

## I PETER

Protected By God's Power Through Our Faith

August 19, 2012

### I. Protected By God's Power Through Our Faith (I Peter 1:5)

A. **I Peter 1:3-9** . . . *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, [4] to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, [5] who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. [6] In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, [7] so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; [8] and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, [9] obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.*

#### B. Pray

### II. Protected By God's Power Through Our Faith

A. Who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

1. The first truth I want us to see from this statement is that our protection is based first and foremost on God, but it is also based on our faith, too. Look at **verse 5** which says: "Who are protected by the power of God (that's God's part) through faith (that is our part)."
2. Now with this truth in mind, let's look at what God is saying to us from this verse, and we will begin by looking at the first and foremost part of our protection for the salvation that will one day be revealed.

B. **Who are protected by the power of God** for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time – **God's part**

1. In the Old Testament we see the protection of God's people by God's power in several ways. It was God's power that enabled Israel to drive out the evil inhabitants of the Promised Land. It was God's power that enabled Israel to defeat their enemies during the time of the Judges and the Kings. It was the power of God that protected David

and gave him the victory when he went out to fight Goliath. It was God's power that protected Elijah with the horses and chariots of fire – *which were invisible to everyone but Elijah* – from the King of Aram. And those examples are just a smattering of examples of the many times and ways God protected His people so they could receive and experience what He had for them. **God protects His people!**

2. There are several passages from the New Testament that clearly speak of a similar protection for God's people. For example:
  - a. In **II Peter 2:4-10**, Peter reminds us that God did not spare the angels who sinned. And God did not spare the inhabitants of the world in the days of the flood. And God did not spare the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. Yet in the midst of not sparing, Peter's point is that God rescued Noah and his family, and God rescued Lot and his two daughters. In other words, God not only knows how to punish and destroy sinners, He knows how to rescue and protect the godly from temptation and from His deadly judgment on sin and sinners.
  - b. Another marvelous example of God's protection is given to us by Jude, who reminds us that God is able to keep us from stumbling, and He is able to make us stand in His presence, blameless and with great joy (**Jude 1:24-25**).
  - c. In **Philippians 2:12-13**, Paul affirms God's ability to protect us for eternal salvation when he says that it is God who is at work within us, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.
  - d. Paul also states that he is confident that God, who has begun a good work in us, will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus (**Philippians 1:6**).
  - e. And again Paul tells us that God protects us from any and every temptation that is beyond our current spiritual ability to resist or bear. And beyond that protection, God always provides a clear way of escape from every temptation He allows to come our way (**I Corinthians 10:13**).
  - f. Finally, Jesus spoke of our protection unto eternal salvation on several occasions.
    - (1) For example, He said: "My sheep hear My voice, and they follow Me; and I give them eternal life, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand (**John 10:27-29**).

- (2) And on another occasion Jesus said: This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day (**John 6:39**).
3. What I want us to see here is that the record of God's interactions with His people includes God's protection and His promise of protection from evil and from the eternal consequences of evil, for the purpose of bringing His people safely home. This should be a comforting truth for all of us. However, God's part does not stand alone. His people have a part in securing this protection from God.

C. **Who are protected through faith** for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time – **our part**

1. There is no question about the Bible teaching that we are saved by faith. And though I doubt any of us need scripture support for this, let me affirm this truth from just three scripture portions.
  - a. **John 3:16** . . . For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever **believes in Him** shall not perish, but have eternal life.
  - b. **John 11:25-26** . . . Jesus said to [Martha], "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, [26] and everyone who lives and **believes in Me** will never die."
  - c. **I Corinthians 1:21** . . . For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to **save those who believe**.
2. Returning to **I Peter 1:5**, what God is saying through Peter is that we are protected in this life, for eternal salvation in the next life, by a working together or a combination of God's power and our faith.
  - a. In other words, our protection is not one-sided. It is neither all God's doing, nor is it all our doing. It is the joining and working together of God's unsurpassable power and our faith.
  - b. As for God's unsurpassable power, we have already examined some scriptures that remind us that God, by His power, keeps and protects us from the first moments of our being born anew to the moment we step into eternity.
  - c. What we haven't examined yet is what the faith looks like that, when joined to God's power, helps protects us in this life for life eternal. And since it is our faith combined with God's power that protects us, it seems very wise to carefully examine what that faith looks like, because that is the kind of faith we need.

D. What Is The Faith That Protects Us In Union With God's Power?

1. I want to begin talking about the faith that helps protect us by first pointing to what it isn't.
  - a. I am convinced that this is important because the word "faith," when used in relation to God and salvation, is increasingly being understood as synonymous with knowledge or an intellectual consent with certain Bible truths – separate from any choices and behavior that either affirm or deny the faith that we claim to hold.
  - b. In other words, it is all too common today to hear the word faith in a context that implies we can believe in God or believe in Jesus for eternal salvation apart from the appropriate accompanying actions of faith on our part.
  - c. However, to imply that we can have faith in God or faith for salvation apart from the appropriate accompanying actions of such faith is an unorthodox, unbiblical use of the word faith, which at best is an empty and worthless claim to faith.
2. To help you see from the Word of God that any claim to faith that lacks appropriate accompanying works is empty and worthless, I will give you two examples taken from several portions of scripture.
  - a. My first example comes from Jesus' words about the nature of love for God, and compares His words with James words about the nature of faith that saves. My second example will be taken from Paul's well known evangelistic words in **Romans 10** – words which demand appropriate accompanying actions.
3. **First Example:** Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." He went on to say that "those who do not love him [Jesus], do not keep His words" (**John 14:15, 24**).
  - a. Of the several truths contained in these two statements, one of the clear inferences is that love for God, by its nature includes appropriate accompanying actions. Any claim to love God that does not include appropriate accompanying actions, is empty and worthless.
    - (1) In other words, according to Jesus, there is an inseparable connection between love and deeds, or love and behavior. In fact, the very nature of love is such that love shows itself through loving actions. Remove the loving actions, either through inactivity or through the introduction of unloving actions, and any claim to love becomes not only empty and worthless, it becomes unbelievable as well.

- (2) If you understand that because of the nature of love it is only love when it includes appropriate accompanying actions, and if you agree that God's word affirms this truth, then turn with me to **James 2:14**, where we find the same principle about saving faith. **James 2:14**, says: "What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works (*no appropriate accompanying actions*)? Can that faith save him?"
- b. James' question is a rhetorical question, and its obvious answer is NO. In other words, a faith that lacks appropriate accompanying actions cannot save anyone.
  - c. Let me put it this way: Just as professed love separate from appropriate accompanying actions will not convince God that you love Him, so professed faith separate from appropriate accompanying actions will not save you.
  - d. Now the reason for showing you the similarity between the nature of love for God and the nature of saving faith is because our faith is the part we are providing to join with God's power to protect us in this life for eternal salvation. And if God will not be fooled by empty, worthless claims of love, we can be sure He will not be fooled by empty, worthless claims of saving faith. Therefore, the faith that joins with God's unsurpassable power to protect our salvation is that faith which includes appropriate accompanying actions.
4. **Second Example:** The second example of why faith in God or saving faith cannot be separated from appropriate accompanying actions comes from the apostle Paul. And the scripture portion we are going to look at is commonly used in modern day evangelism, so I suspect you know these words well. Turn to **Romans 10:9-10**.
- a. **Romans 10:9-10:** "If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; [10] for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness (*a change of values and direction*), and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation (*a change of allegiance*)."
  - b. Let's begin with the first statement in **Romans 10:9**, which says: "If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord. . ."
    - (1) The first thing to note here is that the word LORD is not another name for Jesus, it's His title, and it signifies His position. Therefore, to confess Jesus AS Lord is not to say His name, but to acknowledge that Jesus is now your Lord.

- (2) Think carefully about this: to confess Jesus AS Lord – when asking Him for eternal salvation – is to acknowledge your allegiance to Jesus as your Lord. This is a life altering confession for the sinner who has been living in open and willful rebellion against God.
      - (3) And when it comes to eternal salvation, this is not an optional life altering change of allegiance, it is a required life altering change of allegiance.
        - (a) Notice the first word of **verse 9**.
        - (b) It is a conditional IF, which means fulfilling the IF is required to get to the last four words of the verse, which are “you will be saved.”
    - c. Returning to the second half of **Romans 10:9**, we read: “and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead.”
      - (1) To believe in your heart that God has raised Jesus from the dead is to believe and live according to two truths.
      - (2) **First**, to believe that Jesus is alive means He is our living Lord, here and now. Therefore, we are to give Him humble allegiance and obedience, here and now.
      - (3) **Second**, to believe that God raised Jesus from the dead is to believe and live according to the fact that if we die with Christ through baptism, we are dying to sin. And when we rise with Christ from baptism, we are being raised for the purpose of living a godly life here and now (**Romans 6:4-7**).
    - d. When you understand **Romans 10:9-10** as it is meant to be understood, and then live accordingly, you have the faith that, when joined with God’s power, protects you during this life for eternal salvation and living with God forever.
  - 5. So let’s recap what has been said about faith. The faith that works with or joins God’s power to protects us is the faith that is both knowledge of God’s truth and accompanying actions that are appropriate to the truth of God that is known.
- E. Now you may be thinking that I have taken a couple of scriptures and treated them as if they speak for all of God’s word. I understand that kind of thinking. Therefore, I want to encourage you to search the scriptures to see if what I said is true. And to help you on your way, let me point you to some of the many other passages that send the same message about being protected **by God and our faith** for eternal salvation.

1. In talking about the house built on the rock and the one built on the sand, Jesus shows the necessity of living up to what you know. The house built on the rock represents those who hear or read the scriptures and live according to what it says. The house built on the sand represents those who hear or read the scriptures but do not act on what they know and claim to believe. What Jesus is telling us here is that God protects those who build their life on a faith that has appropriate accompanying actions (*works*) (**Matthew 7:24-27**).
2. Jesus addresses the issue of religious people who think of themselves as people of faith who have been born again to an eternal destiny that is secure. In addressing them, Jesus points out that they knowingly and willfully practice some sins, which means they are, at the very least, not taking the necessary steps to bring an end to them. Listen as I read Christ's words: "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. [22] Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' [23] And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness'" (**Matthew 7:21-23**).
3. Additional suggestions to consider include **Matthew 24:12-13**, **John 3:36**, **Titus 2:11-14**, **II Peter 1:3-11**, and all of **I John**.

### III. Conclusion

- A. The good news from today's lesson is that once we are born again, we are protected by a joining together of God's unsurpassable power and our faith.
- B. The caution from today's teaching is do not trust in God's protection **AND** a faith that is mostly or only knowledge of the truth, for that is to trust in something that is worthless and useless for such needed protection. Trust in a faith that is the uniting of knowledge with appropriate accompanying behavior – that is, where your behavior agrees with what you claim to believe – for that is the faith that both saves and protects, both now and for eternity.