

Descriptions Of Who Christians Are

In 1 Peter there is much that is applicable to the life of Christians. It is not a book full of discussions of doctrine like the book of Romans and others. It is very much a book of encouragement to those who were suffering for the cause of Christ. Peter begins by addressing the Christians who were scattered abroad. There are many wonderful names given to Christians throughout the New Testament. Even the name "Christian" has the special meaning of one who is like Christ. Peter gives some thought-provoking statements about those who have Christ as their Lord.

He first addresses them as pilgrims. The idea behind a pilgrim is a person who is not in their home country, who does not belong. This idea of a pilgrim is developed in Hebrews 11:13: *"These all died in faith, not having received the promises but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."* In the context of Hebrews 11, he is describing those who by faith did such amazing things in their service to God. His point in verse 13 is that they did not see the earth as their dwelling place, they were looking toward Heaven. Christians are people who have their focus on the unseen, and they *"walk by faith and not by sight"* (2 Cor. 5:7). This is what Peter calls those who are faithful to the Lord.

He then tells more about the people he addressed in vs. 1. Christians are "the elect." "Elect" means ones who are selected, or chosen, by obedience to the gospel. They are baptized into Christ (Gal 3:27) and into the relationship God set up to save mankind from the foundation of the world (Eph 1:3-5). What an amazing relationship God offers to those who serve Him.

He then speaks of their sanctification by the Spirit and how they are set apart for obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. How wonderful it is to be in such a relationship. They are set apart by the Holy Spirit, and have been obedient to Christ. Children of God realize their lot in life; they are a chosen people, they are set apart by the Spirit and they have an obedient relationship with Christ. These are some of the defining attributes of who Christians are. Praise God for all He has done in setting up this relationship.

Shane Millard