

The Future Inheritance as Motivation for Daily Discipleship

I Peter 1:13-21

Throughout the Bible there is a tension between Divine sovereignty and human responsibility. There are things only God can accomplish, but we also recognize “faith without works is dead.” How much is our part? How much is God’s part? God knows. We must understand, however, the two are not mutually exclusive. Human responsibility does not cancel the sovereignty of God in the same way God’s action does not necessarily abdicate human participation.

I Peter 1:1-12 provides beautiful language about God’s action through Jesus to cause us to be born again to a living hope through his resurrection from the dead. He has caused us to share in an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading. He is keeping the inheritance for us at the same time he is keeping us for the inheritance...all done by His power. God revealed the gospel to the prophets, but none of them remained to see it manifest. Instead, they proclaimed what was revealed for those in the future to have hope in the present.

Verse 13 breaks in with human responsibility in light of the knowledge of the gospel one receives. Verse 13-25 is a call for the believer to live holy as he/she is motivated by the coming inheritance. Peter marks out the believer’s responsibility using 3 imperatives (13, 15, 17).

Unshakable Hope in Christ (I Peter 1:13-16)

13 Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, 15 but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

- A. Gaze upon the grace and glory of God
 - a. Therefore, reaches back to grab the truths of vv. 1-12
 - i. They are called pilgrims
 - ii. They have been made alive by God
 - iii. They have an inheritance that cannot be touched
 - iv. They have received a great salvation the prophets preached about and angels longed to witness.
 - b. How can Christians effectively set their hope on (or put faith in) the grace to be revealed and the inheritance to be received when Christ returns?
 - i. By preparing their minds for action
 1. Word picture is one who tucks his long garment in order to run fast and far.
 2. Old Testament picture of the children of Israel leaving bondage in Egypt (Exodus 12:11).
 3. Thinking in a new way does not happen automatically...it requires effort and intentionality.
 - ii. By being sober-minded

1. Peter is not admonishing against drinking (although it would not hurt).
 2. The attractions of the world lull Christians to sleep and desensitizes
- iii. By living holy now
1. By not being conformed to the passions of former ignorance (pre-knowledge of Christ)
 - a. Those without Christ are typically described as ignorant in the Bible
 - i. Galatians 4:8-9
 - ii. Ephesians 4:18
 - b. Peter describes them later (1 Peter 4:3-4)

3 For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. 4 With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you;
 2. By being obedient to the Father like children are supposed to be to parents.
 - a. Obedience is necessary for conversion and cannot be separated from faith.
 - b. He who has called
 - i. Calling does not merely mean “invite” but conveys the idea of God’s power in bringing people from darkness to light. Just as God’s call creates light when there was darkness, so he creates life when there was death. The reference to “calling” is important, for again grace precedes demand. Otherwise the Petrine paraenesis could be confused with the idea that human beings attain their own righteousness or that they live morally noble lives in their own strength.
 - ii. Called to goodness of which He is the standard
 1. 1 Peter 2:12-15, 20, 24
 2. 1 Peter 3:6, 11, 13, 17
 3. 1 Peter 4:2, 19
 - iii. From the Leviticus Holiness Codes, he quotes (19:2)
 1. To be clear, the exact Scripture reference Peter cites is unknown. This quote should be seen as an OT Theme
 2. “In the covenantal thinking of the O.T. blessing to the nations is important, but it is not the starting point. Israel must first be holy. And this appears to be Peter’s emphasis as well. The minimal reference to evangelism (and dialogue) is not just because his primary concern is the church’s survival in persecution (though this is a

factor), but because he also sees the starting point as holiness in the covenant people (1:16).”

Live in Fear (I Peter 1:17-21)

17 And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one’s deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, **18** knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, **19** but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. **20** He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you **21** who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

- A. Here is the third imperative: “conduct yourselves with fear”
- a. Does he mean reverence or terror?
 - i. Most people prefer reverence because a state of fear is not appropriate for a Christian (II Timothy 1:7)
 - ii. Peter calls the believers, however, to consider the coming judgment of the Lord.
 1. He is coming for reward (vv. 13-16)
 2. He is coming for retribution (v 17)
 - iii. This is the kind of fear that does not contradict confidence
 1. Deut. 4:9-10; 8:6-9
9 “Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children’s children— 10 how on the day that you stood before the Lord your God at Horeb, the Lord said to me, ‘Gather the people to me, that I may let them hear my words, so that they may learn to fear me all the days that they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children so.’
 2. 6 So you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God by walking in his ways and by fearing him.
 3. Proverbs 1:29; 3:7; 9:10;
7 Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from evil.
 4. 10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.
 5. Ecclesiastes 12:13
13 The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. 14 For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

- b. The judgment that comes from the Father is eschatological
 - i. The tense of the participles does not lend itself to present
 - ii. Judgment according to works is a consistent theme throughout the Bible
 - 1. In the OT
 - a. Jeremiah 17:10
10 "I the Lord search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds."
 - 2. In the NT
 - a. Matthew 16:27
27 For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.
 - b. II Corinthians 5:10
10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.
 - c. Revelation 20:12-13
12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. 13 And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done.
 - iii. There is no dichotomy between God's judgement of works and the distribution of his grace
 - iv. The fear of judgment plays a vital role in the development of the Christian life
 - 1. Paul thought he could be disqualified if his conduct did not match his confession
 - 2. I Corinthians 9:24-27
24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. 25 Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 26 So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. 27 But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.
- B. The conditional clauses serve to articulate why we should live in fear
 - a. Negative (We were redeemed NOT this way)
 - b. Positive (we were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ)
 - i. Redemption – the act of purchasing...paying a ransom

- ii. Ransoms were paid to purchase freedom for prisoners of war. A purchase price could be paid to free a slave. The Septuagint uses the verb Peter uses to describe many redemptive purchases, including the redemption of property (e.g., Lev 25), redemption for a firstborn animal or child (Exod 13:12–13), and payment of the atonement price of one-half shekel per person (Exod 30:12–13).