

2 PETER 1



Living by Holy, Effectual Truth

When military troops are sent to hostile territory, they are not sent without a determination that their efforts will be successful, without sufficient supplies and power, or without a clearly stated purpose. The achievement of these goals will be accomplished by the faithful fulfillment of a number of intermittent goals along the way as the supplies and plans are implemented as they go. Called out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's beloved Son (Col. 1:13), we are now living in hostile territory, but we are not without provisions or purpose. Peter knew that the time of his death was drawing near (2 Peter 1:14). As an apostle, he knew his calling was to give to the church the revelation that he had received, to make sure that they had it available to them at any time (1:15). He saw difficult times ahead, particularly in the form of challenges to the truth, both in doctrines and in morals. We have the provisions of grace and truth to equip us in "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (1:3). Peter points his readers to the power of grace, the necessity and efficacy of Scripture, the presence and deadliness of heresy, and the certainty of the glorious return of Jesus.

The purposes and plans of men may fail through lack of sufficient foresight, lack of effective execution, or an underestimation of the extent of power that was needed. God lacks none of these. His purpose is perfect, the means He has deployed to effect it are exactly proportioned to the task, and the power involved at each stage of the plan is “according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come” (Eph. 1:19–21).

I. God’s Work of Preservation (2 Peter 1:1–4)

Verses 1–4: God acts powerfully and aggressively in taking the initiative in salvation and sanctification and perseverance to the end.

A. Verse 1: Peter as an apostle and servant immediately appointed by Jesus Christ writes with the authority given to the apostles to warn against both false teaching and false living. This probably is written very close to the time of his death (1:12–14). Even though he has special knowledge and authority as an apostle, he writes to those whose faith is of the same quality and content as his.

1. The faith they have received or obtained is not qualitatively different from that of the apostles—“a faith of equal standing” or “equally as dear.” That which constitutes New Testament faith is the same for every believer. Peter calls their faith “of equal standing with ours” (1:1). It could be translated “of equal worth.” Faith, both in content and in heart

commitment, that unites to Christ is the same in every person and in every generation. It will remain the same until Christ returns.

2. Faith constitutes the body of revealed truth that Peter expounds and defends throughout this epistle. This is a common use in the New Testament. Paul speaks of some who swerve “from the faith” (1 Tim. 6:21) and of those who are “disqualified regarding the faith” (2 Tim. 3:8). Jude wrote of “the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). Jesus commended those in Pergamum who “did not deny my faith” (Rev. 2:13). Peter gives one aspect of resisting the deceit of the devil as being “firm in your faith” (1 Peter 5:9).
3. Faith also is that grace-induced submission to Christ and His righteousness that is the natural expression of having seen the glory of Christ, having tasted the goodness of God, and having been captured by the word of truth in Scripture. Thus, faith is the “assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” by the physical eye but seen in the soul (Heb. 11:1). Faith occurs when the affections are wrapped around revealed truth.
4. It is natural, therefore, that the two meanings are combined, for the grace of true faith cannot thrive where the content of true faith is diminished. John wrote, “This is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith” (1 John 5:4). Here he combines the two meanings, for he immediately asks, “Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1 John 5:5).

Paul wanted to see the Thessalonians face to face to “supply what is lacking in [their] faith” (1 Thess. 3:10). By that, he meant they would respond to the challenges of the world more steadily and faithfully with a richer and more comprehensive grasp of the truth as it is in Jesus.



Sylvia's Comments: Peter introduces himself first as a servant or bondsman of Jesus Christ. His reason for living is to show others who Christ is. He is willingly and completely dedicated to Christ and no other. Promoting the kingdom of God as Christ proclaimed it keeps his blood pumping. As an apostle, he is also called and sent by Christ in a special sense. The reminder that he is an apostle is reaffirming that he was actually with Christ, living day to day with Him during His fleshly time on earth. As an apostle, he is set apart to share the good news of how God has opened the gates for all the nations to come in and rest from their works—to find grace and mercy. The faith that people from all the nations have is the same faith that the apostles have. It is not a secondhand faith or inferior to that of the apostles or Jewish believers. It is a uniting faith that comes to us through “the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.”

B. “By the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ” (v. 1).

1. The syntactical emphasis determines that the words “our God and Savior Jesus Christ” all refer to the one person. Peter gives strong emphasis to the deity of our Savior Jesus Christ. If Jesus saves, then Jesus is God; Jesus saves, so Jesus is God. The eternal Son of God is of the same divine essence as the eternal

Father and carries forth, by His own perfectly consonant will, the will of the Father.

2. Here Peter shows that every grace contained in the body of truth and every grace by which we are drawn to embrace it has been obtained “by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.” His obedience to death as our substitute has opened the floodgates of heaven on those to whom He reconciled God. The same thought is found in Romans 8:32: “He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?”
 3. Note the strong emphasis on righteousness throughout this epistle of 2 Peter: 2:5; 2:8–9; 2:15 (“unrighteousness”), 21; 3:13.
- C. Verse 2: Those blessings peculiar to redemption—grace and peace—increase in their effect and intensity as our knowledge “of God and of Jesus our Lord” increases.
1. This construction emphasizes both the Father and the Son as separate persons. It brings to view the idea of the premundane covenant of redemption that involved the Father’s sending of the Son to be the mediator of salvation.
 2. The same idea informs Paul’s greeting comments to Titus (1:1–4), where Paul speaks of the “faith of God’s elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness.” He closes his salutation to Titus with the words, “Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior” (1:4). Because of this commonly owned covenant in the triune God,

Paul, in the third chapter, can call God the Father “our Savior,” (v. 4) and then proceed to give expression to the work of the Holy Spirit (v. 5) and Jesus Christ “our Savior” (v. 6) in the merciful covenantal arrangement for redemption. It is one redemptive transaction executed in different stages by the one true God existing eternally as three persons.



Sylvia's Comments: Next he points out how this grace and peace can grow through more knowledge of God and Jesus. Through Christ, God invites us to live in His house, eat supper with Him, relax in the den with Him, go for a walk with Him, and talk about whatever we want with Him. If we get to know God better, our eyes, minds, and hearts are opened to His unlimited grace and peace that protects His people from the assaults of pride, materialism, lust, lies, and tainted truth. What more could we want? God delights in revealing His nature to us: loving, merciful, giving, unblemished, all wise, faithful—you can add to the list. His peace insulates us from the heavy artillery of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

And how do we live in this spacious home of grace and peace? By knowing the Father and the Son through what the Spirit has revealed in Scripture. The Old and New Testaments point us to Christ as King and Savior. The words are the actual words of God, given to men by the Holy Spirit, to speak directly to us so we can be restored to His family. God shows us who He is and calls to us from an open door by speaking to us through the Scriptures.

D. Verse 3: “His divine power has granted to us.” In the execution of His covenant to save, God manifests the power that is necessary to grant all things consistent

with the purpose. This is not according to our power, nor is it dependent finally on our response as the final determining cause. Our response is indeed just that—a response to the operation of His power manifested in a way consistent with the purpose of rescuing us. This rescue includes release from the condemnation, as well as the corrosive and finally destructive effects of sin. What are these?

1. All that pertains “to life and godliness.” Nothing is omitted. Christ does not become Lord in our lives subsequent to His becoming Savior. No, He brings His lordship with Him as He intercedes for those for whom He shed His blood and conquers them by His grace.
 - Because of sin, we were born and walked our courses of supposed life under a sentence of death. The grace of Jesus has given a spiritual resurrection in anticipation of the eventual physical resurrection. Life means that the “life I now live in the flesh” (Gal. 2:20) manifests the hope of eternal life. The values of eternity become our guiding principles even in a fallen world.
 - “Godliness” means a deep and reverent consciousness of living *coram deo*—before the face of God. Before the one to whom we owe existence, all that we have, and the assurance of eternal life, we live practicing an awareness of His presence and His holiness.
2. “Through the knowledge of him.” Because of the results, we must conclude that this is a transforming