

Romans (47) Christ's Preeminence

Today we continue to consider the work of God's grace on behalf of His elect to bring them salvation. Romans 8:29 and 30 describe five actions that God performs on behalf of His people in order to save them from their sin and to enable them to dwell with Him forever. Paul wrote,

²⁹For those whom He *foreknew* He also *predestined* to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰And those whom He predestined He also *called*, and those whom He called He also *justified*, and those whom he justified he also *glorified*. (Rom. 8:29f)

Last Lord's Day we began to speak of *God's predestination of His elect* "to be conformed to the image of His Son." In Romans 8:28 Paul had mentioned "the purpose" of God with respect to His elect. Then in verses 29 and 30 Paul explained the details of God's purpose. God had purposed to predestinate the ones that He had foreknown in eternity that they would become like His Son in holy privilege and character.

But we then read the ultimate purpose for God having decreed to predestinate us unto this privileged status. It was "*in order that He*", that is, God's Son, "*might be the firstborn son among many brethren.*" We see, therefore, that ultimately our election unto salvation is for the sake of and for the benefit of Jesus Christ. God's purposes are always Christological. God's ultimate purpose for all things is that Jesus Christ has the preeminence. Paul wrote of Christ in Colossians 1:16f, "For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him." That idea is affirmed here. "For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, *in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers.*"

God had one Son from eternity, Who is the Word of God. The Father had determined that His Son would be the King over a great kingdom. But the Father purposed that His Son would not be an only Son, but that He would be the head of a large household, a large family of brothers and sisters who would share in His eternal rule. And so, God purposed to conform you and me—Christians—to be like His Son in order to share in His ruling authority over His kingdom. God purposed that we would become holy as He is holy, making us to be fellow brothers and sisters of His Son, the head of the household of God. As the firstborn son within the family, Christ would have the preeminence and the ultimate authority to govern.

That Christ is the firstborn son reflects the belief and practice common in most patriarchal cultures that the eldest son is the one who inherits his father's name and possessions, for he assumes the headship, the leadership of the family when he came of age. God wanted His Son to be the pre-eminent Son in a family with many sons and daughters. This is a very important theme that would do us well to understand well, and so, I want us to spend some time with this subject today.

This scriptural truth that Jesus Christ is the firstborn Son among many brethren is addressed in different ways in different contexts. Let us examine some of these.

First, we read in Paul's epistle to the Colossians we read of the Father's intention for His Son to have preeminence. Colossians 1:13-18 reads:

¹³He (i.e. God the Father) has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. ¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, *the firstborn* of all creation. ¹⁶For by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. ¹⁸And He

is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, *that in everything He might be preeminent.* (Col. 1:13-18)

In saying that Christ is the firstborn son, Paul was not teaching that Jesus Christ was the first one created by God, as some of the cults teach.¹ Verse 17 makes this clear: “He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.” Christ is the eternal Son of God. The firstborn son as head of the family reflects the common practice of the ancient world as well as the teaching of the Old Testament. For example, we read in Deuteronomy that the law of Moses stipulated a double inheritance for the eldest son. The law commanded that the father “ shall acknowledge the son of the unloved wife as the firstborn by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn is his” (Deut. 21:17).

We may also see that God had regarded the nation of Israel as His eldest son, so he would be destined to have preeminence over all the nations of the earth. God told Moses that he was to declare this to pharaoh. “Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the LORD: “Israel is My son, My firstborn””’ (Exod. 4:22). We have shown that in the New Testament Jesus Christ is set forth as the true Israel, the true firstborn Son of God.

Second, we may also read in Psalm 89 that God speaks of King David as God’s firstborn son and by extension, God would also regard David’s promised seed as His firstborn. In this way we see God’s firstborn son touches on God’s intention for Christ to be King over all of His people. We first read in Psalm 89:1-4 of God’s purpose to exalt David’s son over His people for their benefit.

I will sing of the mercies of the LORD forever;
With my mouth will I make known Your faithfulness to all generations.
²For I have said, “Mercy shall be built up forever;
Your faithfulness You shall establish in the very heavens.”

³“I have made a covenant with My chosen,
I have sworn to My servant David:
⁴Your seed I will establish forever,
And build up your throne to all generations.” (Psa 89:1 NKJ)

Later in the psalm, God promised that He would oversee David as well as his son in order to establish the rule of His kingdom.

¹⁹Then You spoke in a vision to Your holy one,
And said: “I have given help to one who is mighty;
I have exalted one chosen from the people.
²⁰I have found My servant David;
With My holy oil I have anointed him,
²¹With whom My hand shall be established;
Also My arm shall strengthen him.
²²The enemy shall not outwit him,
Nor the son of wickedness afflict him.
²³I will beat down his foes before his face,
And plague those who hate him.

²⁴“But My faithfulness and My mercy shall be with him,

¹ The heresy of the early Arians was that Jesus Christ was a created being, that there was a time when Christ was not existent. (See *The Reformation Study Bible*, footnote on Col. 1:17, p. 1886.) Today’s Jehovah’s Witnesses as well as the Mormons and believe that Jesus Christ was a created being.

And in My name his horn shall be exalted.
²⁵Also I will set his hand over the sea,
And his right hand over the rivers.
²⁶*He shall cry to Me, 'You are my Father,
My God, and the rock of my salvation.'*
²⁷*Also I will make him My firstborn,
The highest of the kings of the earth.*
²⁸*My mercy I will keep for him forever,
And My covenant shall stand firm with him.*
²⁹*His seed also I will make to endure forever,
And his throne as the days of heaven.*

³⁰“If his sons forsake My law
And do not walk in My judgments,
³¹If they break My statutes
And do not keep My commandments,
³²Then I will punish their transgression with the rod,
And their iniquity with stripes.
³³Nevertheless My lovingkindness I will not utterly take from him,
Nor allow My faithfulness to fail.
³⁴My covenant I will not break,
Nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips.
³⁵Once I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David:
³⁶His seed shall endure forever,
And his throne as the sun before Me;
³⁷It shall be established forever like the moon,
Even like the faithful witness in the sky.”

Here we see that God committed himself to exalt David and establish his kingdom. God promised to regard King David as his “firstborn son”, who would rule over His people on His behalf. As such, David would be the greatest of the kings of the earth. But then God also promised David that He would confer this privilege and status upon David’s son who would rule after him. Verse 29 says of David’s son, prophetically speaking of Jesus the son of David who is also the Son of God, ***“His seed also I will make to endure forever, and His throne as the days of heaven.”***

And so, when we read of Jesus Christ as God’s Firstborn Son in the New Testament, it suggests the idea of His preeminence and of His kingly authority over the eternal kingdom of God. We see from Psalm 89 that when the New Testament also speaks of Jesus as the Firstborn Son ruling, that it is a fulfillment of God’s promise to David that He would exalt His Son over “Israel”, which is a position as King over all the nations, even all of the kings of the earth. When the New Testament writers show forth Jesus Christ as God’s Firstborn Son who is now ruling, they are declaring that God’s promise to King David that “his seed” would rule over the nations has been realized. The kingdom of David, that had long before disintegrated due to the unfaithfulness of David’s sons and of David’s people to keep their covenant with God, that kingdom of David was reestablished and that for eternity when God raised Jesus the son of David from the dead and God enthroned Him upon His ascension from the grave. The promised Kingdom of David is the present kingdom of God over which King Jesus, the firstborn Son of God, the promised seed of David rules as King of kings and Lord of lords.

This understanding of Jesus as God’s Firstborn Son, the ruling Son of David over the kingdom that God had promised to David, is in conflict with the teaching of dispensationalism, the most common position held by evangelicals. They teach that the promised kingdom of David is that of a revived earthly and political kingdom in which ethnic Israel is exalted as the leading nation of the Gentile world. They say that this will be realized in a future literal 1,000 year millennium on earth. But repeatedly, in many various ways and contexts in the New Testament, including through the use of this term, Jesus Christ as the firstborn Son, the

New Testament writers assert that the kingdom of David has been restored through the crucifixion, and resurrection of the promised Son of David, Jesus Christ.

This was the teaching of Peter on the Day of Pentecost, that God's promise to King David that his kingdom would be restored was realized when Jesus was exalted upon His resurrection and ascension to the throne of God. Peter declared,

²²Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—²³Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; ²⁴whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. ²⁵For David says concerning Him:

‘I foresaw the LORD always before my face,
For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.
²⁶Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad;
Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope.
²⁷For You will not leave my soul in Hades,
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.
²⁸You have made known to me the ways of life;
You will make me full of joy in Your presence.’

²⁹“Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, ³¹he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. ³²This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. ³³Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.

³⁴“For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself:
‘The LORD said to my Lord,
“Sit at My right hand,
³⁵Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’”

³⁶“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

Jesus Christ is the present ruling Son of David over the future kingdom that God had promised to David. Jesus Christ, the firstborn Son of God, is the seed of David, reigning on his—David's throne.

Third, we also read in Revelation 1 of Christ's pre-eminent position. In the opening greeting of the Apocalypse (which is another name for the book of Revelation), John made reference to the preeminence of Jesus Christ using the word, firstborn:

⁴John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before His throne, ⁵and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, ***the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth.*** To Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood ⁶and made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (Rev. 1:4-6)

And so, again, what is the meaning of the idea of “firstborn?” It suggests that He is the leader, the head of the family of God as the eldest Son who assumes His Father's name and authority. But it also carries

the idea that Jesus Christ as the Firstborn Son of God is the ruler of the kings of the earth. And although other “children” are not mentioned in this context, they are implied. Jesus Christ is the Firstborn, implying that there will be others within His family who will also rise from the dead and share in the rule of His kingdom.

And fourth, another place speaks of these themes in some detail—the Epistle to the Hebrews. There are several passages that we may consider. For example, we read in **Hebrews 1** of the preeminence of the Son of God. Here the writer showed forth the superiority of the Son of God over the angels in order to make the later argument that He revealed God more fully through His life and words than the Old Testament prophets as well as the angels through whom the Old Testament law had been communicated to Israel.

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, ²has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; ³who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴having become so much better than the angels, as *He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.*

⁵For to which of the angels did He ever say:

“You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You”?

And again:

“I will be to Him a Father,
And He shall be to Me a Son”?

⁶But when He again brings *the Firstborn* into the world, He says:

“Let all the angels of God worship Him.”

⁷And of the angels He says:

“Who makes His angels spirits
And His ministers a flame of fire.”

⁸But to the Son He says:

“Your throne, O God, is forever and ever;
A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom.
⁹You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness;
Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You
With the oil of gladness more than Your companions.” (Heb. 1:1-9)

The writer showed forth the Son of God to be above all creatures and so was able to bring a more full revelation of who God is to the world. Here the children of God are not mentioned, but as in Revelation 1, when Jesus is described as the “Firstborn”, what is suggested is that there are others in His family.

In **Hebrews 2** the preeminence of the Son of God is further shown but in addition the idea of Jesus as the firstborn among many sons of God is taught.

¹⁰For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, ¹²saying:

“I will declare Your name to My brethren;
In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You.”

¹³And again:

“I will put My trust in Him.”

And again:

“Here am I and the children whom God has given Me.”

¹⁴Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. ¹⁶For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. ¹⁷Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. ¹⁸For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

In this passage we read of the Son of God as the Savior and High Priest of His People. In verse 10 where it reads, “For it was fitting for Him” is a reference to God the Father. When the writer described the Father’s work “in bringing many sons to glory”, he showed that the means by which God glorifies His elect, here described as “many sons”, is through a Mediator. It was God bringing His “sons” to Himself.

Here we see that God the Father is the One who has wrought our salvation. Do not err as some have done by having the thought that God the Father was against us but Jesus “won Him over” to be gracious to us. We have seen in Romans and it is confirmed here that God the Father is for His people because He chose to view them from eternity to have been in Christ.

In verse 11 the writer speaks of the relationship between the Lord Jesus and His people, whom He calls “brethren”, as we saw in Romans 8:29. Hebrews 2:11 reads, “For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.” “Sanctifies” speaks of God “setting apart” His sons from all others of the world. The setting apart, or sanctifying of “sons” from the world and for “glory” is done through Christ and His sacrifice.² Now in the Scriptures sanctification is set forth in two ways. We are *positionally* sanctified--set apart or distinguished from all others, and *practically* sanctified, by which He makes us to be like Jesus Christ. In Hebrews, however, sanctification is primarily with view to us having been set apart positionally as sons of God. We see in Hebrews 2:11 that because God has set us apart in Christ, He (Christ) is not ashamed to call His people His brethren.”

We then read in Hebrews 2:12 and 13 three Old testament quotations to show “Christ’s solidarity with His people.”³ *The first quotation is Psalm 22:22* in which we read of Christ speaking prophetically to His Father:

***“I will declare Your name to My brethren;
In the midst of the assembly I will praise You.***

² Hebrews 10:10 reads, “And by that will (God’s will) we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

³ F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Eerdmans, 1964), p. 45.

Here the Lord Jesus prophetically describes the time in the future when we believers, all sons and daughters of God, are gathered before the throne of God having been secured and brought there by our Savior, Jesus Christ. It may suggest the formal introduction of His Father to us when He first brings us before the Father after the final resurrection and final judgment. Or it may be the formal presentation of us to the Father on that occasion. But the point that the writer to the Hebrews was making was that this verse in God's holy Word validates the truth that our Savior has sanctified us as God's children, His brethren, and one day we will stand in the presence of the Father and listen to the Son of God (sing) praise to His Father in our presence.

The second quotation is of Isaiah 8:17b., which reads, *"I will put My trust in Him."*⁴ The explanation for the meaning of this verse in context is a very complex matter. **F. F. Bruce** wrote of this difficulty: "If it is easy to see the relevance of the quotation of Psalm 22:22 here, it is less easy to see the relevance of the quotation that follows it."⁵ He then went into a long explanation of its meaning in context of Isaiah 8 and its use by the writer of Hebrews 2.⁶ Bruce wrote this:

"There is something quite outstanding in the case of Isaiah. For it is with him that we begin to see the historical emergence of the righteous remnant, the faithful Israel within Israel, the group in whose survival the hope of the future was assured, one might almost say the *ekklesia* (church) of the Messiah. Certainly, in Isaiah's prophetic ministry the coming King and the remnant are closely associated—or, to use the language of Hebrews, the Son of God and His brethren."

The third quotation is of Isaiah 8:18, which follows immediately the second quote from Isaiah 8:17. It reads, *"Here am I and the children whom God has given Me."* The basic idea is this: Isaiah makes reference to his "children." Although no one was receiving his prophetic word He was proclaiming, he fully anticipated one day some would believe that he had spoken the truth of God. These he referred to as his "children." And so, the reference to Isaiah's children were later witnesses that God had spoken through the prophet. For the writer to the Hebrews, we are the children of Isaiah, who are actually the Christ's "children", who bear witness that God has spoken through Jesus. Therefore, this "remnant" that Isaiah foresaw, who would later understand and believe his testimony, was prophetic of the elect who have faith in God through Jesus Christ; they, Isaiah's "children", are also God's children, who trust in God their Father as His Son also trusts Him.

We next read in our Hebrews 2 passage that our Savior disarmed and defeated the devil so as to secure our assistance. We read in **verses 14 and 15**,

¹⁴Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Death is depicted as an evil that is under the control of satan. God had created man for the purpose of living. Through satan's seducement to sin, mankind was brought under the power of death. How would deliverance come? By overcoming death through the resurrection by a Representative on behalf of mankind. God took upon Himself a human nature, becoming identified with His people. He was subject to all human

⁴ If you were to turn in your Bibles and read Isaiah 8:17 in your English version, it would not read "I will put my trust in Him"; but rather, "And I will wait on the LORD, Who hides His face from the house of Jacob; And I will hope in Him." The quotation in Hebrews 2:11 is a translation of the Septuagint (LXX), which is the Greek translation of the Old Testament. The New Testament writers used the LXX more frequently than the Hebrew Bible. Our English Bibles, however, are translations of the Hebrew Bible. Because we understand the New Testament writers wrote the Word of God that were inspired by God, we believe the words quoted from the LXX were also inspired of God upon them being recorded in the New Testament writings.

⁵ Bruce, *Hebrews*, p. 46.

⁶ I was tempted to provide a long block quote of his explanation, but I realized it would surpass our ability as a congregation to comprehend it and it would involve too much time for me to explain it.

frailties and sufferings, but without sin. And when he died and rose from the dead He conquered death for the benefit of his people, delivering them from death and the fear of death. “Jesus broke the devil's grip on His people when in death He became the death of death.⁷ He became one of us and one with us to defeat our enemy--death, against which we were fearful and powerless. We read similarly in 1 John 3:8, “Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.”

Christ's death and resurrection brought a certainty to the hope of the resurrection that had never before existed. There had been faith in a future resurrection in Old Testament times, but now that one had come forth from death to live forevermore, life and immortality had been brought “to light.” As Paul had written to Timothy, “because of His own purpose and grace, which He gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. (2 Tim. 1:9ff).

We then read in Hebrews 2 of the help that the risen Lord Jesus gives His people through His ministry as their High Priest.

¹⁶For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. ¹⁷Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

As the apostle Paul wrote in his epistles, so the writer of Hebrews asserted that all who are in Christ are children of Abraham (Gal. 3:7), the Israel of God. The promises of Abraham are wrapped up in Christ, to have Christ is to be an inheritor of the promises of Abraham.⁸

Jesus Christ is one with His people. As a high priest under the old covenant was one from among his brethren, so Christ was one with His people. This is necessary because first, he must be able to have feelings of compassion for his people; therefore, it was necessary that he suffer similar sufferings. Second, as high priest He must be faithful steadfast loyalty to God, or, one in whom the people could trust to be true to them.

Through His death Jesus made “reconciliation for the sins of the people.” This was one of the main reasons for His incarnation, in order to expiate, that is, to take away the sins of His people. Sin was the barrier between God and His people. The high priest of the Old Testament could only do in symbol what Christ did in reality.

Our Lord Jesus had suffered through His life-long obedience to His Father. Hebrews 2:18 reads, “For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.” Throughout our Lord's ministry He resisted the temptation to choose a “less costly way” of fulfilling His calling. But He was faithful to His calling, as now we are to be faithful to our calling. We read of the help that He is able to give to us, “He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.” And this is possible, for He who overcame is now able to assist those who experience the same sufferings.

As we leave our Hebrews' passage to return to Romans 8:29f, let us look at Hebrews 3:1f in which the writer draws a just response to all that he had written.

Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house. (Heb. 3:1f)

Notice that the writer appeals to Christians as “*holy brethren*.” In Romans 8:29 we had read, “For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn *among many brethren*. And then he appeals to Christians as “*partakers of the heavenly calling*.” And now we turn to read Romans 8:30 in context:

⁷ Bruce, p. 50.

⁸ Cf Galatians 3:16, 29.

²⁹For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰And those whom He predestined **He also called**, and those whom He called He also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. (Rom. 8:29f)

The first two actions of God that He had exercised toward the salvation of His people was that He foreknew them and had predestinated them that they would be saved. These two actions of God occurred in eternity, before creation. But here Paul stated that the ones whom God chose to save He had in time, in history, **called them** unto Himself in order to give them salvation.

We spoke of God's calling several weeks ago in some detail when we were examining Romans 8:28 which reads, "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, **for those who are called according to His purpose.**" At that time we spoke of God's general call that goes out to all people everywhere calling them to respond to the Gospel. But through that general call God issues His effectual call, which is sometimes referred to as God's internal call. The calling of Romans 8:30 is of course God's effectual call to salvation. Everyone who was foreknown by God, predestinated by God, is called of God.

Having addressed the nature of our effectual calling, we will not repeat ourselves by doing so further at this time, but it would be helpful for us, I believe, to address the task that the Word of God sets before us respecting our calling. We read in **2 Peter 2:10f**,

¹⁰Therefore, brothers, **be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure**, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. ¹¹For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2Pe 1:1 ESV)

Peter exhorted his readers, who he regarded to be "brethren", to make certain that they were numbered among the elect of God and that they had been called of God. How may this be done by us? It would be good for us to perform this self-examination of ourselves to assure ourselves that we are numbered among God's elect and we have been called by God to salvation, that we may be assured in ourselves that we are destined to share in the rule of the kingdom of God.

Let us depart with this thought: "Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to Him who appointed Him" (Heb. 3:1)