

Beloved, Bought, & Born-again
I Peter 1 & 2
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Note: The text below was prepared for oral delivery rather than for publication in print. As such, be aware that sentence fragments are intentionally used and that this document has not been edited to correct the errors in grammar, sentence structure, etc.

I. Introduction:

- A. Today I want to direct your attention to the 1st 2 chapters of the book of I Peter. The apostle, Simon Peter, wrote this epistle to a number of believers who were dispersed in different places. And what is said of them can be said of all believers in every age. I approached my study of this passage as I often do, seeking to understand it within its context and to see the major theme or message being conveyed. And it is clear that much of this epistle is written to exhort and encourage believers in the exercise of their faith, speaking of their duties and the conduct that should be manifested by these trophies of God's grace in Christ. We also find words of encouragement to persevere in the faith and to bear well under the trials and afflictions that had or would inevitably come upon them as believers.
- B. And while that summarizes the main tenor of the book, in my study I was struck by the great lengths which Peter, as inspired by God the Holy Spirit, went to describe the believers to whom he was writing in terms which communicate the true doctrine of the glorious gospel of grace which all true believers embrace by God-given faith. And it is these distinguishing descriptions in I Peter, chapters 1 and 2 that we're going to consider this morning.
- C. As you see the title of my message, you may notice I've stolen a page out of Winston Pannell's playbook in the use of alliteration by titling today's message, "Beloved, Bought, & Born-Again." The fact is this could be titled with a few more Bs as in "The Beloved, Blood-Bought & Born-Again Believer." And that would be appropriate because I have a simple objective this morning. I want to show from this passage and other supporting scriptures how these B-word descriptions are inseparably linked together in this sense (1) each and all of these describe everyone whom God saves and (2) they uniquely or only describe those who are saved.

That is, All who are saved (& only those that God saves):

1. ...are eternally beloved of God – objects of His everlasting, electing love, chosen in Christ Jesus, before the world even existed.
2. ...are bought or purchased by the precious, redeeming blood of Christ which was shed at the cross of Calvary for each and every one of them, and only for them.
3. ...shall in time be born again – given spiritual life in Christ
4. And lastly,shall without fail, believe on the Lord Christ – the Christ in whom they were chosen, who bought their entire salvation, including their new birth and subsequent gift of faith whereby they believe.

II. I Peter 1:2-5: So, let's look at these very descriptions in our text for today, beginning with the 2nd verse of Chapter 1...

A. ...where Peter begins to describe those to whom He is writing as the "***Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,...***" That is they were chosen by God the Father unto salvation in God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, from all eternity.

1. Ephesians 1:3-4a helps us with this understanding as it reads, "***Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: ⁴According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world,...***" So, here we see in plain, unmistakable language that those who are eternally blessed in Christ, the elect, were just that – chosen in Christ from eternity past, before the world every came into existence.
2. And as our text in I Peter 1:2 puts it, this election is "***...according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.***" Some interpret this as the elect whom God fore-loved, objects of His everlasting love. And the context is certainly compatible with that understanding as we will observe by the other aspects of the eternal blessings God bestows on these believers whom He foreknows. But at the onset, Peter addresses these believers as the elect who are chosen in Christ in accordance with God's everlasting love of them. They are the beloved. The word foreknowledge actually means foreordained (see vs. 20) or that which has been before determined to take place by God – the God, who describes Himself in Isaiah 46:10 as God who declares the end from the beginning.

B. Peter continues his description in verse 2 saying, "***Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto <the> obedience and <the> sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.***"

1. So, here believers are described as those who are sanctified or set apart by the Holy Spirit unto the obedience of Christ (i.e. – having been made one in Christ, their obedience meets God's demands of holy perfection because His perfect obedience, even unto death, His righteousness, is their righteousness, not their own works or efforts to obey. And thereby, based upon His imputed righteousness, they are accepted before a holy God.
2. And they are set apart by the Holy Spirit unto the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. So we know that their election according to the foreknowledge of God through sanctification or setting apart is referring to their election unto salvation from its beginning unto its end as Peter is identifying believers as those beloved elect, chosen in Christ so as to have His finished work on the cross (His blood) sprinkled or spiritually applied in their respective lifetimes so as to purge their consciences from dead works (as Hebrews 9 puts it) – causing them to repent of their dead works, their notions of being saved at least in part due to something done by, in or through themselves so as to make the real difference and instead, they turn in faith to base their hope on the obedience of Christ for all of their salvation.

C. Peter continues in verse 3 of our text saying, ***“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time⁶ Wherein ye greatly rejoice,...*** < and then from here Peter proceeds with his encouragements to them to withstand temptations and the trials of faith.

D. So I hope you can see in these opening verses how these believers are described as the beloved elect, as those born-again, begotten and that unto a lively hope all by the satisfaction which Christ rendered when He bought them with His own blood – God’s justice being satisfied as He paid their sin-debt in full and endured the just wrath of God due unto their sins. And God the Father gives us assurance that His law and justice was perfectly satisfied for all those for whom He lived and died when He raised Him from the dead.

E. Just as the demerit of the sins of God’s elect being charged to Christ demanded His death, the perfect satisfaction to justice that He rendered by His obedience unto death, His righteousness, demanded that He come out of that grave! And because He lives, they shall live! It’s that same resurrecting power that insures that spiritually dead sinners for whom He died shall all, without fail likewise be risen in spiritual life and shall receive all the fruits and effects Christ purchased for them, including their God-given faith unto salvation. They shall believe. And it is in this salvation so fully and freely accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ, their Substitute, that believers are said to greatly rejoice.

III. I Peter 1:18 – 23: Now a little farther down in the chapter, Peter again begins to distinguish the believer beginning in verse 18 saying: ***“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; ¹⁹But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: ²⁰Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, ²¹Who by him do believe in God, <I.e. – by believing in Christ you do believe in God> that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.”***

A. Always remember that redemption speaks of a payment made in full. Not an attempt made, but a payment paid! These beloved sinners were bought back from the just wrath of God against their sins by the payment of a penalty commensurate with the holiness of God. They were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ.

B. And then in verse 22, Peter exhorts them to love one another, but picks back up describing the true believer in verse 23, saying, ***“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”***

1. Look at that verse and think about what a privilege it is for us to sit in a place where this message, the word of God, God's gospel, is so clearly preached and distinguished from the false gospel the scripture repeatedly warns us about. We know here that this "word of God," which God actually uses as a word of regeneration by which men and women are miraculously given spiritual life (born-again), is none other than the gospel itself. As we read at the end of the chapter in verse 25, "...***And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.***"
2. As Romans 1:16 and 17 teach us, the gospel is the power of God unto salvation for (or because) therein is the righteousness of God revealed. It is this specific word of the gospel that sets forth Christ's obedience unto death, His imputed righteousness as the only ground or basis of a sinner's salvation. And this gospel when applied to a sinner's heart by God the Holy Spirit is powerful to the salvation of the soul. Men are born again by this word of God, this regenerating word which sets forth how all of salvation's requirements were fully met by the doing and dying of the Living Word of God – the Lord Jesus Christ.

Without argument, Peter is writing to beloved, blood-bought, born-again believers!

IV. I Peter 2:9-10: And lastly, look with me over into chapter 2, beginning with verse 9.

A. There Peter describes these true believers this way, saying "***But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people;...***"

1. Again, we see that these are chosen in Christ, the beloved objects of His everlasting love.
2. They are said to be a royal priesthood. Under the Old Covenant there were priests and kings but these 2 offices came together in Christ, the believer's high priest and the King of Kings who reigns over all. And being one with Christ, believers are kings and priests. For they too reign over sin and Satan in a reign of grace – grace which reigns through Christ's righteousness (Rom. 5:21). And as only the priest could enter into the presence of God in the tabernacle, those made one in Christ have access to boldly enter into His presence having the merits of Christ perfect righteousness put to their accounts. That is our royal apparel – a robe of righteousness!
3. And so we, believers, are a holy nation, in Him. Believers, saved sinners but nonetheless sinners in themselves), are said to be unblameable, unreprouvable, holy and acceptable before God. How can this be? It's because they, these beloved sinners, are accepted in the Beloved, the Lord Jesus Christ!

4. But take particular notice now that they are also called a “peculiar people.” That Greek word translated “peculiar” is a word which means “purchased.” Believers here are being described as the purchased possession of God – again, a blood-bought people. In Acts 20:28, God’s word refers to believers collectively “...*as the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*” Can God possibly have even one of His precious, beloved, purchased possessions somehow taken away from Him? No sir – all who come to Him by Christ have been purchased with His own blood and as Christ said in John 6:39, He will lose none of them!

B. Now back in I Peter 2:9, he continues describing believers, this peculiar or purchased people, saying that they “...*should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:* All believers in their respective lifetimes are called out of darkness into His marvelous light. They are given spiritual life and all of its faculties in order that they might see, hear, and understand that which they could not see, hear, or understand before. So these beloved, blood-bought folks are also without fail birthed (spiritually born-again) and by the accompanying God-given gift of faith, they believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

C. And he further describes them as those “*Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.*” We often acquaint “obtaining” something as a result of some effort we put forth to acquire it. But this word translated “obtain” is better translated “received.” Actually, it would not be mercy if the obtaining came as a result of something that you did. That would be something you earned, deserved or merited. That’s certainly not mercy because mercy, like grace, has to do with being shown favor based upon no merit found in the recipient of mercy or grace.

V. Implications:

A. Well, as I said at the onset, my objective was to show you how these 3 or 4 B-words are inseparably linked to one another in that they are all descriptions of each and everyone that God saves and they are descriptive of only those who God saves. From our text today, one cannot reasonably disagree that these descriptions are to be applied to all who are saved. If you do not believe that all who are saved are the beloved objects of God’s electing love, that Christ died for them, that they must be born again and that they shall believe on the Lord Jesus Christ in belief of God’s gospel, then you simply do not believe God’s Word. It would require a twisting of these passages beyond all reason to conclude anything to the contrary.

- B. That said, while some will concede that these descriptions are certainly true of all believers, many will reason that these passages are not to be interpreted so as to conclude that these descriptions are only or exclusively true of believers. Most notably, many would argue that Christ died for all – both those who are saved as well as those who shall perish in hell. Likewise, some choose to believe that God’s love is universal to all in spite of the clear passages where He states that not to be the case, just as in Romans 9 where He says, “Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.” And others will choose to interpret the phrase in today’s text referring to the “elect according to the foreknowledge of God” as a reference to God having observed them by looking down through the proverbial telescope of time and thereby He foreknew or foresaw that they would do their part (believe, make some profession of faith, get baptized, receive or accept Jesus, something they do). And then they imagine that God reacts to that discovery by electing them (contrary to Ephesians 1:5 which declares it to be “...*according to the good pleasure of his will*” but rather) they will suggest He elected them on the basis of foreknowing how they would later respond to their version of the gospel.
- C. Listen, no mere mortal man can reveal to a sinner’s heart the validity of what some of us have been so blessed to have revealed to us and as I’m trying to convey today. But God can and so I want to close by asking everyone to consider the implications of your gospel doctrine – how you think God saves sinners.
- D. And I want to suggest to you, that the validity of that doctrine can be tested by simply applying a standard that many already agree with. God tells us in Ephesians 2:8-9, that salvation is by grace, not by works. It reads, “*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.*” Now as I mentioned earlier today, like mercy, grace by definition has to do with receiving the blessings or favor of God in salvation without you having done anything to earn, merit or deserve that favor. And all of religion falls into one of these 2 categories, grace or works – but never both.
- E. These are mutually exclusive. Salvation by works, by definition, leaves us imagining that at least something done by, in, or through you the sinner, at least in some degree, contributes as a determining factor to your being saved. And in Romans 11, in referring to the “election of grace,” God, through the Apostle Paul, declares this truth – that there is no mixing of the two. There it teaches that if there is any element of works involved, it is no longer grace and vice-versa. So salvation by grace means that all that is necessary for a sinner’s salvation has been completely fulfilled and accomplished by another, not by the recipient of God’s mercy and grace. And that “other” is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. And if salvation is conditioned in anyway, to any degree on you, the sinner – even if it is just doing your small part (as some would describe it) by allowing God to save you or come into your heart – then that is to be trusting in salvation by works and therefore it is a false refuge and not God’s way of salvation by grace, no matter how insistent one might be in calling it grace.

F. So judging by that simple standard (is it grace or works), let's examine again whether each of these descriptions can rightly be said to belong exclusively (or only) to those whom God saves. And while we're reasoning, I also want to share some more of God's words on the subject, for ultimately His Word, the standard of truth, is really all that matters.

1. Are only the beloved (the elect) saved?

(a) Many will say, "I don't believe that God would choose some and not others. That seems unfair to me and so I don't believe that God chose those whom He would save while leaving the rest to perish in hell. Well, what is the alternative? If salvation isn't totally due unto God's sovereign purpose and will, then ultimately, by default, you must trust in something done in, by, or through you, the sinner to make the difference. It must be your free will, contrary to God's declaration in Romans 9 that "...*it is not of him that willeth,...*" That's salvation by works even though I, like most, thought it was grace and called it grace. I hope you see by the process of elimination that salvation by grace necessitates election.

(b) But enough of my reasoning. What does God's Word say about election? Earlier I read the clear declaration of Ephesians 1:4 that relates how God chose those whom He saves in Christ from before the foundation of the world so I won't return to that passage. But instead let me direct your attention to the Gospel of John. There, God's elect are called His sheep. Consider Christ's words as recorded there:

(1) Beginning in John 10, verse 25, Jesus answered the Jews question as to whether or not He was the Christ by saying, "... *I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.* ²⁶*But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.* ²⁷*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:* ²⁸*And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.* ²⁹*My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand"* Clearly, not everyone is a sheep. There is no mistaking that Christ told them that they believed not because they were not His sheep. It does not say they were not His sheep because they refused to believe. Hear God's word! And notice Christ said that His Father gave Him the sheep, speaking of His choosing of them unto salvation in Christ.

(2) And then, earlier in John, in John 6:36-37 Christ said, "*But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.* ³⁷*All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*" Clearly, some believe not, yet all that are given to Christ by God the Father shall come to Christ – they all SHALL believe. These are not my words but rather the Word of God, specifically here – the word of the God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ!

So there can be no doubt – They and only they, the sheep, the beloved objects of God’s everlasting, electing love are blood-bought, and born-again so as to come to Christ – believing on Him!

2. And are only believers blood-bought? That is, did Christ die only for those He saves?
 - (a) Most of modern day so-called Christendom believes that Christ died for all – including those who perish in hell. Some will argue that the price of His precious blood was indeed shed and paid for the sins of everyone but that it is not effectual to any one unless and until they accept it as their own. They imagine that it must be accepted by the sinner for it to take effect in heaven. So when asked, “How can Jesus die for one and that one not be saved?” The answer usually given is “Because they did not believe or because they did not accept it.” That’s certainly the answer I would have given in years past.
 - (b) But think about that mindset. What then must make the real difference in your salvation? Because whatever it is, that’s your Savior whether you recognize it or not. In the hindsight of God-given faith, I look back with amazement on the depth of my former spiritual blindness. I intellectually understood the concept of grace to be referring to God’s blessing and favor upon me based upon no merit found or produced in or by the one to whom grace was bestowed. And yet I failed to see what is now so obvious – that my real hope of being saved was wrapped up, not in Christ and His shed blood, but ultimately in my act of faith, my believing, my receiving, my willingness to be saved! My, my, my! To presume that my free will choice made the real difference is to believe in salvation by works – no matter what I called it. Remember Romans 11 teaches us that if there is any element of works, it is no longer grace! Think of the sinful pride of having, by my former way of thinking, relegated the sacrificial bloody death of Christ, the God-man, to a lesser, an inferior, subordinate role to that which I presumed to be the real difference maker – my decision for Jesus. I imagined Christ simply made it possible for me to make the real difference. No – Grace necessitates particular redemption! Christ died for a particular people – His sheep.
 - (c) But again, enough of my reasoning. Let’s again consider the words of our Lord on this subject.
 - (1) In Matthew 26, Jesus informed His disciples at the Last Supper that the wine there was symbolic of His shed blood and of that, in v28, He said, “***For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.***” For whom was His blood shed? – For many (not all). And what was it shed for? – To make salvation possible? No – for the remission of sins. As with redemption, this remitting, speaks of a payment in full of the penalty due unto God’s holy justice for the guilt or demerit of all the sins of all for whom that payment was made.

(2) And then if we look back again to John 10, we see Christ's own clear words there...

(a) First in verse 11, Christ said of Himself, "***I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.***"

(b) Then at the end of verse 15, He says, "...***I lay down my life for the sheep.***"

There can be no doubt, not only all who are saved, but only those who are saved are among the blood-bought sinners for whom Christ died.

VI. Closing: Well we could go on, but I hope you see that both all who are saved and only those who are saved are distinguished in the scriptures as the beloved elect of God, chosen in Christ, bought by the precious blood of Christ, and born-again that they might in the day of God's power, by this word of regeneration come to truly believe on the Lord Jesus Christ!

God says that salvation is NOT by works and yet, that notion that salvation is conditioned at least in some way or to some degree on something done by, in, or through me, the sinner is the natural religion of all sinners initially. The scripture makes it clear that even those whom God gives spiritual life to were in times past spiritually dead in their trespasses and sins. That's why the new birth is absolutely necessary. And it is impossible to cling to that notion of salvation by works and at the same time truly be believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. To believe on Him is to look to His doing and dying alone for all of our salvation.

Let me leave you with this thought: You and I didn't have anything to say about when or if we would be physically born. And we don't have anything to say about when or if we will be spiritually born. And yet all the means that God uses, the very power of God unto salvation, has been brought your way today in the preaching of the gospel of God's grace. So what can you do? Simply take God at His word as recorded in Acts 16:31, "***...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved...***"

And all who truly are granted this blood-bought gift of faith can thereby know that they too are:

- the Beloved elect of God – chosen from all eternity unto salvation in and by Christ on whom they've now believed,
- Bought by the precious blood of Christ on whom they've now believed, and
- Born-again as a fruit and effect of what Christ, purchased for them – the Christ on whom they've now believed.

What a blessing to be a beloved, blood-bought, born again, believer!

Footnote from the author: While this sermon was prepared and delivered by me, I often utilize the commentaries, study helps, and teachings of others to supplement my own prayerful study of the scriptures. Since this document was not originally prepared for publication in print, please excuse and recognize that it was unfeasible to properly identify and credit all of the various original sources used to develop the content herein. Ultimately, it is my sincere and foremost objective to accurately present the gospel of God's grace found in the only infallible source, God's word itself – the Bible.