

Settled in the Foreknowledge of God

1 Peter 1:1-2

Introduction – Oftentimes we think that if life is unsettled, we must be outside of the will of God. But that position of unsettledness has nothing to do with our status as Christians or even necessarily an indication of our present obedience. If we have been chosen by God, His love is upon us.

Outline of Verses – Peter identifies himself by the name and office given to him by Jesus the Messiah. He is writing to Christian Jews who have been dispersed from Israel throughout what is present day Turkey. Their struggles may be with unbelieving Jews, or the pagan cultures around them, but the fact is they are ‘strangers’, or ‘pilgrims’. But they are to see how settled they really are in another sense.

The Man, Peter – It is not enough to note that Peter simply refers to himself as ‘an apostle’. There is no hint of popish supremacy in Peter’s words. But no doubt Peter stands out in the pages of the New Testament. Called to discipleship while a fisherman, not a theologian (Matt 4:18, Luke 5:4-11), he is later delegated as an apostle (Matt 10:2-4). As such, he will be graced with the ability to perform signs and wonders to attest to his preaching, to his writings, and to his authority as authentic. He sees and participates in the miracles of Christ (Matt 14:28-33), but falters in his faith. He is the first to confess Jesus as the Christ of God (Matt 16:13-19), but immediately is rebuked for failing to submit to the will of God (vv21-23). He witnesses the glorious transfiguration, but later, even after Christ warns him, He denies His Lord three times (Matt 26:69-75). He preaches the first sermon at Pentecost (Acts 2), receives a vision from the Lord that leads to the salvation of Cornelius and his Gentile household (Acts 10), stands against authorities even if it places him in prison, is miraculously released by an angel, and yet still falls prey to cowardice over the freedom of the Gentiles (Gal 2).

Did you think the steadfastness of your faith was like a roller coaster? It’s enough to give anyone here hope that God can use a wreck like you or me.

God’s Work - Election – We are the elect, not the electors. The Bible teaches that God chose us, not that we chose God. Upon what basis are we elected? “...according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,”.

Foreknowledge – This is not simply raw cognition of future facts. Rom 8:29-30 is a similar passage. Here we see the object of God’s foreknowledge – those he predestined to be glorified. This kind of knowledge is His loving selection of His people. This is the kind of knowing referred to in Amos 3:2 – “*You only have I known of all the families of the earth...*” And the concern in Rom 11:2 that God has abandoned His people is set aside – “*God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew...*”. This cannot mean that God was looking down the corridors of time and saw that we would elect Him and so He elected us. For one thing, Rom 9:10-12 would then make no sense. This is Amazing Grace, not our Amazing Discovery. We were lost, not God. We were found; we didn’t find God.

Sanctification – Here is where we know we are part of the elect. If you are, then you have been set apart, sanctified by a work of the Holy Spirit. What does that mean?

For (Unto) Obedience – The work of the Holy Spirit upon the elect will be to produce the fruit of obedience, the fruit of the Spirit (Phil 2:12-13, Gal 5:22-23).

For (Unto) Sprinkling of the Blood of Jesus Christ – Sprinkling pictured purification, the washing away of sins (Num 19). Isaiah promises that “*so shall (the Servant) sprinkle many nations*” (Isaiah 53:15). And we are taught that this was accomplished once and for all in the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ (Heb 9:11-15). We have been purified. We have been forgiven. We have been marked as participants in the efficacious work of Jesus Christ by His Holy Spirit.

The Trinity – In just these two verses, Peter identifies all three persons of the Trinity. While all three are each involved in every aspect of our salvation, Peter here makes some distinctions that are helpful. God the Father has elected us. God the Son has cleansed us and forgiven us. God the Spirit has quickened us, set us apart, and applied salvation to us.

“Grace to you, and peace be multiplied” – You have been chosen, justified, and you are being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Why do we need grace and peace? Because our lives are constantly unsettled due to the temptations of the flesh, the world, and the devil, along with the fallen state of the world. Therefore, it is good and appropriate to be in a situation where you need a lot of grace and peace. God will give both (2 Cor 12:9, John 14:27).

Grace To You –

Are you like Peter? – Fallen down a few times? Denied the Lord? Slipping and stumbling? There is grace for you.

Are you dispersed? – Physically, emotionally, vocationally, in countless ways, you may not be where you thought you should be. This does not have to rattle your assurance. There is grace for you.

How do you know if you are elect? – Here is the Word of God. You are called to repent and believe as Peter preached (Acts 2).

But your salvation is not in your hands. There is peace for you.

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2001