

# State of the Church 2019 and the Future Generation(s) – 2 Pet 1:1-11

**Introduction** – Our church distinctives include an optimistic view of the flourishing gospel over and upon the nations and cultures of the world prior to the return of Jesus (Isaiah 11:9). We believe the promises of God are to us and to our children, “to a thousand generations” (Deut 7:9) and that Christ will not fail in subduing the nations (Psalm 110:1) nor will the church in disciplining those nations (Matt 28:18-20). That is not to say that we think the future is only full of growth and blessing to the church and all nations from now until the coming of Christ. And as we begin another New Year, the church and this coming generation and generations should be wary of a looming darkness upon our culture. We have squandered the blessings God has given our nation by means of mocking, denying, and rebelling against the same God and Father of our Lord Jesus. Peter knew such a judgment was coming to his generation and we would be wise to learn from these warnings how to prepare for such judgments in our own day.

**Context** – The apostle is preparing his readers for an onslaught of false teachers and teachings “*who will bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them*” (2:1). These will be emissaries of sexual license and perversions who are willing to offer sexual bribes to gain and keep followers (chapter 2). In addition, they openly deny and mock the prophecy of Christ’s near and coming judgment upon Jerusalem (chapter 3, esp. 3:3-4). Peter knows his days are numbered and so wants to make sure he is passing the baton of faithfulness to the next generation (1:12-15). But it is insufficient to “just have faith” or the kind of knowledge “of what the Bible says” that crumbles when the assault comes, when the allurements and temptations come, when the persecutions come, and when God’s judgments come. And so, there is something about passing on the faith to the next generation that requires all of us to be “*even more diligent to make your call and election sure*” (1:10).

**The Divine Power You Have Been Given** (vv1-4) – Peter addresses those who have the same faith he has (v1) and calls upon God to multiply the grace and peace which has already been given them, a divine power that grants us life and godliness (vv2-3). He addresses those who have partaken of the divine nature and have escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust (v4). In other words, Peter is confident of what we have been given to stand firm and to flourish in this new way of living. Everything that we are to do as followers of Christ must flow from what we have been given in Christ and who we are in Christ. We are a forgiven bunch of sinners by means of the shed blood of our Savior, made new from within by means of the Holy Spirit, and granted new hearts that love what God loves, called by glory and virtue (v3).

**A Diligent Faith** (vv5-7) – Diligence in one’s faith is not what many people are known for, and those growing up in the church are often those who lack diligence in these things. They think “faith” has nothing to do with diligence; they think “faith” simply means affirming a set of beliefs. But the faith that God gives is a living faith; it transforms from within. It turns us completely away from ourselves for salvation, resting on the finished work of Jesus alone. But it also frees us from the bondage to sin so that we can add to our faith – virtue.

**Virtue** – The word might better be translated “splendor” (see v3 and 1 Pet 2:9). This is faith to see ourselves as a royal priesthood, a special people, all because of the grace of God. It is the ability to live above the corruptions of the world and to do so gladly, knowing the inheritance that is ours. It is the majesty of a new people. It is royal, but not haughty, for we invite any and all to be adopted along with us.

**Knowledge, Self-Control, and Perseverance** – Adding knowledge to knowledge (v3) is really like growing in the intimate knowledge of the lover for the beloved. It is the personal, relational knowledge of God. From this we can add self-control because we do not have to be controlled by our passions like brute beasts. And we add to this perseverance through all trials for we grow in our understanding that we go through all these as the God we love gives them to us to grow us up in Him (James 1:2-4).

**Godliness** – This is a reverence for and enjoyment of God, along with a lifestyle of active obedience that manifests that reverence and enjoyment.

**Brotherly Kindness** – Our enjoyment of God is not something that takes place in isolation from the community of God into which we have been placed. And so, we add to godliness brotherly kindness, a deference, care, and concern for those our Savior loves and died for. This is the community of the body of Christ.

**Love** – Finally, love goes on top of the first seven. Love is treating others lawfully from the heart. Love is the grace that we put on because we have put on Christ (Col 3:14).

It must be said...no, shouted, that all of these “adds” are built upon faith, not works. All of these “adds” are evidence of growing in grace (3:18) and not in showing off to God. Persons transformed by grace study grace and grow in grace – and they do so all by grace. This is simply working out what God is working in.

**Diligent Assurance** (vv8-11) – Whether you are young and just now taking on this royal faith as your own, or you are old and are continuing in this faith, this path is the only way to escape the corruptions that are all around. As long as you are on this earth in this body, you are either swimming up the river or you are floating down it. You are either growing up more and more in holiness or you are *“shortsighted, even to blindness”* and you are in grave danger of forgetting all that it means that you have been cleansed from old sins.

**A Taste of the Everlasting Kingdom** - This warning comes with great optimism. Look carefully at vv10-11. Peter expects a great judgment, but he knows God has provided this way of escape, or entrance, through the coming trial for those who are growing in grace. He sees the everlasting kingdom of God prevailing, abundantly supplied by the Lord. As we endure and overcome the darkness, and we will, we are to see that we are enjoying our time on the porch of heaven, at its very entrance. Grow in grace this year so that you find yourself there.

*Dave Hatcher – December 30, 2018*

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## Notes for Little Saints

Your parents are told to believe something about you -

In Acts 2:38-39, Paul says that the promise (of the Holy Spirit) is for you and who else?

At the same time, every Christian is told they must do something

Write out Phil 2:12

We are given something in Christ – faith. And by faith we are to add to that faith (can you make the list from 2 Pet 1:5-6) –

F -

V -

K -

S -

P -

G -

B -

L -

These are wonderful graces to add to your faith –

And in doing so – verse 11 tell us that “you will never \_\_\_\_\_”

May the Lord richly bless your growth in Him in 2019.