

# The Book of I Peter – Part Two

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Adapted from John Herbert's Notes; Presented by Ralph Alley

1). We began our study of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter last week by establishing the historical and spiritual context for the writing of these Books.

a). We saw how Simon, the brother of Andrew and son of Jonah, had been given the name Peter, or "Petros" (literally, the "rock man"), by the Lord at their first meeting, which is recorded in the Book of John, Chapter one, verse 41 –

### **John 1:41**

**He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas" (which is translated, A Stone).**

b). And we saw how this giving of the name Peter/Petros prophetically pointed to the type of man of "the faith" that Simon Peter was to become.

c). We would also not fail to miss the connection that is made in Simon's father's name with the biblical account of the historical Jonah – Just as the historical Jonah had denied God in refusing the commission given to him, so Simon Peter denies the Lord, finding himself, like Jonah in a place that typifies the place of death –

### **Matthew 26:75**

**And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." So he went out and wept bitterly.**

d). Just as Jonah, upon repentance, takes the message of God's salvation to the city of Nineveh, so Simon Peter, upon being restored by the Lord, takes the message of God's salvation to the Jews –

### **John 21:17**

**He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep.**

e). "Feeding His sheep" is a work that began on the day of Pentecost following the Lord's resurrection, a day when we see Simon Peter for the first time as "the rock man"

and a day also when he makes his first connection with those from the region of Asia to which he sends his two letters –

**Acts 2:8**

**"And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?  
9 "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea  
and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 "Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the  
parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes,  
11 "Cretans and Arabs--we hear them speaking in our own tongues the  
wonderful works of God."**

And –

**I Peter 1:1**

**Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus,  
Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,**

2). We also saw last week the extent of Paul's ministry among the believers in the very same region to which Simon Peter sends his letters.

a). Now we did not look at this last week, but it is also interesting for us to see that after being taught personally by the Lord in Arabia for 3 years, Paul then travels to Jerusalem to spend 15 days almost exclusively with Peter –

**Galatians 1:15**

**But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and  
called me through His grace, 16 to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach  
Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood,  
17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I  
went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.18 Then after three years I  
went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days. 19 But  
I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.**

b). And Peter himself comments on Paul's involvement with those who had been the recipients of his letters –

**II Peter 3:15**

**and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation--as also our  
beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to  
you, 16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which  
are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist  
to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.**

3). All in all, we can be pretty sure of the extent and the thoroughness of the ministry received by those in the region of Asia to whom Peter writes. And it seems in verse 16 as if Peter has a good knowledge of all Paul's epistles, and perhaps this would extend to all of those in Asia also.

a). There is then one last piece of historical context to set in place this morning before we begin on the letters themselves. It is believed that Peter's first letter was written around 64 AD, and it is in this year, 64 AD, that an event took place that had significant ramifications for the Christian world.

b). It was in this year that a fire broke out in the Circus Maximus in Rome, a fire that burned fiercely for 5 days, devastating a large area of the city. Although the Emperor, Nero, was some 33 miles to the south of the city at the time he, because of the evil he had already done, was accused by the inhabitants of Rome of starting the fire himself.

c) Faced with a difficult situation, he found a scapegoat in the Christians living in Rome and charged them with the crime. What followed was an intense persecution of Christians that would reach throughout the known world and most certainly would have found its way to Asia. Clement of Rome, an early church father, attributes the death and martyrdom of both Paul and Peter to this persecution under Nero.

d). We might remember that it is only 4 years later (past Paul and Peter's deaths) that the Roman legions destroy Jerusalem and the Temple and scatter the Jewish people among the Gentile nations, effectively destroying Israel as a nation - a situation that existed from that time until 1948.

e). And so it is against a background of a mature ministry and a mature understanding within a context of impending persecution that Simon Peter, under inspiration of the Spirit, puts pen to paper.

4). **1Peter 1:1**

**Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.**

a). This first letter begins with just the name 'Peter', whereas his second letter begins with the name 'Simon Peter'. The absence of the name Simon here may, at the outset of the letter, be drawing attention to the steadfastness and immovableness in the faith that "the Rock" desires to encourage in his readers.

- b). Note that he calls himself 'an apostle of Jesus Christ' – one who has been commissioned on Christ's behalf to go, taking with him the credentials of the One sending him.
- c). And as we have just seen, the address is to "the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,"
- d). The word 'pilgrims' here is translated 'strangers' in the KJV and comes from the Greek word – 'parepidemos' = an alien alongside, i.e. a resident foreigner:--pilgrim, stranger.
- e). Now clearly we are dealing with people whose homes are in the places mentioned, people who may even have been born there and so they are not aliens in that sense. However, when we consider those with a Jewish lineage we can see how they could be seen as resident foreigners.
- f). However, given that we are dealing with Christians here who are in pursuit of the Kingdom of the Heavens, and remembering what we have already studied in –

### **II Corinthians 5:17**

**Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.**

- g) We would need to understand them as being pilgrims in the same way that the word 'parepidemos' is used in the following passage –

### **Hebrews 11:13**

**These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. 15 And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country.**

- h) They are pilgrims – aliens alongside, even if they had lived in the same location all their lives, because they are seeking a homeland, a heavenly country that is completely separate from this age.
- i). They are also addressed as pilgrims *of the Dispersion*, and the word 'dispersion' comes from the Greek word 'diaspora'. But this is obviously not speaking of the historical 'Diaspora' of 70 AD following the destruction of Jerusalem, as our letter is written some years before this.

j) To understand the intent here we can follow the word 'diaspora' to its root - 'diaspeiro' which means to sow throughout, i.e. (figuratively) distribute in foreign lands:--scatter abroad.

k). And I am sure right now that things will be jumping into our minds from the Matthew 13 Parables -

**Matthew 13:24**

**Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; 25 "but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way..... 38 "The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one.**

l). These Christians from Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, had been sown into these areas in the region of Asia, by the Sower, for the purpose of producing the fruit of the Kingdom.

m). And it is right here that we come face to face with ourselves, as should every Christian in every generation reading this letter, for we also are pilgrims in this place, even though it may be the place of our birth, because we are looking for that Heavenly city whose builder and maker is God.

n) Consequently, *this is not our home*, and we have been sown into the world, in this location, by the Sower, for the purpose of producing the fruit of the Kingdom. And we need to be steadfast and immovable in the faith, like the Rock man, governing our lives by nothing more and nothing less than the scriptures, while we wait for the ingathering to our homeland at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

o). And although our physical location doesn't appear in the original letter, this letter is for us, in our circumstance, at this particular time. Therefore we will need to take seriously what is written there.

5). As we continue in the letter, what we find in verse 2 written about the pilgrims in Asia also applies to us now -

**I Peter 1:2**

**...elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,**

a). The word 'elect' is the Greek word - 'eklektos' = which means to select:--make choice, choose (out), chosen.

b). And this is the same word that we find in what is now a familiar scripture for us –

**Matthew 22:14**

**"For many are called, but few are [‘eklektos] chosen."**

c). And this is exactly the way we should understand the word as it is used here in Peter. They, as us, in pursuit of the Kingdom, have been called out from among the called; but this is one of those many principles that we see that have a present application with a future fulfillment.

d) The future fulfillment will of course be at the Judgment Seat, when those found faithful will literally be called out from among the rest of the eternally saved who have not been found faithful. The very thing that Paul speaks of in –

**Philippians 3:10**

**...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 if, by any means, I may attain to the [out] resurrection from the dead. 12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.**

e) And so if we should choose now to embrace the fellowship of His sufferings and be conformed to His death and press on in faithful obedience, then being called out from the called – attaining the ‘out resurrection from the dead’, laying hold of that for which Christ has laid hold of us – will be an absolute certainty.

f) But it is a matter of our own personal choice, and this is why Peter refers to our ‘election’ in this way in his second letter –

**II Peter 1:10**

**Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble;**

g). The exhortation here is obviously one of personal choice, that we should expend every ounce of effort so as to guarantee our upward calling and being called out of the called. We must make an unyielding effort to walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh. And this guarantee is not produced for the purpose of being observed by others, but as a proof to ourselves.

h) So – what would this guarantee look like? It would be the manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit in our lives –

**Galatians 5:22**

**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.**

And –

**Ephesians 5:9**

**(for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),**

i). And our being called out, being the elect, according to our verse in 1 Peter Chapter 1, is by the foreknowledge of God the Father. Now the word foreknowledge is the Greek word ‘prognosis,’ which speaks of more than just having a prior knowledge of events; it speaks of a predetermined decision that had been *considered*, and then *made*, in time past.

j) The idea here is that God decided – in time past - that those who would be of “the faith” would be those who ultimately would be called out of the called in order to receive an inheritance in the 7th Day.

k) The decision was that it would be those who are faithful, who are of the faith, who would inherit the promises, and this would have been decided before the foundation of the world. So all that remains uncertain about this (at least from our perspective) is WHO would choose to make that choice to be faithfully obedient –

**Romans 4:13**

**For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.**

And –

**Acts 28:28**

**"Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!"**

6). What we then see in the final part of I Peter 1:2 are the two elements that are necessary so as to make our being found among the elect certain - in **“sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.”**

a). We firstly see our sanctification, our being made holy, our separation from the things of this world. This is the metamorphosis that Paul speaks of in Romans 12:1.

b). And as we know, this is a work of the Spirit within us through the word of God. And it brings us back again to –

**II Corinthians 3:18**

**But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.**

c). The transformation that takes place, that takes us “from glory to glory,” goes hand in hand with our journey from faith to faith –

**Romans 1:17**

**For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."**

d). And our faith cannot be separated from our obedience as we must be doers of the word and not hearers only. Obedience should be the outcome of our sanctification, and the means by which we attain it. And it is manifested in the fruit of the Spirit in our lives.

e). And secondly in I Peter 1:2 we have the ‘sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ’. The imagery here takes us back to the Tabernacle of Moses –

**Exodus 24:8**

**And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, "This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words."**

f). And it should call to mind the consecration of the priests for service –

**Leviticus 8:30**

**Then Moses took some of the anointing oil and some of the blood which was on the altar, and sprinkled it on Aaron, on his garments, on his sons, and on the garments of his sons with him; and he consecrated Aaron, his garments, his sons, and the garments of his sons with him.**

g). Now we also, as part of our upward calling, are to be kings and priests –

**I Peter 2:9**

**But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light...**

h). And it is to the blood of our High Priest in the Heavenly Tabernacle that we go for cleansing –

### Hebrews 9:12

Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. 13 For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, 14 how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?....

Then down to verse 22 -

...22 And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission. 23 Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24 For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us...

i). And so to pull all this together, our process of sanctification – producing in us faithful obedience and the manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit – and our continual cleansing through the precious blood of Christ on the mercy seat in the Heavenly Tabernacle are exactly what must consistently take place for us in order for us to be the ‘elect’ of God within our present situation. This would then make certain that we are the ‘elect’ of God in its final fulfillment at the Judgment Seat.

7). And so the opening address of Peter’s first letter is brought to a close with – “**Grace to you and peace be multiplied.**”

a). Now this closure is not just a mechanical statement of empty words like our common idiom, ‘how are you?’, but is rather to be seen within the context of their dispersion and election and impending persecution.

b). The word ‘grace’ here is the Greek word, ‘charis’, and it is how this word is used later in Peter’s epistle that would give us its meaning here –

### I Peter 2:19

**For this is commendable [charis], if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully.**

c). The ability to do this (endure grief while suffering wrongfully) is entirely dependent upon God, as we are empowered through the work of the Spirit to do that which is contrary to our human nature, freely and willingly. It is an action beyond the ordinary

course of action that might be expected and is therefore *commendable*. This would give us a good definition of the word 'grace' as it is used here.

d). As Peter's readers faced impending persecution, possibly requiring martyrdom, this is exactly the kind of 'grace' that they needed. And although we are not in a position where our lives are threatened as theirs were, we still need the 'grace' that comes from the empowerment of the Spirit so as not to seek to justify ourselves and prove that we are right. Faithful obedience to the word of God in every situation must always supersede the desires of our flesh. This is the 'grace' that Peter is asking for them. This is the 'grace' that we need every day.

e). And along with the grace, he asks that peace be multiplied, literally that peace would increase and abound. And the peace he is asking for is obviously not peace with God, but the peace of God – the quietness and the settled-ness that can only come through trusting God in whatever circumstance we find ourselves.

f). It is this kind of peace that Paul writes about in –

**Philippians 4:5**

**Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. 6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.**

g). To be able to trust God in this way does not come naturally to us, so it is therefore part of the process that we go through towards maturity. Through the Word of God, by the transformation of the Spirit, we come to know the faithfulness of God and thereby His trustworthiness. This is exactly the process we see with Abraham and the process that we described earlier today as going "from faith to faith."

h). This kind of settled peace is at the very heart of that which Peter writes to wives later in his letter recorded in –

**I Peter 3:3**

**Do not let your adornment be merely outward--arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel-- 4 rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.**

i). And a subject he returns to again at the end of his first letter –

**I Peter 5:10**

**But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.**

8). And so having brought his opening address to a close, an address that, as we have seen, contains so much more than just common pleasantries, Peter now goes on to reinforce the reason for the steadfastness and rock-solid faith that they *and we* are to have. And as the Holy Spirit saw fit to make this of paramount importance to the original recipients of Peter's letter, it is something that we need to take careful note of as well –

**I Peter 1:3**

**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls.**

a). And this is what we'll look a bit closer at next week.

Let's pray.