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These are brief sermons to be taken for what they are worth.

John 8:6-8,20 But Jesus stooped down, and with *his* finger wrote on the ground...

Sermons - Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ

Volume 1, Sermon 3

We shall be considering the Apostle Peter's ministry then to Asia, but now modern Turkey.

Note: the Apostle Paul during his first missionary circuit had gone westerly from Antioch in Syria, working his way toward Greece and Macedonia. Therefore, his circuit was west of Turkey. In Paul's second journey he passed essentially through the same circuit '*confirming the churches*'.

Act 16:4,5 And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

However, instead of returning directly to Antioch, Paul turned east and entered Asia (Turkey) and...

16:6-8 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and [they] were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia. After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia [i.e. northwest Asia (Turkey)]: but the Spirit suffered them not. And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas [i.e. southern Turkey on the Mediterranean Sea].

16:9,10 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

The journeys of Paul began and returned to Antioch, a city of Syria on the Mediterranean Sea; yet, he did not journey throughout Syria itself. On the other hand, Peter's center of operations was Jerusalem, from which he journeyed and returned. His circuit included Syria, Turkey, and Mesopotamia. In other words, everywhere east of Judea.

Many Christians think that the churches in Revelation 2, 3 had been started or at least visited by Paul, but that is not so. Those churches were in western Turkey, part of Peter's circuit of ministry. Of course other apostles out of Jerusalem worked within the same circuit as did Peter... which ministries were first more toward the scattered Israelites (i.e. the true olive tree) and to God fearing gentiles (i.e. wild branches grafted in to the olive tree).

- The Apostle Peter unto Israelites Scattered among the Eastern Nations -

1Peter 1:1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout [the varied peoples of] Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia...

Pontus was northeast Asia Minor (Turkey) on the Black Sea. Galatia and Cappadocia were central Asia minor, and Bithynia was northwest Asia Minor. The Greek word for '**strangers**' means "*a foreigner alongside or with*". That is, the apostle addressed his readers as *foreigners in the land where God has placed each one*; Moreover, and he indicted that each such Israelite Christian was *a foreigner along with Peter himself*. (As was Peter, are you walking close to God? If so, you may feel like a foreigner where God has placed you.)

Much of Paul's ministry and travels are familiar to us from the Bible; however, we know but little of Peter's ministry and travels; yet, his two short epistles are essential for Christians everywhere. Indeed, though they are short they contain the essential message to serious Christians in their walk. These Christians, as in Paul's circuit of ministry, usually became ostracized from the Jewish communities; which communities had become established in the eastern nations following Assyria's taking Israel's northern tribes off their land, and later Babylon had taken the southern tribes of Judah and Benjamin from Judea.

Later, then, when Cyrus of Persia offered to let them return to Judea, most of the people of the southern tribes remained in the eastern nations. Thus, most of the people of the entire Nation of Israel had become established in the eastern nations. Those who did return reestablished themselves in Judea and Jerusalem.

Even so, Jerusalem had always been the holy city for all Israelites; so after this return to Jerusalem (i.e. and the reestablishment of the priesthood and all things of the Mosaic Law) and in ensuing years many Israelites made pilgrimages from their homes in the nations unto Jerusalem during holy seasons to celebrate there.

Like Paul, then, Peter had gone far and wide starting and later establishing Christian churches that usually met in homes. And like Paul, Peter sent epistles to them. And like the churches in Paul's ministry, these churches in the east typically became persecuted.

1:2 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.

Peter identified these scattered small churches as '**elect**' (i.e. *selected, favored, chosen*) '**according to the foreknowledge of God the Father**'. Peter was the apostle specially chosen to carry the gospel to the sons of Israel scattered among the nations, which contained many and varied people groups referred to in scripture as 'sons of the east'.

A great many years before the time of Peter's journeys there had been missionaries from Judea (i.e. sent by the Jews) which had found and helped fellow Israelites wherever they were grouped together (some in large groups some in small groups). That is, well before Peter's journeys Israelites had local synagogues for worship and teaching from their scriptures (the Old Testament). Moreover, God had been using them and the scriptures to bring in (i.e. save) a goodly number of gentiles who gathered and worshiped with them.

Paul in his first circuit of ministry always went first to the local synagogues to preach and teach the Jews and their gentile converts to Judaism. Yet, there came a time when the Lord instructed Paul to concentrate fully upon the new Christian converts.

In like manner and led of the Lord, Peter had made his own circuit throughout Asia minor to the many established synagogues. And in Peter's preaching the Spirit moved upon individuals foreknown and chosen by God the Father. In this process, as happened with Paul, local assemblies of new Christians were formed, and usually these new Christians became ostracized from the synagogues and/or persecuted.

Therefore, this epistle (much like Paul's epistles) was unto those churches to bring them to remembrance of the fundamental teaching, and with the Spirit's aid to strengthen and encourage them. Note in 1Peter 5:13 that Peter wrote this epistle from Babylon in Mesopotamia.

When Peter visited these churches and by his epistles he was *the messenger and the voice*, yet it was God the Father who had foreordained them and now had sanctified them by His Spirit. And God had done it unto '**obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ**'.

Note that the Mosaic law for many years had been alive and well in the synagogues. Often pilgrimages were organized to Jerusalem where the pilgrims joined the religious activities demanded in the law. Therefore, the new Israelite Christians along with many gentile Christians (who earlier had accepted the God of the Mosaic Law) were well-versed in Old Testament Scriptures. All fully understood *the yearly sacrifice of a lamb slain whose blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat within the holy of holies*. And they fully understood that their God each year had forgiven the nation and His people of their sins (an accepted and pleasing position before Him). Moreover, they understood that this position before Him was *maintained* by true and real *obedience to His law*.

But in accepting the Messiah as Lord, like the Christians under Paul's ministry, these eastern Christians had similar problems with their Jewish (i.e. Israelite) neighbors who refused Jesus as the Christ. In fact, in all the world at that time (i.e. as in Rome) Jewish and Gentile Christians were persecuted by all the people where they lived. Thus, they really were '**strangers**' in the world.

1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

The word translated '**according to**' is better translated '*sent down*'. The word translated '**lively**'

is better translated '*life or quickened*'. This would be better understood as '*which sent down His abundant mercy hath begotten again us unto a life (or a quickened) hope*'. This means that God sent this *hope* down from heaven upon his people who were in Jesus, the Lord Christ. Moreover, this hope was alive and working (i.e. quickening) in them.

1:4,5 To[ward] an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto [this] salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Yes, each one is saved from his sins, but this '*inherited salvation*' is '**ready to be revealed in the last time**'. The '**inheritance**' (salvation) is '**incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away**'. Therefore, it comprises a '**heavenly hope sent down from heaven**' and is installed in each Christian that would read or hear the words of this epistle.

1:6,7 Wherein [this hope] ye greatly rejoice... though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: [such] That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ [revealed in the last time]:

When the pastor of such a small suffering church received this epistle, Peter knew that the pastor would '**greatly rejoice**'. And when he read the letter before the congregation the people would '**greatly rejoice**' in its reaffirming them. Sometime previous (most likely years had passed) Peter had taught these very things using their Scriptures. So surely the people had been studying Peter's teachings within their Scriptures.

This epistle, then, greatly encouraged them that neither Peter nor the apostles in Jerusalem had forgotten them. Soon the apostles would send some of their workers from Jerusalem to help them establish their church *in proper form* with deacons and such (even as Paul and his helper were doing in his circuit of ministry).

The *great wealth* of these poor persecuted Christians was '**much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire**', a '**hope sent down from heaven**' placed in each one.

Note that hope is hope only when it is unfulfilled (though fulfilled in Promise). Hope *makes firm and sustains one's heart*. And faith, if we allow it to do its work, *energizes the Christian's heart to gaze upward and to heed God's written and spoken Word...* whenever the Shepherd may speak.

Faith, hope, and love are the only things of God placed in a Christian that

goes with him through the portal of death unto Life in heaven. If a Christian is consistently obedient to these things in him (which constantly are drawing him pleasingly unto the Lord) then the Christian will be **'found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ'**.

1:8 Whom having not seen, [Christ and their inheritance in him, nevertheless] ye love; in whom, though now ye see *him* not, yet believing [i.e. faithing], ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

'**Joy unspeakable**' is not something that one can conjure up within himself. As with a real belly-laugh, it takes something from outside the person to trigger '**unspeakable joy**'. We can praise God in the church and in private prayer. However, this kind of '**joy**' (which a person cannot fully describe to others) occurs when God's Spirit from heaven triggers it. Moreover, this particular kind of '**joy**' energizes an internal '**glory**' that momentarily fills up the Christian. This is not God's Glory; it is the person's '**glory**' regarding all that is in him or her accomplished by all that the Lord Christ Jesus has done for him or her. The Father has done extremely broad and eternal things in His Son; yet, this '**glory**' is extremely personal between the Lord and the person.

In my case, this usually manifests itself in me with tears... sometimes great tears of joy and thankfulness. It can occur in church when the words of a hymn spiritually hit me and so I have to work in keeping back the tears.

More often it occurs (comes upon me) when I am in the Scriptures and some words there open up and grab hold of me. It may be some new inspired knowledge, but more often it is simple thankfulness that God has included me in all that He is and all that He is doing. Including me is but a tiny thing in all that He is doing; ah, but it is everything to me.

1:9 Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of your souls.

The word '**receiving**' is present tense verb or action. The *end* of '**end of your faith**' and '**salvation**' (i.e. out of this world into God's world) waits upon the Lord Christ Jesus' return. Even so, the *spirit-hope* of his return presently abides within the person and amidst the Church.

This is similar to a bride-in-waiting during the engagement of marriage: The commitment has been made and the engagement ring ('**more precious than gold**') is ever on her finger, and she has been cleaned up and washed, and needs no more washing *except for her feet* because she must continue for a while walking in this dusty dirty old world. (Also see the Song of Solomon.)

1:10,11 Of which salvation the prophets have enquired 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 [the Spirit of Christ] testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

Interesting that the final '**glory**' will be the Glory of all that God had done, and also the small but significant '**glory**' of each child of God regarding his or her belonging to that greater Glory.

1:12 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the[se] things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you...

After the group of Peter and his helpers (in their initial circuit of preaching and starting churches) had been accomplished, each church has now a local pastor, but also visitors from Jerusalem to minister to them. And these ministered in the same Spirit to these Christians. But note that Peter claims that this wondrous salvation was first ministered to anyone who would read, study, and devour the words of these prophets of the Old Testament. Sadly, few Christians feed upon the words of the prophets.

[along] with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

'**The Holy Ghost**' was '**with**' those ministering and '**with**' those hearing and living the words of this new life.

Prophecy in Isaiah

What was it which the prophets prophesied? What was (and yet remains in promise) this '**inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto [this] salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.**'?

A great deal in Scripture deals with it, yet the many scriptures are inter-woven with 'Mystery' (as the Apostle Paul stated). Here is just one such passage –

Isaiah 61:1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to *them that are bound*;

Notice '**the Lord GOD**'; here the reference is to God Himself (i.e. God the Father). Also note '**LORD**' which the translators of the KJV were kind enough to emphasize that *the Highest* has anointed this *one* to '**preach good tidings**', etc. The *Very Highest* is LORD over this one.

61:2,3 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and [also] the day of vengeance of our God;

to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

61:4,5 And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations. And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien *shall be* your plowmen and your vinedressers.

61:6 But [however,] ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD: *men* shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.

61:7,8 For your shame [i.e. which Israelites shall have endured over a great many years] *ye shall have double*; and *for* [your] **confusion [i.e. regarding their Messiah] **they shall rejoice in their** [assigned] **portion**[s of land]: **therefore in their land** [i.e. when they all shall return to their covenant land] **they shall possess the double:**
everlasting joy shall be unto them.**

For I the LORD love [righteous] judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their [priestly] work in truth, and I will make an everlasting [new] covenant with them.

'robbery for burnt offering' refers to when Israelites too often offended God in offering lesser things, like lambs "with spots" or giving meager help to the poor by passing on to them unwanted things, etc.
How many Christians today offer God lesser things, keeping the better things for themselves. One day we shall all give answer.

61:9 And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they *are* the seed *which* the LORD hath blessed.

Many Christians have either written off God's people Israel or consider them second rate children of God. Be careful!

The next verse introduces the '**anointed**' *one* in the first-person (i.e. he is the Lord Christ-come-down ... the Messiah ... at birth to be named *Jesus*).

The Messiah

Isiah 61:10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.

The beauty of the Lord Christ when he comes down as the man Jesus is the godly beauty of righteousness. He will be covered with it as a robe. But the physical man would be homely, not of beauty to be desired by men or women. The only men and women who would see him as lovely would be those already of the Father and those who would respond by the call of the Spirit, thus becoming 'of the Father'. Such sheep will know their Shepherd and heed his voice.

61:11 For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations [i.e. by means of His anointed Son, 'Lord' Jesus].

Here we see all which the poor persecuted hearers of Peter's epistle had received in Promise and thus what awaits them within God's Plan of the Ages. They have already heard of the Anointed Son, Jesus, and have accepted all that is in him for them and for the ages of mankind. They are not realizing the fulness of the Promise (verses 4 through 9) in their lifetime, yet by means of heaven's '**faith**' placed in them they can rejoice in the '**hope**' that came to them in Christ Jesus.

As they contemplate it in searching their scriptures (the Old Testament), there are times when they shall be overcome by the Word and rejoice with '**joy unspeakable and full of glory**' regarding what is in them and what awaits them.

Therefore, Peter Continues Preaching --

1Peter 1:13-15 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope [i.e. hoping within the 'hope'] to[ward] the end [result] for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; [Be] As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But [rather] as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in

all manner of conversation [i.e. verbal and physical exchanges];

1:16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

It is not “Be ye holy *as* I am holy”, because it is impossible (though many Christians think it is possible if they work at it long and hard enough). God is Holy in Himself.

The Christian, however, can become holy in word and deed *within the shadow* of what we are waiting for in Promise.

Note that '**the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations**'. This is our Blessed-Future. Especially it is said regarding God's chosen people Israel. Yet, all other Christians through the ages will be as '*branches grafted in*'; therefore, we also will bear much Fruit of the Vine. This, then, is your and my Promise.

More of Peter's Instruction

1:17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, [then] pass the time of your sojourning *here* in [proper] fear:

1:18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers;

The word '**conversation**' means 'all interacting things both word and deed'.

The word '**vain**' means 'empty'. The '**tradition from your fathers**' was 'vain' only in that the Law had been fulfilled and replaced by the Lord Christ Jesus come in the flesh ... Crucified, Resurrected, and at the Right Hand of the Father.

The Wonder of the Law yet remains for the Christian because it is The Righteous Law and not one jot or tittle of it shall be removed until it is written into the heart of all children of God when our Lord Jesus returns to set up his kingdom. We are no longer required to fulfill the written details of the Law since it is in Jesus ... done! Ah, but the spirit-of-righteousness that is in the Law remains for you and me as a righteous goal ... even as it has always been for all Israelites.

1:19,20 But [purchased] with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb [truly] without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

'**Lord**' in the Old Testament usually referred to Christ, the Son, *the One who created all according to the will of LORD God the Father ... the One who would come down to his people in the Father's appointed time.*

In the Old Testament, then, Christ was '**Lord**', and the Father (i.e. God) was

'LORD', and He was 'LORD' unto the 'Lord' Christ. Indeed, God the Father is **LORD of All**.

Sometimes it is a little confusing in the Old Scriptures translated by men for our benefit, but the context typically makes it clear. Therefore, look to the content to determine which.

All of God's people from before, during, and after the Law understood that the Lord, the Anointed One, would come to them; thus, the term Messiah. He will come again.

1:21 [you] Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

Thus, *faith and hope* (i.e. both are in the true believer, placed there from heaven, and are of heaven) is the *duo* by which and in which the true believer can walk and work and speak. Our humanity, one's flesh, is normally fully in charge of the Christian... until such time as he or she decides that *faith and hope* are of much higher quality.

The flesh never gives up until it is dead; and at death of the body *faith, hope, and love* pass on with the child of God into the awaiting Promise.

(My book, God's Hook, is a lengthy discourse of this very subject. It is free for you to download and enjoy. In it is a chapter on me and how the Lord drew me to him. Also it has a chapter of Barbara and me when our son was born with a lung disease and was considered not-survivable. So much was this the case that the nurses did not roll him over to give shots in various places. They gave shots only in the thighs. Following a very real and obvious miracle (two of them within a few days) and in growing up, his thigh muscles had much scar tissue and grew slower than did his bones. He became somewhat stiff legged and needed an operation to lengthen the muscles. Read of this and how it gave his mother and father wonderful opportunities to give witness. However, all the other many chapters are Bible stories of heaven's faith working between God and persons.)

1:22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit [and] unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

1:23 Being [i.e. the actions of] born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

Even as the Word of God '**liveth and abideth for ever**', that which has been placed in the true believer (and awaits him or her in Promise) also (being of God) '**liveth and abideth for ever**'.

1:24,25 For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man [i.e. in his flesh is] as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever.

And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you [even as unto your forefathers it was preached to them in the Old Testament time, though the Messiah had not yet come].

The Lord Christ was and is and always shall be. And now he is the Lord Christ Jesus at the Right Hand of the Father. And gazing down upon you and me.

**He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good;
and what doth the LORD require of thee,
but to do justly, and to love mercy, and
to walk humbly with thy God? (Mic 6:8)**

- C. Ronald Johnson at Christian Wilderness Press -