



**Living as Subversive Foreigners
Hope for the Hurting
An Introduction to Peter
1 Peter 1:1-2**

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About this Guy Named Peter

Remember Simon Peter? Yep, the professional fisherman who became a follower of Jesus Christ. The classic example of hoof and mouth disease because he tended to speak whatever was on his mind no



matter what anyone else thought about it. He wound up becoming the author of two letters which became part of the Bible. No, really.

He was the oldest disciple, being married before meeting up with Jesus. Odds are, he was 10 or more years older than all the other disciples and closer in age to Jesus.

How do we know that.

Matthew 17:24–27

“After they arrived in Capernaum, the collectors of the temple tax came to Peter and said, “Your teacher pays the double drachma tax, doesn’t he?” He said, “Yes.” When Peter came into the house, Jesus spoke to him first, “What do you think, Simon? From whom do earthly kings collect tolls or taxes—from their sons or from foreigners?” After he said, “From foreigners,” Jesus said to him, “Then the sons are free. But so that we don’t offend them, go to the lake and throw out a hook. Take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth, you will find a four drachma coin. Take that and give it to them for me and you.”” (NET 2nd ed.)

Why was Peter approached? Well, it was his house, and he was the taxpayer for the family and for those who were living there, and at that point in time, it was Jesus and the disciples. The tax collectors from the Temple were busy collecting the annual tax loosely based on the tax of half a shekel outlined in Exodus 30. The tax there was to be taken as the result of a census and the payment was to be from every adult male. It was to be paid annually at the Temple and that would normally take place at Passover in Jerusalem. “It was collected locally in the month before Passover from the rest of the Jewish population.” (France 2007, 668)

This collection included Jewish communities outside of Judea as well as those areas surrounding Judea such as the Galilee area. Only two had to pay, meaning only two of the men were old enough to be considered adults at that point. In Numbers 14, the Lord judged those of Israel who were 20 and above as adults. That might be a clue for us what was the age of majority at the time of Jesus. If that was the case, then only Jesus and Simon Peter met the age requirement to pay the tax.

Unlike Paul, who had the equivalent of two doctorates, Peter, well he went into the family business and received only the required training and schooling needed before that.

As we read the gospels, Peter is the guy who comes across as rather, impetuous. Ready, fire, aim Peter. He is the same guy who tried to kill Malchus by removing his head with a sword while Jesus was being arrested but missed, only removing an ear, which Jesus promptly put back on (John 18:10). Of course, only John identifies Peter as being the errant swordsman.

Peter wound up denying Jesus, three times, prior to the cross. That was a seminal moment for Peter, that was what removed much of the pride from him. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost would finish that job.

This is the same Peter who lost a footrace to the tomb after Jesus rose from the dead. And he is also the one that Jesus returned to see post-resurrection, in order to restore him (John 21).

During a ministry trip to the north of Israel, at Caesarea Philippi, Peter is the one who clearly identified Jesus Christ as the Messiah. Oh, and one more thing, Jesus did not make him Pope while there.

Matthew 16:15–19

“He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus answered him, “You are blessed, Simon son of Jonah, because flesh and



blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father in heaven! And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven, and whatever you release on earth will have been released in heaven.” (NET 2nd ed.)

And indeed, Peter gave the first sermon after Pentecost and thousands were saved. Yes, he was the rock which started the church.

But as we look at this passage, “there is nothing in this passage about any successors to Peter. It is Simon Peter himself, in his historical role, who is the foundation rock. Any link between the personal role of Peter and the subsequent papacy is a matter of later ecclesiology, not of exegesis of this passage.” (France 2007, 622)

Peter was mightily used by the Lord to kick off the church, but the scriptures are totally silent that this is to be the beginning of a new priesthood of a single man, the Pope.

The scriptures, pre-Pentecost, presents the picture of a conflicted individual. There are those times when he is the strong one of the group, and then there are those times where Jesus must address Him rather directly. Like when Peter thought he knew better than Jesus.

Matthew 16:22–23.

“So Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him: “God forbid, Lord! This must not happen to you!” But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me because you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but on man’s.” (NET 2nd ed.)

We see Peter here in the scriptures, with all the details good and bad, to include failure and restoration for one simple reason. To show us that Jesus can and will indeed use anyone. He shows us clearly that the person who is yielded to Jesus is one who is usable by the Lord. God can and does use anyone who is available and fully surrendered to what He wants to do; and that means He can use you and me too.

“The Peter we read of in the book of Acts is a transformed man. He has witnessed his Lord’s ascension to glory (Acts 1). He is devoted to prayer with the others in the upper room and with them is filled with the Holy Spirit. In new boldness and power he proclaims the gospel of Jesus Christ in Jerusalem, the very city that had crucified his Lord only a few weeks earlier (Acts 2). Imprisonments and persecutions do not stop Peter from preaching—they become occasions for gospel proclamation. The Lord greatly uses him as an apostle to lead, shepherd, and feed the flock.” (VanDoodewaard 2017, 9)

Does Peter still have moments where he decides to control things rather than allow the Holy Spirit? Yes, he does.

Galatians 2:11–14

“But when Peter came to Antioch, I had to oppose him to his face, for what he did was very wrong. When he first arrived, he ate with the Gentile believers, who were not circumcised. But afterward, when some friends of James came, Peter wouldn’t eat with the Gentiles anymore. He was afraid of criticism from these people who insisted on the necessity of circumcision. As a result, other Jewish believers followed Peter’s hypocrisy, and even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. When I saw that they were not following the truth of the gospel message, I said to Peter in front of all the others, “Since you, a Jew by birth, have discarded the Jewish laws and are living like a Gentile, why are you now trying to make these Gentiles follow the Jewish traditions?” (NLT)

Never a good day when the self-proclaimed chief of sinners must rebuke you publicly, but Paul did and Peter, he got it and repented.



So, in these two letters, we see just how incredibly changed Peter has become through the power of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

How did Peter die? Good question, the Bible is silent on this other than predicting that he would be martyred in John 21. Church tradition steps in on this.

Later in his life, Peter ordained Clement as a pastor just as John ordained Polycarp in Smyrna. A record was kept due to the false teaching going on so that it would be clear who was teaching truth. Tertullian tells us “the Church of Smyrna recounteth that Polycarp was placed there by John; as that of Rome doth that Clement was in like manner ordained by Peter.” (Tertullian 1842, 465)

This was during the time of Nero. Nero was also responsible for the death of Paul.

Paul was not the only one planting churches, Peter was possibly also doing the same, most likely attested to by who he addresses 1 Peter to. But this also is church tradition.

1 Peter 1:1

“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as strangers, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen” (NASB 2020)

Eusebius also says the same in his church history. But as he worked his way west, he came to Rome, ordained Clement, and then ran into Nero.

Peter seems to have preached in Pontus and Galatia and Bithynia and Cappadocia and Asia to the Jews of the Dispersion, and at last, having come to Rome, was crucified head-downwards, for he himself had asked to suffer so. (Eusebius of Caesarea 1953, 138)

These cities may sound familiar, because those who were in Jerusalem for the day of Pentecost, had come from them. The Apostles had disciplined them before they went home.

But here is the thing about church traditions. They may not be true. There are those with a different view of Peter. They would tell us that from a historical basis, yes, we do know that Peter writes to these cities, but we do not know if he physically went there and instead was simply writing to those who he had disciplined years before in Jerusalem. The cities that Peter references are in Asia Minor and listed in an east to west order, why? That might be how they are arrived at as one travels from where he might have been based. We get a hint in 1 Peter, and this is an issue many have an opinion on.

1 Peter 5:13

“She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings, and so does my son, Mark.” (NASB 2020)

Babylon? Is this a greeting from the church in Babylon? Historically, this idea is a very slim possibility. Josephus tells us the Jewish community in Babylon had to flee to Seleucia due to persecution. They had to flee at the same time Peter, John and the rest of the Apostles would have had to leave Jerusalem due to the persecution of Herod Agrippa I and the explosion of civil disorder in the city which would result in the fall of Jerusalem in 70AD. We will cover this more when we get there.

It is most likely a coded reference to Rome.

Peter had to leave Jerusalem at the same time the other Apostles did as well. His ministry was to the Jewish believers who were in Asia Minor, and I tend to align with church tradition on his making his way to Rome where he was imprisoned and murdered by Nero.



So, about these two letters. Peter is indeed the author of them both.

Let's concentrate on the first letter for now.

Peter made use of the same network Paul had set up during his missionary journeys. In fact, one of Paul's partners in ministry, Silas, may have been the one who delivers this letter to those it was written to (1 Peter 5:12).

Peter wrote his epistles after Paul had written his epistles, somewhere between A.D. 64 and 67, after bloody Nero had come to the throne and persecution was already breaking out. (McGee 1997, 672)

Here in 1 Peter, he will deal with doctrine. "In the first few verses he deals with the great doctrines of election, foreknowledge, sanctification, obedience, the blood of Christ, the Trinity, the grace of God, salvation, revelation, glory, faith, and hope." (McGee 1997, 672)

When we first met Peter there is no way we would ever conceive of this man and what he would become because of Christ. Jesus always sees the future in us. He knows what we will become and then loves us enough to be with us where we are and walk us to the spot, step by step.

Peter, because he experienced it personally, writes for us here in 1 Peter a letter of hope, a letter of second and third chances. As he is writing to a church in the beginning throes of persecution, he is wanting to encourage those who would be reading and hearing what it is he writes. "In the midst of suffering and pain that would attempt to derail us, Peter provides an epistle of triumphant faith." (Walls and Anders 1999, 5)

Consider this to be a handbook on how to live in a hostile foreign county.

Outline

- I. Greetings 1:1-2
 - a. The author
 - b. The audience
- II. What does it mean to be and live, saved? 1:3-25
 - a. Thanksgiving for the work of salvation. 1:3-5
 - b. Why trials? 1:6-9
 - c. The mystery and revelation of salvation. 1:10-12
 - d. How saved people do life. 1:13-17
 - e. Here's why. 1:18-21
 - f. And because of that, we love one another. 1:22-25
- III. The exciting joy, glory and responsibility of believers. 2:1-25
 - a. How we should respond to Jesus. 2:1-3
 - b. The impact of responding to Jesus and realizing who He is. 2:4-8
 - c. The privilege of God's people. 2:9-10
 - d. How should we now live as believers? 2:11-20
 - e. Our model for doing life – Jesus. 2:21-25
- IV. What Godly living looks like at home. 3:1-7
 - a. The Godly wife. 1-6
 - b. The Godly husband 7
 - c. The Godly home 8-12
- V. The Believer Dealing with persecution and suffering. 3:13-22
 - a. When evil is returned for good. 13-17
 - b. The example of Jesus. 18-22



- VI. Serving the Lord in the last days (today). 4:1-19
 - a. The need for commitment. 1-2
 - b. The need for wisdom. 3-6
 - c. The primacy of prayer. 7
 - d. The need for love. 8-11
 - e. Understand the why for trials today. 12-13
 - f. Suffering as a believer vs. a poser. 14-16
 - g. The need for commitment in suffering. 17-19
- VII. Instructions for shepherds and for sheep. 5:1-14
 - a. Requirements for the shepherds. 1-4
 - b. Promises for the humble. 5-7
 - c. The reality of Spiritual Warfare. 8-9
 - d. Closing prayer for strength. 10-11
 - e. Some closing thoughts. 12-14

So, let's look at two of the most tightly packed, doctrinally filled verses in the Bible. It appears this man has learned a bit about packing truth into a small space.

1 Peter 1:1–2

“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as strangers, 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 multiplied to you.” (NASB 2020)

The old Peter, pre-crucifixion, would have probably been a bit more poetic about his title. But this man has grown in the Lord, and he realizes who he is in Jesus. Just one of the guys. An apostle. Other than the denials, what else played into this reversal?

Galatians 5:22–24

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.” (ESV)

The pride is gone, and the fruit of the Spirit is evident. Yes, Peter's name is second to the name of Jesus in the gospels in terms of total mentions. Yes, no one speaks in the gospels as much as Peter. That is not necessarily a good thing either.

Peter was rebuked more by Jesus than any other disciple. He is also the only one who decided he knew more than God and tried to rebuke Jesus.

He is also the only one who dared to surf boardless, joining Jesus out on the water. No one confessed Jesus more forcefully than Peter, and no one denied Him more forcefully than Peter. In fact, he holds the distinction of being the only disciple who was called Satan by Jesus. This is one serious outspoken type A guy who met God in the flesh and was never again the same. If Jesus can use him, He can use all of us too.

Peter is an apostle of Jesus Christ. “Jesus Christ designated Peter as an authoritative messenger and interpreter of the gospel. The letter does not represent good advice but a binding apostolic word for the church.” (Schreiner 2003, 49)

By using the name Jesus gave him and his office in the introduction, Peter is letting the reader know that what he has to say is not simply good advice.



Peter has been commissioned by Jesus Christ and as such, he is writing God's words for the churches. He has already done jail time for Jesus along with John. Their first album of prison worship songs was making all the playlists in the Empire. And his angelic led prison escape story was making all the rounds as well.

Remember, his ministry was to Jewish believers throughout the Roman Empire, so notice who he addresses the letter to.

"To those who reside as strangers."

As believers in Jesus Christ, we are truly no longer citizens of this planet. Heaven is our real home. John was invited to go through the portal into heaven itself to get the eyewitness scoop on last things in Revelation. Paul made this crystal clear for us.

Philippians 3:20–21

"But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself." (ESV)

If we are citizens of heaven, then that means here on earth, we are nothing more than resident aliens awaiting evacuation.

I get it now, the reason why, as Christians we feel like we are in another country here on earth is this, we are truly from another country, entirely. We are resident aliens temporarily making do at whatever location the Lord has placed us in.

The Greek word that Peter uses here is *παρεπιδήμοις* (*parepidemois*). This word always refers to a temporary resident in a foreign place. "Pertaining to staying for a while in a strange or foreign place, sojourning, residing temporarily...stranger, sojourner, resident alien..." (Arndt, et al. 2000, 775)

"Christians are presented as men who have no country of their own on this earth; they are simply temporary residents. For this reason they are not to allow themselves to be shaped by the things which largely determine life on this earth: the *σαρκικαὶ ἐπιθυμίαι* (*evil cravings of the flesh*). Their alien status emerges clearly in the fact that they belong to the *διασπορά* (*diaspora*), the Jewish concept being applied to Christians. Their life in the *διασπορά* brings clearly into focus their existence as *παρεπίδημοι*. And the fact that they are called *ἐκλεκτοὶ παρεπίδημοι* (*elect resident aliens*) shows that their home is the place from which their election proceeds." (Grundmann 1964-, 65)

As the Jews were spread across the planet in the diaspora, so too are we. Our true home, as believers, is heaven, we are resident aliens, simply passing through and working to take more along with us.

"To those who reside as strangers, scattered..."

The word translated scattered is indeed the word *διασπορᾶς* (*diasporas*). But here, Peter, who does indeed minister to the diaspora that has turned towards Jesus Christ and are now believers, uses this term not as for the Jews, but for us, we who are believers in Jesus Christ. "Rather, the term here has a new spiritual sense, referring to Christians 'dispersed' throughout the world and living away from their heavenly homeland (yet hoping some day to reach it). The word thus reinforces the meaning of 'sojourners' and adds the idea that they are part of a 'worldwide' scattering of Christians." (Grudem 1988, 53)



Peter specifically mentions five names which outline four Roman provinces, all located in what is today known as Turkey.

At this point in time, persecution was beginning to heat up for the church. Being reminded that heaven is their real home is encouragement and comfort. Yes, there are those who are slandering and defaming you, but Jesus knows.

Here at the very beginning of his letter, Peter provides a concept for us as what it means to identify as a believer. Our relationship to Him versus our relationship to the world.

There is another reason why this concept of identity and citizenship is important for us to grasp. Citizens have certain rights and privileges which non-resident foreigners do not have. We forget that we are not from around here and as foreigners, we are not expected to hold the same values, customs and practices of the places where we live. Because of the vast differences between a citizen and a resident alien, many times they are looked at as potentially subversive to the established order since they do not do things like we do.

We are citizens of heaven and that comes with out of this world privileges and rights. Due to that, we no longer operate as citizens of this world.

This makes you and I subversive to the existing order where we are temporarily residing. We tend not to be invested into the same things the culture says are good, in fact, we look and call them evil. You see, where we are truly from, there is a different way of living which, unless you are from there, you simply do not understand. This is one of the reasons why we, as believers, are called to not be in binding business relationships or voluntarily through marriage enter family relationships with those whose home is this planet. They will never understand us or our motivations since we are not from around here any longer.

At the outset of his letter, Peter has reminded us of our true citizenship and then states the intended audience for this letter. It is intended to be passed from church to church throughout Turkey.

As foreigners living in a strange land, there is something unique about each of us, yes, we are believers who have decided to follow Jesus, but we have also been "chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father." Peter has now moved into the doctrine of election.

This is a doctrine that has and continues to cause division in the church as folks align themselves with the two primary manmade interpretations surrounding this doctrine.

The Bible never reconciles the seeming contradiction between God's sovereignty and mankind's free will, but affirms them both! A good example of the biblical tension would be Romans 9 on God's sovereign choice and Romans 10 on mankind's necessary response (cf. 10:11, 13). (Utley 2000, 163)

But here is the good news, we are not required to understand this in order to be saved or remain saved. The two views are as follows based on Chuck Smith's pamphlet, Calvinism, Arminianism & The Word of God.

One side of the coin is Calvinism, also known as the reformed tradition. This side looks at election from the perspective of an acronym, TULIP.

T - Total depravity, man is in total bondage to sin and Satan and unable to exercise his own free will to trust in Christ without the help of God.



U – Unconditional election, election is not based on the decision of man but only on the free will of the Creator.

L – Limited atonement, Jesus only died for the elect who will be saved, not for the lost.

I – Irresistible Grace, His grace cannot be obstructed. The free will of man is so far removed from salvation, that the elect are regenerated even before expressing faith in Jesus for salvation.

P – Perseverance of the saints, the work of salvation is entirely the work of God and man has nothing to do with it. The Saints will persevere because God will see to it, He will finish the work He has started.

The other side is called Arminianism. Yes, this system has points as well, but there are only “Five Points of Arminianism.”

Free will – the fall of man was not total there is enough good left in man for him to will to accept Jesus Christ.

Conditional election – Man’s act of faith was the condition to become elect since God foresaw him exercising “free will” in response to Christ.

Universal atonement – Christ died for everyone, but each must exercise their own free will to decide.

Obstructable grace – God wants all to be saved and the Holy Spirit indeed woos all to Christ, but free will. God’s will can be frustrated by man and man first exercises his free will and then is born again.

Falling from grace – If man cannot be saved by God unless it is man’s will to be saved, then man cannot continue in salvation unless he continues to will to be saved.

Those are the two views. Here at Calvary Chapel, we take a Biblical view and do not side with either one of these views. And this frustrates a lot of folks. The Bible does indeed create a tension on this topic. So, here is what we believe.

Depravity

We are all sinners, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,” (Romans 3:23, ESV)

There is nothing we can do to be saved because “he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,” (Titus 3:5, ESV)

Without His grace, no one can be saved. “For by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so that no one can boast.” (Ephesians 2:8–9, NET 2nd ed.)

We believe that none of us is righteous. “just as it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one, there is no one who understands, there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away, together they have become worthless; there is no one who shows kindness, not even one.”” (Romans 3:10–12, NET 2nd ed.)

Apart from the conviction and regeneration of the Holy Spirit, none can be saved. “But to all who have received him—those who believe in his name—he has given the right to become God’s children” (John 1:12, NET 2nd ed.)



We are all SIN positive, fallen and in need of His grace.

Election

We believe that God chose the believer before the foundation of the world. “For he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before him in love. He did this by predestining us to adoption as his legal heirs through Jesus Christ, according to the pleasure of his will—to the praise of the glory of his grace that he has freely bestowed on us in his dearly loved Son.” (Ephesians 1:4–6, NET 2nd ed.)

We believe that all who call on the name of the Lord will be saved. “For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” (Romans 10:13, NET 2nd ed.)

God calls to Himself those who will believe. “God can be trusted, and he chose you to be partners with his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 1:9, CEV)

We also realize that this call has been made to all, but only a few will accept it. Or as Peter says here, we 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....” (1 Peter 1:2a, NASB 2020). Here is the thing, “For many are called, but few are chosen.” (Matthew 22:14, NASB 2020)

Yes, God who knows everything, clearly chooses considering His knowledge, but man must also accept God’s invitation to salvation.

Atonement

We believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross satisfying the righteous wrath of God against sin. “He himself is the sacrifice that atones for our sins—and not only our sins but the sins of all the world.” (1 John 2:2, NLT)

He died for the whole world and, He redeems and forgives all who will believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as their only hope for salvation from sin, death and hell.

Romans 10:9–13

“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.” (NLT)

Ephesians 1:7

“He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins.” (NLT)

The atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross is indeed sufficient to save the entire human race, but not all will believe.

Grace

God’s grace has nothing to do with anything that we as humans have done or any so-called inherent goodness we might have.



Romans 3:23–28

“For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past, for he was looking ahead and including them in what he would do in this present time. God did this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and he makes sinners right in his sight when they believe in Jesus. Can we boast, then, that we have done anything to be accepted by God? No, because our acquittal is not based on obeying the law. It is based on faith. So we are made right with God through faith and not by obeying the law.” (NLT)

God, in His grace, gives us what we do not deserve. We deserve death and hell, but He offers eternal life and heaven, through Jesus. We cannot earn what He gives us, we cannot pay for it, it is truly His love gift to us.

Ephesians 2:8–10

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” (NKJV)

Here is the thing, we all have the capacity to resist His grace. How many times did you say no to Jesus before you said yes. There are some who never said no, but then there are folks like me. We are not condemned because we had no opportunity to be saved, we are condemned because we made the choice to not be saved resisting His grace towards us. I still remember that internal BC conflict.

John 3:18

““He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (NKJV)

God’s grace can be resisted by knowingly rejecting and resisting the offer of salvation. Or His grace can be received simply by believing. Both are the exercise of human free will.

And for those who have truly received His grace becoming believers, we are locked in forever. But a side note, yes, you can lie to yourself on this and never truly believe.

Matthew 7:21–23

“Not everyone who calls me their Lord will get into the kingdom of heaven. Only the ones who obey my Father in heaven will get in. On the day of judgment many will call me their Lord. They will say, “We preached in your name, and in your name we forced out demons and worked many miracles.” But I will tell them, “I will have nothing to do with you! Get out of my sight, you evil people!”” (CEV)

2 Corinthians 13:5

“Examine yourselves to see whether you are living in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless, indeed, you fail to meet the test!” (NRSVue)

But if you pass, you truly believe.



Romans 8:38–39

“For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (NKJV)

Nothing can separate us from Him or His love and because His work is a completed one, He did say it is finished, then Satan and his lies are just lies.

Romans 8:1

“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.” (NKJV)

Philippians 1:6

“God is the one who began this good work in you, and I am certain that he won’t stop before it is complete on the day that Christ Jesus returns.” (CEV)

Once we believe, then God begins His sanctifying work in us. To ensure that we have all of the tools we need to live for Him as aliens, He provides His Holy Spirit to us as the proof that He will indeed complete what He started in us. It is His work, and He is insistent on getting it done.

Ephesians 1:13–14

“Christ also brought you the truth, which is the good news about how you can be saved. You put your faith in Christ and were given the promised Holy Spirit to show that you belong to God. The Spirit also makes us sure that we will be given what God has stored up for his people. Then we will be set free, and God will be honored and praised.” (CEV)

I told you Peter packed in a lot in these first two verses, and we have almost made it halfway through verse 2. About free will and election, they are both Biblical and also true. We want to be Biblical on this.

Pastor Chuck Smith puts it this way, “It seems that the sovereignty of God and human responsibility are like two parallel lines that do not seem to intersect within our finite minds...To say what God says in the Bible – no more and no less – is not always easy, comfortable, or completely understandable.” (Smith 2021, 15) Scripture tells us “But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.” (James 3:17–18, NRSVue)

Romans 11:33

“O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!” (NRSVue)

Proverbs 3:5–6

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.” (NRSVue)

God’s choosing is not random or uninformed, but according to His foreknowledge, which is an aspect of His omniscience. This foreknowledge includes prior knowledge of our response to the gospel, but is not solely dependent on it. (Guzik 2013, 1 Pe 1:2)

By the way, He knew you would be here this evening and He has known from before the world was even created what your response would be to what we have been discussing. Where do you stand, are you locked in? Or are you still playing at it. It is past time for a decision. Free will you know.



ABC's of Salvation

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.

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