Set Apart and Sustained by the Word of God!

1 Peter 1:1-16

I. <u>INTRODUCTION</u> (1 Peter 1:1-2).

a) **<u>God's Elect</u>**: In just these two verses in the introduction, God provides fundamental divine principles for the Church (God's Elect – His Chosen People). Whereas being "**The Elect**" is the ***ultimate status***, privilege and honor a believer can receive, being **chosen** by God comes with awesome responsibilities, sobering accountabilities and demanding roles in God's Plan of Salvation. To be God's Elect comes with a **divine purpose** – *that of being blessings to others who don't know our Lord Jesus Christ.*

b) **<u>Foreknowledge of God</u>**. Those who believe in Christ are **chosen** according to the ***Foreknowledge of God the Father***. In other words, the 'foreknowledge of God the Father' is simply God's Infinite Ability and Wisdom to ***foresee*** all things before they become a reality. The whole universe came into being according to the ***foreknowledge*** of God. He knew of anything and everything before they were, i.e., before they came into being! That means, NOTHING PRECEDES GOD! ***Foreknowledge also speaks of God's Sovereignty in All Creation!***

c) **<u>The Sanctifying Work of the Holy Spirit</u>**. Those of us whom God ***foreknew*** before creation have been *set apart* "**through the Sanctifying Work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ.**" *Sanctification is one of the major works of the Holy Spirit.* ***Sanctification is a life-long process in the life of the Believer.*** *Sanctification begins immediately after the person was saved by God's Grace through faith in Jesus Christ.* ***By definition, Sanctification is a progressive work of God in the believer that makes him or her more and more free from sin in order to be conformed to the likeness of our Lord Jesus Christ.*** *Sanctification continues throughout the believer's life.* ***The saved person has <u>critical roles</u> in the sanctification process.*** As the disciples of Christ, we must remain faithful and obedient to God since the Holy Spirit will continue to **sanctify** and **purify** us.

II. <u>THE LESSON:</u> *Set Apart and Sustained by the Word of God.*

Despite the troubles of this world, those who believe in Jesus Christ shall *persevere in the faith* **empowered** by the Holy Spirit and **sustained** by the Word of God.

1. ***vv.3-5:*** **Shielded by God's Power**. For those of us who have been in the faith for some time, these verses remind us of the ***basic doctrines*** or the ***fundamental tenets of our faith*** in Jesus Christ. We know what it means to be born again! We know what it means to be revived from the dead! We know what it means to have a living hope in Jesus Christ!

   (a) ***New Birth into a Living Hope***. All praise and glory belong to God, the Father of Jesus Christ, who because of His Mercy "has given us **new birth into a living of hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Without Hope, every living person will become depressed, disillusioned or suicidal. *People cannot continue to live unless they see hope in the future.* Life becomes meaningless without hope for a better future. Hopelessness causes people to descend into a life of drudgery – wearisome toil and misery! Hopelessness causes people to alcoholism, drug addictions and criminal activities. In Christ Jesus, people have a "***new birth into a living hope!***" Those of us who have been born again have a "new birth into a living hope" in Jesus Christ! Dead hopes become alive in Jesus Christ! Dead relationships become alive in Jesus Christ! Dead dreams become alive in Jesus Christ! Hallelujah!

   (b) ***Shielded by God's Power until End of Time***. The Bible says, "***Through faith***, [we] are shielded by ***God's power*** until ***the coming of the salvation*** that is ready **to be revealed in the last time**." As long as we maintain our faith in Jesus Christ, *God's power will continue to shield us from Satan's power, influence* and all *temptations* that surround us each day in this world! The ***living Word*** of God assures us that the Rock of our Salvation is *our shield* in this turbulent world! ***If*** we put our trust in anything other than Jesus Christ who died on the Cross on our behalf, ***then***, God withdraws His shield of protection from us. Soon, we will find out that money, jobs, degrees, our homes cannot *shield* us from the evils of this world. If we trust in ourselves, we will find out that even our own evil desires render us powerless from temptations and the power of sin!

2. ***vv.6-9: Suffering Produces Genuine Faith***. Our faith in Jesus Christ is *proven through trials and tribulations* as gold is purified in the fire. *Genuine faith is proven through perseverance.* God's Truth is confirmed in the believer's life and affirmed in overcoming difficult times. Nobody rewards someone for failing in something; we

applaud and reward them when they succeed at some worthy endeavors. Even non-Christians admire, reward and honor those who accomplished something worthwhile under difficult circumstances. Even the secular world admires and honors soldiers who put their lives in extraordinarily dangerous situations for their country. We applaud, honor and reward them for their extraordinary courage and commitment to what the flag of the United States represents! ***The disciples of Christ are supposed to be as courageous and committed as soldiers for what the Cross represents!*** As the devotion and obedience of the soldiers are tested under fire, our faithfulness and obedience to God is tested under fire! ***Genuine faith in Jesus Christ is tested under fire!*** The Bible says, trials and suffering come so that your faith "may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed."

3. ***vv.10-12***: ***Your Salvation in Christ is a Glorious Mystery***. Through the Holy Spirit, the prophets of the old proclaimed the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ for thousands of years. Accordingly, the Glory of God was revealed in His Son! The mystery about the Kingdom of God was *revealed* in Jesus Christ when Virgin Mary became pregnant in the Power of the Holy Spirit. In verse 8, the Bible says, "Though you have not seen Him, you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls." ***Through the Power of the Holy Spirit, we are able to discern the Glorious Mystery of our Salvation wrapped up in Jesus Christ!*** Through the Sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, we *rejoice* in His Blood because we understand the *glorious mystery wrapped up in Jesus Christ*! Through the **Living Word**, we are able to know the Wisdom of God which produced the unfathomable victorious Glory out of the suffering of His Son! *Though we have not seen Him, we love Him!* ***It is a great mystery!*** *Though we have not seen Him, "we are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy!"* ***It is a glorious mystery!*** *Though we have not seen Him, we eagerly anticipate His Glorious Second Coming!* ***It is an amazing mystery!*** *Even though we will surely die, we shall be resurrected to eternal life because we believe in Him whom we have not seen!* ***It is a profoundly glorious mystery!***

III. CONCLUSION. (Verses 13-16): PREPARE YOUR MIND FOR ACTION!

It is impossible for a person to "be holy and blameless" if he or she has not been "born again" in Jesus Christ. But God commands those who have been *born again* to be "holy in all we do." As a disciple of Christ, how do you live a holy life in this world full of ungodliness? The Bible gives us **divine principles** which allow us to be conformed to Christ as His disciples.

a) **"Prepare your mind *for action."*** To "**prepare your mind**," you must be filled with the "**Knowledge of God**." To be a lawyer, doctor or an engineer, you **prepare your mind** with the **appropriate knowledge** and **training**. Similarly, to be a disciple of our Lord Jesus Christ, you "**prepare your mind**" with the study of the Word of God. You **train** to become a faithful and obedient disciple of Christ. ***We know faith without action is dead.*** In other words, as followers of Christ, we must put our faith into action.

b) "Be self-controlled." Self-control is one of the Fruit of the Holy Spirit. *Self-control is a spiritual disciple.* An athlete has to train his mind and body with *rigorous discipline.* A soldier has to train for battle within a framework of a rigorous chain-of-command and culture of discipline. ***As disciples of Christ, we must be prepared for kingdom building the same way.*** Controlling our mouths and actions are just the *basic moral ethics.*

c) **"Set your hope on Christ."** Our hope is in Christ who shall be revealed in His Full Glory and Power. *Just as we cannot expect victory in anything by being halfway committed, we cannot hope in Christ without fully trusting Him.* Just as we cannot be divided in our loyalty to the company or owners we work for, we cannot be divided in our faithfulness to Christ. *Our hope in Christ must be total.*

d) **"Do not conform to your evil desires."** Our flesh is weak. In other words, we can be tempted in our flesh. We were prisoners to our **evil desires** before we were liberated in Jesus Christ. We were ***ignorant*** to the consequences of our *evil desires before God rescued us through Jesus Christ.* To walk "holy and blameless," we must **say no** to our **evil desires** *daily.*