

Making Your Call and Election Sure – 2 Peter 1:10-11

¹⁰ Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; ¹¹ for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Does this passage exhort professing believers to prove that they are true believers, or does it exhort true believers to demonstrate the faith they have? At stake in the first instance is eternal salvation; at stake in the second are eternal rewards. Careful observations answer this question.

Important Observations

1. Peter is convinced the readers are saved. Even in this passage he calls them “brethren” (cf. 1:1, 3, 4, 5-7, 8-9).
2. There is no indication or information about doubts of the readers’ salvation among the readers or in Peter.
3. If Peter is talking about God’s sovereign unconditional election to salvation, there is nothing the readers can do to alter or prove that. It would have been decreed in eternity past.
4. If Peter is talking about proving one’s sovereign election in eternity past by conduct, then that would be impossible. He does not give any objective standard of acceptable proof. Good works and fruitfulness cannot be objectively measured, because they are relative and variable.
5. Peter acknowledges that believers can be barren, unfruitful, and spiritually blind (1:8-9), so conduct cannot prove salvation or the lack of it.
6. Peter is explaining how God has given believers everything necessary for godliness (1:3-4), but it is the responsibility of believers to appropriate these virtues (1:5-7). Verse 9 is the negative consequence of not cooperating with God; verses 8 and 10-11 are the positive consequences of cooperating with God.
7. Peter uses the adjective “sure” (v. 10; *bebaios* from *bebaioō*, to confirm, establish) in the sense of giving evidence to others that the faith they claim is established. He is not seeking to have the readers prove the existence of their saving faith to himself or to themselves. The visible testimony of their conduct will confirm (show to be reliable, valid, or established; see

the same word and its verb form used in Matt. 16:20; Rom. 15:8; 2 Cor. 1:7; Heb. 2:2, 3; 6:19; 2 Peter 1:19) to others the faith that the readers say they have (cf. Rom. 4:2, John 13:35; James 2:21-25).

8. The terms “calling and election” echo what Peter heard Jesus say in Matthew 20:16 (Majority Text) and 22:14 when He said “For many are called, but few are chosen.” Both Peter and Matthew use related words meaning “chosen, select.” But many would argue that sovereign salvific election should precede calling (cf. Rom. 8:30). The reverse word order used by Jesus and Peter indicates that they are not discussing eternal salvation. Jesus uses this phrase in His two parables to comment about many who are invited to work or to a wedding, but only a few get the reward of full payment for a partial day’s work and only a few get special privileges at the wedding feast. Jesus is indicating that rewards are reserved in the kingdom for a faithful few (cf. Rom. 8:17b; 2 Tim. 2:12).

9. The context of this passage is not about eternal salvation, but eternal rewards. Peter is helping the readers prepare for their eternal future as he is also preparing for his (1:13-14). He knows they are established in the truth (1:12), but wants them to remain steadfast (3:11, 14, 17-18). They can prepare for an eternity of rewards by appropriating God’s power to live a godly life (1:3-4) and putting on godly virtues (1:5-7). The result is not simply that they gain entrance into God’s kingdom, but that they enjoy a rich entrance that “will be supplied... abundantly.” The passive form of the verb *epichoregeō* (to supply, provide) indicates that God bestows this reward. Peter knows that all of his readers will enter the kingdom (even the unfruitful ones), but the faithful ones will have a rich welcome much like the victorious athlete or conqueror who is celebrated and rewarded when he returns home. Not all Christians will have equal rewards in the kingdom (cf. 1 Cor. 3:11-15).

Conclusion

Peter is not addressing the *fact* of his readers entering the kingdom, but the *quality* of that entrance. All believers will enter the kingdom, but only the faithful ones are richly welcomed as a special reward. If this passage is intended to have readers prove their salvation by their works, the result will be futile introspection and endless uncertainty about their salvation, because measuring conduct is a subjective exercise. But as an exhortation to grow in faithfulness because they are surely saved, this passage reminds believers that they should increase in faith and virtue. If we please God in our growth, He will reward us with a rich welcome into His kingdom. Eternal salvation comes through faith alone; eternal rewards come through faithfulness.