

1Peter 10-10-15a

This is Friday, the 15th of October, 2010. We continue our study in the first chapter of 1 Peter. We'll take a moment at the outset to go to the Lord in prayer.

It's an opportunity to get ourselves squared away and prepare for this very interesting material that Peter introduces the letter with. And we'll dive into that momentarily. But at this point, we'll take a moment to pray.

Father, it is a wonderful comfort to recognize that it is not by our might or our power or our talent or our ingenuity that we seek to live the life to which we have been called. It is all of grace. You have provided everything that we need.

And we are sustained by that grace, by your power, by your provision, and by simply resting in those things that you have given us. We can succeed and we can achieve everything that the Lord Jesus died to enable us to enter into. We thank you for this passage of scripture.

We study it together tonight, knowing that in it, each of us will find truth that will be pertinent, that will be meaningful, that will be helpful, that will enable us to grow in grace and knowledge, that will equip us for every good work, and that will give us the perspective and the understanding that we need both to live the remainder of this life and to enter into the eternal realms. We ask your blessing on us as we spend time in fellowship and in this study. We ask it in Jesus' name, amen.

Well, this letter that Peter wrote to the scattered believers that he addresses in the first couple of verses here begins with a lot of freight. When I was a young boy, I was, I think, maybe seven or eight years old, and my dad got me an electric train. And I was absolutely thrilled because it wasn't just a train, but it had a scene.

There was a great big flat table that he had put together and it had this plastic landscape with a tunnel. And it was a double looping track. So one time the train would go over the ridge and the next time it would go under the ridge.

And there was a little town and there were telephone poles and buildings and little crossings. And it was just the neatest thing. And of course, I think he enjoyed it too because he had had a train when he was a young lad and he was operating it more than I was on that morning.

Let me show you, son, stand back and let me explain how this works. But it was a great thing. But I had these cars and there was a little junction track thing that was really handy.

It had a springy plastic deal in the center. And instead of trying to laboriously get all eight of the wheels lined up onto the piece of track, you could just run it back and forth across this thing. And it had a little centering deals to get the wheels on.

So you take the engine, go to this little crisscross track and just run it back and forth a few times

and all the wheels were on. Run it up ahead, get the next car, run it back and forth, run it up ahead and it would link. And you could put these cars, I had probably seven or eight cars in any order.

And there was a coal carrying car and there was a cattle car with little tiny cows. And there was one that carried actual cars, had a couple little cars and a flatbed and it had little clips, had a caboose. And it was just, I had endless hours of fun playing with that thing.

But it was interesting to me to see what would happen because you could run the train pretty fast. If you put the little lever all the way up, I mean, you could fling the thing off the track. And so I began to understand some elementary principles of physics.

Because if you put the heavier cars, like that flatbed car that had the two little toy cars on it, that was a heavy car with the cars on it. Well, if you put that toward the back, like right in front of the caboose and then crank the speed up, well, it was like cracking a whip. The tail of the train would just fly off the track.

And so I learned that if I wanted to make the train go as fast as possible, I had to put all the heavy cars right behind the engine and lighter and lighter. And the caboose was naturally light because it was hollow. And I found that by doing that, I could get maximum speed and I would still have to slow down on the sharp curves.

But most of the time, I could just really rev that thing around. But I put all the freight up to the front. And I was thinking about that, looking at this introduction to first Peter, because he has put a lot of freight right up in the front of this letter.

You can't get two verses into this letter without major themes, major concepts, gigantic words that import all kinds of spiritual meaning are right up here in the introduction. And so often it's kind of like when you tear open a letter, well, anybody that still tears open letters, most people get their texts and emails and tweets and so on. But back in the days when we used to get our mail in the box and in an envelope, and you would tear the thing open, you tend to, there's a little greeting section and this has been true since ancient times.

And you kind of skip over that. Hi, how are you? I'm doing fine. I enjoyed your last letter.

You skip down to where you get into the substance. Same thing when you open a textbook, there's a preface. A lot of people never read the preface.

I probably spend more time reading the preface and the introduction in books than anybody else I know, because I figure there's lots of clues there that are going to tell you things that will be helpful later. Well, in this letter, Peter puts an awful lot of stuff right up in the front. And if we glide through that and pounce on the word elect or pounce on the word predestinated or pounce on the word, the Holy Spirit or whatever, we miss the very important beginning section and these

important truths that he opens the letter with and that are going to define the themes in this letter.

So we started looking at this, especially last time, where Peter says that he is writing to the diaspora. And we talked about the origin of that word, dia is through and spora is seed. And it comes to mean scattering seed.

It comes from a verb, dia spiro. Spiro is to sow seed and dia is to sow it through. And the way you would sow seed is by scattering it.

And this idea of scattering is really important to understanding the next set of concepts that Peter gives. It is so widely misunderstood. But he says, Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ.

And I can honestly tell you that I could probably spend the next two months on just these first four verses. I was trying to figure out how, this is always the challenge for somebody that is tackling a passage of scripture. There is the vertical depth to which you can dig in a verse and there is the forward progress that you hope to make through the book.

And you can postal, I have studied under pastors that will absolutely dig to China on every single word. And you kind of lose the flow. You forget what the book is about, what the letter's about, what the chapter's about, what the verse is about.

Because, well, for the next four weeks, we're going to be studying every possible nuance and every use and every extra biblical use of the word eclectoes. And we'll see its use in the church fathers, et cetera, et cetera. So how do we, it's like water skiing.

You don't want to go so slow that you sink below the surface. You don't want to go so fast that you wind up being on the highlight reel of the sports show, tumbling in a cartwheel fashion with the rope flying and your skis going every which way. So I want to touch on a couple of things that we didn't cover up to this point in the verses we have already covered, but I'm going to do so quickly and try to keep us on the breathable side of the water-air boundary here.

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ. The thing that struck me as I was looking this over again this week, the very first thing Peter says after his name, Petras, when he talked about that, his actual name in Aramaic is Cephas, C-E-P-H-A-S, as it's transliterated into Greek, and then it becomes Petras. The normal word for rock is a feminine noun, Petra.

Jesus says on this Petra, feminine noun, I will build my church. But he says, you are Petras. Well, there was no such name as Petras.

Nobody was ever named that before. Jesus coined that name and gave it to Peter. People only ever talked about Petra as a stone.

And we have this coming down into English even today where we say, here's a petrified tree, here's petrified wood. I was petrified with fear. I was turned to stone.

But he gives his name Petras, and he gives it in Greek. Why? Is he not, have we not established that he's writing to Jewish people? Wouldn't they feel more at home and so on if it was in Aramaic? Why isn't this an Aramaic letter? Well, we know that these people are possibly second generation, maybe even third generation people. Some of their kids, some of the young people in these groups will have been born outside the land, and Greek is their first language, and Aramaic is their second.

You think about immigrant families that have come to this country, and maybe the parents have real difficulty learning English because they come here as young adults or middle-aged adults, but their kids grow up speaking American. And the native language that's so familiar to the parents is a second language and somewhat poorly spoken and quickly lost by the children because that's the lingua franca. That's what they deal with every day.

So Peter recognizes the situation of these people, and some of them, no doubt, are first generation and have been careful to teach their children the old language and so on, but many others do not. So he writes in Greek to ensure that everyone can understand. And so he gives his name, Petros, in Greek.

He doesn't say, hi there, I'm Cephas, or hi there, I'm Simon, or I'm Simon, Peter, Cephas. He just says, I am Petros. The next thing he says is Apostolos, Peter, an apostle.

And I find this very interesting because there's been a great quest for identity and self-discovery, and who am I, why am I here? You had the whole identity crisis thing going on and has been supposedly for decades now in America because in the wash of prosperity and lack of challenge, people become introspective and subjective. But how do you define yourself? You go into a room where you're going to perhaps speak to people that don't know you, or you are brought into a, maybe you have to go to a wedding or a funeral or something, and you're one of the peripheral people. Most people there, you don't know them.

Most people there don't know you. And so somebody introduces you, you introduce yourself, you say, hi there, I'm Sam. And they say, oh, well, hi, Sam.

Tell me a little about yourself. What do you do? Who are you? How do you respond? What are the defining first foot forward ideas about yourself? What would you say? Well, there's no hesitation on Peter's part. He could have said, Peter, the fisherman, Peter, the disciple, Peter, the denier of the Lord, Peter, the throw the net on the other side of the boat guy, Peter, the drowning in the middle of the stormy lake guy, Peter, the suffering with the mother-in-law with the fever guy, Peter, the I don't eat with Gentiles until Paul chastised me guy.

There's many, many different things that Peter could probably introduce himself with. We know quite a bit about Simon Peter. But to him, writing to these people, there's no question and no doubt.

He is Peter, the apostle. That's what defines him. That's what makes him who he is.

And to me, it's an encouragement that we should think of ourselves first and foremost as believers. Not hi there, I'm Sam, the computer guy. Hi there, I'm Sam, the artillery man.

Hi, I'm Sam, the would-be guitar playing guy. I'm Sam, the car mechanic. I'm Sam, the lawn mowing man here.

I'm Sam, the excavator of my plumbing. I am Sam, the whatever else you might wanna say. You can do a lot of things.

You can be involved in a lot of activities. You can have a lot of affiliations. But what defines you? If you're gonna put yourself down in one word and introduce yourself, what do you say? I am Sam, saved by grace.

I am Sam, believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. And in particular now, let's narrow the focus a little bit. In the realm of believers, we say, well, of course, Peter's not gonna save the fishermen.

He's talking to other believers. Okay, in the realm of believers, how do you introduce yourself? How do you identify yourself? Peter does it in terms of his gift and his calling. He knows what his gift and calling is.

He doesn't say, I'm Peter, the Pope. He doesn't say, I'm Peter, second only to John. I'm Peter, the guy that rushed into the tomb.

I'm Peter, the, he knows exactly what his function is. There's no doubt in his mind. He's not called to be a writer.

He's not called to be a theologian. He's not called to be anything but an apostle. Peter, the apostle.

Paul is very similar. Paul has no doubt as to who he is. He could make all kinds of claims.

I'm Paul, the Pharisee, or the ex-Pharisee. A lot of people define themselves by what they used to be. You know, I'm Sam, the midshipman.

You know, I'm Sam, the disc jockey. I'm Sam, the whatever else. You know, I'm Sam, the, I was telling a guy the other night at Albertson's, I used to sack groceries.

I'm Sam, the grocery sacker. I did what he did for a couple of years, and boy, you can get really good at it. And I said, you know, back in those days, they didn't have these whip, snap, and scanner deals where you just show the can to the glass and it rings it up.

You know, these ladies had to learn that machine and their hands would just fly over that thing. They were like, you know, fast dictation takers where they were just tick, tick, tick, tick, tick, tick,

and all the, you know, they rang up each separate thing. And the guy said, so, you know, what was the weather like in the Stone Age anyway, or some such thing? And I said, yeah, you know, that's back when, you know, it didn't even come in cans.

It was live chickens and pigs and ears of corn coming across. But I don't define myself as Sam, the ex-Safeway employee or, you know, whatever else. Who are we? And I think it's important that there is a good example from the apostles, and they are given to us as an example.

And we are told this repeatedly. And what is their example? They know exactly what their function is in the plan and purpose of God. And we should also.

And we say, well, but, you know, I'm not an apostle. So what's the name for what I do or what I am or what? I'm not even sure myself that I can put a name to it. Well, you can, because, for example, if you're a guy and you're a husband and father, and you feel like your primary spiritual effort and function and role is head of the household, that's who you are.

If you're a wife and you're supporting your husband domestically or in whichever way, if you're raising kids, if you're working in a ministry function in some form or fashion, but in the body of Christ, all of us have a role. If you don't know what your role is in the body of Christ, start looking because you have one and it's important. That's why we're here.

We are not here to be accountants. We're not here to be tradesmen. We're not here to be professionals drawing a salary.

We are here. The reason we're breathing air, the reason God has incorporated us into his plan and purpose, sanctified us, entered us into union with his son, Jesus Christ, is to fulfill a spiritual function. That function is often exercised in the immediate sphere of believers.

Sometimes, oftentimes, it is the local church. Sometimes, oftentimes, it is a family in which you find yourself of believers. You've got children, you've got spouses, you've got parents, you've got... And at the present time, there may not be a name for what you do.

You're not a... You can't say, well, I'm the foot washer or I'm the comforter or I'm a missionary or I'm a prophet or I'm a... Maybe there's not some kind of formal name for it. It doesn't have to have a formal name. What is the field of opportunity that most frequently opens itself to you? Where do you most often find yourself hoeing a row, planting the seed, nurturing and bringing forth spiritual fruit? If you still can't answer the question after I have elaborated on it, this is something to start thinking about and praying about because I tell you unequivocally, authoritatively from the word of God, this is your primary identity.

You are not primarily your name and social security number. You are not primarily just a citizen of your state and of the United States. You are not primarily a voter.

You're not primarily a taxpayer. You're not primarily an employee. You're not primarily anything

other than what you are in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Peter says, Peter, apostle, petros apostolos. That's who I am. That's what I do.

He was a highly successful and evidently fairly well-off fisherman. He was well-known in the Galilee area, but he didn't say I'm Peter from Petros Iskus Incorporated or something. I'm Peter Fish Incorporated from Galilee.

He didn't say I'm president of the Peter Andrew James and John Fishing Company or anything. He's Peter the apostle. Each of us should know what the main area of our spiritual opportunity is.

Where is it that we exercise the horizontal ministry that is one of the three identities we have? Priesthood, it's all the same. Every believer is a priest. Every believer has identical responsibilities before God for prayer, for acknowledgement of sin, for pursuit of understanding of God's word, for sanctification, be ye holy for I am holy.

All of our priesthood functions, our standing before God is identical. We have the same standing in Christ. Doesn't matter what your gift is.

Doesn't matter how long you've been a believer. The vertical component is all identical. Horizontal is a whole different thing.

We are a body. There are eyes, there are hands, there are mouths. Jesus said, the eye can't say to the hand, I have no need of you and so on, but they're definitely different.

And there are all kinds of differences, but the hand can't be dangling there, not doing anything because, well, I don't know what a hand does. I'm getting signals from the brain, but I'm just not going to obey them because I lack confidence or I lack dexterity or I like practice or I like strength. It's ridiculous.

You want to cripple the body of Christ? You need to find out what your function is, know what your function is, and do your function to the best of your God-given ability and do it in the power of the spirit, in the guidance of the word, and by that which every joint supplies, every joint, every direction-giving part of the body of Christ enables the rest of the body to know what it does. This is communication functions. This is anybody you can hear.

It doesn't say that there's one joint in the body and it's the right pastor and, well, I listen to him and I get all of my information from him. Every joint, there are all kinds of resources in the body of Christ that provide strength and direction. That's what joints do, every joint.

You can't do a good job of pushing and pulling on a thing unless your ankles and your knees and your hips and the rest of your joints are also in sync. You don't lock your knees and rock back on your hips and then try to push a piano. You're just gonna knock yourself over.

Every joint has to be in concert, has to be focused on the same goal. And there are many sources of good wisdom in the word of God. It's certainly wonderful to find somebody that you feel like you learn well under because of whatever the peculiarities of that presentation are, but it is not the be-all and end-all.

It is not the only one. I will tell you now and forever after now, I do not believe in a doctrine of right pastor. I do not believe it.

I don't find it in the word of God. Multiple apostles and multiple pastors ministered to congregations. Paul said, I'm gonna send Timothy to you this time and I'm gonna send Epaphroditus to you next time.

He didn't say, I'm gonna send you your right pastor, Timothy, and until he gets there, you're just gonna have to try to remember what he said last time he was there, nonsense. Every joint provides, God will use whatever is working. Some pastors rise up and do a good job for a few years and then they lose it, either through failure or through natural aging or whatever it may be.

You can't sit around saying, well, you know, there's just one guy. There's nothing in the word of God that says that. And I eschew and repudiate the whole idea of right pastor.

Listen, the word of God is too precious to say, well, you know, I can only get a hamburger that's cooked by that chef at McDonald's. I'm gonna wait for Bobby to come in on his shift. And when Bobby gets here, I'm gonna eat the burger that Bobby cooks.

Look, it's food, it's spiritual food. It's too important to worry about who cooked it or who prepared it. Get the food.

And if one guy stops cooking, find somebody else. Get the food. The man is not the issue, the message is the issue.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the issue. God, the Holy Spirit is the teacher and anybody you can find, listen to the radio, buy a book, get something off the internet, read some of the old gray heads, C.H. Macintosh. You can learn more from one book of C.H. Macintosh than you can learn from me in a year.

That guy was deeply, deeply knowledgeable of the word of God. And I love to sit down and read Macintosh. I learned something every time I opened one of those books.

There are dozens and dozens of guys. So obviously we all appreciate pastors that have done a good job and we stick with them as long as they are doing a good job. And when they quit doing a good job, throw them overboard like a bad fish and find something else.

It is the word of God. Peter says, you know what, I'm an apostle. That's what I do.

Pastors ought to know what their job is and they ought to do it. Teachers ought to know what their job is and they ought to do it. Elders, in whatever capacity, if they have an administrative gift and they help out, if they have a technical gift and they help out, if they have a comforting gift, if they have an organizing gift, if they have a support gift, if they have an encouragement gift, if they have a prayer gift, if they have a faith gift, whatever it may be.

Some people, that gift of faith is so misunderstood. Sometimes in a group, there's a shock or a setback. You think about these people that got scattered and got blown out of their area and off of their foundations and they're somewhere and everybody's just kind of shell-shocked.

And there's one person that says, you know what, if you think about this, if you kind of put it in perspective, this is actually a good thing. In fact, that's what Peter's going to argue in the next couple of verses. But somebody will have that gift of faith where they just have a knack for seeing things from God's perspective.

They can kind of identify how it might fit into the plan of God. And other people say, you know, I never thought of that, but you're right. It's a gift, it's given to the group, but one person has it and they'll express it.

They speak the truth in love and they just have a gift for seeing how this particular weird circumstance actually could work together for good, could fit. And it's a benefit to the whole body. And you'd walk up to that person and say, what's your spiritual gift? And they would say, I have no idea.

But if you stop and think, you realize that there is a thing and you don't have to post a sign. You don't have to brag on it. You don't have to talk to anybody else about it, but you ought to know what your strengths are and you ought to know whether you're a stabilizing or destabilizing influence in a group.

You ought to know whether or not you are hospitable or comforting or encouraging. There are some people that just have this unerring instinct to do exactly the right thing when the chips are down. There's a bereavement, there's a setback, there's an unexpected circumstance.

And out of nowhere, as if by magic, here's this person with the right word or the right thought or the right action, or they have contacted somebody else who winds up being the stitch in time that saves nine, it's of God. It's just a knack that he gives some people and it ministers to the body of Christ. You don't have to put a name to it, but you yourself ought to know who you are in Christ.

Peter says, I know exactly who I am. I am an apostle of Jesus Christ. He's not the apostle of Peter.

He's not the apostle of the Catholic church. He's not the apostle of anything other than Jesus Christ. That's who commissioned him.

That's where he drives his authority. There's no doubt in his mind. Paul is exactly the same way.

And isn't it interesting that these men, so widely different in their backgrounds, so opposite in their training. One was unlettered, but learned from Jesus for three or four years. The other never walked with Jesus, but had all of the training from the Old Testament and in the Pharisaic tradition.

And yet they both write their letters, Paul, an apostle, Peter, an apostle. They know exactly who they are. Total opposite ends of the spectrum.

Then he says to the Par Epidemios. We talked about this extensively. These are people who dwell among others, but they are not part of that society and culture.

You can say pilgrims, you can say strangers. Some translations have it exiles, but the idea is you're there, but you're not indigenous. You're like an immigrant.

You're an outsider. You're there, but you're not viewed as being part of the fabric of the community. You're strange in some way.

You don't fit. They are strangers of the dispersion, the diaspora in, and then you have these five areas. What I think is really interesting about these five areas is that when you go to Acts, keep your finger in first Peter and turn back to Acts chapter two, the places we're looking at here are Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

Look at Acts chapter two, verse seven and following. You remember the day of Pentecost came and there's the rushing noise, the Holy Spirit, and devout men are there in verse five in Jerusalem. These Jews, they were dwelling in Jerusalem, Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven.

And when it says dwelling in Jerusalem, it means they were there at the moment. It doesn't mean they were longtime residents. They're back for the feast.

And when the sound occurred, the multitude came together and were confused because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were amazed and they marveled saying to one another, look, are not all those who speak Galileans? How is it that we hear each in our own language in which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, and so on. But notice three of the five areas that Peter is writing his letter to were specifically represented in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.

So I've read countless more argumentation trying to say that Peter wasn't writing just to Jewish Christians, he was writing to the churches and that it's just sort of a parallel or a metaphorical use or something. I'm sorry, no. These to whom he is writing are some of the same people that heard

him speak on the day of Pentecost from Pontus, Cappadocia, Asia, Bithynia, and Galatia and so on.

So what kind of dispersion is this? Well, we also find this out in Acts and you may have a text note to this effect somewhere in your New King James, seems like I saw one somewhere. But it talks about the turnover a few pages in Acts, keep your finger in first Peter and turn over to Acts, I think it's in chapter 10. And there is the statement made here that the saints had been scattered, trying to look and find it.

Let me see if I can find the note that I actually put in my notes here, because it tells us about this scattering. Oh, I know where it is. Here we go.

It says that because of the persecution in the days of Stephen, the church in Jerusalem had been scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. And I'll give you the verse here in a second, but here's the point. The dispersion in the New Testament is generally talking about the church.

Of course, it is also Jewish because the first generation of the church in the New Testament is Jewish Christians, but they are scattered within Israel first. The persecution, it took an ugly turn when James was executed and Stephen was stoned. And so they scattered from Jerusalem first.

And it tells us this in Acts and it uses the very same word. It uses the word diaspora. And so what we understand from this is that this is, oh, here we go.

It's Acts chapter eight, verse one, instead of 10. It's right after Stephen in chapter seven. Now, Saul was consenting to his death.

At that time, a great persecution arose against the church, which was at Jerusalem, and they were all scattered, diaspyro, throughout the region of what? Judea and Samaria. What had Jesus told the 11 right before the ascension back in Acts chapter one? You shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and Judea, Samaria, until the end of the world. Well, here's the church that begins at Pentecost in Jerusalem.

And these other Jews had come in for the feast. They heard the gospel preached, but when persecution began and a reaction set in among the Jews against the Christian faith in its nascent stage, they scattered. Where did they scatter to? Well, initially this Jerusalem, the indigenous Jerusalem church, scattered to other places in Judea.

They literally got out of town and they went into Samaria where they knew the righteous Pharisees wouldn't chase them. What Pharisees are gonna go into Samaria? They would go on the other side of the Jordan to avoid Samaria. So, safest place to go is where the holier-than-thou's won't travel.

So they were in Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Only apostles stayed in Jerusalem. Why? Jesus had told them, remain in Jerusalem.

This is your field of endeavor, at least initially. And if you look down a couple more verses to verse four, therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. Now, who is it that's going everywhere preaching the word in Acts chapter eight? These are all entirely, without exception, Jewish Christians.

There are no Gentiles anywhere in the church at this point. And remember, it is Paul who's gonna be the apostle of the Gentiles. And at this stage, he's the guy holding the coats while they're stoning Stephen in chapter seven.

So the gospel hasn't gone to the Gentiles yet. And if you, now here's the one I was looking for. I said Acts 10, it's Acts 11 and verse 19.

Flip over a little bit to Acts 11. 19, now there were those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen, traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, doing what? What's it say? Preaching. At first, they were scattered from Jerusalem into Judea and Samaria, preaching the word everywhere in Judea and Samaria.

Now, after the persecution of Stephen and more time has passed, we're in Acts chapter 11, we're three chapters hence. Now they have traveled as far as Phoenicia. This is old Philistia.

This is up and down the coast, tire and side and up that way. Cyprus, that's the island on your way, getting over to Greece and further. And Antioch, remember Antioch is where they're going to launch Paul from.

Preaching the word to no one but the Jews only. To no one but the Jews only. This scattering and these Jews initially think, well, this is a new development in Judaism.

This is an advance, this is a fulfillment, understandably so. God's chosen people. And now the plan of God is moving forward for them.

This is the background. This is the context for Peter. Peter knows who he is.

He knows what his calling is. And he knows that he is called to be an apostle to the Jewish church. So when he says to the strangers or pilgrims or exiles, or in the non-technical use of the term, gypsies, your immigrants of the scattering, what scattering is he talking about? This isn't the scattering of the Jews beginning after 70 AD.

That hasn't happened yet. This is back in the days of Nero. And this is the church scattered, scattered out of Jerusalem, scattered out of Israel proper.

And these are some of those Jews scattered, not necessarily or entirely by persecution, but scattered by circumstance. Some of them were people that had come for the feast and had gone back home and they're in the scattering. They're in the dispersion.

The Jewish church is no longer concentrated in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria. That's where Peter did his, certainly the bulk of his apostolic work. But they are in these regions.

And so we have these three that were mentioned in Acts. And we also have beyond that, Asian Bithynian. And it's been pointed out, I think by a guy named Hort of Westcott and Hort fame from the end of the 1800s.

He looked at a map and if you start at the Black Sea and go through Asia Minor, this is Northern Turkey today. All five of these regions are Northern Turkey today. Well, if you start at the Black Sea and go ashore and go counterclockwise, you hit each of these in order.

You first hit Pontus, then you hit Galatia, then you hit Cappadocia, then you hit Asia, and finally you hit Bithynia. So you get the idea that Peter was going to dispatch a messenger with this letter. He was going to go across the Black Sea.

He was going to land and then he was going to take this Syriatic to each of these five regions where Jews dwell, Jewish Christians specifically, not just any old Jews, but Jewish Christians. And you know this from the second word in the letter, Peter an apostle. Apostolos is meaningless to law abiding non-Christian Jews.

They don't know apostle. There's no apostle in the Old Testament, whether it's the Hebrew Old Testament or the Septuagint Old Testament. As soon as it says Peter, the apostle, anybody who knows anything about Peter knows that he's not your mainstream law abiding Jew.

He's a Christian. He was with Christ. This is to the Christian Jews in that realm.

Chosen, to the chosen ones. Now, this is where we're going to spend a little bit of time when we come back from the break, because as I mentioned, this has been picked up by your Calvinist reformed theologians and they love to find eclectois and say, this is God's choosing unto salvation. Well, I know you think you know where we're going with this because you've heard me talk about this in the past, but when we come back from the break, we're going to take a look at some passages that I have never connected with this before.

But in my preparation this past week and digging around and exploring there, I am now smacking myself in the head saying, why didn't I find these passages before? Because as usual, the Bible interprets itself. Scripture interprets scripture. And we're going to see beyond any shadow of reasonable doubt exactly what Peter means when he says eclectois.

And I think you'll be pleasantly surprised at how clear scripture is on this point. So we'll pause here and take our break. When we come back, we'll pick up at the word elect.