

“Picturing Parts”

I Peter 1:1-2

Context: Peter’s encyclical was written to a small population of Christians that was only about 0.2 % of the inhabitants in ancient Asia Minor. Christians were seen as suspect by the Romans mostly due to popular rumors and misunderstandings. These suspicions led to further isolation by those who considered Christianity another burial cult that shunned Roman traditions and separated themselves from the festivals and feast days of the local deities. For example, the historian Tacitus recorded that Christians were an affront to the Roman social and religious order. Uninformed thought like his provided fodder for the brutalities that were soon to be visited upon them by the next insane Roman emperor, Nero Claudius.

Pivotal verse: Stand firm in the true grace of God (cf. I Peter 5:12).

1. God’s Elect – I Peter 1:1

Election is the controlling concept in Peter’s letters to those of Asia Minor. Its importance is that the person knows that they indeed are numbered among God’s chosen, especially in the face of persecution. The order of where “election” occurs in God’s salvific decree might be interesting for a theological musing but that musing should not obscure Peter’s primary intent.

2. God’s Part – I Peter 1:2a, b, d

God’s prior knowledge of the identification of the elect is clear and assuring. What is also assuring is the active working of the Holy Spirit as the agent preserving election and the fact of Christ’s blood atonement that is sufficient to secure it.

3. Our Part – I Peter 1:2c

Peter nests our part within the salvific work of God. Our part is a God-empowered transformation as we willfully come “under the hearing” as those whom God created as elect, becoming what we shall be becoming forever.

For Further Study:

- In 1 Peter 1:1, Peter writes to the elect, that is, the Chosen. Using a Bible concordance look up Peter's other references that use the term 'chosen' or 'elect' (i.e. 1 Peter 2:9). Describe one characteristic about them and one work that they do. Name a characteristic that you have similar to the people to whom Peter writes and one time last week that you proclaimed or praised God as they did.

- As a **theological study method**, use your Bible cross references of other verses in the Old and New Testaments that provide a description behind the meaning of "be sprinkled with His blood" (i.e. Hebrews 9:13-22; Exodus 24:3ff; Revelation 7:14). What does it mean to you personally "to be washed in the blood of the Lamb?"

- Give an example that you might use to describe how FBC's doctrinal statement on **God the Holy Spirit** is worked out practically in community (<https://fbccorvallis.org/wp/about/what-we-believe/>).

Transformation exercise:

Find one picture that represents one of the ways that you described in the third bullet point.