

Feed My Sheep: 1 & 2 Peter

Jesus in the Writings of Peter

Lesson #8 for May 20, 2017

Scriptures: 1 Peter 1:18-19; Colossians 1:13-14; Isaiah 53:1-12; John 11:25; Psalm 18:50; 2 Peter 1:1.

1. First Peter speaks a great deal about Jesus. Peter talked about Jesus's life, His suffering, His dying as our sacrifice, His resurrection, and His ascension. That certainly suggests that Peter was focusing on Jesus as our salvation in this short book. Implied by his words are the ideas that Jesus is, in fact: 1) Divine; 2) A Being who came in human flesh; 3) One who lived and died to provide the means by which we can be saved; and 4) The One who came to answer the most important questions in the great controversy over God's character and His government. The clearest evidence of the truth about God's character and government is revealed in the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ because He is God.
2. If you were to describe the central theme of the Bible, what would you say? Is it primarily about how God saves you and me? Certainly, it does talk about that; however, there is much more.

Through the plan of salvation, a larger purpose is to be wrought out even than the salvation of man and the redemption of the earth. Through the revelation of the character of God in Christ, the beneficence of the divine government would be manifested before the universe, the charge of Satan refuted, the nature and result of sin made plain, and the perpetuity of the law fully demonstrated.—Ellen G. White, *The Signs of the Times*,* February 13, 1893, par. 12; *Ibid.*,* December 22, 1914, par. 4; *The Messenger** June 7, 1893, par. 5; *Bible Echoes*,* July 15, 1893, par. 3; *That I May Know Him** 366.4.

But the plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; but **it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe.** To this result of His great sacrifice—its influence upon the intelligences of other worlds, as well as upon man—the Saviour looked forward when just before His crucifixion He said: “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me.” John 12:31, 32. The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, but before all the universe it would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan. It would establish the perpetuity of the law of God and would reveal the nature and the results of sin.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets** 68.2-69.0 (1890); *Reflecting Christ** 50.3 (1985). [Bold type is added.]

3. Read 1 Peter 1:18-19 and Colossians 1:13-14. How does the sacrifice of Christ set us free? The process of redemption or ransom is something the Bible speaks about in considerable detail. (See 1 Peter 1:18-19; Exodus 34:19-20; Leviticus 25:25-26,47-49.) Jesus is spoken of as the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world. Those were the words of John the Baptist at his first meeting with Jesus. (John 1:29,35) But, how does that actually work? Remember that Hebrews 10:1-4 suggests that the sacrificial animals in the Old Testament were at best only a shadow or a faint outline of God's plan of salvation; in fact, “...the blood of bulls and goats can never take away sins.” (Hebrews 10:4, *GNB**) And that point is repeated in verse 11 (*GNB**): “Every Jewish priest performs his services every day and offers the same sacrifices many times; but these sacrifices can never take away sins.”
4. So, why does the sacrificial death of Jesus “buy us back from sin”? Is the blood of Jesus some

kind of payment? Could we just claim it without understanding it? Or, are we supposed to learn something really important from His sacrificial death? What might that be? God had said that sin leads to death. (Genesis 2:17) Satan, speaking through the serpent, told Eve that God was lying. (See Genesis 3:1-4.) So, how would we determine who is telling us the truth? If we recognize that Jesus did not die of blood loss and that He did not die of the beatings or the crucifixion, but instead, He died of a “broken heart” (Is that a failure of all metabolic processes due to separation from God?) as a result of sin, thus demonstrating the deadly effects of rebellion against God, then it would be clear to us why this sacrificial death of Christ can win us back to God. That is the theme which is found in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. We need to dig deeper in God’s holy Word to understand these issues.

None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great [594] conflict.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 593.2.

5. So, what can we learn from the substitutionary sacrifice of animals in the times of the Old Testament? Sinners would bring a lamb without blemish and lay their hands on that animal, (Leviticus 4:32-33) confess their sins, and then cut its throat. The blood was carried into the courtyard and smeared on the altar or poured out at its base. Thus, in symbol, the sins of the sinner were transferred to the sanctuary. Later, on the Day of Atonement, those sins were symbolically removed from the sanctuary and placed on the head of the scapegoat which was taken far away and left to die in the wilderness. Thus, people were taught that God had set up a plan for removing their/our sins far away from them/us, forever.

What does the fact that our hope of salvation exists only in a substitute punished in our place teach us about our utter dependence upon God?—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sunday, May 14.

6. What is a “substitute punishment”? Why is a substitute punishment necessary? Is God demanding it? Is God the Father demanding that a death be the payment for offending Him by breaking His law? At the cross, was God pouring out His wrath on His Son? It is interesting to notice that every one of the Ten Commandments has a death penalty attached to it except the tenth. The children of Israel rapidly came to the conclusion that almost any open sin should be punished by death! (See Joshua 1:16-18; Leviticus 24:10-23; Numbers 15:30-36; Exodus 21:12-17; 22:19-20; 31:14-15; 35:2; Leviticus 20:2-5,9-16,27; Numbers 1:51; 3:10,38; 18:7; 25:5; 35:16-21; Deuteronomy 13:5-18; 17:2-5,12; 18:20; 21:18-21; 22:20-25; etc. For more details see “Leviticus - A Teacher’s Guide” #7 -

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7. On page 107 of the teacher’s edition of the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide**, it says:

The life and work of Jesus permeate Peter’s first epistle. But the central focus of Jesus’ life and work is found in 1 Peter 3:18, namely, the substitutionary death of Jesus for our sins and His subsequent resurrection to life in the Spirit.

8. But, there are reasons above and beyond the “substitutionary death of Jesus.”

It was in order that the heavenly universe might see the conditions of the covenant of redemption that Christ bore the penalty in behalf of the human race. **The throne of Justice must be eternally and forever made secure, {even tho the race be wiped out, and another creation populate the earth}**. By the sacrifice Christ was about to make, all doubts would be forever settled, and the human race would be saved if they would return to their allegiance. Christ alone could restore honor to God’s government. The cross of Calvary would be looked upon by the unfallen worlds, by the heavenly universe, by Satanic agencies, by the fallen race, and every mouth would be stopped.... Who is able to describe the last scenes of

Christ's life on earth, His trial in the judgment hall, His crucifixion? Who witnessed these scenes?—The heavenly universe, God the Father, Satan and his angels.—Ellen G. White, *The Signs of the Times*,* July 12, 1899, par 2-3. Compare *LHU** 257.2-3 where the key words present above in curly brackets, {...}, are omitted in *LHU* but are present in *The Signs of the Times*! [Bold type is added.]

9. Could it be true that the throne of justice must be eternally and forever made secure even if the entire human race were wiped out? This flies in the face of much of Christian theology. But, it is core to our understanding of the great controversy.

10. The *Adult Teacher's Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** goes on to say:

These passages teach a substitutionary atonement to pay the redemption price for our sins. Apart from the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus, there would be no provision for our salvation. This arrangement is the only way we can approach God (*1 Pet. 3:18; John 14:6; Acts 4:10-12; Heb. 9:27, 28; 10:19-22*).

11. But, there are a number of questions raised by these comments. Is the problem that God is angry with us? Or, is it that He is unloving? If a redemption price must be paid, to whom is it paid? Does Jesus pay it to the Father? Is He the One who is demanding it? Has the Father said that He will not accept us back unless a price is paid? Or, must the price be paid to the Devil? The ransom theory of the atonement which was popular in the early days of Christianity suggested that the Father offered His Son to the Devil as a ransom in exchange for the souls of all sinners. Since the Devil had always wanted to take the place of Jesus, he happily accepted the body of Jesus, only to discover after Jesus was dead and in his hands, that he could not keep Him in the grave and Jesus escaped from him and returned to heaven. This would suggest that God won the great controversy by tricking the Devil. Could that really be true?

12. When someone speaks of the "passion of Christ," what comes to your mind? Read 1 Peter 2:21-25 and Isaiah 53:1-12. It is very important to notice in Isaiah 53:4 that it says: "All the while we **thought** that his suffering was punishment sent by God." (*GNB**) [Italic type and bold type are added.] What is implied by those words, *we thought*? Notice Ellen White's comments.

As Jesus came into the temple, He took in the whole scene. He saw the unfair transactions. He saw the distress of the poor, who *thought that without shedding of blood there would be no forgiveness for their sins*. [Hebrews 9:22] He saw the outer court of His temple converted into a place of unholy traffic. The sacred enclosure had become one vast exchange.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 157.2. [Italic type and content in brackets are added.]

13. So, many Christians believe that God's wrath was poured out on Jesus. That is true; but, we need to understand that God's "wrath" simply means His "handing Jesus over," to the consequences of sin (See Romans 1:18,24,26,28; and 4:25.) suggesting that whereas we were the ones who committed sin and should have died as a result of that sin, Jesus was handed over by the Father and allowed to die to show us what the second death is really like. Remember that Jesus Himself said that He could lay down His life and He could take it up again. (John 10:18) So, if God is not the one who killed Jesus, who or what did? Who has the authority to say that someone must die because of sin?

Satan with his fierce temptations wrung the heart of Jesus. The Saviour could not see through the portals of the tomb. Hope did not present to Him His coming forth from the grave a conqueror, or tell Him of the Father's acceptance of the sacrifice. He feared that sin was so offensive to God that Their separation was to be eternal. **Christ felt the anguish which the sinner will feel when mercy shall no longer plead for the guilty race. It was the sense of sin, bringing the Father's wrath upon Him as man's substitute, that made the cup He drank so bitter, and**

broke the heart of the Son of God.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 753.2.
[Bold type is added.]

14. These words tell us that Jesus died the death of sinners.
15. Read 1 Peter 2:21. We are to follow in His steps. Does that mean to persecution, torture, and death? Many martyrs have died for their faith. Could one of them have been the sacrifice for our sins? Why? Or, why not? Or, was the death of Jesus different from the death of an ordinary human being? Of what did Jesus actually die? Separation from God. (Matthew 27:46)

God's Spirit will not always be grieved. It will depart if grieved a little longer. After all has been done that God could do to save men, if they show by their lives that they slight Jesus' offered mercy, death will be their portion, and it will be dearly purchased. **It will be a dreadful death; for they will have to feel the agony that Christ felt upon the cross to purchase for them the redemption which they have refused.** And they will then realize what they have lost—eternal life and the immortal inheritance....—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*,* vol. 1, 124.1 (1855); *CCh** 41.3; *4bSG** 11.1 (1864). [Bold type is added.]

16. Read 1 Peter 1:3-4,21; 3:21; John 11:25; Philippians 3:10-11; and Revelation 20:6. The Bible clearly teaches that the resurrection of Jesus Christ proved that God has the power to raise us also and take us to heaven to live eternal lives with Him. Surely, to those who were suffering in the days of Peter, that was a glorious hope. In fact, would it not be correct to say that the resurrection of Jesus from the dead is a guarantee that we also can be raised? (1 Corinthians 15:20-21) If Jesus did not rise up from the tomb and return to heaven, then our faith is in vain and there is no recovery from our sins. (1 Corinthians 15:17)
17. It is interesting to note that Jesus waited four days to resurrect Lazarus in order to make sure that no one could question his death. Should Jesus have waited in the tomb four days so no one could question His own death? Was it the death of Jesus that paid for our sins and saves us? Or, His resurrection? Or, is the Christian's hope based on both of those events?
18. Think of the incredible change that came over the disciples between crucifixion Friday and Pentecostal Sunday! What caused that incredible transformation?

To the Christian, death is but a sleep, a moment of silence and darkness. The life is hid with Christ in God, and "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." John 8:51, 52; Colossians 3:4.... At His second coming all the precious dead shall hear His voice, and shall come forth to glorious, immortal life.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 787.1-2.

19. To us in this life, death seems so harsh, so final, so unforgiving. It is only through the hope we have in Christ that we can see beyond the tomb.
20. Read Matthew 16:16. What is implied by the words: "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God"? (*GNB**) The word *Christ*, or, *Christos* in Greek, means "the anointed one" or in Hebrew *Messiah* or *Mashiyach*. The word means someone who has been anointed. It was even used in reference to the pagan king, Cyrus, in Isaiah 45:1.
21. Do you think that Peter understood what was implied by the word *Christ* or *Messiah* when he spoke those words?
22. Read Psalm 2:2; 18:50; Daniel 9:25 (*NASB* 1995); 1 Samuel 24:6; and Isaiah 45:1. These verses make it clear that those who are anointed have been chosen for a special task. But, it is clear that Peter did not understand fully the special task for which Jesus Christ had been chosen.
23. The Jews had very indistinct, confused ideas about what the Messiah was supposed to do. Read John 7:41-42. They believed He would be a descendent from David and that He would be born in the town of Bethlehem. (Isaiah 11:1-16; Micah 5:2) But, they believed that He would disappear

after His birth and then later reappear, leading a mighty army to help them conquer their enemies, the Romans. They certainly did not think that the Messiah would die on a cross. The Messiah was expected to kill the Romans not to be killed by the Romans! That was a misconception!

24. To the Jewish people, everything depended on the coming of the Messiah as prophesied in the Old Testament. Thus, when speaking to Jewish people, proving that Jesus was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies was a compelling point in sermons by leaders of the early church.
25. Of course, by the time Peter wrote this letter, he understood much more clearly what was implied by what he had said as recorded in Matthew.
26. Four times in his letters, Peter called Jesus “the Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 1:3; 2 Peter 1:8,14,16) What is implied by those words? Are we prepared to accept Jesus not only as a sacrifice for our sins but also as the Lord of our lives?
27. Read 2 Peter 1:1; John 1:1; and John 20:28. Peter, like other New Testament writers, recognized Jesus as the divine Son and as having a special relationship with the Father. (1 Peter 1:3; 2 Peter 1:17) We need to recognize that Jesus—also called the Word—was, is, and always will be fully God.
28. Read 2 Peter 1:1. What is implied by the words “our God and Savior Jesus Christ”? The grammatical construction in Greek with a single definitive article applying to both *God* and *Savior Jesus Christ* implies that, in fact, He is God.
29. Those who have studied early church history understand how the early church struggled with the idea that Jesus was fully God and at the same time fully Man. (Docetists)
30. Read 1 Peter 1:3; 2 Peter 1:17; 1 Peter 1:12; and 2 Peter 1:21. These verses make it clear that Peter understood that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are distinct Beings. Seventh-day Adventists believe in the doctrine of the Trinity; it is one of our 28 fundamental beliefs.
31. Try to think back over the events especially of that closing week of the life of Christ. Now try to remember as you review those events that He was fully God as He did all those things! Remember that Jesus, although He was God, knelt down and washed 12 pairs of dirty feet! Would your God do that? Judas’s God would not! What do we know about the deity of Christ?

It seems logical to begin with “Messiah,” since the Christian church owes its name to the Greek equivalent *Christos*, the “Anointed One.” The Hebrew word relates to the deliverer figure whom the Jews awaited and who would be God’s agent in the inauguration of a new age for God’s people. Both the Hebrew and the Greek terms are derived from roots meaning “to anoint.” Evidently, by calling Him “Christ,” the New Testament writers regarded Jesus as specially set aside for a particular task.

The title *Christos* occurs more than 500 times in the NT. Although there was more than one concept of Messiahship among Jesus’ contemporaries, it is generally recognized that by the first century Jews had come to look on the Messiah as someone in **a special relationship with God**. He would **usher in the end of the age, when the kingdom of God would be established**. He was the **One through whom God would break through into history for the deliverance of His people**. Jesus accepted the title “Messiah,” but did not encourage its use; for the term carried political overtones that made its use difficult. Though reluctant to avail Himself of it in public to describe His mission, Jesus rebuked neither Peter (Matt. 16:16, 17) nor the Samaritan woman (John 4:25, 26) for using it. He knew Himself to be the Messiah, as seen in Mark’s report of Jesus’ words about giving one of His disciples a cup of water “because you bear the name of Christ” (Mark 9:41).—*Handbook of Seventh-Day Adventist Theology (Commentary Reference*

Series),* vol. 12, 165. [Bold type is added.]

32. In church history, we find that church authorities have frequently tried to use the idea of eternal life not only as a reward to the righteous but also as a club to try to force people to do what they wanted them to do. This has led some people to reject the whole idea of life after death. But, the Bible is very clear that God wants every one of us to be saved and to live with Him forever.
33. Some atheistic critics claim that the Christian's hope is just based on "pie in the sky, by and by." Is that true? Or, is living a Christian life, even today, the best way to live? Even if that leads to our persecution, torture, and even death?
34. How does the fact that God has repeatedly prophesied about future events and those events have taken place exactly as He prophesied impact your understanding of God's foreknowledge and whether or not we should believe what He has prophesied about the final events of this earth's history? God already knows what is going to happen.
35. So, we can be even more confident of the messages proclaimed by the prophets. Those messages could not have been thought up by some ordinary human being. God Himself spoke through the Holy Spirit, inspiring those prophets.
36. Aren't you glad that the eternal hope that God has promised us in heaven can never perish, spoil, or fade?
37. Read 1 Peter 1:3-9,18-21. In these few verses, what are we told about the process of salvation? We see that Jesus rose from the dead and that He has promised us rich blessings from God. They are awaiting our eternal life in heaven. Any current sufferings which we might have to face are there to prove that our faith is genuine. But, genuine faith must be tested to show that it will endure. Thus, we will receive the salvation of our souls which is the purpose of having faith.
38. So, in summary, we can say that Peter spoke a great deal about the life, ministry, and death of Jesus. His sufferings and death are mentioned in 1 Peter 1:2,11,19; 2:21,23-24; 3:18; 4:1,13; and 5:1. Notice that every chapter in this short book says something about the sufferings and the death of Jesus.
39. There are also four clear references to His resurrection. (1 Peter 1:3,21; 3:18,21) Peter went on to mention His ascension (1 Peter 3:21) and His second coming in five different places. (1 Peter 1:5,7,13; 5:1,4)
40. Baptism is supposed to be a way that Christians by being buried in the water and raised back to life symbolically participate in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paul discussed that in Romans 6.
41. But, it does not really matter to us individually if Jesus was the Messiah unless He also becomes Lord in our personal lives.
42. Many Christians confess these truths verbally; but, do they live these truths? Think of what happened to Peter. Have our lives been transformed as his was?
43. Read 1 Peter 4:1-2,7-8; and 5:6-10. One day, we may be forced to suffer physically for our beliefs. Are we self-controlled and alert, able to pray? Are we prepared for the second coming? Are we humble, allowing God to lift us up when He is ready? Are we alert to the activities of the Devil who roams around like a roaring lion? How can we best prepare ourselves for these future events?

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