

Lesson 1: Introduction (1:1-2)

“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.”

Our Lord Jesus said in His Sermon on the Mount, **“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”** (Matt. 5:10-12) Jesus told us that suffering and persecution for His sake would happen, and that blessing would come upon them for it. Our Lord Jesus endured terrible persecution Himself, **“Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor’s headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion before him. And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” And they spit on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him and led him away to crucify him.”** (Matt. 27:27-31)

Persecution and suffering was a mark of the life of Christ, and the same is the mark of the Christian. So Jesus tells us, **“A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household. So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”** (Matt. 10:24-28)

How many times have we heard a “gospel presentation” that saves a person (not from God’s wrath) but from their personal problems? The “Jesus” preached today fixes your marriage, ensures your kids grow up successful, fills your bank account, and cures your disease. But is that the message of the gospel? Did Jesus ever promise these things?

The truth of the matter is that God is more concerned with our character than He is our comfort. The Father has not saved us through the Son’s sacrificial atonement so that we can leave a life of freedom, comfort and ease. Rather, He has purchased us and tasked us to serve as a soldier for Christ in the spiritual war around us. Eternal rest and comfort are promised, but today is the age of proclaiming Christ to a world that hates Him, while God does His miraculous work of awakening dead sinners to life through His Word preached. Occasionally, our efforts to make Christ known are fruitful, and we share the joy of watching someone grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ. We share in the fellowship of the saints. But one thing is certain: The more frequently you speak of Christ—the brighter and clearer you shine the light of Christ on people through your living, so will the frequency and magnitude of the hatred and persecution towards you. It’s the reason why many Christians avoid evangelism altogether.

This epistle from Peter spells out clearly, and quickly, everything that we need to know as Christians about our calling in Christ, our identity in Christ, what we are to expect in life as Christians, and how we are to handle those expectations. Peter is writing to elect “exiles”, but this term can be re-applied to every believer in every age. We are all sojourners here on this earth. (1 Pet. 2:11) Our citizenship is in Heaven. (Phil. 3:20-21) We are called **“according to the foreknowledge of God the Father”** (1:2), for the

sole purpose of **“obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood.”** (1:2) We are not our own. We don’t own our lives as believers in Christ, God owns us. He bought us, so we live according to the Father’s plan, in Christ, by the Spirit’s indwelling strength. Along the way we ought to expect various trials and tribulations as well as great joys, but our eyes are set upon the prize. 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. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”**

Who is Peter?

Unlike certain people in scripture who are mentioned once, or even a handful of times, Peter is mentioned quite frequently. In the Gospels alone, Peter is mentioned in 191 verses, so we have much information about his life to understand who he is. We first hear of him in the first chapter of John’s gospel, 1:40-42, **“One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which means Christ). He brought Him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas” (which means Peter).”** Our introduction to his life is that he is one who is found by Christ and given a new name. God is always the One finding His people, and causing them to be born again unto new life.

Simon, and his brother Andrew, were fishermen. Matthew’s gospel teaches us that in 4:18-19, **“[Jesus] While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. Immediately they left their nets and followed him.”** Not only does the Christ find him and give him a new name, but he gives him a new occupation too.

We know from John 1:44 that Peter lived in the village of Bethsaida, and that later on he lived in Capernaum (Mark 1:29). As we read the passage in Mark 1:29-34 we learn more details about his life. He was married, we read of Jesus healing Peter’s mother-in-law. We also learn that his fishing business must have been very successful, because he had a house that was so spacious that “the whole city was gathered together at the door”.

There is also something to be noted regarding the name-change from Simon to Peter, and the way that scripture uses them interchangeably. It’s not that Simon was called Simon until he became Peter, and then was called Peter the rest of the way. Jesus actually called him by both names as a teaching and rebuking tool. Do you remember when Jesus prayed in Gethsemane? He instructed his disciples to sit and wait while he prayed. Then Jesus took with him Peter, and James and John, and he said to them, **“My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch.”** When Jesus came back, he found them, not watching, but sleeping! Mark 14:37, **“And he came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, “Simon, are you sleeping?”** Whenever Jesus wanted to remind Peter that he was acting in accordance with his sinful flesh, and not in according with righteousness, he called him by his former name. We even see Luke employ this same thing in his gospel. In Luke 5, where Jesus is about to show the master fishermen how to properly catch an abundance of fish, notice how Peter is referenced. Luke 5:4, **“And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.”** He’s called Simon at this point because he’s annoyed. He’s been fishing all of his life. He’s tired, he’s fished all night and caught nothing, and now he’s taking pointers from someone he likely feels has no idea what they’re talking about. Verse 5, **“And Simon answered, “Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets.”** He’s obedient, we’ll give him that, but he’s not truly believing at this point. But when the boats fill up with so many fish that they begin to sink, he gets the message. Notice verse 8, **“But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees,**

saying, **“Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”** Now he was acting in accordance with his calling, and is referred to as Simon Peter.

In Luke’s gospel, the disciples entered into a dispute concerning who was the greatest among them. If there’s one sinful characteristic that God hates, it’s pride. Jesus, about to tell proud Peter that he’ll deny Him three times calls him Simon, Luke 22:31, **“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat.”**

On one final occasion Jesus called him Simon. After Peter’s third denial, and the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, Peter decided it was time to go back to the old fishing life. And everyone followed along with him. They went out all night, and God sovereignly allowed the professional fishermen to catch nothing the entire night. The next morning, Christ gave them a fishing lesson and they definitely caught more than their limit. After breakfast that morning Jesus helped Peter to reorient his love and focus in life. Jesus said to him in John 21:15, **“Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?”** Peter answered in the affirmative, and so Jesus commanded him to feed His lambs. Again in verse 16, **“Simon, son of John, do you love me?”** Peter answered with a little more passion, **“Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.”** And Jesus commanded him to tend His sheep. A third time, in verse 17, to contrast the three denial of Peter, Jesus asks again, **“Simon, son of John, do you love me?”** This really cut Peter to the heart, and so he pours out in verse 17, **“Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.”** So Jesus commanded him to feed His sheep.

If we’re honest, we can all see a Simon, and a Peter in our hearts. There are times when we act according to our flesh, and there are times when we act according to the Spirit. It is God’s electing grace in our lives that calls us to new life. And it is God’s sustaining grace that allows us to live for Him. By His grace alone, we will progress more and more into Christlikeness, and finish the race a little closer to holiness than when we began. And Peter was certainly no different.

The weak and wavering Simon ends his life as a bold and fearless Peter. It’s Peter who boldly preached the sermon at Pentecost in Acts 2:14-40. It was Peter who after healing the lame beggar, boldly proclaimed to the men of Israel in Solomon’s Portico in Acts 3:12-26. Peter was among the apostles who performed many signs and wonders among the people. Acts 5:15 records **“that they even carried out the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and mats, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them”** It was Peter who boldly confronted the Jewish authorities in Acts 4:8-20, notice verse 13 especially, **“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.”** (I will explain why I underlined “uneducated” and “common” momentarily.) It was Peter who was called by God to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles in Acts 10 and 11. We again see Peter at the Jerusalem Council, arguing against the salvific necessity of circumcision amongst the Gentiles.

After Acts 15, Peter is hardly mentioned again in scripture until the writing of his epistles. Paul mentions him a handful of times (Galatians 2, 1 Corinthians 1 and 9 “Cephas, the Amaraic translation of Peter). Church history has held that Peter died in Rome, crucified upside down under Nero’s persecution. Being as Nero died in A.D. 68, he obviously died before then.

Turning our attention back to this epistle of 1 Peter before us, there are some people who attempt to argue that this epistle could not have been written by Peter. The hook that they hang their hat on has to do with the vocabulary and sentence structure found in the letter. Here is where I draw your attention backwards two paragraphs to Acts 4:13. These scholars argue that it’s impossible for an **“uneducated, common man”** to write something so beautifully well. Yet Acts 4:13 is actually complimenting Peter, rather than speaking ill of him. The Jewish authorities were astonished at how

well Peter spoke! What the Jewish authorities marveled at was the high level and excellence that Peter addressed them considering his position in life. If Peter possessed the ability to articulate his speech well at this earlier point in his life, is it too far-fetched to think that he could write with excellence at the end of his life?

Who was Peter writing too?

It always helps to reference the map in your Bible (if it has one) whenever the text mentions traveling from one place to another. Peter addresses his letter to the “**elect exiles**” (more on that later) of the Dispersion (see the next paragraph) in five places: Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. After checking your map you’ll learn that these five cover a massive expanse of land. They literally spread across all of modern-day Turkey today, an expanse of 129,000 square miles.

Traditionally, the Dispersion (*diaspora*), is a technical term referring to the dispersion of the Jews in both the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities. The traditional interpretation of 1:1 is that Peter is therefore writing to Jewish believers scattered abroad, comforting them through their sufferings. There is a debate however concerning exactly what the word “Dispersion” means. Some scholars argue that because the definite article is missing before the word “Dispersion” in the original text, we need to interpret this dispersion in reference to Gentile believers widely distributed across the land. The historical explanation of this Gentile dispersion is given to the burning of the city of Rome in A.D. 64. This letter from Peter is figured to have been written shortly after this important event in history. When Rome burned down, the Romans believed that Emperor Nero destroyed it simply so that he could rebuild it again. Nero had an unquenchable desire to build, and everyone knew it. When Rome burned down, so did everything in it, leaving the people devastated. They lost their religious artifacts, they lost their temples, their shrines, and their idols. They lost their homes, and their loved ones. The Romans were left homeless, hopeless, and bitter. Nero, looking for a scapegoat, pinned the burning of the city on the Christians.

People hated the Christians because they associated Christianity with the Jews, and everyone hated them already. The Christians (because of their monotheistic religion) were considered by the Romans to be a threat to Roman culture. An easy target already, Nero pinned everything on them. Nero’s lie spread like wildfire (again) amongst the Romans, and a quick and severe persecution rose up against the Christians. The Christians were driven out, and pushed far and wide away (dispersed) into the remotest parts of Asia Minor.

So how do we interpret the Dispersion? Is he writing to Jewish Christians, or Gentile Christians? The historical position is that he is writing to the Jews. The majority position of my commentaries side on a Jewish audience. And my head is hurting trying to figure this out! Here is where I will attempt to land: The most important word in this verse isn’t “Dispersion”, it’s “Elect”. How we define “dispersion” matters to a degree, but how we define “elect” matters to a major degree. I believe that Peter wrote to Jewish Christians who were suffering, and I believe that there were Gentile converts in their midst who read the letter. And I know that ultimately we are the recipients of this letter who are going to be encouraged, and most of us are Gentile Christians.

Regardless of whether the letter was read by dispersed Jewish Christian through historical exile, or dispersed Gentile Christians through Nero’s persecution, the letter was timely written to people suffering much for their faith in Christ. Peter wanted to remind these believers that even through their suffering, they were the chosen children of God, and that they had much to glory about in Christ.

Elect...by His foreknowledge...in the Spirit...for obedience

Verse 2, **“According to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood. May grace and peace be multiplied to you.”**

The truth of the matter is that every believer in Christ, whether Jew or Greek, whether living in the first or the twenty-first century, is an elect exile. Every Christian owes their full identity in Christ to the sovereign plan of God. As David Helm helpfully wrote it, *“In the strongest way possible, Peter has told us: The Lord God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, is behind all of this. The hidden counsel of the Eternal Trinity has planned for us to be known as his “elect exiles.” And he has done all of this through the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. So take heart. Be encouraged. Christians are those who are chosen by God and called to live in this world. There is something in this letter for every Christian.”*¹

The first thing in Peter’s mind concerning this election that is true of every Christ is that it is according to the **foreknowledge** of God the Father. Not just the knowledge of God, but the “fore” knowledge (before-knowledge). In other words, before they became Christians, God knew that they would become Christians. Peter used the word *proginosko* one other time, in Acts 2:23, **“This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God.”** Paul used the word in its verb form in Romans 8:29, **“For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son.”** So we get a fairly clear and simple picture that this foreknowledge involves the full and detailed sovereign plan of God. God’s knowledge isn’t like our knowledge. We learn things through experience, God already knows everything, and forgets nothing. Because God knows everything perfectly, coupled with His perfect wisdom, and omnipotent strength, nothing can thwart His eternal plans. As Ephesians 1:4 tells us, **“He chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.”** That’s how “fore” God’s foreknowledge is! He elected His children before the foundation of the world!

We see a derivative of the word expressed again in 1:20 of our letter, **“He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you.”** The redemptive role of Christ was foreknown to God before the foundation of the world. We can compile verses 2 and 20 at this point and conclude that before the foundation of the world, God chose not only who would be saved, but He planned how He would save them, through the Son Jesus Christ. This thought ought to bring so much comfort to the believer, knowing that we have no part in our justification. It helps us to rely upon God in our present day, knowing that we are near to Him because He has drawn us there.

There is a further comfort to be drawn on top of knowing that we are elected unto salvation, and that comfort is that we are a child of **God the Father**. God the Father, the Creator of everything, has become our Heavenly Father who not only calls us, but knows us perfectly, and loves us deeply. Karen Jobes writes, *“Peter reminds his readers that the God who took the initiative in their lives has drawn them into an intimate, loving, and redemptive relationship with him, but also one in which God claims supreme authority over their lives. Such a reminder is apt at times when Christians are troubled by the circumstances in which they find themselves, confused about how to live, and tempted to doubt God’s goodness or faithfulness.”*²

Secondly, take notice of God’s continuing care of our souls. Not only did he elect us before the foundation of the world, but He presently is in the process of sanctifying us through the Spirit. Verse 2

¹ Helm, David R. *1 & 2 Peter and Jude: Sharing Christ’s Sufferings* Crossway p. 27

² Jobes, Karen H. *1 Peter: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* Baker p. 69

continues, **“In the sanctification of the Spirit.”** Sanctification here speaks to the ongoing process of becoming more holy (more like Christ) in the life of every believer. This is the end, the goal, the intended purpose of every Christian. Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount that we are to recognize the authenticity of people by the fruit that they produce. (Matt. 7:15-20)

Contrary to much teaching in modern churches today, God is not smiling down upon the mass of humanity today. God is not in love with people today. God is not willing to take you, and accept you just as you are. The biblical truth is that God loved us when we were His enemies. (Rom. 5:10) The biblical truth is that God loved us first, when we didn't love Him. (1 John 4:10) So in that regard God **did** accept us 'just as we were'... in all of our sin. But it came at a cost, **“you were bought with a price.”** (1 Cor. 6:20) Your adoption as God's child while currently in your state of sin came at the cost of the innocent, shed blood of Jesus Christ on your behalf. Christ suffered the torment, and overcame death and Hell so that you could be free. Certainly, scripturally, Jesus Christ did not die so that your Christian walk could resemble your life before salvation. There is a rebirth, a new life that is to accompany being a child of the King. The same God who planned your salvation before the foundation of the world, and executed the plan to purchase you through the sacrifice of Christ, is the same God who sanctifies you now through His Spirit. We live in the middle of the “already” (justification), and the “not yet” (glorification). And we receive the same grace of God day-by-day to grow in Christlikeness through the process of sanctification.

The Bible has much to say regarding what a life in Christ, being sanctified by the Spirit looks like. For example, Romans 12:1-2, **“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”** The life of a believer should no longer fit the mold of this world, but rather our minds are slowly being changed from the way we used to think, to thinking about things according to the way God thinks about them. One of the prayers that I pray often is that God would help me to see the sin that I'm confessing through His eyes, so that I hate it as much as He does.

2 Corinthians 7:1, **“Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.”** Paul has been reminding them of their eternal reward and dwelling place with Christ. He's reminded them to be courageous in this life, through their groaning and burdens, knowing that even if this life ends, there's an eternal life awaiting us. In other words, our justification is a done deal! We're not earning it, it's a free gift, earning it turns justification into a reward. But what does he say in 7:1? In light of the promises that we have in Christ, be sanctified. It's critical to get the order right. Religion today would have you dig deep, pull up your bootstraps and do as many good works as possible in order to get God's attention, that He might show favor towards you. That's putting your sanctification before your justification, as though the one led to the other. 7:1 tells us that in light of our justification, there should be sanctification.

Consider these other passages: 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24, **“Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”** God is sanctifying us! How many forget this! Hebrews 12:14, **“Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.”** There is a synergism involved. Remembering that our salvation is monergistic, and remembering that our sanctification is included in the package of salvation, yet there is still room for us to obey! We are not to be idle in the process of sanctification. A Christian life devoid of holiness is one which will not see the Lord, it's the “dead faith”

that James speaks of. (Jas. 2:14) A life devoid of holiness is the useless tree that Jesus says gets cut down and thrown into the fire. So, we must be sanctified, which is to say, we must be renewed into the image of Christ. Ephesians 4:24, 30, **“And to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness...And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”** Do we possess the ability to do this alone? We don’t. 2 Timothy 4:18, **“The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom.”** To God be the glory! Great things He has done in our hearts!

Sanctification is manifest in obedience to Jesus Christ

There’s an intended purpose for our lives, God **“chose us in Him that we should be holy and blameless before Him.”** That holiness is manifest by obeying Jesus Christ, which is done in accordance with His Word, in order to please God. Let’s get back to our text again in verse 2, **“according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for the sprinkling with his blood.”**

Peter references obedience a few more times in this chapter. In verse 14 he writes, **“As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance.”** And a few verses later in verse 22 he writes, **“Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart.”**

God is taking us somewhere, and He’s begun the change in us now before we get there. When we get to glory someday, we will be before the Lamb forever, in perfect sinlessness. We will fellowship with the saints of old, and worship our Lord perfectly, eternally. 1 John 3:2, **“Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.”** Therefore, our lives ought to be characterized by obedience, by a purity that is found only in Christ.

But Peter links the fruit of obedience to Jesus Christ with the sprinkling with His blood. Here Peter refers his largely Jewish readers of the confirmation of the covenant that God made with the people of Israel in Exodus 24:3-8. (note especially verses 7-8) Peter encapsulates the complete and sovereign work of God in salvation by showing that God is one who made the covenant in His own blood. Consider also Hebrews 9:18-28, Jesus shed His blood to take away the sins of His people. Peter touches on this later on in 1:18-19, **“Knowing that 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.”**

Simon Kistemaker writes, *“Thus, in summary, the Triune God has given them three distinct privileges: God the Father foreknows them, God the Spirit sanctifies them, and Jesus Christ cleanses them from sin through the sprinkling of his blood. Although the shedding of blood has taken place once for all, its significance has lasting effect and is an enduring process. Jesus Christ continues to cleanse us from sin.”*³

Peter closes his greeting in verse 2, **“May grace and peace be multiplied to you.”** Isn’t this the heart attitude of every Christian towards everyone else? We know what joy it is to experience God’s grace and peace in an increasing measure day by day, and do we not want those around us to experience it as well to the maximum level? But let’s not lose the context of the letter here. Peter is attaching the

³ Kistemaker, Simon J. *Peter and Jude* Baker p.37

experienced grace and peace from God to the comforting knowledge of our foreknown election, and secured salvation through the covenant made by God, sealed in His blood. This is a grace and peace that is greatly diminished by those who reject the doctrine of election.

The doctrine of election is rejected by many in Christian circles today. Election is seen as a divisive doctrine that offends people, sheds a bad light on the character of God, and splits more churches and it unites. It offends people because they interpret their response to being elect as robotic. They are offended that their positive inclination towards the things of God is something outside of their control. Election is also rejected because it makes God look like bad. If He is choosing to save some, and choosing to let others die in their sins, doesn't that make Him unjust? Doesn't that make Him unloving? And finally, the doctrine of election is rejected for the same reason that much doctrine is rejected in the modern church today: doctrine divides, love unites. The slogan of the day is to love Jesus with all of your heart, and not worry about splitting theological hairs.

This isn't where we ought to be on the doctrine. The doctrine of election was never meant to be ignored, swept under the rug as though we're embarrassed to see it. The doctrine of election is found cover-to-cover in scripture, and I'll give you five good reasons to believe it:

Five Biblical Reasons to Love the Doctrine of Election

- 1) Election is humbling: John 1:12-13, **"But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."**

Romans 9:16, **"So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy."**

To realize that our salvation came to us, outside of our desiring (or even capability of desiring) God is a most humbling truth.

- 2) Election is God-exalting, worship-enhancing truth: Whether we speak of the origin of our faith, the forgiveness of our sin, the conviction in our hearts to repent of sin, or even the ability to obey the Lord with any level of consistency, we know all of that as coming from God. Ephesians 2:8-9, **"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not as a result of works, so that no one may boast."**
- 3) Election produces Joy: Notice in John 6:44 how the sinner is drawn to God, and their salvation is secured in Christ, that ought to produce great joy. **"No one came to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day."** As Psalm 65:4 says, **"Blessed is the one you choose and bring near, to dwell in your courts! We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, the holiness of your temple!"** It is a supreme joy for the elect to consider that the Lord has loved them with an everlasting love, from before the foundation of the world and on into eternity future.
- 4) Election promises an eternity of spiritual privileges: Ephesians 1:3-14, **"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predesti**

ned us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed 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 upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory."

- 5) Election gives us a powerful incentive to holy living: Colossians 3:12-13, **"Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive."** Our gratitude for our election ought to compel us to a life of obedience and holiness.

When Christians choose to ignore (or fail to see) the doctrine of election, they do not understand redemption biblically, they do not see or savour what it means that God is Sovereign Lord, and they miss every privilege that comes along with election. Election is a powerful truth when Christians understand it. It is a transformative doctrine that brings much blessing, and every believer would do themselves a great deal of good to meditate on the implication of it often.