

Permanent Blessings

Theoretically, this part of the passage is called an **exordium**. In rhetorical writing it is sometimes simply viewed as the introduction. But that is a simple, basic idea, there can be and is in this case more to it.

In the *exordium*, the orator lays out the purpose of the discourse.

So if you want to get a run down of the document, read this. IN our writing systems we have conclusions that act as a review, so if you want to know what something is about you go to the end. IN the academic world, you have abstracts at the beginning of a essay or thesis that gives you the idea of what will be discussed. The exordium is kind of like that abstract but also like our review.

Ben Witherington puts it this way.

"An exordium can serve different kinds of functions in the differing species of rhetoric, but in all of them some of the major themes of the coming discourse will be announced in advance"

Why do I mention this? Because Peter really has set up the scene for us in this passage to whet our appetites for what is to come.

SO lets have a look. "

1 Peter 1:3-7 (ESV)

³ 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,

It starts with worship!

But a question: How do we bless God?

1. Recognise what He has done for you.

According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again.

2. Obedience

The second thing here in this verse is interesting

he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

Living hope.

I have mentioned before that hope means something different from what it meant years ago. Yet we still translate this greek word (elpo) as hope even though we see hope as a vague chance.

The word elpo realistically means to anticipate, usually with pleasure or expectation.

There is a huge difference, in fact hope from this perspective is much more assured rather than a vague chance.

Jesus causing us to be born again gives us the expectation of something. That expectation is expounded in the next verse.

⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.

Note here: The expectation is a place in heaven, a place in God's presence, a place of absolute joy, no pain, no suffering, you have probably heard the metaphors used.

Not only is it an expectation but notice it says an inheritance.

The idea of an inheritance is a possession given due to a relationship with the giver.

Being a heir is about having a certain relationship which entitles you to receive from that person. Usually it is due to a family kinship, but sometimes for other reasons.

It is due to you. That is the idea.

Hang on it is due to me, I didn't do anything to get it – yep, God gave you the rights, God gave you the relationship.

And notice the wording.

imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven

It is permanent, can't be taken away!!!!!!

⁵ who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

This is a pretty huge verse.

Let me paraphrase it a bit and personalise it.

We are being guarded and cared for by God's power through our faith in him to be saved and that will be shown in heaven.

Cool hey

Yep that's what the next verse says, well in different words!

⁶ In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials.

This is what we to look forward to even when times are tough. Notice it says grieved by various trials. I'm not going to lie to you. Life will be tough, it has been and probably will be again. In a variety of ways, notice it says various trial. Not just one thing but a number. Why do we have to put up with these trials and tough times? After all if God has elected us, chosen us and gas foreknowledge could He stop it?

Yep He could. Why doesn't He? Don't know! Well this verse gives us an inkling.

⁷ 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.

MMM, so the tested genuineness of your faith. It's kind of like God finding out who is serious about being His people!

Here's a thing, we all aspire to be God's people. We even aspire to be like our spiritual heroes, some in the bible like David, or Paul or even Peter himself. People who went through tough times and came out the other side still faithful. Maybe even some people in history like John Wesley, Martin Luther, George Muller. Yep great people, that's what I want to be like. Sorry but all of them went through the toughening up prices of tough times. That is why we admire them. Problem is we want to be spiritually great but without the effort. Time to recognise God wants to hone us, sharpen us, equip us and prepare us to be useful to Him and one of the ways He does it is to let us experience a real life. Pain and all.

And we do it! I know you people. I know some of the trials you go through or have been through. Guess what, God has used those experiences to help you be useful to Him. I mentioned to some one the other day I am a better pastor because I went through the pain of divorce, I am a better pastor because I have a hearing deficiency, I am a better pastor because of my bad back. These things God has used to help me understand other people with these issues. I didn't have fun going through it, but it has made me more useful to God.

Listen to this next bit.

⁸ 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.

Where does this takes us? Well, let's be realistic, each of us as Christians have achieved something difficult. We believe without seeing. Not only that our faith is developed and grows into love for God and for others so much we develop a contentedness ,or joy in life. This doesn't make sense to non Christians they can't see it, but hey it changes our lives and our eternity.

Look where Peter takes these thought processes.

⁹ obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

These things hone and develop our faith, yes test it and try it but, develop it in such a way that it becomes tangible and an assuring of the salvation process.

Question:

Is it faith that saves us or what that faith is in?

Listen up here: we have it in a nutshell.

¹⁰ Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully,

¹¹ inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.

The salvation thing is about Jesus

Notice:

1. Prophets talked about it
2. They said God's grace or favour would be given out (to you)
3. You are to search it out, work out what it's about.
4. Work out what the suffering Jesus went through is about.

I love this verse:

¹² It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

Revealed to them and us!

Revealed through those who preached to you

Revealed through the Holy Spirit.

This is cool, this is amazing. We know how to get saved! We know how to deal with the issues that keep us away from God. We are so precious and important to God, He has made Himself available to us.

Feeling important or special, you should. This is about you.

This is what the rest of the book will unpack in different ways.