

6. 1 Peter 1 of a Verse by Verse Study of James, 1 Peter, and 2 Peter

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Peter, declared here to be an apostle, writes with the validity and reliability promised to all the apostles by the Lord himself in John 14:26-27:

26 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. 27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives.

Paul describes how this inspiration includes the apostles' written word in Eph 3:3-5:

. . . the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. 4 In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5 which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets.

As an apostle of Jesus Christ, Peter wrote words inspired by the spirit of God. In 1 Peter 5, we will discover that Peter was also an elder in the church; thus, he also had day to day experience in the affairs of a congregation—perhaps in Jerusalem (Acts 15:6-7) or perhaps in Babylon (1 Peter 5:13).

To God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, 2 who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood:

Grace and peace be yours in abundance.



The phrase “God’s elect and strangers to the world” clearly identifies the audiences as Christians affected by events that scattered them abroad. Luke recorded one such event in Acts 8:1: “On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.” Many such events could have displaced Christians in keeping with the term “scattered.”

It is interesting to note that Paul’s missionary journeys were more to the south in Asia Minor. John, as recorded in the

Revelation, had influence in eastern Asia Minor, as he wrote to the seven churches of Asia. The connection between Peter and these saints might have been his own non-recorded visit there; or it might have been through his acquaintance, Silas, who may have worked with these churches. 1 Peter 5:12 tells us, “12 With the help of Silas, whom I regard as a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God.” Peter elaborates on what it means to be God’s elect in 1 Peter 2:9-10:

9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

The Goal of Your Faith—the Salvation of Your Souls

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a

living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade – kept in heaven for you, 5 who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

Peter connects our living hope, our inheritance, and our salvation in this thematic statement of the letter. Our living hope is in the new birth that he gave us. Jesus described this birth to Nicodemus in John 3:5-7, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. 6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. 7 You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'" God made this hope possible by raising Christ from the dead. Paul wrote of this hope and the new birth in Titus 3:4-7:

4 But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

The hope of a heavenly home is the inheritance that cannot fade away. Until God reveals this inheritance, He shields us by his power. This salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last day contrasts directly with the salvation sought and searched for by the prophets (1 Peter 1:10 ff).

6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that your faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, 9 for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Intervening between now and this great salvation are all kinds of trials causing Christians to suffer. Peter uses the analogy of gold refined by fire to illustrate the value of this suffering. Our suffering must be genuine, and it must result in praise, glory, and honor when Christ comes. In suffering, we may joyfully know, beyond expression, his glory and our salvation. Without seeing him, we love him, and we believe in him. In keeping with Peter's theme, he concludes that we are receiving the goal of our faith, the salvation of our souls.

10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, 11 trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. 12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

This salvation, which has come to us, was only spoken of by prophets, who were instructed that it would be revealed by the suffering Christ to us through the apostles (see notes on 1:1). Now we have the gospel preached by these apostles and prophets inspired by the Holy Spirit who was sent from heaven. Not only the prophets but also the angels longed to look into what has come to us. How fortunate we, as Christians, are.

The Preparation for Your Salvation

13 Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. 14 As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. 15 But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; 16 for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

However, we must be ready to receive that salvation by preparing our minds for action. These actions include self-control, a hope set fully on the grace to come at the revelation of Jesus Christ, obedience as children, and a non-conforming to evil desires. Like Christ, we are to be holy in all that we do.

17 Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in

reverent fear. 18 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. 20 He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. 21 Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

We are just strangers in this world, and as strangers, we must live in reverent fear. We were not redeemed with material things—silver and gold—but with the precious blood of the Christ, a lamb without blemish. Hebrews adds to the meaning of this perfect sacrifice Heb 9:12: “12 He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. Further, without such a sacrifice there can be no forgiveness according to Heb 9:22, “22 In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.” It is through this precious blood that everything is possible for us. Heb 10:19-22 teaches:

19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

The new and living way provided by this purification is the church. Paul taught in Eph 5:25-27:

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

God chose this plan for purification, before the foundation of the world. It did not come from any human, past or present, no scholars, no reformers, no councils, no synods, no theologians. He has revealed it in these last times for us: no latter day revelation, not developmental church doctrine, no voices speaking directly to us. What we have and all that, we have is from God, planned before the foundation of the world. Our faith and hope must be in God.

Purification by Obeying the Truth

22 Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. 23 For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. 24 For,

God and Christ have completed the eternal plan for redemption—God before the foundation of the world, and Christ, the lamb, upon the cross. But there is no purification except we obey the truth for we have been born again, by the washing with water through the word (Eph 6:26).

This chapter ends with a profound and eternal truth:

*"All men are like grass,
and all their glory is like the flowers of the field;
the grass withers and the flowers fall,
25 but the word of the Lord stands forever."*

And this is the word that was preached to you.

Now it is up to us to obey that word, as the Holy Spirit revealed it, and the apostles and prophets preached it.