



Old Testament Reading – Isaiah 55:1-13

New Testament Reading – Ephesians 1:1-14

How Should We Then Live “The Search for Authentic Christianity” # 2 1 Peter 1:1

If we believe what the Bible says about the imminent unleashing of the end-time events, including God’s plan to remove this heaven and this earth and replace it with a new heaven and a new earth, **“How should Christians Then live?”**

- The obvious answer would be to live our lives so others see Christ in us and be drawn to Him for their eternal salvation – i.e., to live as “His witnesses.”
- However, with the many different concepts of the Christian faith being preached today, our first priority would be to identify the essential characteristics of authentic Christianity.

- Christianity is listed as the world's largest religion, with over 2.4 billion members worldwide, and with over 100,000 people profess their faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior every day.
- But the question remains: If one-third of the world's people are authentic Christians, why is the world so filled with evil?

The Bible says when the followers of Jesus Christ were called "Christians" at Antioch, it was intended as an insult to them, and as a mockery of Jesus Christ.

- Those who dared to become followers of Jesus Christ were criticized, ostracized, and vilified by their own families.
- When a person expressed their faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord, it was not to join a religion or establish a set of religious rules by which to live.
- In the 1st Century, a person's verbal expression of their faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior was the outward evidence of their:
 - **Unquestionable affirmation** that Jesus was the Messiah, the Savior sent from God.
 - **Unconditional submission** unto Jesus Christ as their Lord and Master.
 - **Unreserved transformation** of their lives, allowing the Holy Spirit to do whatever necessary to conform their lives to the image of Christ.

Saving faith begins with the conversion of the heart, dethroning self, and enthroning Christ as the ruler of our lives. Saving faith then radiates outwardly until it transforms every area our lives spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically.

- Since every person is born with a sin-nature, it is impossible to for anyone to please God.
- In Romans 3:10, Paul said, ***"None are righteous, no not one."***
- In Romans 3:23, Paul said, ***"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."***
- In Romans 6:23, Paul said, ***"The wages of sin is death."***
- In John 3:16, the Apostle said, ***"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believed in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."***
- As Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 ***"Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, He was buried, and raised on the third day, according to the Scriptures."***
- At the cross, Jesus took the "wages" we deserved, and He has offered to exchange His holy nature for our sinful nature.
- Therefore, true conversion occurs when we, by faith, make that exchange and allow the Holy Spirit to transform our lives until we become a ***"new creature; old things are passed away, and behold all things become new."***²
Corinthians 5:17

Conversion changes the **desire of our heart** from our selfishness to Christ's righteousness, and the **destination of our lives** from an eternal hell to an eternal heaven. Therefore, authentic Christianity:

- **Convinces us to believe the truth about Jesus Christ** – Romans 10:17

- Inspires us to **behave like Jesus Christ** – Colossians 3:1-14
- Assures us that we **belong to Christ** – 1 Peter 2:9-10

Therefore, the search for authentic Christianity begins with our acceptance of the doctrine of election.

1. The Pilgrims of the Dispersion –

Peter was writing to Christians who were living in a pagan area and suffering persecution for their expressed faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior.

- Peter wanted those 1st-century Christians to know that even though they were rejected by the world and scattered over the Roman empire, they were **chosen by God the Father** to be a part of His eternal family.
- Peter assured them that God had given them everything they needed to stand firm in their faith, and to suffer persecution for doing so, **for that was what God had called them to do.**
- Christians are not to love the world, neither the things in the world, for while this world is passing away, Christians are just passing through.
- However, as long as the Lord leaves us here, we are to be His witnesses to the world, and be willing to suffer persecution for doing it, **for it is to that end that we have been called.**

2. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father –

Salvation did not originate in the will of man to be reconciled with God but rather in the will of God to reconcile lost man unto Himself.

- ***“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws Him.”*** – John 6:44
- We have heard testimonies of how people came to express their faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior, but the fact is, no man seeks after God; instead, it is always God who seeks after man, and without God’s election, no one would have ever turned to Him.
- In Deuteronomy 7:6, God told the nation of Israel, ***“The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the people on the earth, to be a people for His own possession.”***
- What was true for the nation of Israel is also true for the Church – the “Ekklesia” – the called out and assembled.
- In Matthew 20, Jesus gave us a picture of our election and our work in God’s kingdom.
 - The landowner hired laborers to work, and they all agreed upon their wages.
 - The landowner hired more laborers during the day, and they all agreed upon their wages.
 - The landowner called them, sent them, and rewarded them – a picture of our election.
 - Verse 15-16 – ***“Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things, for many are called, few chosen.”***
 - Other verses used to support the doctrine of election:
 - Matthew 24 – ***“For the sake of the elect,” “His angels will gather the elect.”***
 - John 15 – ***“You did not choose Me, but I chose you!”***

- John 17 – Jesus prayed for those the Father had given to Him.
- Acts 13 – the gospel message shifted from the Jews to the Gentiles, and ***“as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.”***
- Romans 9 – ***“It is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.”***
- 2 Timothy 2 – Paul said the suffering he endured from preaching the gospel was ***“for the sake of those who were chosen of God, that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus.”***
- Ephesians 1 – Christians were ***“chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. “***

God gave us the doctrine of election for three reasons:

- To show us that **He is in charge** and we are not.
- To show us **His grace**, for were it not for His grace, no one would have been saved.
- To **destroy our pride and to provoke us to give Him all the praise and all the glory for our eternal salvation** – He sought us and He bought us with His redeeming blood.