

FIRST PETER CHAPTER ONE

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Greeting (vv.1,2)

VERSE 1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ (Πέτρος [*n.m.s.*] ἀπόστολος [*nom.m.s.*] Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ [*gen.m.s.*]),

to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen (παρεπιδήμιος [*adj.m.p.*, *parepidemos*, *temporary resident, resident alien*; 3X: Heb.11:13; 1Pet.2:11] διασπορᾶς [*gen.f.s.*, *from diaspora*; “scattered throughout”; {of Jews or Christians}; 3X: Jn.7:35; Jam.1:1] Πόντου [*gen.m.s.*, *Pontos*] Γαλατίας [*gen.f.s.*, *Galatia*] Καππαδοκίας [*gen.f.s.*, *Kappadokia*] Ἀσίας [*gen.f.s.*, *Asia*] καὶ Βιθυνίας [*conj. + gen.f.s.*, *Bithunia*] ἐκλεκτοῖς [*adj.dat.m.p.*, *eklektos*, *chosen, elect*; 24X {of Christ and believers}])

ANALYSIS: VERSE 1

1. The apostle Peter wrote this letter from Rome around 63AD.
2. Note the cryptic reference to the city of Rome in 5:13 (“Babylon”).
3. Babylon, in Mesopotamia, was mostly deserted at this time.
4. This letter was written late in the apostle’s life, probably shortly before Nero’s persecutions of 64AD.
5. Peter was in Rome during the last decade of his life (60’s AD), as was the apostle Paul.
6. Both Peter and Paul were martyred by the Roman emperor, Nero, at about the same time (66AD).
7. The main objection to the Petrine authorship of this letter is that the Greek is too sophisticated for an unschooled fisherman.
8. Two considerations undermine this contention.
9. The meager use of particles and prepositions and the excessive use of relative clauses show the author’s limitations.
10. Also consider the supposition that Silvanus (Silas of the Book of Acts) may have been more than a secretary in the ordinary sense (cf. 1Pet.5:12).
11. Though Peter claims to have written the letter, he says so “through” (the help of?) Silvanus.
12. Such language suggests more than just mere dictation.
13. Silas helped shape the language of the Apostolic Decree of Acts 15 (note the Greek of Acts.15:23, where the word “sent” is actually the aorist part. Γραφῶ *grapho*, to write, compose).
14. He was with Paul on his second missionary journey and was in some sense responsible for the Thessalonian letters (Paul uses the first person plural very liberally in those letters).
15. Likely the thoughts of Peter were pressed into the mold of the language of Silvanus, at least to a considerable degree.
16. Among the so-called General epistles none has been more widely used during the history of the church than First Peter.
17. It is not a general epistle in the sense that it was sent to the entire church, but it was intended for a larger audience than the majority of the NT epistles, which were usually written to a single congregation or individual.
18. First Peter most nearly resembles Galatians, but its recipients belonged to a much wider geographical area.
19. Eusebius (father of church history) placed it among the undisputed books.
20. The first witness to it comes from 2Pet.3:1.
21. “Peter” was the Greek equivalent of Cephas (“rock”), the nickname Jesus had conferred upon Simon (Jn.1:42).
22. He identifies himself as “an apostle (no def. art.) of Jesus Christ” without any elaboration (cp. 1Cor.1:1; Col.1:1; Ti.1:1; 2Pet.1:1).
23. Peter’s authority to teach and exhort believers “scattered” throughout the whole of Asia Minor is based on his status as “an apostle of Jesus Christ” (1Pet.5:12).
24. He was one of the original twelve men so designated by the Lord during His public ministry.
25. Paul replaced Judas on the roster of apostles.
26. Their authority to minister to multiple congregations was unique to the apostolic age.
27. Peter received this authority from “Jesus Christ” when Jesus appointed the twelve (Mk.3:13-19).
28. Throughout the Church Age false apostles have emerged (2Cor.11:13; Rev.2:2).
29. Peter leaves his readers aware of the unique personal authority of an apostle.

30. This letter is addressed “to those who reside as aliens, scattered...”, or “to temporary residents of dispersion throughout...”.
31. These were of course Christians who, like Israel, were scattered throughout the world.
32. These congregations were made up predominately of Gentiles with the usual smattering of Jewish converts.
33. It is plainly stated that they were engaged in typically Gentile or pagan STA practices (4:3), including idolatry, which fact precludes an exclusive Jewish readership.
34. Moreover, they are differentiated from the chosen people of Israel on the ground that they were formerly not a people but are now the people of God, and were formerly without mercy but have now received it (2:10).
35. Finally, Peter uses his Greek name rather than his Aramaic name, Cephas (1:1).
36. True, Peter was the apostle of the circumcision (Gal.2:7), but his activity among Gentiles is amply attested (Gal.2:12; Acts.10:34-48; 15:7-11).
37. What was Peter’s relationship to his readers?
38. There is no compelling evidence that this pastoral letter is based on his own labors among them.
39. On the contrary, he seems to disassociate himself from their evangelization (cf. 1:12).
40. Moreover, there is a complete absence of reference of any kind of personal experience with these believers.
41. He does not once mention any previous visit or contact.
42. These Christians lived in the Roman provinces that covered the major part of Asia Minor, the portion north of the Taurus Mountains (modern Turkey).
43. Since Paul labored in this general region, the question is naturally raised as to whether First Peter was circulated among at least some of the converts he evangelized.
44. This possibility concerns those in Galatia and Asia.
45. As far as Galatia is concerned, Peter’s letter may have been intended for believers in North Galatia, where Paul had little or no contact (cf. Acts.16:6,7).
46. However, since Paul’s work in Ephesus (within the province of Asia) resulted in the spread of the gospel throughout the province of Asia (not to be confused with Asia Minor; cf. Acts.19:10), some of the readers of this letter may have been inducted into the faith by Paul or his associates.
47. To this extent Peter may have entered into the labors of the apostle to the Gentiles.
48. But is it possible that the bearer of First Peter may have avoided contact with areas where Paul labored.
49. We know nothing of Peter’s movements as compared to Paul’s.
50. Peter uses three terms to describe his audience in v.1.
51. The first in the Greek text occurs last in the English translation (“who are chosen”).
52. The dative of address of the adjective *ελεκτος* means “elect”, or “chosen”.
53. First and foremost, they are the special people of God, chosen before the foundation of the world to eternal salvation (Eph.1:4; cp. 1Pet.1:20).
54. The ground for our eternal election to salvation is seen in the prepositional clause opening v.2.
55. Next they are described as “those who reside as aliens”.
56. This adjective (*παρεπιδημος*) occurs 3X: Heb.11:13; 1Pet.1:1; 2:11.
57. It normally refers to anyone who is a resident in a foreign land.
58. The patriarchs who lived in Canaan were resident aliens (Heb.11:13).

59. While these Christians were bona fide citizens of the Roman provinces in view, they were in a spiritual sense “aliens”.
60. Like people who are merely passing through a country with no intention of permanent residence, so believers are bound, wherever they reside, to be transitory sojourners yearning for their “up-country”.
61. “Home” for us cannot be identified with any place on earth, but only with the new and heavenly order which God brings in.
62. For parallel ideas, see Eph.2:19, Phil.3:20, and Heb.11:13-16.
63. We pass our Ph2 time on earth, but belong as citizens to heaven.
64. Hence, we should conduct ourselves as worthy ambassadors of our new homeland.
65. As we shall see, the Christians living in these provinces of the Roman Empire were suffering in a hostile society.
66. This is what occasioned the letter.
67. Breaking as they did from their pagan antecedents, they were viewed with suspicion, resentment, and general hostility.
68. Peter wrote to encourage them in the face of growing persecution.
69. The third term “scattered”, used to describe the status quo in the Greco-Roman world, is the gen.f.s. noun meaning “dispersion”, without the article.
70. The Greek noun is *diaspora* (i.e. “Dispersion”), a technical term among Greek-speaking Jews (there is no exact equivalent in the Hebrew Bible) for members of their race dwelling outside Palestine in Gentile lands (cf. Jn.7:35).
71. A translation of the two dative adjectives followed by the genitive singular noun (ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις διασποράς) could be: “to a chosen people, living as resident aliens of a dispersion throughout...”
72. This noun also occurs in Jam.1:1 of the Jewish Christian *Diaspora*, which is the same as the Gentile *Diaspora*.
73. It is of interest to note that the recipients of the epistle of James were believing Jews living in the Land!
74. Peter’s choice of terms to describe these Gentile Christians all have as their background the O.T. designation and experience of the people of Israel.
75. Israel is God’s chosen/elect people (e.g., 1Chr.16:13; Pss.105:6; 106:5; 135:4; Isa.65:9,15,23).
76. Their election from eternity past and their subsequent incorporation into the POG made them “aliens”.
77. The addressees are “aliens” not by race, natural birth, or circumstances, but because divine election has estranged them.
78. In this letter Peter appeals to them as “aliens and strangers” (2:11) to attain more fully in practice that estrangement from “fleshly lusts”, which is the mark of their new citizenship.
79. The first term points to the indispensable basis of Christian identity and the second to its inevitable social expression.
80. And so, they are not quite at home in the places where they live.
81. Spiritual growth heightens this sense within our hearts.
82. Even if believers are comfortable with their surroundings, they are still “aliens”.
83. Like the Jews of the dispersion, we are a minority among unbelievers.
84. In a sense our experience is similar to that of Israel.

85. *Diaspora* is used twelve times in the LXX of the scattered Israelites among the Gentile nations as a divine judgment.
86. Believers of the Church Age are a *diaspora* waiting for their final gathering at the Rapture.
87. In the meantime we are a brotherhood separated by geography.
88. The place from which Peter writes his diaspora letter (mystical “Babylon”) is not home, but is itself a place of exile, and therefore part of the same worldwide diaspora to which his readers belong.
89. All that distinguishes the author’s own situation from that of his readers is geography.
90. The five districts listed were Roman provinces comprising all of Asia Minor north of the Taurus mountain range.
91. The order in which Peter lists them is curious in that Pontus, with which the list begins, and Bithynia, with which it ends, had been considered a single province since about 64BC.
92. The most plausible explanation is that the sequence represents the projected route of the messenger who delivered the letter.
93. The messenger would travel by ship from the Mediterranean and Aegean seas through the Hellespont (Dardanelles) and the Bosphorus straits to the Black Sea.
94. His entry to Asia Minor would be at one of the Black Sea ports in Pontus.
95. From there he would strike into the interior of Asia Minor to Galatia then possibly as far east as Caesarea in Cappadocia, back again into Galatia by the westward trade route through Iconium and Pisidian Antioch, to the cities of provincial Asia mentioned in Rev.2–3, and finally north into Pontus-Bithynia once more, sailing from perhaps Nicomedia or Chalcedon.

VERSE 2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father (κατὰ πρόγνωσιν [*prep. w/acc.f.s., prognosis, foreknowledge*] θεοῦ πατρός [*gen.m.s., theos, + gen.m.s., pater*]), **by the sanctifying work of the Spirit** (ἐν ἁγιασμῷ [*prep.w/instr.m.s., hagiastos, sanctification*] πνεύματος [*gen.nt.s., pneuma, spirit*]), **that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood** (εἰς ὑπακοήν [*prep.w/acc.f.s. ὑπακοή, obedience; “upon obedience to”*] καὶ ῥαντισμὸν [*conj. + acc.m.s., hrantismos, sprinkling*] αἵματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ [*gen.nt.s., haima, blood, + gen.m.s., Iesus Christos; translation: “and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ”*]): **May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure** (χάρις [*n.f.s., charis, grace*] ὑμῖν [*pro.dat.p., su, you*] καὶ εἰρήνη [*conj. + acc.f.s., eirene, peace*] πληθυνθείη [*aor.pass.opt.3.f.s., plythuno, increase, grow*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 2

1. The long, loosely constructed sentence starting in the previous verse continues to the end of v.2.
2. This verse features three prepositional phrases reciting how the recipients came to be God’s chosen/elect people.
3. The first phrase (κατὰ πρόγνωσιν) is to be connected with “who are chosen” (ἐκλεκτοῖς).
4. Believers are the chosen/elect of God based on “foreknowledge”.

5. This noun is from the verb προγινώσκω, to know before hand or know in advance.
6. The verb occurs in 2Pet.3:17 in a non-technical sense of knowing information in advance that can protect believers from doctrinal error.
7. The verb also occurs in v.20 regarding the person of Christ, who was “foreknown before the foundation of the world”.
8. The verb occurs in Rom.8:29 in the same doctrinal context as here, where it precedes “predestined”.
9. Finally, the verb occurs in Rom.11:2 of Israel’s election to salvation.
10. The noun only occurs here and in Acts.2:23, in Peter’s message on the day of Pentecost in reference to Christ’s death.
11. Believers’ election or predestination is based on what God knew from eternity past.
12. God foreknew all who would come to saving faith based on the attribute of Omniscience.
13. God desires that all be saved (1Tim.2:4; Ezek.18:23,32; 2Pet.3:9; cp. 1Tim.4:10; Ti.2:11).
14. Those He foreknew, He predestined/elected to salvation (Rom.8:29).
15. Foreknowledge and predestination occurred in eternity past.
16. Foreknowledge is God’s eternal prescience with respect to the free will of each person.
17. God predestined some to salvation based on His foreknowledge, and not upon His inscrutable wisdom as espoused by Calvinism.
18. Otherwise God would be a respecter of persons.
19. To be just, God had to provide salvation for all and allow each person the freedom to believe or not.
20. Foreknowledge answers the question regarding those who never heard the gospel and perished.
21. God is obligated to get the gospel to all who He foreknew would believe.
22. Foreknowledge is associated with God the Father, who is the Planner.
23. The second prepositional phrase features the work of God the Holy Spirit.
24. The phrase “by the sanctifying work of the Spirit”, or “the sanctification of the Spirit”, refers to the doctrine of positional sanctification.
25. The noun ἁγιασμός (*hagismos*) is from the root, which means “holy”.
26. The genitive is a subjective genitive indicating the sanctification performed by the Spirit.
27. Paul expresses the same thought in 2Thess.2:13 using the same preposition (*en*).
28. The “sanctifying work of the Spirit” is the baptism of the HS, whereby the one who believes is entered into union with Christ (cf. 1Cor.12:12-13).
29. The HS joins all who believe to the body of Christ, or the Church universal.
30. We call this positional sanctification.
31. It occurs at the moment of saving faith (among other works of saving grace).
32. Expressions such as “in Christ” and “in Him” specify this reality.
33. The designation “saints” is based on this concept.
34. The elect that God foreknew He set apart to Himself via positional sanctification.
35. The cognate verb ἁγιάζω (*hagiazō*) is used in 1Cor.6:11 in reference to the blessings of the salvation adjustment (along with “washed” and “justified”).
36. The third prepositional clause is introduced by the preposition *eis*.
37. It occurs with the accusative of the nouns ὑπακοή (*hupakoe*) and ῥαντισμὸν (*hrantismōn*), translated like infinitives.
38. Translation: “according to (the) foreknowledge of God (the) Father by the sanctification of (the) Spirit upon obedience and upon sprinkling of (the) blood of Jesus Christ”.

39. The preposition *eis* modifies both accusative feminine singular nouns.
40. This preposition occurs with the accusative case and means: into, to; at, on, upon, by, near; among; against; concerning.
41. The word “upon” renders good sense and does not violate doctrine.
42. The notion of result would violate BD.
43. In other words, they were not set apart and then the actions specified by these two verbal nouns followed.
44. Actually, in sequence of occurrence, their obedience to the message of salvation came first, followed instantly by sanctification and sprinkling of blood.
45. This noun is used of the obedience associated with the command to believe in Christ (Rom.1:5; 6:16,17; 10:16; 15:18; 16:26; cp. Acts.6:7; 2Thess.1:8; Heb.5:9).
46. Obedience is used of the willing acceptance of the gospel under what is referred to as calling.
47. The last item Peter associates with their eternal election to salvation has to do with the blood of Jesus Christ.
48. This final phrase deals with the work of Christ on the Cross as it pertains to the salvation adjustment.
49. “Sprinkling with the blood” recalls the Jewish ritual where animal blood was applied to persons and objects under the Law.
50. The close association between obedience and sprinkling points to the ratification of the old covenant mentioned in Ex.24:3-8 (cp. Heb.9:19,21).
51. Moses sprinkled the entire nation with blood to signify their qualification to serve God as His priest nation.
52. This ritual had typological significance.
53. It pointed to the death of Christ and the benefit it brings to those who are obedient.
54. Apart from the blood of the covenant there would have been no forgiveness.
55. Christ’s blood does not refer to His literal blood, but rather refers to His judgment on the Cross for the sins of the world.
56. Those who believe in Him are granted forgiveness of all pre-salvation sins.
57. Animal blood represents the judgment Christ experienced when He bore sins.
58. When a person believes in Christ they are forgiven their past sins.
59. As with rebound the salvation adjustment cleanses the individual from all his/her sins.
60. God is free to do all the things related to the salvation adjustment based on the blood of Christ.
61. The blood of the O.T. sacrifices, going all the way back to Adam and Abel. was but a shadow of the reality, which is Jesus Christ dying for sins.
62. To be sprinkled with Jesus’ blood was to be cleansed, or forgiven, from one’s former life.
63. So “the sprinkled blood” is strictly a figurative expression or analogy to the real thing (Heb.12:24).
64. There is no external sprinkling, as there is no physical blood applied when a person is saved.
65. God cleanses and forgives the one who is obedient to the command to believe based on Christ’s sacrificial death.
66. There is a Ph2 sprinkling associated with the Rebound adjustment (Heb.10:22).
67. Peter’s choice of images confirms the impression that he writes to communities of Gentiles as if they were some strange new kind of Jew.

68. The words “grace and peace” were ubiquitous in first-century Christian greetings (besides all the Pauline epistles and Revelation; cf. 2Pet.; 2Jn; “mercy” replaces “grace” in Jude).
69. Grace epitomized for him all that believers receive from God from the moment of their salvation forward into Ph3.
70. Peace refers to both inner tranquility (even in the face of adversity) as well as the external benefits that come to those who are in a right relationship with God.
71. Inner peace is multiplied where there is intake and application of BD (Jn.16:33).
72. Jesus promised this peace to His followers (Jn.14:27).
73. Peace in the Hebrew greetings (*shalom*) covered all blessings, both spiritual and material, that came to those who were positive.
74. Peter expresses a wish when he uses the optative mood of the verb *plethuno*.
75. Grace and peace are multiplied in our lives when we conform ourselves to the directive will of God.
76. Grace and peace were theirs under the ordeal of persecution that had come upon these Christian communities (4:12).