

PETER #11 Peter Cares for the Flock of God

1 Peter 1:1-12 “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, & Bithynia, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ & for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

Blessed be the God & 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, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, & unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 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 & glory & honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him & rejoice with joy that is inexpressible & filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched & inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ & the subsequent glories. 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.” (1 Peter 1:1-12)

Notes: 1:1 *Peter* designates himself as an *apostle*, an authoritative messenger of Jesus Christ. *Apostle* emphasizes Peter's authority. The 12 apostles were specifically called by Christ (Matt. 10:1-7) & had seen the risen Lord Jesus (Acts 1:22; 1 Cor. 15:7-9). They established the whole church, under Jesus Christ, & had authority to speak & write the words of God, equal in authority to the OT Scriptures. ESV

Notes: 1:1 The people receiving Peter's letter are called “*elect exiles of the dispersion*.” Peter is not speaking of a literal exile [i.e. like the Jews' exile in Babylon, ~600 BC.](1:17 says “*conduct yourselves...throughout the time of **your exile***”). The believers long for their true home in the new world that is coming & for their end-time inheritance, for they do not conform to the values & worldviews of this present evil age. Believers are not only exiles but God's “*elect [chosen] exiles*.” They are his chosen people, just as Israel is designated as God's chosen people in the OT, [even though] the recipients of his letter were primarily Gentile believers. “*Dispersion*” (Greek: *diaspora*) points to the same truth. It was typically described the scattering of the Jews throughout the world, but Peter sees a parallel in the church being dispersed throughout the world. ESV

Notes: 1:2 Peter celebrates the work of the triune God in saving his people; the descriptive phrases in 1:2 modify “elect exiles” in 1:1(the Gk. has no verb in 1:1; the ESV supplies “are” to make the sense more clear. Other versions use the verb “chosen”). Believers are God's people because of God the Father's *foreknowledge*. This does not merely refer to God's foreknowing that they would belong to him but also means that he set his covenantal affection upon them in advance, foreordaining that they would belong to him (Rom. 8:29). *In the sanctification of the Spirit* may refer here either to conversion or to gradual progress in the Christian life, or possibly to both. The Spirit sets apart God's people into the sphere of the holy, so that believers are now holy & righteous in their standing before God, & they grow in actual holiness in their lives. “*For obedience to Jesus Christ*” [God the Son] may also refer either to conversion, when Christians confessed Jesus as Lord (Rom. 10:9; cf. 1 Pet. 1:22), or to God's purpose for their lives, that they obey Christ. “*For sprinkling with his blood*” refers to Christ's atoning work on the cross, where all the believers' sins were washed away, just as the old covenant was inaugurated with the shedding/sprinkling of [animal] blood (Ex. 24:3-8). Peter sees believers “sprinkled” with the blood of Christ, referring to their initial entrance into a covenant with God (similar to Ex. 24:3-8). ESV

- I. Introduction – three places where Peter appears
 - A. Simon becomes Peter in the Gospels (Jn. 1:40-42; Matt. 16:18)
 - B. Peter becomes a fisher of men in Acts (Mk. 1:16-17; Ac. 2:14-41)
 - C. Peter tends the flock of God in his Epistles (Jn. 21:16; 1 & 2 Peter)
- II. The Flock of God (1 Pet. 1:1-6a)
 - A. Who we are (1 Pet. 1:1-2)
 1. Elect exiles of the Dispersion (in Northern Turkey)—“1 Peter teaches about living in a hostile world. Underlying the whole letter is the thought of [Christians] being confronted by and having to live within a society whose values are antagonistic to their own....The letter’s recipients [are] living in exile (1:1) [as] “sojourners & aliens” (1:17; 2:11), the exile providing an image of this life as a temporary residence in a hostile context, exiled from where one’s true inheritance & citizenship lie.” [James D. G. Dunn, *Beginning From Jerusalem*, pp. 1163-4]
 2. According to the foreknowledge of God the Father
 3. In the sanctification of God the Spirit
 4. For obedience to Jesus Christ [God the Son] & for sprinkling with His blood
 - B. Under God’s care (1 Pet. 1:3-5)
 1. Under God’s great mercy, we are born again--Through God’s mercy, He gave sinners new life (*caused us to be born again*). Peter connects “born again” to *Jesus Christ’s resurrection*, meaning the new birth was made possible because God thought of those who believe in Christ as being united to Him in His resurrection.
 - a. **“To”** a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ—“A living hope is one that can never be extinguished by untold circumstances...” (Reinecker)
 - b. **“To”** an imperishable, undefiled & unfading inheritance-- The “hope” of 1:3 is described as an *inheritance*, which in the OT typically described the Promised Land & Israel’s place in it. But the NT believers have a greater inheritance, reserved *in heaven* for the people of the new covenant. *Imperishable*: nothing can tarnish or extinguish that secure inheritance. *Undefiled*: unstained by evil. *Unfading*: supernatural beauty that time doesn’t impair. 3 verbal adjectives—“untouched by death, unstained by evil & unimpaired by time” (Reinecker)
 2. Under God’s great mercy, we are guarded (watched over) by God’s power
 - a. **“For”** a salvation to be revealed in the last time
 - C. Rejoicing in God’s work and in who we are (1 Pet. 1:6a)
- III. The Purpose of Suffering (1 Pet. 1:6b-9)
 - 1 Peter “teaches why & how Christians must expect to suffer. If there is a single theme which dominates 1 Peter, it is the theme of suffering, both the sufferings of Christ and the suffering which believers must anticipate as their lot in this age.” [James D. G. Dunn, *Beginning From Jerusalem*, p. 1162]
 - A. **“Though now”** we have various trials
 1. For a little while
 2. If necessary
 3. Don’t be surprised that you, a Christian, go through fiery trials—“*Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.*” (1 Pet. 4:12) Peter reminds his readers

that they should not be astonished when they suffer. God is using the suffering to purify the church; therefore they should unreservedly give themselves to God in their sufferings ESV

4. Peter realizes that joy is mingled with grief as Christians...suffer *various trials*. *Little while* denotes the whole of their earthly life before they inherit future salvation. “*If necessary*” or “*if it must be*”. These sufferings are God’s will for his people, [they are not “bad luck”] so that their faith might be purified & shown to be genuine. Such faith has a great reward, for at the *revelation* (i.e., the return) of *Jesus Christ*, *honor & praise* will belong both to Christians & to Christ. ESV

B. “**So that**” we are refined

1. The tested genuineness of your faith (like gold passing through fire)
2. The result is glorious – praise, glory, honour

C. Our attitude as we pass through our trials

1. Love Him—“we are loving Him”—present tense implies a continual action
2. Believe in Him—“we are believing”—present tense

D. Rejoice in Him-- Joy is not reserved only for the future when Jesus will be clearly seen at his revelation (1:7). Even now, his followers *love him, believe in him, & rejoice* with an *inexpressible* joy. The end result is eternal *salvation*—the completion of God’s saving work.

E. Obtaining (receiving--present & ongoing) our salvation—the “*salvation of your souls*”—“Soul” [Greek: *psyche*] here “is not a special part of man’s structure but is man [a person] as a whole; it is a Jewish rather than a Greek or modern usage of the word” (Reinecker). In this context “soul” is not the 3rd part of man (distinct from his body & spirit). Rather it refers to a person’s whole being. Later Peter says, “*in the days of Noah...eight **souls** [i.e., persons], were brought safely through water*” (1 Pet. 3:20).