

## Our Faith Will Be Tested and Our Salvation was Revealed

### 1 Peter 1:6-12

1 Peter 1:6-9: *“In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,<sup>7</sup> that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,<sup>8</sup> whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,<sup>9</sup> receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.”*

#### Background Notes

The year 64AD is quite significant in Church history, because that was the year of the great fire in Rome. The Roman Emperor Nero said that the gods were upset because the Christians wouldn't worship them, and so Christians were blamed for the devastating fire. And thus the Roman persecutions began, and did not come to an end until the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

Christians were persecuted for their faith before 64AD, but the primary source of persecution was mainly Judaism. Before 64AD Christianity was not illegal in the Roman Empire – in fact, Christianity was generally considered a sect of Judaism. But after 64AD Christianity became illegal throughout the Roman Empire, and Christians were greatly persecuted. They were crucified, burned alive, and thrown into the lions.

1 Peter was written in about 64AD. The apostle Peter wrote this letter either just before the Roman persecutions began, or soon after. If before, then the Holy Spirit had Peter write this letter in anticipation of the great sufferings for the Christian faith that were to come in the near future. If he wrote this epistle after the Roman persecutions had begun, then it is obvious why so much discussion of suffering for the Christian is included in this letter to scattered believers.

The overall purpose of the First Epistle of Peter was to encourage Christians who were suffering for their faith. God had a purpose in allowing persecution of the early Christians, and the same is true today. Are you suffering right now because you are a Christian? If so, the study of Peter should be an encouragement to you. And if you know any fellow believers who are suffering for their faith in Christ, share with them the encouragement for suffering Christians in 1 Peter.

## Doctrinal Points

### 1. Our faith will be tested and proved.

Verses 6-7: *“In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”*

Our faith is precious to God. By earthly comparison, it's more precious than gold! Did you ever think of your faith in that way? Gold is a very valuable material, and it is one of the most indestructible materials on earth. Fire doesn't destroy gold - in fact, fire purifies gold and proves that it's gold. And your Christian faith is more precious than gold to God.

But your faith will be tested and proved in many big and small ways. Perhaps the test will be a huge drop in the stock market, or a diagnosis of terminal illness, or a critic who mocks and tries to tear down your faith. If your faith is tested at work or school, would you conceal your faith to get a promotion or a better grade? If your Christian faith is known, it will be tested in some way. Your faith may be tested at church. If church decisions don't go your way, are you willing to be humble - to eat your pride? That's a test. Are you willing to forgive someone who has wronged you? That's a test.

On and on we could go. These, and many more big or small examples, may all be tests of our faith. But tests of our faith are not just everyday problems, like clogged drains or flat tires. Everyone has problems - believers and unbelievers - but the subject here is more than everyday problems.

The subject here is ***trials that are a test of our Christian faith***. Why does God allow these tests of our faith? Verse 7 tells us why: *“That the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”*

Just as a precious metal is refined by fire, our faith is refined and purified when it is tested. Impurities are burned away. Through the fire of tests and trials, our faith is purified. We're freed up!

Remember the three faithful Jews who were thrown into a fiery furnace in Daniel 3? The ropes that bound them were burned away, and they were free to walk with the Lord – even in the midst of the fire! Do you see the picture there? When the dross or impurities in our lives are burned away, we're free to walk with the Lord, even in the midst of the fiery trial!

Furthermore, when our faith has passed the test and proved to be genuine, it results in praise and glory and honor when the Lord returns. Who will receive “praise and honor and glory” in that day? Will we - or will the Lord? Ultimately, all praise and glory and honor belongs to the Lord - but when the Lord returns, if our faith has been proved genuine, He will give praise and honor and glory to us! Romans 8:17 says, *“If we suffer with Him, we will also be glorified together.”* And we will hear the Lord say to us, *“Well done, good and faithful servant,”* (Matthew 25:21). Our faith will be tested and proved.

## 2. Our faith is focused in a Person.

Verses 8-9: *“Whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.”*

Verses 8-9 remind us that our Christian faith is not based on facts alone. It is placed in a **Person**, the Lord Jesus Christ! The Christian faith is a personal relationship with Christ. We can't see Him now, but we know Him now! And we can experience the glorious joy that only He can give!

Have you experienced that joy? You can! It's available for every believer - and that joy doesn't depend on your circumstances. It's guaranteed as a benefit of the salvation of your soul (v9). Our faith is focused in a Person.

## 3. Our faith was revealed to the prophets.

Verses 10-12: *“Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.”*

The coming of Christ and the salvation that we have by faith in Him was not something that came about suddenly! No, it was revealed to the Old Testament prophets, and foretold by the Old Testament prophets. The prophets didn't fully comprehend all that they wrote about, but they certainly knew the Messiah was coming to bring salvation.

They also knew that Messiah would have to suffer before He was glorified in order to obtain this salvation for us (v11).

And they knew that they were not serving themselves, but some special people. They were ministering to future believers who would come to know Christ (v12). Our faith was revealed beforehand to the prophets.

So in 1 Peter 1:6-12 we've seen three great truths about the Christian faith:

- It will be tested and proved.
- It is focused in a Person.
- It was revealed beforehand to the prophets.

## Practical Application

### Thank the Lord that you are not an angel!

Would you like to be an angel, rather than a human? Just think. If you were an angel, you wouldn't have any financial problems. If you were an angel, you wouldn't age! If you were an angel, you wouldn't be bound by gravity. And on and on we could go.

But in spite of all the advantages, I'm glad that I'm not an angel! Angels are wonderful and powerful spirit beings that God has created to serve His people (Hebrews 1:14). And the holy angels love to look into the things of God (v12). They desire to learn more about the amazing wisdom of God. Ephesians 3:10 says, "*Through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.*" The angels learn, and wonder, and give praise.

But angels will never know the inexpressible and glorious joy that we will experience forever because of our salvation (v8). And there is no plan of salvation for the fallen angels. Hebrews 2:16 says, "*For indeed He [God] does not give aid [help] to angels, but He does give aid [help] to the seed of Abraham.*" There is a wonderful plan of salvation for us, but there is no plan of salvation for the fallen angels.

So - don't forget to thank the Lord that you are **not** an angel!