

2015

## Guarded by God

by Bill Lockwood

An inspiring passage to NT Christians is Peter's encouragement that Christians are guarded by God (1 Peter 1:4-5). In fact, in the context the apostle explains God's **two-fold** guardianship. **One**, our inheritance in heaven is guarded, and; **Two**, Christians themselves are protected. Examine both of these points.

*First, the Christian Inheritance is Guarded in Heaven.* Because of God's great mercy (1:3) the Christian has been "born again" unto a "living hope." This hope based upon the historical fact of Jesus' resurrection from the dead (3). It is a hope for "an inheritance that cannot perish... **guarded** in heaven for you."

The word "guarded" is a participle of the perfect tense which simply means that the eternal inheritance is *already in heaven* and is being "reserved" for the Christian. No burglars or bandits can break in and steal it. One writer observed that this is an "Inflation Proof Investment!" "If people have too much money, prices go up and dollars buy less. Then the Federal Reserve Board raises prime interest rates, people have less money, and prices stabilize. So the theory goes. Fortunately, none of the laws of economics apply to salvation. Everyone can have it; money cannot buy it; and the value never depreciates" (*Life Application Bible Commentary*, 27).

*This* (Christ) is our investment plan for the future. God "keeps a huge escrow account for you in heaven. That's why we must take the Bible as our only real Prospectus. It reads: Don't worry; serve God heartily; the future looks really good with God in control."

*Second, the Christian himself is Guarded by God.* The actual wording is: "by the *power of God* being guarded ..." Contrast is here shown by the Greek. We are *presently being guarded* (continuous action). Or, we may put it, the reward is completed and "kept"; but the heirs are currently *being guarded*.

Peter does not stop here, however. Christians are being guarded *through faith*. Here is input. Here is cooperation. In spite of the fact that the immediate recipients were "being put to grief in a multitude of trials" Peter assures them that these fires would only serve to demonstrate the *genuineness of their faith*. Severe testing and persecution normally do not tend to cause joy. But the apostle reminds us all that these trials only demonstrate that when our faith remains intact it shows to be very precious indeed! (7)

When Peter wrote Christians had become targets for four reasons: (1) They refused to worship the emperor as a god and were viewed as atheists and traitors. (2) They refused to worship at pagan temples. (3) They did not support the Roman ideals of self, power, and conquest and Romans scorned their self-sacrifice. (4) They exposed the horrible immorality of pagan culture. (Ibid.). This was why "it was necessary" (v. 6) that they suffer.

Be sure of this. No amount of pain or suffering escapes God's notice. To remain faithful makes our faith "more precious than gold that is tested by fire."