

## Fact Sheet for “Meditations on 1 Peter 1:1-2”

### 1 Peter 1:1-2

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*Take a moment to read about the Synod of Dordt at [www.theopedia.com](http://www.theopedia.com).*

The five points of Calvinism are known by the acrostic “tulip”. (T – Total Depravity, U – Unconditional Election, L – Limited Atonement, I – Irresistible Grace, P – Perseverance of the Saints) The Christian community has been at odds over these points for four centuries, and it has not gotten any closer to a resolution. This morning I want start by taking a good close look at 1 Peter 1:1-2.

ESV <sup>1</sup> ¶ **Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, <sup>2</sup> according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.**

Look at the KJV and its placement of the word “elect”. It may not seem so on the surface, but if you diagram these two verses in Greek you will find that both translations are accurate in their placement of the word “elect”. The KJV however allows the sentence structure to be seen more easily.

#### **Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ**

There can be no doubt as to who wrote this book.

#### **To those who are... exiles of the Dispersion**

The word “dispersion” is from the Greek word “diaspora”. It means a scattering. Initially it referred to the scattering of the Jewish people outside of the land of Israel but later also referred to the similar scattering of Christians due to persecution.

#### **in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia**

These were five of the Roman provinces in Asia Minor, and are now a part of Turkey.

#### **May grace and peace be multiplied to you.**

I have skipped to the end of Peter’s introduction. If we leave out the intervening words Peter’s introduction still makes clear sense. It sounds similar to several introductions in Paul’s letters. But the intervening words were put there deliberately by Peter.

#### **elect**

This is a word that can also be translated “chosen” and shows up multiple times in the NT referring to Christians. Christians are the elect. They are the chosen of God. Each place in the NT that this is mentioned adds to our understanding of this doctrine. What does 1 Peter 1:1-2 add? There are three prepositional phrases in verse two that tell us about the elect. Notice that each member of the Trinity is mentioned here. Let’s take them one at a time.

#### **according to the foreknowledge of God the Father**

The preposition that begins this phrase is “according to”. It can also be translated “in keeping with”. What does “foreknowledge” mean? We tend to think of this as just facts that God is aware of. He knows completely what the future will bring. He knows who will receive Christ and who will not. If God elected us on the basis that he foreknew we would place our faith in Christ then His choice of us would only be only his reporting of our choice to accept Christ, and then referring to this reporting as His choice of us. God’s sovereignty in election would be removed. But what is very often missed with this word is the relationship God has with us in His foreknowledge. One of my professors at seminary said that this word is akin to “foreloving”. There is not only an intellectual knowing on God’s part, there is also a volitional aspect on His part. And, this phrase describes how we are elect. (Look at your Study Bible notes.) If

God's foreknowledge only has the intellectual element then how are we to understand verse 20 of this chapter? (<sup>ESV</sup> **1 Peter 1:20** He (Jesus Christ) was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you) Jesus was intimately known by the Father from eternity past, not just on the basis of what the Father foresaw He would do! This is why the NLT translates the initial part of this verse as "God chose him". And at times *in His plan* God's foreknowledge was not necessarily connected with salvation, but it was with relationship (Romans 11:2).

### **in the sanctification of the Spirit**

"In" could be translated "by". God chose us in the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. The word "sanctification" literally means "to make holy".

### **for obedience to Jesus Christ**

The preposition translated "for" is also translated "unto" indicating direction or goal. We have been chosen by God to be obedient to Jesus Christ.

### **and for sprinkling with his blood**

The only time the Jewish people were sprinkled with blood was at the inauguration of the Mosaic Covenant (Exodus 24:8).

Now I want you to think about another verse from 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter that tells me that I still don't understand everything about God's election and our choice to believe.

<sup>ESV</sup> **2 Peter 3:9** The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

## **Statements from Our Declaration of Faith**

God's foreknowledge is exhaustive and not dependent on human decisions and actions.

Everything He does is in accordance with His perfect will, though His sovereignty does not eliminate or minimize human responsibility. The Father adopts as His own, through Jesus Christ, all those He calls to Himself.

He regenerates, baptizes, seals, gifts, and indwells all believers at conversion, progressively sanctifying, and securing them in Christ forever.

Being sinners by nature and choice and utterly unable to remedy their lost condition, humanity is in need of salvation.

Regeneration is effected through the work of the Holy Spirit in God's elect. All who repent and believe in Jesus Christ are forgiven of all their sins, justified in God's sight by the merit of Christ's righteousness, adopted into His family, sealed by the Holy Spirit, and have equal access to God.

Four of the five points of Calvinism are reflected these statements. But are we saying we have all the answers as to how God's sovereign choice of us and our responsibility to believe are interfaced? No!

Here's the upshot...

1. The Declaration of Faith in our constitution is the teaching position of our church. It is carefully thought out and well honed.
2. There may be something in it that you as an individual may disagree with, and that is OK. It is also OK to express your personal opinions that may be at odds with our Declaration of Faith as long as people know they are your opinions. But our Declaration of Faith is our teaching position.
3. In your relationship with other believers always let your speech and approach be seasoned with grace.