

All the Difference

a Bible study note from Wayne Braudrick

Joy

Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls. (1 Peter 1:8-9 NIV)

Salvation brings joy inexpressible and glorious. This mustn't be understated. Inexpressible & glorious joy is ours in what God has provided for us! I pray we realize how radical that is. In every age of history, the Christian's joy has shone in dazzling contrast to the gloomy backdrop of life on earth. In our heavily secularized age, this distinction is especially marked, as Larry Folkemer explains:

Secularism is a radical heresy. In the final analysis it is self-defeating. It makes the world self-contained, self-sufficient, an end in itself. It closes in the world and stifles it. It ends up in frustration and despair. Secularism...fails to lead humanity to the living springs of its being, its freedom, namely, God. It boxes the person in the world. It traps the person.ⁱ

Understanding our great salvation:

1 Peter 1 is concerned that we understand the awesome blessing we have received in salvation through Jesus Christ. Similarly, the author of the book of Hebrews emphasizes the import of grasping the greatness of our salvation:

The message God delivered through angels has always proved true, and the people were punished for every violation of the law and every act of disobedience. What makes us think that we can escape if we are indifferent to this great salvation that was announced by the Lord Jesus himself? (Hebrews 2:2-3 NLT)

I rather enjoy how Robert Leighton summarized this scriptural issue. Over 150 years ago, Dr. Leighton wrote:

It is the ignorance, or at least the inconsideration of Divine things, that makes earthly things, whether good or evil, appear great in our eyes; therefore the Apostle [Peter's] great aim is, by representing the certainty and excellency of the belief and hope of Christians to his afflicted brethren, to strengthen their minds against all discouragements and oppositions; that they may account nothing too hard to do or suffer for so high a cause and so happy an end.ⁱⁱ

Christianity as culmination of prophecy

Isaiah said this about the Messiah:

"I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, As a light to the nations." (Is. 42:6 NASB)

Then, Simeon confirmed that Jesus fulfilled that prophecy. He held the infant Jesus and said:

*“For my eyes have seen your salvation [Sovereign God],
Which you have prepared in the sight of all people,
A light for revelation to the Gentiles
And for glory to your people Israel.” (Luke 2:30-32 NIV)*

Jesus the Messiah then applied this and described how He would be a light to all the world – through His church. He gathered His people on a hill and told them:

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do men light a lamp, and put it under the peck-measure, but on the lampstand; and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:14-16 NASB)

See how this works? The prophets foretold the coming of God’s grace; how it would light up the entire world. Then Jesus shows how this comes together in His church. This becomes an important background for a key point in Peter’s letter: Peter stresses that it is a human responsibility to share the good news of this great salvation.

May God bless each of us in joy, understanding, and sharing of our great salvation!

God bless,
Wayne

Rev. Dr. Michael Wayne Braudrick | Senior Pastor | [Frisco Bible Church](http://www.friscobible.com) | 972.335.8150 | www.friscobible.com

“The goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith.” I Timothy 1:5
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ⁱ Lawrence D. Folkemer, *No Mere Dialogue: Engaging World Religions*, p. 29-30. (Note: Dr. Folkemer, well into his nineties, is not only an accomplished theologian, he is an astute baseball fan. Last year we spent a wonderful early evening talking over tea – and baseball happily dominated the conversation.)

ⁱⁱ Robert Leighton, *Commentary on First Peter*, p. 62 Kregel 1972 ed. (Note: I know the run-on 18th c. style is a beating, but there are great truths there. Just insert an occasional mental period and you’ll be blessed by the thought.)