

1Peter 10-10-08a

This is Friday the 8th of October, 2010. We begin a new study tonight in the book of 1 Peter. We will begin, as is our custom, by going to the Lord in prayer.

It's an opportunity to focus our attention and remind ourselves of the importance of the ministry of God's Holy Spirit. And it is also an opportunity to remember those in our midst who need prayer for various reasons and we've got a wide variety of challenges facing quite a number of different people and I think most of you are aware of those. And sending up a quick intercession is not out of line either.

So we'll take just a moment to go to the Lord in prayer and then we'll begin this very interesting book. Father, every time we assemble and focus our attention on your word, we are reminded of the grace and the faithfulness that you express toward us every day. The large picture of our salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ, the daily picture of your mercy and compassion expressed toward us in provision and protection and blessing and opportunities to grow through challenge.

We thank you for the life that you have given us. It distinguishes us. It sets us apart from the world.

We have the ability to enter into eternal things even while still here in a mundane and temporal realm. And it is all of grace. It is all because of what the Lord Jesus has done for us in rescuing us from a lost and hopeless condition, enslaved by sin and living in darkness.

And through his faithfulness and his obedience and his love for you and love for us, we have all of these wonderful blessings. We thank you for the book of 1 Peter that we are about to study. We ask your blessing on us as we investigate the message, as we seek to understand it, that we will rightly divide the word of truth, that each of us will find in the pages of this epistle the necessary doctrines and principles and promises that will build us up, will advance our understanding and our faith, will motivate us and encourage us to fulfill all of the potential that you have given us through the Lord Jesus, and that it will be a blessing and will enable us to be a blessing in this age and in the ages to come.

We thank you for this opportunity, and we thank you for the ministry of the Holy Spirit that rises above all of our human limitations, whether in presenting or in hearing and understanding. And we are grateful for his teaching ministry amongst us. We ask your blessing on our fellowship and on our study, in Jesus' name, amen.

Well, we, as I said, are beginning the first epistle of Peter, and as is the normal way to begin, we'll first talk a little bit about the characteristics of this letter. And first, of course, is authorship. When we think about the Apostle Peter, we cannot help but remember what we have learned in the Gospel accounts about Peter.

He is quite prominent in the group of twelve that Jesus called. He is in the first group of three, Peter, James, and John, and, of course, his brother, Andrew, is closely linked with them. From the earliest days down by the beginning of the river Jordan with John the Baptist.

And we could spend any amount of time reviewing the biography of Peter as it is given to us in Scripture. We could talk about his testimony in the Gospel of Mark. We could review his career as it is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, parallel to the account given of the Apostle Paul.

I think probably most pertinent for an introduction to the epistle of First Peter is to consider the instructions that Jesus gives to his disciples who are now to be apostles in the first chapter of Acts. And so if you will turn to the first chapter of Acts, there is a particular statement by the Lord Jesus that we want to focus on. I think most of you will remember it from our study of Acts not too long ago, although our study of the beginning of Acts was longer ago since it was such a long book.

But in the first chapter, Luke gives his introduction to Theophilus and he says that the Lord Jesus in verse 3 of Acts chapter 1, presented himself alive after his sufferings by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. We know this forty day period extending between the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread and First Fruits and going up to and shortly before Pentecost. There is actually fifty days total between the two major feasts and forty of those days Jesus spent amongst his disciples and then he commanded them to wait and they had another week and a half or so to wait before the Feast of Pentecost and the inception of the church age as we understand it.

First Fruits is being assembled together with them and he commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem but to wait for the promise of the Father which he said you have heard from me. For John truly baptized with water but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. And having also studied the end of the Gospel of John more recently, you remember that Jesus met his disciples up in Galilee at the Sea of Galilee.

There was the bookend episode of Castor Net on the other side of the boat. Peter jumps in and swims to shore. They enjoy a meal from those numbered fish and there is a conversation on the shore.

There is a conversation as Jesus, Peter, and John and the rest of the disciples who are present on that occasion walk along and this now in Acts chapter 1 is subsequent to that. Jesus of course was arrested, tried, crucified, buried, and rose again in Jerusalem. He appeared to his disciples that Sunday in various forms.

He appeared to the ladies at the tomb. He appeared to the disciples on the road to Emmaus. He appeared to his own disciples in the upper room all on that Sunday.

A week later he appeared again to his disciples and Thomas being absent the first time was present the second time. Well that accounts for the first seven days or so. Probably at the conclusion of the Feast of Unleavened Bread when all of the feasting was over and you are in that hiatus period, they then went up to Galilee.

And some of this is a bit compressed depending on which Gospel you read, but they went up to Galilee and met Jesus up there. It is an interesting come to pass. It is an interesting circumstance that Jesus would be with his disciples in Jerusalem after the feasts are over.

They leave Jerusalem which is the custom. They would go back to their home of record or their town of dwelling. Many of them are from the Galilee area so they have gone back up there.

But they are going to return to Jerusalem and it is here that we find Jesus assembling with them and commanding them not to depart from Jerusalem until they have received the promise of the Spirit. So a lot of reconstruction is necessary to figure out what happened where. So they have gone to Galilee.

The episode at the conclusion of John has happened. Now they are back in Jerusalem subsequent to that. And Jesus says, the promise of the Father which you have heard from me.

And this was also recorded in the Gospel of John, chapter 14, 15, 16 and so on about the coming of the paraclete. I will send you another comforter and so on. For John truly baptized with water, verse 5, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.

And this is about 10 days from now as it happens. Therefore when they had come together they asked him saying, Lord will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? Of course this has come into serious question because after the triumphal entry and everybody thought, hey here comes the kingdom, well that seems to have not tracked as they expected. He said to them, it is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in his own authority, actually has set in his own authority, but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be witnesses to me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria until the end of the earth, haos, until, not unto, end is eschatos, teis, ges, until the end of this earth.

And eschatos is singular, not plural. So if you recall we decided that this is temporal, haos is almost always temporal rather than physical. And he says you disciples, you 11 shall be witnesses unto me where? Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria until the end of the earth, until the end of the earth you all are witnesses to the Jews primarily, not exclusively but primarily.

Jesus doesn't say only to Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, but that's their primary field of endeavor. When he has spoken these things, the ascension takes place. Peter is in this group, the apostle Paul is not.

Hence we have the 11, you have the loss of symmetry preserved in the New Jerusalem and so

on where you have 12 gates and so forth. But Paul identifies himself several times as the apostle to the Gentiles. Why would that be a uniqueness? Because these other 11 are sent to God's people, Israel.

And the first generation of the church is in fact going to be almost entirely Jewish. And these 11 are going to witness to those who have first crack at inheritance. Much as the blessing was first available to Esau before it passed to Jacob, much as it could have been Cain's except for his disobedience, could have been Esau's except for his disobedience.

You have this pattern repeated time and again. We've seen it over and over, Ephraim and Manasseh, Ishmael and Isaac, on and on. So Israel gets the first opportunity to inaugurate and enter into, and of course it is all Jewish writers who pen the New Testament books, with the possible exception of course of Luke.

But these apostles make the church happen in its early days, certainly in Jerusalem. So that's enough background to launch us into 1 Peter. We have the greeting of this book, which is a standard introduction, and the first word in it is Petras.

We know that this is not Peter's original name. What was his original name? Simon. And in Aramaic, his new name is Kephas, which comes into the King James and so on as Cephas.

And in Greek, it is translated Petras. And we end up corrupting it into Peter. So of the available name choices by which he could identify himself, he chooses the name the Lord Jesus gave him, Petras.

We don't need to review the Great Confession. Who do men say that I am? Well, they say this, that, and the other. Who do you say that I am? Peter, at that time Simon, speaks up and says, You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

Jesus says, You are Petras. And on this Petra, I will build my congregation, my ecclesia. And this, of course, becomes an issue in the very first word of this letter, because this is Peter's name.

Now, to clarify this, we're going to actually do something that I don't often do, which is to jump forward in the very book that we're studying. But if you turn a page in 1 Peter to chapter 2, you find that Peter is talking about stones. He's talking about Petra and Petras.

And it's pertinent because it is the first word in the letter. So as you look at 1 Peter 2, verse 4, Peter says, Coming to him as to a living stone, a zoonta or zoonta lithon. You know, lithography or a lithograph is an engraving on, it comes from the word stone, but it's a hard, flat surface.

And lithographs start with that etching of a hard surface. And so he talks about coming to him as to a living stone. Of course, you can see the italics there.

Coming to him, a living stone. And we'll get here again when we get to chapter 2, but you can

scribble it out now. It messes up the meaning.

Coming to him, the Lord Jesus, a living stone. He is the rock of salvation. He is the rock on which the house should be built.

He is the stone of stumbling and the rock of offense. He is the rock not made with hands that smashes the kingdoms of the world. Jesus is, we don't come to him like we would come to a living stone.

When's the last time you ever went to a living stone? What sort of precedent is there? Well, people go to these living stones, I'm going to come to Christ like I would come to a living stone. No, he is the living stone. It's not like or as.

Coming to him, a living stone. Rejected by men, but chosen by God and precious. You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God and so on.

But you notice that Jesus is the living stone. We come to him and we are then living stones. So you have the Lord Jesus Christ, the incarnate God, as the living stone.

And those who come to him become living stones. This is the dynamic. And Peter is reflecting here the episode of the great confession.

You are Petras, you are the rock. And on this rock, Petra himself, I will build my church. I'm going to take lots of Petrases, lots of Petroi, and I'm going to build my church.

Peter explains the great confession right here. People agonize and say is Peter the pope and is he the foundation on which the church is built and so on. Peter explains it himself right here.

Instead of using the word Petras, he uses Lithos. But it's essentially the same thing. He is the Petra.

He is the living Lithos. And we, as smaller Lithos, smaller Petros, are being built up as a spiritual house. But he is the foundation stone that the builders rejected, but chosen by God and precious.

So when Jesus says on this rock, I will build my church, the church is built of people. The church is built of us as living stones and it is built on the foundation of the living stone, capital L, capital S. So you can't really understand the great confession without first understanding the words of Peter here. And there is a direct correlation.

And he continues this stone idea throughout the second chapter. You can see it in verse 6 and following. I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious cornerstone.

He who believes in him will not be disappointed. This precious value then is for you who believe. But for those who disbelieve, the stone which the builders rejected became the cornerstone, a

stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.

And chapter 2 is the rocky chapter. And then he is going to go on to talk about being a chosen race. So the very first word in the book is going to set the tone.

Petras. He is one of the stones that Jesus is building his church out of. Not the only one.

He is not a unique one. The unique stone, the foundation stone, the cornerstone is not Peter. It is the Lord Jesus Christ.

And that is going to become manifestly clear in chapter 2. I am sure that Peter had probably clarified this many times for people if it ever came up. I doubt that anybody thought that he was any sort of a Pope in his own lifetime or for quite a long time thereafter. Well, back to our first verse.

We must necessarily enter into the Greek here. So verse 1 says Petras Apostolos Iesu Christu. And each one of these words is profoundly significant.

Even though this follows sort of a standard greeting formula, every one of these is significant. Petras Apostolos, apo stelo, sent, sent off, sent away from, posted forth, apo stelo. This is Petras, this is Peter, sent forth, posted of Jesus Christ.

Sent forth by Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ. If you look at the first three verses of this letter, you will find the name of the Lord Jesus no less than four times.

Four times in three verses. And you can't help but think back to the night of the arrest and the trial when Peter is in the courtyard and the servant maid accuses him of being one of them. And he denies the Lord Jesus.

I don't know him. He curses and swears. And he denies him three times.

Well, Peter can't get four words into this epistle. He puts two words, Peter, Apostle, and here's the name of the Lord Jesus. And then he's going to use the name of the Lord Jesus again in the second verse.

And he's going to use it twice in the third verse. So Peter wastes no time making sure that everybody understands that he is sent forth by the Lord Jesus Christ. He is here to declare the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And he is thankful for the Lord Jesus Christ who has made salvation possible. And in case you missed it, that was the Lord Jesus Christ. Four times in three verses.

So his days of conveniently forgetting the name of the Lord are way behind him at this point. Petros Apostolos Iesu Christu. And it is the full name.

That is his personal name, Yeshua, Deliverer, Saving One. We're well aware of what Joshua means, both in the history of Israel and as a word in and of itself in Hebrew. And Christu, the Anointed One.

This corresponds to Mashiach in Hebrew. Yeshua Mashiach, Jesus Christ. He is the incarnate God and his office is King of Israel.

He is the Anointed King. He is the Son of David. And while all of the apostles will freely refer to the Lord Jesus as Christ, it is especially significant when you have an apostle to the Jews writing to the Jews.

Because the Jews had been waiting for centuries for the Christ, for the Anointed One. And Peter wastes no time talking to this Jewish audience saying, Jesus is the Christ. We recognize him as the Christ, but he is that and so much more.

That is just the beginning of his identity to a Jewish audience. It could have been the culmination of his identity if the kingdom had come in, but it hasn't. So now you have the whole new dynamic of the church.

But what a great way to start a letter with the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And Peter just does the formula with his name. I'm Peter, but the only reason I'm writing to you is I was sent by Jesus Christ.

Par Epidemois. And right away we end up with a difficulty. Because if we follow the Greek word order here, we have something that is left out in the English.

And you have heard me lament this in the past. But the word we have here is Eklektos. And give me a second to get my Greek text here so I can read it.

Eklektos par Epidemois is our next phrase in Greek. So Petros Apostos Iesu Christou. The very next word is Eklektos.

What is Eklektos? We get the word eclectic from this. But it is a combination of ek plus lego. Ekleko Christos.

Eklektos par Epidemois. Eklektos is a word that is used to refer to the one who is called out ones. Spoken out ones.

Lego is to speak or to say. Ek is out. So it is typically almost transliterated as elect, but it has quite a bit more freight than that to carry.

It means to be selected to be chosen and so the question becomes selected or chosen in what sense in what capacity what is the what is the nature I can choose my socks or I can choose a wife I can choose a color of paint or I can choose a major and a vocation in my education and in

my adult life there are degrees of choice there are degrees of significance there are realms and spheres and contexts in which choices are made so Peter an apostle of Jesus Christ and this is the dative or in the case system I learned it can be dative locative or instrumental but it's it's this is a dative of indirect object and the verb is understood Peter an apostle of Jesus Christ writing or speaking or preaching K russo wing to the chosen the chosen one the chosen few the well the the various English versions have rendered this different ways when you look at your new King James the word is missing it says to the pilgrims that's your your par Epidaemus what happened to eclectos it's it's not there and it's the pilgrims of the dispersion in Pontus Galatias Cappadocia Asia Bithynia and you have to get down to verse 2 before you find elect according to the foreknowledge of God well this seems rather strange since the word has been vastly displaced if you look at the new American standard Peter an apostle of Jesus Christ to those who reside as aliens that's your pilgrim par Epidaemus scattered throughout Pontus Galatia Cappadocia Asia Bithynia who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God they managed to get chosen into verse 1 right at the end because of course that's the verse that is supposed to be in so they kind of fudge it it's in the same order as the new King James but they slip it on the other side of the two the English standard version does a better job Peter an apostle of Jesus Christ to those who are elect exiles of the dispersion they put it where it belongs the NIV the new incomplete version for all of its other faults says Peter an apostle of Jesus Christ to God's elect strangers in the world bless their hearts here's one place where the NIV got it right to God's elect the RSV and NRSV of course stick it down in verse 2 Peter to the exiles of the dispersion Pontus Galatia Cappadocia Asia Bithynia who have been chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit shove it way down into verse 2 Wiest Kenneth Wiest one of my favorite Greek guys Wiest's word studies in the Greek New Testament is a goldmine and for all of his acumen and all of his skill and all of his erudition in Greek here is his New Testament translation for this verse Peter an ambassador of Jesus Christ to those who have settled down alongside of a pagan population sown as seed throughout Pontus Galatia Cappadocia Asia and Bithynia chosen out ones this choice having been termed determined by the four ordination of God the Father he shoves it way down after the location as well which is a concession to tradition because the tradition is Calvinist and the tradition is that we want election tied to foreknowledge whom he foreknew them he predestined he elected those that he foreknew foreknow means for love and they want to get some because there's not enough biblical support so we'll fudge it and we want to stick election down there with with destiny well this is playing with the Word of God that's not what Peter said what did he say we go back to the Greek eclectos par epidemios diasporas chosen and we'll talk about par epidemios after the break will just say pilgrims for now dwellers amongst strangers is a fairly literal translation scattered chosen dwelling among strangers scattered ones what is the near context if you're going to infer a verb as when Peter says Peter to these people writing to those chosen to be dwelling among strangers and scattered in this list of places the election that he speaks of is not to salvation it is to destination it is to geography what is the thought of every Jew what has it been for 2,000 years next year in Jerusalem pray for the peace of Jerusalem why aren't we in Jerusalem what happened to our heritage in the land Peter begins the letter by

saying I am writing to you who have been chosen to be scattered and living among the Gentiles in these places that are not Israel and are not Jerusalem your geographical location start to say your geography which is why my pronunciation was strange your geographical location your place has been chosen by God it's not an accident it's not an omission you were selected to live in these places among the Gentiles chosen to be scattered pilgrims in these areas according to the foreknowledge of God the Father God knew ahead of time the situation he knew ahead of time that he was going to choose you to be in these places this is critical to the message of the letter and to subvert this for theological purpose is to make it very difficult to get at the actual message of the letter so this is essential to straighten out Peter is not making a dogma about predestination or election here with regard to salvation as so many Calvinist reform theologians would love to have him do he is saying you to whom I am writing are where you are I am sending this to Cappadocia and Bithynia and Asia and Galatia and Pontus and so forth because God chose to put you there he chose you to be there and we have to recognize that regardless of what the immediate causes and conditions and successions and relations may be we are where we are because we have been chosen to be there by God God knew beforehand that this is where he wanted us to be it may be the result of all kinds of things malfunction on our part or or wisdom on our part it might be a malfunction on someone else's part it might have been the influence of someone else who is wiser than us by one reason or another we are where we are circumstantially and in the plan of God God knew it ahead of time and he selected us there could have been some other human being in my marriage in my town in my job in my family relationship in my circumstance in my situation at this time in this place but God chose me to be here he knew all of the things that would bring about this situation and he chose me to be here he chose you to be exactly where you are well this helps us to be objective and forces us to rethink ideas of blame or shame or rethinking and hashing over old decisions and well if only what if wouldn't it have been great if you know things have worked out differently Peter before he even gets through the introduction is encouraging us to live in the present and recognize that God was aware beforehand prognosco and he selected us to be right where we are chosen chosen to be in this unfortunate situation no Jews wanted to be scattered they wanted to be in their homeland they wanted to be in their inheritance but whether it was their generation or previous generation whether it was a current persecution or past persecution some kind of way events conspired and here they are scattered Peter says don't worry about it God chose you to be born or to live or to be driven or to be carried or to be impelled in some fashion to write where you are well that's verse 1 everything except these destinations we'll pause here and take our break when we come back we'll take a quick look at those and move through chapter 2 if there is both choosing and foreknowing in this context what does it actually refer to if it's not salvation what is it and how does the rest of verse 2 relate the Holy Spirit is mentioned the blood of Christ is mentioned doesn't this seem to suggest salvation will parse that when we come back from the break