

*1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,
To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia,
Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are 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: May grace and
peace be yours in the fullest measure....nasb*

This morning we embark, again after a couple weeks hiatus and get serious about delving into this little book written by the apostle Peter.

3 weeks ago we covered just 2 words in verse one; Peter, and apostle.

Now don't get discouraged, that isn't a fair indicator of how fast or slow we'll travel through this epistle. If you missed our introduction, it is available on tonopahchurch.org.

One thing we said that we'll repeat again, is that Peter comes out of the gate and gets to full speed like a race horse, or a projectile out of a gun barrel. He launches us into the depths of theology in the first couple of dozen words in this passage.

Like any normal letter, Peter first identifies who he is, and then he identifies who the letter is addressing. No different than what we might do today in a business letter. This is me. I'm speaking to you.

And that becomes important to us because, we need to do an identity check here. Are we in fact identified by the words Peter will use to define who this letter is for.

And if we are not, then I would submit to you, perhaps you're not a christian. Here we have, thanks to the apostle Peter, several identifiers that are true of all christians, and by default, if we don't fit Peter's description, we might have reason to believe, perhaps we aren't christians after all.

Identity. American culture is drowning in identity crisis mode. We woke up one day in a world that says you get to define who it is you think you are and the rest of us then, had better, if we know what's good

for us, approve and affirm who you decided you are, no questions asked.

We have LGBTQQRSTUVWXY and Z and a myriad of other add ons and attachments to whatever those are so that somehow we can all have an identity. And if you're an S T U or V, Zeus help you if you say, I don't affirm G's B's or Q's and I'm still studying T's to see if I can tweek some kind of affirmation for them.

If you do that you're an H. H is for Hater. All the other tolerant letters of the alphabet hate the haters. Bad, bad, haters.

Beyond the sexual and gender identifiers, all of a sudden I've noticed that Ancestry dot com has an almost unlimited budget for prime time advertising. They must be making a lot of money on our desperation to identify who we are, so you can send in your DNA with a check and they'll tell you besides being an H QQ T U V, you're 40% Ukrainian 30% Chinese 15% Irish 10% American Indian and 5% Jewish.

And when you find that out you get a service dog that can help you deal with emotional trauma of it all. The doggy can help you if your emotions start to tip towards depression.

Then you can apply for a job out where I work, and we can't even ask what the doggie is for, because you might sue us for discriminating against B B Q's who are heinz 57 and need to have a doggie at all times.

Things are simpler for christians. We are binary. Boy christians and girl christians, assigned at birth by our creator, and all of the ancestral clans of our fathers and mothers don't matter. That all becomes a moot point, because Peter says, you're aliens.

See it there in vs. 1. *1Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,*
To those who reside as aliens

That's our first descriptor. Aliens. And he doesn't mean, like we used to be Jerusalem jews but now we're scattered all over the world. That may have been true for some of them and would be true after 70AD for many more jews, but Peter has something further in mind.

When you became a christian, you left your old identity behind. You became a new creature. You are an alien in this world. You no longer belong here. Your body is still here, but your soul is under new ownership. You've become a citizen of heaven, and likewise an outsider, here.

This is nothing new. Although to American evangelicals it may be a phantasm. A surprise. A reach. But biblically, this is an old doctrine.

To the jews, God says in Leviticus 25:23

The land, moreover, shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are but aliens and sojourners with Me.

We are nothing more than temporary residents in a foreign land. Peter appeals to that fact here in his address to who he's speaking to. Then he appeals to that truth again later in the letter as a cause, a reason for our unique morality. We aren't of this world, and neither is our morality.

1Pet 2:11 Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.

The old you is struggling with lusts left over from your old life. Abstain from those. Why? Because you are no longer citizens of this place. You belong to a new Lord.

In Hebrews 11:13, an excerpt out of the faith rockstars chapter;

All these people died in faith, without having received the things they were promised. However, they saw them and welcomed them from afar. And they acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

That is Peter's audience. *To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia*, the place names are all in what would be the country of Turkey now. They were provinces in the Roman empire. Roman territory.

Real places you could put your finger on. Like Tonopah is now. But likewise, only the designated locales of these aliens who belong to God.

If we claim to be christians, that is indeed, who we are.

This letter is from Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the exiles, aliens who are scattered even as far as Tonopah. If we belong to Jesus, like Peter the apostle did, our identity is; we are the exiles, the aliens who reside in Tonopah.

A couple of weeks ago we sang the old chorus, *This world is not my home, I'm just a passin' through. My home is way out there, somewhere beyond the blue.*

Those words to that chorus are doctrinally sound. The man who wrote it understood this truth. We ain't from around here.

How did that happen. How did that extrication from this world and transfer to another, take place. Fasten your seat belts. That's next, and it's way out there deep.

I love that it apparently wasn't anything difficult for the original hearers to understand. It tells me how far we have moved away from this truth.

A. W. Pink, an expositor of depth who died the year I was born began one of his sermons with these words; "I am going to speak tonight on one of the most hated doctrines of the Bible, namely that of God's sovereign election."

Election, sovereign election is the next thing Peter brings to light. The reason we are aliens in this world is because of something God did, not something we did.

He snatched us out of this world. We still live here physically. Our bodies are still here. But our souls dwell with Christ, in heaven. And as such we are like fish out of water here. Aliens. Strangers. We don't fit.

How did that phenomenon come about? When and how did that change take place? Because my birth certificate says I was born very much in a city that is renowned for being a center of wickedness in Satan's world system.

Most of us would default to our natural old flesh and take pride in stating, I did that. I, by my own will, hearing the good news of Jesus death for my sins and resurrection for my eternal life, when I heard that, I was smart enough and good enough to pray a prayer inviting Him into my life, and I became a christian.

Who's the hero in that story? You. You did it. You heard. You believed. You willed. You prayed. You You You.

That's our natural default in this old flesh that still hangs on to the pride of life.

But Peter here, and Paul in his letters, and indeed, Jesus himself especially teach that . . . if you are a christian and belong to Jesus, it didn't begin with you. In fact Paul teaches in Ephesians that it would have been impossible for you to have anything to do with regeneration and new birth, and for a very good reason.

You were dead. Dead as a board. Dead people, if you've ever been around them, are unresponsive. *Ephesians 2:1As for you, you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2in which you used to walk when you conformed to the ways of this world and of the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit who is now at work in the sons of disobedience....*

He says the same thing to the colossians 2:13 *When you were dead in your trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, **God made you alive** with Christ. He forgave us all our trespasses,*

Regeneration is the act of God, causing new life. He makes you alive. You were dead in sins, He causes you to come to life, spiritually. Dead people can't effect that for themselves. There's only one way the phenomenon happens. God does it. He causes it. Not dead sinners.

This was nothing Peter had to spend any time explaining to his hearers. His letter is to aliens. People who no longer belong in this world. Separated out of this world by new life. Christians, scattered all over asia.

And then, likewise, he doesn't apologize or feel any need to explain, he launches right into how this phenomenon of aliens, citizens of heaven, living scattered about asia, how that happened.

To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen

You didn't do it. You were dead. God breathed new life into you. He made you alive together with Him. How? *who are chosen* eklektois

Actually, our translations are trying to help us by having the words out of order. Peter literally says; Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect, who are aliens scattered all over asia etc.

Peter describes christians, those to whom his letter is addressed, as elect aliens. Chosen people who because of that choice, have been made exiles. Aliens. Chosen by God to be set apart, seperated out of this world, and thus, they have become aliens. Chosen aliens. That's exactly how Peter addresses his letter.

And then he gets very specific about how that happened. How is it that you woke up one morning, an alien, living in the same place you did before, but now you are seperated from that place.

You were born again. You came out of Satan's authority and you now belong to Jesus Christ. You woke up one morning an enemy combatant in Satan's kingdom, because you now live in God's kingdom. You're a citizen of heaven and an alien here.

Peter speaks to that in vs. 2. This is deep theology, and Peter throws it out in the opening address! Listen carefully to Peter's words, and then we'll go back and try to unpack them.

(vs 1 you are chosen exiles) 2 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

Nothing to it! The way you became chosen, select exiles in Satan's kingdom is because God the father knew you for all eternity, He chose you, and then the Spirit separated you, He drew you out of Satan's world, and then Jesus sprinkled you with His blood.

And you're thinking, wait a minute. There's a whole bunch of stuff you just said that I need to understand better. A LOT better.

OK, stay with me for a few more minutes. It took me 45 years to get a shaky handle on this and I'm going to get you up to speed in less than 30 minutes. Right. Never the less, stay with me.

Paul says to the Ephesians, 1:3 *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, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love 5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,*

God chose us before the foundation of the world. He selected us. He knew us intimately, for all eternity. He chose us to be adopted, in His Son, into His family.

You have to let go of real time here. Somehow, this happened outside of this time space continuum that is the only thing we know. God lives outside of that. We are locked in, for now. It's the only thing that makes sense to our poor finite brains.

God is not bound by time and space. Those of us whom He has by His mercy and grace, chosen, were chosen outside of time and space. We were known by Him and chosen by Him in eternity. Don't try to understand that. Your brain isn't big enough. Mine isn't either.

We have to default back to Isaiah 55:8 and 9

8 *“For My thoughts are not your thoughts,
Nor are your ways My ways,” declares the LORD.*

9 *“For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways
And My thoughts than your thoughts.*

Just let go and accept that you can't understand a realm outside of time, space, matter. This world.

That's the first of many pride crushing truths that we simply have to accept as something we'll understand better by and by.

God chose us. In eternity past He knew us. Peter says; *you are chosen exiles) 2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,*

prognōsin foreknowledge. Now then, Caution. Do not try to bring God down to your level by making this word foreknowledge less than it is.

It's very common to say, Oh, I see, I get it. God looked down through eternity and He saw me on that day that I chose to believe Him, and He based His selection of me, on my action. I willed. I believed. I chose. Therefore, He, because of my action, wrote my name in His book in eternity past.

That goes against what scripture teaches. That is a doctrine steeped in your pride. You believe you're smart enough to figure God out, even though He has told you You were dead. Nothing that caused salvation originated with you. Get over that pride. Get beyond that pride. You didn't do anything.

He chose you. Before the foundation of the world. Then in the fullness of time, the Holy spirit acts on God the Fathers choice and seperated you out of this world. Regeneration came by faith that also did not originate in you.

Paul explains what Peter says here; Anybody that says Peter and Paul were in some disagreement about the gospel, doesn't have a clue. Here Paul explains what Peter just told us.

Ephesians 2: 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.

God chose us outside of time and space. He quickened us from the dead and made us alive together with Christ. And even the faith that caused us to believe, Paul tells us here, is a gift of God. We supplied nothing. He did everything.

I'll wait a minute for the red light to come on. OK, there it is. You will say, wait a minute. You mean God chose me in eternity past, and nothing had anything to do with me, He just picked me, set me apart by the drawing of His Holy Spirit, caused me to believe, the faith wasn't mine, in fact nothing originated with me because I was stone dead.

Yes. That's what this book says. Then you'll say, what about the guy across the street that God didn't pick. I like that guy. We're friends. We borrow each other's stuff. I care about Him. And you're telling me He has no say in salvation. If God didn't choose him, and he's a great guy, but if God didn't choose him, he's bound for hell. Period.

And my answer is going to be, both yes, and no. The book teaches two truths that seem to us to be in conflict.

Salvation comes from God's mercy and choice. Period. But we default back to verses like Revelation 22:17 *The Spirit and the bride say,*

“Come!” Let the one who hears say, “Come!” And let the one who is thirsty come, and the one who desires the water of life drink freely.

And Isaiah 55 where we were just at. *“Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk Without money and without cost.*

And John 6:37 *and the one who comes to Me I will never turn away.*

But just to make your brain hurt, Jesus teaches both doctrines in one verse. I only read you the last half of the previous verse. Here's what Jesus said;

37 All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will never turn away.

And again Jesus says in John 15:16 *You did not choose Me, but I chose you.*

Whosoever will may come. But the ones who come are the ones who the Father gives to me.

This doctrine is pride crushing. The only way to understand it is to relinquish back to God that we can't understand it. Election is His business. We touched on this very thing last week.

You need to step away from the pride that says; I can understand this, and say with Paul to the Romans in chapter 9:14 *What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Absolutely not! 15 For He says to Moses: “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” 16 So then, it does not depend on man’s desire or effort, but on God’s mercy....*

Election is God's business. We don't need to understand it. We need to step away from our pride and resign God's choice back to Him and default back to what I said last week.

God, is a righteous, holy, perfect, sovereign King. No one withholds

His hand. All of His judgements are righteous altogether. You don't get to question that.

Set your pride aside. You don't need to understand it. God isn't waiting for your counsel. But He is waiting for you to pray for Him to have mercy on that neighbor you're worried about.

OK, back to Peter's casual introduction. He's writing to the elect who have been chosen by the foreknowledge of God the Father, who have been made aliens, enemy combatants in Satan's realms, set aside, how?

who are chosen 2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit,

We were quickened from the dead and moved out of Satan's authority into God's authority. Because of that we are aliens in this realm that still belongs to Satan. We're set apart. No longer citizens in Satan's realm. How. *by the sanctifying work of the Spirit,*

The Holy Spirit of God is who drew us to Christ. He supplied the faith to believe in Christ. And He quickened us from the dead and made us alive together with Christ.

That is the sanctifying work of the Spirit. Sanctify means to set apart. The spirit plucked us out of Satan's authority, regenerated us, made us alive with Christ, and set us down in God's authority. Right in the middle of Satan's kingdom. Thus, we are aliens. Exiles.

By the way, for any non-trinitarians out there. This verse describes what all 3 persons of the trinity accomplished to cause our salvation.

God chose us before the foundation of the world. The Holy Spirit took us out of Satan's world, quickened us from the dead, supplied the faith to believe, made us alive together with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Finally, what does Jesus do in all of this, and why? Two items left to consider in Peter's casual opening address.

to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood:

Both are answered for us in those few words. How can someone say so much with such few words!

God ordained it in eternity past. The Spirit caused it to happen. Why? So that we can obey Jesus Christ.

There's nothing casual about this obedience. I always default back to the Lord's prayer. Recall with me.

Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, like it is in heaven.

Earth is in rebellion against God. The sons of wrath who dwell here hate God. His will is not done on earth.

The prayer is for God to cause His will to be done on earth, like it is in heaven. Crush the rebellion on earth. Cause earth and heaven to sing in harmony to hallow your name. Cause obedience on earth to come.

That will happen. There's an ultimate end and answer to that prayer. The sons of wrath will be crushed. The earth will rejoice. The king will reign.

But not yet. Right now, God is calling out of the sons of wrath on this earth, a group of people He has chosen, who will obey Jesus Christ.

Let me tell you, more and more, if you are a person who obeys the Lord Jesus Christ, in the midst of this rebellious world that hates Him, you will stand out in stark contrast as an exile. An alien. The contrast is growing starker by the day.

That's who we are, people. Chosen by God. Quickened to new life by regeneration from the dead, by His Spirit. A people who will live in contrast to the sin of this world, in obedience to Christ.

IF that doesn't define you. Question your salvation. Peter is painting in

black and white here. If you aren't an alien in this world . . . are you indeed a christian? You need to ask that question!

One final thing in Peter's casual introduction. *to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood*

What is that??!! What does it mean to be sprinkled by His blood. What does it have to do with obedience to Jesus? There is a connection.

This goes all the way back to a picture that is fresh in Peter's mind that is based in God's promise to His chosen people. The parallels are obvious and fascinating.

This comes from Exodus 24. God's covenant with His chosen people. Listen carefully as I read this;

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."

God made a covenant with Israel and the covenant was ratified in blood. The altar represents God and the other part of the blood gets sprinkled on the people. The people covenanted to obey God.

They failed. They didn't keep their side of the bargain.

We have a new covenant. An unbreakable covenant with God the

father. A covenant of obedience, but unlike the Israelites who had an animals blood sprinkled on them, we have the blood of Christ sprinkled on us, and God's covenant with us is unbreakable because we are in Christ whose obedience is perfect.

We may stumble and fall from time to time, but we are forgiven, and the righteousness of the obedience that is set before God in this covenant, is the righteousness of Jesus Christ. He gives us His righteousness. The covenant of that truth is ratified in blood. His blood of the covenant, sprinkled on us.

Just a casual introduction to the beloved aliens that Peter addresses.

Chosen by God. Set apart from this world by the regeneration of His Spirit. Obedient to Christ in a covenant written with His blood.

In just a few verses, I can't wait, Peter will say, In this, you greatly rejoice!

I should hope so. What riches God has lavished on us!

Peter ends his salutation by saying; *May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure....*

Part of the realization of real grace, and real peace, is understanding our position before God that Peter has just so very casually laid out to the recipients of his letter. Pinch yourselves. That would be us!

Now then, we've covered in 35 minutes what MacArthur covered over 3 sundays. If I've caused you to have more questions than answers, I would encourage you to go to Grace to You dot com (gty.com) and click on sermons, then find 1 Peter and download the mp.3's titled 60-2, 60-3, and 60-4, and feed on the banquet feast of information and teaching in those 3 messages. So much more depth than what I have done in a short time this morning.