

Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc.

1789 Iglehart Ave St. Paul, MN 55104-5215 www.dtminc.org Ph. (651) 283-0568

Hope In God For Freedom From Inherited Bondage

by Dan Trygg

“Consequently, girding-up the loins of your perception, being clear-headed, completely hope upon the grace being brought to y'all in revelation of Jesus [the] Anointed-King. ¹⁴ As children of obedience (hearing-under), not conforming (for yourselves) to the former 'in-your-ignorance' lusts, ¹⁵ rather, according to the Holy One calling y'all, also come-to-be yourselves holy ones in all your habitual-conduct; ¹⁶ because it has been written, 'Be set-apart-ones, because I am set-apart.' ¹⁷ And, if y'all call upon as Father the One judging without-partiality according to the work of each person, in fearful-awe habitually-conduct the time of your temporary-stay-among-strangers; ¹⁸ observing that not with perishable things, like silver or gold, were you set-free-by-a-price out-from the profitless habit-patterns-of-life given-to-you-from-previous-generations, ¹⁹ rather with precious blood of [the] Anointed-King, *offered* like that of an unblemished and unstained sacrificial-lamb. ²⁰ *This redemptive offering*, having been foreknown from the foundation of the world, but being made visible upon the last of the times on account of y'all, ²¹ the ones by means of Him believers toward God, the One raising Him out-from the corpses and giving glory to Him, so that the trust and hope of y'all to be toward God. ”

I Pet. 1:13-21

Sometimes when we try to read a passage in the Bible, it can seem to be so tangled, twisted and intertwined that we have difficulty really understanding what is being said. One of the reasons why the sentence structure can seem so frustrating is that our Bibles are translations from another language. The rules and peculiarities of the biblical languages are different than English, and sometimes it is difficult to carry these over into our language, and not end up with some confusion. The Greek of the NT is notorious for being able to use participles and dependent clauses which, though they may be clear in the Greek language system, end up being a complicated jumble of phrases in English. We really need to slow down and comb carefully through what has been written, in order to sort it all out.

For example, allow me to make some observations about this passage. The first thing I notice is that we **have a "hope sandwich" in this paragraph**. In the first sentence, Peter commands us to "hope completely" upon God's grace in Christ. The closing sentence brings us back to the intent or result of this grace, i.e., that we might trust and hope in God. **Hope is an *expectation of some kind, an anticipation that something can or will take place***. To hope in God, or His grace revealed in Jesus, is to anticipate and expect something from Him. **Hope grows into trust, when the desire and expectation is accepted as being actual and definite**, and steps are taken in order to obtain what is anticipated, or actions are initiated which *depend on* the reliability of the expectation to come to pass in order for one's plans to succeed. Hope is primarily an emotional/mental anticipation. Faith or trust is a mental/volitional action or state of mind. When we “place our hope” on something or someone, we are moving beyond emotion or expectation to a choice, and we begin to step into faith. Our *actions* will show if our faith is genuine, or not. If we live consistently with our hope, then we have trusted in it. If not, then our so-called faith is not a firm conviction. We are merely engaging in wishful thinking, not expressing genuine trust.

Well, what is it that we are to be expecting from God? What are we to be anticipating the revelation of His grace to do for us? The paragraph indicates that God has provided freedom from past-rooted bondage. There are two areas delineated for which we are to anticipate help from God: **(1.) Freedom from former lusts; and (2.) Freedom from inherited patterns of living**. It is important to see that these are not the same, though they can be intertwined.

The word translated as "**lust**" **simply indicates strong desires**. Our word, lust, is emotionally loaded, carrying the message that these strong desires are "evil". The Greek word does not necessarily carry that same flavor. The strong desires Peter mentions may be obviously evil, or apparently wholesome and culturally accepted. The point Peter is making is that these strong desires, longings, wants, or attractions were ones that *had been established* in our lives *before* we were walking with Christ. **They are part of our B.C. value system, and they have a tendency to steer us, or draw us, into an old pre-Christian way of living life**. We need to especially be on our guard against this “conforming influence from within”, specifically because it has so deeply penetrated our inner programming that *it seems normal*. While the “conforming influence” that the apostle Paul addresses in Rom. 12:2 is an ongoing *exterior* pressure from the people and society around us, this “conforming influence from within” *has been programmed into our inner guidance system* through messages from society, friends, family, as well as through personal perceptions, preferences and choices. The important thing to see is that **these strong desires can still affect us as subtle attractions toward things that are untimely, unhealthy, vain or out of God's will**, in some way or another. We must be mentally alert, ready to respond to any insight into ourselves from God, or we will tend to continue to pursue these empty, old attractions from our former world view. If we are to succeed at becoming

holy ones, ...ones "set apart from what is common, set apart for a special purpose" ..., we must change the inner attractions that motivate our choices and behaviors.

The second area of freedom has to do with habitual patterns of behavior. The Greek word, *anastrophē*, is a compound word originally meaning to "turn again", implying repetitive, habitual behavior. By the time of the NT, it meant "habitual conduct, manner of life, or patterns of living". This word occurs three times in this paragraph, in verses 15,17 (verbal form), and 18. The first two occurrences are about establishing patterns of living that are holy. If we are to be "holy ones", then we must be "holy" in all our habitual behavior. Again, the word "holy" means "separated from what is common, or every day, and set apart for special use". It means to be dedicated or consecrated for a special purpose, and implies special treatment, as well. So, **if we are to be specially devoted to God, ...somehow set apart** from the lifestyle of the typical person who does *not* know God..., **how will that be reflected in the daily, habitual conduct of our lives?** What does it mean when it says, "with fearful-awe habitually-conduct the time of your sojourn"? What would *that* look like? Finally, note that Peter says we *have been* purchased for freedom from the futile habitual patterns of life which have been handed down to us by our forebears. There *are* life patterns that have been given to us that are unhealthy, profitless, and dysfunctional. God paid the price for our freedom by sending Jesus to die for us. The fact that we are at all aware of this is the beginning of our discovery of freedom. We must stop living according to this old behavioral programming. We must discover healthy, godly ways of living that can become new habits in living life. We do not have to wait to "get set free". We must by faith accept the freedom Christ has purchased, and stop going down old familiar paths. These old habits are deeply imbedded, and often it is difficult to experientially break the cycle and truly establish new patterns.

We have seen in our study of II Cor. 10:4,5 that **the strongholds of spiritual bondage in our lives have been built on lies, reasonings, and thoughts that keep us from an experiential knowledge of God.** These either directly oppose the truth about God in our lives, or they are ways that short-circuit the possibility of experiencing God's working, because we take matters into our own hands or look somewhere else for the answer to our felt-needs. This is exactly what Peter is describing here in this passage, and what Paul wrote about in Eph. 4:17-19. These old patterns of thought and behavior, these old misguided desires and attractions, direct us away from God to seek our own solutions. In doing so, we do not experience the provision of God, or see His deliverance, and we remain stuck in our old ways. These old patterns produce the same results as they always did. They never worked before, and they won't work, now. Furthermore, they give the enemy an opportunity to "work us over", because we blindly follow the same old lures and step into the same old traps we did before, ...or some new variation with which he entices us.

The good news, however, is that the freedom is paid for. The "jig is up", so to speak. The enemy has been stripped of any legal authority over us, because of our joint death and resurrection with Christ (Col. 1:8-15). Any claims of ownership or any resistance is all bluff. He can posture, and fume, even harass and inflict pain upon us, but he no longer owns us, and eventually the light of the kingdom of God will drive out the prince of darkness. **Satan's resistance can be real, but he is no match for Yahweh, Lord of Armies.** What remains for us is, like Joshua and the armies of Israel, to go up to "possess the land" which Christ has given to us (e.g., Josh. 8:18-22). **There is no question as to the outcome, if we will persevere.** On the other hand, these admonitions, and that of the apostle Paul in Eph. 4:17-19, would not be there except **there is a need for our involvement in this process.** Without our attention and effort, we will continue along the old familiar paths. **Change will not come without choice.** The overcomers in Rev. 12:11 were victorious because of the blood of the Lamb, because of the word of their own testimony, and because they did not esteem highly their natural life as far as death. What does this mean? They kept returning to the cross. They were willing to give themselves entirely, even to the point of death, for the kingdom of God. They were truly sold out to Jesus, dedicated and consecrated to Him. They chose to be faithful to Him in spite of all else. They could not be dislodged from their place of hope (Col. 1:23). They could not be lured or enticed away, nor could they be harassed, driven or beaten away. They knew that they were not their own, they had been bought with a price (I Cor. 6:19,20). They were willing to be spent as God decided, though it may mean humble service, or even imprisonment and suffering. **They chose to give themselves to God without qualification.** They, like Jesus, kept entrusting themselves to Him who judges righteously (I Pet. 2:21-23). As a result, the enemy totally lost his grip over them, and was powerless to hold them in bondage.

Let's step back and get the big picture again. There are **only three imperatives in these nine verses:** (1.) **Hope** in God's grace; (2.) **Become**, or "come to be" holy ones in *all* your conduct; and, (3.) **Habitually-live** the time of your sojourn in fearful-awe. Why in fearful-awe? Because the impartial Judge of all the earth has become your Father, who loves you and has paid such an incredible price for your freedom. He determined to do this before the world was, and has openly done it now, so that your trust and your hope might be in Him.