

1. What did the text mean to the biblical audience?

Structure diagram 1 Peter 1:1-2

Peter,

an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who are

elect exiles of the Dispersion

in Pontus,

Galatia,

Cappadocia,

Asia,

and Bithynia,

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.

Key words:

Apostle – direct messenger of Jesus Christ; Significantly, Peter introduced himself as an **apostle**. “The supreme importance of the apostles is suggested by the fact that the phrase *of Jesus Christ* is attached to no other New Testament office: we do not read of *teachers of Jesus Christ* or *prophets of Jesus Christ* or *evangelists of Jesus Christ*, only of *apostles of Jesus Christ*.” (Grudem)

Peter did nothing to explain or justify his apostleship and did not add a phrase like “by the will of God” as Paul did on some occasions (1 Corinthians 1:1, 2 Corinthians 1:1, Galatians 1:1, Ephesians 1:1, and so on). “Unlike Paul, Peter’s apostolic status was never questioned. This brief phrase indicates Peter’s authority.” (Hiebert)

Elect – chosen; **Exiles** – strangers; pilgrims; The idea behind the word **pilgrims** is of someone who lives as *a temporary resident in a foreign land*. **Pilgrims** are sojourners and travelers, and **pilgrims** live in constant awareness of their true home.

The early Christian writing *The Epistle to Diognetus* gives the idea of what **exiles** are. “They inhabit the lands of their birth, but as temporary residents of it; they take their share of all responsibilities as citizens, and endure all disabilities as aliens. Every foreign land is their native land, and every native land a foreign land... they pass their days upon earth, but their citizenship is in heaven.”



Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia: These specific areas were places Christianity had extended in the first several decades after the beginning of the church. It was probably the route that the original courier of Peter’s letter followed in distributing the letter. This was not written to any one congregation, but intentionally written to *all* Christians.

Elect according to the foreknowledge: Peter first described his intended readers as **elect**. This means simply that they are *chosen*, chosen by God in a particular and unique sense.

In sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience: – dedication to holiness and moral purity; becoming like Christ; An essential result of election is **sanctification** and **obedience**. While some would like to think that election has only to do with going to heaven or hell, Peter reminds us that it also touches

earth. A claim to be among the **elect** is doubtful if there is no evidence of **sanctification** and **obedience**.

Blood was sprinkled on people in two cases in Levitical law. One of them was the symbolic cleansing of a leper (Leviticus 14). And the other was the consecration to priesthood of Aaron and his sons (Leviticus 8). Neither of those fit this. Peter's not talking about a leper and he's not talking about priests.

What other occasion occurs in the Old Testament that has to do with sprinkling blood on people? This one other time occurred before the Levitical legislation, and it is so significant that it is mentioned twice in Hebrews (9:19-22 12:24). Look at Exodus 24:3-8:

In ancient times, when two people made a covenant, that covenant was usually cut in blood, and that blood would be placed on both parties. That was a blood covenant of commitment to keep a pact. It was common in ancient cultures, and it happened that day. And the covenant was this: **"We promise, O God, that we will obey your Word."** It was a covenant of obedience sealed in blood.

There was a bond being made between God and the people. The people are promising to keep His Word. And the blood on them indicates their part of the covenant. The blood on the altar indicates God's part of the covenant. Sprinkling the blood on the people symbolized their commitment to obedience. Sprinkling the blood on the altar symbolized God's commitment to faithfulness.

This has a tremendous parallel for the Christian and the matter of election.

When these believers, to whom Peter wrote, were saved by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, making their past election a present reality, they were brought into a covenant with God that was sealed by blood. It was a covenant of obedience.

In the death of Jesus Christ, there was not only salvation provided, but also a covenant of obedience. **When we come and accept the sacrifice of Christ for us, we are not just accepting the benefit of His death on our behalf. We are covenanting with Him in obedience. And that is consecrated by blood by the death of Christ.**

What Peter is concluding is that when you were set apart by the Holy Spirit, you were set apart to God for a life of obedience sealed in the blood of Christ. Obedience is inseparable from the sprinkling of blood. It is inherent in the covenant: Acts 5:32; Romans 6:17-18

You can't talk of salvation without talking of obedience. And the blood was sprinkled symbolically on us as our part of obedience and on God as His part of faithfulness. We have been elected to obey.

What is God's part? The blood sprinkled on us symbolizes our commitment to obedience. The blood sprinkled on the altar, on God, symbolizes His commitment to forgiveness.

Grace – kindness, favor

Peace – harmony, tranquility, freedom from worry

Multiplied – grow, abound

Need to know more:

The dispersion: One of the most interesting and strategic "*dispersions*" occurred in Acts 8, after the stoning of Stephen, at which time

"a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem and they were scattered (diaspeiro) throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria" and "those who had been scattered (diaspeiro) went about preaching the word." (Acts 8:4)

The church was scattered like seed so that they might spread the "seed" of the Word of God, the Gospel.

The *scattering* that Peter is referring to took place prior to the world-wide dispersion associated with the Roman conquest and destruction of Jerusalem and the Holy Temple in 70AD. Therefore, at the time of Peter's writing the majority of the Jews living outside of Jerusalem and Palestine were living there by their own choice, the chief reason being the opportunity for business activity which the Gentile centers of population afforded. They were in these strategic population centers when the Christian missionaries contacted them. They had been providentially sown there by the Lord of the harvest, to become themselves disseminators of the gospel which was to be given to the Jew first and then to the Greek (Gentile).

The foreknowledge of God: One cannot speak of foreknowledge in the case of God: with him there are no "distinctions of time." Tertullian

He calls the things that are not as if they were and sees what is not as if it already existed.

"For what is foreknowledge if not knowledge of future events? But can anything be future to God, who surpasses all times? For if God's knowledge includes these very things themselves, they are not future to him but present; and for this reason we should no longer speak of God's foreknowledge but simply of God's knowledge." Augustine

"Whatever is past and future to us is immediately present in his sight." Gregory the Great

"However the times roll on, with him it is always present." Marius Victor

Ephesians 1:11

Acts 2:23

Psalm 33:11

Daniel 4:35

The freedom of the will does not, as we will discover later, consist in indifference, arbitrariness, or chance, but in "rational delight." This rational delight, rather than being in conflict with the foreknowledge of God, is implied in and upheld by it. The human will, along with its nature, antecedents and motives, its decisions and consequences, is integrated into "the order of causes that is certain to God and embraced by his foreknowledge."¹⁰¹ In the knowledge of God things are interrelated in the same web of connections in which they occur in reality. It is not foreknowledge, nor is it predestination, that now and then intervenes from above with compelling force; every human decision and act is motivated, rather, by that which precedes it, and in that web of connections it is included in the knowledge of God. In keeping with their own divinely known and ordained nature, contingent events and free actions are links in the order of causes that, little by little, is revealed to us in the history of the world. - Bavinck

Summarize what the text originally meant in a past tense statement:

As Christians living as exiles in non-Christian world, they needed the reminder that suffering isn't an abnormality but an expectation. And, given to God, suffering can produce gold rather than ashes.

Despite living in a hostile world, Christians can live in hope and holiness by submitting to God.

2. What are the differences between the biblical audience and us?

3. Write down the theological principle(s) found in the text.

1 Peter 1:1-2 conveys key theological principles including divine election, Trinitarian work in salvation, and the believer's identity as chosen exiles called to obedience.

Election by Foreknowledge: Believers are "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father," emphasizing God's eternal plan and relational knowledge in choosing His people before creation.

Sanctification by the Spirit: The Holy Spirit sets believers apart for holiness, consecrating them as a distinct community with a mission to reflect God's character amid worldly opposition.

Obedience and Covenant Cleansing: Election leads to obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by His blood, echoing Exodus 24's covenant ratification and pointing to justification, purification, and new covenant life.

4. How does our theological principle fit with the rest of the Bible?

See step above – Write in present tense.

Same: As Christians living as exiles in non-Christian world, they needed the reminder that suffering isn't an abnormality but an expectation. And, given to God, suffering can produce gold rather than ashes.

5. How should individual Christians today live out the theological principles? Apply it!

This step involves several sub steps.

a. **How did the original author want his audience to apply the meaning?**

b. **Make your applications specific.**

Bring the truth to the specifics of your life. Don't leave things vague and unclear.

**Specifically, ask what should I (and others) be, think, or do in light of this text's meaning?

- Being addresses the character.

- Thinking addresses our understanding of God and our inner thoughts on everything else.

- Doing addresses the action we take in response.

Application questions for 1 Peter 1:1–2.

"Elect exiles" (chosen strangers)

- In what ways does being a Christian make you feel like a "stranger" or outsider where you live, work, or study?

- How does knowing God has "chosen" you change the way you think about rejection, criticism, or marginalization from others?

- If your primary identity is "God's chosen," what labels or identities from culture need to become less central in your mind?

Scattered but known by God

- Where do you feel most "scattered" or unstable in life right now, and how might this passage remind you that God sees and knows exactly where you are?

- How could you intentionally encourage another believer this week who may feel isolated or alone, as Peter did for believers scattered in different regions?

- What practical step can you take to live as a faithful Christian "where you are" instead of wishing you were somewhere else?

"According to the foreknowledge of God the Father"

- How does the truth that God knew you and set His love on you before you knew Him affect your confidence in times of failure or suffering?

- When you think about your future, do you tend to focus more on uncertainty or on God's wise and fatherly foreknowledge? How could your prayers reflect more trust in Him?

- What fear or anxiety could you consciously place before God this week, reminding yourself that none of it surprises your Heavenly Father?

“In the sanctification of the Spirit”

- Where do you see evidence that the Holy Spirit has been changing you over the last year (attitudes, habits, relationships)?

- Is there an area of life where you resist the Spirit’s work of setting you apart for God (entertainment, speech, relationships, use of time)? What concrete change could you make?

- How can you more actively cooperate with the Spirit’s sanctifying work—through Scripture, prayer, or accountability—this week?

“For obedience to Jesus Christ”

- In what specific area is Jesus clearly calling you to obey, but you have been hesitating or delaying? What is one step of obedience you can take today?

- How does remembering that you were chosen “for obedience” (not just for forgiveness) reshape the way you view God’s commands?

- Who in your life needs to see a visible example of obedience to Christ, and what might that obedience look like in front of them?

“And for sprinkling with his blood”

- When you sin, do you tend to run from God or to Him? How does the picture of Christ’s blood cleansing you encourage you to come back quickly in repentance?

- Are there lingering feelings of guilt or shame that you still carry even though Christ’s blood has cleansed you? How can you preach this verse to yourself in those moments?

- What regular practice (confession, communion, journaling, singing) could help you remember more often that you are fully forgiven and cleansed?

“Grace and peace be multiplied to you”

- Where do you most need God’s grace and peace multiplied right now—home, work, health, finances, or relationships?

- If you truly believed God desires to multiply grace and peace to you, how would that change the way you speak, react, and make decisions this week?

- Who around you needs to experience God’s grace and peace through your words and actions, and what will you do for them in the next few days?