

23.1 First Peter

Introduction

Peter writes to Christians who suffer for their faith. Almost every paragraph in the letter opens with a command (except for 1.1-9 and 2.4-10). Depending on the unfolding of ideas, it may be that a command drives every section. Even the conclusion (5.12-14) begins with an exhortation despite the fact that conclusions usually cover greetings, loose ends of travel, and so forth. By comparison, we might say that if Hebrews is an exhortation with theology as support, then 1 Peter is *a series of exhortations* with theology as support.

1A. Outline

Introduction, 1.1-2

1) Responsibilities as God's people, 1.3-2.10 [*elect* exiles]

(Note the accent on election, 1.1 with 2.9-10)

2) Responsibilities as aliens and strangers, 2.11-4.19 [elect exiles who *suffer*]

(Note the accent on submission, even in suffering, 3.13-17)

(Note the context of the famous text for apologetics, 3.15)

3) Responsibilities of shepherds and sheep, 5.1-11 [elect exiles *under shepherd care*]

Conclusion, 5.12-14

2A. Motifs for discussion

1B. Election

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, ² 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 (1.1-2)

1) What are some reasons for rejecting the claim that election means that God looked into the future, saw who would accept Christ, and on that basis chose them to be His people? Hints:

a) KJV better translates "in" as "through" sanctification of the Spirit

b) KJV better translates "for" as "unto" obedience to Jesus Christ

c) Note the contrast of those who do not obey: they are destined to that status, 2.8

d) Define foreknowledge

If we reject the election based on foreknowledge claim, then what is the value of knowing that as exiles we are elect? How firm is the rock on which we walk?

2B. What is the central purpose of God's people [of elect who suffer]? 2.9-10; 4.16

3B. What example must elect exiles who suffer always turn to for help? 3.18; 4.1, 13

4B. Should we assign two meanings to baptism (one for adults and one for infants)?

Of course, if infant baptism is a requirement by divine command, then Pratt's answer seems reasonable: "Yes, it must have two different meanings. For infants, it is an objective sign that calls them to faith. For adults, it is a subjective sign by which they confess faith."

According to Pratt, the Peter text (3.21) indicates that confession or pledge by the one coming to baptism is important in the sign. He also wants to stress another meaning, a call to faith, and to use that to defend infant baptism (defend, perhaps, by explanation). Problem: should we not apply both meanings to baptism, to all who receive the sign?

Adults: do not just apply the subjective aspect. Baptism is a call to faith in that it gives the gospel and promises salvation to those who believe. At the same time, Peter shows that it is a pledge that a sinner makes in baptism.

Infants: do not just apply the objective aspect. Both aspects should apply to infants if infant baptism is correct (for whatever other reasons people cite to support it): it calls them to faith and by it, in baptism, they confess their faith!

5B. Hospitality

Though we do not have many references to this duty, why per this context should we take it to heart? **1 Peter 4:7-9 ⁷ The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. ⁸ Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. ⁹ Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.** Moreover, recall the implication for the flock that arises from the duty of elders to show hospitality (Titus 1.8).