

## 1 Peter 1 – Part F

**1Pe 1:1 (NKJV) Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, <sup>2</sup> elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.**

We have been addressing the somewhat controversial issue of election for the last several weeks. Historically what has happened is that the doctrine of election has been divided into two camps and both have been given names to postulate their theological position – reformed vs. non-reformed, Calvinists vs. Armenians. In all honesty, I am not really comfortable with having one of those labels simply because the ultimate goal is to have rightly divided the Word of God. Practically, it would be somewhat naive to not understand that each of us actually are in some kind of theological camp. Here at Chime Bell, we call ourselves “Baptists” as opposed to being a Methodist or Presbyterian or Pentecostal. However, when actually communicating with other people, what we really want to do is to keep reinforcing the idea that our ultimate goal is to properly handle and accurately interpret God’s Word. That is always the goal. If someone else gives us a label in doing that, then so be it. The goal, though, is to accurately handle the Word of God, or as [2 Timothy 2:15](#) states it – “**to rightly divide**” the Word of God. The best way to remain biblical and not engulfed by a kind of theological grid that often times imposes itself on us is to simply stay in the text, understand the words, and be diligent to ensure that we have handled the Word of God with integrity and honesty.

Now, the different views that have been postulated around the election issue have developed non-biblical terms to define their position, and each position is designed to protect itself from what they may consider to be a level of error and misunderstanding. The conditional election perspective (non-reformed) is designed to protect two distinct issues: (1) on one side a particular view of human freedom that is called “free will”, and (2) a particular view of God that God is “fair”, and not unjust. In the second view, the goal is to protect God from the accusation that in election it appears that He is not being fair with everyone. Everyone it seems is not really getting a “fair deal”. However, and this is very serious theologically, when carried to its logical conclusion, it makes God out to be unjust or unrighteous in His dealings with men. It all stems from the idea of God’s choice – of His choosing some, but passing over others. I.e., from a purely human perspective, it does not seem “logical” or “fair” that God would bestow His grace on certain individuals, and then not provide His grace to others who seem to “deserve” it just as much, or even more, as the next guy. It is the idea that if God gives His grace to someone who is completely undeserving (which He absolutely does), then why would He not give it to someone else who is also undeserving (which He does not)? So, the question that is asked is why is there “selection” in election? In essence, to help settle this question in their mind, the non-reformed theologian simply removes God’s selection from the process of salvation and renders the idea of selection to man. The argument would be that if God is just, then His seemingly random selection of some who are undeserving and not all who are undeserving appears to be unjust. By transferring the “selection” issue to man, the non-reformed theologian thinks they have adequately defended God against a charge of unfairness.

If we take the biblical example of Jacob and Esau, the argument is that God’s decision was made prior to either one of them being born, before either one of them had done good or evil. So, why did God

choose one and not the other? Paul's answer is given in his great discourse in [Romans 9](#) on the sovereignty of God. [Romans 9:10-22](#) says the following,

**<sup>10</sup>And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac <sup>11</sup>(for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), <sup>12</sup>it was said to her, “The older shall serve the younger.” <sup>13</sup>As it is written, “Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.”**

**<sup>14</sup>What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! <sup>15</sup>For He says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.” <sup>16</sup>So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. <sup>17</sup>For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.” <sup>18</sup>Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.**

**<sup>19</sup>You will say to me then, “Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?” <sup>20</sup>But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, “Why have you made me like this?” <sup>21</sup>Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?**

**<sup>22</sup>What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, <sup>23</sup>and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, <sup>24</sup>even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?**

Paul's answer, which often times is not really acceptable to the liberal theologian, is that God shows mercy on whomever He chooses to show mercy. God has the sole prerogative to bestow His grace and mercy however He chooses to bestow them. God does not have to bestow His grace in a way that satisfies me personally. God is not obligated to address my lack of understanding related to His sovereignty and holiness in whatever He does. It must be understood that God can do whatever He chooses to do, and whatever He chooses to do is the right thing to do. To be perfectly honest, God did not owe grace to either Jacob or Esau. Neither had merited or earned God's grace. If God had not chosen either one of them, He would not have violated any precept of His justice or righteousness.

The problem is that the issue of **fairness** is not a biblical concept addressed in Scripture. Please appreciate that God in His eternal integrity and holiness is not obligated in any way to be humanly “fair” just to satisfy us. In reality, God would have been perfectly just and righteous to have condemned everyone, but instead He chose to save some. So, “fairness” is not an issue that has any kind of biblical support. If God chooses to give grace to one and not to another, that is His sovereign choice and He is perfectly righteous in that decision. If you choose to have someone over for a meal, but not someone else, that is your prerogative. It is your choice and you are not being unfair or unjust to those whom you did not invite. If you remember, God condemned to eternal punishment every angel that rebelled against Him with Lucifer. There was not one angel that rebelled, nearly one-third of all the angels in heaven, where God relinquished His judgment and showed mercy or grace to them in their rebellion – not one. He condemned them all immediately to eternal judgment. Yet, in our rebellion, God has shown mercy

and grace to millions upon millions, and has actually provided a means whereby we as sinful men and women may be saved from His eternal judgment. Exactly as with the angels that sinned, God could have simply chosen to let us continue down our path to eternal destruction, but He chose to save some, and for that I am personally and eternally grateful! You see, when we think about what God did to the rebellious angels, we think that is right, but then when the spotlight is turned on our personal rebellion and its corresponding judgment, many call that “unfair”. In reality it is a double standard.

In reality, no one deserves grace. So, who are we to question God’s choices, or to question how God distributes His grace in the various individuals within whom He chooses to work? We live in an entitlement culture that thinks everyone is due an entitlement and is due undeserved privileges. Our political system has developed such a corrupt system of entitlement that there is an entire culture of individuals who believe that they deserve money from the federal government because they are living in fornication with someone to whom they are not married and have had multiple children by them, or others. The more unwed children they have, the more money they believe they are entitled to receive. Nothing could be more ludicrous than that kind of mindset.

The problem, however, is that some bring that mindset into the theological discussion and end up accusing God of not being “fair”, or, even worse, of not being merciful. We bring that kind of mentality into our doctrines. It is as if God owes me something – which He does not! No one has any claims on God’s mercy or God’s grace. If God sovereignly chooses to grant mercy or to grant grace, His granting does not obligate Him in any way to grant it to everyone. If we receive God’s grace, it is grace that none of us deserved. Biblical history makes it clear that even though God is never unjust to anyone, He does not treat all people equally or the same – nor does He have to treat them equally. For example, God revealed Himself to Moses in a manner that He did not choose to reveal Himself to Pharaoh. God gave Saul of Tarsus a vision of Himself that He did not give to Pontus Pilate or Caiaphas. Many would say that in those decisions that God was unjust or unfair, but justice simply is not the issue. We need to be very careful in how we demand justice. If God were to exact justice from us, then we would all die in our sins and be sentenced to eternal judgment in the Lake of Fire. Justice is not what we are after.

As we close out this brief teaching on election, please appreciate that the doctrine of election is at the very heart and soul of all of redemption. Today, if someone is truly a Christian, it is simply because God the Father chose them for His Son, and He wrote their name down in the Lamb’s Book of Life, and He drew them by the enabling power of the Holy Spirit, and they came and received the gift of eternal life that they simply did not deserve. We can be eternally sure that we are eternally secure because the Son will not lose one person that God the Father has given to Him, and we have the seal of the Holy Spirit within you as that guarantee. You have become precious simply because of what you have been chosen to do throughout all of eternity. In light of that, what a tragedy it is not to live for Christ with all of our heart and strength.

We must remember that we were “**bought at a price**”. There was a price for the bride, and it was the most profound price in all of eternity – **the very life of God the Son**. [1 Corinthians 6:20](#) says,

<sup>20</sup>**For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.**

[1 Peter 1:17-21](#) says,

**<sup>17</sup>And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; <sup>18</sup>knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, <sup>19</sup>but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. <sup>20</sup>He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you <sup>21</sup>who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.**

He who was rich became poor so that we who were poor might become rich. This is really incredible, staggering beyond description. The Father was willing to allow His Son to become sin and to pay the price of redemption for an unholy, undeserving, unworthy bride. It is as if we were like Gomer in the story of Hosea – a prostitute, an adulterer, a whore. However, God set His love on us, and He is fully responsible for every aspect, for every detail, for every work of our salvation – and in eternity, He will receive all of the glory, and rightfully so. Salvation is all of God, and because of that He deserves all of the glory. To reject the doctrine of the sovereignty of God in election is to deny God the glory for salvation.

The doctrine of election is pride crushing. It should produce in us nothing but humility and gratitude. None of us believe in Christ and follow Christ because of any good thing in us – none of us do. It is not that we are smarter or more spiritual or better than anyone else. To the contrary, “**all of our righteousness is as filthy rags**” before God the Father. That is why [2 Corinthians 5:21](#) says,

**<sup>21</sup>For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**

We can only become righteous by someone else making us righteous – and never on our own, never because of anything that we have done – never! It is the utter hopelessness of our own abilities that strengthens us with joy.

The problem that most people have is that they are not able to rationalize and understand all of the attributes of this glorious doctrine, and so they sit around and continuously try to figure out why it is not so, why it is not real – and in the process they lose the very glory of what God has done on their behalf. Rather than rejoicing in this great salvation that has been fully provided for them apart from anything in them or done by them, they try to find fault with God's sovereignty and ultimately God's glory. We had better be thankful, gloriously thankful, that God is the One who has saved us and not ourselves. If salvation depended on us in anyway, we would never have come to Christ on our own – never. We need to celebrate this great salvation that is ours. Maybe more than any other doctrine in Scripture, this doctrine should cause us to want to live as godly a life as we possibly can, to honor God, to honor Christ, to obey the Holy Spirit, to obey the Word of God as much as we can. How could we transgress against such love bestowed on us personally? How could we disdain following Christ for worldly pleasures and pursuits? To do so is a travesty of the greatest measure.

This doctrine gives great peace about the present and about the future. [Philippians 1:6](#) declares,

**<sup>6</sup>being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;**

Now, at this point someone is going to ask the question, “How do I know that I’m one of the elect?” Well, do you believe the gospel? Have you committed your life to Jesus Christ? Have you repented of your sin? Do you earnestly desire to be obedient to the Scriptures? Do you sincerely love Christ? That is the proof, because none of that is possible apart from the incredible sovereign work of God.