

1 Peter Intro + 1:1-12

Introduction

- Background
 - Most likely written around July, 64 A.D., when Rome burned
 - Nero diverted the initial outcry against him for starting the fires by charging the Christians as scapegoats, which worked since they were already hated by many
 - Authorship: Peter (Greek)/Cephas (Aramaic) ~ *stone* or *rock*; originally *Simon/Simeon*
 - The only objection to Peter's authorship arises from the excellent, classical style of Greek
 - Unexpected that an "uneducated" fisherman would generate some of the best Greek in the NT
 - Peter was not illiterate, but only without formal, rabbinical training in the Scriptures
 - Greek was a widely spoken second language in Palestine & dictation was common (v5:12)
 - Theological ideas were exactly the same as those expressed by Peter's sermons in Acts
 - 1 & 2 Peter is quoted extensively by early church leaders, who all recognized Peter as the author
 - Peter was martyred about two years after writing this letter
 - Written in "Babylon" (v5:13)--could be a code for Rome to avoid further retribution on Christians
 - Recipients: Gentiles in Asia Minor
 - There is no mention of the law, plus the locations listed in 1 Pet 1:1 describe a circle of a major portion of what is Turkey today
 - Believers were living in a secularized, pagan society that was ever growing increasingly hostile
 - Themes:
 - How to live victoriously in the midst of hostility 1) without losing hope, 2) without becoming bitter, 3) while trusting in the Lord and 4) while looking for His second coming.
 - Christians must stand against the enemies of God and silence critics by the power of holy lives
 - The Christian life, though blessed, is a call to victory & glory through the path of suffering
 - Jesus is the model of one who maintained a triumphant attitude in the midst of hostility
- ⇒ **Reformation Study Bible:** It is a tribute to God's grace that the apostle who once dared to rebuke his Master over the prospects of the Messiah's suffering (Matt. 16:22-23) and who flinched in fear when identification with Jesus became risky (Matt. 26: 69-75) is in this epistle the Holy Spirit's spokesman to declare the necessity both of Christ's unique sacrificial suffering and of Christians' suffering for His name.

1 Peter 1:1-2 Greetings From Peter

- *v1 An apostle of*--not “the,” “the chief”, etc., but one of the group, showing humility, even after being one of the “inner circle”. In **1 Pet 5:1**, he refers to himself as “a fellow elder”
 - *Apostle*--one sent; *of*--ownership: Peter is saying “Jesus **owns** me,” just as He does each of us
 - *Elect exiles*--an astounding message from a Jew; he is calling Gentiles the “chosen people” of God!
 - The Jews seemed to have forgotten they were chosen not for privilege but for service, as are we
 - Some rabbis held that Gentiles were only fit for the fires of hell
 - *Elect*--from Greek “called out ones”: brought into the Kingdom of God in His saving grace
 - *Exiles (Diaspora: “sojourners of the Dispersion”)*--a Jewish concept from the Assyrian & Babylon captivities; Christians were not dispersed as the Jews, but are dispersed as alien residents
 - Dispersion for us is not from judgement but from God’s hand of salvation and commission
 - Christians pass their days upon the earth, but their citizenship is in heaven
 - We must be exiles from the passions of the flesh on our path to growth in Christ; recognition of such must govern the way we live in anticipation of Christ’s return
 - We live in the world but are not owned by it; we strive to show Jesus to others & bring them to Him
 - **Reeder¹**: Peter is telling us: We will never live as we ought **in grace for Christ** without the knowledge of who we are **by grace in Christ** and what we are **through grace for Christ**.
 - *Pontus. . . Bithynia*--the locations describe a circuit of a major portion of Turkey
- *v2 Foreknowledge*--not *what* but *whom* God knew! *Know*--an accurate, personal knowledge
 - Before you existed, God chose to love you personally & intimately in the covenant of grace and to love you not because He saw what you would do, but *in spite* of what He knew you would do
 - The “golden chain”--unbreakable since it depends on God’s sovereign grace rather than on our fickleness. How incredible to receive His unmerited, undeserving, pure love!
 - **Romans 8:28-30** And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹For those whom he **foreknew** he also **predestined** to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰And those whom he predestined he also **called**, and those whom he called he also **justified**, and those whom he justified he also **glorified**.
 - *Sanctified by the Spirit*--sent by God, who sets you apart from sin to a sacred relationship with Jesus Christ & leads to a lifestyle desiring *obedience*, which even if not perfect, evidences election
 - *Sprinkling of the blood*--symbolizes 1) cleansing (**Lev 14:1-7, 2**); setting apart for service to God (**Ex 29:20-21**); 3) sealing the covenant to obey God (**Ex 24:1-8**)
 - Such sprinkling brings to mind Moses’ sprinkling sacrificial blood on the Israelites
 - Christ’s blood completely atones for sin & brings the believer into the New Covenant
 - Note that we have a Trinitarian Gospel--Father, Son and Holy Spirit all have critical involvement
 - *Grace and peace multiplied*-- more than a simple wish repeated more than 20 times in the NT
 - *Grace*--unmerited mercy & power to raise us from the death of sin. It enables us to come to Jesus for a new 1) life status of justification, 2) lifestyle of sanctification whereby we seek to be like Him
 - *Peace*--1) from God in Christ, whereby Jesus has overcome the world’s tribulations (**John 16:33**); 2) with God in Christ, whereby there is no condemnation (**Rom 8:33-34**); 3) the peace of God in Christ, which will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus (**Phil 4:4-9**)

¹ Dr. Harry Reeder, Senior Pastor of Briarwood Presbyterian Church of Birmingham AL & theology professor until his eternal rest in 2023. Gave the most absorbing sermons I’ve ever heard, even though they typically lasted 45 minutes! These class notes were influenced by the series of 49 sermons on 1 Peter by Dr. Reeder spanning from 2017 to 2019.

- *Multiplied*--we need all we can get: 1) to grow in Christ, 2) face trials for Christ in a broken world, 3) live winsomely for Christ, and 4) after all, there is an endless supply, so there's no rationing!

⇒ **Reeder:** Know-Be-Do: Know that you are elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, sanctified by the Spirit, sprinkled clean with obedience. Now do what He has called you to do and that it to be a resident alien in the nations of this world. You are an exile in your obedience to Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:3-12 A Living Hope

• Overview

- All one sentence in the Greek, so it bears consideration as a whole before analyzing the parts
- Sets the framework for guidance in the rest of the letter on how to live for Christ in an evil world
 - v3-5 Praise God for the blessing of our salvation inheritance from Christ
 - v6-9 Praise God for the blessing of our salvation trials, which come because of the truth we treasure
 - v10-12 Praise God for the blessing of our salvation truth
- We need to always be aware not just what we have in Christ but what we are called to do in Christ
- Our focus in worship is to ever rejoice in the blessing we have in Christ as Creator, Redeemer & Sustainer; such worship in community focuses on our inheritances so we can scatter to carry out the imperatives

• v3-5 Praising God for the Blessing of our Salvation Inheritance

- v3 Peter starts this single sentence of 177 words with worship
 - **Reeder:** Paul does the same thing in all his letters as well. In Ephesians, before Paul gets to how you are to live for Christ starting in Ephesians 4, he says 28 times in Ephesians 1 through 3 that this is who you are in Christ. He does this so that you have the foundation to receive, embrace and engage in the commands from Christ
 - *God and Father*--as Son of God, Jesus is equal to the Father, but as Son of Man He came to do the Father's will
 - **Our--not the;** if He is your personal Savior, you have a *personal* doxology to say/sing!
 - *Lord Jesus Christ*--something only a believer can say; to anyone else it is meaningless
 - *Born again*--sinner is born anew into God's family & receives a new nature (**John 3/Nicodemus**)
 - *Living hope*--not just wishful thinking but assurance based on the promise & person of God as verified by the resurrection of Christ which announced the triumph of His atoning death (**1 Cor 15:20-23**)
- v4 A tremendous inheritance is promised to each of us
 - *Inheritance*--same Greek word used for the Jews' inheritance of Canaan (**Deut 15:4; 19:10**)
 - *Never perish, spoil or fade*--heavenly riches that no invading army can destroy; the world cannot pollute nor sin infect; not subject to theft, passing away or undergoing decay
 - *Kept in heaven*--we don't get the full inheritance until the last day; however, God has guaranteed that inheritance by putting the Holy Spirit into our life & making us heirs as sons & daughters in His family
- v5 We have a double security: Our inheritance is being kept but we as heirs are also being kept
 - *Through faith*--God delivers you by His power through faith, the faith that is the result of God's work
 - *Shielded*--military term for a garrison that protects a city under siege; just as we are under attack from without by Satan & the world and from within by our own sinful nature (the flesh)
 - *Power*--not that God staves off the trials & sorrows of life; He empowers you to face & conquer them
 - *Salvation*--from condemnation of God (**Rom 8:1**); from the disease and power of sin (**Rom 6:23**)
 - *Ready. . .last time*--already marked for us, ready, only waiting for the great moment of the end of time

⇒ Your security as an heir of God's salvation does not depend upon the strength and power of your faith but upon the strength and power of God revealed through your faith.

- **v6-9 Praising God for the Blessing of our Salvation Trials**

- *v6 Greatly rejoice*--faith in the promise gives joy regardless of the circumstances of life (**Phil 4:4**)
 - *Suffer*--their salvation encourages them to be faithful to Christ even under pressure & persecution
 - Why do Christians have to face trials? Shouldn't God's love cause Him to remove such trials?
 - God does not take away trials when you come to Jesus; such trials have a purpose in them
 - Peter faced a trial and failed, but by the power of God through his faith was his faith strengthened
 - The blessing is to have a God-strengthened faith that takes you through the trials and your faith is actually strengthened further in the trials
 - The inheritance is ready for us now, but God is getting us ready for it through the trials we face
- *All kinds/various*--Greek *many-colored*; also used in **1 Pet 4:10** to describe the grace of God
- *v7 Reflect openly or privately on what this means in your life; (proved for purpose of approving)*
 - Trials refine our character as precious metals are refined by fire
 - Though trials may cause temporary grief they cannot diminish deep, abiding joy rooted in hope
- *v8 Peter was talking of and to people that believed before, during & after Jesus' time on earth*
 - Before: those who believed the promise in the OT (Luke 10:24); during/after (John 20:29)
 - Now: "There are those in every nation and time who see Jesus with the eye of faith"--Barclay
 - Focus of a believer's faith is not on the abstract knowledge but on the person of Christ
- *v9 Receiving*--literally "presently receiving"--immediate deliverance from the power of sin
 - Past--has given new birth; present--shielded; future--inheritance, to be revealed, the goal

- **v10-12 Praising God for the Blessing of our Salvation Truth**

- *v10-11 Inspiration depends on two things: the searching human mind & the revealing spirit of God*
 - What does this imply about Scripture? Was the Holy Spirit only active in the New Testament?
 - Prophets wrote, but the Spirit guided their writings so that they did not fully understand
 - The prophets understood that much of what they wrote was for future believers
 - The prophets were much like Moses, who saw the promised land but did not enter (Deut 34:1-4)
 - Do we search as intently today? Why or why not?
 - *Searched*--for the deeper significance of what they wrote (e.g., Is 53 quoted in 2:22-25 spoke of the Messiah's suffering; Is 11 spoke of Messiah coming in glory; how to resolve the two?)
 - The hopes of the OT are fulfilled in Christ and the unity of the two Testaments is shown to include the ministry of the Holy Spirit and testimony to Christ
 - *v12 Preaching is the proclamation of the gospel and announcement of salvation*
 - Like the prophet, a preacher must search, study & learn, then wait for the Spirit's guidance
 - How can you offer someone encouragement, much as Peter did for those to whom he wrote?
- ⇒ Effective witnesses for the Triune God are heartfelt worshippers of the Triune God of grace and glory
- ⇒ Embracing our salvation inheritance sets the foundation for living in Christ and He in us: we gain the inheritance because of what Jesus has done; we can bear fruit because of what we inherit from Him
- ⇒ The inheritance of God's elect is their salvation by grace secured through the work of God's love in Christ which is now finished & assured but yet to be revealed & received
- ⇒ Adversity is a bridge to a deeper relationship with God
- ⇒ Our dark moments will last only so long as is necessary for God to accomplish His purpose in us