

Do Not Be Surprised at the Fiery Ordeal Among You

An Expository Journey Through **1 Peter**

1 Peter 1:1-2

5 Chosen by Foreknowledge and Sanctified to Obey, Part 3

October 01, 2017

1 Peter 1:1-2

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen² according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.

To the Glory of God

When someone asks me to explain Sovereign Election, I never start with Election itself. I start by asking this person to describe to me how he got saved. I ask them to tell me how they were converted. And to make my question more clear, instead of using the passive "got saved," I would ask, *"How did God save you? What did God do in you and to you, before you repented, that brought you to that place? Describe how God worked to bring you to Himself."*

And what I'm trying to do is search for how this person describes the depths of his own lostness, and the glorious Acts of God in bringing him out of that lostness. I'm looking to see if he really understands all that God did to bring him *out* of his blindness, and *out* of spiritual deadness and into spiritual life. I'm looking to see how amazed he is and how he marvels at the profound miracle that God did in bringing him out of his hostility toward spiritual things into being thrilled with spiritual things. And I'm trying to understand to what degree this person understands all that had to happen in order for him to believe.

So, I come at the question of Election by studying the effect that it has manifested in this person's life. And what I find among those who are genuinely saved is that very few of them want to take decisive credit for their own conversion. Even among those who say they disagree with Sovereign Election, most of them will agree that God did something to them *first, before* they repented, and *before* they trusted in Christ.

And with their hearts leaning in that direction, I take them to Scripture verses and Passages that teach exactly what *did* happen to them, like **2 Corinthians 4:6**, that says:

For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Here, the Apostle Paul says that God has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ, *in the very same way* that He spoke Light into Darkness in the first "Day" of Creation. In other words, God has sovereignly illuminated our hearts with Himself *in the very same way* that God created Light out of Darkness back in **Genesis 1:3**.

So, just how did God create Light into Darkness back in **Genesis 1:3**? Well, first of all, God did it *sovereignly*, all by Himself. And secondly, God did it by His spoken Word. So, Light didn't *cooperate* with God in its own creation. Light didn't *assist* God. No, God *created* Light *decisively, sovereignly*, all by Himself.

And God sovereignly created Light by just His spoken Word. Now according to **Genesis 2**, when God made Man, He fashioned him out of the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and at that point Man became a "living being". So, Life is a gift from God. Human beings cannot *create* life. Life comes through God *breathing* upon humans, and when we die, we "breathe our last", and we *exhale* the very Breath of God that final time, and the life that was given returns to the God Who gave it.

But God didn't fashion Light out of the dust. God just spoke and the Holy Spirit took what God spoke and made it a reality. And the Apostle Paul says that is the way God saves lost people. The Word of God is preached (spoken) and God the Holy Spirit takes the Word of

God that was preached and He sovereignly creates new spiritual life in those who are chosen. And that is how every one of you were saved.

Now if you're going to understand the Bible correctly, there is a Divine Principle that you must understand:

God always *originates* and Man always *responds*

You see, part of what it means to be fallen and lost is that we have lost our understanding and knowledge of God and ourselves. And, through that ignorance, we naturally assume that we are *equal to* or even *superior to*- God. And this wrong understanding does not have to be taught to us, we *naturally* and *normally* assume it based on our fallen condition. This false and even blasphemous thinking flows out from our fallen and corrupted nature. And so, it is very easy for lost and unsaved people to assume that what *we* want and what *we* like and what *we* crave after and what *we* deem to be important is also very important to God.

Therefore, part of what it means to be in "right standing with God" is that we *adjust* our thinking about God and ourselves until it comes into alignment with Divine Truth. And so, by reading and studying the sacred writings, we find that God is *always* "prime", and that which has been created, including humans, are *always* "secondary". God is *always* "above us" and "superior" to us, and we are always underneath Him and inferior to Him. God is always *more important* than we are. And by saying that, I'm *not* saying we have no importance at all, but only that God is *more* important.

And that means that God's Will and God's Plan and God's Desires are superior to and more important than our will and our plans and our desires. And Sin *maintains* that division between our will and God's Will, and sin *celebrates* that division. But Worship, real Worship, Spirit and Truth Worship, struggles very hard *against* that fallen impulse that maintains and celebrates the division between our will and God's Will, and Worship desires to be found humbly and joyfully submitted to the Authority of Scripture in our daily lives, all to the Glory of God.

And this is all part of the concept, that is all but dead in the modern Church, where the arrogant Pride of fallen and Man is humbled by the Reality of Who God is. And so, Biblical Salvation is carried out

the way it is delineated in Scripture so that two things will always be true:

1. God alone will be glorified
2. Man will be humbled

... and without both of those being true, you don't have Salvation.

So, what we find, when we read and study the Bible, is that Man does not *originate* anything that is eternal. We do not *initiate* anything that is eternal. We are never the "First Cause" of anything that is eternal. Human beings, saved or lost, are *not* "creators". We do *not* have the power or the authority to *create* reality or to *initiate* our own healing or our own blessings or our own Salvation. We do not speak things into existence. That kind of Power is reserved only for God.

And any Teaching that says that humans can speak things and cause them to become reality has more in common with the false religion of Christian Science (that is neither "Christian" nor "Science") than it does Christianity. We must remember that we are part of that which has been created, but we are never the *creators* of anything.

The humiliating and insulting reality is that we have never been in charge, even when we were lost. Human beings are *not* the "Captains of their own ship", nor are they the "Masters of their own fate". Before we were saved, we were "slaves to sin" who were cruelly driven by our own lusts. And after we are saved, we are bond-slaves of the Lord Jesus Christ and are led by His Spirit. But, whether saved or lost, we have always been slaves, and have never been in charge.

And the flip side of that is just as important. God has *always* been supremely Omnipotent, Omniscient and Effectual. God never counsels with us about anything, and He never needs our advice or input. God already knows everything about everything, and is always *decisive* in whatever He wills. Therefore, God never *responds* to what we *initiate*. God is the *decisive* One, God is the *sovereign* One, God is the Creator and the Initiator and the Originator. God alone is the "First Cause" of all things, and all we do is *respond* to that which God *initiates* or *originates* or *causes*.

So, in the case of Salvation, human beings, who are fallen and radically ruined, do not *originate* their own Salvation. They are *not* the "First Cause" of their own Salvation. They do not *initiate* their own

Salvation by *anything* they say or do. Rather, the Bible is crystal clear about this, dear friends, Salvation was God's idea. And God accomplishes Salvation, *sovereignly*, all by Himself.

God acted *decisively* in taking on human flesh and inserting Himself into His Own Creation and becoming Man. Jesus acted *decisively* when He lived a perfectly sinless life, in thought, word, and deed, 24 hours every day and 7 days every week, for 33-1/2 years. God acted *decisively* by imputing all of our sins onto Jesus on the Cross so God's Wrath could be poured out on them and Him. Jesus acted *decisively* in literally dying. And God acted *decisively* by raising Jesus up from the dead on the third day.

And God the Holy Spirit acts *decisively* in going all through the earth to find those whom God has set His Love upon and *drawing* or *dragging* them to Jesus. God the Holy Spirit acts *decisively* in opening their blind eyes and unstopping their deaf ears and by taking out of them a hard, unbelieving, stony heart and replacing it with a heart that is soft and is both able and willing to believe. And God the Holy Spirit acts *decisively* by granting repentance to those whom God has chosen and by giving them the gift of faith.

And we *respond* to that decisive Action by hearing the Gospel and by believing the Gospel, and by repenting or turning away from all our wickedness, and by placing all our hope and all our faith and all our trust in Jesus personally and in His finished Work. And *that* is how we are saved. Divine Light *sovereignly* shone into our hearts through the spoken Word of God and the veil was removed from our eyes and we beheld the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ. And chosen people treasure what they see.

And then Paul, and every other writer of the New Testament says that all who actually are blessed to be able and willing to do all of that, they will themselves be changed, from one realm of glory to the next, even as by the Lord, Who is that Spirit.

So, one moment, we had no light at all and we were content in our dark and fallen condition, and we were without God and without hope in the world. And the very next moment, God *sovereignly* and *decisively* gave us that Light, just like on the first day of Creation and we see. So, please turn with to **Ephesians 2:1-10** to see what the Apostle Paul said about this:

1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,
2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world,
according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now
working in the sons of disobedience.
3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the
desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath,
even as the rest.
4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved
us,
5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with
Christ (by grace you have been saved),
6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in
Christ Jesus,
7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace
in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.
8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves,
it is the gift of God;
9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.
10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works,
which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

... that's how God moved upon Paul to say it. And back in **1 Peter 1:1-2**,
the Apostle Peter said, we were chosen...

**... according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work
of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood...**

... which is just a different way of saying the very same thing.

So, how did *you* come to repentance? By a "free-will act of your
own self-determination"? No, the Bible says that God moved *decisively*
to *grant* you the gift of Repentance. And that is why Paul said:

2 Timothy 2:24-26

24 The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able
to teach, patient when wronged,

25 with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may
grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,

26 and they may come to their senses *and escape* from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

So, it is God alone Who *sovereignly* and *decisively* gives sight. It is God alone Who *sovereignly* and *decisively* gives light. It is God alone Who *sovereignly* and *decisively* grants repentance. And Jesus said in **John 6:44- 47:**

44 "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.

45 "It is written in the prophets, '*AND THEY SHALL ALL BE TAUGHT OF GOD.*' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me.

46 "Not that anyone has seen the Father, except the One who is from God; He has seen the Father.

47 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes *A*has eternal life.

So, it is after I have said all of this that I ask them if they see that God was the "Decisive Cause" of their "beholding" Christ as true, and desirable, and the Source or the Originator or the Initiator of their spiritual life, and their repentance, and *even* their coming to Christ. God's electing Grace awakens in us a greater sense of wonder that we are saved, and that we owe it all to God. And if they insist on pushing back and deny this teaching, if they insist that they have ultimate self-determination, and that they themselves are decisively responsible for their own conversion, I would stop the discussion right there and would never even mention Election to them, because they have already rejected the foundation of it.

If they have to have "human self-determination" as the ultimate Cause of their own Conversion, then Election is already undermined and the Bible will not make it plain to them. The passages I have just given about how they were converted are the most plain.

But if they agree, "*Yes, God saved me. God was the decisive Cause,*" then I would ask them, "*When did God decide to do that?*" And to get the biblical answer I would probably look first at **The Acts 13:48** that says:

When the Gentiles heard this, they *began* rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

Here is the *decisive* Act of God in sovereignly *appointing* some to eternal life. And that "appointing" is the *First Cause*, the Origination, the Initiation. And my *belief* in Jesus is a human *response* to having already been "appointed". So, the sovereign decisive "election" or "appointing" comes *first*, and the "believing" is a *response* to having been chosen.

And then I would turn to **Ephesians 1:4** that says:

just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him...

Here, the Bible says that God decided to save you, way before He actually did it. So, God saved you *sovereignly* because He decided to. And then I would write down a few more texts about Election for this person to take home and study on their own:

Romans 8:30

and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

Romans 9:11-13

11 for though *the twins* were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to *His* choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls,

12 it was said to her, "***THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER.***"

13 Just as it is written, "***JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED.***"

Romans 11:5

In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to *God's* gracious choice.

1 Corinthians 1:23-24

23 but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness,

24 but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

And my goal in explaining the mystery of Election would be to awaken in both of us a greater sense of wonder that we are saved, and that we owe it all to God that apart from Him we can do nothing, and therefore, all of our lives should be lived in the constant amazement that we are saved and that God Almighty would take on flesh and die for us. And so, my effort would not be to simply win an argument, but so that two things can happen:

1. God is glorified
2. Man is humbled

Now last week, we looked at what Peter meant when he said that we were:

... chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father...

... and we saw that God the Father "sets His Love" upon all those that will be saved, *from before the foundation of the world*. And we saw that the reason God does this is to accomplish two things:

1. So that God alone will be glorified
2. So that no Man may boast

Now, today I want to look at what this amazing Apostle meant when he said that we were:

... chosen... by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood...

Here, Peter says that the outworking of God's choice of the elect made in eternity past *begins* at a particular point of time, "by" or "through" or "because of" the sanctifying Work of God the Holy Spirit. Now this "Sanctifying Work" or the Work of God in making us holy encompasses all that the Spirit sovereignly or decisively produces in Salvation, like:

- ✓ Faith (**Ephesians 2:8**)
- ✓ Repentance (**The Acts 11:15-18**)

- ✓ Regeneration (**Titus 3:5**)
- ✓ Adoption (**Romans 8:16&17**).

So, Election, which is the Plan of God to save all those chosen from before the foundation of the world, becomes a *reality* in the life of each believer, through Salvation, which is the Work of God, which the Holy Spirit carries out, *decisively* or *sovereignly*.

And this sanctifying Work refers to a separation, a consecration, a dedication to Jesus and His Glory, *exclusively!* That is what "Holiness" is, and Peter illustrates the Principle when he said:

1 Peter 2:9-12

9 But you are *A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION*, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

10 for you once were *NOT A PEOPLE*, but now you are *THE PEOPLE OF GOD*; you had *NOT RECEIVED MERCY*, but now you have *RECEIVED MERCY*.

11 Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.

12 Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe *them*, glorify God in the day of visitation.

At Salvation, the sanctifying Work of the Spirit sets believers apart from sin to God, separates them from darkness to light, sets them apart from unbelief to faith, and mercifully separates them from a love of sin and brings them to a love of righteousness (**John 3:3-8; Romans 8:2; 2 Corinthians 5:17; cf. 1 Corinthians 2:10-16; Ephesians 2:1-5; 5:8; Colossians 2:13**).

Peter expressed this very same Principle years earlier, at the Jerusalem Council:

The Acts 15:7-9

7 After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe.

8 "And God, who knows the heart, testified to them giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us;

9 and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith.

Peter says here that God the Holy Spirit *decisively* and *sovereignly* cleansed the hearts of the Gentile converts, by faith. And that underscores four different aspects of the Spirit's Work in Salvation:

1. Salvation is the Spirit's Work (**John 3:3-8; cf. Romans 15:16; 1 Corinthians 6:11; 1 Thessalonians 1:4-6; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Titus 3:5**).
2. Once the Holy Spirit, at Salvation, separates believers from sin, He *continues* to make them more and more holy (cf. **Philippians 1:6**) in the *life-long, progressive separation process* called "Sanctification" (**Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; Hebrews 12:14; cf. Ephesians 4:24,30; 2 Timothy 4:18**).
3. Paul says that God chose believers "that [they] would be holy and blameless before Him" (**Ephesians 1:4**). That begins at Salvation and is completed at Glorification.
4. The sanctifying Process is the working out of God's elective Purpose in the earthly lives of Christians (cf. **Romans 6:22; Galatians 4:6; Philippians 2:12-13; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 12:14**).

Who are chosen... to obey Jesus Christ...

Obedience to Jesus Christ is the *effect* or the *result* or the *by-product* of Divine Election. **Ephesians 2:10** says:

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

So, for anyone to obey Jesus Christ, then, is the equivalent of being saved. In **Romans 1:5**, Paul called it "**the obedience of faith**". Now while it is true that believers do not obey *perfectly* or *completely* (**1 John 1:8-10; cf. Romans 7:14-25**), the overall testimony of their lives is a

visible, tangible, real and measurable pattern of obedience as they continue to yield themselves as “servants of righteousness” (**Romans 6:17-18; cf. Romans 8:1-2; 2 Corinthians 10:5b**).

Listen to how Paul commends the obedience of the saints of Thessalonica in **1 Thessalonians 1:2-10**:

2 We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers;

3 constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father,

4 knowing, brethren beloved by God, His choice of you;

5 for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.

6 You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit,

7 so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.

8 For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything.

9 For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God,

10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *that is* Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.

All of that godly fruit...

- ✓ Their faith
- ✓ Their love
- ✓ Their hope in Christ
- ✓ Their imitation of Paul and the Lord
- ✓ Their exemplary behavior before others
- ✓ Their proclamation of the Word
- ✓ Their turning from idols
- ✓ Their waiting for Christ

... all of this fruit proved beyond any doubt that their regeneration as genuine.

Now the Apostle John's first Epistle makes an even more extensive case that true Salvation always results in obedience to Jesus Christ:

1 John 2:3-5

3 By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.

4 The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;

5 but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him:

1 John 3:3-10

3 And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

4 Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.

5 You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin.

6 No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him.

7 Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous;

8 the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.

9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

10 By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

1 John 3:24

The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

1 John 5:2-3

2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments.

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

It won't be until our final glorification in Heaven, when the realization of the entire Purpose of Election and of the ultimate Work of Sanctification will be realized, because it is then that believers will have become completely conformed to Christ (**Romans 8:29; 1 John 3:2**). So, until then, our obedience to Jesus is the *effect of* or the *response to* Sovereign Election. Now let's examine the last aspect of Sovereign Election that Peter gave us, when he said, "**we were chosen... to obey Jesus Christ...**

... and be sprinkled with His blood:

There is yet one more profoundly important and very practical component of Election. And that is the Security for the believer. And Peter was moved along by God the Holy Spirit to say that this Security is wrapped up in the elect being sprinkled with Christ's Blood. And Peter's metaphor here looks back to the time in the Old Testament when the blood of animals was sprinkled on the people of Israel. And that event is significant enough that the letter to the **Hebrews** to mention it once *specifically* and once by *allusion* (**9:19-20; 12:24**). The following Passage in **Exodus 24** describes the remarkable event:

Exodus 24:3-8

3 Then Moses came and recounted to the people all the words of the Lord and all the ordinances; and all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words which the Lord has spoken we will do!"

4 Moses wrote down all the words of the Lord. Then he arose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain with twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel.

5 He sent young men of the sons of Israel, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as peace offerings to the Lord.

6 Moses took half of the blood and put *it* in basins, and the *other* half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar.

7 Then he took the book of the covenant and read *it* in the hearing of the people; and they said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!"

8 So Moses took the blood and sprinkled *it* on the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words."

Here, Moses had just returned from Mount Sinai and gave a review of the Law to the people. And they *responded* very dutifully by pledging to obey all God required. This began the Covenant-making agreement between God and His people (cf. **Exodus 19:3-20:17**).

Under the Spirit's Inspiration, Moses recorded all the words of the Law. And when he finished the next morning, he built an altar at the foot of the mountain to symbolize the sealing of the Covenant between God and the people. To represent the entire nation's involvement, the altar consisted of twelve stacks of stones (pillars), one for each of the twelve tribes. And to further provide the people an opportunity to express their determination to obey the Law, Moses offered burnt offerings and peace offerings of young bulls.

Moses then placed half the blood from the slain sacrificial animals in large basins, and the other half he splashed on God's altar. Then Moses read the Words of the Law he had recorded the previous night, and the people pledged their obedience again. And it was after that that Moses splattered the people with the remaining blood from the basins, thereby visually and ceremonially making the people's pledge and promise of obedience official.

So, the shed blood was a tangible demonstration that two parties had made a binding commitment or Covenant (cf. **Genesis 15:9-18; Jeremiah 34:18-19**). Israel made a promise of obedience to God, mediated through sacrifice. And the blood splattered on the altar represented God's agreement to reveal His Law. And the blood sprinkled on the people signified their consent to obey.

And the Holy Spirit compares that unique pledge to the inherent Covenant in saving faith in Jesus Christ, which entails a *similar* promise to obey the Word of the Lord. When believers trust in Christ's atoning Sacrifice for them, they are *not* simply accepting the *Benefits* of His Death on their behalf. They are *also* submitting to His sovereign *Lordship* over every aspect of their lives. (**Matthew 7:24-27; 1**

Thessalonians 1:9; 2:13; James 1:21-23). And Christ's Blood, that was shed at the Cross, acts like a "seal" to that Covenant. In fact, the night before He died, when He instituted the Lord's Supper, Jesus echoed Moses' words in **Exodus 24:8**:

Matthew 26:27-28

And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins'

So, *inherent* in the New Covenant was the Promise that the Lord would come and redeem sinners, and they would *respond* to His Promise by keeping His Word.

Peter states that when believers were spiritually sprinkled with Christ's Blood, they entered into a "Covenant of Obedience". Years earlier, Peter and the other Apostles referred to the Truth of obedience when they told the Jewish leaders:

The Acts 5:31-32

"He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him"

Now to summarize the Old Testament analogy, the blood sprinkled on God's altar symbolized His Commitment to forgive sins (fully realized in the sacrificial Death of Christ), and the blood sprinkled on the people symbolized their intention to obey God's Law (more fully realized when Christians walk in the Spirit and obey the Word). And **1 John 2:3-6** is crystal clear about this submission:

By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

So, as every coin has two sides, the New Covenant also has two sides:

1. Salvation
2. Obedience

So, as a result of Sovereign Election, God's children are saved from sin and given the desire and the power to obey Him. And God promises to forgive them when they don't. The same Blood of Jesus Christ that sealed the New Covenant keeps on spiritually cleansing the sins of Christians when they disobey (cf. **Hebrews 7:25; 9:11-15; 10:12-18; 1 John 1:7**).

So, the very Purpose for which we are chosen is that God will so *radically* and *thoroughly* change us (by what He does for us, all by Himself), that every chosen vessel will have both the God-given *desire* and the God-given *power* to obey Jesus Christ. Salvation without the component for us to obey God doesn't exist and would be worthless.

1 Peter 1:2e

... May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.

Now the reason Peter said this was because he wanted these scattered aliens to experience all the best that God can offer, and that it would repeatedly *increase* to their advantage. So, Peter wished for the readers of this Epistle to experience all the rich and varied Blessings that come from being God's elect.

Now contrast Peter's desire here with the tendency in the modern Church is to either *minimize* Sovereign Election and all its benefits, or outright *ignore* them. Many today seek to justify this unbiblical effort by claiming that the Doctrine of Election is too deep, too confusing, and too divisive. But that is not our job. Our job is *not* to preach only the issues that are easy and readily accepted, but to preach the whole counsel of God.

People should rejoice over the glorious advantages that a correct understanding of Election provides. And this verse points toward a few of them.

The Doctrine of Election is the most God-honoring and Man-humbling Truth in all of Scripture. Nothing else even comes close. It is

very sobering to realize that we had absolutely nothing to do with God's choice of us (**John 1:12-13; Romans 9:16**).

So, when properly understood, Election raises God's Value and crushes human morality and religious pride more than any other Doctrine. And that is a great blessing, because God only gives His Grace to those who have been made humble.

Election makes it clear that the sinner's faith, repentance, and ability to obey God, comes from God and not from himself. (cf. **Psalms 110:3**, KJV; **Ephesians 2:8-9**). Only God can grant Forgiveness to His people when they sin (**Proverbs 20:9; Micah 6:7; Ephesians 1:7; 1 John 1:7; 3:5**). The psalmist declared:

Psalm 115:1

Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Your name give glory because of your lovingkindness, because of Your truth

Election produces ultimate Joy. Those whom God chooses rejoice because they know they would have no hope for Salvation *apart* from God's electing Grace (**John 6:44; Acts 4:12; 1 Timothy 2:5-6**). The elect would ultimately perish forever like all other sinners if God had not chosen them (cf. **Romans 9:29**). **Psalms 65:4** says in part:

"How blessed is the one whom You choose and bring near to You to dwell in Your courts."

It is a supreme joy for the elect to consider that the Lord has loved them with an everlasting Love (cf. **Luke 10:20**), from before the foundation of the world and on into eternity future.

Election is advantageous because it promises Christians an eternity of spiritual privileges. The Apostle Paul's prayerful expression of praise and gratitude to God, which opens his letter to the Ephesians, is a fitting summary of many of those privileges.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself,

according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory. In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.
(Ephesians 1:3-14; cf. 1 Peter 2:9-10)

The Doctrine of Election is a powerful incentive to holy living. Knowing God has set them apart because of His Own special Love for them is a most effective motivation for believers to live to the Glory of God. That Principle was undoubtedly on Paul's mind when he exhorted the Colossians:

Colossians 3:12-13

"So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you."

... their gratitude to God for His election of them should compel believers to a life of obedience and holiness.

If Christians ignore the doctrine of election, they fail to understand the glories of redemption, they fail to honor the sovereignty of God and Christ, and they fail to appreciate the immense spiritual privileges that are theirs. Present-day believers, just as those in Peter's time, need not be ignorant of election, because God wants them to know

what His grace has provided, and because every scriptural teaching is cause to offer Him the praise He deserves (cf. **Psalms 19:7-9; 119:7,14-16**).

Election is such a powerful truth that when Christians understand it, the practical ramifications of election will transform the way they live their daily lives:

- ✓ Knowing the *Condition* of their election (they reside on earth as spiritual aliens to reach those around them).
- ✓ The *Nature* of their election (it is completely the result of God's sovereign choice).
- ✓ The *Source* of their election (God set His love on them from eternity past).
- ✓ The *Sphere* of their election (it becomes a reality by the Holy Spirit's sanctifying work).
- ✓ The *Effect* of their election (loving obedience to Jesus Christ), the security of their election (the covenant of obedience, which ensures divine forgiveness).
- ✓ And the *Advantages* of their election (the many spiritual blessings and privileges available) produces power in believers' lives that they would otherwise never be able to fully appreciate.

And that is why Peter used these terms at the very beginning of his Epistle. And that is why we should not only *believe* in Sovereign Election, but we should preach it and teach it and shout it loudly from every rooftop!

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.