

1\* ¶ Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen 2\* according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure. 3\* ¶ Blessed 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, 4\* to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5\* who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6\* ¶ In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, 7\* so that the proof of your faith, *being* more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 8\* and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9\* obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

Peters' purpose in writing this letter seems to be based on clearly making it known to his readers about the heavenly inheritance. He also follows Christ's example, if we would reflect back to the Sermon on the Mount and other passages where Jesus guarantees persecution for the believer, to give consolation to the persecuted, and to prepare them for a greater approaching ordeal. Peter exhorts all by letter's end - husbands, wives, servants, elders, and people to live as good citizens wherever they are, so as to give no reason for the enemy to reproach Christianity or the Gospel of Christ. Rather he would hope that they would win them to it, reminding them that they are established in the faith and others can be as well:

1Pt.5:12 Through Silvanus, our faithful brother (for so I regard *him*), I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it!

1 Pet.5:12 refers to Peter's exhortations throughout the Epistle grounded on testimony which he bears to the Gospel truth, already well known to his readers by the teaching of Paul in those churches. They were already introduced "into" (so the Greek, 1Pe 5:12) this grace of God as their safe standing-ground. Paul writes in 1Co 15:1, "I declare unto you the Gospel *"wherein ye stand."* As we stand in the Gospel we stand in Christ for we are placed in Him and He is the good news, He is the living Word. Therefore Peter does not, in this Epistle, set forth a complete statement of this Gospel doctrine of grace, but falls back on it as already known by those he is writing to.

Those to who he is writing understand the doctrines of grace: total depravity, unconditional election, particular atonement, irresistible grace and the perseverance of the saints. As they stand in this grace they are considered to be aliens.

**Vs.1 who reside as aliens**

All Christians, if they rightly consider their calling, must never settle themselves here in this temporal place and kingdom, but see themselves as travelers, sojourners and as pilgrims waiting for the consummation of Christ's kingdom to come in His person unto the praise of His glorious grace. Jesus taught us "My kingdom is not of this world". Yes we are members of His kingdom, but it is not of this present world or its system. The kingdom of God is within us and where ever we are there exists the kingdom of God, in small tracts as it were, as we gather as bodies of believers throughout this world. We should live as aliens and many times brethren we are made to be aliens in many lands and many places. We are not wanted. However we are God's chosen.

**Vs.1 who are chosen**

We are the chosen, the elect (KJV, NKJV, ESV) of God if we are standing in the grace of the gospel. The word chosen comes from -eklektos -to elect, to show favor, to select out from, which is synonymous with being the blessed of the Sermon on the Mount. We are the favored of God if we have genuinely repented and believed in Christ and have the promise of the kingdom of heaven as our own. "Many are called but few are chosen", said Jesus. And we are chosen,

**Vs. 2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father**

There is great misunderstanding of this word among many Christians. Inherent in this knowledge of God is a loving of the object of His knowledge.

Foreknowledge here signifies the free favor and good will of God, which is the fountain from whence the decree of election proceeds; and then we are to take *elect* in the sense, and so *elect according to the foreknowledge of God*, as being eternally designed unto eternal life, according to, or out of, that free grace and love which God did from eternity bear towards them, which was the only motive he had for his choosing them.

The father had an intimate relationship with the Son,

**1Pe 1:20\* For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you.**

Now this election is a work of the Holy Spirit.

**Vs.2. by( in or through) the sanctifying work of the Spirit,**

The "election" of God is realized and manifested "IN" their sanctification.

Believers are "sanctified through the offering of Christ once for all" (Heb 10:10). "Thou must believe and know that thou art holy; not, however, through thine own piety, but through the blood of Christ", Martin Luther

So we must determine what is sanctification?

Sanctification is the Spirit's setting apart of the saint as consecrated to God. It is the execution of God's *choice* (Gal. 1:4). God the Father gives us salvation by gratuitous election; the Son earns it by His blood-shedding; the Holy Spirit applies the merit of the Son to the soul by the Gospel word as Jesus meant when He said "you are washed by the Word". We must hear the gospel and respond with repentance and faith to show we have been regenerated and washed by the word. We are sanctified

**Vs.2 , to obey Jesus Christ**

There is no other reason to be set apart by God for God's purposes.

Paul wrote that we are saved to do the works God has ordained for us.

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. (Ephesians 2:10, NAS95).

Heaven is not our good works it is a benefit of being the elect unto God's glory.

We are not saved to go to heaven, although we are going to be in the kingdom forever. We go to heaven because we are saved.

So much of our preaching the gospel is result oriented rather than Christ centered.

The purpose of the gospel is for God to call His elect from the corners of the world for His purposes.

And that is revealed in that we are called

unto *obedience*-the result or *end aimed at* by God as respects us, is the *obedience* which consists in faith, and that which flows from faith; as Peter writes "obeying the truth through the Spirit" (1Pe 1:22); as Paul writes, Ro 1:5, "obedience to the faith,"

We must show the fruit of faith in our obedience.

So let's hold here for the morning and see how we can apply this standing in the faith as aliens living obediently in a land that is not ours.

We are aliens. The language and values and customs and expectations of this world feel foreign to us. Something really radical has happened to us. Peter says in verse 3: God has caused us to be born again to a living hope—for another world, another, greater kind of existence. Paul put it this way: "You have died and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you will appear with him in glory" (Col. 3:3-4). Jesus called us to live like aliens—to fix our minds on radically different priorities than the nations:

**Mt. 5:31 "Do not be anxious then, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'With what shall we clothe ourselves?' 32 "For all these things the nations eagerly seek (that's the way people live whose citizenship is here in this world); for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.**

God will supply your needs in the foreign land of the world if you orient your life on the kingdom of God and his values and purposes and righteousness.

We are aliens. And living like aliens is utterly necessary. O, what a tragedy when an alien falls in love with the world. In Colossians and Philemon Paul called Demas his fellow worker along with Luke and Mark. But in the last letter 2 Timothy, he wrote these terrible words, "Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica." This is a great tragedy when a professing believer throws away his faith and hope in the future world, renounces his citizenship there, and lives for "this present world."

When professing Christian aliens are absorbed into the world and give up walking by the constitution of the kingdom and give up loving the King and give up pursuing the cravings of the kingdom, then they have no warrant for thinking that they will inherit the kingdom. "They went out from us," John said (1 John 2:19), "but they were not of us. For if they had been of us, they would have remained with us."

Living as aliens in the world is the only pathway to heaven. If you choose to be at home in the world and love the things of the world, you will perish with the world. John said, "The world is passing away and its desires, but the one who does the will of God abides for ever" (1 John 2:17).

So the question of how to keep our alien identity is not an idle question. It is utterly important. Our eternal destiny hangs on it.

Paul wrote in 2Ti 2:12 **If we endure, we will also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us;**

There is no way that we are true believers if we do not endure to the end. To believe less is to deny the purpose of God for His adopted ones in Christ. He who began a good work in you is faithful to complete it. All of the promises in Him are yea and Amen. God has purposed it for us to be aliens. As such we see our sufficiency in him. The world is not sufficient for us. The world and all of its wisdom, power and deceit will be put under the feet of Christ and in essence already is. He is the king of kings and Lord of Lords. Men just do not acknowledge it yet. But they will even unto their own condemnation.

Yet, there are many who are forsaking the way of the alien to be popular.

Today we have the Purpose Driven Church and the Emerging Church both of which are sacrificing the gospel and preaching messages that are focused on felt needs and problem solving in practical terms without applying biblical doctrine.

Dr. D. A Carson writes about the Emerging church and says,

At the heart of the Emergent Church movement—or as some of its leaders prefer to call it, the “conversation”—lies the conviction that changes in the culture signal that a new church is “emerging.” Christian leaders must therefore adapt to this emerging church. Those who fail to do so are blind to the cultural accretions that hide the gospel behind forms of thought and modes of expression that no longer communicate with the new generation, the emerging generation. One reason why the movement has mushroomed so quickly is that it is bringing to focus a lot of hazy perceptions already widely circulating in the culture. It is articulating crisply and polemically what many pastors and others were already beginning to think, even though they did not enjoy—until the leaders of this movement came along—any champions who put their amorphous malaise into perspective.”

Here are eight points from a book on missions from an Emerging Church believer’s book on missions: *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. His name is David Bosch.

“1. Accept co-existence with different faiths gladly, not begrudgingly. It is not their fault if they are alive. 2. Dialogue presupposes commitment to one’s

position, so it is surely not a bad thing to listen well. Dialogue should be congruent with confidence in the gospel. 3. We assume that the dialogue takes place in the presence of God, the unseen Presence. In such dialogue we may learn things, as Peter does in Acts 10–11. Similarly, Jesus learns from his interchange with the Syrophenician woman. 4. Missional dialogue requires humility and vulnerability. But that should not frighten us, for when we are weak, we are strong. It is surely right, for instance, to acknowledge earlier atrocities committed by Christians, even as we remain careful not to disparage those earlier Christians. 5. Each religion operates in its own world and therefore demands different responses from Christians. 6. Christian witness does not preclude dialogue. 7. The “old, old story” may not be the true, true story, for we continue to grow, and even our discussion and dialogues contribute to such growth. In other words, the questions raised by postmodernism help us to grow. 8. Live with the paradox: we know no way of salvation apart from Jesus Christ, but we do not prejudge what God may do with others. We must simply live with the tension.”

Let me define post modernism for you.

It is a worldview that emphasizes the existence of different worldviews and concepts of reality, rather than one "correct or true" one. (ie. the absolutes of Christianity for example are meaningless) Whereas modernism the predecessor of postmodernism emphasized a trust in the empirical scientific method, and a distrust and lack of faith in ideologies and religious beliefs that could not be tested using scientific methods; postmodernism emphasizes that a particular reality is a social construction by a particular group, community, or class of persons. (In other words whatever you or a group want to believe about anything is the truth. The bible calls that each man being right in his own eyes and we know what that led to.

Now I want to ask Mr. Bosch what did Jesus learn from the Syrophenician woman?

What different response am I to give to a Muslim, a Hindu, a Mormon, a Jehovah's witness, a Catholic, a Jew, a Buddhist and so on concerning the absolute truth of Jesus Christ and that He is the way the truth and the life.

Yes, I may use little different tactic with each to get them to where they need to think about sin and a personal redeemer but in the end it is the same absolute truth that is found in Christ and Christ alone.

Now you may ask why bother with all this intellectual nonsense.

Brethren we are to have a Christian worldview and it must stand the test of the times in which we live. Christians are to be thinkers. Biblical doctrine requires sound reasoning with the help of the Holy Spirit to lead us into truth. We must work at understanding the Scripture. We are to labor at it otherwise we do come off like mean spirited, narrow-minded bigots.

To be an alien in the land does not mean to be ignorant of the land and those who inhabit it. Post-modernism is the mainstream philosophy against which we fight the good fight of faith in the secular realm. This is the thinking of the newer generation and those who have leapt from one philosophy to another just to be relevant to the times. It is all in the name of tolerance and cultural pluralism.

There are those who have called themselves Christians who now believe in Universalism, meaning that as long as a man in some way proves to love God, he will go to heaven.

Sadly we have those who call themselves Christians who are not living like aliens but are living like the world around them and accomodating the world in Christ's church.

If we are truly aliens we should be longing for the consummation of the kingdom in the return of Christ. There are many things in this world that should make us uncomfortable.

We should not forget that once we were alienated from God, without help and without hope. But by His grace we have been helped and we have the greatest hope even as Peter later writes, "we are born again unto a living hope."

As aliens we are sanctified unto obedience. This is the will of God for us. This is the purpose for us. Our lives are to show a desire for Christ above all other things.

We are to be seeking the beauty of our New Covenant as it is found in the person of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ and savor every moment that we can in the joy of Christ and Christ alone.

We are the elect of God for no other reason than the fact that He loved us so that we could love Him. By His grace and who we are in Christ Jesus we are no longer God haters but we have become incurable lovers of God who can obey the commands of God because they are not burdensome.

We have our rest in Christ and no matter what trials will come our way as aliens in a strange land we will endure by the grace of God unto the glory of God if we are truly Christ's.