

Peter the apostle packs a lot of spiritual nuggets into this chapter to encourage the Christians of his day in the face of persecutions, reminding them of what they have through faith in Jesus Christ. As the persecutions of Christians continue to increase in our day, we also can find encouragement in the things that the apostle has to say.

Peter, of course, was one of the disciples called by Jesus Christ to spread the gospel. Theologians believe this epistle was written around 64 AD to encourage Christians facing persecutions as a result for Nero blaming them for the burning of Rome. It is also believed that Peter wrote this epistle 2-3 years before his death.

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

“Peter, an apostle [messenger; one sent] of Jesus Christ” - Peter identifies himself as the one writing the letter as well as being an apostle of Jesus Christ. He has been sent by Jesus Christ with the message of the gospel.

“to the strangers [pilgrims; foreigners] scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia” - Peter is writing to a specific set of Christians, calling them “strangers.” He could either be writing to Jewish Christians who are foreign to the Gentile regions he lists, or he may be writing to Christians in general who are foreign to this world, specifying the regions of Pontus, Galatia, etc. These regions encompass the area now known as Asia Minor where modern day country of Turkey is located.

“Elect [chosen] according to the foreknowledge [to know before; determine beforehand] of God the Father” - Peter calls the Christians he’s writing to the “elect” or chosen of God. This election is in accordance with the foreknowledge of God. The Greek word for “foreknowledge” is “prognosis” (to foretell the course and end result of a disease) and is used only one other place in scripture: **Acts 2:23** – Peter preaching on the Day of Pentecost, describing how that Jesus Christ was delivered to be crucified according to the plan and purpose of God: *“Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:”*

“through sanctification [consecration; to set apart] of the Spirit” - Because the Father has chosen us according to His foreknowledge, the Holy Spirit set us apart from the rest of humanity by dealing with us, convicting us of our sin, and bringing us to a saving knowledge of Christ. Thereafter the Spirit continues to work within us to transform us into the image of Christ.

“unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ” - The purpose of the sanctification of the Spirit: 1) to bring us into obedience to the Father, and 2) the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ on us. The sprinkling of blood refers to the OT sacrifices where the sprinkling of blood accomplished such things as sealing the covenant with the people and sanctifying the utensils of the temple. The sacrifices were sprinkled with blood, as well as the mercy seat on the Day of Atonement. It all pointed to the day when Christ ascended to heaven and sprinkled His own blood on the mercy seat in heaven in order to give us forgiveness for our sins (Heb. 9:19-28).

“Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied” - Typical greeting by the apostles.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” - Peter is giving praise to God, the Father of Jesus Christ. Jesus spoke often of His Father, and served Him as His God as we should always.

“which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again” - Peter’s praise to God is for what He has done in accordance with His abundant mercy. God has caused us to be “begotten again” (born again), whereby we have been brought in His kingdom.

“unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” - Being born again births us into a “lively” (living) hope that was obtained for us by Jesus Christ rising from the dead. Hope in the Bible describes not a possible outcome but a certain one. The resurrection of Christ guarantees life for us who are born again. See the 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians where Paul describes the importance of the resurrection.

“To an inheritance incorruptible [not susceptible to decay or deterioration], and undefiled [unspoiled; free from any defect]” - Our hope includes an inheritance that will not deteriorate in any way and is perfect in every way. **Matt. 6:20** *“But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:”*

“and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” - This inheritance is permanent. It will not expire nor will it be revoked. It will not be given to someone else who got there first, but has been reserved for each of us.

“Who are kept by the power of God” - Our ability to remain born again and eligible for this inheritance is not based on our own feeble and flawed human strength but on the power of God, the power that saved us to begin with. **Gal. 3:2-3** *“2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? 3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?”*

“through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed [apokalýptō] in the last time” - Faith is the conduit through which the power of God works in our lives. The salvation Peter is talking about is the completion of our salvation that will be accomplished when Jesus Christ returns and sets up His kingdom on this earth. More on this in verse 7...

6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: 7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: 8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: 9 Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

“Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness [made sorrowful] through manifold temptations” - Peter doesn't identify in what we rejoice until verses 7-8 (the fulfillment of our faith), but he does say here that we rejoice despite the sorrow brought on by various trials. Two things he says about these temptations: 1) they're temporary (“for a season”); 2) they are sometimes necessary and unavoidable (“if need be”). Living for Jesus Christ sometimes requires us to undergo persecution for His sake.

“That the trial [proof; tested and found genuine] of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth” - The temptations prove the genuineness of our faith and thus are a source of rejoicing. Peter describes gold as something that perishes despite it being a much sought-after commodity. Seeing our faith proved genuine is much more precious because it will not perish.

“though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing [apokálypsis; revelation] of Jesus Christ” - Just as fire doesn't destroy gold but rather purifies it, the testing of genuine faith only makes it stronger and more pure. Such faith results in praise, honor and glory when Jesus Christ appears. The word for “appearing” is the same John uses in Rev. 1:1 when he describes the book as “The Revelation of Jesus Christ.” Christ's identity was veiled to an extent the first time He came but the whole world will see exactly Who He is at His second coming as King of kings and Lord of lords.

“Whom having not seen, ye love” - Even though we've never seen Jesus Christ, faith enables us to love Him.

“in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory” - We rejoice in this One we love, the One in Whom we believe despite never having seen Him. Our faith enables us to rejoice with indescribable joy and our joy is full of His glory.

“Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls” - The end result of our faith is the salvation of our souls. Peter is not saying we aren't saved yet but that we will experience the full realization of it when Jesus Christ returns to this earth as King of kings and Lord of lords.

10 Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: 11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

“Of which salvation the prophets have enquired [to seek or search out] and searched diligently” - The coming of Christ (both first and second comings) was predicted by the prophets, but even they didn't understand all that the LORD revealed through them, nor was the revelation complete. They wanted to know more and so they searched their own prophecies as well as the other scriptures they had at the time.

“who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you” - Speaking of the prophets that predicted the grace that was coming through Jesus Christ.

“Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify” - The prophets tried to determine in what way and when their prophecies would be fulfilled that was given to them by the Spirit of Christ.

“when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow” - They predicted the sufferings of Christ in His first coming as well as His glorious second coming, although they didn't understand it all nor did they get to see it within their lifetimes.

12 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

“Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things” - Even though the prophets did not understand all the specifics of their prophecies, they did understand that these things concerning the Messiah (Christ) would not happen during their lifetimes but would be fulfilled in the future. Thus what they wrote benefited us who now have the historical record of the first coming of Jesus Christ and how He fulfilled their prophecies.

“which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven” - Those who preach the gospel of Jesus Christ are now reporting on the fulfillment of at least some of the things predicted by the prophets through the Holy Spirit. The prophecies not yet fulfilled will be fulfilled when Christ comes back the second time.

“which things the angels desire to look [to bend over and examine] into” - The Greek word for “look” implies putting forth some effort to look more closely at something, rather than casually looking at something. Not only did the prophets desire to know more about the grace of God through Jesus Christ, but the angels also are fascinated by the idea that a holy God would want to redeem fallen man. God has not revealed a plan to redeem the fallen angels but He did lay out a plan to redeem fallen men and women by sending His Son to die on the cross. How amazing a concept that must be to the angelic host!