

1 Peter

When I look at a book of the Bible I like to know a few things before I start:

Author

This letter claims to be written by the Apostle Peter in the first verse.

It was unanimous that the early church fathers believed that the Apostle Peter wrote this letter. Church leaders who followed the early church fathers also believed the Apostle Peter wrote this epistle.

Date & Place

Peter tells us that he wrote this letter from Babylon (1 Peter 5:13). There are two locations this could have been- Jerusalem and Rome. It would appear that it would have been Rome, probably in the early 60's AD.

Audience

Peter wrote to churches in what was called Asia Minor- modern-day Turkey. Paul had reached much of this area but the places that Peter mentions Paul did not go.

It would seem that either Jewish believers who had been at Pentecost (Acts 2) started these churches or Peter had gone there and started these churches.

It would appear that these churches had a large Jewish presence (1 Peter 1:1). It should be noted that there would have been Gentiles as well.

Purpose

This letter was written to encourage Jewish Christians along with Gentile believers who were going through trials and persecution.

Chapter 1 Verse 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.

Peter- which was common in ancient letters. Peter tells us right up front who was writing this letter.

Peter was a person like **us**. Sometimes it is hard to identify with Paul because of who he was and how smart he was. But Peter was like us; he put his foot in his mouth, would get **discouraged** easily, and failed his Lord.

Peter was one of the Twelve Disciples chosen by Jesus (Mark 1:16-18) and with James and John, he was a part of the **inner group** of disciples.

Peter's given name was **Simon** but upon meeting Jesus Jesus changed his name to **Peter** (John 1:42) or Cephas in Aramaic- Petros in Greek. The word means *stone* or *rock*.

Peter would be a **foundational** stone in the building of the early church. In fact, almost half of the book of Acts is dedicated to Peter's ministry in the early church.

Peter also calls himself an Apostle. The Apostles had a unique function in the church. They laid the foundation of the church and they wrote the New Testament. There were **five** requirements to being an Apostle:

- 1) **Seeing** Jesus (1 Corinthians 9:1)
- 2) **Commissioned** by Christ (1 Corinthians 15:6)
- 3) Performed **miracles** (2 Corinthians 12:12)
- 4) New teaching that was **backed** up by Scripture.
- 5) **Character**

The office of apostle was an important office in the early **church** (Ephesians 2:20).

Peter was one of these Apostles and he wanted these churches- who he had probably **never been** to- to know who he was and the importance of his words.

God's chosen people- Peter is telling them **three** things:

- 1) Your salvation is no **accident**- God chose you long before you chose Him. God took the initiative, and you were saved for a purpose.
- 2) Your salvation is not based on what you have done- Your salvation is based on who God **is**. He loves to take people who have shipwrecked their lives and make them His- because of His mercy and **grace**.
- 3) Your sins were **known** by God- Our sins past and future were known to God and he still chose us because he loves us.

who are living as foreigners (exiles of the dispersion [ESV])

- Exiles- refers to being temporary residents
- Dispersion- this is a technical term referring to the Jews being dispersed throughout the world due to the Assyrians and the Babylonians.

But Peter does not use the definite article so this probably not only refers to the Jewish believers but also all Christians- who spiritually are aliens in this world.

The Area

This area is a large area of modern-day Turkey. Peter is addressing a larger area with a number of believers.

Verse 2

according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood:

May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

Three Important Things

- 1) Foreknowledge- This verse starts out with a tough word- what this word involves God predetermining to know someone. In other words, he is telling the people who received this letter that your salvation was no accident. God chose you before the foundation of the world to have a relationship with him.
 - a) This means that your salvation is not based on what you have done but based on who God is- a God of mercy and grace.
 - b) This means God knows your past sin and your future sins and still chose us.
 - c) This means we have been chosen by God to be pilgrims (this is not our home). This also includes going through suffering as Christ did.
- 2) Spirit's sanctification- (sanctifying) means to separate- from sin to God, from darkness to light. In other words, through obedience to Christ, the Holy Spirit works in us to make us more and more like Christ (1 Corinthians 6:11; Titus 3:5).
- 3) Sprinkled by the blood- So many times we read this and don't think much about it. But Peter is telling us something very important.
 - a) Back in the Old Testament when a leper was healed/made clean they were sprinkled with blood. Like the leper, when we accept Christ as savior we have been sprinkled with his blood and made clean- God has forgiven our sins.
 - b) Back in the Old Testament, when the nation of Israel promised to obey the Ten Commandments they entered into a covenant with God, and they were sprinkled with blood. Peter, when making this statement is saying we have entered into the new covenant with Jesus (1 Corinthians 11:23-26) and we are to obey him.
 - c) Back in the Old Testament, priests were sprinkled with blood for service and Peter is telling us we have been sprinkled for service. Peter is telling us in this phrase (and his Jewish readers would understand this):

- i) We have been made **clean**.
- ii) We need to **obey** him.
- iii) We are to **serve** him.

In verses 3-12, Peter talks about our salvation and how God took the initiative, and how he showed grace and mercy into our lives. It should be noted that this is actually one long sentence that can be broken down into three different parts.

Part 1: Verses 3-5- Our Salvation is Secured

Verse 3

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

- 1) The first thing we see in this verse is God the Father and His great mercy. Any time we talk about our salvation God's **mercy** is at the heart of it. The word "mercy" that is used here means "**compassion**, pity". God took **pity on** us and provided salvation for us.
- 2) The Lord Jesus Christ- all of what the Bible tells us about our Savior is found in this title
 - a) **Lord**- sovereign ruler
 - b) **Jesus**- incarnate Son
 - c) **Christ**- The anointed Messiah-King
- 3) Peter uses a pronoun to describe **our** relationship with Christ. **Our** the Sovereign Lord of the universe belongs to us- **wow**.

Verses 4-5

to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Peter talks about our glorification. In other words, our **eternal life**. And he uses four words to describe our salvation being secure.

- 1) **Imperishable**- beyond the reach of decay
- 2) **Undefiled**- free from the stain of sin
- 3) **Unfading**- does not lose its beauty or desirability
- 4) **Guarded**- means two things: "to watch over, to guard" and that God is the one who guards our salvation.

Part 2: Verses 6-9- Rejoicing in Trials

Verse 6

In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,

Rejoice- is an active response of thankfulness to God.

For a little while- this is talking about the length of a trial compared to eternity.

Various trials- the word that Peter uses refers to both persecutions but also sickness, accidents, and any negative experience we might go through.

Verse 7

so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Genuineness- refers to **approval** after an evaluation or testing

Tested by fire- Peter is writing about the process of purifying gold and how the various trials we go through **improve our faith**.

Praise- this is the **“well done”** God will give his saints for going through those trials.

Glory- believers will share in Christ’s glory at this second coming (Colossians 3:4).

Verse 8

Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory,

The readers of this letter, **like us**, have never seen Jesus, and Jesus talked about us in John 20:29. Even though we have never seen him there is **great joy** when we live for him.

Verse 9

obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Peter is not talking about getting salvation. He is talking about our **rewards** for living out this salvation.

Part 3: Verses 10-12- Old Testament Prophets Wanting to Know

Verse 10

Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully,

The Old Testament prophets from Moses to Malachi wrote about the **Messiah** and the saving grace that would come but they never fully **understood** what Christ would do. They wanted to know about what they wrote about.

They **knew** God's promise of salvation that would come to all peoples far beyond Israel (Isaiah 45:22, 49:6, 52:10; John 10:16; 1 John 2:2) and they wondered how it would be done.

Verse 11

inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.

The prophets were not questioning the **validity** of their prophecies but rather the timing of the prophecies.

Verse 12

It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

The prophets did not understand what they were writing but they were writing prophetically and generations in the future would benefit from the information they were passing on.

We sometimes wonder what angels do and Scripture tells us a couple of things they do:

- 1) **Oppose** demons (Daniel 10:13; Jude 9)
- 2) **Carry** messages from God (Daniel 8:16-17, 9:21-23; Matthew 2:13; Luke 1:19, 28)
- 3) Other **divine** service (Psalm 91:11-12; Hebrews 1:14)
- 4) Angels look into our salvation
 - a) "**Things**" refers to features of salvation
 - b) "**Long**" is a strong desire or overpowering impulse, "What is this?"
 - c) "**Look**" this word means "to stoop, bend over, to look, to look into"

What Peter is telling us is that the angels want to understand our salvation so they can give **glory** to God.