

I Peter is addressed to the Christian Church. Like the seven Church Epistles written by the Apostle Paul, it was sent to a specific group first but intended for the whole Church, then and now. This specific group was the Judean Christians who were scattered throughout Asia Minor.

I Peter 1:1

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

These believers were foreigners who settled down next to or among a nation of people different from themselves. More significantly, they were strangers, as we are because they were Christian believers living next to non-Christian unbelievers. Much of that which is written in this Epistle addresses how we, as a holy people, are to live in an unholy world. Indeed, the children of God are strangers in a world whose god is the devil, and we are to remain strangers until the end.

Verse 2 continues the salutation.

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ...

The elect are God's chosen as stated in Ephesians 1:4 (According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world...). God's foreknowledge (previous knowledge) pertaining to our election was before the foundation of the world. The Holy Spirit has made us sanctified which means holy (see II Thessalonians 2:13).

We have been elected by God's sovereign grace to be holy by the Spirit with the intent that we would be obedient unto the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Because of our calling and his loving sacrifice, we should be obedient. Obedience is the proper, loving response to the goodness of God which has been manifested to us. Obedience and love are companions. For I John says, "If you love me, keep my commandments."

Verse 2

...Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

Since this Epistle deals with living in a holy manner in an unholy world, the multiplication of peace is reassuring and encouraging. We need peace in the midst of the evil temptations that we continually face!

Verse 3

Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

Abundant mercy is the motivation behind God's loving dealings with us. We deserve nothing and have been given everything! It is the compelling constraint in the merciful heart of God that gives us a lively hope. Our hope is not only living but actively alive and is an energizing principle of divine life in the believer. Our hope is living, active, enduring, as opposed to that which is dead, inactive, and transient. When Jesus Christ was resurrected from the dead, mankind's hope became alive.

It is this lively hope which energizes us to live a holy life for Him. This hope keeps us moving forward joyfully. This hope is our polestar by which we guide our lives. It is the anchor of our soul and holds us steadfast on the seas of temptation with which we are surrounded. This hope is alive and works in us to do that which is right now as strangers in this evil world. We are able to stay detached from the world because we are attached to this hope.

Verse 4

To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

Our inheritance is incorruptible. God Himself is not capable of corruption (Romans 1:23). The inheritance is likewise. Our inheritance is undefiled which means nothing in it is polluted, stained, soiled, or defiled by sin or any other thing. Our inheritance fades not away. It is not something beautiful, like a flower, which lasts only for a while then fades away. Corruption cannot decay or wear out its freshness,

brightness, or beauty. This glorious inheritance is reserved in heaven. The word “reserved” is from the Greek word *tereo* which means to watch, to observe, to guard, to protect, to set aside. Heaven is the safe-deposit box where God is guarding our inheritance for us under constant surveillance.

Verse 5

Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

“Kept” is a military term meaning to guard or protect. While our inheritance is being kept (guarded) in heaven under the watchful eye of God, we are being garrisoned about by God’s protective care. As our faith remains strong in Him, He guards us unto salvation. This salvation is not the new birth, but rather the completion when Christ returns of that which was started with the new birth. We have so much to be thankful for and to rejoice in!

Verse 6

Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

For a mere season, for a short time, we have heaviness because of manifold temptations. “Manifold” means variegated, many colored, various, or diverse. The temptations are many with varied faces, but the lively hope gives us the vision to see through them and to stand. As we endure we are made strong, and in the end we will be rewarded.

Verse 7

That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

Those who endure receive praise, honor, and glory at his appearing! Praise is applause, commendation, or approbation. “Honor” used here implies a continuing state. It can include rank and dignity as conferred in a reward. Glory is the glory which God will bestow. Our inheritance has already been decided in Christ Jesus, and, as such, is incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading. However, the praise, honor, and glory to be received are being determined by our walk today. These are the rewards in addition to the inheritance.

The opposite extreme to receiving praise, honor, and glory is for the Lord to be ashamed of us at his coming.

Mark 8:38

Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

If we abide in him, he will not be ashamed of us, nor will we be ashamed in front of him.

I John 2:28

And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

With our lively hope in view, we can strive to live a holy life. And in so doing, rather than shame, we can expect to receive praise, honor, and glory at his return.

I Peter 1:13-17

Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning *here* in fear:

We have already been judged in Christ Jesus and found righteous; therefore, we have the inheritance. However, we all will be judged when Christ returns for the works which we are doing today. This judgement will determine the rewards we receive at his coming.

The hope that is ours is indeed a lively hope if it is energizing our souls to live a holy life for Him. Our choice is either to live for the lust of the flesh and the temporary, limited reward it provides or to live a holy life unto God and receive the blessings that it provides now and at Christ’s return.