

1 Peter 1:13-16 - Ron Stullenbarger

Beginning in verse 13, there is a change in emphasis. Peter has been dealing with the glories of our salvation. At this point, he launches into a series of exhortations based on the foregoing.

First, Peter urges the saints to have a "*girded*" mind. The girding up of the mind is an interesting figure of speech. In eastern lands, people wore long, flowing robes. When they wanted to walk fast or with a minimum of hindrance, they would tie the robe up around their waist with a belt (see Exodus 12:11). In this way they "*girded up their loins.*" But what does Peter mean by *gird up the loins of your mind*? As they went out into a hostile world, believers were to avoid panic and distraction. In times of persecution, there is always the tendency to become rattled and confused. A girded mind is one that is strong, composed, cool, and ready for action. It is not hindered by the distraction of human fear or persecution.

This state of mental solidarity is further encouraged by the words "*be sober.*" This means self-control in contrast to hysteria. The sober spirit is poised and stable.

Next, the saints are urged to have the optimistic, forward-looking mind: *rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.* The assurance of Christ's return is held out as a compelling motive for endurance through the storms and tribulations of life. The revelation of Jesus Christ is generally taken to refer to His coming back to earth when He will be revealed in glory.

In verses 14-16, the subject is the obedient mind. Obedient children should not indulge in the sins which characterized them in their former life. Now that they are Christians, they should pattern their life after the One whose name they bear. If they conform to the ungodly world, they are denying their heavenly character. The things they did in the days of their ignorance should be put away. The former lusts means the sins they indulged in while they were still ignorant of God.

Instead of imitating the ungodly world with its fads and fashions, our lives should reproduce the holy character of the One who called us. To be godly means to be Godlike. God is holy in all His ways. If we are to be like Him, we must be holy in all that we do and say. In this life we will never be as holy as He is, but we should be holy because He is.

Peter reaches back into the OT for proof that God expects His people to be like Himself. In Leviticus 11:44, the Lord said: "*Be holy, for I am holy.*" Christians are empowered to live holy lives by the indwelling Holy Spirit. OT saints did not have this help and blessing. But since we are more privileged, we are also more responsible. The verse Peter quotes from Leviticus acquires a new depth of meaning in the NT. It is the difference between the formal and the vital. Holiness was God's ideal in the OT. It has assumed a concrete, everyday quality with the coming of the Spirit of truth.

The imminent return of Christ should motivate us to live for Him. This means being mentally alert ("think clearly"), disciplined ("exercise self-control"), and focused ("look forward"). Are you ready to meet Christ, living as God's obedient child?