

# The Spirit of Babylon

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] You're listening to the sermon podcast of Grace Reformed Church in Spring Hill, Tennessee. To learn more about us, visit our website at [gracereformed.org](http://gracereformed.org).

And now, today's sermon. 1 Peter chapter 1 and verse 1 says this and following, Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, according to the foreknowledge of God, the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit.

For obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood, may grace and peace be multiplied to you. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. To an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

This is the word of the Lord. May we pray and ask the Lord to bless it. Father, we are coming before you now to receive of your word. We believe that it's living and active and that it cuts down into our soul and brings fresh new living water.

[ 1 : 2 3 ] And Lord, may we feast upon you this morning in remembrance of your great truth. In Christ's name, amen. We're going to pick up where we left off last week.

For those of you that are visiting, we're working through the book of Peter, 1 and 2 Peter. And we were looking at the historical background for the readers because it's hard to understand a letter if you don't understand the context.

Peter, in verse 1, uses this unique phrase that we're going to see elsewhere in the New Testament and in his letter. And we talked about it last week. He uses the word elect.

We're not going to revisit that. But he uses it in a phrase. He says, elect exiles, which is a really curious phrase. It's the only place in the New Testament that those two words are used together.

And the phrase is meant to provide comfort in the midst of chaos. He's describing their context, but in light of their context, who they are. And so the full phrase says, elect exiles of the dispersion.

[ 2 : 2 4 ] Meaning, you are the ones to whom God has chosen to save and sanctify and to receive his love and his salvation. For exiles, this could be, for the word exile, this could also be translated as sojourners.

Peter uses this word as well. One who doesn't belong in the current position or place. Many would have been born in Rome.

So it's not that they were from another country and now living in Rome. They lived in Rome, but yet they're in exile. How can this be? And Paul, Peter is speaking of a spiritual exile, a disconnect.

They're in exile from the culture. They had a new God. Therefore, they had a new home. They had a new home waiting for them. And therefore, they had new ethics and a new way of living. And so they're exiles among their own home, their own city.

And then it says the dispersion. And this means that you are not gathered into the Father's house yet. That we, the people of God, are dispersed all over. Peter being in Rome, these people being on the outskirts of Rome, were not all in the presence of the king.

[ 3 : 30 ] Therefore, globally, we are scattered. And then last week, we covered this concept of what it means to be of the elect, the comfort of it.

And before we can tie the two words together, I think we're going to need to look a little bit longer at the word exile. Peter uses, again, I apologize. If I say Paul, you know what I mean.

It's one of the Ps, all right? And Peter will reference the idea of being exiled three times in his letter. Three different times. And we'll look at this as we go through the letter.

But one of them, notably, if you want to turn there, is 1 Peter 2, verse 11. So this becomes a theme. And the theme really helps you with the tone and the purpose of the letter.

It says, Beloved, I urge you, 1 Peter 2, verse 11, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh which wage war against your soul.

[ 4 : 29 ] I don't believe we fully understand the connection that Peter is making here. Sometimes these are just words. And the words have minimal concepts to them, but not biblical concepts. And so Peter addresses them as an out-of-place pilgrim.

That's what it means. An out-of-place pilgrim, one who is journeying. But later states that because of this, they should abstain from the passions that wage war against them.

So the world around us indulges, including here in Rome, indulges in their sensuality and the desires of the flesh, as the Bible puts it. But that's not how the elect exiles are to act or to think of life.

Look, if we're all willing to admit, the word exile, sojourners, aliens, Paul uses this phrase too, living as an exile in this world is not something that we fully understand or consider in our daily lives.

Just to be frank with all of us, to be fair, we at many times feel very comfortable in this world. We enjoy it. I did yesterday. Our family went out on a bike ride.

[ 5 : 48 ] It was wonderful. It was beautiful. It was great exercise. Got a lot of exertion out throwing knives and hatches with the boys. If you're ever frustrated, I recommend it.

There was much I enjoyed about, I didn't feel like an exile yesterday. What does Paul mean by this? Or Peter and Paul. What do they both mean?

What does the whole Bible mean by this? I think how you understand this from a biblical perspective will change when you read.

Like when we're done today, I'm hoping when you read elect exile, it changes the way in which you see it and think of it. Peter is speaking here of a spiritual exile, not necessarily physical.

It is true that the new heavens and the new earth will come, but in this particular context, he keeps referencing their actions, how they act. And I think it's because we don't understand in fullness the Old Testament and its imagery and its purpose.

[ 6 : 49 ] We don't understand the weight of Peter's words here. When he's talking about an exile, he's referencing something that those who would have been aware of the Old Testament would have meant a lot to them.

I would go as far to say, as understanding this concept, the Bible is the story of exile and redemption. The whole thing is built upon this flow of a story.

While we are waiting for the restoration or the redemption of all things, that puts us in what kind of a state? An exile state. Because we're not where we're supposed to be.

That makes us exiles. That makes us wandering pilgrims, sojourners. So we live in a world that is at war. It is dangerous and it hates our king and our kingdom.

And it projects and pushes and tempts and pulls us into sins that go against the holiness of God. That's spiritual exile.

[ 7 : 50 ] I want to explain this to you from a couple of Old Testament stories, because this is what Peter is doing. Peter is reaching back to some Old Testament stories. Later on here, we're going to see how John in Revelation uses the same idea of exile to give us this.

So this is why understanding and knowing the stories of Genesis and Exodus and the stories of the Old Testament bring to life the words of the New, because that's the foundation that Peter is drawing on.

His letter is short and small, because he's assuming you know the big letter called the Old Testament. Let me explain. Adam and Eve is where we're going to begin. So we have four areas, four stories that we're going to look at this morning as an example of exiles and how the New Testament uses it as a theology for us to live.

We begin in the garden. Who are the characters in this story? Well, first we start with the creator. He's the one who's in the garden, and he's roaming in the garden with what? Humans, both Adam and Eve. Those are the second characters in our story.

And then there's a third character, and it is the enemy of the story. He's known as the serpent. We have learned by Ezekiel and Isaiah that this is Lucifer, the great Satan, the great adversary.

[ 8 : 58 ] And what does this enemy do? He comes and he tempts Adam and Eve to turn against their God, and in doing so, the moment that they give in to the temptation, they are removed from the presence of God.

They're cast out of the garden, and that capacity to be with God is now gone. And we know that it's to be restored, which then makes them an exile.

It's to be restored because God promises the restoration, right? From the seed of Eve will come, and that seed will crush the head of the seed of the serpent. Therefore, there's a promise of restoration, which immediately makes them what?

Exiles. They're not in the land that they belong in. Well, this is a theme, and I want you to pay close attention to the theme, because the one doing the tempting is a God. What does Jesus call him?

The God of this world. What is Paul referencing to them, right? The great deceiver of the world. This is a theme that goes throughout Scripture. You're going to see it connected from Genesis to Revelation.

[ 9 : 58 ] We spoke of this a little bit last week. I want to add some meat to the bone this week. The next story that really kind of picks up this idea of exile, and really the theme that the Bible uses, is at the Tower of Babel.

Hopefully most of us know this, but let's talk about the characters of this story. First of all, you have the creator. He is still involved in this one. And then you have all of humanity. All of humanity has gathered into this one place, and they're under the rule of one man.

His name is Nimrod. Now what's interesting about the story of Nimrod, as you read Genesis, you learn very interesting facts about this man. This man is described as a demigod, meaning half human, half God.

And what he's doing is extremely fascinating. At times we mock this story, thinking that, oh, they were trying to get into heaven and be with God by building a tower. That's not what the story says. That's not what's going on here.

They weren't just building a tower. Nimrod being that, what we learn from Genesis chapter 6, that there's this, we're not going to go into it now. We will only get into 2 Peter.

[ 11 : 01 ] There's a whole section about it in 2 Peter, so we'll save it for then. But there's a story in Genesis chapter 6 where the gods of heaven come down and have relationships with the women of men, and they create these demigods, these half humans and half gods.

And Nimrod is from this line of this. And what happens here, and by the way, both Jude and 2 Peter reference this interaction that has happened. So Nimrod has gathered this great nation, and they're going to build a tower called Babel.

Now pay attention to the name of this tower. The name of this tower, what it means is gate to the gods. That's what the name means. Babel, gateway to the gods.

What he is doing is gathering all of the nations, all of the people who are in exile, and he is getting them ready to receive from the very God and gods that have already deceived them because this is who he's a part of.

God didn't come down and destroy the tower because they were trying to build some kind of monument. He came down to destroy the works, what we're going to learn of, the works of Babylon, or what is known as the spirit of Babylon.

[ 12 : 09 ] What ended up happening here? God comes down. There used to be one language. He divides them and stops the work by multiplying the languages so they cannot communicate with each other, and they are dispersed on the earth, which is what the original command to Adam was, the original command to Noah, go into all the world and subdue it.

Instead, they gathered, and they gathered up underneath Nimrod. Well, years and years later, this great city gets rebuilt and becomes the greatest city in the world, known as Babylon.

Babylon. And when we were working through Ezekiel, this is what Ezekiel was writing towards because in this story, the characters are a little bit different now. Now the characters are the children of Israel, Yahweh, their God, and Babylon.

And what ended up happening is that because of Israel's disobedience and not following the way in which God had told them to follow, their great city, Jerusalem, fell under siege of Babylon, and they were all taken into captivity.

And the story, the major story of being an exile comes to full light. It starts with Adam and Eve. It gets convoluted at the Tower of Babel. But when that city is rebuilt, the story, the Psalms, Isaiah, the prophets, they write extensively about the heart and the idea of being an exile.

[ 13 : 31 ] Well, so much so that the children of Israel start to cry out, please free us from this exile. Please free us from this tyranny, the tyranny of Babylon and restore us back to our nation.

The prophet Isaiah, if you'll turn with there, or you can write it down, Isaiah 47, the prophet comes and brings a prophecy that is important to the story and it's important to us and it's important to the end of the world.

Isaiah comes and prophesies before the children of Israel and he says in verse 10, you felt secure in your wickedness, Babylon.

You said, no one sees me. Your wisdom and your knowledge led you astray and you said in your heart, I am and there is no one beside me. But evil shall come upon you which you will not know how to charm away.

Disaster shall fall upon you for which you will not be able to atone. And ruin shall come upon you suddenly and which you know nothing.

[ 14 : 39 ] And in 539 BC, this powerful city under the leadership of Cyrus the Great, the Persians came and destroyed, utterly destroyed the greatest city in the world.

The city that could not be destroyed. Israel was set free from their captivity. But as we know, they did not find themselves back in their homeland for they learned quickly it could not be found here.

And even though this great city had been destroyed, it played a huge part in the rest of the history and really the theology of Israel.

Babylon became a symbol of the people to which would always be luring and capturing God's people. Turn with me to 1 Peter 5 and verse 13.

I want you to see how Peter ends his letter. This is why this is important. Understanding exile and the concept of Babylon. Peter says something very interesting and this takes us to our fourth story which is our current story that we're in right now.

[ 15 : 43 ] We've talked about the garden. We've talked about Babel. Babylon. And now we're going to be speaking of what's called the spirit of Babylon. Babylon. The spirit of Babylon. This is 1 Peter 5 and verse 13.

It's a fascinating phrase. Listen to what Peter says. She who is in Babylon or at Babylon who is likewise chosen sends you greetings and so does Mark my son.

There's a lot you can take here. She being maybe his mom? No. Secondly, Babylon hasn't been in existence for a very, very long time. So Peter can't be speaking of the actual city of Babylon.

What we learn is that he is speaking of Rome and he is in a place that is like Babylon. In other words, it has the spirit of Babylon.

She is in reference to the bride of Christ. He is riding from the churches of Rome to the churches that are scattered in the dispersion and he says, she who is at Babylon under Rome.

[ 16 : 50 ] This is what makes it sense if you're in exile. We too are exiles. We are living in the spirit of Babylon and he says, those who are chosen. This is why we know it's the church and this is why we know it's God's people.

So Peter makes a fascinating connection here to which opens our minds to John because John in his book in Revelation explains to us this concept.

So as he's writing and he's closing off this letter, he addresses them in the beginning of the letter, you are chosen exiles. Then he mentions multiple times what an exile means and then at the end of it he brings it home for us and says, oh by the way, no matter where you go in this world, the spirit of Babylon will be there, therefore you will always be in exile.

There is no place in this world that you are free from the spirit. How do we know this? Well turn with me to Revelation chapter 17. Revelation chapter 17.

What is it that we knew about Rome that Peter would make this statement that it has the spirit of Babylon? Well if we go through these stories in the garden, Lucifer brought the first idea of the spirit of Babylon which tempting them to turn away from God and become like God.

[ 18 : 06 ] In other words, you have Lucifer tempting them to be like God because he literally says you can be like the most high. You can become a God. And at Babel they are drawn by the power of the gods.

You have the demigod Nimrod who's calling the people to worship not Yahweh but call upon the gods by which we learn that Paul warns us against in Ephesians chapter 6 that Psalm talks about he's the God of gods.

And then you have this great city that comes and captures its people. And so you see this flow and it goes from an actual city to an actual concept of gods, these evil gods influencing people to have a position that is not only rebellious but sensual.

And we know for a fact that the reason the church was being persecuted under Peter's writing was because they refused to worship these other gods. They refused to be a part of the culture, the sensuality of the culture, to live the way the culture would.

And so because of that Nero started to persecute them and kill them because they would not bow the knee to Nero and the gods that would only bow their knee to Yahweh. Listen to how John, John also was writing to the same group of people not long after this who were also in immense persecution, intense persecution so he writes this letter to them to encourage them.

[ 19 : 32 ] And look at with me in Revelation chapter 17 and verse 1. Then one of the seven angels who had seven bulls came and said to me, Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who is seated on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality and with the wine of whose sexual morality the dwellers on the earth have become drunk, and who carried me away and he, the angel, carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names and it had seven heads and ten horns.

The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet adorned with gold and jewels and pearls holding in her hand a golden cup full of abomination and the impurities of her sexual morality.

And on her forehead was written the name of mystery, Babylon the Great, mother of prostitutes and of the earth's abomination. So John is definitely giving us a spiritual picture.

This isn't a real person. This is an idea. This is a description of a goddess that is at war with the world. Keep reading. And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.

When I saw her I marveled greatly. Notice the last verse. What was it she was drunk on? And she was consuming the followers of Christ.

[ 21 : 01 ] Why? Because they would not bow the knee and they would not drink of her wine. This is what Peter is referencing. Babylon becoming the metaphor of the work of the gods in humanity.

This sexual desire is the overthrow of worshiping not Yahweh but going to lesser gods. And so sensuality living in constant opposition to the true God.

And he's saying the powers behind this spirit is the darkness or the dark kingdom. I want you to read this section. Turn with me to Ephesians chapter 2. I want you to now read this.

Thinking about the idea of being an exile living in a world with the spirit of Babylon. This constant push and pressure to turn in rebellion against God in ways that are extremely deviant and dark.

Now read Ephesians chapter 2. Maybe, maybe that casts some light from Paul's perspective. Ephesians 2.1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked following the course of this world following the prince of the power of the air the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience the same spirit, right?

[ 22 : 23 ] Peter references that as the spirit of Babylon. John, in his revelation, references that as this woman, the spirit of Babylon, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.

The whole world has drank in this debauchery. We're going from metaphor to reality. This is why Peter mentioned something in metaphor.

You're going to feel this in the culture that you live in and this is why. It's not that some people have bad appetites. Some people have bad habits.

They're under the influence of something that is powerful. Otherwise, he would just give us plans to come out of our bad habits. You just need better discipline.

This is not what he says. Our world eats and drinks and laughs and sings and learns of this experience that is brought to them.

[ 23 : 34 ] But for those of us who look at it and say we will not participate in that immediately makes you an exile, makes you not of that culture, not of that world. We are of something different.

And so I think Paul in Ephesians chapter 2 provides us an example. We can't live in peace in this world because this world is under the control of the evil ones who are destroying anything that resembles the holiness of God.

Turn back with me now to 1 Peter except for go to 1 Peter chapter 2. this is what makes us an exile. You see, I at times really do enjoy this world.

And there are times I'm not as much in a hurry to get out of it because there are parts of it that reflect the creator in me. Right? His, this relationship not in me but his image in me.

And there are times when I'm around you and other sweet fellowship. It's enjoyable. But there is a part of it that is wrong. And this is why we can't fully rest here.

[ 24 : 44 ] We can't fully have peace here because there hasn't been restoration. 1 Peter chapter 2 verse 11. Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh.

Listen to this next phrase. Which wage war against your soul? He's connecting the sensuality, the ways in which we reject the holiness of God, embrace the way of Babylon.

He's saying it puts war on your soul as if it needs to be protected. Is Peter being a little dramatic here?

Maybe overstating it? I don't think so. We can enjoy God's creation as it's meant to be enjoyed. But when it comes to the desires of the heart, we can't simply sit back and enjoy it with the world because they are not controlled the way in which we are controlled.

We don't live in that kind of freedom yet. We are the ones who are aliens and we don't belong with the rest of the world. It's still under the control of the rebellious one.

[ 25 : 56 ] Or as Peter is saying, it's still under the spirit of Babylon. Babylon. They worship another god. They fulfill their desires in ways that we cannot.

Going back and thinking about spiritual warfare and as I've really thought about this concept of exile for quite a while, it makes a lot of sense thinking through Ephesians 6. Do you remember we just went through this?

If you understand that the spirit of Babylon, this horrendous, rebellious sensuality that engulfs all of our cultures around all of the world, it makes sense when Paul says put on the armor of God because how else are you going to stand against this ploy against you?

You have to do it with the gospel of grace. You have to do it with Christ. It's not your own efforts. It's not trying. Sometimes I sit down with people and I've tried these tactics in my past.

I just need to try harder. I need to have discipline. I need to put certain things in my life. Paul does not say this. He says stand in the strength of the Lord, not in your discipline. And then he says where do you look as you stand in the strength of the Lord?

[ 27 : 06 ] You look to Christ. What ends up happening? Remember Isaiah 47 and the destruction of the real Babylon? This is why John wrote Revelation so that we the church would read it and wonder is there ever coming an end to the utter chaos?

If you just take some time to read about what's going on in our world with, I have to be careful with children in here, but with trafficking and what's going on in Hollywood, it's horrendous. It's disgusting.

And you just wonder when's it going to end? Go back to, we'll just end here, Revelation chapter 14. I lied.

We're going to go back to Peter as well. Peter. Peter. Peter. Peter. Peter. It was an unintentional lie. Revelation 14.8. So this is before he gets to the whole idea, but he's getting ready to describe to them what's happening.

Revelation 14.8. John says, another angel, a second, followed saying, fallen, fallen is Babylon the great. Now obviously the city is already gone, so he's not referencing the physical cities.

[ 28 : 16 ] He's talking about the spirit of Babylon. She who made all the nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality. All the nations. This means that sometimes people are like, well, America's under condemnation because of the ways in which they have gone.

According to scripture, all nations around all of the world are under the influence. This is why we believe in the doctrine of depravity. All of humanity is born under the influence of sin.

And so there is no city that is safe. There is no country. There's no part of the world that is safe from the spirit of Babylon. Babylon. Now turn to chapter 17 and hear how he ends this dialogue.

The hope that which we have, what we're longing for. Revelation 17, 5 and he says, and on her forehead was written a name of mystery, Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of the earth and abominations.

And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. I mean this is, the only reason I read this again is because as we oppose the way of our world, it's not like they're like, okay, well you know, to each his own.

[ 29 : 35 ] That's not how it works. This is, in Nero, Nero wasn't like, well whatever, you got your gods, we have ours. It breeds within them anger and hatred toward things that are holy and right. I have people that I'm counseling with right now that are potentially going to lose their adult children because they cannot agree with the way in which they have chosen to live their life.

The blood of the martyrs is what she drinks in. The spirit of Babylon consumes Christianity because we're unwilling to bow the knee to another god. Turn with me to chapter 18 and verse 1.

Where is our hope then? After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven having great authority and the earth was made bright with his glory and he called out with a mighty voice fallen.

Fallen is Babylon the great. She has become a dwelling place for the demons. A haunt for every unclean spirit and a haunt for every unclean bird and a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast.

For all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality and the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living.

[ 30 : 53 ] I think this metaphor is covering that our world is under its possession. Now skip to verse 20. 18-20. Rejoice over her O heaven and you saints and apostles and prophets for God has given judgment for you against her.

Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea saying so will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence and will be found no more.



The book of Revelation was written as a metaphor as a picture as a story to remind all of us that what we feel the constant weight of the spirit of Babylon in our lives if you can feel like I don't belong here I feel dirty even when I'm around other Christians who seem to embrace this attitude I don't think we should be embracing this attitude I think it's wrong it's a complete opposite of what God is in our hearts we can take comfort in knowing the day of judgment is coming and God will deal with all of this wickedness but what we have to remember and the reason why this is if I've lost you come back to me right here the reason why I set the story up like this is that people are not our enemy Peter is going to say in both his letters that we want to live peaceably among people this is why Jesus says other humans who might act as your enemy are not your enemy and you're to love them and do good for them why?

because those are the people who are under what? the spirit of Babylon just like you were under the spirit of Babylon Ephesians chapter 2 we don't get angry at humanity we have compassion on them who was it that wanted to be surrounded by Jesus and who came to Jesus it was all of those who had been enslaved by the spirit of Babylon and Jesus says if you come to me I can give you something that you cannot find anywhere else rest from that dark demonic world I will give you rest from it you will no longer have to labor against it you'll be set free this is why Paul says you've been set free from it why are you going back to it?

you see some people think that we emphasize grace here so much that people want to go back and do their sin I'm sorry that is a demonic dark wretched horrendous place why do you want to go back there?

[ 33 : 25 ] that's why he says in Romans may it never be but I want you to pay attention to what Peter does emphasize like how is it that we make it through a world that is under the control of this it's just dark and it's horrible and it's everywhere by the way the spirit of Babylon is not something you're going to point out in being obvious of like oh that's dark and dirty the results of it you'll see but how it leads you there starts with innocence it starts with simplicity it's just a little off it's just a little joke it's just a little section in the show it's just a little mention in the song but what it does is it gains control of our minds to the moment where we see the logic and the pleasure that if I fulfill my passions of my flesh it feels good and you've given over to the spirit of Babylon and Peter says don't do this you don't belong in that culture you belong in the world and you're going to be involved in the world and even more importantly you're going to be rescuing people who are in Babylon all over the world but you yourself cannot give in to those passions because if you do you will stop speaking of the wonders and the holiness and the beauty of Jesus and you'll start laughing at the sin of the world so after Peter gives them that phrase elect exiles exiles they know what that means the spirit of

Babylon Rome is under the spirit of Babylon Peter we can feel it so how does Peter encourage them how does Peter encourage people who feel the weight of their sin and they can feel the weight of the demonic darkness that they live a part of and they just don't feel at home now read with me first Peter now that we have this context first Peter chapter one he acknowledges their position chosen by God he acknowledges their situation exiles and how does he comfort them not with rules but with truth first Peter one three blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ according to his great mercy he caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead you see it has to be great mercy because nobody can pull themselves out of Babylon you can't free yourself it's too powerful it's too much strength and you're too dead so Peter says why should you be encouraged because it was his great mercy that brought you out to an inheritance that means there's nothing for you to work for on this world because it's being granted to you and not only is it being granted to you in its full form it can't perish that is imperishable undefiled and unfading undefiled meaning you can't ruin it and neither can anyone else kept in heaven for you who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last times in this you rejoice so you live in a world that has a reflection of God and we can enjoy that parts of the world but you live in a culture that is under the spirit of Babylon and it feels like there's nothing to rejoice over and Peter says ah but there is you can rejoice in the mercy of God in this you rejoice though now for a little while if necessary you have been grieved by various trials

I love that Peter acknowledges this this makes so much sense to me the world that I live in verse 7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire may be found to result in the praise and the glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ it's the faith we have in Christ that gives us the guarantee more important than gold and so as we think about this freedom we have received in Christ I mean I love how he says this rejoice right in this the gospel of Jesus Christ not only you've been cleansed but you've been clothed with the righteousness of Christ you've been given all of his inheritance all of the wealth of heaven all of the relationship that he has with God everything that's there and it can't be destroyed he says dear church dear church if you're going to find something that pleases you if you're going to find something that encourages you if you're going to find something to live for in this you rejoice

I think now we understand Peter's letter the rest of it's going to be great because the context is persecution deep dark spiritual warfare played out in rebellion and sensuality to where we love those people but we do not enjoy the passions of the flesh like they do but that doesn't mean we're joyless this is why Paul says no matter what state I can find myself in I have a reason to rejoice why?

does he look to his obedience? does he look to his past? no he looks to the mercy that has been granted to him and so church as we think about our time in this world as we think about our time this week if you look clearly at your world start paying attention to it start asking yourself does this world look like it's being under the control of something evil because it is it's under the control of an evil evil God it's not innocently trying to give you entertainment it is deceitfully trying to manipulate your mind therefore we have to be renewing our mind in the mercy of our God and realizing we have been set free from the bondage of sin and we can now walk in newness of life so take every thought captive for what?

[ 39 : 54 ] for the work of Christ I think that I struggle to do the work of the kingdom I struggle to put first the kingdom of God I struggle to sacrifice and lay down for my family and for my wife and for you because at times I fall prey I fall prey to the spirit of Babylon to giving in to the passions of the flesh I heard of two more pastors this week in our state that are no longer in ministry because they gave in to the spirit of Babylon it's real it comes after all of us and no one no one is free from its power unless we remember the gospel we encourage each other with the gospel and we stay away we stay away from those passions let's pray our father we would be hopeless if our situation was try harder it's unreal the amount of power that our flesh has over us and then you put something nefarious on top of that and we are without hope and then we look to your great mercy you pulled us out you reached down and died and rose again and grabbed us and pulled us out of our death the trap that we found ourselves in and then you clothed us with something that is glorious your righteousness and father may this be our rejoicing this morning and for the rest of our time and for the rest of our week in Christ's name amen thanks for listening to the sermon podcast of Grace Reformed Church in Spring Hill Tennessee where everyone is in equal need of grace to plan a visit or to learn more about us visit our website at [gracereformed.org](http://gracereformed.org) [www.firstfe.org](http://www.firstfe.org) Alt Protein