

Standing Fast in the Grace of God

The Work of the Godhead in Salvation

1 Peter 1:2

In the first verse of this letter, Peter identified those to whom he was writing as “strangers scattered.” These were specifically Jewish believers dispersed across the Roman provinces, living as pilgrims in a place that was not their home. As we pointed out in our last study, this can be clearly applied to the believer today, whether Jew or Gentile. His purpose in writing was to strengthen their faith and remind them that, though they were rejected by men, they were chosen and precious to God.

Verse 2 continues that thought by showing why they could stand firm: because their salvation is the united work of the Father, the Spirit, and the Son. This verse is one of the clearest examples in the Bible of the Trinity’s (the Godhead’s) involvement in redemption. Although the word “trinity” doesn’t appear in our Bible, to say it isn’t taught because it doesn’t appear, as some do, is foolish. This verse mentions all three Persons of the Godhead together – each with a distinct role, yet acting in perfect unity. The point of this message is not to teach about the Trinity, but to show, from this verse, in relation to the believer, what work each Person of the Godhead had to do in the work of man’s salvation.

I. THE PLAN OF THE FATHER – 2A

“Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father”

A. The meaning of “elect”

Much has been said about the term “elect” (and the

other key words related to it: predestination and foreknowledge) down through the ages and no matter what is said there will never be an end to the debate. That's sad considering God didn't put it in the Bible to be a point of contention among believers but that is exactly what it is. There is more "mudslinging" and hateful speech used today concerning this one subject than perhaps any other subject in the Bible. No matter what side of the argument you may tend toward, there will be people that oppose you.

Let me make a point right here – God didn't put things in the Bible to be confusing. It says in 1 Corinthians 14:33 that "God is not the author of confusion" and if that's the case then He certainly didn't want us to be confused on this issue. Certainly, there will be things we don't understand, but this isn't supposed to be one of them. God put enough in the Bible on this topic for us to know, with a certain degree of confidence, what He meant by the term "elect."

1. The term "elect" (ἐκλεκτός), in simplest terms, means chosen, selected, or picked out.
 - a) As it was used in the time period of the 1st century Christian, they would have understood it to mean:
 - (1) Chosen out for a purpose – as it was used in political or civic situations.
 - (2) Selected for special distinction – as special military units were spoken of.
 - (3) Set apart as the best or finest of the group – as used of fine good (select marble, the best fruits, etc.)

- b) As it would have been understood by the Jewish believers specifically (to whom the letter was initially written):

- (1) Israel as God's chosen nation:

"The LORD hath chosen Jacob unto Himself" (Ps. 135:4 LXX).

- (2) The Messiah as the chosen one:

"Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect..." (Is. 42:1) – quoted in Matt. 12:18 as, "Behold my servant, whom I have chosen..."

- (3) Priests and Levites as chosen servants.

In the Jewish context, "elect" (ἐκλεκτός) signified God's gracious choice for the covenant relationship He had with Israel and the service they were called to. In other words, it denoted calling to purpose, not simply privilege – being set apart to represent God among the nations.

- c) In early 1st and 2nd century Christian writings, the word continued to mean those who have been chosen by God through faith in Christ to belong to Him, distinct from the world, set apart for His service and glory.

2. They are called "elect" because they believed the gospel that God graciously gave to all mankind. If they had not received Christ, they would not be counted among the "elect."

Ephesians 1:4-5

⁴ According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: ⁵ Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

- a) One very important point to keep in mind when studying the doctrine of predestination, is that whenever the Greek word translated "predestination" in this verse (προορίζω) is used (6 times), in every case, it is referring specifically to Believers, to the saved, to those that are born-again.
- b) The word *predestinate* (or *foreordain*) never refers to the lost being predestined to damnation. It always concerns God's purpose for the saved – specifically, their adoption, conformity to Christ, and ultimate glorification. In every context, the objects of predestination are "the called," "the justified," or "those in Christ."

Acts 4:28 [God's purpose in the crucifixion]

²⁸ For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

Romans 8:29-30 [believers are here referred to as the foreknown, the justified, and the glorified]

²⁹ For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be conformed* to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. ³⁰ Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

1 Corinthians 2:7 [God's plan of salvation revealed to believers]

⁷ But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even the hidden wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

Ephesians 1:5 [believers – those in Christ]

⁵ Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

Ephesians 1:11 [believers - those who have obtained an inheritance in Christ]

¹¹ In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

B. The meaning of "foreknowledge" (πρόγνωσις)

1. The word is a compound word – προ (before) and γνωσις (knowledge) – that means to know beforehand. It's only used in noun form twice – here and in Acts 2:23.

Acts 2:23

²³ Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

2. God's knowledge of who would be saved does not cause their salvation – it simply means He knew from eternity what every person would freely choose.
3. God's knowing and our choosing are not contradictory; His foreknowledge is perfect perception, not coercion.

When God looks at mankind in His foreknowledge and sees someone who has rejected Him, He will not act to force them against their will. He wants them to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9) but will not force them to be. Even dealing with believers, the same is true. God saw us in His foreknowledge when we violated His Word and He allows us to make those choices, knowing they will happen but doesn't force us to comply. He may discipline

us in love (Heb. 12:6) to try and help us correct our failure but He won't force us to.

C. The source of salvation

1. The phrase "according to" (κατὰ), in its use here, means "down from" or "based upon." Salvation flows down from the Father as the source of all grace and purpose.
2. He planned it, provided for it, and made it available to all who believe.

John 3:16

¹⁶ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

1 Timothy 2:4

⁴ Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

2 Peter 3:9

⁹ The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

II. THE POWER OF GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT – VS. 2B

"Through sanctification of the Spirit"

A. The means of salvation – "through"

1. The word "through" (ἐν) shows the Spirit's work as the *means* by which salvation is accomplished.
2. Salvation cannot happen without the Spirit working in the heart of the unbeliever.

John 16:7-10

⁷ Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. ⁸ And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ⁹ Of sin, because they believe not on me; ¹⁰ Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;

B. The meaning of "sanctification"

1. The term "sanctification (ἁγιασμός) comes from the same root as "holiness" – means to be set apart for divine use.
2. Before salvation, the Spirit convicts; at salvation, He sets apart; after salvation, He continues sanctifying.

2 Thessalonians 2:13

¹³ But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

Romans 15:16

¹⁶ That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified [set apart] by the Holy Ghost.

3. The continuing work of the Spirit
 - a) Once the sinner is saved, the Spirit begins what we call "progressive sanctification" – a lifelong work of shaping us into Christ's likeness.
 - b) He dwells within, teaching, guiding, and

empowering us to live a holy life.

III. THE PROVISION OF GOD THE SON – VS. 2B-C

“Unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ”

Most often in the Bible, the work of God the Son is mentioned before the work of the Spirit. I believe the reason it isn’t in this verse is found in the three prepositions that are used to describe man’s salvation as it relates to the Godhead – “according to” (the direction from which our salvation come – the source), “through” (brought about by – the means), “unto” (the purpose).

A. The purpose of salvation – “unto obedience”

1. The word “unto” (εἰς) means “toward” or “for the purpose of.”
2. Salvation has direction and design: God saved us “unto obedience” – to live our lives so they honor and reflect Christ.

John 14:15

¹⁵ If ye love me, keep my commandments.

Hebrews 5:9

⁹ And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

B. The price of salvation – “and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ”

1. “Sprinkling of the blood” recalls the Old Testament imagery of covenant and consecration (Exodus 24:3-8).
2. In the New Testament (Covenant), it points to the atoning blood of Christ that purifies and

brings us into fellowship with God (Heb. 9:18-23).

Hebrews 12:24

²⁴ And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of* Abel.

C. The proof of salvation

Those cleansed by His blood are called to obey His Word – not to earn salvation, but to express love for the Savior who purchased it.

1 John 5:2-3

² By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. ³ For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

IV. THE PRODUCT OF GOD’S WORK – VS. 2D

“Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied”

A. “Grace unto you”

Everything Peter has said comes from the grace of God – the undeserved favor of the Father, revealed through the Son, and applied by the Spirit.

B. “And peace”

Grace brings peace (reconciliation) with God and inner rest of knowing we are His.

Romans 5:1

¹ Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

C. “Be multiplied”

Peter isn’t asking them to *receive* grace and peace,

but that these blessings would *increase* in their lives, especially, as we'll see as we study this book, in their suffering.

Conclusion:

The purpose of this verse is not to cause division or invoke argument, but to simply declare the harmony of God's saving work.

- The Father planned salvation – the source.
- The Spirit performs salvation – the means.
- The Son purchased salvation – the purpose and provision.

In simple terms, God's sovereignty makes salvation possible; man's choice makes it personal.

Our salvation is the work of the Triune God: foreknown by the Father, sanctified by the Spirit, and secured by the blood of the Son.