Conclusions

The apostle Peter had packed a lot into this first chapter and we are only two-thirds through it. He is encouraging a suffering church to stand firm in their faith in the living hope of an incredible inheritance that is guarded by God. These truths would enable them to rejoice in the midst of their various trials though distressed. Their personal response to this great salvation was to refuse to be conformed to the lust of this world and instead live in holiness in reflection of the Holy One that saved them. What was true for them then is still true for us now.

Whatever trial you may be facing in your own life personally or that we may be facing collectively as the world and our society increasingly turns against us because as Christians we strive for holiness, we have an enuring hope that cannot be taken away. It is a hope that transcends this life for it is guaranteed in heaven, and because of that it changes our perspective enabling us to live joyfully in the present despite circumstances for we have an eternal purpose for our present lives and heaven is always in view.

## **Introduction**

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## **Conclusions**

### ***KIDS KORNER***

Parents, you are responsible to apply God's Word to your children's lives. Here is some help.

**Young Children** - draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch. **Older Children** - Do one or more of the following: 1) Write down all the verses mentioned in the sermon and look them up later. 2) Count how many times the words "mind" and "holy" is mentioned. Talk with your parents about the importance of having your mind ready to think and how to pursue personal holiness.

### ***THINK ABOUT IT!***

Questions to consider in discussing the sermon with others. Described what happened in Judah after Nebuchadnezzar had conquered Jerusalem (Jeremiah 39-44). Why did God judge Jerusalem? Why was God going to judge those who fled to Egypt? What parallels to you see between this and those in our own time that insist on their own self interpretation of the events in their lives even when contrary to the principles and precepts of God's word? How can you personally avoid this pitfall in your own life? To what does the "therefore" in 1 Peter 1:13 refer? Explain. What does it mean to prepare / gird the loins of your mind? What does "mind" refer to in 1 Peter 1:13? List some of the things that can hinder proper thinking? To which of these are you most vulnerable? What can you do to protect yourself? What does it mean to keep sober and how can you do it? What is the object of hope on which they were to be fixed? Explain. Why should Christians be characterized as "obedient children"? How does a son of disobedience become a child of obedience? What does it mean to be holy? What is the nature of God's holiness? How can a man be made holy before God? How is a man sanctified in this life? What does God do in that process? What is the man to do in that process? When will positional and personal holiness become perfect holiness? How do the truths of salvation encourage you to stand firm in faith in the midst of current trials? How can you encourage other believers who are in distress with these truths?