

1 Peter 1:10-13

hope in the storm

Rarified Heir



Christianity is cerebral. It is first and foremost about knowing things! The Creator/God has revealed who He is, what He is like, and what He wants - and Christ-followers are supposed to know that information! In fact, it is how we are saved! We have to know about certain things and believe them to be true to be saved! That is why it is so vitally important to get it right. The enemy of God has found that the easiest and most effective way to short-circuit a seeker's search for God is to give them an inaccurate portray of the God of scripture! If they believe in a different definition of God, of Jesus, then they believe in a different God! So Satan uses his own prophets, and theologians/seminary professors, pastors, and laypeople to indoctrinate people with a corrupted version of the gospel so that people ARE NOT actually saved - but are certain they are! So the information contained in the Bible and the accurate interpretation and portrayal of it is of paramount importance! And contrary to popular opinion it is not that hard to get right! There is one truth that the original authors intended to convey to future generations – not 2 or 3 differing and even contradictory meanings to the same sentence or paragraph. You can't use the excuse for poor interpretation "***Well, that's YOUR interpretation and this is MINE***" because someone is wrong! Someone does not hold to a legitimate interpretation! One verse does not accommodate two different meanings, and it is not that hard to figure out which one is accurate and which interpretation is not – not if we would actually use the intelligence that God has given us! But, the problem is that we don't! We get on a certain train of thought and will not give it up, even for an obviously better one! Peter, like all the writers of New Testament scripture had plenty of experience with false teachers and those who tried to siphon off believers from the apostle's teaching that was contained and protected in apostolic born and bred churches. So their writings reflected basic gospel truth always – this is who the true Jesus is and this is His will for your life. Don't deviate to the right of left of this ***intellectual*** path! We see that in first Peter also! It is what he is doing in these verses in our text this morning.



Peter is reminding the people that we know ***what*** we know of the Christ because over a period of about 1500 years – about a thousand or so yrs for the Old Testament and then a 400 year interval of silence, and then about 50 yrs to write the New Testament. God caused many men to become authors and write down what He wanted to be known by humanity. This was important to God who had originally created people in His own image. He had a plan. It was ***already*** being carried out, but the planet was being told of it while it was hapening. And what God told His prophets to tell the people was that He was coming to earth! The Word, second member the triune Godhead would become a Son, and being a product of God and a woman, he would be all man and all God - not be half God and half man. He was composed of the fullness of both parts equally. But God ***was*** coming! He was making it happen and waiting for everything to come together so that the timing was right! Because He was coming to die, and to die in a certain manner, so, again, the timing had to be just right! Certain historical developments had to be in place for His plan to happen as He intended. He undoubtedly caused some of these things to happen, and other things He anticipated.

Among the messianic verses and passages scattered throughout the Old Testament, Isaiah 9:6 is probably the most well-known of these – especially by Christians. It is pointing to the type of person that the coming Messiah would be. ***“For unto us a child is born. Unto us a son is given. And the government shall be upon His shoulders. And He shall be called...”*** (It is obvious from the descriptive words used that this is no mere man!) ***“...Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace”***.

When you see ***that***, you ***know*** that the Messiah cannot possibly be a normal man! When you see the entire chapter of ***Isaiah 53***, you know that the Messiah does not have a normal mission! He was coming to be killed! He was coming to be killed for the sins of the people - to take them upon Himself and to extinguish their guilt and power to bring God's judgment. He was coming to cleanse the people of Israel, and the people of the world, and reconcile them to a pure and holy God! He was coming to close the distance between God and humanity!



It was a long-standing mystery as to who this Promised One could actually be. Every priest and rabbi through the ages had an opinion, but none of them were able to unwrap the ***mystery***. They knew He was coming, and they thought they knew why – and they were actually right. They just didn't know that there were two separate and very functionally different “comings”. Each coming had its own diametrically different approach to the problem of sin and rebellion on earth. The Messiah's first coming was to be the **Lamb of God** who personally pays the terrible price to take away the sins of the world! In the second coming, He is to be the **Lion of God** who comes to bring judgment upon the unbelieving and hostile world who has responded with disinterest and hostility to the Lamb of God's first offer of amnesty! Well, anyway, the Old Testament theologians of Israel were focused on the second coming and totally missed the first! That is why they would not believe in Jesus. He was not political, and they were sure that He was supposed to be talking over the world politically! Plus Jesus **disregarded** some of their extra-biblical additions to the Law of Moses – and in their minds, it was an unthinkable act of disrespect for the Law and for the religious power brokers of Judea who believed that they were put in place by God to ensure adherence to ALL the laws and statutes - even the extra-biblical ones!

So, collectively, they had been right, yet also had it all wrong! It was a **herd** mentality, and herd mentalities are VERY hard to get past. It is what everybody accepts as true, so to question what everyone knows is true is only done by people of independent spirit – people who seek the truth despite what everyone else thinks! The disciples of Christ were such people. But it was even hard for them to get past conventional thinking to see who Jesus really was – how different His mission was from what they had been taught, and to wrap their minds around the fact that fact that this Jesus was God come down to earth as a man!



Now, I realize that today is Father's Day, and this is not a Father's Day message. But if you love your children and want them to grow up to be good people of excellent character, there is room in this sermon to give you a BIG fathering tip! What matters most in fathering is that you teach and show your children what it means to follow Jesus! If they see Jesus be real in your life and central to your thinking, and they see the fruit of the Spirit in your language and behavior to your wife and to everyone else in your life, it will be much easier for them to see that Jesus is real (even though they can't physically see Him). They will see that He lives powerfully in and through His people/ specifically their father! So let them see Him in your life! It is imperative! **If**, because of your example, your children truly give their heart to Jesus, He will first teach them to not be mean. Then He will teach them to be kind – through patience and generosity toward others. Then He will teach them to love people. Then He will teach them to love even their **enemies** and the people that return evil for good. So, Fathers, that is where you need to be pointing your children. Be sure to credit Him for **your** success in character. It is Jesus who will cause them to be independent thinkers who will not follow the mob mentality, especially these days when the mob opinion **gels** off of the social media. Social media is like a drug for our children, and it is representative of the world system – God's enemy! Its new morality does not represent that of the Bible! It is a fleshly morality, man-made and destructive in the end! Only by following Jesus will our children gather the crucial tools to counter the evil that the social media contains and strengthen them to oppose the world system that is reflected in them. Then they will not have to follow every trendy cause. They will not tap into the judgmentalism that has suddenly become so righteous these days. I mean, judgementalism used to be a dirty word. Things have definitely changed – big time! A misplaced or misspoken word, or a politically incorrect opinion can **ruin** someone these days! The shaming that goes on is absolutely vicious! People have found a new way to gain and wield power over others! Your better be righteous according to the world's definition, or else! It is absolutely frightening what is happening to this country and to the western world in general. A place founded on free speech is now walking on egg shells!

But Christ-followers are given the tools that will keep them safe – not from getting hurt by it, but tools which will keep them from entering in to it and becoming a part of it! It is a dark world right now, and it is not for us to be entering into it for any other reason than to be peacemakers – not to be influence by it but other - to drag people out of it and into the light! But let me caution you that peacemaking does not include giving in to what is not true, but by sticking to what *is* true - with a twist! You do it humbly, carefully, with kindness and patience – not anger! And maybe, just maybe our children will begin leading people out of the darkness and despair that is enveloping our culture, and instead bring them into a healthy life-giving relationship with Jesus who will fill their soul with His kindness! It is who and what we and our children were created to be. This is the intention of God for you and me.

Help your children get there! They must also take up their cross and follow Jesus. So model Jesus to them! Teach them the teachings of Jesus and of the apostles. Don't know His teachings? It's quite simple - apply yourself to learning them!

The first part of our text this morning, **vs. 10 - 12** have to do with the identity of Christ, assuring Christians that Jesus was the one the Old Testament scripture writers (the prophets) were referring to. It was what Jesus had shown His disciples (for example) on the road to Emmaus, and which they, in turn, had faithfully passed on to the people of the churches. Then **verse 13** begins a section that is obviously a transition into the practical application. In other words, if Jesus is who the apostles bear witness to Him being, what then? That knowledge is a call to action! "***Prepare your minds for action***" says Peter! *The other day I was watching a boxing match on TV. A fighter was preparing himself for his fight. He was hitting himself in his own face! It was like he was telling himself to wake up and get going! In another fight, the fighter's **trainer** was slapping his fighter in the face, mid-fight, and yelling at him from six inches in front of his tired and bruised face and trying desperately to get a spark of anger or passion out of him. He screamed at his fighter that he was sleepwalking through the fight! You see, a fighter's job in the ring is really hard, dangerous even, and he was going to have to be at his best and call upon everything he has learned in countless hours of preparation, and then call upon his reserves of strength and energy he didn't know he had, if he was going to survive, much less win!



Likewise, Peter is telling Christians they were going to need to get ready! They were in a fight – a battle for truth! Their hearts would be tested! They would walk through the refiner’s fire! Their loyalty to Jesus was going to be proven or disproven! They were going to take some hard punches from the enemies of Christ from outside the church and from within! They had to wrap their minds around that fact and get themselves ready, because when it came it would be ***hard!***



Peter could be talking to us today! It is coming and it is coming fast! We are going to find out who among us are the real deal and who are not – who will fight and who will fold! The age of easy Christianity that we have been through in the American church for hundreds of years now is coming to an end! It is hard to watch so many churches and their pastors cave to the culture so that they can remain “relevant”! But the truth is they just become some kind of mushy... non-descript,... well, something else other than carrying on a distinct Christianity! They can rationalize until they are blue in the face but it is just cowardice and an overwhelming desire to be “cool” in a culture that admires cool. But the culture is not our friend and never can be! Their ”righteousness” is not the righteousness of God. Don’t be fooled! Stick to the apostles teaching and you will be okay!

Rarified air – Rarified air is the low oxygen content air that one will begin to encounter above about 2,500 feet. Its effect at that height is that you will tire in about half the normal time. Only a small number of people, mountain climbers, can survive at 16 thousand feet. To travel higher you have to take your own supplemental oxygen in cylinders to continue to go even higher. There is an elite group of people, mountain climbers, that are acclimated to the lack of oxygen in the air. They spend so much time in high altitudes, that they can survive in that thin air. A group of expert climbers actually climbed Mt. Everest, 29,000 ft, in the 1950s without the aid of supplemental oxygen. It is an impossibly dangerous thing to be at that height and only the very best, the expert mountain climbers, are able to survive there, much less function well enough to continue on to the summit!



Jesus invites us to join Him on the heights! It is not for the faint of heart, but it is where a Christ-follower belongs as heirs of Christ! It is a higher existence! He gives us everything we need to join Him in His heaven, and in the meantime, if we are following Him on earth we will live dangerously in a world that is rotten to the core! If we are heirs with Him we must go where He leads and breath the high and sometimes dangerous air He breathes! This is who we are in Jesus! We stay true and we stay focused on the mission. We will be criticized and judged with a viciousness that is hard to wrap our minds around! It is the way our world has turned recently. But we cannot waver! Stay steadfast, but humbly - keeping a low profile - influencing our “brave new world” for Jesus one person at a time! We maintain our identity by holding to and defending the truth of scripture on the **inside** of the church. And **outside** the church also, by lovingly promoting Jesus to those in our life that need Him!