

1 Peter 1:1-2 Peter Identifies and Blesses His Audience, part 2

Last week, we began our study of the book of First Peter.

Peter thus far has identified himself as the apostle of Jesus, and he identified his readers as strangers.

Christians are strangers and pilgrims in this world. We should not feel too comfortable here. We are to remain separate from the ungodly world in which we live. Our true and final citizenship is in heaven. Our highest loyalty is to the Lord and his kingdom—Mt 6:33—“seek ye first...”

Peter also states that his readers are elect by God. I mentioned last week that the text reveals three elements of election. In vs. 2, we find that people are elect according to the foreknowledge of God. Foreknowledge is not merely knowing something ahead of time. Foreknowledge pertains to God’s relationship to his people and his plans for them. God has set his love upon his people, and that results in their salvation.

Peter goes on to describe two other elements of election.

2. Election occurs “through the sanctification of the Spirit.”

- a) Sanctification (ἁγιασμῶ) is the setting apart of the believer for God’s sacred use. At the point of salvation, God declares the believer to be holy and righteous. Salvation sets believers apart unto God as his children and empowers them to live righteously.

The word “saints” is related to this word; we are saints because we are sanctified—set apart unto God.

- b) The HSp is the means through (ἐν) which God sets us apart as his people.

2 Thessalonians 2:13 ... God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth,

The saving aspect of sanctification happens at a point in time—the point when you turn from your sin and trust in Christ as your Lord and Savior. The HSp convicts you of your sin, and you respond by getting saved.

- c) The HSp is the agent of regeneration. We are born again (vs. 3) through the work of the Spirit. Cf. John 3—“born of the Spirit” describes conversion.

So Peter is saying that, in the mind of God the Father, we’ve been elect from the foundation of the world. Then, at a point in time in our lives, the HSp convicts us of our sin and brings us to the point of conversion.

I wonder if you have had that experience?

Once you are converted, a process begins, which leads to the third element of election...

3. Election is “unto/for obedience.” (εἰς ὑπακοήν)

- a) Often, the preposition “unto” or “for” (εἰς) refers to the purpose, goal, or the result of some action. The purpose of election is the believer’s obedience.

We know that we are not saved by obedience, but there are two senses in which believers obey.

- (1) We are saved when we obey the Gospel.
Conversion is a form of Gospel obedience.

The NT writers frequently describe saving faith as obedience to the Gospel or obedience to the faith.

Romans 1:5 *Through Him we have received grace and apostleship **for obedience to the faith** among all nations for His name,*

Romans 6:17 ... *though you were slaves of sin, yet **you obeyed from the heart** that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.*

Romans 10:16 *they have **not all obeyed the gospel.** ...*

1 Peter 1:22 *Since you have purified your souls in **obeying the truth** through the Spirit ...*

So election results in getting saved—obeying the Gospel, obeying the faith, obeying the truth. If you are elect by God and sanctified by the Spirit, it means that you have obeyed the Gospel, and thus are saved.

That's the first aspect of obedience, and secondly...

- (2) Once we get saved, the result is that we obey Jesus' commands. Christians are obedient to Jesus' commands.

1 John 2:3–6 ... by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4 He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ... He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

Sanctification is obedience to God; it's holy living. We strive to obey the commands of Christ. If you are genuinely elect by God the father and sanctified by the HSp, your life will be characterized by obedience to God's commands. The result of salvation is obedience.

Quote: Conversion is more than an intellectual believing that something is true. It is repentance, a turning from a past way of life; it is faith, a commitment to Jesus as Lord that results in a way of life characterized by obedience.¹

Holy living is one of the practical results of election. If God has elected us and set us apart for himself through the work of the HSp, the result will be obedient living.

Ephesians 1:4 ... He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

We should be holy and obedient. Of course, we often fail at that, but we should strive for holiness and obedience.

¹ Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 49.

If such obedience is *not* evident in a person's life, then it is evident that he is not a true believer. He can make any kind of claims he wants; but if he is not living a holy lifestyle, then his profession of faith is questionable at best and likely insincere.

There is no excuse for a genuine believer to live in habitual, unrepentant disobedience. A true Christian cannot live that way. He is the elect of God; he is sanctified by the Spirit; he is obedient to the commands of Christ. He cannot remain in unrepentant sin. If he falls into sin, he'll be like the Prodigal Son—he'll arise out of the pigpen of sin and repentantly return to the father. Humble repentance is a mark of genuine Christianity.

And there's one more element of election—I said “three elements” because there are three prepositions here, but the last two of them use the same preposition. Part 3b is that ...

4. .2c Election results in the “sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.”
 - a) The same preposition, “unto/for” (εἰς) pertains to both obedience and the sprinkling of blood. Remember that the preposition here imply purposes or results.
 - b) So if election results in obeying the Gospel, it also results in the sprinkling of blood. That is, at the point of salvation, the blood of Christ is applied to the believer. Salvation is the application of Jesus' sacrificial death to the believer.
 - c) The sprinkling of blood pertains to two major concepts.
 - (1) First is *cleansing*. Under the OT system (cf. Ex 24), the priest would sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice on the altar, and that blood would cleanse the sinner from his sin. God would be propitiated/satisfied with the shedding of the blood of the sacrificial animal to atone for the sin of the sinner. So the sprinkling of blood speaks of purification of sin.

- (2) Second is *covenant*. OT believers were brought into a covenant with God through the sprinkling of blood. The sprinkling of blood on the people was a way of confirming them in a covenant with God.

d) Jesus fulfilled both of these ideas.

- (1) 1 John 1:7 ... *the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*

The sacrificial death of Christ atones for the sinner; it pays his penalty and forgives his sin. God is satisfied/propitiated regarding our sin because Jesus' blood has been shed on our behalf. Jesus' death for us cleanses us from sin.

- (2) NT believers are brought into the *new covenant* through the sprinkling of Christ's blood as an atonement for our sin.

Heb 12:24 ... *Jesus [is] the mediator of the new covenant, [through] the blood of sprinkling, ...*

e) So God's purpose in election is that the atonement of Christ is applied to the believer.

At the point of salvation, the merits of Jesus' death are credited to the repentant believer, and that provides for his cleansing from sin (atonement), and initiates a new relationship (covenant).

f) All of this means that if you are among the elect, you will be set apart by the Spirit, you will obey the Gospel, and the atonement of Christ will be applied to you. The elect will be saved.

g) God's election, foreknowledge, and sanctification are effective; they result in salvation. Nothing can prevent God from saving his people.

John 6:37 *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*

John 10:27–28 *My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. 28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.*

App: Peter knew that his readers were elect—chosen by God. How do you know if you are among the elect? That is a very important question. Many people wonder/worry about that.

We know who the elect are because when elect people are convicted by the Spirit of their sin, they repent of it. When they hear the Gospel, they obey it. When they hear that Jesus shed his blood that they might be saved, they want that for themselves.

I.e., you hear the voice of Christ and you respond to it in repentance and faith. That's the only way anyone knows that he is among the elect.

If you have no regard/interest/concern in such things, it's a pretty good sign that you are not among the elect. But only God knows who is elect. We know that a person is elect when he responds to the Gospel. That's why we preach the Gospel to everyone. We don't know how people will respond. Our job is to proclaim the Gospel; everything after that is God's job.

E.g. Acts 18:10 "I have much people in this city." How did Paul know who they were? They responded to the offer of the Gospel.

AW Pink said the following regarding how we can know we are among the elect: “First, by the Word of God having come in divine power to the soul, so that my ... self-righteousness is renounced. Second, by the Spirit’s having convicted me of my woeful, guilty, and lost condition. Third, by having had revealed to me the suitability and sufficiency of Christ to meet my desperate [need], and by a divinely given faith, causing me to lay hold of and rest upon Him as my only hope. Fourth, by the marks of the new nature within me. A love for God, an appetite for spiritual things, a longing for holiness, a seeking after conformity to Christ. Fifth, by the resistance which the new nature makes to the old [nature], causing me to hate sin and loathe myself for it. Sixth, by avoiding everything which is condemned by God’s Word and by sincerely repenting of and humbly confessing every transgression.”²

Those are the marks of an elect, sanctified, obedient, blood-bought believer. This is the common experience of genuine Christians. If those marks are *present*, then you are among the elect. If those marks are *absent*, then it becomes questionable if you are really saved.

5. Keep in mind that Peter is describing salvation from God’s perspective here. He’s focusing on what God does in salvation.

We see all three Persons of the Trinity at work to provide salvation—Father, Son and Spirit, all at work to save the individual believer. The Father chooses, the Son provides the sacrifice, and the Spirit regenerates. And this is effectual/efficacious work—i.e., God will successfully save those whom he has elected, foreknown, sanctified, and atoned for.

Quote: The Father chose us, the Son died for us, and the Spirit awoke us when we were rebelling, refusing, and resisting.³

² Quoted by MacArthur, <https://www.gty.org/sermons/60-4/chosen-by-god-part-3>

³ Joe Thorn, “The False Calvinist,” *Tabletalk Magazine: Doubt and Assurance* (Sanford, FL: Ligonier Ministries, Inc., 2016), 55.

Quote: God the Father gives us salvation by [free] election: the Son earns it by His blood-shedding: the Holy Spirit applies the Son's merits to the soul by the Gospel word.⁴

But we don't know if any of that is working/operating until a person obeys the Gospel. We cannot tell that a person is elect until he gets saved. God knows those who are his, but we don't know until they get saved.

Peter goes on to mention personal faith in vs. 5—all of this happens *from the human perspective* “through (διὰ) faith” – because of faith. It's God's business to elect, sanctify, and provide atonement. The response of an elect person is obedience to the faith. We appropriate the saving work of Christ through repentant faith. And we exercise faith because we are among the elect that God sets apart for himself through the Spirit.

Many people do not appreciate this doctrine of election. They claim that election pertains to something else, that is does not relate to salvation. But the teaching of the NT is fairly clear. Christians are saved because the Father elected them, the Son shed his blood for them, and the Spirit set them apart unto holiness. Our response to all of this is obedience to the Gospel. Our response is repentance of sin and faith in Christ.

I wonder if you have obeyed the Gospel?

So this is how Peter describes his readers; this is their identity. He wants to encourage them as they are facing persecution and exhort them to behave consistently with their Christian identity.

And this is your identity if you are a believer in Christ, and this is what you should keep in mind as you face the trials of life. God elected you, the Spirit sanctified you, and Jesus atoned for your sins through his bloody, sacrificial death.

⁴ Calvin, quoted in David Brown, A. R. Fausset, and Robert Jamieson, *A Commentary, Critical, Experimental, and Practical, on the Old and New Testaments: Acts–Revelation*, vol. VI (London; Glasgow: William Collins, Sons, & Company, Limited, n.d.), 597.

Since all of this is true, we cannot live like the unsaved world anymore. We must live like strangers and pilgrims whose citizenship is in heaven. We must not love the world or the things of this world. We must live in obedience to Jesus' commands.

Quote Spurgeon “Nothing under the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit can make a Christian more holy than the thought that he is chosen. ‘Shall I sin,’ he says, ‘after God has chosen me? Shall I transgress after such love? Shall I go astray after so much loving kindness and tender mercy? [No], my God. Since thou hast chosen me, I will love thee, I will live [for] thee, I will give myself to thee to be thine forever, solemnly consecrating myself to thy service.’ ”⁵

That’s a proper Christian response to these great doctrinal truths.

II. Peter bestows a blessing on his readers. .2b

- A. Greek letters at this time would often have the format, “Writer to readers, greeting.” The word “greeting” is based on the same root word for “grace.” Christians began opening their letters with a statement of grace instead of a statement of greeting.

This letter is full of grace. Peter uses the word “grace” about 10 times here. So grace is an important foundation for everything that Peter says here.

- B. Peace is the normal Jewish greeting “shalom,” which was a wish or prayer for prosperity or wellbeing.
- C. Grace and peace became a standard Christian greeting in the early church. We have peace with God because of the grace of God.
- D. And we can tie these blessings back to what he said earlier in vss. 1-2. We have grace and peace because the Father elected us, the Spirit sanctified us, and Jesus died for us. Because of that, we have the privilege of grace and peace.

This initial greeting sets the spiritual tone for the rest of the letter. Peter identifies his readers as those whom the Father had chosen, the Spirit had set apart, and the Son had purchased with his blood. They are the elect, foreordained, sanctified, obedient, covenant people of God. That’s how they should think about themselves.

⁵ Quoted in MacArthur, <https://www.gty.org/sermons/60-4/chosen-by-god-part-3>

This is a reminder of the spiritual position of believers. We have experienced God's mercy, grace, and peace. And on that basis, Peter goes on to encourage and exhort his readers – and us – regarding various aspects of the Christian life.

If you are a Christian, you should find great comfort and hope as you face the trials of life in that you are a chosen child of God, set apart by the HSp, obedient to the Gospel, and purchased with the blood of Christ. That's how we identify ourselves, not by the world's viewpoint, but from God's viewpoint. We may be strangers to this world, but we are God's chosen people.

And if you are *not* a Christian, you should want this for yourself. These concepts will apply to you if you repent of your sins and put your faith in Jesus Christ.