



## SAVED BY GRACE - A LIVING HOPE OVERVIEW and 1 PETER 1:1-12

### Call to Holiness in 1 Peter

Christians have been born again to a living hope. This fact should make our lives different from people of the world. We have something that they do not have. We have salvation through the blood of Jesus Christ which was shed on the cross for us. It is a wonderful salvation which gives us a future of hope and consequently changes our present way of life. 1 Peter is an exhortation to Christians to live in the manner which is worthy of the great hope we have been given. 1 Peter is an exhortation to holiness, an exhortation to raise our hearts and minds above the world and follow the example of Jesus Christ in holy living.

### God's Grace in 1 Peter

Our new way of life does not depend upon our own wisdom or will-power. Our new way of life is lived entirely by God's grace. It was God's grace which saved us, and it is God's grace which will see us through to the perfect completion of our salvation on the day Christ returns in all His glory. No wonder Peter emphasizes the grace of God in his letter.

G. Campbell Morgan in [Student Survey of the Bible](#), sees Peter's purpose in writing as conveying the sufficiency of grace. The word grace is found in every chapter of Peter's letter (1:2,10,13; 2:19,20 ["is commendable" in these verses may also be translated "finds grace"]; 3:7; 4:10; 5:5,10,12) and Peter's final exhortation in 1 Peter 5:12 (NASB) is, *This is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it!* Morgan summarizes 1 Peter from the standpoint of grace in the following manner.

**Chapter 1 - Grace is the secret of confidence.**

**Chapters 2 and 3 - Grace is the secret of triumphant conduct.**

**Chapter 4 - Grace is the secret of high and holy character.**

**Chapter 5 - Grace is the secret of Christian courage in conflict**

His conclusion is that Christians are to live in a country watered by the river of grace which comes by way of the altar of God.

Grace is flowing like a river,  
Millions there have been supplied,  
Still it flows as full as ever  
From the Savior's wounded side.

J. Sidlow Baxter ([Explore the Book](#)) also sees grace as the underlying theme of 1 Peter. His outline gives a simple and clear overview of the letter.

**1 Peter 1:1-2:10 - Explanation of God's grace**

**1 Peter 2:11-4:11 - Exhortation to live by grace**

**1 Peter 4:12-5:14 - Exhortation to be upheld by grace**

1 Peter definitely makes it clear that the Christian's hope is contingent upon the magnificent grace of God. The good news is that God's grace is abundant and free and that He longs for us to live in the country which is watered by His grace. Peter's letter is an encouragement to come and live in that country. It is a country where trials, persecutions, and sufferings are overshadowed by the grace and glory of our Lord and Savior. It is a country where His children live above the world and its evil enticements. It is a country where love is the rule and wavering reeds become solid rocks. It is the country where every Christian is meant to dwell. If you are not dwelling there, will you now, by faith, trust God to lead you there as you study 1 Peter? You have been saved by grace. 1 Peter will show you how to stand firm in that grace.

### The Believer's Suffering in 1 Peter

Suffering and trials are mentioned often in this letter. The sufferings Peter refers to are not strange or unusual (1 Peter 4:12), but are things which belong to the normal experience of believers in an evil world. Christ suffered in the flesh when He was here on earth. Therefore, His followers should expect to suffer in this present life. Peter's message is that God's grace is sufficient to enable believers to endure suffering, experience victory, and thus glorify God. Have you ever suffered just because you are a Christian? Perhaps you have been put down, discriminated against or shunned for your beliefs. Peter says that is to be expected. He will encourage you to face your trials with strength and joy, by the grace of God.

## SAVED BY GRACE - A LIVING HOPE - 1 Peter 1:1-12

### Introduction

After an encouraging greeting, Peter begins by presenting the basic theology of salvation. He gives a reminder of

what a blessing it is to be counted among the *elect* (1 Peter 1:2), the *special people* (1 Peter 2:9) of God. The chosen recipients of so great a salvation have great reason for rejoicing (1 Peter 1:6).

## OUTLINE OF 1 PETER 1:1-12

### I. A Graceful Greeting - 1 Peter 1:1-2

### II. A Great Salvation - 1 Peter 1:3-12

#### I. A Graceful Greeting - 1 Peter 1:1-2

- A. From Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ -  
1 Peter 1a

An apostle is one who is sent with a special commission or message, and this is Peter's credential in writing. He is an apostle of Jesus Christ. This would have been an important distinction to make, as Peter may not have been known to the recipients of the letter.

- B. To the pilgrims of the Dispersion - 1 Peter 1b

The recipients of the letter are *pilgrims* or *sojourners* (also 1 Peter 2:11). They are spending a short time in a foreign and hostile land. As Christians, their home and their citizenship is in heaven. All men and women of faith should consider themselves as sojourners here on earth. We are simply passing through this transitory land to a better place, and in doing so we follow in the faith of all God's faithful, confessing that we are *strangers and pilgrims on the earth* (Hebrews 11:13b). Are you living as a sojourner, or have you settled down and made yourself quite comfortable?

The term, of the Dispersion, or Diaspora, was commonly applied to Jews who were living outside of Israel, the land which had been given to them by God (Genesis 15:18-21). Out of this land, many thousands of Jews had been taken captive, first by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. and later by the Babylonians. They had been scattered throughout the regions which were ruled by those powers. Because Peter uses this term, many scholars conclude that his letter is addressed to Jewish readers. However, Peter may have been using the term in a more spiritual sense, referring to the early Christians who were scattered abroad due to the persecutions of the times. It is this writer's opinion that 1 Peter is addressed to both Jews and Gentiles, and that fact should become clear as we study the letter. However, the most important thing to keep in mind is that Peter's letter is for you. Although it was written nearly two thousand years ago, Peter's message has great significance and application for Christians today.

1. In Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia - 1 Peter 1b

The areas where these believers resided was in the northern area of Asia Minor.

2. The elect (or chosen) - 1 Peter 1: 2

With the term "elect", Peter designates that he is writing to those who have come to saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This verse is a beautiful description of what it means to be the elect or chosen by God. In this brief sentence, Peter succinctly summarizes the crucial elements of our salvation.

- a. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father - 1 Peter 1:2

Election is by God the Father, first person of the Trinity. "Christians are God's elect, not by chance or human design but by God's sovereign, unconditional choice." (The Bible Knowledge Commentary, 1 Peter, Roger M. Raymer). God's choice is in accordance with His *foreknowledge*, a word which implies not just a passing perception, but a relationship of personal involvement. The same word is used in 1 Peter 1:20, describing Christ as being foreknown by the Father. "God the Father did much more than just know about His Son. He knew Him intimately, completely, and certainly. It follows then that the elect were not chosen as a result of ignorance or blind chance" (Barnes' Notes on the New Testament, Albert Barnes). Furthermore, foreknowledge signifies that God's election is certain.

- b. In sanctification of the Spirit -  
1 Peter 1:2

The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, is the agent which makes election effective. The Holy Spirit convicts hearts of sin, righteousness, and judgment and reveals the truth to God's elect, disclosing the glories of Jesus Christ and God's salvation offered through Him. See John 14: 16, 17, 26; John 16:7-15; 2 Thessalonians 2:13. The elect are regenerated and renewed by the power of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5).

- c. For obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ - 1 Peter 1:2

The purpose of the Spirit's work in the elect is that they might be obedient and obtain forgiveness of their sins through the sprinkled blood of Jesus Christ, the Son, third person of the Trinity. For by one offering (the sprinkling of His own precious blood [1 Peter 1:17-19]) *He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified* (Hebrews 10:14).

The sprinkling of the blood is suggestive of the sacrifices at the giving of the Law at Mt. Sinai (Exodus 24:3-8) where the blood of the sacrificed animals was sprinkled on the people as a means of purifying and consecrating them to enter into the divine covenant with God. That sprinkling represented their acceptance as God's people and their pledge to obey Him. The elect are God's new covenant people (Hebrews 12:24), consecrated for obedience to Him, through the blood of Christ which was shed on the cross.

#### C. Grace and peace - 1 Peter 2b

Peter's desire is that God's grace and peace might be experienced in fullest measure in the lives of his readers. He has stated the essence of this grace and peace in its outworking through all three persons of the Trinity (God the Father, the Holy Spirit, and Jesus Christ, the Son) in verse 2. Now he will go on to give encouragement and exhortation to the fullest experience of God's richest blessings.

## II. A Great Salvation - 1 Peter 1:3-12

Peter blesses God for the many benefits of His magnificent grace in granting to us His great salvation. "The knowledge of God's benefits is of great help, for when we appreciate their value, all other things will become worthless, and especially, when we consider what Christ and His blessings are, everything without Him will seem as dross" (Calvin's New Testament Commentaries, 1 Peter, John Calvin). In this portion of his letter, Peter extols the blessings of salvation.

#### A. Born again to a living hope - 1 Peter 1:3

Believers have been regenerated, born again to a living hope. No one is born into this world with living hope, for worldly hope fades and passes away. It is only through new birth that we receive a hope which can never be corrupted or taken away. Those who have been born again are no longer *children of wrath* (Ephesians 2:3) and *enemies of God* (Romans 5:9-10) but *children of God* (1 John 3:1). No longer do we live under the doom of judgment. We live with great expectancy as His heirs (1 Peter 1:4).

#### B. According to His abundant mercy - 1 Peter 1:3

Regeneration is not based upon anything we can do for ourselves. It cannot be willed or worked for or earned in any way. It is totally the result of God's mercy toward us. See Romans 9:16, Ephesians 2:8 and Titus 3:5.

#### C. Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead - 1 Peter 1:3

God's abundant mercy comes through Christ alone.

It is through Christ and His resurrection from the dead that we have received mercy, new life, and new hope. Surely the resurrection of Christ was especially meaningful to Peter, who had witnessed His crucifixion and then been one of the first to see the empty tomb and the risen Lord.

#### D. To obtain an inheritance - 1 Peter 1:4-5

In the Old Testament, Israel's inheritance was the land which God had promised to them (Genesis 12:7; Hebrews 11:8-9). It was an inheritance reserved for them for over four hundred years of slavery in Egypt and wanderings in the wilderness. However, the physical inheritance of the land was merely a foreshadowing of a better inheritance which was to come. That is the inheritance which is reserved in heaven for all believers. It is a kingdom which has been prepared for us *from the foundation of the world* (Matthew 25:34).

##### 1. An inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading - 1 Peter 1:4

"Our inheritance cannot be corrupted from within as the earth was in the days of Noah (Genesis 6:11), or defiled as Canaan was by abominations (Leviticus 18:27; Deuteronomy 21:23; Jeremiah 2:7).....nor do its flowers or fruits fade away (Isaiah 32:15; 61:11)" (The One Volume Bible Commentary, J. R. Dummelow). Our inheritance is indestructible.

##### 2. Reserved in heaven - 1 Peter 1:4

The word "reserved" is in the perfect tense, denoting that the inheritance has been laid up from the beginning and kept up until the present time.

##### 3. For those who are kept by the power of God - 1 Peter 1:5

"Kept" is a military term which literally means garrisoned or guarded. It refers to a garrison within a city. The picture is of the power of God guarding the believer from within through the precious gift of faith in order to keep his/her salvation safe and secure. This salvation is the believer's possession right now, but the fullness or the completeness of the salvation will not be revealed until the last time, that is at the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Peter's description of our inheritance assures us that it is sure and certain.

#### E. A reason for rejoicing - 1 Peter 1:6-9

##### 1. In spite of trials - 1 Peter 1:6

The response to so great a salvation as Peter has

described should be great rejoicing, even though it is accompanied by trials in this present life. The trials are only for a little while. In contrast to our living hope of an eternal inheritance with the Lord, this life and its troubles are brief indeed.

2. For the purpose of proving your faith -  
1 Peter 1:7

Trials prove that your faith is real, and in the process they refine and purify your faith so that you may be *perfect and complete, lacking nothing* (James 1:4).

- a. Faith is more precious than gold

Peter compares faith to gold. Gold is refined and purified in the fire to increase its value. The purer the gold, the higher price it will bring. "But gold holds no value in the marketplace of eternity" (*The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Roger M. Raymer's commentary of 1 Peter). True faith, on the other hand, endures testing, and after it has been tested, will result in *praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ* (1 Peter 1:7b). Faith is truly a gift to treasure and to nurture. *And this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith* (1 John 5:4).

- b. Faith loves and believes without seeing  
- 1 Peter 1:8

Peter had seen the living Lord face to face. He had touched Him and heard Him speak. Peter had loved Him and believed. Here he praises those believers who have never seen the Lord and yet love Him and believe. Theirs is a joy inexpressible and full of glory. Jesus said, *Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed* (John 20:29).

- c. Faith saves your soul - 1 Peter 1:9

The final result of faith is full and complete salvation. (See D. 3. above.) *Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation* (Hebrews 9:28).

## F. Salvation revealed - 1 Peter - 1:10-12

The message of salvation was revealed in a veiled way to the prophets. It has been preached to needy human souls from the time of Christ until this present time. It is a message of prime importance to the angels in heaven even though they are not recipients, but spectators, of the glories which are revealed by God.

1. Through the prophets - 1 Peter 1:10-12

Through their writings, which were inspired by the Holy Spirit, the prophets of old had some understanding of salvation. They understood that the Messiah was destined for suffering as well as for glory. (See also Acts 3:18 and 26:22-23. ) They also understood that the fulfillment of the prophecies was not for themselves but for generations to come who would hear the gospel message through Spirit-filled preachers. The prophets longed to know more. They diligently searched to learn all they could. Do you diligently search the Scriptures to learn all you can about the great salvation which is yours through Jesus Christ?

2. By the power of the Holy Spirit  
1 Peter 1: 11 -12

It was the Holy Spirit who moved the Old Testament prophets to speak and to write. Peter affirms this again in 2 Peter 1:20-21. This is the same Holy Spirit who empowered preachers of the first century as they ministered the Gospel of Salvation to the recipients of this letter. It is the same Holy Spirit who empowers true teachers and preachers of the Word of God today.

### Application

1. Will you thank God for the benefit of having heard the message of salvation? Will you now diligently seek to learn all God would teach you through His Word and apply it to your life by faith?
2. How are the trials in your life presently proving the genuineness of your faith to yourself and to others?