



As born again believers in Jesus Christ, the concept of eternity becomes very real to us. It truly becomes and should be our true hope. It should be our greatest desire as we believe in Jesus as our Lord and Savior. It is where we desire and long to be. In Peter's letters, He emphasizes this hope and this fact. He refers to those whom he is writing to in the upper regions of Asia Minor (modern day Turkey) as "strangers," the "elect," as well as "sojourners."

Back in Peter's day, things weren't too different than what they are today. During Peter's time of his writing to those in Asia Minor, there was tremendous persecution in which the early believers were always in peril of facing. In Peter's letters, as he refers to the believers as "strangers" and "sojourners," he was actually telling them a true statement and using these terms as terms of encouragement.

You see many of those who believed in Jesus and living in Asia Minor where Jewish but also there were a great majority of Gentiles who had come to faith. However, many of them had come from different countries, regions and areas. The Jews had suffered tremendous persecution back in Israel and many of them had to leave and ended up in Asia Minor. This area of Asia Minor was a melting pot for Gentiles that had to leave where they originally had come from to escape harsh persecution and other things within their own regions. We see that all the believers in this region understood the concept of being transient.

If we remember, we see that in the Book of Acts, it was Paul who initially went and evangelized in northern Asia Minor and the surrounding region. It was Paul who initially started up these churches. Now a few years later we see Peter writing to these churches. Peter was most likely in Rome when he had heard that Paul initiated those in the region to come to know and believe in Jesus as the Son of God and the true Messiah.

Peter, during this time, which was somewhere around 60-62, thought it necessary to reach out to these new believers and encourage them in their new faith in Jesus. They, as well as all the new believers, were suffering much persecution. In his writing to them, as mentioned previously, he calls them "strangers" and "sojourners." Those are interesting terms in which Peter refers to the believers as.

If we look at these words, we find something very interesting concerning them. If we take a look at these words we find that they refer to people who do not really "belong" to the area, city or country that they are living and dwelling in. Actually when Peter writes these terms he is clearly and distinctively telling the readers, the believers, that they really are no longer citizens of that region or that area. Peter is telling them very candidly that they are not "citizens" of that region at all. Actually, Peter is telling them that they are no longer citizens of this world but rather they are simply "passing through."

They were all simply "passing through" during their time on this earth headed toward their true home land – the Kingdom of Heaven. That is a powerful lesson and truth for us all to grasp and hold onto. As believers in Jesus, we are all "sojourners" who are simply "sojourning" on the earth. To get a better grasp of this, let us look into this word "sojourner."

You see it truly is a very simple word. The word "sojourn" can be used as both a noun and a verb. As a noun it simply means, "...a temporary stay." As a verb it means, "...to stay somewhere temporarily." In both definitions the key word is "temporary." It is a Hebrew term which lends itself to the fact that the individual or group of people are either living temporarily or permanently, in a community and place **that is not** primarily their own. In other words, wherever they may be dwelling is not truly their "homeland." They are simply dwelling in that spot but always desiring and ready to go "home" where they truly belong. In other words they were not and are not truly home - yet.

Well, this is what Peter was referring to when he writes to the believers in Asia Minor. He is encouraging them within his letters of the important truth that each one is to grasp and hold onto. He writes to them that even though they may be going through hardships and difficulties during this time, they must never forget nor lose focus on the fact that everything – all the difficult times, all the pain and hardship – are only for a “season.”

In 1Peter 1:7-9, he writes, *“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: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.”*

Peter is truly writing to all believers throughout the ages since that time. He writes to them and us today, concerning Jesus, *“Whom having not see, ye love... ye believe in...and rejoice in with joy unspeakable.”* That is what it is all about. Isn’t that the hope that each of us are to be living in – today and in this hour? In verse 9 he concludes this thought as he states, *“Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.”*

What is Peter referring to when he writes the, *“end of our faith?”* He is referring to the “salvation of our souls.” Our salvation is the conclusion of our faith. It is the essence of our belief in Jesus. We must always have this within our thoughts. We must always truly live, grasp and understand this very fact. Yes, we are saved now through Jesus but the actual experiencing of the fullness of our salvation is when we are with Him in eternity. That is the *“end of our faith.”* However, it is the beginning of a new realm of life that we could never truly grasp as we live upon this earth but that we shall experience – one day.

In 1Peter 4:17-19 we read, *“For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? Now “If the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?” Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good as to a faithful Creator.*

As we read these scriptures, it would seem as if they are saying something very scary. Peter refers to judgment beginning at the “house of God.” What does He mean by this? Well, I believe he means exactly what he is saying – that judgment will come to the “house of God.” So what does this mean? I believe it means that there will come a time of judgment for **everyone** – believers and non-believers. The Bible does tell us that we **all** will appear before the “judgment seat of Christ” – the just and the unjust; the righteous and the unrighteous.

The scriptures are very clear in this. Those who totally reject Jesus will be judged for their total lack of faith in or their total rejection of Jesus. However, we must see that this is also including the fact that judgment **will come** to those **who are** in the Body of Christ and it will come to those **who say** they are in, the Body of Christ. There is a difference. Hmm....

For the true believer, those who are in the Body of Christ, this is just a formality that will lead them to eternity with Him. However, it is a fact that we all will go before the “judgment seat of Christ.” What this tells me is that whatever I think or say now while I am on this earth means little. What really will matter is when I stand before the “judgment seat of Christ.” Only at that time will the truth of my life be exposed for all to see. It will be at that time when it will be truly seen if my life and all that I said and done unto the Lord God was true or if it will be exposed that I was simply living a lie and deceiving others but most importantly – deceiving myself. Is Jesus my Lord, my absolute and supreme authority, or is He not. That is what will be exposed for all to see. That is difficult for many of us to grasp and come to terms with.

We may think that we automatically have eternal life by simply saying a prayer and saying that I believe in Jesus. Unfortunately, it is not that simple. It is not simply saying that I believe in Jesus but it is truly a new lifestyle and most importantly a new mindset that I am now living in. This is what Romans 10:9-10 tells us as it states, *“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, **and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.**”*

Am I perfect? No. But when I do falter I am to own up to it, repent and turn from that evil way and turn to Jesus. This is a day by day, minute by minute process and lifestyle. It is truly having a renewed “spirit being” now living within me.

Peter states in verse 18 that *“the righteous one is scarcely saved.”* What does he mean by using this scripture from Psalm 11:31? He is simply stating that it is truly only through Jesus that someone can truly be saved. It is nothing that anyone can do in their own strength. It is only through Jesus. It is only when one truly believes with all they are and with all their heart that Jesus is who He says He is and did what the scriptures tell us He did that we are saved. Salvation only comes by and through Jesus.

Peter continues in this scripture as he states, *“...where will the sinner and the ungodly appear?”* Wow, that is a stark reality. It is concluding that the sinner and ungodly person (meaning any and all unbelievers) will end up in the place that has been reserved for them – hell. This is not where God desires anyone to go. However, it still comes down to the choice each and every person makes on their own.

Peter ends this thought with saying, *“Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good as to a faithful Creator.”* Peter is simply stating that if you are a true believer, a true child of God through Jesus, that you will suffer persecution for being His. However, you must be totally committed unto Him. We must commit our souls onto Him. This is referring to our lifestyle and ways of living unto God. We are to live our lives the way He leads us and guides us through the power of His Holy Spirit. In many cases, both back in that time and today, this could lead to tremendous persecution and even death. Hmmm....

So why do we do this? We do this because He is our *“faithful Creator.”* Why does Peter use that particular phrase – *“faithful Creator?”* We know that God is “Creator.” However, we don’t really hear God referred to as “Creator” too often. We read it used three times in the Old Testament and twice in the New Testament in which one of those times is here in 1Peter. Yet we know that God is the Creator of all things. So what was Peter referring to? What does He mean by using this particular word instead of simply using the term God?

We know that the term “Creator” is referring to God. It refers to the fact that God was and is the “author of all things.” In His infinite wisdom, God the Father established all things. Everything was then made by and through the Living Word, Jesus. It is then overseen and monitored by the Holy Spirit. We see this process and truth found in Genesis 1:1.

Peter uses the adjective “faithful” in conjunction with the term “Creator.” This refers to the fact that the “Creator” (God) is trustworthy in every aspect. It is saying that God was, is and always will be the author of everything that takes place upon this earth. Everything will take place the way our God had intended and told us as seen through His Word. After all, the entire Bible is called the Word of God. Everything from beginning to end has and will take place. Peter was encouraging the believers in Asia Minor as well as us today to think on this, dwell on this fact and believe it with all of their heart.

Wow!! Let's think on that for a moment. That is so awesome and mind boggling. That phrase or title is truly revealing to God's people (those who truly believe in and know Him as their God) that they are to totally commit their entire soul and life to Him. We can give ourselves totally unto Him so that He can then mold us and make us into what we were meant to be and are to be. He is our sovereign Creator, with the right to do with us as He pleases. Yet He is so very, very "faithful," and will only do what is ultimately best for us. This is the essence of the faith that we are to have towards and in our God.

As we go forth in our lives, let those of us, who are true believers, never forget that we are only "passing through" this earth. This is not our homeland. Yes, we are to obey the laws of the land and we are to live according the laws and regulations of the land we live in. However, we must never forget that everything around us is only temporary.

We must never forget that we are only "sojourners" where we live. One day we will be going "home." We will be one day, in a place that is much, much different than where we are now. Yes, one day, we will be in the presence of all the angels and every other true believer and we will all be worshipping and praising our God. Oh what a day, or should I say, oh what an eternity that will be!!!