

2 elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:

Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

Now that's a lot of big words and your brain probably didn't process all of it easily because they're not just big words, they're big concepts too. Notice, Peter calls his readers predestined pilgrims or elect exiles. Those two ideas don't seem to fit together very well at first. How can you be chosen by God, elect according to His foreknowledge, and a wandering pilgrim or exile at the same time? If God is on your side, how can your life be so tenuous and unsettled, full of challenges, struggles, and trials?

And the answer is: Christians are predestined, chosen by God, elect for His purposes, but those purposes are not ultimately fulfilled here on earth. And so, in a sense, we're just passing through – we're refugees on our way to a better life. Eternity does make a difference in our daily lives, but we're living out of our spiritual suitcases, we're not fully settled in. And that tension is going to be the basis for most of the struggles Peter addresses in this book, and the things you face you too. You're predestined and elect for something great, but it's not all going to happen here.

Scripture clearly says:

Hebrews 13:14 For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come.

Christians are, primarily, citizens of the Kingdom of God. On earth we are temporary residents in a foreign land, sojourners and travelers. We're just passing through, though we desire to have a positive impact while we're here. This is why you can find Christians in Communist China as well as Western democracies. You can find Christians in Islamic Republics and Constitutional Monarchies. The church thrives under certain conditions and suffers under others, but it can exist anywhere God chooses to save or scatter His people because we seek the Heavenly city of the new Jerusalem. Our hope is not found in the thriving cities or the slow pace of small towns or the secluded get away spots of earth.

And to the degree you are confused about that, you will experience angst and frustration on earth. And so, today, people, including many Christians are upset because this world and their lives doesn't look the right way. They've forgotten, or they never really understood, that we're exiles, pilgrims, with our hearts set on eternity. We're not trying to build a better kingdom here and now.

And they forget, or never fully understood, that it's all God's doing. We're not just pilgrims, we're predestined pilgrims. We're not just exiles, we're elect exiles - [according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ](#)

Do you notice the reference there to the Trinity? The Father, Son, and Spirit collaborate for our salvation and destiny and all of this is very important for you to know. You need to

know that God knows you, sees you, is at work in your life, that even as you suffer in this world, as you go through difficult seasons and endure difficult relationships, perhaps even face hostility, you need to know that God knows, and that He has chosen you.

You also need to know that God's choice was not random or uninformed, it was [according to \[His\] foreknowledge](#) which is an aspect of His omniscience, the fact that He knows all things. In other words, God knows everything about you – everything you have done, are doing, and will do, and He still chose you. That should encourage you. It certainly encouraged Peter who is writing this.

We mentioned his denial of Jesus earlier. Well, Jesus actually told him he would do it before it ever happened. And Peter said, "No way. I'm willing to die for You." Peter didn't believe he could ever deny Jesus, but Jesus knew he would and told him, after you do, and you repent, come back and strengthen the rest of the group. In other words, God knew that Peter would fail, and He made plans for Peter's ministry afterwards.

Again, that should be encouraging to you! God knows what a mess you can be, or have been, or are right now. He knows what you're struggling with. He knows what you're fighting through. But you're chosen. Predestined. Elect. Those are Bible words. Spoken by God. And they're meant to give you hope. They're meant to tell you: God has better plans for you. And it's not sentimental syrup, it's Scripture.

That's why He has and is, sanctifying you according to the Spirit.

You're sanctified as soon as you're saved. You receive a new, holy purpose. But then you grow in sanctification as God shapes you into more and more of the man or woman, He wants you to be. So, you might be way down here on the whining, crying, barely crawling spiritual infant side of sanctification, or you may be growing in strength and wisdom and stature in sanctification, but the Holy Spirit is constantly trying to lead you.

You remember our studies in Galatians – the question is: are you walking according to the flesh or the Spirit? Producing works of the flesh, or fruit of the Spirit? God wants to grow you in sanctification, will you participate, or resist?

We've seen the work of the Father and of the Spirit in your life, and it all comes together with [obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ](#).

At some point you were obedient to gospel. You heard the news that you were a sinner, that you have chosen to do things your way instead of God's way and that even when you tried to do things God's way, you could never do it well enough. You could never quite reach God's standards, or hold them consistently. You need forgiveness and help. And so, you turned to Jesus. And there you received the sprinkling of His blood.

You exchanged your inability for His perfection. He took on your faults and failures and the penalties they deserved, and He suffered and died on the cross in your place, rescuing you for all of eternity.

Christian, this is who you are. You are an elect exile, a predestined pilgrim, because of the work of God, because of all that He already knew about you and has already done for you. This should be encouraging as you face difficult or uncertain times. It should give you hope for the future – God knew who you are, what you would be up against, where you would live and who you would live with, and He chose you anyway, from the beginning.

I think of Peter like a coach motivating the team before a big game. He's knows what they're up against. He knows there will be some struggles, some challenges. He knows they're going to get knocked around a bit. But he encourages them to remember who they are and go out there, take the court or take the field or take the ice, and show their opponents who what they've got.

It reminds me of the way I've been trying to encourage you – I know it's hard right now. I know we all hate wearing masks. I know we can't believe the things we see happening online or in the news. I know we can't believe the things people say and do. These are dark and difficult days, but church, you were made for this! You were made to shine like lights in the darkness. God knew exactly what 2020 would bring and exactly what 2021 holds, and He chose *you* to be here now, to live through this.

But He didn't choose you to do it alone – the Father is at work in you, the Spirit is at work in you, the Son is at work in you, and He has placed you in the church, surrounded with other Christians to help you and to be helped by you. We were made for this, chosen for this, elected for this, predestined, for this. So,

[\(verse 2\) Grace to you and peace be multiplied.](#)

Not just grace, not just peace, grace and peace; [grace to you and peace be multiplied](#), sufficient for all your needs, whatever you face. This was written to Christians facing actual, active, persecution for their faith from the Roman government, the Jews, and their own families. It was not political peace, or societal peace, it was personal peace, transcendent peace, down at the bottom of your soul peace. Do you have it today Christian?

On the night before His crucifixion, in the Upper Room, during the Last Supper, Jesus told the disciples:

[John 14:27](#) "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

He said this knowing Peter would deny Him. Knowing Judas would betray Him. Knowing the disciples would abandon Him. Knowing He would be beaten and face a horrific form of slow execution. And yet, He had peace and He leaves it with us. Now, you tell me, if this peace was sufficient for what Jesus faced, is it enough for you and your issues?

Later on, the Apostle Paul would write *from jail* to the church in Philippi, encouraging them:

Phil 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

God's will for you is grace and peace, even in difficult days. You go through the same things everyone else goes through, but you do it differently. You react differently. You endure differently *because God is with you*, you are His elect, His chosen, His children. You know He is with you, working for you and in you and on you, and that He has prepared a future for you – that you are a pilgrim, but you're headed for an eternal home.

Read with me:

3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Let's talk about some of the many benefits we find crammed into the verses.

First of all, notice God has **begotten us again to a living hope**. He has caused us to be born-again. Children have nothing do with their own birth. They have nothing to do with the timing, the location, the circumstances. They are acted upon. God has done the same with us.

It can be hard to accept, it causes you to ask all sorts of philosophical questions, and yet there it is, plain as can be in Scripture: God has begotten you, according to His abundant mercy. You can, and should, wrestle with what that means for your free will, but you can't take the force out of the simple statement – God called you, summoned you, and gave you new life through the resurrection of Jesus, because He's merciful and He wanted to.

And notice, He has begotten us, or caused us to be born **again to a living hope**, a sure hope. God doesn't give you a fragile, or a maybe hope, it's a hope that looks to the past, sees what has been done and, in light of that, trusts what the future will bring.

It's **a living hope**, relevant here and now. It's alive. Or is it? I mean, in your life, right now, is hope alive? Is it thriving, dominant, shading everything else that happens? Are you eternally optimistic because you're confident in eternity? Or is your living hope struggling a bit? Gathering dust over in the corner, perhaps living under the stairs like Harry Potter at the Dursleys'?

Let me just ask it straight out: how much impact does the **living hope** you've been given, as a gift from God, affect your daily life?

What I've noticed in myself and a lot of others is that we haven't completely given up hope, but we place it in the wrong things. Some people put their hope in politics and legislation and judicial appointments. Some people put their hope in a recount. Others put their hope in a new administration. People put their hope in a vaccine. Some people put their hope in a national conversation over important issues. People put their hope in relationships with friends or the hope of a spouse. You can put your hope in your job and in your boss and in her recommendation for your promotion or next assignment.

We put our hope in all kinds of things, but what about this [living hope](#) that we have from God?

Now, those other things aren't bad, but they're like the furniture and decorations in our lives – this [living hope](#) is more about: where is your home going to be? What it looks like inside is important, it has an impact, yes, but what's your address? Where is the house located? Are you looking at life with the right priorities and perspective? Are you building on the foundation of eternity, or have you reversed things?

Too many of us are trying to build our dream house here and now, on the foundation of daily life in 21st century America and then we try to decorate a room or two inside with the hope of eternity. But God doesn't promise you the American dream, He doesn't promise you a comfortable middle-class life in the suburbs, He promises you [a living hope, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away.](#)

My friends, we must work to remind each other that the chief aim, or goal of our lives is to know God and enjoy Him forever – that's the foundation, that's the address, everything else is decoration in the rooms and landscape in the yard.

God promised the land of Israel to the people of Israel. It was to be their inheritance. But you remember their history. They defiled the land by worshipping foreign gods, building foreign altars, offering pagan sacrifices and running after their own desires. And, they were oppressed by outsiders. They were attacked, invaded, driven out of the land and into captivity. These things happened over and over *to their inheritance*.

But ours is different. We are not promised a country. We are not promised a land. God showed us, that arrangement didn't work. His desire all along was to reach the entire world, to save people from every tribe, tongue, and ethnicity – representatives from every people group on earth. The Christian inheritance is not a region of earth marked off with borders and a flag.

Our inheritance is God Himself; we get a relationship instead of a region. We look to the promise of Heaven, yes, but it's not about the real estate, it's about the owner of the estate – we are headed to *our Father's house*.

The joy of heaven is not what you experience there, but Who. You have direct relationship with Him who can never change or be defiled. We catch a glimpse of this even in Old

Testament Israel. Land was allotted to tribes, the different descendants of Joseph, whose name was changed to Israel; each had their own region of inheritance. Except the tribe of Levi, the tribe of priests, they were to be scattered throughout the land in smaller cities. As God told Aaron, the high priest:

Numbers 18:20 ...“You shall have no inheritance in their land, nor shall you have any portion among them; I *am* your portion and your inheritance among the children of Israel.”

Do you think Aaron felt ripped off? Do you think he was like, “Well gee God, you know my cousins are getting some really nice property in the mountains, kind of nice views up there. Or these guys got beachfront property on the coast. Can you hook me up?”

Do you think Aaron was satisfied with inheriting a direct relationship with God?

Don't you have that living hope right now? But, are you dissatisfied? And if so, why? Has your attention and focus shifted to the wrong things? Are you more concerned with the decoration and furnishing than with the foundation and location of your life?

One last thing to point out here and it has to do with home security. Today it's not uncommon for people to have video surveillance on their front door or steps. Whether it's to see who's coming or to defend yourself against porch pirates stealing your Amazon deliveries, people have wired up video cameras everywhere in an effort to protect and defend what they have – it's like Jesus knew what He was talking about when we warned us against storing up treasure on earth where thieves break in and steal.

But when it comes to your eternal identity and inheritance, who is protecting and preserving you? Peter says (vs 5) **you ... are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.**

Our inheritance is being protected, and so are we. The idea here is that of a military guard or garrison. You're in protective custody. Like the Secret Service guarding the President, your eternal salvation is secure because no one and nothing can defeat or distract God and sabotage or steal it.

Now, that doesn't mean you'll never be attacked. It doesn't mean you won't feel threatened at times. It doesn't mean you're going to live this charmed life. It just means the attacks can never ultimately succeed. You can never accidentally lose your eternal inheritance or have it taken from you by force. You're elect, chosen, predestined.

You have *been* kept from the *penalty* of sin, you're *being* kept from the *power* of sin, and *one day*, you will be completely kept from the *presence* of sin – all because of what God has done for you.

So, how should you respond to all of this? With faith. Learn these things. Know these things. Rest in these things. Remember your living hope, even in this hostile world. Of

course, you're surrounded by pain and difficulty. Of course, you experience anger, frustration, depression, and intense desire. That's what God came to save you from.

So, bless [the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy](#) has done all these things for us. See the bigger picture.

This is Peter's message for the early church, and it is still God's message for the church today.

But, it's a message only for the church. It's only for the elect. Only for those who are predestined. God is unapologetically exclusive. No one goes to Heaven automatically, yet anyone who is willing to come is welcome to enter through the door of Jesus Christ. Remember, we are saved by the sprinkling of His blood. If you're hearing this message, I have absolute confidence that God wants you to be saved. He wants you to hear these things, know these things, and share these things with others.

If you have a Bible with you, turn with me over to Peter's next letter, 2nd Peter. And look at this – chapter three. In explaining why Jesus hasn't come back sooner, in explaining why we wait so long for God to wrap things up here on earth, the same Peter who says you're elect, you're predestined, says this:

2 Peter 3:8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day *is* as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. **9** The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

Maybe you've been elected or predestined to hear the call to repent instead of perish today. Maybe God has been patiently waiting for two thousand years, or a couple of days, for you.

Let's pray.