

1 PETER 1:1-12



The Fullness of the Redemptive Work Announced

I. Peter Greets His Readers as “An Apostle of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:1–2)

A. In 2 Peter he adds “a servant,” or bonds slave (2 Peter 1:1).

Apostolic authority was extremely important for the true knowledge of Christ, and the gospel depended on the reality of divinely revealed propositions of truth. Paul used the term everywhere except in Philippians (“servants”), 1 Thessalonians and 2 Thessalonians (where he names his coworkers), and Philemon (“prisoner”). The apostolic office was the first and most authoritative gift Christ gave the church in His ascension (1 Cor. 12:28; Gal. 1:16–17; 2:8; Eph. 4:11; Col. 4:16–18; 1 Thess. 2:3–8, 13; Heb. 2:3–4; Jude 17–18). The apostles saw the risen Lord, were given a special commission from Him, were promised the revealing operations of the Spirit for their teaching ministry, and had confirming manifestations of power (2 Cor. 12:12). It was important that these churches knew of Peter’s apostolic status.



Sylvia's Comments: Peter was first known as Simon, and seems to have been quite an impetuous rascal. He and his brother, Andrew, were fishermen on Lake Galilee when Jesus called them to become “fishers of men” (Matt. 4:19). Peter had quite a common beginning for someone who became the first of Jesus’s disciples and an apostle, a writer of Scripture, a church leader, and a martyr for being a Christ follower.

Christ changed Simon’s name to Peter, meaning “the rock.” Although Peter didn’t always appear to be as steady as a rock, he was “foreknown” to be a pillar of the church. Here he confirms his calling as an apostle, and is in the role of church-encourager, teacher, and admonisher. This letter was probably written from Rome (1 Peter 5:13) around AD 62.

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- B. Peter addresses Christians who have been dispersed throughout Asia Minor because of a flurry of persecution.

Although Peter is the apostle to the circumcised, internal evidence indicates that he addresses not only Jewish Christians, but also those who had formerly lived their lives thoroughly immersed in a particularly debased gentile culture (4:3–6). Even though they are in an exiled situation, Peter reminded them that their position is not thereby uncertain, for in the purpose of God, they are elect (1:1).



Sylvia's Comments: About two hundred years before Christ, Israelites were dispersed across the known world, but they were not necessarily believers. Peter is probably writing to Christians who had been forced to leave Jerusalem and Rome because of persecution. No matter when they were scattered from home, he is writing to believers. Christians are

God's elect and the world's rejects. They left property, family, and heritage to worship as Christians without fear for their lives. This "dispersion," as it is called, will spread the gospel seed to many other places, where it will grow and flourish. Romans 8:28 tells us that God uses all things for good for His chosen people, and this is one great example.

- C. This election proceeds in an orderly and certain fashion from the divine foreknowledge to the effectual operation of the Holy Spirit in setting them apart for faith in Jesus, particularly in relation to His shedding His blood for them.

The salvation of God's elect is a fully Trinitarian salvation proceeding from the one God who lives eternally as a three-personed Being. This God-in-three-persons covenanted to bring salvation to sinners, with each person performing those aspects of the work peculiarly appropriate to His distinctive personal properties and relation within the triune God.

1. "According to the foreknowledge of God the Father." Foreknowledge does not mean only precognition, but also an unchangeable divine affection, the kind of affection given peculiarly to one who is particularly loved. See its use in 1:20 where it obviously means an eternal and purposefully productive love concerning the Son of God, who would take to Himself our nature in order to be the Christ. It is also used in a chain of issues concerning God's eternal purpose (Rom. 8:26), a purpose founded in foreknowledge and ending in glorification. That foreknowledge is God's setting His heart upon

certain persons beforehand. The outflowing of love as an originating power is peculiarly reflective of the Father's properties and the eternal fountain of the love intrinsic to the persons of Son and Spirit and characteristic of the divine essence.

2. "Sanctification of the Spirit." The Spirit sets apart those who are foreloved and chosen by the Father. This setting apart involves the threefold operation of convincing of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8–9). The Spirit accompanied the preached word with a special power (cf. 1 Thess. 1:4–5) and granted the new birth to these chosen ones. This operation implies a full and eternal accord with the Father's will and love.
3. "For obedience to Jesus Christ." This is faith in Christ, but is called obedience because true faith always contains in it the recognition of and submission to divine authority. Note 1 Peter 1:21, which emphasizes belief and faith, followed immediately by 1:22, which states that the new birth purifies the soul by "obedience to the truth." Note also 2:6–8, in which belief is set opposite of disobedience to the Word. See also 1:9 and 1:14 for the interchangeableness, in Peter's vocabulary, of faith and obedience (cf. 3:1).
4. "And for sprinkling with his blood." Note the references to Christ's blood/death in 1:11, 19; 2:21–24; 3:18; 4:1, 13; and 5:1. This phrase would be particularly striking to dispersed Jews, for they are thereby reminded that Passover and the Day of Atonement have been fulfilled once and for all by the Lamb

(1:19) that was slain, Christ Jesus Himself. His suffering, His death, was truly substitutionary. He took death for us. To be sprinkled with His blood means that it is peculiarly and certainly efficacious for those to whom it is applied.

5. Peter adds this capstone of “grace and peace” under the assumption that God’s elect will find this divine kindness multiplied, taking on proportions of an ever-increasing abundance. Grace and peace will be sufficient for each day and situation in this fallen world in our unending battles with the world, the flesh, and the devil. Moreover, in heaven, these blessings will be absolutely unhindered by any opposition, but will still be multiplied unendingly. God remains infinite, and even in heaven we are finite, so these blessings from the triune God may increase by multiplication forever. “Grace and peace” provide a summary of the statements given just above concerning God’s purpose in saving a people. Grace relates to the whole of what flows from election, and peace relates to reconciliation by the blood of Christ and peace of conscience from the call and sanctifying operation of the Spirit.



Sylvia's Comments: Even this hard providence was planned before creation. The Father’s eternal plan, to show His holiness, grace, justice, and love to all creation, cannot be changed by man’s actions. In fact, man’s actions are part of this plan. God’s foreknowledge doesn’t mean that He’s looking at creation from a distance. He is actively directing every thought, word, and action.

The Holy Spirit is transforming sinners who are chosen to be God's people, called out of Satan's evil dungeon and transferred to the kingdom of light in Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:13). The Spirit breathed life into us who were dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1). Light flooded our minds and hearts to show us Christ, and He gave us a hunger and thirst for truth and love. We were given the ability to hear the Father, to worship Him, and to live eternally with Him, all through the obedience of Christ to Him, even to death.

We have been chosen by and restored to the Father and have been given life by the Spirit for obedience to Christ. We are permanently cleansed from our sin by His blood, as other Bible passages say. As we go through trials, persecutions, and death, the Holy Spirit continually sprinkles us (metaphorically) with Christ's faith-sustaining, life-giving, ever-effective blood.

Our triune God is acknowledged and credited here. Working in complete agreement, God, in three persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—delights in choosing and restoring.

After pointing out their common experience and state of being chosen by the Father in Christ, exiled by the world, and being sanctified, or changed, to be like Christ, Peter exuberantly heaps on grace and peace. This blessing comes straight from God because only God can provide the grace and peace that calms us no matter our circumstances. Peter's blessing is not for a sprinkle, but for a cloudburst of grace and peace.

II. Peter's Energetic Benediction (1 Peter 1:3–5)

Peter gives an energetic benediction to the Father, specifically as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is no other God than this one who identifies Himself in such a

way. This passage is filled with the initiative and power of God and the blessings that His foreknowing love has prepared for us.



Sylvia's Comments: This is great! Peter is calling for praise so loud that it drowns out everything else. God, who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, has invited us boldly to approach His throne, being confident that He hears us. The priests of the Old Testament, but not the rest of Israel, were privileged to go into the holy places. Certain people had access, and others were kept at a distance. Here Peter is telling us that we can enter God's presence with praise because the Father has opened the door.

In John's gospel, Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be born again—of the Spirit—in order to enter God's kingdom (John 3:6–7). Peter expands on that to say that we are born through God's mercy into a living hope, the eternal kingdom of God. As Christ was resurrected from utter death, we are given life because of Christ's death and resurrection. As He joined us in death, we join Him in life. Christ is our only hope, and He is vibrant, radiant, and inexhaustible—our eternal flame of hope—the lamp in God's kingdom (Rev. 21:23).

A. Look at the assertions of divine initiative.

If God has used their circumstances to this point to work in them the eternal plan of grace that He determined for them, they do not need to fear any temporal circumstance. It is under the beneficent providence of God. As He has used their situation to work His plan of grace and peace to this point, so He will continue to do. Mercy denotes that God withholds a punitive strike