# 1 Peter 1:20-21 Christ Came For You November 15, 2009

# Introduction

Some themes occur over and over again in 1 Peter. We have seen and continue to study the theme of salvation, and its related theme of sanctification. We’ve seen the theme of suffering, and we will see the motifs of submission and service as well. If these five aspects of the believer’s life were pictured as spokes of a wheel, the hub would have to represent Jesus Christ at the center. These themes all revolve around Him.

Peter has instructed us to live with sober mind and holy and reverent conduct. This last point—reverent conduct—is motivated by the knowledge of the means of our redemption. We should live as God-fearing people because we were redeemed at such a high price, with the precious blood of Christ. Verses 20-21 continue to highlight what we should know when we consider how to conduct ourselves.

# Text of Verses 19-21

1:19 But with the precious blood—as of an unblemished and unspotted lamb—of **Christ**,

1:20 **who** *on the one hand* was foreordained before the foundation of the world but [**who**] *on the other hand* was manifested in these last times for your sake,

1:21 who [you] through **Him** believe in God, who raised **Him** [Jesus] from the dead, and gave **Him** glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

# 1. Christ: Foreordained

The verb “foreordained” is in the perfect passive which means that God foreknew in a settled sort of way that His plan was to send the Son of God as a ransom for sin. It is like this plan was written in stone ahead of time and settled as if done though it was not yet actualized in history. Revelation 13:8 speaks of the “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”

The word for “foreordain” is literally “foreknown,” but in the Scriptures this word has more than just the idea of “knowledge ahead of time.” It is coupled with God’s decree of the way things will be so that He knows because He has planned things to be a certain way. It can even be translated as “chosen.” We can add some color to the term by looking at Acts 2:23 where Peter reflects on God’s “determined plan and foreknowledge” in the death of Christ. This was not an accident or afterthought on God’s part. God works out all things according to His plan (Ephesians 1:11).

Neither was our sin a surprise to God. God ordained it to come to pass by permitting Satan and the first couple to choose sinfully and to be confirmed in their sinful natures. As soon as the fateful decisions were made by Satan, Eve, and Adam, God could have zapped them into nothingness. But He permitted these errors, and their consequences, including the need for the death of Christ—if anyone were to be saved at all.

Notice a neat connection between verses 2 and 20: both speak of foreknowledge. Christ was foreknown/foreordained before the foundation of the world, but also, individual believers were in God’s foreknowledge as well! He had you in mind back before anything was, before there were any people to redeem. That is mind boggling for us, but no problem for God.

# 2. Christ: Manifested

The past tense of “was manifested” indicates the historical happening of the entire first coming of Christ. This is not just the incarnation per se, but the entirety of the Lord’s ministry on the earth. The plan that was set in motion ages before was now being revealed in real human history. The whole matter of salvation was marvelously planned and then brought to fruition.

“In these last times” shows us that Christ was made known only “lately” compared to the long ages that preceded His coming. After being promised for so long a time, He then came and propelled the world into its final age. From that point on, no one could legitimately look forward to the coming of the Messiah. All have to look back. And since that work is finished, there is nothing more prophesied that has to be done before the culmination of God’s plan is set into motion in the end times.

“For you” brings this all down to as personal terms as we can get. Like Galatians 2:20, Peter teaches us here that this plan was made and executed *for our sake*. Can you believe it? God did all that—for us?—for me? As 1:12 indicated, the prophets knew that it was for us that this plan of salvation was going to come about. What a huge privilege.

You could ignore what God has done, “not knowing” that Christ provided redemption with His precious blood, that he was foreordained and manifested for you. But it will be your biggest regret if you do ignore Him.

# 3. Christ: Raised and Glorified

Let’s focus on the middle phrase of verse 21 for a moment. It tells us that God raised Christ from the dead and gave Him glory. Verses 18 and 19 are presumed here—Christ had to be killed (Acts 2:23) before He could be raised. Did you get that? “The precious blood of Christ” means that He gave His life for our sins.

It is common in Scripture to read of the Father raising the Son back to life. For instance, Acts 2:24 and 32 say so. The Triune God was integrally involved in purchasing our redemption—Christ offered Himself through the Spirit (Heb. 9:14) and the Father accepted His payment and raised Christ from the dead. It is an essential of the Christian faith to believe in the resurrection (Romans 10:9-10). The crucifix is not sufficient. The resurrection is needed too.

Furthermore, in response to Christ’s great humiliation, God the Father exalted Him to a place above all others (Phil. 2:5-11). Christ prayed in John 17:5 to return to the glory He had as God with the Father and this was done. The great suffering of Christ was followed by great glory (1 Peter 1:11). Actually the glorification of Christ will be brought to full view when He comes back and reigns over the entire earth in His kingdom (Matt. 24:30, Mark 13:26, Luke 21:27).

# 4. Christ: Believed

Now we look at the remainder of verse 21, “who through Him believe in God…so that your faith and hope are in God.” The focus shifts to the reader of the letter.

Christ is our path to God. Having some generic idea of “god” apart from Christ does not cut it. One commentator writes, “No man can actually believe in God without believing in Christ; otherwise the God in whom he believes is not the God of revelation (Kenyon, quoted in Hiebert, *1 Peter*, p. 105).

“You” are the ones who call on the Father, who love the unseen Christ, who live reverently and obediently as holy children, who are sober-minded, who are graced with the salvation that caused wonder in the minds of the OT prophets, who believe despite difficult trials, who are elect, and who are temporary residents in this world. This is Peter’s audience, and I pray it includes you, dear reader of these notes.

The last phrase, “so that” is debated as to whether it is God’s intended purpose, or the result of God’s work. The ideas are close and we don’t have to worry about exactly which direction we take on this. The point is that God did all this planning and executing of His plan so that our faith and hope would be centered on Him, not anywhere else. Many people “trust in uncertain riches” (1 Tim. 6:17) but Peter is advocating a single-minded faith and hope—as in v. 13 where our mind is not to be distracted with all kinds of other things.

God wants us to have a God-centered life. As He enjoyed fellowship among Himself in the Trinity, so He wants us to have that blessed fellowship with Him as well.

# Conclusion

Our redemption was not an afterthought on God’s part. It was pre-planned long ago. The costly plan was executed during history. God’s design was for us to have our faith and hope in Him, not in anything else. Where are you at in all this? God designed this FOR YOU. This heightens our responsibility to live reverent and holy lives. God’s glory and reputation are at stake.

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