

Elect Pilgrims

Franklin Church of Christ
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PM Worship

Introduction:

There are two kinds of people in the world – those who are handpicked by God to be His special people (**I Peter 2:9-10**) and those who are not. The doctrine of election is one of the most profound and yet most misunderstood teachings in the Bible. Misconceptions ranging from election is unconditional to election is miraculous to election is earned to election cannot be forfeited are all taught in different churches today. Peter, however, provided a primer on Christian election that sets the record straight in **I Peter 1:1-2**. Regrettably, because of the modern misconceptions, even just trying to explain the truth can be somewhat confusing. Thus, we learn from **I Peter 1:1-2**, we will use an analogy that might be helpful. Remember a time when you were involved on the winning side of a pick-up game of baseball or volleyball. We are on the winning team and God is our captain. But how did we get there and what does that mean for us. Look at what Peter said.

Discussion:

- I. We are elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.
 - A. When we were playing baseball or volleyball, upon what basis did we end up on the winning team? Typically, we ended up on a team according to the team captain's knowledge of our ability to play. Our election to God's team is not different. Peter said our election is in accord with, consistent with and based on the authority of God's knowledge. Of course, our analogy does not perfectly fit. The baseball team captain had to see us play before knowing how we would fit. God did not. His election was based on foreknowledge.
 - B. I am surprised, considering such a clear statement, that our brethren traditionally claim God chose not to know who would be a part of the elect until they actually live their lives. As Paul told Timothy in **II Timothy 1:9**, we were called according to God's "grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began." How could that happen if God chose not to know who was in Christ until they actually arrived in the world?
 - C. But the great import of this is found in the promise of **Romans 8:28-30**. Whom God foreknew would love Him, He predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ. Those whom He foreknew are called, justified (that is, declared innocent) and glorified (that is, we will go to heaven). God is not going to forget that we are on His team, He has known about us since before time began. What a great comfort this is!
 - D. We must note very carefully that our election is according to God's foreknowledge, not His foreordination. The Calvinist claims that God foreknew who would be elect because He foreordained that they would. The Bible says that God predestined based on His pre-knowledge. Before time began, God knew who would love Him and He handpicked us out of the masses of the world and made us a part of His special people.
- II. We are elect in sanctification of the Spirit.
 - A. In our pick-up volleyball game, what was the actual means by which we ended up on the various teams? The captains picked us and set us apart. That is similar to our election. The actual means by which we were put onto God's team was the sanctification of the Spirit. "Sanctification" being a fancy word that simply means to be set apart for a holy use.
 - B. Do not be surprised by this statement. Regrettably, because of the great deal of noise made by the modern charismatic and Pentecostal movements, we hear a statement such as "sanctified by the Holy Spirit" and automatically think of miraculous power. While we are clearly handpicked and set apart by the Holy Spirit, the Bible just as clearly explains that this process is not by means of a miracle.
 - C. According to **I Peter 1:22-25**, the Spirit sanctified us through our obedience to the truth. In **John 17:16-19**, the apostles would be sanctified by God's Word, which is truth. According to **II Thessalonians 2:13**, we are sanctified by the Spirit and the belief in truth. **II Timothy 2:20-21** is a great passage, which goes beyond just speaking of the moment at which we were put onto God's team and discusses our continuing growth as one of God's special people. This passage demonstrates that we continue to be sanctified, that is, we continue to grow, becoming more and more separate from the world and more and more useful to God, equipped for every good

work. However, **II Timothy 3:14-17** says this process occurs through the Scripture's training. Thus, we learn that the Holy Spirit sets apart, not miraculously, but through the scripture He revealed (**II Peter 1:20-21**).

III. We are elect for obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus.

- A. When we were picked for the winning team, we had responsibilities and privileges. We were not allowed just to stand around, we had to play. We had to do our best, working with the team. When the game was over and our team won, we had the privilege of being the victors, even if we did not spike the winning point or hit the winning home run. We partook in the victory simply because we were on the winning team.
- B. Our election to God's team is similar. We are not chosen in order to stand around idly and glory in being on the winning team. Rather, we are chosen in order to work and obey. According to **Ephesians 2:4-10**, we were saved by God's grace so we might walk in His good works. According to **Romans 6:15-19**, we were saved by God in order to cease being slaves to sin and begin to be obedient slaves of righteousness. If we go back to sin, we will lose what we have been given, the gift of life, and receive what we have earned, the death wages of sin. As **I Peter 1:14** says, we must be obedient children to God.
- C. At the same time, God did not choose us so we could be bound up in the fear of death over the sins we have already committed and continue to commit. Instead, He chose us so we could receive the sprinkling of Jesus' blood. According to **Matthew 26:28**, Jesus' blood was shed for the remission of our sins. With all our newfound obedience, we could not possibly earn the salvation we so desperately need (**Luke 17:10**). That is why Jesus died, to wash our sins away. This also demonstrates that God did not choose us so we could get caught up in a competition with our fellow teammates. As **Matthew 25:14-30** demonstrates, we are all chosen to be on the team. In the end, we are victors not because we did so much in comparison to others, but because we were on God's team and we all get sprinkled with Jesus' blood.

IV. As the elect, we are pilgrims in the Dispersion.

- A. Here is the place where our team analogy breaks down. When our teams were chosen up we went to separate dugouts or opposite sides of the net. But that is not how it works with God's team. The two teams are interspersed with one another, living in the same world.
- B. Peter said we are pilgrims or sojourners. Though we live in the world, we are not of the world (**John 17:15-16**). Our citizenship is in heaven (**Philippians 3:20**). Because we are pilgrims and only passing through, we must not become too tied to this place. We must abstain from the fleshly lusts and worldly living that plagued us before we became part of the chosen (**I Peter 2:11-12**) and we must keep our eyes focused on heaven (**Colossians 3:1-2**).
- C. Additionally, we are part of "the Dispersion." Peter, in order to describe what it means to be a part of God's elect, used a concept well known by physical Israel. Regarding geographical residence, there were two kinds of Jews – native Jews, who lived in the Promised Land, and the Dispersion, who lived among the Gentiles. This second group was among the Gentiles, but they were not to be Gentiles. They were different. They had a different culture, a different background, different behaviors and a different God. They stood out. Of course, there was an inherent danger in being a part of the Dispersion. Constantly living around Gentiles caused many of the Dispersion Jews to lose their distinction. They became more like Hellenistic and less Jewish. We are in the dispersion. We are a chosen people in the midst of those not chosen and we are to be different (**Romans 12:2**). Because we are different, the non-elect do not understand us. We think differently, act differently and pursue different goals. The world will mock and ridicule us (**I Peter 4:4**), but we must not be influenced by them.

Conclusion:

The question as we conclude then is, "Which team are you on?" Have you submitted to the scriptures and been set apart for God's service. The same Peter who has given us this primer on election also explained when we are put on God's team. In **I Peter 3:21**, Peter said baptism saves us. God sprinkles us with Christ's blood which was shed for the remission of our sins when we are baptized. You cannot be elect without being baptized! Will you submit today?