

1 Peter 1

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The Translation:

We have chosen the *New Living Translation* for this study. It is a thought-for-thought translation made by 90 translators.

Introduction to 1st Peter:

1. The writer was named Cephas by his parents, but was renamed “Peter” by Jesus. Though he struggled, Cephas was the rock (*Petros*) used by the Lord for presenting the gospel first to Jews on Pentecost and the Gentiles at Caesarea in Acts 10.
2. This letter was written during a time of persecution, probably sparked by the Roman Emperor Nero. The time is about A.D. 65, some years after Paul had written his prison epistles and about the same time he was writing 2 Timothy. All of this was before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.
3. As in other documents of the time, the writer's name is at the beginning so the scroll did not have to be unrolled to learn who the author was.
4. There is little dispute about the identity of the writer. The late **Bruce Oberst** writes:

Eusebius, often called The Father of Church History (A.D. 260-340), said, “One epistle of Peter, called his first, is acknowledged. This the presbyters of ancient times have quoted in their writings, as undoubtedly genuine.”
5. While Paul's writings emphasize *faith*, John's emphasize *love* and James stresses *good works*, Peter's emphasis is on persevering and consistent **hope** in the midst of trials from the Roman Government. The persecutions in the Book of Acts were by Jews and protection had been offered by the Roman Government. Now the persecutors are former protectors.

6. In 1 Peter 1:1-2, Peter states that he is writing to believers in five Roman provinces in Turkey. Representatives from this area were present when Peter first preached the gospel on Pentecost, some thirty years before. Acts 2:9.

7. Although this is debated, the letter was probably written from Babylon as stated in 1 Peter 5:13. There is no reason to take the word



Babylon as standing for Rome. It was Babylon on the Euphrates, where a large number of Jews lived.

(1:1) This letter is from Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ. I am writing to God's chosen people who are living as foreigners in the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

A. About Peter's Authority

- Where did Peter get the right to be heard? He is **an apostle of Jesus Christ**. He has a direct commission from the Lord to speak on His behalf. Jesus promised His 12, including Peter:

When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own but will tell you what He has heard. John 16:13

This book of 1 Peter is authoritative.

- An **apostle** is “a delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders” — *Thayer's Greek Lexicon*.

- In the lists of the 12 **apostles**, **Peter's** name always comes first. Jesus had picked **Peter** to lead the group, probably because he was slightly older. He was indeed more aggressive and outspoken. While **Peter** was never raised above the other 11 men by title, he was, never-the-less, the accepted leader of the **apostles**. His name is used about 200 times in Scripture, more than any other of the 12 apostles.

B. About The Chosen People

The book is written to those **who are chosen**—believers, both Jews and Gentiles. These **chosen live as foreigners**. They are on a spiritual journey. All believers are on this trip. Some song writers encapsulated this truth:

“This world is not my home, I'm just a passing through.”
—Jim Reeves

“I am a stranger here, within a foreign land.”

C. About the Map

How did the faith reach this area?
Some were at Pentecost (Acts 2:9) and may have been among the 3,000 baptized that day. Also, Paul had evangelized in this general area.



(2) God the Father knew you and chose you long ago, and His Spirit has made you holy. As a result, you have obeyed Him and have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ. May God give you more and more grace and peace.

A. God's Foreknowledge

Are some predestined to be saved while others are lost?
No, Peter is saying that God in His foreknowledge knew

that believers would be saved. They each had free will and could choose just as God in His foreknowledge knew that Jesus would die on the cross. But Jesus was free to make the choice Himself.

B. Our Obedience

Obedience is a character trait of believers. Our calling is to be faithful servants to the Lord, **obeying** His every command. Obedience is demonstrated in our baptism into Christ and should grow from there. **Obedience** is more than a mental exercise.

C. The Father, Son And Holy Spirit

See here the work of the Godhead in man's redemption. All three members are mentioned in this verse, **God the Father** planned it, the **Spirit** made it work, and **Christ cleansed** it with His **blood by** His death.

D. Grace And Peace

Peter uses the greeting that Paul uses: **Grace and peace**. These words were meaningful to both Gentiles and Jews. **Grace** was a common greeting among Gentiles while **peace** was (and is) used among Jewish people. The churches that Peter wrote to contained both Jew and Gentiles. In the Christian realm, **grace** had a much higher meaning.

(3) All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by His great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation, (4) and we have a priceless inheritance — an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay.

A. Praise God For His Mercy

Praise that we have been born again needs to be on our tongues. Our new birth is possible only because the **Father** raised **Jesus from the dead**. Nicodemus learned that he had to be **born again**. This new birth is into a kingdom where Jesus is the king. It is a spiritual kingdom, not a physical one like Nicodemus was asking about. John 3:4.

B. Praise God That Jesus Is The Christ

Christ is equivalent to the Hebrew word *Messiah, the Anointed One*. Jesus has been anointed as a Prophet speaking for God, a Priest representing mankind to God and the King of God's kingdom on earth as well as in heaven.

Additionally, Jesus is **Lord**. He is the absolute owner of all and believers are to acknowledge this.

C. What Believers Can Expect

We can now be born in an entirely new dimension, unknown before the resurrection. In this new kingdom, we have a **priceless inheritance** waiting that is out of reach of **change and decay**. No more replacing what is worn out or has rotted or molded as we do now.

Furthermore, we **live** with great **expectation**. For us today, our end is not in a nursing home followed by a memorial service, it is an **inheritance** in **heaven**.

(5) And through your faith, God is protecting you by His power until you receive this salvation, which is ready to be revealed on the last day for all to see.

A. How We Are Protected

God **protects** us — but through our own **faith**. He wants our total trust in Him. If we have adequate **faith**, we are protected, even from worry.

B. Future Salvation

Peter speaks of **salvation** in its outcome at the **last days**, not in the present. **Salvation** is spoken of in other places as being in the present, also. Viewed as the **last days**, it's like having a brand new house open for all of our friends to see. We can give the grand tour!

(6) So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you have to endure many trials for a little while. (7) These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold — though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith

remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.

A. **Trials Will Test Us**

As believers, we have every reason to be **glad** and **joyful**. There will be **trials** to **test** us for being **genuine**. It's like testing **gold**, but our faith is far more valuable.

B. **Roles Will Be Reversed**

The Lord knows about each trial and we will receive **praise, glory and honor** from Him when He comes again! Such a role reversal!

(8) You love Him even though you have never seen Him. Though you do not see Him now, you trust Him; and you rejoice with a glorious, inexpressible joy. (9) The reward for trusting Him will be the salvation of your souls.

A. **You Love Him Without Seeing Him**

These believers had not **seen** Jesus like Peter, who knew Him for more than three years, yet these people relied on the testimony of others who did know Jesus and they **loved** Him. And their **joy** was beyond **expression**.

B. **The Reward For Their Love**

No unrequited **love** here. Believers will **enjoy** eternal **salvation**. **Trusting**, faith, is not an end in itself, but transports us to eternal **salvation**.

(10) This salvation was something even the prophets wanted to know more about when they prophesied about this gracious salvation prepared for you. (11) They wondered what time or situation the Spirit of Christ within them was talking about when He told them in advance about Christ's suffering and His great glory afterward.

A. **The Prophets Of Old Wondered**

Believers since the resurrection of Jesus experience **salvation**, but Isaiah, Jeremiah and other prophets didn't understand it even when they predicted it by the power of the **Spirit**. They wanted to know more. But the **prophets**

nearly uniformly ended their prophecies with words of hope.

B. The Climactic Prophecy

It was Isaiah who delivered his majestic 53rd chapter about the coming Jesus. Suffering and glory were combined and left the grand old **prophet** puzzled. The Treasurer returning to Ethiopia from Jerusalem was reading *this very passage* and asked Philip to explain it. The details are in Acts 8:26 and following. We can thank the Lord that we live this side of the resurrection of Jesus. No need to be puzzled now. Just look at the evidence.

(12) They were told that their messages were not for themselves, but for you. And now this Good News has been announced to you by those who preached in the power of the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. It is all so wonderful that even the angels are eagerly watching these things happen.

A. These Are Exciting Times For Us

The old prophets didn't get their questions answered, but the **Holy Spirit** has come and **empowered** men to announce the **Good News**.

B. These Are Exciting Times For The Angels

This is the true World Series and the angels are watching each play. They care about what is happening on earth. Jesus said:

In the same way, there is joy in the presence of God's angels when even one sinner repents."

Luke 15:10

(13) So think clearly and exercise self-control. Look forward to the gracious salvation that will come to you when Jesus Christ is revealed to the world. (14) So you must live as God's obedient children. Don't slip back into your old ways of living to satisfy your own desires. You didn't know any better then.

A. Tips From The Trainer

- **Think clearly.** It will take some meditation time and prayer.
- **Exercise self-control.** We are not to be controlled by our desires, but do those things that please the Lord.
- **Look** ahead. Use God's Word as a *Global Positioning System (GPS)*. The believers that Peter wrote to may not have had the written Word yet, but they had living prophets.
- **Live as obedient children.** Backtalk to the Father is discouraged.

B. Warning From The Trainer

Avoid slipping into your **old** life. Back then **you didn't know any better**, but now, you are going against your conscience.

(15) But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy. (16) For the Scriptures say, "You must be holy because I am holy."

A. The New Rule Is Holiness

A key word for a believer's vocabulary is "**holy**." This means "separated." God is separated from all sin and desires His people to be the same. So Peter says to use the **holiness** rule **in everything you do**. The rule never is applied by asking "Can I get away with this?"

B. Holiness Is An Old Practice

While **holiness** may be a new word for believers, it has a history and Peter quotes from Old Testament Scripture as evidence:

For I am the LORD your God. You must consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy.

Leviticus 11:44

He could have quoted many other Old Testament Scriptures because the idea is repeated often.

(17) And remember that the heavenly Father to whom you pray has no favorites. He will judge or reward you according to what you do. So you must live in reverent fear of Him during your time as "foreigners in the land."

A. The Father Is An Unbiased Judge

Dr. James Smith writes concerning verse 17:

The supreme, impartial Judge of all the earth is our Father. He deals with men in judgment according to the actual work of each individual without regard to outward appearance, i.e., he looks at the true character of each person. Peter in no way nullifies the factor of God's grace. *Obedient* children are not perfect. For those imperfections God's grace is more than sufficient. *Rebellious* children, however, are a different matter. God will not tolerate rebellion. There will be no favoritism extended.

God is an unbiased Judge, but He is also our heavenly Father.

B. We Now Live In A Foreign Land

William MacDonald, writing in the *Believer's Bible Commentary* says:

We are living in a foreign country, exiled from heaven. We should not settle down as if this were our permanent dwelling. Neither should we imitate the behavior of the earth-dwellers. We should always remember our heavenly destiny and behave ourselves as citizens of heaven.

(18) For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And the ransom He paid was not mere gold or silver. (19) It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God. (20) God chose Him as your ransom long before the world began, but He has now revealed Him to you in these last days.

A. God Paid A High Ransom Price For Us

- In Roman times, a slave could be purchased from slavery and set free. There were times when a buyer would purchase a slave at the slave market and give them freedom. The word *redeemed* describes this. **Ransom** is the amount paid.
- Keep in mind that we are very valuable to the Father. We have been **ransomed** by a gift from the Father Himself: the **blood of Christ**, the **spotless Lamb**.

B. The Ransom Price Fulfills A Very Old Plan

- This was not a spontaneous purchase. It was planned before this world was made. Now this **Lamb** has appeared in your time for all believers. God raised him from the dead and gave Him glory so you can believe at the present time and have hope for the future.
- When Peter was writing this was the **last days**. The law of Moses was no longer in force for Israel because Jesus had fulfilled it. We are in new times and there will not be another phase of God's dealing with mankind. This church age is final. These are the **last days**.

(21) Through Christ you have come to trust in God. And you have placed your faith and hope in God because He raised Christ from the dead and gave Him great glory.

A. The Resurrection Is Our Basis Of Faith

Peter lays great stress on the resurrection of **Christ**. Here, it is the basis for confidence in God. A God who can raise from the dead is a God of unlimited power. **Trust** Him.

B. From A Grave To Glory

- Jesus received great glory from the Father following His resurrection. Consider Hebrews 1:3:

The Son radiates God's own glory and expresses the very character of God, and He sustains everything by the mighty power of His

command. When He had cleansed us from our sins, He sat down in the place of honor at the right hand of the majestic God in heaven.

(22) You were cleansed from your sins when you obeyed the truth, so now you must show sincere love to each other as brothers and sisters. Love each other deeply with all your heart.

A. Cleansed When We Obeved

- Again, Peter connects **cleansing** from our **sins** with **obedience**. In his sermon that opened the doors of the kingdom, we are told:

Peter replied, "Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38

- The believers who were listening that day were told to repent and be baptized. That's how they obeyed the truth. Believing alone was not what God wanted. They certainly didn't earn salvation by taking these steps. Salvation was a free gift of the Heavenly Father.

B. Move From One Kind Of Love To A Higher One

- With insight, **Bruce Oberst** writes about the two words translated as love:

In the first (*philadelphia*) we find *phileo*, from the verb *phileo*, a word that is supposed to have personal pleasure or joy as a motive of the lover.

In the second "love" (*agapao*), we have a nobler word, where the lover loses his affection on the worthiness and preciousness of the thing or person loved. If this be a clear-cut distinction which holds true here, Peter's exhortation is to further develop and grow from a *phileo* type of love to an *agapao* type.

- Not only must we show sincere affection to our brethren, we are to upgrade our love to loving regardless of any attraction we may experience.

(23) For you have been born again, but not to a life that will quickly end. Your new life will last forever because it comes from the eternal, living word of God.

A. The New Birth Leads To Eternal Life

- Our first birth lasts less than 100 years while the new one will last forever because it comes from **the eternal God**. Typically our bodies begin to deteriorate around 35-40 years of age.

(24) As the Scriptures say, "People are like grass; their beauty is like a flower in the field. The grass withers and the flower fades. (25) But the word of the Lord remains forever." And that word is the Good News that was preached to you.

A. This Life Is Temporary Like Flowers And Grass

- The Scripture Peter quotes is Isaiah 40:6:

A voice said, "Shout!" I asked, "What should I shout?" "Shout that people are like the grass. Their beauty fades as quickly as the flowers in a field.

B. The Good News Lasts Forever

- We have our brief moment on this planet, then wither and die. God's Word, on the other hand, continues to speak to generation after generation. It lasts. And that is what they heard from the apostles and those who followed them.