

I PETER

Aliens, Chosen To Obey, Full of Grace and Peace

July 29, 2012

- I. Aliens, Chosen to Obey, Full of Grace and Peace
 - A. **I Peter 1:1-2** . . . Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen [2] 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 yours in the fullest measure.
 - B. Prayer
- II. We are aliens
 - A. [1:1] Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as **aliens**
 - B. The truth of God's word that I want to make related to the word **aliens** is that it not only describes the condition of those Christians who fled Jerusalem and its surrounding areas because the coming judgment of Rome and because of persecution by the Jews, but it describes the condition of Christians today in that we live here on this earth but we belong to, are citizens of God's heavenly kingdom. Consider:
 1. **I Peter 2:11** . . . Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.
 2. **Hebrews 11:9-10** . . . By faith [Abraham] lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; [10] for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.
 3. **Hebrews 11:13-16** . . . All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. [14] For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. [15] And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. [16] But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.
 4. **Philippians 3:20-21** . . . For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; [21] who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body

of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

- C. The point here is that we are Christians first, and earthlings second. As born again believers, we have been rescued from the domain of darkness, and transferred into the kingdom of God's beloved Son (**Colossians 1:13**). We are now members or citizens of God's eternal kingdom.
 - 1. And so even though we are living in this world, this earthly kingdom is no longer our home, as proven by the fact that it is no longer our destination. We are simply passing through this world as we travel on our way home.
 - 2. Listen carefully as I read the words to the first verse of a song that captures the mindset and attitude we are to have as aliens heading home. **"This world is not my home, I'm just a passing thru. My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue. The angels beckon me from Heaven's open door, and I can't feel at home in this world anymore."** May this be our mindset.

III. We are chosen to obey Jesus Christ and walk with Him in purity of life

A. [1:1b-2a] who are chosen [2] 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.

B. who are chosen

- 1. (**who are chosen**) according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,
 - a. In simple terms, the foreknowledge of God is what God knows before it ever happens. Now what is going to happen may be the result of God's activity on or in people, circumstances, or things (*i.e., what we see in prophecy*), or it may be the result of people who are acting according to their choices. Either way, God knows them both before they happen.
 - b. When God speaks of choosing us according to His foreknowledge, it implies that before we were born, He knew about us, He knew about His activity in our lives, and He knew about our responses to Him as God and to His influence on us.
 - c. An example of God's foreknowledge is found in **Acts 2:22-23** . . . Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know— [23] this Man, delivered over by the **predetermined plan**

and **foreknowledge** (same Greek word) **of God**, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.

2. (**who are chosen**) by the sanctifying work of the Spirit,
 - a. In relation to our pre-born again or pre-conversion life – the sanctifying work, or “setting apart” work of the Holy Spirit is best summed up by Jesus in these two passages:
 - (1) **John 16:8-11** . . . And [the Holy Spirit], when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; [9] concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; [10] and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; [11] and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.
 - (2) **John 6:44** . . . No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.
 - b. Paul uses similar language in **II Thessalonians 2:13** . . . But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification (*setting apart*) by the Spirit and faith in the truth.
3. The point is that we are not only chosen according to the foreknowledge of God, we are also chosen by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. And interestingly, Peter is very clear in stating the reason or purpose or goal of our being chosen.

C. (**who are chosen**) to obey Jesus Christ

1. Some speak of our being chosen or elected to eternal life as if such a choosing by God is separate from how we live our lives.
 - a. In other words, for some, being elected has only to do with where we live after we die, not how we live before we die.
 - b. Such a conclusion about God choosing us is not the teaching of scripture any more than God’s choosing Israel had only to do with taking them from Egypt to the Promised Land. As we know from the Old Testament, how Israel lived between Egypt and the Promised Land and how they lived once they settled in the Promised Land had as much to do with the purpose of God choosing them as did His taking them to and enabling them to conquer and live in the Promised Land.
2. In keeping with Peter’s words, consider these scriptures as true expressions from God concerning His choosing or electing us to

salvation – a salvation that treats how we live today to be equally important to where we live after we die.

- a. **Romans 8:28-30** . . . And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. [29] For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; [30] and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.
 - b. **John 3:35-36** . . . The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand. [36] He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.
 - c. **Ephesians 1:3-4** . . . Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, [4] just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.
3. God's point here in **I Peter** is that He has chosen us for a salvation that changes our eternal destination from hell to heaven, and our present life from rebellion against God and selfishness to obedience to God and love. The next phrase supports this understanding.

D. (**who are chosen** to) and be sprinkled with His blood.

1. This is not referring to being sprinkled with the blood of Christ which paid the penalty for our sin so as to save us from eternal death. Rather, this is the sprinkling of Christ's blood that cleanses us from current sins committed, that restores our good conscience and the purity of our heart, that brings about a forgiveness that returns us to good standing with God and restores us to the highest quality of relationship with God that we are capable of at this time.
2. We see these truths in the following two scriptures:
 - a. **I John 1:6-9** . . . If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; [7] but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. [8] If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. [9] If we confess

our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- b. **Hebrews 10:19-22** . . . Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, [20] by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, [21] and since we have a great priest over the house of God, [22] let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

- E. In relation to His choosing us, the point God is making here in **I Peter** is that we have been chosen by God to be a people for His own possession, pleasing Him by living holy and blameless lives, confessing and correcting whatever sins we may commit along the way, and continually making forward progress in pursuing a growing and deepening personal, intimate relationship with Him.

IV. The value of God's grace and peace – why desire it or pray for it or want it for others?

- A. [1:2b] May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.
 - 1. It isn't that we do not already have a measure of God's grace and peace working within us. But we can have more, much more. In fact, we need more if we are going to continue advancing in the knowledge of God, continue building stronger faith in God, and continue growing in godly living.
 - 2. And the wonderful truth is, we can have God's grace and peace up to the fullest possible amount available for any child of God. In other words, no one needs to have more of God's grace and peace than you, because He makes the fullest measure of His grace and peace available to you. And you never need to lack a sufficient amount of God's grace and peace, because God will gladly and freely give you all that you need.
 - 3. But here is an important truth regarding our need for more of God's grace and peace: to grow from those first days of being a Christian, *which is a time when you are yet sinfully immature* – to grow from there to a Christian maturity – *a maturity that encompasses purity of heart and godliness of life*, requires among other things, an ever increasing amount of grace and peace to make the increasing growth possible and to help us on our way.

4. Now as you recall from what we just looked at – God chose us so that we would obey Jesus Christ, that is, that we would become holy in thought, word, and deed. Therefore, it is as we fulfill God’s purposes in choosing us that we both need and can receive an ever increasing amount of grace and peace.
- B. Let me give you an example of what I am talking about here. And my example will take us back to Israel’s taking and cleansing the Promised Land.
1. As we know, the Israelites who had the responsibility of driving out the sinful inhabitants of the Promised Land were not strong enough or educated in the ways of war enough or experienced in military tactics enough or trained for battle enough or in possession of sufficient war equipment to defeat the enemy on their own. They needed outside help, and God was their helper.
 2. In New Testament terminology, God provided Israel with, among other things, sufficient grace and peace for each day and each battle. And He provided sufficient grace and peace for keeping clean those areas of the Land that had been cleansed, while Israel moved forward in taking more Land.
 3. And this is exactly what God does for us today when we take seriously our responsibility of driving out the old nature and putting on Christ and the ways of Christ in its place.
- C. How are we to understand the grace of God within this context?
1. What we are talking about here is God’s grace for living the Christian life, not God’s grace for salvation.
 2. Surely, we need God’s grace for salvation, but we also need His grace for living the Christian life – if we are to live it according to God’s expectations of us. Consider:
 - a. Jesus told that lame man who he healed to not sin anymore so that nothing worse happens to him (**John 5:14**).
 - b. Jesus told the woman caught in adultery that she was to go from there and sin no more (**John 8:10-11**).
 - c. John said he wrote his epistle so that we would no longer sin (**I John 2:1**).
 - d. Peter wrote that we are to live holy lives in all our behavior like the Holy One who called us (**I Peter 1:15-16**).
 - e. Paul wrote that we are to cleanse ourselves from all defilement of the flesh and mind, and perfect holiness in the fear of God (**II Corinthians 7:1**).

3. What I want us to see here is not so much God's exhortation to stop sinning after receiving His great saving grace, but the fact that the clear implication of scripture is that we can stop sinning. And if we make this our goal, Peter is reminding us that we have all the grace of God needed to realistically and practically pursue this goal.
4. And those who do seriously pursue this goal soon discover that as they dig deeper and deeper into their thoughts, words, and deeds, and as they make progress in godly thinking and living, they not only need, but the want more and more of God's grace for living.

D. How are we to understand the peace of God within this context?

1. The peace of God as it is used here refers to an inward calmness or serenity that comes from a growing confidence in God's presence, His goodness, and His help in defeating sin in our lives and replacing it with godliness. It includes the conviction that we are safe in His hands, and that if we live to please Him by doing His will, we can have the confidence that He is with us and in us. And it includes the calming and encouraging assurance that God will see us through the transformation process and finally bring us to glory.
2. I believe it is important to tell you that you do not gain this peace based on need, but rather based on obedience to the God of peace.
3. An O.T. example of this truth is Israel. God promised to give them a comprehensive peace in their land – not based on their need for peace, but rather based on their obedience to God's will and laws.
4. And the same is true for us. The more you obey, the more you press on in putting off sin and putting on Christ, the more you deal with your ungodly fears and unholy desires, the more you pursue godliness in everything, the more you will experience the real presence of this peace from God, deep within.
5. It will start small, but it will grow and grow – to the fullest possible amount available to us. And once you notice its presence within, you will be very grateful for it.

V. Conclusion

A. As a reminder:

1. Aliens in this world – passing through, not worshipping it.
2. Chosen by the work of God and the Holy Spirit to obey Jesus Christ.
3. Treasuring God's grace for living and His calming peace