

## Studies in I Peter (8)

### The Believer's Security -- Chosen by God

#### Introduction

- A. Peter wrote to Christians who were undergoing persecution. They needed spiritual support for many of them would be martyred for their faith.
- B. The theme of these Epistles is hope. A major truth contributing to this theme is the identity of the believer.
- C. The text -- I Peter 1:1,2 (NIV)

*To God's elect . . . who have been chosen according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood.*

#### **I. The Fact of Election: "God's elect"**

- A. The word means "Chosen with a purpose in mind."
- B. To summarize the many references in the Bible it should be said that those who are now believers were chosen in eternity past to receive the gift of salvation. As a group we were given to the Lord Jesus as the reward for His suffering on the Cross.
- C. Election is not only in harmony with the other doctrines of the Bible but is the foundation of at least four of the most important.

Election means we can believe:

1. The sovereignty of God.
2. The depravity of man.
3. Salvation by grace alone.
4. The believer belongs to God secured only by his works.

Rejecting election we must hold:

1. God's acts based on human acts.
2. Man is not depraved.
3. Salvation based on works.
4. The believer belongs to God and is secure. If he sins all is lost.

- D. This truth brought comfort to these early Christians.
  1. It reminded them that they were the people of God even though under persecution.
  2. That their Heavenly Father was in charge of all things.
  3. That there was a purpose in their trials.
  4. That they could put their faith in God and His eternal plan.

## **II. The Source of Election: "The foreknowledge of God"**

- A. When used in reference to divine activity the word "foreknowledge" means much more than mere omniscience -- as though God knew who would believe and therefore chose them to be saved. The noun occurs twice (Acts 2:23; I Peter 1:2); and the verb five times (Acts 26:5; Rom. 8:29; 11:2; I Peter 1:20; II Peter 3:17). From these passages and the grammar (Kata and the Acc.) the word must be explained as "Elect in harmony with (not "on basis of") the foreknowledge of God."
- B. The purpose God had in mind in causing Peter to write these words had to do with the suffering the believers were going through. It would help them to know that God knew all about them and their trials and that He was carrying out His plan for their spiritual development.

## **III. The Application of Election: "The sanctifying work of the Spirit."**

- A. The Holy Spirit carries out the decrees of God and applies the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus. He works in the life of the elect to convict them of their lostness and to enable them to repent and believe.
- B. The word "sanctification" in this passage has the twofold thought of "separation" and "making holy." God the Holy Spirit severs us from our relationship with Adam and the guilt, bondage, and death associated with that relationship -- and through the new birth makes us a holy person.

## **IV. The Product of Election: "For obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by His blood."**

- A. The product or evidence of election is -- obedience to Jesus Christ.
1. The emphasis here is on that first response of faith whereby we confess our sinfulness and believe upon the Lord Jesus as Lord and Savior.
  2. The true believer is characterized by this obedience.

*And being made perfect, he (the Lord Jesus) became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him. Hebrews 5:9*

3. We have no right believing we are spiritually secure if we do not live a life characterized by obedience to Jesus Christ. The obedience of many so-called Christians is not to Jesus Christ -- but to the church, or the family, or their reputation, or their pride, or their community.
- B. The product or evidence of election is -- covenantal relationship.

1. The reference to "sprinkling of the blood" indicates admission into a covenantal relationship with God. (See Exodus 24:1-8)

*But ye are come ... to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. Hebrews 12:24*

2. The Christians were here reminded that God had brought them into a covenantal relationship with Himself through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in their place. Although in persecution they had all the benefits of the new covenant.

Victor M. Matthews