

**Text: 1 Pt 1.13**

We completed the long sentence that begins in 1 Pt 1.3 and ends in 1 Pt 1.12 last week. The long sentence is a celebration of our most excellent salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Tonight, we turn to verse 13.

<sup>1</sup> Pt 1.13 ¶ Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober *in spirit*, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Our text rests on that long sentence that preceded it, notice how it starts, “Therefore.”

A few comments from commentaries.

“‘Therefore’ ties in with everything Peter had explained thus far (vv. 3–12). He said in effect, Now that you have focused your thinking positively you need to roll up your sleeves mentally and adopt some attitudes that will affect your activities.”<sup>1</sup>

“At 1:13 Peter says, ‘Therefore’—that is, since you have received the great benefits of salvation, among which are a new birth, a living hope, and an assured inheritance—you ought to be different in how you live. The theme of this passage, indeed 1:13–2:10 (with further implications until the end of the letter), is *the difference salvation brings to the life of the Christian*.”<sup>2</sup>

“God’s commands are always rooted in his grace. Another way of putting this is to say that the indicative (what God has done for us in Christ) is always the basis of the imperative (how we should live our lives).”<sup>3</sup>

I hesitate to add more for want of time; the commentaries have some very good reflection on this point.

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<sup>1</sup> Tom Constable, *Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), 1 Pt 1.13.

<sup>2</sup> Scot McKnight, *1 Peter*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 83.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, The New American Commentary, v. 37 (Nashville, Tenn: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 77.

Before we develop the verse, I need to take time to give a translation comment. Our verse has a very familiar phrase in the KJV – if you did your memory work in the KJV, that is.

KJV 1Pe 1:13 ¶ Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

Note that the NAU has a very similar structure:

NAU 1Pe 1:13 ¶ Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Reading these two versions, we think we have three imperatives in a row:

1. Prepare your mind
2. Keep sober
3. Fix your hope

Compare two other versions:

ESV 1Pe 1:13 ¶ Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

NIV 1Pe 1:13 ¶ Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming.

These versions reflect just ONE imperative, “Set your hope.”

The other two clauses are participles (verbal nouns). It is true that they can take what the call an “imperative force” so I am NOT saying that the KJV and NAU are wrong in the way they translated them.

One other translation issue, which may or may not have much significance:

KJV: “hope to the **end**”

NAU: “fix your hope **completely**”

ESV: “set your hope **fully**”

NIV: “and **fully** sober, set your hope on...”

The word “complete” or “full” follows “sober” and precedes “hope” – the Greek is ambiguous, does it modify “sober” or does it modify “hope”? The commentaries are divided, some on either side.

Why mention this? I want to point out that translators have to make choices, they are trying to bring the full meaning over into English, but sometimes the differences in languages just makes it challenging. That is why we don't set one translation over against another, unless, like the New World Translation (Jehovah's Witness), they make deliberate and misleading errors.

The last thing to say about this is the general focus of the verse — what is it driving at?

Therefore: because your salvation is so wonderful (vv. 3-12)

Set your hope on the coming grace: This is the heartbeat of the verse

While you also:

Gird up your mind

Keep sober

- These are things you *ought to do*: they have “imperative force”
- These are supportive activities: the twin pillars that buttress our hope.

So, let's quickly work through the details:

## I. The spiritual activities that support sustaining hope

### A. Decluttering the mind

1. Literal rendering: “gird up the loins of your mind” — KJV.
2. Image: Middle eastern style, even to this day, wearing a long robe or outer ‘shirt’
  - a. For work or war or athletic activity, a man had to tie up these robes to get the encumbrances out of the way
  - b. This frees up the “loins” – the strongest muscle in the body (thighs) for action

“It is a call to bring all of one's rational and reflective powers under control by ‘cutting off vague loosely flowing thoughts and speculations that lead nowhither,

and only hamper obedience.’ [Charles Bigg, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, p. 112.]”<sup>4</sup>

“The English phrase ‘pull yourselves together’ would express the meaning.”<sup>5</sup>

3. Many worldly concerns hinder spiritual progress, trip you up in your spiritual life

“Peter wants his churches to maintain a loose grip on this world and a tight grip on the world to come.”<sup>6</sup>

## B. Keeping control of the spirit

1. The image here is the familiar one of “not drunk, or intoxicated: sober”
2. Insobriety is a problem in our world today, but it is not merely physical sobriety in view
3. The image is suggestive of a lifestyle of spiritual sobriety:
  - a. Under control
  - b. Not given to whims
  - c. Not under the control of “the ‘reckless irresponsibility of self-indulgence on the one hand, and of religious ecstasy on the other.’ [Alan M. Stibbs, *The First Epistle General of Peter*, p. 85.]”<sup>7</sup>

“Peter was not merely saying that believers should refrain from drunkenness. There is a way of living that becomes dull to the reality of God, that is anesthetized by the attractions of this world. When people are lulled into such drowsiness, they lose sight of Christ’s future revelation of himself and concentrate only on fulfilling their earthly desires.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Hiebert, 91.

<sup>5</sup> Selwyn, *1 Peter*, 139.

<sup>6</sup> McKnight, 86.

<sup>7</sup> Hiebert, *1 Peter*, 91.

<sup>8</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 79.

## II. The sustaining duty of the spiritual life: fixing your hope on coming grace

A. Supported by an unencumbered mind and a sober spirit, we obey the command for a forward look, *i.e.* “hope”

1. Some say that for Peter “hope” becomes equivalent to “faith” in Paul
2. The hope is that strength of faith that enables victory over all the trials and temptations of this world
  - a. An ungirded mind is easily distracted from the hope
  - b. An unsober spirit, in its “presentism,” will not settle on the forward look
3. This is the imperative of the verse, based on our glorious salvation (“therefore...”), you must set your hope on coming grace

B. The grace to be brought at the revelation of Jesus Christ

1. As great as salvation is now (and it is great!)
2. Yet the full grace of salvation is coming – “you ain’t seen nuthin’ yet!”

“Living for the future is fundamental for Peter, and a brief sketch of his theology here provides the most important context. Even if believers have begun to share in the salvation of God (1:9), that salvation is presented as only complete in the future (1:5). There will be a penetrating evaluation by God (1:7, 9, 17; 2:12, 23; 3:12; 4:5–6, 17–19) when Jesus is fully revealed (1:7, 13; 4:13). After the judgment, the faithful followers of Jesus will share his glory (5:1, 4) and receive the full compensation of grace (1:17; 4:13, 14). Peter urges his readers to see history the way God has planned it.”<sup>9</sup>

I’ll leave those references for you to trace out on your own.

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<sup>9</sup> McKnight, *1 Peter*, 86.

**Conclusion:**

We are called to action in response to the great salvation we have in Jesus Christ. That means adopting an unencumbered mind and sober spirit. That means fixing our hope on the grace to come.

This is the way of victory.