

"Born to a Living Hope"

1 Peter 1:1-5 *"¹Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as exiles, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are **chosen***

²according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to the obedience of Jesus Christ and the sprinkling of His blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

*³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to **be born again to a living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

*⁴to obtain an **inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and unfading**, having been **kept in heaven** for you*

*⁵who are **protected by the power of God** through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."*

Christians Are Born Again!

Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, sinners can be forgiven of their sins and establish an eternal relationship with Almighty God. Salvation by grace through faith is a great GIFT to mankind because ALL have sinned and have fallen short of God's glory. Since the wages of sin is death, there is no hope for anyone except by the mercy and grace of Almighty God through Jesus Christ.

In that regard, God decided to love the world such that He gave His only Son to die as the sacrifice for our sins so that whoever would trust in Him would not perish but would be forgiven and receive everlasting life (John 3:16).

This gift of salvation is received when sinners believe in our hearts that Christ is alive (*risen from the dead*) AND we confess with our mouths that Jesus is Lord (*submit to His absolute authority over our lives*), we are saved, forgiven, and granted eternal life.

Upon our trust and confession of Jesus as Lord, God rebirths us by placing His Holy Spirit in our lives, never to depart, and we become eternal beings with the certain promise of heaven. It is important to remember that no one deserves such salvation,

it is the result of our eternal relationship with the LORD based solely on His love, mercy and grace!

Unfortunately, we often view salvation as a **transactional**, contractual interaction whereby the “Christian” has the responsibility to perform appropriately (“want to do good and do one’s best to be good”) and in return God will fulfill His part of the salvific transaction (forgiveness and blessings).

Of course, there is a major problem with transactional salvation—the sinner has nothing to offer in the transaction but ungodliness! There is NOTHING “good” in us, about us, of us, or from us! We are completely incapable of goodness! We are sinners through and through! **God needs nothing and we have nothing “good” to offer!**

Mankind’s only hope is God’s mercy and grace through which we can be forgiven and changed by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit! If anything is ever good in our lives, it is only the abiding presence of God’s Holy Spirit!

Salvation is the Work of God

The miracle of salvation begins and ends with God! No one is ever worthy of being saved—all have sinned, continue to sin, and fall far short of God’s glory (Romans 3:23). However, while we were yet sinners, God so loved us that He gave His only Son to die as a sufficient sacrifice so that our sins could be forgiven, and we could have the privilege to know God and live as His children forever.

However, God’s gift of salvation—**His forgiveness**—is not only potentially available through His sacrificial love; it **is truly available through the convicting, justifying, and sanctifying power of God’s Holy Spirit.** In His incredible mercy and grace, God elects sinners, loves sinners, woe sinners, pursues sinners, convicts sinners, convinces sinners, converts sinners, indwells sinners, sanctifies sinners, and protects His regenerated servants forever!

It requires the action of the Trinitarian God to save mankind: we are created and chosen by the Father; purchased and forgiven by the Son; convicted, regenerated, and indwelt by the Spirit:

- As far as God the Father is concerned, I was saved when He chose me in Christ before the foundation of the world.
- As far as the Son is concerned, I was saved when He shed His blood for me on the cross.

- But as far as the Spirit is concerned, I was saved one Sunday night when at the age of eight, I heard the Gospel, responded by the gift of faith, and confessed Jesus as LORD!

In other words, all three Persons of the Godhead acted in my life to bring me to salvation!

Of course, not only was the Trinitarian God involved in my salvation, my mother, my Sunday school teachers, my pastor, and many faithful church members greatly influenced my faith and decision! In other words, we all have a part in God's plan to save sinners!

Peter's own example at Pentecost demonstrates that we do not "leave it all to God!" God not only **ordains the end**—our salvation—He also **ordains the means to the end**—preaching the gospel (Romans 10:14) and sharing our testimony (Acts 1:8).

Christians Have a Living Hope (vv.3-4)

Our hope is a living hope because it is based upon the living Word of God! It is a "living hope" because it assures eternal life to us. Because our hope is alive, it grows as we grow in faith and maturity. In our earthly lives, time diminishes and usually destroys hope—as we age, most hopes fade and die! But the passing of time only makes a Christian's hope more vibrant and glorious as God demonstrates His lifelong faithfulness and assures our eternal life with Him in heaven!

In our text, Peter called this hope ***an incorruptible inheritance is being reserved*** (1:4). As the born-again children of God, we share His inheritance in glory (cf. Romans 8:17-18; Ephesians 1:9-12). The incredible truth is that we are included in the last will and testament of Jesus, and we share the glory with Him (John 17:22-24).

Our inheritance is **incorruptible** (imperishable) (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:25; 15:52)—nothing can ruin it; **undefiled** (cf. Matthew 15:15-20; Acts 10:9-15)—nothing can stain or cheapen it; **unfading**—nothing can end it; eternal; and nothing can disappoint it; **joyful!**

What a thrilling and incredible expectation to realize that we have been born and destined for glory! When we were born again, we exchanged the fading glory of humanity for the eternal glory of God (cf. 2 Corinthians 3:7; 3:18)!

Not only is this glory ***being reserved*** for us, but we are ***being kept (guarded)*** for the glory! When we arrive in heaven, our eternal home and inheritance are guaranteed and reserved. In the meantime, we who are born-again are ***being kept (guarded)*** and transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit!

The word translated “protected” is a military word that means “guarded, shielded.” It is a present, passive Greek participle that means we are constantly being guarded and under the protection of Almighty God! In other words, we are not protected by our own power and means—my protection is not affected by my feeble strength or my wavering faithfulness—God has me! He will guard me and protect me until Jesus returns when we all share in the full revelation of His great salvation (cf. 1 Peter 1:9).

FOREKNOWLEDGE AND PREDESTINATION

In Greek, the term for “foreknowledge” is πρόγνωσις, *prognosis*, which expresses the idea of knowing reality before it is real and events before they occur

In Christian theology, *foreknowledge* refers to the all-knowing, omniscient nature of God whereby He knows reality before it really happens, all things and events before they occur, and all people before they exist (cf. Isaiah 41:23; 42:9; 44:6–8; 46:10; Psalm 139:15-16; 1 Peter 1:20; Acts 2:23; 4:28; Revelation 13:8). However, just because He sees and knows everything that will happen, this does NOT necessarily mean that He controls all that happens in the future.

The “*elect*” (ἐκλεκτός, elected or chosen) are those “*who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father*” (1 Peter 1:2). The question that arises is: “*Does foreknowledge imply predestination?*”

Some teach that before the beginning of creation, God intentionally created some to experience eternal life in heaven with Him; and He created others to experience eternal damnation separated from Him. These believers tend not to be very strong on evangelism since they believe people are saved by God’s predetermined will—this theology is typically called *Calvinism or Reformed Theology*¹.

On the other hand, others teach that God’s *selection* of the *elect* is a function of the individual’s decision to choose God. In this view, God’s *elect consists of* those who exercise faith (trust in Him as Lord) and are saved—His foreknowledge (ability to see and know the future) enables the Creator to know who will make that decision and,

¹ This theology was discussed in detail when we studied “ATONEMENT” during our study on “Difficult Theological and Biblical Words.”

therefore, by their own decision, as led by the Holy Spirit, to trust God are the *elect* (i.e., they *elect* Jesus as their SAVIOR!

In this understanding of predestination, a person's eternal destiny is both a function of divine choice [*"The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some consider slowness, but is patient toward you, not willing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance"* (2 Peter 3:9)—He chooses all] and the creature's choice [*"Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved"* (Romans 10:13)].

In this view of the *elect*, Because God knew (by His *foreknowledge*) who would trust Him, He declared their eternal identity and destiny before the foundation of the world [*"For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters"* (Romans 8:29; cf. Romans 11:2; Ephesians 1:4–5)].

The foreknowledge of God is much more than His ability to "*see the future.*" His foreknowledge is a true *understanding* of what will come to pass, which is determined by both God's and His creature's decisions. In other words, God *predestines* each person's destiny based on His foreknowledge of what each creature does. Therefore, foreknowledge is not just intellectual; it is personal, relational, and intentional! Since these believers understand that the God grants the individual the capacity to act in faith, they tend to be strong on evangelism—hence, this group is typically called *Evangelicals!*

The theology of foreknowledge and predestination is not settled doctrine among committed Christians. The means of salvation is not in dispute (*faith in Jesus as Lord*), but whether individuals have any ability to determine their salvation is in dispute. Therefore, I always advise, "*Live confidently like a Calvinist, but pray expectantly like an Arminian!*"