



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of Dan Duncan

1 Peter 1: 10-16

Summer 2024

"So Great Salvation"

TRANSCRIPT

Well, as you can see, that is the title of the sermon today. I try to give a pithy title to my sermons, and I was toying with one, "What Angles Study," which seems like a kind of compelling thought, (and that's here too, as well). It all is to show, though, as I hope to bring out, the greatness of our salvation and what a motivation that should be for us to live for the LORD.

Well, salvation is the subject, and our text is 1 Peter chapter 1, verses 10 through 16. And it follows, not only in the order of things from verse 9, but in the thought that Peter left us with. In our last lesson he spoke, in verse 9, "of the salvation of your souls." Now in verse 10 he writes:

¹⁰As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that *would come* to you made careful searches and inquiries, ¹¹seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. ¹²It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look.

¹³Therefore, 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. ¹⁴ As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts *which were yours* in your ignorance, ¹⁵ but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all *your* behavior; ¹⁶ because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

1 Peter 1: 10-16

May the LORD bless this reading of His Word, and bless our time of study in it together. Let's bow together in prayer, and seek the LORD's blessing.

LORD, we do come before You humbly, and in Your debt—debt to Your mercy and grace. And we're always in that position; we're always in need of Your mercy, we're always in need of Your grace. We give You praise and thanks for the abundant grace that You've poured out upon us. We're reminded of that from this text, but we should know that every day we are debtors to mercy alone. And we pray for that mercy and grace in this hour, that through the Holy Spirit, You would teach us and help us to understand the things we just read and help us to understand the greatness of our salvation. And help us to act upon it as Peter exhorted those saints all across Asia Minor to do: To live in light of a great salvation—to live in light of the great hope we have and what will be revealed some day in all of its glory.

We're here for a brief time, Father, help us to know that and to redeem the time to live for You; and know that there's great reward in it, for there is great blessing in the present simply living for You. So LORD, we pray that You would guide us in our thinking and in our study: May this be a time of learning, and also a time of worship when our hearts are lifted up to You in gratitude for all that we have in Christ.

We pray, LORD, for the material needs that we have. We're totally dependent upon You every day for every breath of life we take and all the provisions of life. We give You thanks that You provide so abundantly, and we pray that You would continue to bless us and provide for us, and provide health. I pray for those that are struggling with issues of health—and some are at home and not feeling well; we pray that You'd give them recovery.

Father, we thank You for this time together and pray You'd bless it. I pray that You would prepare our hearts now to direct our attention, our minds, to the things we've read and that You would build us up in the faith. Bless us as we sing this next hymn, and may this be a time of worship and instruction to Your glory.

In Christ's name, Amen.

(Message) A year ago, Chris Splawn sent me John Newton's introduction to an edition of *Pilgrim's Progress*. Newton, as you know, wrote the hymn, *Amazing Grace*; and *Pilgrim's Progress* is a story of that grace; grace and salvation—and grace all the way through the Christian life.

In his introduction Newton wrote, "If you are indeed asking the way to Zion with your face toward it, I bid you good speed. Behold, an open door is set before you which none can shut. Yet—prepare to endure hardship, for the way lies through many tribulations." And that thought surfaces in his great hymn, as well as Paul's statement in Acts chapter 14, (vs22), "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."

Well, that's very much the story of *Pilgrim's Progress*. Christian and his companions face trials and temptations all along the way that threaten to get them off the path to heaven. It's an allegory, it's a story.

But it was real life for the saints to whom Peter wrote. They had trials from without, and trials within. They experienced persecution, but also the temptations of the flesh. And that is common to every earnest Christian. But the one who is called by God continues in "the Way", (Acts 19:9), refusing to be distracted from the goal of salvation or allow the difficulties of life to diminish in any way the greatness of that salvation in his or her mind. The author of Hebrews warned early in the book, what we read a moment ago; Hebrews chapter 2, verse 3, "How will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?"

One thing that keeps the true believer from being neglectful is knowing that we *do have* a "so great salvation"; and that, though the way through which we travel as

pilgrims is a way of tribulations, nevertheless, the destination is well worth it. So one way to prevent neglect in the Christian life is to know the greatness of our salvation—and the hope of it.

Peter helps us to understand that in this passage, particularly in verses 10 through 12. And then the rest of the passage gives us, with the "Therefore", (vs13), the application of our hope: How this hope and how this great salvation should affect our behavior.

He begins by stating that our salvation is so *great* that the Old Testament prophets, 'carefully searched' (vs10), their prophecies to understand it—and so *wonderful* that, 'the angels longed to look into it.' (vs12).

Verse 9 ended with salvation; Peter wrote of, "the salvation of your soul" — eternal salvation, a great salvation. In verse 10 he continues with; "As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that *would come* to you made careful searches and inquiries."

They were very curious, with a godly curiosity about the things they had prophesied—and so they studied them. A prophet didn't just simply receive revelation from God and know everything, (as though they were these passive vessels, filled with knowledge). They received it all from God, but they also were students; they 'diligently searched the Scriptures', we're told here.

They searched the Scriptures that they had written to understand them better. And they searched the Scriptures of the other prophets. Both of those words, "*searches* and *inquiries*", (vs10), refer to active effort: They spent a lot of mental energy in their studies. They wanted to know who the Savior was; and when He would come. Verse 11, "...seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow." And that is true of us as well; those two words, *sufferings* and '*glories to follow*.' We may suffer much now, but glory is coming.

And we, in a sense, participate in the sufferings and the glories of Christ. That's what Paul wrote in Philippians chapter 3, verses 10 and 11, that they, "may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings; being conformed to His death;" —there's glory that comes out of that. So I think we have that suggested here in that very statement: 'That's a great salvation, the glories that come.'

But it's also an important verse that instructs us on how we are to understand the Bible—specifically, how we are to interpret the Old Testament: 'The Old Testament is about Jesus Christ, and His work of salvation.' Now let me demonstrate that. I want to spend some time with that thought.

Jesus, Himself said that very thing, (at least certainly by implication), in John chapter 5, verse 39. "You search the Scriptures..." He told the Jewish leaders, "...because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me..." 'The whole Old Testament', He was saying, 'is about Me, Jesus Christ!'

So when you read the Old Testament, you should see Christ all through it. The Old Testament prophets did—that's how they understood it. Christ and His sufferings are predicted and illustrated in the direct prophecies of Scripture—and in the *institutions* and *types* of the Old Testament.

All the way back to the beginning, in Genesis chapter 3, verse 15, we see Christ in the prediction of the "seed", (or descendant of the woman), who 'would be bruised on the heel by the serpent.' That's about the cross, and that *seed* is Christ. That passage is called, "The First Gospel".

Psalms 22 predicted His sufferings on the cross. Jesus quoted the first verse of that Psalm on the cross; "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" The psalmist goes on to speak of, 'the dogs that surrounded Him', and 'the evil doers who encompassed Him.' (vs16). "They pierced my hands and my feet." (vs16). "They look, they stare at me", (vs17). The psalmist wrote, "They divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots." (vs18).

Psalm 69, verse 21, "They also gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."

All of that occurred at the cross in fulfillment of prophecy, as was Isaiah chapters 52 and 53, the well-known text on the suffering servant. We won't read all of it, but you're familiar with it; you're familiar with verse 5 of chapter 53, "He was pierced through for our transgressions..."

The same with the prophecies of Zechariah chapter 12, verse 10, and chapter 13, verse 7, —of Israel, (the nation), 'Looking on Him whom they had pierced, and how they will mourn over Him.' And of, 'the Shepherd whom God the Father strikes with the sword.' One passage looks back to the cross, the other looks forward to the great revival that will occur at the end of the age, when God's people, the Jewish people are saved. 'They will look upon Him whom they have pierced, and they will mourn.' (Zac 12:10)—They'll repent.

Then the Lord's resurrection was predicted in Psalm 16, verse 10. His return and future reign on the earth are predicted in Psalm 2. All of the '*types*', as I mentioned earlier; the sacrifices and offerings of the Old Covenant are pictures of our Lord. Events, such as Abraham offering up Isaac, 'his son, his only son whom he loved' on Mount Moriah, (Gen 22:12), these picture and predict Christ's sufferings, and His death. Jonah's deliverance from the belly of the great fish, according to Jesus is a picture and prediction of His resurrection. And so on.

In fact, the plethora of prophecies, and types, and shadows, and all of that—and the unity of all of these predictions given and written over the centuries, the harmony of it all, the fulfillment accurately of it all, is indisputable proof of the divine authorship of this book.

Peter testifies to that authorship. He said that, "...the Spirit of Christ", (*which is the Holy Spirit*), "within them", (*the prophets*), "was indicating", (*these things*), "as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow." (vs11). In other words, 'The Holy Spirit was inspiring the prophets who wrote of Christ.'

Not all that they wrote was equally clear to the Old Testament prophets, so they made careful search of the Scriptures. But what is clear is that the Old Testament is about Christ; and as we look back on it we can see that clarity, the accuracy of the fulfillment of Christ, and His sufferings, and glories set forth in the Old Testament.

Now some dispute that today, I think unreasonably in light of the statements that Jesus made. But even the apostles did not understand these things clearly at all, at first, even though the Lord predicted His death and resurrection on numerous occasions—and told them about that. Peter himself rejected that.

You remember famously he made this great confession about Christ in Matthew chapter 16, verse 16, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And the Lord praised him for that. But then soon after, he resisted Jesus when Jesus told the disciples that He would be put to death. Peter took Him aside, and he rebuked Him. Jesus responded, "Get behind Me, Satan!" (Mat 16:23). That's strong.

Yet even when Jesus was put to death, no one understood—although they should have. When Jesus met the two disciples on the Emmaus road, they were in grief, they were in despair. They were walking home; it's after the resurrection, (and they've heard rumors of the resurrection), but they're in complete despair when, unknown to them, Jesus, the resurrected Christ, begins to walk with them and talk with them.

And finally He says in Luke chapter 24, verses 25 through 27, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and enter into His glory?" (*sufferings and glory*), "Then, beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures."

From the writings of Moses, from the Book of Genesis to the Book of Malachi, it's all about Christ; and He went through all of this, explaining these things to them.

He gave them a full understanding of biblical theology, in a two or three hour visit. And remember, they say, 'Did our hearts not burn within us, as He unfolded the Scriptures?' (Luke 24:32).

Well it can't be clearer than that: The Old Testament is about Christ. The disciples may not have understood that at first, (they didn't), but the ancient prophets did, and they searched their writings, and those of others, for Christ. Isaiah pondered his prophecies; and he pondered the writings of Moses. Jeremiah looked at his own writings as well—he looked through Isaiah and the others. They all did that.

But they must have been somewhat disappointed at what they discovered, because they learned that they were not predicting events that would occur in their generation, but for a later one. Verse 12, "It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look."

Those great prophets of the Old Testament; Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, were our servants—and the others as well. They were, 'serving us', Peter said. And, in a way, I think that shouldn't surprise us because everyone who has been given large responsibilities is a servant. It's not for themselves, it's for others; and that was true of the prophets.

Still, Peter's statement about the prophets being 'our servants' reminds us of how privileged we are to have received their ministry, and the fullness of it. 'The things' they desired to understand, we have experienced—and we possess them.

And *God* revealed it to us; that's Peter's meaning, the statement that he makes here that it was, 'announced through the preaching of the Gospel by the Holy Spirit.'

When God sent the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the church then, and down through the centuries, was and has been equipped, supernaturally, to reveal God's truth with power. That's why Peter, an unschooled fisherman, (a man who only a little

over a month earlier, had denied the Lord three times), understood and was able to preach things that the learned rabbis couldn't understand. He had the boldness to do it, he had the clarity to do it; he made known these things to the crowd.

When Peter made his great confession, that 'Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God', in Matthew 16, (vs16), the Lord said, "Flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven." (Mat 16:17). What has "been announced", (vs12), and what we know, is from God. Therefore, it is truth, the most important truth in all of human history: God's work of redemption, God's work of salvation.

No wonder the prophets were so interested in it; but they were not the only ones who are interested in 'this great salvation'—the angels are, too. They, 'long to look into these things', Peter said. (vs12). They have a desire to know them. The word, '*long*', '*long to*', is used in the New Testament of very strong desires, (both good and bad). In the case of the angels, they are pure desires—but very strong. They desire to look at what is happening in the church, to see the work of grace that God is doing among us.

The word, '*look*', is used in the *present* tense—so this is a present activity that they are engaged in now. They had anticipated the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament: They knew those; they searched for them and they saw this unfold—watched the Lord's ministry, even participated in it; played a part in His ministry. They watched the events at Pentecost, and they have watched the church down through the centuries. They are still doing that. —They're still watching; and they're watching us here, now, I think.

The word, *look*, means, 'to peek into a situation, as an outsider looking in'. In fact the word used here is used, for example in Genesis 26:8, of Abimelech leaning to a window and *looking* through the window at Isaac.—And then of Michal, David's wife, *looking* out the window and seeing him dancing before the ark. (2 Sam 6:16). So the image you get of the angels is, 'an outsider *looking* in on the church to study what is going on'—in here and on the earth...and what God is doing; the amazing things He's doing. They're fascinated with it.

In Ephesians chapter 3, verses 8 through 10, (it wasn't that long ago we looked at that passage), Paul wrote of his ministry, of making known 'the mystery of the ages, so that the wisdom of God might be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places' —to the angels.

What they hear from the pulpit, or in Sunday School classes, or on Wednesday night lessons, instructs them. What they see in our lives illustrates grace—it shows them what God is doing. And I can just imagine, as I ponder this, what they must have thought when they look and they see this man, John Newton, a slave trader made into a saint. Maybe they said, 'I remember his mother teaching him as a child, the Scriptures and the passages that he memorized. And then he goes off into such a horrible life. And look what God has done! That's amazing grace!'

And they can do that with so many examples. They look, and they see, to learn the Scriptures in one sense, but to then see the evidence of it and the great work of God in what He's done in your life, and the life of the saints. Now, that's an amazing thought. It really is, that here in this auditorium, we are under the gaze of the angels. We're like a theater in the round to them. That's sobering. And they're fascinated by it. Well, that's how great our salvation and all our spiritual blessings are.

But the world may think very little of what we have and what we are. In fact, it does think very little of it. The world thinks the Gospel is foolishness; and to the degree that the unregenerate of the world see us living the Christian life, and they hear us speaking about it, they think we are fools—which can tempt a person to feel foolish and maybe give up on the pilgrim life. That's the temptation that we're often faced with, what the Hebrews, (those to whom the author of Hebrews wrote his book), were faced with: 'Maybe we should go back to the synagogue, where life is easier.' Well, that's what we face, and is one of those temptations that tries to get us off the pilgrim's path.

But the reality is, we're not the fools—they're the fools. In 1 Corinthians chapter 2, verse 14, Paul said, they "cannot understand these things..." And I underline that they, "cannot!" —they do not have the ability to understand these things, "because

they are spiritually appraised", (ibid) —evaluated and understood; "these things" must be revealed to them by the Holy Spirit, (which happened to these saints to whom Peter was writing). They got a new heart: they got a new mind: they were born again. —It's supernatural. So it's outside of the world's experience; and as I said, 'foolishness to it'. But the prophets understood, and they envied us with a '*holy*' kind of envy.

The angels are fascinated with our salvation for it is the greatest possession of all things in life. And that leads to the application of these glorious truths by Peter in the next verses.

He has given facts, or doctrines; now he applies them in verse 13 with the word, "Therefore". "Therefore", 'a lot of this so great salvation, all the blessings you have received', "Therefore, prepare your minds for action..."; literally, "Gird up the loins of your mind." The picture Peter gave was a common one; (it would have been very common to those who lived in Asia Minor and throughout the ancient world), when men pulled their long robes up and wrapped them around their waist so that they could run, or they could do strenuous work. And with that, Peter was saying that, 'We are to be ready to act and respond to God with an instant obedience.'

And next he said, "Keep sober." Now that can mean avoid drunkenness—don't drink too much. The Romans were notorious for being gluttons and overindulging; and that's a possible way to understand it. But since the context here of Peter's counsel is the 'attitude of the mind', he was probably speaking of, 'sobriety of mind', and meant, 'Stay focused!' 'Get ready to work!' That's how he used the expression later in chapter 4, verse 7, of being, "...sober for the purpose of prayer". And also in chapter 5, verse 8, "Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion...". 'Therefore, have a clear mind!'

We can become mentally intoxicated on the things of the world; the mind is easily distracted; it wanders. I can remember, back in the mid '50s, my parents bought *The World Book*. I can remember the salesman, spreading things out on the living room floor, and saying, 'Here we have *The World Book*, all this knowledge!' Then, in the '70s,

they got the *Encyclopedia Britannica*; and so now I could look things up. And we'd look things up to prepare our lessons for school. But I just had the hardest time getting to the point, the subject I was looking for, because I'd see a picture here, then I'd see another picture, and I'd start look at... The mind is so easily distracted. That's a kind of prosaic illustration, but that's true of us in so many ways; our mind gets distracted. So we need to be mentally alert, because Christians can fall into sin when they are not; when they are careless.

"...fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.", Peter said. (vs13b). That's the advice given earlier in verses 3 through 5, when Peter reminded them of their "living hope", and "inheritance" that will be revealed, "in the last time" (vs5b)—when the Lord returns. And here he exhorts them to think about the future—to live with confident expectation of Christ's return and all that that will mean for them—all the blessings that they will receive at that moment, when it all comes together.

This is what gives encouragement when people are discouraged. And it helps us to reset our priorities, which can continually getting off base and off center. 'Life is short; Christ is coming again; live for what lasts. —Live for eternity!' I think that's what Peter is encouraging them with here.

According to Wayne Grudem, this expression, "fix your hope", forms a transition point for the rest of the letter. From verse 14 on, the letter is almost all moral commands and instruction on conduct. For Peter's readers to stay on the course of obedience, for them to stay in and on the pilgrim's path, it was necessary for them to have perspective—to stay focused on their future *hope* and the glories to come that are for us. —Great glories.

So after reminding them of their *hope* he says, "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which *were yours* in your ignorance," (vs14). Now that statement implies a lot: First, that Peter knew that such "lusts", such 'desires', such

'things' still exist in their hearts. That even though they were saved, they were still sinners and struggling with all kinds of temptations. That's what Paul describes in Romans chapter 7, (vs27), 'the law of sin in our members'. We will struggle with sin, and fail, and stumble along the way for the rest of our lives. There is no perfection in this life; and the pull of sin is strong.

But this verse, (vs14), also implies the ability to overcome and triumph. We have new natures, we have a new heart, we have new desires. And we are to consider ourselves, (as Paul told us to consider ourselves in Romans chapter 6, verse 11, which is the first command given in the Book of Romans), that we are, "dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus." The power of sin has been broken. It's still there and it still has its hold—but it doesn't control us. We have the Holy Spirit within us and, as Paul explains in Galatians 5, verse 17, 'The Spirit is set against the flesh.' He is overcoming it and sanctifying the believer, transforming the believer—which is to say, 'We are well equipped.' So while defeat will happen, we will have victories as well; and we can anticipate significant victory over the powers of evil, and the sins and the habits of our lives.

And again, as Peter reminded these saints, and us, we also have *hope*. We have, what he called earlier, "a living hope". (vs3). We are to consider it to be true; we are to consider the greatness of it; and that is a sanctifying thought, a sanctifying influence on our souls—a soul strengthening experience to think of the coming of the Lord and the greatness of our future, and the certainty of the victory.

That's the counsel that James also gave, (this isn't just Peter, this is 'the apostles'.) He wrote, in James 5, verse 8, "You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near." That meant, 'glory was coming'. And it's even nearer now than it was then; and therefore it should be on our hearts and minds continually. "The way to Zion," to quote Newton, "lies through many tribulations." That's the Christian life. —Life for the earnest, serious Christian.

But it's short. It ends either with the Lord's return; or with our death. But either way, it's glory that comes. Based on our hope and great salvation Peter wrote, 'be like obedient children'. (vs14). And then he gave the standard for obedience in verse 15; we are to be "like the Holy One." —We're to be like God; He's our standard. And there can't be a higher standard than that. He's described as the One who "called" them, (that is, the Father who called them), and He called them, called the saints, through the Holy Spirit. This is a reference to, 'the effectual call of the Spirit of God'. God draws us through the Spirit.

Peter mentions this "calling" four times in this letter—here, (verse 15 of chapter 1), and then in chapters 2, 3, and 5. So he comes back to this 'efficacious call', that draws us to the Lord, and in doing that, Peter continues to remind his readers that it was God who initiated their relationship and salvation. What a gift!

In chapter 2, verse 9, he wrote that, God called them, "out of darkness into His marvelous light." He called them out of ignorance; He called them out of paganism. They had no 'light', no *understanding* until God gave it.

Paul told that to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians chapter 4, verse 6. He found an analogy with Genesis chapter 1, verse 3, where God said, "Let there be light", and Paul told the Corinthians, 'God shown light into your hearts.' (2 Cor 4:6). That's God's work: He spoke the light of truth and knowledge into our hearts when we were in darkness, and darkness was in us—just as He spoke light into the universe when it was all chaos and black as night.

Now that is great theology—and great theology is always practical. It is here because it gives incentive to obey; that's how practical it is. That's the practicality of it: Since God did all of that for us when we were lost, what won't He do for us, now that we are found? He'll do everything for our good!

His providence works in our favor. The Holy Spirit supplies enabling grace, and strength to obey. "We are more than conquerors", Paul said in Romans 8:37. Now that gives incentive to obey. —And since He loved us and chose us when we were lost, now

that we're found, and we are His children, He will never lose us. He will certainly bring us into Zion, His glorious city.

Amazing Grace!

Through many dangers, toils and snares

I have already come,

'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,

And grace will lead me home.

Now that fact gives gratitude that moves us to obey.

But obeying means more than simply doing good things; it involves the mind as well—thinking rightly. We are to bring, “every thought captive”, (2 Cor 10:5), to the Lord; as well as every action. But our actions follow from our thoughts.

Holiness is basically separation; and we are to have minds that are separated from the world—but not detached from the needs and the people around us. We are, of course to be involved with them, involved with their lives. But our minds are to be separated from evil and from the mind of the world—the world view, ‘The Zeitgeist’ that has such an influence. Our mind is to be separated from that, and to be dedicated to righteousness.

And holiness is not only negative, it's also positive. It's not just, ‘We don't do those things!’ But since we have a new heart, we have new desires, and we are not only to desire to avoid sin, we are to ‘delight in God’. We are to delight in who He is; in His character and in His holiness. That's what should attract us; and that's what Peter meant when said, "...be holy yourselves also in all *your* behavior;", (vs15b).

And in verse 16, Peter gave the basis for that: "You shall be holy, for I am holy", (that's a quote of the LORD in Leviticus 11, verse 44). God's Word is our standard, because God is our authority.

"What is truth?" Pilate asked. (Jn 18:38). Now that's a major question today. What is right?, and, What is right behavior? Well, left to ourselves, we'll never know. But

we will always be right when we copy God and His revelation. It is the absolute. Where are absolutes to be found? Where is the foundation of our thinking to be found? It's here in the Word of God—and it is the basis for our thoughts and conduct.

Peter is not finished with doctrine; some of the most important is in the rest of this chapter. But in much of the letter, Peter will explain how we imitate God and how we go forward in the path of righteousness—even when the way to heaven lies through many tribulations.

But the end of that 'Way'—'the glory of heaven and the world to come, eternity', makes those tribulations seem small and easy in comparison. That's what Paul says in Romans 8. The future is great; the future is glorious—but so is the present. On John Newton's tombstone are the words,

'John Newton, once an infidel and libertine, a servant of slaves in Africa,
was, by the rich mercy of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,
preserved, restored, pardoned, and appointed to preach the faith
he had long labored to destroy.'

Now that, too, is a 'So Great Salvation!'

Do you long for that? If not, the light of God's grace has not entered into your heart—you're in darkness. Seek the Lord. Ask Him to shine truth into your heart.

The truth is: Christ is God's Son and our Savior; He died for sinners to save the lost; and all who trust in Him, all who trust in Him are saved, forgiven, and made heirs of a glorious, eternal future. So come to Christ.

And all of you who have, set your mind on '*the hope*' we have. Live for eternity, and for God's glory.

(Closing prayer) Father, we have considered, and we do consider, that the race we're in is not complete. We're in the midst of it and it's filled with trials and difficulties. But we will finish in Christ; and we do give all the praise to our Savior, to our Triune God.

We thank You for Your grace. Give us a greater appreciation of what that means, and what You've done for us, and what is yet to come—the glory that's ours through Christ alone.

Now the LORD bless you and keep you. The LORD make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The LORD lift up His countenance on you and give you peace. In Christ's name, Amen.

(End of Audio)