

Title: Chosen to Live as Exiles

Text: 1 Peter 1:1-2

Introduction

Steven Cole once wrote these words in a recent article – he writes:

“If you **keep up** with the news – it’s **difficult not to get depressed**. Every day **brings stories of human suffering** through war – terrorism – natural disasters – coronavirus or crime. In addition – I **get daily emails** that tell how the world is **attacking** our **Christian faith** from every **angle imaginable** ... [**and then he concludes with these words**] ... We live in **spiritually dark times** that can lead us to **despair**.”¹

Friends – I’m **not sure about you** – but I **think** that **this** is an **increasingly apt description** of **the times** in which we are living:

- For **the world** – *in general*.
- And for **Christians** – *in particular*.

Elliot Clark – in his book – *Evangelism as Exiles* – makes **the following observation**.

He writes:

“We all know a **seismic cultural shift** is **taking place** in our land. The **social pressures crashing** against **Christians** and **Christianity** are **on the rise** and **aren’t likely to recede** for some time. The **West** is **fast becoming post-Christian** – **post-truth** – and **perhaps even post-tolerant**.”²

¹ Source: <https://bible.org/seriespage/1-how-god-works-dark-times-judges-61-24>

² Elliot Clark, *Evangelism as Exiles: Life on Mission as Strangers in Our Own Land* (The Gospel Coalition: 2019), 24.

Or – in the words of Carl Trueman:

“We live in a time of exile. At least those of us who hold to traditional Christian beliefs. The strident rhetoric of scientism has made belief in the supernatural look ridiculous. The Pill – no-fault divorce – and now gay marriage have made traditional sexual ethics look outmoded at best and hateful at worst. The Western public square is no longer a place where Christians feel they belong with any degree of comfort.”³

Did you catch the last sentence?

“The Western public square is no longer a place where Christians feel they belong with any degree of comfort.”

How eerily true this is!

We need to look no further than the recent uproar against Citipointe Christian College – and their stance regarding sexuality.⁴

The **onslaught – backlash – and hostility** against **Christians – and Christian beliefs – is evident for all to see.**

Or – *at least* – is beginning to rear its ugly head.

Friends – **the truth** is that – as **Christians – we are living in increasingly:**

- **Interesting**
- **Precarious**
- **And perilous times**

³ Source: <https://www.firstthings.com/article/2014/08/a-church-for-exiles>

⁴ See <https://www.news.com.au/lifestyle/parenting/school-life/brisbane-christian-school-blasted-for-inhumane-enrolment-contract/news-story/2c90e85f089e89a3b6b2cb3e1b08849d?amp>

And **that's why I'm glad that we're starting a new series in 1 Peter.**

For **I believe that the book – and the themes contained in this book – are highly relevant – and pertinent – to the times in which we are living.**

It **prepares us – it equips us – it fortifies us – to live faithfully as Christians in what is an increasingly decadent society.**

And **that's why Rhoi, Scott, and myself – who – together – will be walking us through the book of 1 Peter over the next few months – have decided on this theme for the book:**

Living Hope in a Hostile World

Our goal is to remind us of the glorious – and imperishable – hope that we have in Christ – even as we seek to live faithfully as Christians in a world that is becoming increasingly hostile – and antagonistic – to the Christian faith.

And **that seems to be Peter's purpose in writing this letter to the churches scattered throughout the Roman provinces of Asia Minor – now modern-day Turkey.**

He wants believers to stand firm in the faith in the face of persecution and suffering.

As **Peter puts it in 1 Peter 5:12:**

“... I have written to you briefly in order to encourage you and to testify that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it!”

For **what we find in 1 Peter is that the believers were facing persecution – they were suffering – they were experiencing hostility – because of their faith.**

For **example:**

- In chapter 1 – we read that **they** “*have been grieved by various trials*”.⁵
- In chapter 2 – **slaves** are **encouraged** to **do good** – even when **they suffer unjustly** for it.⁶
- In chapter 3 – they are **encouraged** to “*suffer for righteousness’ sake*”.⁷
- In chapter 4 – they are **not** to be “*surprised when the fiery ordeal comes among [them]*” – instead – they are to “*rejoice as [they] share in the sufferings of Christ*”.⁸

Now – **most scholars** believe that **Peter wrote this letter** sometime around AD 62–63 – that is – *before* the **onset** of the **full-fledged persecution** of **Christians** by **Emperor Nero**.

So – what we have here is *not* an **official** – **state-sanctioned** – **government-sponsored** – **persecution** against **Christians** – *well!* – at least – *not yet*.

Instead – it is *probably* a **more general** – but *nonetheless* – **widespread hostility** – that they were **experiencing** because of **their faith** – and **the pressure** seems to be **mounting**:

- They were **discriminated against**.
- They were **mistreated**.
- They were **maligned**.

And **some believers** – *it seems* – were **surprised** at **this**.

Thus – Peter writes with the **specific purpose** of **encouraging believers** to **stand firm** in the **faith** *in the face* of the **hostilities** that they were facing.

And – friends – what **Peter** says to **his readers** in the **1st century** – also **applies** to **us today** in the **21st century**. It’s very **practical** – and **relevant**. *Especially* in the **day and age** in which we are **living**.

⁵ 1 Pet 1:6 (ESV)

⁶ 1 Pet 2:18ff.

⁷ 1 Pet 3:14 (ESV)

⁸ 1 Pet 4:12ff.

And – *perhaps* – even more so – in **the day and age** in which **our children** – and **our children’s children** – may live.

So – I’m really looking forward to be **digging into the book together** with **Scott and Rhoi!**

Well – **this evening** – to **kickstart the series** – we will **just be looking at the first two verses of the book.**

Now – **some of you** – when you heard that – **might be thinking:**

“What? Just the first two verses?”

And – **along with Nathanael** – you might ask:

“Can anything good come out of the opening greeting of this letter?”⁹

But – friends – **scholars are in agreement** that:

- **Peter’s opening greeting** here is **no meaningless platitude.**
- It is **no mere formality.**
- These are **no throwaway lines.**

No!

- **Peter’s words** here are **theologically rich** – and **purposeful.**
- They are **packed with themes** – **key themes** – that **lay the foundation** for the rest of the letter.
- And they contain truths that are **just as valuable** – and **applicable** – today – as it was back in **Peter’s time.**

⁹ John 1:46

And the **main point** that I want us to see from **today's passage** is this:

Knowing our identity is key to living faithfully in a hostile world.

That's what I believe **Peter** is **subtly** – but **strategically** – **doing** in the **opening greeting** to **his letter**.

He wants to **remind believers** of *who they are* – **their identity** – and **thus** – **fortify** and **equip them** to **live faithfully** in a **hostile world**.

So – *without further ado* – let's **jump straight in** – and **walk** through **our text** together.

The Author: "Peter"

Verse 1 – **Peter** writes:

"Peter – an apostle of Jesus Christ."

Short. Simple. And succinct.

What we see here at the outset is that **Peter** is **the author** of **this letter**.

And **he designates himself** as – ***"an apostle of Jesus Christ"***.

And – *in so doing* – **he** is **reminding readers** that **he** has been **personally appointed** by the **Lord Jesus himself** as **one of the Twelve** – to be **his spokesperson** – to be **his representative**.

And so – **what we have here in this letter** – is *not* merely **Peter's own personal opinion**.

No! As an apostle commissioned by Christ – Peter’s words here carry the weight – and authority – of Christ himself.

And – thus – we do well to pay attention. For this is nothing less than God’s holy and inspired Word.

The Recipients: “Chosen Exiles”

Peter next addresses his readers – he writes:

“... To those chosen – living as exiles dispersed abroad in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia ...”

Now – as mentioned – Peter is addressing believers who are scattered across the Roman province of Asia Minor – specifically – the regions of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

As you can see from the map – Pontus and Bithynia are right next to each other.

So – most scholars believe that the order in which the regions are listed – is probably reflective of the order in which the courier – most likely Silvanus – carried the letter.

But what I want us to notice is *how* Peter identifies his readers – he calls them:

“... chosen ... exiles ...”

Or – as the ESV puts it:

“... elect exiles ...”

Now – this – I believe – is a key phrase that is foundational to understanding the rest of the letter.

And **that’s what I want to focus on for the rest of our time together.**

This is what Peter wants his readers – and – *by extension* – us! – to grasp right at the outset.

He wants us to know:

- That we are “**chosen exiles**”.
- That we are “**elect exiles**”.

That’s *who* we are. That’s our *identity*.

And **Peter emphasises this right at the start of his letter** – because **he knows that knowing our identity will help us tremendously as we seek to live faithfully as believers in this hostile – and antagonistic – world.**

Now – **before we see how it applies to *us* – we need to settle an interpretive issue – just very briefly.**

Did you notice the phrase – “*exiles dispersed abroad*” – in verse 1?

Or – as the ESV puts it – “*exiles of the Dispersion*”?

Now – **the term “dispersion” – or the *Diaspora* – is often used to refer to Jews who were living outside their homeland because of the exile.**

And so – **some scholars – *on that basis* – argue that Peter is writing *specifically* to Jewish Christians who have been scattered in these regions.**

However – most scholars today – *correctly I think!* – based on the contents of the letter – argue that Peter was addressing a predominantly – although *by no means* exclusively – Gentile audience.

Some examples will suffice:

- In 1 Peter 1:14 – Peter’s encouragement for his readers “*not to be conformed to the desires of your former ignorance*” – and his reminder in 1 Peter 1:18 that “*you were redeemed from your empty way of life inherited from your ancestors*” – seem to be more applicable to a Gentile audience than it is to a Jewish one.
- In 1 Peter 2:10 – Peter’s words – “*Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people*” – seems to echo language of Gentile-inclusion in the people of God¹⁰ – and thus implies a Gentile readership.
- And – *finally* – Peter’s admonition in 1 Peter 4:3 – “*For there has already been enough time spent in doing what the Gentiles choose to do ...*” – and the surprise of the Gentiles that “*you don’t join them in the same flood of wild living*” – seems to indicate that a Gentile audience is in view – since it is unlikely that Jews would engage in such practices.

So – with that in mind – and yet – *without* denying that there *may* be some literal “exiles” in these places – whether *Jew* or *Gentile* – I think that it is warranted to conclude that Peter is using the term “exile” here *primarily* in a metaphorical sense – and *not* in a literal sense.

And that seems to be his argument throughout the book.

For example – in 1 Peter 2:11 – Peter writes:

“Dear friends – I urge you as strangers and exiles to abstain from sinful desires that wage war against the soul.”

¹⁰ See e.g., Hos 2:23; Rom 9:25-26.

Peter is here clearly referring *not* to their physical exile – *but* to their spiritual exile. He uses the term not literally – *but* theologically.

As God’s people – they are *not of this world* – and *thus* – they are to avoid such practices that wage war against their souls (cf. 1 Pet 1:17).

So – *with this in mind* – since Peter is addressing *not just* Jewish Christians – *but all* Christians *in general* – and since he is *not* referring primarily to a physical exile – *but rather* a spiritual one – I think we can see how this applies to us believers today.

Peter is here reminding us of *who we are*.

He is reminding us of *our identity* as Christians in this world:

- That we are “chosen exiles”.
- That we are “elect exiles”.

And what we see is that there’s both a vertical – and horizontal – dimension to this identity.

Horizontal Identity: “Exiles”

Let’s begin with our horizontal identity – that is – *who we are* in relation to the world.

And what Peter tells us is that – *in relation* to the world – we are “exiles”.

Now – we all know what an “exile” is.

It is someone who is “banished from his or her native land”.¹¹

¹¹ Source: <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/exile>

And **that's what we are as Christians:**

- We are “**exiles**”
- We are “**foreigners**”
- We are “**aliens**”
- We are “**strangers**”
- We are “**sojourners**”
- We are “**pilgrims**”

Making our way through this dark – and *oftentimes* – hostile world.

I think **John Bunyan's classic book – *Pilgrim's Progress* – which my children love – best captures this imagery.**

It's a reminder:

- That we *don't* belong here.
- That **this** is *not* our home.
- That we are *just* passing through.

Or – as **Paul** puts it in **Philippians 3:20** – “*Our citizenship is in heaven*” – and “*we are eagerly awaiting a Saviour from there – the Lord Jesus Christ*”.

Now – **in saying that:**

- I *don't mean* that we cannot enjoy certain aspects of the culture.
- I *don't mean* that we have to reject everything that this world has to offer.
- I *don't mean* that we cannot have non-Christian friends.

No! Not at all!

But **what I think it means** is that **there** will be **some practices** – and **value systems** – of **this world** that **should make us feel** – **out of place** – **uncomfortable** – **different** – and **that we don't fully belong**.

And **that's what Peter wants to remind us** – we are **“exiles”**.

So – friends – **let me ask:**

- **Is that how you view yourself** – as an **“exile”** – a **“stranger”** – in **this world**?
- **Are we truly** – *in* the world – but not *of* the world?

Friends – *like it or not* – the truth is **this:**

When we came to Christ – *everything* changed!

We have:

- **A new Master.**
- **A new King.**
- **A new Lord.**

And we now **march to a different drumbeat.**

We have:

- ***Different* values**
- ***Different* standards**
- ***Different* goals**

To that of the world.

And – as such:

- We should **no longer** *think* the way **the world** *thinks*.
- We should **no longer** *walk* the way **the world** *walks*.
- We should **no longer** *talk* the way **the world** *talks*.

And **the thing** about “exiles” – “aliens” – “strangers” – is **this**:

- We are **different** – and we stand out.
- *Sometimes* – like a sore-thumb!

Friends – **the truth** is that:

- It is **not easy** *being* different.
- It is **not easy** *not going* with the norm.
- It is **not easy** *swimming against* the tide.

And **the thing** is this:

- **The more** the world in which we are living departs from **the ways of God** – and **his Word**.
- **The more** intense our feelings of unease with – and alienation from – **this world** will be – or ought to be.

In fact – we should *expect* persecution to come our way.

As **Peter** would later warn us in **1 Peter 4:12**:

“Dear friends – don’t be surprised when the fiery ordeal comes among you to test you – as if something unusual were happening to you.”

Note the words – “*as if something unusual were happening to you*”.

It suggests that:

- As “exiles” who have **values** that are **diametrically opposed** to that of **the world**.
- And as “exiles” who **live** in a **markedly different way** from that of **the world**.

This is what we *should* expect living in this fallen – broken – and sinful world.

After all – as Paul puts it in 2 Timothy 3:12:

“... all who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will – [not may!] – be persecuted.”

And **Paul is simply echoing the words of Jesus – who tells us in John 15:18-19 – (and this is worth remembering):**

“If the world hates you – understand that it hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world – the world would love you as its own. However – because you are not of the world – but I have chosen you out of it – the world hates you.”

Friends – in a room this size – I would **not** be surprised to hear that **some of you have experienced – or perhaps – are experiencing – some form of persecution** because of your **faith – whether** in:

- **Your family**
- **Your workplace**
- **Or your school**

Now – while the ‘persecution’ that we face in **Australia** may **not** be as **overt** – and **intense** – as what Peter’s readers may be facing – or what our **brothers and sisters** in other countries may be facing – it is **still not easy**. And we must be **prepared**.

We mentioned earlier **Citipointe Christian College** – who **experienced** – and **are experiencing** – **severe backlash** from the **public** for their **stance concerning sexuality**.

But – **the sad thing** is – **this is nothing new.**

For example – **some of us** may **remember** that **in 2017** – **a Canberra teenager** was **sacked** by **entertainment company** – *Capital Kids Parties* – simply for **saying** – **“It’s OK to vote no”** – **against same-sex marriage.**¹²

And **we could give many more examples.**

In fact – **Andrew reminded us** in **yesterday’s prayer-meeting** about **the legislation** that had **just been passed** in **Canada** – the **Bill C-4** – which **criminalises conversion therapy** – **especially** as it **pertains** to **one’s sexuality.**

Friends – **such is the world** in which **we are living.**

Elliot Clark’s words ring true:

“**The West is fast becoming post-Christian** – **post-truth** – and *perhaps* even – **post-tolerant.**”

How true!

Friends – *with that in mind* – **I think** that **a good** – and **challenging** – **question to ask ourselves** at **this juncture** is this:

How ‘at home’ do we feel in this world?

Friends – **let’s be honest:**

¹² Source: <https://www.news.com.au/finance/work/at-work/canberra-teen-sacked-for-opposing-samesex-marriage-says-young-people-fear-being-bullied-for-voting-no/news-story/4ef4ea6cf3f56db96fc6b64a3c51dc16>

There's a problem – and there's something terribly wrong – if we are feeling *totally* at home – *totally* at ease – and *totally* comfortable – in this world.

After all – **John** warns us in **1 John 2:15-17**:

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world – the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world – the lust of the flesh – the lust of the eyes – and the pride in one's possessions – is not from the Father – but is from the world. And the world with its lust is passing away – but the one who does the will of God remains forever.”

Or – as **James** puts it:

*“... **friendship** with the world is **enmity** with God ...”*¹³

And **that's why Peter** reminds us of our identity as “**exiles**” in this world.

He wants us to maintain *our distinct identity* as God's people in this world – and *not* compromise – or fraternise – with the world – or the things of the world.

Now – friends – **let me be clear**:

This does *not* mean that we isolate ourselves from the world – and retreat into our own Christian enclaves – as some Christian ‘hermits’ have done in the past.

No! We are *neither* to isolate – *nor* assimilate. Instead – we are to permeate.

After all – we are “**exiles**” who have been sovereignly “**dispersed**” – “**scattered**” – or “**placed**” – where we are – for a purpose.

We have been called – as **1 Peter 2:9** puts it – to “*proclaim the praises of the one who called us out of darkness into his marvellous light*”.

¹³ James 4:4

Or – to use the words of Jesus’ High Priestly prayer – even though we are “*in the world*”¹⁴ – but not “*of the world*”¹⁵ – we are nonetheless “*sent into the world*”.¹⁶

Simply put – we are “**exiles on a mission**”!

But – friends – I think that Peter reminds us of our identity as “exiles” *not merely* to wean us from the things of the world – but I think he *also* does it to prepare us – and fortify us – against the persecution that may come our way.

He doesn’t want us to be surprised at the trials we may have to face.

After all – we are “exiles” living in a world that is estranged from – at enmity with – and antagonistic to – God.

And that’s what Peter wants us to remember right at the outset of his letter.

So – that’s our horizontal identity – we are “exiles”. Let’s look now at our vertical identity.

Vertical Identity: “Chosen”

And verse 1 tells us that – *in relation* to God:

- **We are “chosen”.**
- **We are “elect”.**

Now – I think it is significant that Peter places the term “chosen” – or “elect” – in front of the term “exiles”.

¹⁴ John 17:11

¹⁵ John 17:14, 16

¹⁶ John 17:18

That's **the order** in **Greek** – and **I think** it is **significant**. It is **placed in front** for **emphasis**.

Peter wants to **remind us** – *before anything else* – of **our fundamental identity**.

That's *who* we are:

- We are **God's "chosen"**.
- We are **God's "elect"**.

In fact – **that's the reason** *why* we are **"exiles"** in **this world**.

We are **"exiles"** because **God "chose" us** – because **God "elected" us**.

- We are **"chosen" by God** to be **"exiles"**.
- We are **"chosen" to live as "exiles"**.

And **that's what Peter wants us to know**.

He wants us to know that *although*:

- We are **rejected by the world**.
- We are **accepted by God**.

We are **God's "chosen exiles"**.

Now – **what does it mean** that we are **God's "chosen"** – or **God's "elect"**?

Well – **simply this**:

It means that God “chose” us – God “elected” us – God “handpicked” us – to be his own.

And – friends – there’s nothing random *whatsoever* about our being chosen.

As we will soon see – we are “elect” by God’s sovereign choice – by his grace – and by his good pleasure!¹⁷

Now – I know that the doctrine of “election” is much-debated in Christian circles.

It is deemed as ‘controversial’ – because it essentially states:

- That *before* we chose God – God chose us.¹⁸
- That God chose us to be saved *before* the foundation of the world.¹⁹

But Peter *isn’t* ashamed of it! In fact:

- He revels in it!
- He delights in it!
- He celebrates it!

And he reminds his readers – and us – of this glorious truth right at the outset of the letter.

And – *indeed!* – it is glorious!

It is something that we can take comfort – and find encouragement – as well as stability – in – especially as we navigate through life as “exiles” in this dark and hostile world.

And that’s Peter’s goal: Peter wants us to *know* – and rest – in the fact of our “election”:

¹⁷ Matt 11:25-27

¹⁸ John 15:16

¹⁹ Eph 1:4

- That we are “chosen” by God.
- That we belong to God.
- That we are his.

And *why* are we his? Well – Peter tells us in verse 2.

Peter here lifts the veil – so to speak. He reminds us *how* is it that we came to be God’s own – God’s “chosen” – God’s “elect”.

And – *by the way* – what Peter is doing here is instructive:

He knows what we need most in times of suffering is *not* meaningless chiches – *not* pep-talks – *but* deep doctrine – a high view of God – and his saving work.

And so – Peter reminds us in verse 2 that we are “elect”:

“... according to the foreknowledge of God the Father – through the sanctifying work of the Spirit – to be obedient and to be sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ ...”

Friends – what an amazing – and glorious – truth this is!

I don’t think I can do it justice – *but* I think that we are meant to marvel – and revel in it!

This is *not* a doctrine to be debated – but a truth to be celebrated!

Think about it: All three Persons of the Trinity are intricately involved:

- In bringing about our salvation!
- In bringing us to himself!
- In making us God’s own!

And **Peter** wants to **lift our eyes** to **these glorious truths** to **encourage – fortify – and strengthen – our hearts** as we **navigate through life** as **“exiles”** in **this hostile world**.

He wants us to **find rest – and take comfort – in this marvellous reality**.

A reality that will **sustain us – and give us hope – in times of suffering**.

So – **very briefly** – *why* are we **“chosen”**? *Why* are we **“elect”**?

The Foreknowledge of God the Father

Well – **verse 2** – **Peter** tells us – we are **“chosen”** – we are **“elect”**:

“... according to the foreknowledge of God the Father ...”

Friends – **this is an amazing truth** that **ought to greatly humble us!**

Now – **contrary to popular opinion** – the term **“foreknowledge”** does *not simply refer* to **God knowing the future**.

It does *not refer* to **God** – in **eternity past** – **looking down the corridors of time** to see **who would believe in him** – and **then** – on **that basis** – **“choose”** or **“elect”** that **person** for **salvation**.

No! The term **“foreknowledge”** – *when used in reference to God* – **carries** with it **the idea**:

- Of **“foreordination”**.
- Of **“foreloving”**.
- Of **“fore-choosing”**.

It carries with it the idea of God setting his love – and affection – on those who are his.

On **sinners** like you and me! And – **this** – from **eternity past!**

As **Paul** puts it in **Ephesians 1:4**:

“For he chose us in him – before the foundation of the world – to be holy and blameless in love before him.”

So – when **Peter** says here at the **beginning** of **verse 2** that we are **chosen** – “*according to the foreknowledge of God the Father*” – what he is **emphasising** is **nothing other than the sovereignty** – the **grace** – the **initiative** – of **God** in **salvation**.

Friends – **let’s just pause here for a moment** – and **let this mind-boggling** – and **glorious** – **truth sink in!**

God – in **eternity past** – even *before* we were born – even *before* the **foundation** of the **earth** was **laid** – has **set his love** – and **affection** – on **us!**

What assurance! – **what awe!** – **what wonder!** – should **this** bring to **our hearts!**

In fact – **go back tonight** and **ask yourself why** is it that you **believe**. And **what we’ll find** is that we **believe** – *because*:

- **We have been “chosen”!**
- **We are God’s “elect”!**
- **We are God’s sheep!**

We were “**foreknown**” – “**foreloved**” – and “**fore-chosen**” – by **God** from the **foundation** of the **world!**

Let this truth sink in!

The Sanctification of the Spirit

Next – Peter says that we are “chosen” – we are “elect”:

“... through the sanctification of the Spirit ...”

Now – the term “sanctification” – as used by Peter in this context – refers *not* to our progressive growth in holiness as a believer – what we normally call – “progressive sanctification” – *but* to our conversion as believers – what theologians call – “positional sanctification”.

Peter is here reminding us *how* it is that we came to be part of God’s people.

And it is all the work of the Triune God!

Those whom the Father has “chosen” in eternity past – the Spirit “sanctifies” – or “sets apart” – in time – as the gospel is proclaimed – and as he works in the hearts of the elect:

- Calling us.
- Regenerating us.
- And bringing us to faith in Christ.

In other words – God’s “choosing” of us in eternity past – is realised by the Holy Spirit’s “sanctifying” – or “setting us apart” – in time.

It’s all of God – it’s all of grace!

The Sprinkling with the Blood of Christ

And – *finally* – we see the goal of it all – verse 2:

*“... to be **obedient** and to be **sprinkled** with **the blood of Jesus Christ.**”*

That’s **the goal of the Father’s “choosing” of us in eternity past – and the Spirit’s “setting us apart” in time.**

It is so that we **may be “obedient” – that is – come to faith in Christ²⁰ – and be “cleansed” – and forgiven of our sins – by the blood of Christ.**

Now – **we don’t have time to go into it – but for those who may be interested – you might want to read Exodus 24:3-8 – for that’s the most likely background to this passage.**

There – we see the concepts of “obedience” – and “sprinkling” – fleshed out in the inauguration of the covenant with Moses.

And **the idea here – I think – is that – by virtue of Christ’s blood – we are sealed into God’s new covenant – we are united to Christ.**

Alright – friends – let’s take a step back for a moment – and ask ourselves:

***What* is Peter doing in all of this?**

And **the answer – I think – is this: Peter is reminding us of the sovereign work of the Triune God in salvation.**

If you like alliteration:

- **We are “*chosen*” by the Father.**
- **We are “*consecrated*” by the Spirit.**
- **We are “*cleansed*” by the Son.**

²⁰ See 1 Pet 1:22; cf. Rom 1:5; 16:26.

All three Persons of the Godhead worked together to bring about our salvation.

And I think this is Peter’s logic for suffering saints:

If the source – root – and cause – of our salvation is found in the Triune God – then we can rest assured that we are safe – and secure in him – *no matter* what the world may throw at us.

He who began a good work in us will bring it to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.²¹

Nothing – and no one – can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.²²

No one can snatch us out of the Father’s hand!²³

He will hold us fast – and keep us to the end.²⁴

That’s *why* Peter reminds us that we are God’s “elect”.

For Peter knows that understanding this reality – understanding this identity – brings stability in the midst of hostility in the life of a believer.

Conclusion

So – friends – even as we live in this increasingly – post-Christian – post-truth – and post-tolerant culture – I want to encourage us:

Let’s remember *our identity* – let’s remember *who we are*:

²¹ Phil 1:6

²² Rom 8:39

²³ John 10:28-30

²⁴ Jude 24

We are – God’s “chosen exiles”.

And – friends – in our various journey through life – in our various seasons of life – perhaps some of us may need to be reminded of one of these identities *more than the other*.

So – for those of us who may be tempted by the world – or the things in this world – let’s remember that we are “exiles” – that this world is *not our home* – that we *don’t belong here*:

- **We are not meant to find our identity in this world.**
- **We are not meant to fit in to this world.**
- **And we are not meant to be surprised if the world hates us – or rejects us.**

We are “exiles”.

And – for those of us who may be feeling like an “exile” in this world because of our faith – whether in our family, workplace, or school – let’s remember – rest – and revel – in the fact – that we are “chosen”:

- **We are eternally loved by the Father.**
- **We are set apart by the Spirit.**
- **And we are cleansed – and redeemed – by the Son.**

God chose us – God has us – and God will keep us.

And so – as Peter closes – so I close:

“May grace and peace be multiplied to us – even as we seek to live faithfully as God’s chosen exiles in a hostile world.”

Amen.