

PETER'S EPISTLES

1 Peter: Living In Conflict With The Culture

I. Chosen Of God For Holy Living In A Godless World

(1 Peter 1:1-2)

I. Introduction

- A. Several believers in different states of the union have reported to me the increasing difficulty they face in living in alignment with Bible truth due to the way this efforts conflicts with the world's deteriorating culture.
- B. "First Peter was written to Christians . . . whose stand for Jesus Christ made them aliens and strangers in the midst of a pagan society" (B. K. C., N. T., p. 837), so we study 1 Peter for insight and encouragement.
- C. 1 Peter 1:1-2 starts off with Peter's claim that we were chosen by God to live for Him in this era of all eras, what encourages us today to have hope that it is possible for us to live righteously in this present era:

II. Chosen Of God For Holy Living In A Godless World, 1 Peter 1:1-2.

- A. When Peter addressed his epistle to the *parepidemois* (from *parepidemos*, "sojourners," Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 631) of the *diasporas* (from *diaspora*, the technical term for "Jewish dispersion," Ibid., p. 187; Theol. Dict. of the N. T., vol. II, p. 98-102) in 1 Peter 1:1b, the word *diaspora* also being used in James 1:1 of Hebrews, he addressed **Hebrew believers** who had suffered persecution into being **scattered** from Israel into living as temporary residents or **sojourners** in Gentile Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia of Asia Minor. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, Map 14: "The Spread of Christianity")
- B. Peter mentioned that these believers were "elect" (*eklektois* (from *eklektos*, "chosen, select," Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 242) (1 Peter 1:1a) according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, 1 Peter 1:2a.
- C. 1 Peter 1:2 is most often interpreted to fit either Arminian, Calvinist or Moderate Calvinistic views of election:
 - 1. Arminians hold that God knew beforehand who would trust in Christ and that He then chose them to be saved when they believed in Him. (Henry C. Thiesson, Intro. Lectures in Syst. Theol., 1949, p. 344-345)
 - 2. Calvinists claim that all that God knows must be first eternally predestined by God to be a reality and thus to be knowable, that God thus predestined who would believe in Christ to be saved. (Augustus H. Strong, Systematic Theology, 1907, reprint 1970, p. 356; 783)
 - 3. Moderate Calvinists say God's foreknowledge and election are coextensive, that we cannot set up a time sequence for both, but try to relate them to one another logically. (L. S. Chafer, Major Bible Themes, rev. John F. Walvoord, 1974, p. 233) Thus, God somehow sovereignly chose who would believe in Christ while man freely chooses of his own volition to trust in Christ in ways we will understand only in eternity.
- D. However, each of these views is illogical and hence errant, and we explain (as follows):
 - 1. Were God to choose who would be justified based on His knowledge beforehand of who would believe as Arminians teach, God's election would be unnecessary (C. F. Baker, A Disp. Theol., 1971, p. 384-385), and unnecessary interrelations of facts or events are illogical by definition (Webster's Third New Int'l. Dictionary, s. v. "logic"), so they err. (Clark H. Pinnock, A Defense of Bib. Infallibility, 1967, p. 16-17)
 - 2. Were God to predestine who would believe in Christ to be saved as Calvinists teach, then faith would become logically unnecessary since God could save without it, producing an illogical view that is errant.
 - 3. Were God to predestine who would believe while man also freely chose to believe as Moderate Calvinists teach, then God's predestination and man's faith would cancel out the logical need for one another, producing an illogical and hence an errant theological position.
- E. The solution then is to view the **goal** of God's election as something **other than justification** in contrast to what the mainline theological views do, and the **context** provides the answer and a great lesson (as follows):
 - 1. Since Peter was writing to **Hebrew** believers (1 Peter 1:1; see "II,A" above), we note that Moses in Exodus 24:6-8 sprinkled the people of Israel with the blood of a lamb to set them apart **for obeying God**.
 - 2. Thus, God foreknew from eternity past that Peter's Hebrew readers would trust in His Son and suffer persecution for it, so He had chosen them in eternity past to live godly lives even amid a difficult world!
 - 3. A godly life was thus not only possible, but attainable by Peter's readers regardless what they faced!

Lesson: *Regardless if they faced a hostile, ungodly world, Peter's Hebrew Christian readers had been eternally chosen by God to live godly lives in such a world, so God expected them to rely on Him to achieve that objective!*

Application: *Since God eternally chose us live godly lives in our ungodly era, may we rely on Him to do just that!*