

## 1 Peter 1:1-2 (Part II)

### Introduction

Peter begins his letter with these words:

- 1 Peter 1:1 — Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, **To** the chosen, [who are] resident foreigners of the Dispersion of Pontus, of Galatia, of Cappadocia, of Asia, and of Bithynia...

And so we learned that we are, all of us, living in Babylon. We are all “resident **foreigners** of the Dispersion.” The point here is **not** our separation from our true heavenly city that we long for. The point is rather to emphasize our **separation** and our **estrangement** from the place and culture in which we find ourselves living – a place and culture that views us as “foreigners,” and which we *feel* to be utterly foreign to us.

So, the question is: How are we to *safeguard* our foreignness while still living in our neighborhoods, our workplaces, our communities – and sometimes even our families? How are we to *keep* our foreignness while still living “permanently” in Babylon?

The very first and most important solution to this pressing question is to see that this foreignness is nothing more and nothing less than the product of our “chosenness.” “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, **To the chosen**, [who are] foreigners of the Dispersion...” It’s never pleasant to be a foreigner – not in and of itself. For the rest of our lives, we’ll constantly face the pressure *and* the temptation to assimilate – to be absorbed into the culture as much as possible rather than safeguarding our estrangement from the culture. (cf. the Jewish Dispersion) So, what is it that will give us the strength to resist these pressures and temptations? What is it that will give us the will to be constantly working to maintain our foreignness? Peter’s first answer: We *must* learn to see with the eyes of faith, that it is our foreignness in this world, no matter how uncomfortable, and difficult it might be, that actually **reassures us** of our “chosenness”—that we have indeed been chosen—by God. We must learn to see that it is the inestimable privilege of our chosenness that has created this situation where the world views us as foreigners and where we feel the world to be utterly foreign to us.

And so, after Peter writes in verse one, “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the chosen, [who are] resident foreigners of the Dispersion of Pontus, of Galatia, of Cappadocia, of Asia, and of Bithynia...” he then goes on to write in verse two:

**I. 1 Peter 1:2** — ...according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

**What is it** that is “**according to** the foreknowledge of God the Father”? **What is it** that is “**in** the sanctification of the Spirit”? **What is it** that is “**for** obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ”?

Is it “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ... according to... in... [and] for...”? For several reasons that seems most unlikely. No, it must be that after identifying his readers as resident foreigners of

the Dispersion of Pontus, of Galatia, of Cappadocia, of Asia, and of Bithynia, Peter now comes right back again to the theme of our **chosenness**. We have been **chosen** “**according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,**” **chosen** “**in the sanctification of the Spirit,**” and **chosen** “**for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.**”

Do you think this is a big deal for Peter? Do you think it *needs* to be a big deal for us? We’re going to spend the rest of this morning seeking to root ourselves in this biblical doctrine of our chosenness so that we might have the strength and the courage to live as the resident foreigners of the Dispersion that we are. The first thing Peter wants us to know is that we have been chosen...

**II. 1 Peter 1:2a** — ...[*chosen*] according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,

So what does this mean? Where is the beauty and the encouragement in this? When we think of “knowledge,” we think of facts and information. So when we think of “*foreknowledge*,” we think of knowing the facts and the information ahead of time. So what would this mean? Is Peter saying that God chose us because of certain information that He knew in advance—for instance, is Peter saying that God chose us because He knew ahead of time that we would believe in Jesus? May even the hint of such a thought be banished forever from our minds!

God’s knowing is not like our knowing. God’s knowing is not based on the collecting of information outside of Himself – like ours is. God’s knowing is based on His own sovereign **ordering** and **directing** and **governing** and **decreeing** all things. (cf. Isa. 48:3-5; 41:25-29; 42:9) All of God’s knowing and all that God knows has its source ultimately in Himself. So this is what explains God’s “*foreknowledge*.” God knows all things beforehand because in some wonderful and mysterious way all things are the result of His own eternal purpose and decree. So, **all** of God’s knowledge is **foreknowledge**. It is not possible that God should not foreknow all things from all eternity – because there is nothing that God knows that is not ultimately the outworking of His own plan and decree. To sum up, in the Scriptures God’s foreknowledge is ultimately the **same** as His foreordination. In his first sermon on the day of Pentecost, Peter says:

➤ Acts 2:23 — This Jesus, delivered up according to the **definite plan** and **foreknowledge** of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

Notice how the definite plan and foreknowledge of God doesn’t take away the answerability and the accountability of men. But then we notice especially that God’s “foreknowledge” is the *very same thing* as His “definite plan.” So far, then, Peter is saying that when God chose us in history and time, it was actually the outworking of plans and purposes that He had formed in Himself from all eternity.

Paul speaks of God choosing us “before the foundation of the world” (cf. Eph. 1:4), whereas Peter is thinking of God’s choosing us in terms of His **calling us** to Himself in the **here and now**.

➤ 1 Peter 1:15 — As He who **called** you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct...

- 1 Peter 2:21 — To this [perseverance in suffering] you have been **called**, because Christ also suffered for you...
- 1 Peter 3:9 — Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were **called**...
- 1 Peter 5:10 — And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has **called** you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you...

Brothers and sisters, each one of us who have truly believed in Jesus have experienced what it is to be chosen and called by God. We know that even our faith in Jesus is just the result of His choosing and calling us. And yet what Peter wants us to know is that this choosing and calling that we've experienced in our lives is the outworking of plans and purposes that God has formed in Himself from all eternity past. But that's not all – not by a long shot.

Peter isn't talking about information and facts that God has foreknown. What Peter says is that when God chose us and called us, this was all based in this awesome reality – that He had **foreknown us**—that He had foreknown **you** and **me**—from all eternity. Can you see, already, how this is more wonderful than you or I will ever be able to fathom? What does it mean for God to “foreknow” us? It means that before we were ever born, before the foundations of the world were ever laid, God **knew** us and **loved** us. Listen to what God says to the people of the Old Covenant:

- Amos 3:2 — **You only have I known [LXX ginosko] of all the families of the earth...**

What Peter wants us to see is that our present experience of being chosen and called by God is not the result of our faith or of anything else “good” in us. Our present experience of being chosen and called by God is ultimately only the result of God knowing and loving us from before the world was ever made.\* The Apostle Paul also loves to celebrate this same reality:

- 1 Thessalonians 1:4 — For we know, brothers **loved by God**, that he has **chosen** you...
- Romans 1:7 — To all those in Rome who are **loved by God** and **called** to be saints...
- 2 Thessalonians 2:13 — We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers **beloved by the Lord**, because God **chose** you as the firstfruits to be saved...

---

\* Exodus 33:17 (cf. 33:12) — And the LORD said to Moses, “This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and **I know [LXX oida] you by name.**”

Numbers 16:5 [LXX] — And he spoke to Core and all his assembly, saying, God has visited and **known [ginosko]** those that are his and who are holy, and has **brought** them to himself; and whom he has **chosen** for himself, he has **brought** to himself.

Jeremiah 1:5 — “Before I formed you in the womb I **knew [LXX epistamai]** you, and before you were born I **consecrated** you; I **appointed** you a prophet to the nations.”

Romans 8:29–30 — For **those whom he foreknew** he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Romans 11:1–2 — I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not **rejected his people whom he foreknew**. Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel?

It may seem ridiculous to ask, but why should this be an encouragement to us? When it comes to you and me, the purposes and plans that God has formed in Himself from all eternity past can **only, always** have **everything** to do with His **eternal love** for us. Here is something that's no less true of us than it is of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, of whom Peter writes:

- 1 Peter 1:20 — **He** was **foreknown** before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of [us]...

Are you secure, and confident, and joyful in the **FOREKNOWLEDGE** of God? Are you utterly secure, and confident, and joyful in the eternal, sovereign, electing **LOVE** of God? Certainly, this is where we are right to think of Paul's words in Romans chapter eight:

- Romans 8:28–30 — And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

What wondrous **love** is this?!? What a powerful, all-encompassing, irresistible **love** this is! It's in this light that we should come again to read the words of Peter: “[chosen] according to the foreknowledge of **God the Father**.” Do we understand the miracle that we should know **God as Father**? There's only one way this can be. God is first of all the Father of His one and only Son, Jesus Christ. In the very next verse, Peter will write:

- 1 Peter 1:3 — Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!

And so it's **only** through the miracle of our union with Christ that we have the right, now, to be called children of God (cf. 1 Pet. 1:14) and to call God our Father. (1 Pet. 1:17) In the very next verse, Peter also goes on to write:

- 1 Peter 1:3 (cf. 1:23) — 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...

The God who has foreknown us and loved us in eternity past, the God who has planned and purposed all things concerning us from before the foundation of the world, **this** is the God that we call our **Father**, and who has called us His sons and daughters.

If we have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, then we have also been chosen in the sanctification of the Spirit:

**III. 1 Peter 1:2b** — [**chosen**] in the sanctification of the Spirit,

The question we may have is this: If we have been chosen and called by God **as the result of His eternal foreknowledge**, then **how is it** that we have **experienced** this choosing and calling **in the actual present reality of our lives today**? How has God's choice and calling, based in his

eternal foreknowledge, actually become effective as a living, powerful reality in our lives today? Peter answers: We have been chosen in or through the sanctification of the Spirit.

But what does this mean? The Bible speaks of sanctification in two different ways. On the one hand, there's the **gradual and constant** sanctifying process where—by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit—we're more and more putting sin to death in our lives and being set apart in holy and righteous living. (cf. Rom. 8:9-14; Gal. 5:22-23) On the other hand, there's the **once for all past** event when we were set apart from this world and consecrated as God's holy people. Now, we can't finally separate between these two things – sanctification accomplished, and sanctification in process; the one always assumes the other. But which one does Peter mainly have in mind here? I think it's very clear. What Peter is setting before us now is the Spirit's initial work of transferring us out of this world and consecrating us to God as His holy people.

- 1 Corinthians 6:11 (cf. 1:2; Rom. 15:16) — You *were* washed, you *were sanctified*, you *were* justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and **by the Spirit of our God**.
- 2 Thessalonians 2:13 — We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers **beloved by the Lord**, because **God chose you** as the firstfruits to be saved, *through sanctification by the Spirit*.

So, it is the **Holy Spirit** who makes the **Father's** choice and calling of us actually effective in our lives by consecrating us and sanctifying us to the Lord. But *how* does the Holy Spirit do this? How has the Spirit worked in your life to accomplish this miracle? In verse 12, Peter writes:

- 1 Peter 1:12 — It was revealed to [the OT prophets] that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those **who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven**.

What we have here is truly awesome. The Holy Spirit powerfully and effectively accompanies the preaching of the Gospel to all those whom God has chosen and called. And it's this power of the Spirit accompanying the seed of the Word of God as it's preached to those who are chosen and called that actually works and produces faith in us and causes us to be born again as children of God. Peter writes in verse 23:

- 1 Peter 1:23 — You have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God.

And listen to what Paul says in 1 Thessalonians chapter one:

- 1 Thessalonians 1:4–5 — We know, brothers **loved by God**, that he has **chosen** you, **BECAUSE** our gospel came to you not only in word [as it does to many], but also **IN POWER** and **IN THE HOLY SPIRIT** and **WITH FULL CONVICTION**.

So now let me put the question to you once more. If we have been chosen and called by God **as the result of His eternal foreknowledge**, then *how is it* that we have *experienced* this choosing and calling **in the actual present reality of our lives today**? How has God's choice and calling, based in his eternal foreknowledge, actually become effective as a living, powerful reality in our

lives today? There's only one possible, glorious answer. It is in and through the sanctification of the Spirit — the Holy Spirit powerfully and effectively accompanying the preaching of the Gospel to all whom God has chosen and called, and thereby infallibly working and producing faith in us and causing us to be born again. This is a miracle of infinite proportions. O for a thousand tongues to sing the sanctifying, saving work of the Holy Spirit in our lives!

If we have been chosen and called by God **as the result of His eternal foreknowledge**, and if God's choice and calling has been made effective in our lives today through the powerful sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, then we have to ask: **to what end** and **for what purpose** has God chosen and called us? Do you think the answer to this question will be wonderful? Peter answers: We have been chosen **for** obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

**IV. 1 Peter 1:2c** — [*chosen*] for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:

That can feel like a mouthful! So what does it mean? Peter seems to have in his mind a passage in Exodus that we were just looking at not so very long ago. The people of Israel have arrived at Mount Sinai. God has come down on the mountain and made known to them all of his commandments and judgments (the Book of the Covenant). And then we read:

- Exodus 24:3–8 — All the people answered with one voice and said... “All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and **we will be obedient.**” And **Moses took the blood and threw it on the people** and said, “**Behold the blood of the covenant** that the LORD has made with you **in accordance with all these words.**”

What are the two main ingredients in this passage? – Promised obedience and the sprinkling of blood; the same as we have here in Peter. And *together*, what do these two ingredients add up to? – A covenant relationship with God.

But as we know, on the one hand the people of Israel failed to be obedient, and on the other hand the sprinkling of the blood of animals couldn't ultimately cleanse them from the defilement of sin or set them free from the power of sin. And so the covenant was broken, and the people were left desperately in need of a new covenant. What kind of a covenant?—A covenant that would transform their hearts so they could obey the law of the Lord and a covenant that would wash away all their sin and set them free from its power forever. And that's exactly what the New Covenant in Christ's blood *is*. When Peter says that we have been chosen “**for** obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ” he means that we have been chosen **for** membership in *this* promised **New Covenant**. We have all been chosen and called **to this end** and **for this purpose** – that we should be wholly enabled to live lives of **obedience** by faith in Jesus Christ,<sup>†</sup> and that by the sprinkling of His blood we should be **washed** from all our sin and **set free** from its power forever. (cf. Jobes; Acts 13:38-39)

---

<sup>†</sup> **Romans 1:5** (cf. Rom. 10:16; 1 Pet. 4:17; 2 Thess. 1:8) — through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the **obedience of faith** for the sake of his name among all the nations...

**Romans 16:25–26** — Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the **obedience of faith**.

Peter will say in verses 18-19:

- 1 Peter 1:18–19 — **You were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers**, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but **with the precious blood of Christ**, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

And then Peter will continue in verse 22:

- 1 Peter 1:22 (1 Pet. 1:14–15; 3:1, 20; 4:17; 2 Thess. 2:13) — Having **purified** your souls by your **obedience to the truth...**

Both of these realities—obedience to the truth by faith in Jesus Christ and cleansing from sin by the sprinkling of His blood—are miracles of the New Covenant, and it was with the purpose that we should be granted these awesome privileges that God chose us and called us.

## Conclusion

To sum up, then, *you* have been chosen and called according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in and through the sanctification of the Holy Spirit, and for the purpose of the obedience of faith and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Brothers and sisters, this is enough spiritual food right here to sustain us for the rest of our lives and throughout all of eternity. Do you see how all three persons of the Godhead—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit<sup>‡</sup>—have worked together for *your* salvation? And do you see how the knowledge of these mysteries is enough to give us **peace** in every circumstance, **endurance** in every trial, **steadfastness** in every temptation, and **joy and wisdom and strength** in the living of each day of our lives?

---

<sup>‡</sup> Matthew 28:19–20 — Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the **Father** and of the **Son** and of the **Holy Spirit**, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

2 Corinthians 13:14 — The grace of the **Lord Jesus Christ** and the love of **God** and the fellowship of the **Holy Spirit** be with you all.

Hebrews 9:14 — ...how much more will the blood of **Christ**, who through the **eternal Spirit** offered himself without blemish to **God**, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

Romans 15:30 — I appeal to you, brothers, by our **Lord Jesus Christ** and by the love of the **Spirit**, to strive together with me in your prayers to **God** on my behalf...

Romans 15:16 — ...to be a minister of **Christ Jesus** to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of **God**, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the **Holy Spirit**.

Galatians 4:6 — Because you are sons, **God** has sent the **Spirit** of his **Son** into our hearts, crying, “Abba! **Father!**”

Romans 1:1–4 — Paul, a servant of **Christ Jesus**, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of **God**, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his **Son**, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the **Son of God** in power according to the **Spirit of holiness** by his resurrection from the dead, **Jesus Christ our Lord**.

Jude 20–21 — But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the **Holy Spirit**, keep yourselves in the love of **God**, waiting for the mercy of our **Lord Jesus Christ** that leads to eternal life.

1 Corinthians 12:4–6 — Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same **Spirit**; and there are varieties of service, but the same **Lord**; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same **God** who empowers them all in everyone.

2 Thessalonians 2:13–14 — But we ought always to give thanks to **God** for you, brothers beloved by the **Lord**, because **God** chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the **Spirit** and belief in the truth. To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our **Lord Jesus Christ**.

We said that these three phrases (“according to...,” “in...,” and “for”) all modify the word “chosen.” But now we have to remember what we learned last week—that it’s our “chosenness” that has actually created this hard situation where the world views us as foreigners and where we feel this world to be utterly foreign to us. For Peter’s first readers in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, it was their chosenness that had brought upon them fiery trials and sufferings and persecutions. (1 Pet. 1:6-7; 3:8-17; 4:12-19; 5:9-10) And so what they—and we—are meant to see is that while these three phrases all modify the word chosen, they also ultimately give us the *lens* through which we are to see and understand and embrace every aspect of our lives as resident foreigners here in this world. If we don’t have this lens, then we will not be equipped to live steadfastly and faithfully as the foreigners that we are. But if we do have this lens, then our joy will always be abundant and full to overflowing. Peter obviously believed this to be true, because he closes his opening greeting to the chosen with these simple, but profoundly rich words:

**V. 1 Peter 1:2d** — May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

Is that not a beautiful, wonderful, summary and conclusion to all that Peter has said thus far? And we’re only at the end of verse two. **Brothers and sisters, as you come to love and understand and steadfastly believe these mysteries of the Gospel, may grace and peace be multiplied to you.**