# DESTINY BULLETIN

A commentary sent to the supporters of the ministry of Christian Destiny.

Dear "Special Friend" of Christian Destiny,

February 2012

#### HARNESSING YOUR SPIRITUAL POWER

#### **Envy of the Angels (1 Peter 1)**

There is a very special group of beings, unique in all the universe, that has been given Divine assurance of a bright and blessed future. Those beings are the Christians, the Body of Jesus Christ. In his first Epistle, the Apostle Peter underscores some of the marvelous promises that belong to Christians, reaching from this world into the eternities to come. As Christians, it is a wonderful thing to have an assured future and to know where we are going in life!

Do you want excitement? Do you want a great adventure? Do you want to have a future that's more wonderful than can be described in any kind of human words? Pay attention to what the Apostle Peter says in his first book, which consists of five chapters. When Peter gets through presenting the marvels of salvation to us, I'm sure that you and I will be most impressed. It is, after all, the greatest thing in all the world to be a creature of the eternities with a destiny that goes beyond the grave!

Let's participate in that great adventure by looking first in Peter's first chapter. This is a terrific chapter. It was, I think, the first chapter in the Scripture that I memorized, and it was like opening up a treasure chest! I was stunned by all that it would say to me. I challenge you to think deeply about what these things mean to you, as well!

#### **Unconditional Election?**

First of all, Peter wants to discuss an issue that is the cause of concern among many people today. That issue deals with a thing called unconditional election.

"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the sojourners scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied" (1 Peter 1:1-2).

Right off the bat, he raises the question of election, and if election is unconditional. We have going in the world today several systems of theology that talk about election, predestination, salvation, the basis of salvation, and all of this. One of the most animated of these discussions centers on this matter of election. If there is election, is there free will? Are we truly free moral agencies, or are we just automatons? Is this world a place of choice, or is it just God's little machine shop?

Now, before we spin off in a thousand different directions, please note that Peter gives us a very clear answer. Election is not unconditional. Peter says election is "according to the foreknowledge of God." Nothing with conditions is unconditional. So, if election is not unconditional, what are the conditions which determine it? Answer - the foreknowledge of God.

Paul says in Romans Chapter 8 that we are predestinated, having been chosen and

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foreknown by God, unto several things. How does that actually work? Well, God, being One who knows everything, knows in advance what we will do about salvation. He sees that we will trust Christ as personal Savior, and on the basis of our choice, believing on the work of Christ on the cross, we become elected. But unto what are we elected? Salvation? No! We are not saved by election, but rather, we are saved by faith in the finished work of Christ on the cross. We are elected unto obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Paul says we are elected, we are predestinated, "to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Romans 8:29).

So when you believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and trust God's Son as personal Savior, election comes to pass in your life, and election produces the certainty of salvation. It is the strong argument in the New Testament for what Christians have come to call "eternal security." You are instantly and eternally saved when you come to Christ, but election is where God moves in to determine that there is coming a day, when as a result of all the experiences of life, you will be "conformed to the image of His Son" What is God's intention in salvation? It is to make you like Christ.

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2).

And the likeness of Jesus Christ will be made real in our lives by the circumstances of life. So, my suggestion: whenever you face problems or difficulties, don't bring your salvation in question. But rather say, "I'm elected to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. What, therefore, shall I do to cooperate in that inevitable program that God will bring to pass for me?"

So as a Christian, do not resent the workings of God. That produces bitterness and many problems in life. But whatever may be the difficulties, know that by election, you are certain to be in heaven's glory, that you are certain especially to be conformed to the image of Christ.

Election is not unconditional. It is conditioned on the foreknowledge of God, foreknowledge that we will receive Christ as personal Savior.

#### **Incorruptible Inheritance**

Now, that having been said, think together for just a moment about that incorruptible inheritance that becomes ours. The Scripture says that we are saved: "To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1:4).

The Bible uses human inheritance as an illustration of our Divine inheritance. But a Divine inheritance goes way beyond anything we can know in this world. Whatever we get by way of a human inheritance will surely pass away. But our Divine inheritance is made up of things that are "incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away." You can't lose it. It is reserved in heaven for you.

So, from now on, when you think about your salvation, don't think of it only in terms of this life, which will pass. Think of it as a massive, marvelous, permanent thing that is yours, and that will continue to be yours forever!

Do you want the cure for anxiety? Think of the eternal riches you have in the Lord. You're going to see those eternal riches in person-they are reserved in heaven for you. What a day that will be, when you realize how rich you really are, and have been all of the time! An eternal inheritance is yours that is incorruptible and undefiled.

#### **Victory over Adversity**

Let's face the fact that in this world, we all face adversity. Must Christians continue to face adversity? Yes, we must, but we have also been given the means to triumph over it. The Scripture says: "Wherein you greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, you are in heaviness through manifold trials: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:6-7).

There will come, inevitably, circumstances in your life that will produce questions: "Am I really a Christian? Is God really for me?" You can overcome every one of those trials by remembering that that trial is ordained of God, more precious than gold that passes away; it is of immense value.

Why is that the case? Trials in this world are allowed, in fact they are ordained of God. They develop within us a sense of appreciation of perfection, produce within us whatever it takes to bear the burdens of life, and forge those qualities that will make us valued contributors to what heaven really is.

One day, this whole world is going to pass away. All that will remain of our lives will be what we sent ahead, and what we will continue to accomplish in heaven. These marvelous accomplishments will be shaped by how we met the challenges of this life, and overcame the trials of our faith.

#### **Prophesied Salvation**

When thinking about history, and what life is all about, the Bible reveals secrets we could not otherwise have known. One of these, is the whole matter of salvation prophesied in the Old Testament. The way it worked out is very interesting.

"Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you, Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into" (1 Peter 1:9-12).

Here we have a remarkable picture. The prophets of the Old Testament, speaking by Divine inspiration ("All scripture is given by inspiration of God" 2 Timothy 3:16), found themselves writing about a glorious day to come, the day of salvation for mankind. Yet they were astonished, because they didn't themselves understand what that was all about. They could see the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow, but they could not see that valley in between, which is the Church Age, in which salvation by grace would be preached unto the whole world.

The details surrounding our salvation are so spectacular, that even the angels desire to look into them. There's an old song that says, "Angels never felt the joy that our salvation brings." Why? Because angels do not receive salvation from sin. They are kept inviolate by God. Therefore, they could not personally experience redemption, the cleansing in the blood of Jesus Christ that brings joy unspeakable and full of glory. Even to this day, they look with astonishment at the marvelous rejoicing of Christians, and stand in awe of what God has done for us. The gift of salvation through faith alone, and all that it entails, has made us the envy of the angels.

#### **The Glory That Follows**

The angels were able to see the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that would follow. But then God had to reveal to them something special: "Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into" (1 Peter 1:12).

Yes, they are astonished as they look over the battlements of heaven and see what is happening now. The glory that has come to us as a result of the finished work of Christ on Calvary's cross, will only be finally and fully revealed in the wideness of eternity. That glory will be multiplied in the lives and ministry of the Church, which has been given the unspeakable privilege of preaching the Gospel message to the world.

#### **The Incorruptible Nature**

Now, here's how to understand life. Here's what God says what you ought to think about this world, and about the world to come. We are "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which lives and abides forever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower thereof falls away: But the word of the Lord endures forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Peter 1:23-25).

First of all, notice that the Scripture says that we Christian are "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which lives and abides forever." Strangely enough, there are lots of people who believe that being Born Again is to be born of corruptible seed. In other words, you can lose your salvation. It doesn't last. It's only a temporary thing. Or it's dependent upon the whims of human will once you have come to know Christ. Or, you are obligated to do a certain amount of works, or a certain amount of giving, or a certain amount of positive response to the will of God, in order to be saved.

None of these propositions are true. Why? Because the seed which has come to pass within us, being Born Again, is incorruptible. It cannot be corrupted by anything. Therefore, when you know that you know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, you have salvation that will never fade away, "reserved in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1:4), and you are born of seed that will last forever and forever.

Do you know why we should do what we do in our lives for God? Because the Bible tells us we should do it. Do you know why we should be strong in the Lord? Because it is written to be strong in the Lord. And why should we be holy? Because it is practical, or because it is fun, or because an alternative course will be unfortunate? No. "Because it is written, be ye holy; for I am holy." The answer to every positive argument in life is, "Because it is written." Your soul will stand strong, and your life will be valuable to God, and you'll be a resolute conqueror for the Savior, when the basis of your life is, "Because it is written." Make that the bottom line of your life, and you'll never go wrong.

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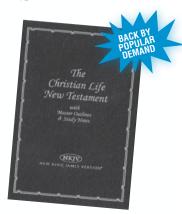
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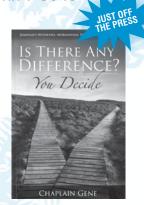
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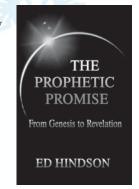


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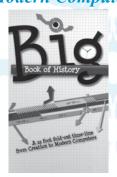
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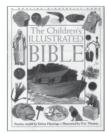


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