

INTRODUCTION 引言

Today is Superbowl Sunday. Two professional football teams will compete for the championship. Tomorrow morning people will savor the exciting moments in the game. It may be an incredible catch, a sneaky run, or a critical defensive play. Many people idolize the players. They are big, strong and fast. They are also rich and famous. But few people pay attention to the price those athletes pay to achieve all that. There are gruesome conditioning and skill training. They follow a strict diet. They work under the summer heat and winter cold. There are risks of minor and even career-ending injuries. Being hit by a 300-pound guy at full speed is no fun. To the fans, the games are like drama series. The show will go on. New personnel will replace the retired ones. But to the players, they invest the best part of their lives into something they are passionate about. When you think about it, being a Christian is quite similar to an athlete. One major difference is that there is no retirement. There is no Christian graduate, only Christian gradual. By God's grace, we walk by faith daily until the Lord calls us home. Apostle Peter wrote his two letters to encourage Christians living in the nowadays Turkey. He told them plainly that there would be hardships. There were false teachers and persecution. However, God is always with His faithful followers. The joy of eternal glory motivates them to overcome the difficulties in this life. Today, we too will encounter adversity. The same joy should energize us to live a victorious life. The lesson for us today is simply this: being a Christian needs hard work, but the reward will be great. With that in mind, we will now read 1 Peter 1:3-9. I want you to picture in your mind three columns as you listen to the reading. You sort out whether the things Peter mentions belong to the past, present or the future.

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. Saved from Iniquity 罪中得拯救

First, let us look at what happened in the past. Peter tells us in verse 3 that those who are saved by Jesus has been given a new life. In other words, they have been saved from iniquity. Peter says the removal of sin was a result of Christ's resurrection from the dead. How does that operate? Let me refer you to **Romans 6:5-7** – 5 If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. 6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin – 7 because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. We often read this passage when we have baptism. The water cannot save anyone. Only Jesus can save us. The process of going into and coming out from the water symbolizes that a person identifies with Jesus in His death and resurrection. Paul calls it “united with Christ.” This unity already occurred when a person admitted that he/she is a sinner, and agreed that Jesus died for him/her on the cross. Such person will receive a new life instantly. We can look at another familiar passage in **John 3:16**, Jesus said: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” Notice the grammar of the key verbs here. Those who believe in Jesus shall not perish. They are waived of the future judgment. Instead, believers have eternal life. This new life, or eternal life, in Christ begins the moment

when a person accepts Jesus. Very often, even long-time Christians mistakenly think that eternal life will not begin until they meet God in glory. Heaven is actually a continuation, not the starting point of eternal life. Children living in other cities often go home during holiday season. There is joy when family members see each other. A house is called a home because of the relationship. Similarly, Christians belong to the family of God. Going to heaven is just like traveling back home. But for now, we can enjoy God's presence every day. Therefore, we should urge non-believing friends and family members to accept Christ soon. Those who believe that becoming a Christian is all about going to heaven will become complacent. Those who think that baptism confers salvation are satisfied that their obligation is done once the ceremony is over. Both groups of people are happy to secure a passport to heaven. They say to God: "Thank You Lord. See You when I get there!" I am not judging whether or not those people are truly saved. God will make the final judgment. But there must be signs when there is a new life. Anyone can tell the difference between the animals in a zoo and those in the meat section of a grocery store. If you profess that you are a Christian, do you possess a new life? Do you love God? Do you hate sin like God does and desire to live a holy life with His help? Or are you still struggling helplessly with the sins of your past? Do you soak into His Word daily? Do you apply Biblical principles to your life? Do not judge others, but check yourself if you have a new life. Ask God for help if you realize that you need to make some adjustments to grow in your new life.

2. Saved for Infinity 永恆得獎賞

In Christ, we have been saved from our iniquity. Peter tells us in Christ, we are also saved for infinity. In this case, infinity means eternity. In Peter's letters, "salvation" often refers to a future event. For example, Peter says in verse 5 that believers will receive a salvation "is ready to be revealed in the last time." That is the time when Jesus returns. Those who believe in Jesus have received a new life. When Jesus comes back, they will also receive a new body. My two boys often call me "old man." I usually respond: "Wait till you get to my age!" How much do I look forward to a new body! Paul describes in [1 Corinthians 15:52](#) – In a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. In the ancient world, a messenger blew a horn when there was an important announcement. When Christians hear the sound of the trumpet, they know it is time to go home. Every Christian will be given a new body, first the deceased believers, then the living ones. This is not a Sci-Fi movie but it is God's promise. Peter tells us that believers will also receive a reward when they reach heaven. Look at [verse 4](#): And into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade – kept in heaven for you. This reward is guaranteed for the recipients like an inheritance. Better still, it will never lose its value. Peter uses three words to describe it: it will not perish, spoil or fade. It is more permanent than fine diamonds. What kind of inheritance can we expect? Every Christian will receive a new body, an eternal home and will forever be in God's presence. Besides, there will be other rewards. Let me refer you to [1 Corinthians 3:12-14](#) – 12 If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, 13 his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. 14 If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. When we see God in glory, there will be a house inspection with fire. God will check if there is any lasting value in our work. The higher the value, the greater will be our reward. You may ask: what kind of work counts? We can think of things like leading people to Christ, supporting mission work or starting a new church. However, the key is

not your work but your mentality. Remember Jesus' parable of the talents? Two of the servants were praised because they diligently invested the money the master entrusted them. The third servant was condemned because he was lazy and did nothing. Also, in Jesus' parable of the sheep and goats, God complimented those who showed compassion to even strangers. They fed the hungry, poured water for the thirsty and cared for the afflicted. God stated that those who serve the least of the brothers will be like serving Him. Therefore, we do not need to do anything spectacular to have eternal value. One line in a Christian song says it well: we are reflection of God's perfection. Before you tell people that you are a Christian, you have to show it. For example, show kindness to others, appreciate people for their service or give them encouragement. Do it naturally without even realizing it. God will surely keep a record of your good work. In the process, you may even kick start a conversation about the gospel.

3. Saved in Infirmary 軟弱得幫助

In Christ we have been saved from iniquity. We are also saved for infinity. You may think: "That sounds nice. But my school assignments or my work projects are due this week." The gospel is good news because in Christ, we are also saved in our infirmity. Look at **verse 5**: Who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. God uses His power to shield us from harm, so that we can persevere through this life. Say you are going to a high crime area of the city. You may feel a little intimidated. Then, you see a police car after you arrive at your destination. You now feel protected. God uses His mighty power to shield His children. But that does not mean that we are invincible. Continue to read the **next verse**: In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. The eternal destination for believers is set. But there will still be challenges. Those who claim that everything will be fine after you become a Christian are naïve and wrong. We may suffer losses of all kinds: finance, health and relationship. But there must be a reason when God allows something to happen in our life. Peter states God's purpose in **verse 7**: These have come so that your faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. A goldsmith heats up the ore at a high temperature to burn away the impurities. Trials in our life verify whether our faith in God is strong or weak, or even true or fake. Most products undergo quality control before being sold. I love cars just like most guys do. At a certain auto-show, a manufacturer displays a crashed car in its booth. The message is clear: their cars can protect you in danger. After each crash test, engineers will reinforce the weaker areas. It is no fun when our faith suffers a bump. But God does not want us to focus solely on the hurt. He wants to reveal the areas we need to grow more. The process is called maturity. It is like doing exercise. Why torture yourself when you can sit all day to watch TV or play computer games? It is not because you love the pain, it is about what you can gain. You want to get stronger, sleep better and feel more energized. Similarly, God wants to prepare us for a bigger test. Peter says after we overcome the trials of this life, it will result in praise, glory and honor. We will receive a reward from God and His heart will be pleased. You may be facing some unique challenges that no one will ever encounter. The same God who worked in the Bible characters is also working in your life. Rely on Him! However, God does not want us to be loners. He puts us in a community called a church so that we can cheer each other up. One thing the pandemic teaches us is that relationship is vital. Social media and Zoom help us connect with each other to some extent. But we long for the day when we can take down our masks to see a

real smile, visit others at home and are not afraid to shake hands and hug each other. For now, please do not isolate yourself from others church members. Take advantage of the resources we have to share our burdens, encourage and pray for one another. Let us experience God's grace together.

CONCLUSION 結論

Being a Christian needs hard work, but the reward will be great. God is always on our side. In Christ, we are saved from our iniquity and saved for infinity. While we are still in this world, God also saves us from our infirmity. Let me conclude with an interesting story. In December 11 of last year, Arizona State University football team beat its rival University of Arizona by a score of 70 to 7. A player caught people's attention. His name is Peizhang He. Yes, He is a Chinese. In fact, he was born in the Canton Province. He goes by Jackson, named after the famous singer Michael Jackson. Jackson's football career started when his parent sent him to San Diego to finish the last year of high school. Jackson was walking on the campus one day when a stranger pointed at him and said: "Hey, man you look big. You should play football." Jackson had nothing else to do after school anyway. The coach saw the potential in Jackson. He worked hard to overcome barriers in both sport and English. He was assigned to play a running back. After a series of events, Jackson was admitted to Arizona State. When he heard that the football program was recruiting walk-on players, he went to volunteer himself. Both the coaches and the players liked the enthusiasm and diligence in Jackson. One day, he told an equipment personnel that it would be cool to print his name in Chinese characters on his jersey. The guy did not promise anything. It brought Jackson to tears when received his shirt. At that game in December, Jackson scored the last touchdown. Everyone went crazy. The head coach presented Jackson the game ball. The College Football Hall of Fame even intends to display his jersey in its exhibition hall. Jackson appreciates all the support from everyone. But he knows his journey barely begins. His goal is to improve his skills every day so that he can perform better. We are inspired by a story like Jackson's. In fact, God has been writing our life-stories too. He chose us by His will to become His children. Our circumstances are God's training grounds to mature our faith. We can turn obstacles into stepping stones when we follow His guidance. Sometimes we have small victories, other times we suffer setbacks. But God never stops polishing us until we reach the final destination.

INTRODUCTION 引言

今天是超級盃星期日。兩隊職業美式足球隊將爭奪冠軍。明天早上，人們將回味比賽中的精彩片段。那可能是令人難以置信的接球、偷偷摸摸的帶跑或關鍵的防守戰略。許多人崇拜那些球員。他們又高大又強壯跑得又快。他們既有名又有利。但是很少有人注意這些運動員為了得到一切所需要付出的代價。他們要經過艱苦的體能和技術訓練。他們遵循嚴格的飲食習慣。他們在炎夏和寒冬都要工作。他們要冒著輕度甚至嚴重受傷的風險。被一個重達 300 磅的傢伙全速撞倒絕對不是開玩笑的事。對粉絲來說，球賽就像連續劇。節目會繼續進行。新的球員會接替退休的人。但是對於運動員來說，他們將一生中最精華的時刻投入在他們熱愛的事情上。想想看，成為基督徒與運動員非常相似。一個主要的分別是基督徒不會退休。世上沒有基督徒的畢業生，只有基督徒的漸進學員。靠著神的恩典，我們每天憑信而活，直到主呼召我們回家。使徒彼得寫了兩封信，鼓勵生活在今天土耳其一帶的信徒。他坦誠地告訴他們，前面將會有困難。他們要面對假教師和信仰迫害。但是，神一直會與忠心的跟隨者同在。因著永恆榮耀而帶來的喜樂能激勵他們克服這一生的困難。今天，我們也將遇到逆境。同樣的喜樂也能幫助我們過得勝的生活。今天我們要學習的功課很簡單：做基督徒需要花苦工，但是獎賞將是極大的。有了這一點背景之後，我們現在來讀彼得前書 1:3-9。我希望大家一邊聽的時候在腦海中描繪出三列空欄。你嘗試分辨彼得所提到的事情是屬於過去、現在還是未來。

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. Saved from Iniquity 罪中得拯救

首先，讓我們看看過去發生的事情。彼得在第 3 節告訴我們，那些被耶穌救贖的人得到了新生命。換句話說，他們已經從罪中得到拯救。彼得說，罪的除去是基督從死裡復活的結果。具體到底是如何操作的？讓我們來看羅馬書 6:5-7 - **5 我們若在他死的形狀上與他聯合，也要在他復活的形狀上與他聯合；6 因為知道我們的舊人和他同釘十字架，使罪身滅絕，叫我們不再作罪的奴僕；7 因為已死的人是脫離了罪。**我們經常在舉行浸禮時讀這段經文。水不能救任何人。只有耶穌才能拯救我們。進出水面的過程象徵著一個人在耶穌的死和復活中與祂認同。保羅稱之為「與基督聯合」。這個聯合是當一個人承認自己是個罪人，並且相信耶穌為他死在十字架上時已經發生了。這樣的人將立即獲得新的生命。我們可以看一下約翰福音 3:16 一段熟悉的經文，耶穌說：「**神愛世人，甚至將他的獨生子賜給他們，叫一切信他的，不至滅亡，反得永生。**」請注意這裡一些關鍵動詞的語法。那些相信耶穌

的人不會滅亡。他們被免除了將來的審判。相反，他們能有永生。這個在基督裡的新生命或稱為永生是在一個人接受耶穌的那一刻就已經開始。很多時候，甚至是信主有一段時候的基督徒也誤解，以為永生是在榮耀裡與神相見時才會開始。天堂實際上是永生的延續，而不是永生的起點。住在其他城市的孩子們一般在過節時都會回家。與家人相聚會令人感到高興。房子被稱為家是由於血源的關係。同樣，基督徒是神家裡的成員。上天堂就像回家一樣。但是目前，我們在每一天都可以享受神的同在。因此，我們應該鼓勵仍未信主的朋友和家人趕快接受基督。那些以為做基督徒只是為了上天堂的人會甘於安逸。那些認為浸禮能帶來救恩的人會感到自滿，他們覺得儀式結束後任務就完成了。兩批人都很高興得到天堂的通行證。他們對神說：「感謝主。到時候再見！」我不是在評論那些人是否真正得救了。神會做出最終的審判。但是有了新生命就必然會有生命的跡象。任何人都可以分辨出動物園中的動物與超市賣的肉之間的區別。如果你自稱是基督徒，你是否擁有新的生命？你愛神嗎？你是否像神一樣厭惡罪，並渴望在祂的幫助下過聖潔的生活？還是你仍在為過去的罪無奈地掙扎？你是否每天都泡在神的話語中？你有沒有把聖經原則應用在生活中？不要去論斷別人，只要審視自己是否真的有新生命。如果你發現自己需要作出一些調整才能在新生命中不斷成長，請尋求神的幫助。

2. Saved for Infinity 永恆得獎賞

在基督裡，我們已經從罪中得拯救。彼得告訴我們，在基督裡我們也會得到永恆的獎賞。在今天的信息中，英文的「無限」意味著永恆。在彼得的書信中，「救恩」常常是指未來的事情。例如，彼得在第 5 節中說，信徒將來會獲得「到末世要顯現的救恩」。那是指耶穌再來的時候。相信耶穌的人已經得到了新生命。耶穌回來時，他們還會得到一個新的身體。我的兩個兒子經常稱呼我「老人」。我通常會回答：「等你到我的年紀你就會明白！」我多麼期待新的身體！保羅在哥林多前書 15:52 中描述 – 就在一霎時，眨眼之間，號筒末次吹響的時候。因號筒要響，死人要復活成為不朽壞的，我們也要改變。在古代世界，有重要消息宣佈時，信差就會吹起號角。當基督徒聽到號角的聲音時，他們知道是時候回家了。每個基督徒都會得到一個新的身體，首先是已經過世的信徒，然後是還活著的人。這不是科幻電影，而是神的應許。彼得告訴我們，信徒們到達天堂時也會得到獎賞。看第 4 節：可以得著不能朽壞、不能玷污、不能衰殘、為你們存留在天上的基業。就像繼承遺產一樣，那些獎賞是保證能拿到的。更美的是，它永遠不會貶值。彼得用三個用詞來形容：不能朽壞、不能玷污、不能衰殘。它比優質的鑽石更持久。我們可以期望什麼樣的基業？每一個基督徒都會得到一個新的身體、一個永恆的家和永遠與神同在。此外，還會有其他獎賞。讓我們來看哥林多前書 3:12-14 – 12 若有人用金、銀、寶石、草木，禾楷在這根基上建造，13 各人的工程必然顯露，因為那日子要將他表明出來，有火發現；這火要試驗各人的工程怎樣。14 人在那根基上所建造的工程若存得住，他就要得賞賜。當我們在榮耀裡見到神的時候，祂會進行房屋的

檢驗。神會檢查我們的工作是否有永恆的價值。價值越高，我們的獎賞就越大。你可能會問：什麼樣的工作才算有價值？我們可以想到諸如帶領人信主、支持宣教事工或建立新的教會之類的事情。但是，關鍵不是你的工作，而是你的心態。還記得耶穌所講才幹的比喻嗎？其中兩個僕人受到稱讚，因為他們勤奮地投資主人委託給他們的金錢。第三位僕人因為懶惰而無所事事被責備。此外，在綿羊和山羊的比喻中，神讚賞那些表現出同情心的人。他們分食物給饑餓的人、拿水給口渴的人並照顧患病的人。神說做在一個最少的弟兄身上的事情就等於做在祂的身上。因此，我們不需要做任何壯觀的事情也能產生永恆的價值。一首基督徒歌曲中的一句歌詞扼要地說明了這一點：我們的生命應該是反映神的完美。在告訴別人你是基督徒之前，你必須證明你的確是。例如，對他人表示友善、感謝別人的服務或給予別人鼓勵。當你自然地流露時，你甚至不用思考便會表現出來。神會記得你的好行為。在這過程中，你甚至可能引發起福音的話題。

3. Saved in Infirmary 軟弱得幫助

在基督裡，我們從罪中得拯救。我們在永恆裡也會得到獎賞。你可能會想：「聽起來不錯。但是我這一週還有學校的作業或工作的項目必須完成。」福音是個好消息，是因為在基督裡，我們的軟弱能得到幫助。看第 5 節：**你們這因信蒙神能力保守的人，必能得著所預備，到末世要顯現的救恩。**神運用祂的能力來保護我們免受傷害，以便我們能夠在一生中持守信心。假設你要去城裡某個犯罪率高的地區。你可能會感到有些膽怯。當你到達目的地後，你看到一輛警車在那裡。你就頓時感到被保護了。神使用祂強大的能力來保護祂的兒女。但這並不意味著我們就能刀槍不入。繼續閱讀下一節經文：**因此，你們是大有喜樂；但如今，在百般的試煉中暫時憂愁。**信徒們永恆的終點已經設定了。但是他們仍然會碰到挑戰。一些聲稱在你成為基督徒之後就會一帆風順的人是幼稚和錯誤的。我們可能會遭受各種損失：財務、健康和人際關係。但是，神允許發生的事情一定有祂的美意。彼得在第 7 節中說明了神的旨意：**叫你們的信心既被試驗，就比那被火試驗仍然能壞的金子更顯寶貴，可以在耶穌基督顯現的時候得著稱讚、榮耀、尊貴。**一個金匠把礦物在高溫下加熱，將雜質燒掉。我們生命中的試煉證明了我們對神的信心是強還是弱，甚至是真還是假。大多數產品在銷售前都要經過質量控制。像大多數男士一樣，我喜歡汽車。在某個車展中，一家製造商在其攤位上展示一輛撞毀的汽車。信息很明確：他們的汽車可以在危險中保護你。每次碰撞測試後，工程師將鞏固較脆弱的地方。當我們的信心受到碰撞時，我們會覺得不好受。但是神不希望我們只專注於傷害中。祂想揭示我們需要進一步成長的地方。這是信心成熟的過程。就像做運動一樣。若你可以整天坐著看電視或玩電腦遊戲時，為什麼要折磨自己？這不是因為你喜歡苦待自己，而是因為你可以得到的東西。你想變得更強壯、睡眠更好或精力更充沛。同樣，神希望我們為更大的考驗做好準備。彼得說，在我們克服了今生的磨難之後，將帶來稱讚、榮耀和尊貴。我們將從神那裡得到獎賞，祂的心也會喜悅。你可

能面臨著沒人會遇到的一些獨特的困難。在聖經人物生命中作工的神也在你的生命中作工。依靠祂！但是，神不希望我們做獨行俠。祂把我們帶進一個叫做教會的群體，以便我們可以互相鼓勵。大流行使我們明白一件事，就是關係是至關重要的。社交媒體和 Zoom 可以在某程度上幫助我們彼此聯繫。但是，我們渴望有一天可以摘下口罩，看到對方真正的笑容、去拜訪別人、並且不怕跟別人握手和擁抱。但在目前，請不要把自己和其他教會成員孤立起來。請善用各樣資源，彼此分擔重擔、互相鼓勵和禱告。讓我們一起體驗神的恩典。

CONCLUSION 結論

做基督徒需要花苦工，但是獎賞將是極大的。神常與我們同在。在基督裡，我們從罪中被拯救出來，在永恆裡會得到獎賞。當我們仍然活在世間時，神也使我們在軟弱中得到幫助。讓我用一個有趣的故事作總結。去年 12 月 11 日，亞利桑那州立大學的橄欖球隊以 70 比 7 的高分擊敗了死對頭亞利桑那大學。一名球員引起了人們的注意。他名叫何佩璋。沒錯，他是個華人。實際上，他出生在廣州市。他替自己取了個洋名叫傑克遜（Jackson），是根據名歌手邁克爾·傑克遜（Michael Jackson）的名字命名的。傑克遜的美式足球生涯始於他的父母送他到聖地亞哥完成高中最後一年的學習。有一天，傑克遜在校園裡散步時，一個陌生人指著他說：「嘿，老兄，你的個子那麼高大。你應該去打美式足球。」傑克遜想反正他下課後也沒事幹。教練看到了傑克遜的潛力。他努力克服運動和英語方面的障礙。他被分配到帶球跑的位置。經過一系列的事件後，傑克遜被接亞利桑那州立大學錄取了。當他聽說足球隊正在招募自薦的球員時，他就去應徵了。教練和球員都喜歡傑克遜的熱情和勤奮。有一天，他告訴一名負責設備的工作人員，如果他的球衣上的名字印上漢字會很酷。那個人並什麼答應會怎樣做。當傑克遜拿到球衣時，他掉下眼淚了。在 12 月的那場比賽中，傑克遜拿到最後一個得分的機會。全場所有人都快要瘋了。後來總教練把比賽用的球送給傑克遜作紀念。大學橄欖球名人榜甚至打算把他的球衣放在展覽館。傑克遜感謝大家的支持。但是他知道他的運動旅程才剛剛開始。他的目標是每天提高技術，使自己有更好的表現。我們被傑克遜的故事激勵了。實際上，神也一直在寫我們的人生故事。祂以主權揀選我們成為祂的孩子。我們的遭遇是神培育我們信心的訓練場所。當我們聽從祂的指導時，我們可以將障礙變成墊腳石。有時我們取得小小的勝利，而其他時候則遭受挫折。但是，神會不停地塑造我們，直到我們到達終點。