

## 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.

[Discussion: *Why can we speak of 1 Peter as a series of exhortations (commands, calls to duty)? It is because every section of the book (practically every paragraph) begins with a command.*]

### 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, <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 (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

[Discussion: *the key here is to define foreknowledge as "forelove"; it is not good foresight, but a prior love that the Lord sets upon elect sinners that He brings to realization in time through the work of the Spirit setting them apart (through sanctification of the Spirit) and that brings them to or "unto" obedience to the Lord Jesus in the obedience of saving faith.*]

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? [*People in exile facing suffering have the most solid rock under their feet because their salvation depends fully on the Lord and not on anything they do*]

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!

[Discussion: *this is a reductio of the infant Baptist position: in Pratt's way of arguing for infant baptism, a) there is the acknowledgement that baptism involves confession of faith as an essential of its meaning, b) but then he admits that that is not the meaning for infants. He is forced to argue for one meaning for adults and a different meaning for infants. It has a subjective meaning for adults and an objective meaning for infants. However, should we not maintain that the meaning of baptism is what it is for all who receive the sign? Therefore, it is better to teach that baptism has both the subjective and objective meaning for every person receiving the sign. In turn, since infant baptism cannot maintain this unity, lacking the subjective aspect, then the better view is that those who enter into the new covenant community should do so confessing their sins (as those coming to John's baptism) and pledging to live under the authority of God's commandments with a good conscience (per 1 Peter 3.21).]*

#### 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** <sup>7</sup> **The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.** <sup>8</sup> **Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.** <sup>9</sup> **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).

[Discussion: *we should take hospitality to heart because it is part of what it means to love one another earnestly; it is also something that we should address as a matter of faithfulness in light of the nearness of the Lord's coming, cf. Mat. 24-25]*