

Lesson 2: The Living Hope (part 2)

A Series Thru First Peter

Salvation of the Soul

For grace-oriented Christians, it is often difficult to wrap our minds around the idea of earning anything from God. But Jesus expressly taught that believers, through their faithfulness, will be rewarded when he returns. (Matt. 16:24-27) Indeed, Jesus urged his disciples to lay up treasure in heaven. (Matt. 6:20) A key parable Jesus taught on this was the parable of the pounds. (Luke 19:11-27) Elsewhere Jesus talked about living a life rich toward God instead of rich toward the things of the world. (Luke 12:15-21) The apostle Paul also taught about believers and rewards for faithfulness. (2 Cor. 5:10) Paul's most comprehensive passage on this issue is in 1 Cor. 3:11-15. There, Paul describes the content of our lives being tested by fire to see what remains. This judgment contrasts living by faith and living for our own pursuits. The substance of our lives that persists through the fire represents that portion of our lives that will be rewarded. Jesus referred to this "salvation" as the salvation of our souls / lives. The "soul" here refers to our experience of life.

1. **The Salvation To Be Revealed In the Last Time (1:5, 9):** Critical to understanding what First Peter is all about is understanding his focus on a "salvation" that will not be revealed to us until Jesus returns. As we read verses 5 and 9 together, we note that (1) this "salvation" will be revealed to us "in the last time" and (2) it is referred to as the salvation of our souls. As we will see, this salvation includes the inheritance Peter introduced in verse 4.
 2. **Kept By God Through Faith (1:5):** The word in verse 5 usually translated as "kept," "guarded," or "protected" is the Greek *phroureō* and has the primary meaning of maintaining of watch or guard, for example, over the city gates.
 - The **most common understanding** of verse 5 is that Christians cannot lose their salvation
 - I take the keeping / guarding / protecting God provides is with a view to the salvation to be revealed when Jesus returns and is "through" our "faith." I understand Peter to be addressing God's provision during the trials of life to those who live faithfully so that they are able to endure.
 3. **Reason to Rejoice (1:6):** Peter told his readers they had reason to "greatly rejoice" in the salvation to be revealed in the future (their "living hope"). They had reason to rejoice even though during their lives they will face various trials.
 4. **Trials With Purpose (1:7):** Depending on your translation, verse 7 may refer to "the trial of your faith" or "the proven character of your faith." The Greek noun *dokimion* can refer to process of testing something with a view to approval, or to the result of the testing. Here, the correct translation is "proven character." The proven character of our FAITH RESPONSES to the trials of life — responses made on the basis of God's Word — are valuable, and it is these FAITH RESPONSES that lay up treasure in heaven. The treasure includes (1) praise or commendation from Jesus, (2) honor, meaning exaltation (possibly to a place of authority in the world to come), and (3) glory or reputation in recognition of a race run well, a life rich toward God.
 5. **Receiving the Outcome of Our Faith (1:9):** The word "receiving" or "attaining" is the Greek verb *komizō* and often means to receive something that is owed (like a wage). Peter's point is that his readers are presently being appropriated their inheritance. This is exactly what Jesus meant about laying up treasure in heaven today, treasure that will be revealed to us at a future time.