

1 Peter 1:2

The message in our society and others today is that morality is passé, the conscience is for the weak and the single overriding rule in life is – “*Thou shalt not be found out.*”

“We are cruel to ourselves if we try to live in this world without knowing about the God whose world it is and who happens to run it. Disregard God and you sentence yourself to stumble and blunder through life blindfolded, as it were, with no sense of direction and no understanding of what surrounds you.” [J.I. Packer]

Three prepositional statements for verse 2:

- The first statement – “*according to the foreknowledge of God*”
- The second statement – “*by the sanctifying work of the Spirit*”
- The third statement – “*to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood*”

1. What is known beforehand by God ... the believer will be saved and scattered

Peter specifically relates this particular aspect of the gospel to God the Father. God the Father did the choosing. Paul supports the theology that God the Father chose the believer “*before the foundation of the world.*” (**Ephesians 1:4**)

Peter is revealing that God’s love for us actually preceded the creation of the universe, that from eternity past, God the Father foreknew His beloved. As stated by R.C. Sproul, “*...for God to foreknow us is for God to ‘forelove’ us.*”

False Doctrine:

Some theologians say verse 2 means that God elected those whom He foreknew would believe (Arminianism). This would mean God, in His omniscience down through time saw all who would believe the gospel and He then called them His elect and chose them for salvation. That position simply makes God a responder to us, which is tantamount to making us the author of our salvation – the initiator of our salvation, and not God. However, God is the initiator of our salvation **Hebrews 2:10** informs us that God is, “*... the author of [our] salvation through sufferings.*” In **Hebrews 12:2** the Bible identifies, “*... Jesus the author and perfecter of faith.*”

Peter’s use of the Greek word “*prognōsis*” “*foreknowledge*” in verse 2 means it is knowledge already perceived and understood. In other words God pre-knows what will happen and God’s chosen response was predetermined as well. In **Acts 2:23** Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost that the death of Christ was, “*according to the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God.*” (**Acts 2:23**)

What is far beyond our comprehension is:

- God the Father, before the foundation of the world, chose us
- God the Son paid the penalty for our sin
- The Holy Spirit indwells us
- The Triune God has destined us and prepared for us an eternity

Peter is telling those scattered because of persecution that the foreknowledge of God the Father doesn’t just relate to their salvation, but their situation. Vs. 2 “*You have been chosen by God*” to not only be *saved*, but to be *scattered.*” Before the creation of the world, God chose us then God hasn’t lost sight of us now nor at any time in our life.

2. The believer is sanctified and set apart by God the Spirit

Vs. 2b, “*by the sanctifying work of the Spirit.*” Peter is moving from the foreknowledge of God the Father in eternity past to the work of God the Spirit as He intersects our lives in time-present. The word Peter uses here refers to the sanctifying activity, the ongoing process of making us holy and separate as God’s people; this is a sanctifying activity by means of the Spirit of God that starts and never stops.

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The work of the Holy Spirit:

- The Holy Spirit, according to scripture, draws us to a saving relationship with God (**John 12:19; 16:8-11**)
- The Holy Spirit resonates in our heart regarding the truth of scripture – “for someone without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him” (**1 Corinthians 2:14**)
- The Holy Spirit kindles true and genuine worship and prayer, “for the Spirit helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us.” (**Romans 8:26**) All of Christianity – the beginning, middle, and end of the Christian life is accomplished by the work of the Holy Spirit.

There are two different ways to interpret this ongoing work of God’s Spirit in your life; you can say it one of two ways: God *never leaves us* alone . . . or . . . God never leaves us *alone!* Both are true.

There is not one function a believer can fulfill for God’s glory without God’s power. By means of a relationship with God comes the power to live, work, disciple, evangelize, and function in our world.

Peter would be encouraging these believers to not only know that God hasn’t left them alone, but that He’s at work through the Spirit sanctifying them, making them different, distinctive, holy and separate from the world.

3. The believer is surrendered to God and sprinkled clean by God the Son

Vs. 2 – “*by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey*” It is the Holy Spirit empowering us to be obedient. It refers to daily practice, though imperfect, of reversing the attitude that characterizes the unbeliever of rebellion to what God has said.

Obedience like:

- Obedient to Christ – vs. 2
- Obedient children – vs. 14
- Obedient to the truth – vs. 22

Because we do not obey Christ perfectly, (sometimes not at all) the cleansing we have by the “*blood of Jesus Christ*” is a reminder that our assurance is based on the blood He shed and the payment He made on our behalf.

Moses gathered the people at Mount Sinai and delivered to them the commandments and ordinances of God. And the Israelites heard God’s word and said, “*Everything the Lord has said we will do.*” And Moses then sprinkled the people with sacrificial blood and they entered into an eternal covenant as God’s people (**Exodus 24**). Peter is effectively saying we the people of God will do as the Israelite did, we will say “*Everything the Lord has said we will do.*”

- Aaron and the priests were set apart for ministry unto God as priests, and the sign of being set apart was the sprinkling of blood.
- The New Testament believer is called a royal priest, (**1 Peter 2:9**) able to serve for God, sprinkled and set apart by the blood of Christ the final sacrifice.
- When a leper had been healed, he was sprinkled with the blood of a sacrificial animal to symbolize that he was now cleansed – We were once leprous with a terminal case of sin.
- **Hebrews 10:22** “*draw near to God with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.*”

Vs. 2 “Grace to you and peace be multiplied” The peace Peter has in mind isn’t the lack of conflict or trouble. These scattered believers were in trouble, and we still are today. What Peter had in mind with “grace” and “peace” is internal, it is the conscious awareness that God is in control. It is an understanding that the gracious providence, plans, and purposes of God, even during hardships, have the purposes of God behind them. Peter wants grace and peace “*to be multiplied*” in their lives.

The verb he uses for **multiplied** is in the passive voice which is a gentle reminder from Peter that grace and peace aren’t something believers can run after and get, or create on our own. We can only receive grace and peace from God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.