

Spiritual Growth Through Understanding Obedience
I Peter 1:16,17

Introduction

- A. The greatness of salvation leads us to the realization that some serious obligations are also involved. As in other areas of life everything of value is in some manner a responsibility.
- B. Peter is writing to suffering believers. Too often during a time of trial we tend to neglect our obligations.

I. The Grace of God in the Believer's Salvation, I Peter 1:3-2:10.

- A. The description of salvation, Vs 3-5.
 - B. The joy of salvation, Vs 6-9.
 - C. The greatness of salvation, Vs 10-12.
 - D. The responsibility of salvation, Vs 13-2:3.
- 1. The responsibility of dedication, V13.
 - 2. The responsibility of holiness, Vs 14,15.
 - 3. The Biblical reasons for obeying God, Vs 16,17.

- a. Because of divine revelation, V16A. *Because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy.*

The first reason why we should obey God is due to the fact that we have been given the standard. One of the greatest marvels of all time is that God has revealed Himself to us. We have His Word in written form. We may not live as though God has not spoken.

- b. Because of the teaching of divine revelation, V16B. . . . *Be ye holy, for I am holy.*

Peter's second reason has to do with what God has said to us. We need not guess -- the basic responsibility is clear. To be holy means a separation from all sin and the practice of truth, love, and righteousness -- by faith and love. All of life is included in these topics. There is a right and a wrong way of living -- and we must do what is right.

- c. Because of personal accountability to God, V17.

And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.

1. The basis of our accountability. *And if ye call on the Father*

The basis of our accountability is found in the salvation God has established with us in His mercy and grace. We have been brought into a living relationship with Him so that we can call Him "Father." One important facet of this relationship is His love for us. If God did not hold us accountable, it would show us that He did not love us. No Father, worthy of that name, would say to a child, "I don't care what you do."

On the other hand, because of the mercy and grace He has shown to us in salvation – the believer is glad to accept accountability. We owe Him everything. It is fully in harmony with love as well as gratitude to know we will give an account to God for every facet of our life.

2. The character of our accountability. . . . *Who without respect of persons . . .*

Because our Heavenly Father is holy He is perfectly just and righteous. This is the reason He does not respect persons in regard to accountability. This is an area where each of us has a tendency to show favoritism -- not with God. He knows our hearts, our motives, and all the reasons behind our actions. When we fail to do His will, whether through neglect or rebellion we will have to give an account. Every Christian, now and then, believes he is an exception to the Biblical standards. This is an error we may not accept.

3. The standard of our accountability . . . *judgeth according to every man's work.*

Every person, believer as well as unbeliever, will have to give an account to God on the basis of how they have lived. This does not mean that we gain or lose heaven by our works. What Peter is speaking of is the amount of reward the Christian will receive in heaven (Romans 14:11,12; II Corinthians 5:10) or the amount of judgment the non-Christian will receive in hell (Matthew 11:20-24; Revelation 20:11-15). This subject reminds us that how we live makes a difference. We are under obligation to obey God.

4. The exhortation related to our accountability . . . *pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.*

The word "fear" in this passage can be translated "reverence." We are to live our daily lives with a sense of respect for God and His will. He is our Heavenly Father and He seeks our good. To enable us to be the kind of persons we should be and to live the life we should live -- He has given us His Word. We must treat His word with "reverence" or "respect" by humility and obedience. We all are afraid of many things -- this subject of accountability should lead us to true reverence.

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