

FPFWC Christian Development



God's Call

February 2023

Winter Quarter

February 25, 2023

Lesson #4 – Results of the Call

SCRIPTURE TEXT – 1 Peter 2:1-10

ICE BREAKERS-

1. Why is it important that we remember our identity in Jesus Christ as we live out that identity?
2. If accomplishments are not a good basis for security, what is?

Key Verse: “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”—1 Peter 2:9

LESSON BACKGROUND –

Peter was undoubtedly the most prominent among the original 12 apostles. He is named first in listings (Matthew 10:2–4; Mark 3:16–19; Luke 6:13–16; Acts 1:13). His denials of Jesus and subsequent reinstatement are significant markers of his life (John 18:15–17, 25–27; 21:15–17). Some commentators use those and other indicators to see Peter’s life in terms of four chronological segments. The following texts in that regard are not exhaustive but representative:

1. Early ministry

Mark 1:21, 29–30; Luke 5:1–7; John 1:40–42

2. With Jesus

Matthew 16:18; Mark 1:16–20; Luke 9:28; John 1:42; 21:15–17

3. Post-ascension

Acts 4:13; 5:29; 10:1–11:18; 12:1–19

4. Later Life

John 21:18–19; 1 Corinthians 9:5; Galatians 2:11–14; 2 Peter 1

The 27 books of the New Testament include 2 that are ascribed to the apostle Peter. The first of these two is particularly thick with citations from and allusions to various Old Testament passages. By one count, 1 Peter is tied for second place with Hebrews in having the highest percentage of verses (69 percent of its 105 verses) that reflect Old Testament passages; only Revelation has a greater percentage. Peter was particularly fond of drawing from the book of Isaiah (examples: 1 Peter 2:6a, 8–9a, below).

We should wonder who Peter's primary intended audience was. Were the addressees mainly Christians of Jewish background, Christians of Gentile background, or a significant percentage of both? Supporting the theory of a Jewish-Christian audience is the opening verse, which notes the letter addressed "to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" (1 Peter 1:1). The word translated "scattered" is diaspora, mentioned in last week's Lesson Context (see James 1:1; compare John 7:35). The Diaspora is a technical term for Jews who were dispersed among Gentiles as predicted in Deuteronomy 4:25–27; 28:64–68. And Jews certainly did live in the areas listed (compare Acts 2:5, 9–11), provinces located in modern-day Turkey.

On the other hand, supporting the theory of an audience of predominantly Gentile background are certain indicators in 1 Peter 1:14, 18; 2:9–10, 25; and 4:3–4. Proponents of this theory argue that Diaspora, or dispersion, should not be taken literally as applying strictly to Jews, but figuratively as applying to Gentile believers.

LESSON COMMENTARY

2:1–3. With a drastic change of tone, Peter gave stern warnings against heretical teachings entering the church. That false teachers would come is not surprising, as they had arisen among the people of Israel in the past (v. 1). Destructive heresies come, the worst being denial of the Lord who accomplished redemption. The results are that they bring swift destruction upon themselves (v. 1), lead others away, and discredit the Christian cause (v. 2). In their greed they exploit many. But God's judgment will fall. While these false teachers arise among the people and among you, God is able to distinguish between genuine and counterfeit teachers, as well as genuine and counterfeit believers—an important point in determining the identity of those in 2:20–22 who apostatize. They are not genuine believers. Since they were not believers, their denial of the Lord who bought them indicates that the Messiah's redemptive death made provision not just for the elect but even for the lost. The fact that Jesus' death has "bought" all men does not mean all men will be regenerated. It is not until an individual places his faith in Christ's provision on the cross on his behalf that the accomplishment of Christ's work is applied in him.

B. Old Testament Figures Applied to the False Teachers (2:4–9)

2:4–9. Genesis is cited, demonstrating while God's certain judgment punishes sin, He remembers His own. One illustration is the angels who sinned, possibly when they followed Lucifer (cf. Is 14; Ezk 28; Rv 12:4). However these angels have been cast ... into hell (the verb tartaroo), from which they never escape, indicating that this verse cannot describe the origin of demons, for none of these angels ever leaves Tartarus. Peter was probably thinking of Gn 6 when the sons of God cohabited with the daughters of men (see the comments on Gn 6:1–4). The point is clear: God punishes sin. A second illustration is the ancient world in the days of Noah. God delivered eight people but destroyed everything else. Judgment is certain, but He cared for His own. Finally Sodom and Gomorrah are mentioned with the rescue of Lot (vv. 7–8), who was oppressed by the sensual

conduct of unprincipled men. Second Peter presents facts not found elsewhere. Lot was tormented by his surroundings, yet he remained in Sodom. Peter may have been implying that Lot was God's witness to that city, and that Lot was distinct from those who lived in the wicked city. Just as God rescued ... Lot, distinguishing him from the unrighteous with whom he lived, so God will rescue His people and distinguish them from the false teachers whose end is unenviable (cf. the comments on 2:17–22). His conclusion is the Lord knows how to rescue the godly (illustrated by His deliverance of Noah's family and Lot) from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment (as in the case of the demons, the wicked world, and Sodom and Gomorrah).

C. The Future of the False Teachers (2:10–22)

2:10–13a. False teachers are under God's providential control. They indulge the flesh (see Peter's development of this characteristic in vv. 13b–16) and despise authority (developed in vv. 10b–13a). One of the ways their scorn for authority is observed is by their disdain for angelic majesties (lit., "glories" or "glorious ones," a reference to evil angelic beings that are fallen but still give evidence of God's creative power). Not even the good angels (v. 11), who are superior to the evil angels, denounce the fallen angels. This serves to indicate the extraordinary arrogance of the false teachers. They are like brute beasts following their passions (v. 12). They will be destroyed. Their lives will rob them, not pay them a reward. They receive a reward, but not the expected one (v. 13a). They sow unrighteousness; they will reap the same.

LESSON NUGGET – Each believer is a priest before God and can bring sacrifices to the Lord through Jesus Christ. As we worship the Lord, we proclaim His virtues to a lost world. That is what God called Israel to do (Exodus 19:1-9); and they failed. Are we also failing?

Sources: Moody Bible Commentary, Standard Lesson Commentary, Wiersbe Study Bible, The Life Application Bible and The Essential Everyday Bible Commentary