



The First Letter of Peter
Bible Study Session 01
“Getting to Know Peter”
1 Peter 1:1-2



Study By
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Greek NT

1.1 Πέτρος ἀπόστολος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις διασπορᾶς Πόντου, Γαλατίας, Καππαδοκίας, Ἀσίας, καὶ Βιθυνίας, 2 κατὰ πρόγνωσιν θεοῦ πατρός, ἐν ἁγιασμῷ πνεύματος, εἰς ὑπακοὴν καὶ ῥαντισμὸν αἵματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ· χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη πληθυνθείη.

La Biblia

de las Américas

1 Pedro, apóstol de Jesucristo: A los expatriados, de la dispersión en el Ponto, Galacia, Capadocia, Asia y Bitinia, elegidos 2 según el previo conocimiento de Dios Padre, por la obra santificadora del Espíritu, para obedecer a Jesucristo y ser rociados con su sangre: Que la gracia y la paz os sean multiplicadas.

NRSV

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 who have been chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled with his blood: May grace and peace be yours in abundance.

NLT

1 This letter is from Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ. I am writing to God’s chosen people who are living as foreigners in the lands of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, the province of Asia, and Bithynia. 2 God the Father chose you long ago, and the Spirit has made you holy. As a result, you have obeyed Jesus Christ and are cleansed by his blood. May you have more and more of God’s special favor and wonderful peace.

Quick Links to the Study

- I. [Context](#)
 - a. [Historical](#)
 - b. [Literary](#)
- II. [Message](#)
 - a. [From Peter](#)
 - b. [To the churches](#)
 - c. [Hello](#)

Introduction to Study. This study begins a twenty-two session exploration into the riches of the New Testament document known as First Peter. This ancient letter stands as the second document in the General Letters section of the New Testament, and is the first of two documents attributed to the apostle Peter in the early church. The letter expresses hope and confidence in the face of suffering and persecution. And as such it stands as a source of great encouragement to believers of all times undergoing similar experiences. Its initial reminder to us in the *Praescriptio* is that all believers stand as foreigners in this world while we await God’s calling us to our eternal home with Him and thus provides all believers with important insights into the nature of the Christian life lived out on planet earth. The implications of being ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις are spelled out in the Body proper of the letter with challenging implications for discipleship.

Come journey with us in the exciting venture of studying First Peter. You will find it rewarding and challenging. With this first study we get acquainted with the basics -- who was responsible for the letter, who were the initial readers, something about the circumstances of the writing of the letter in the mid-first century world.



I. Context

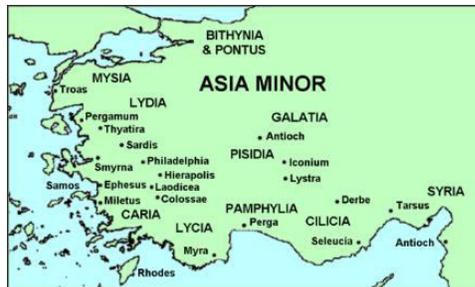
Have you ever listened to someone talking on a phone but didn’t know who they were speaking with? If so, then you understand something of the challenge of interpreting ancient letters. The letter sender is “talking” with his initial readers through the ‘substitute presence’ of a letter. We don’t know these individuals personally, and are dependent on the letter sender to give us clues about the identity of his targeted readers. The more we learn

about them, the better we can understand what the sender is attempting to say to them.

Identifying the circumstances for the writing of this New Testament document is the goal of this first study, based on the letter Praescriptio in 1:1-2 as the launch pad into the who and to whom, the when and where, the why questions that comprise the background understanding of First Peter. In addition, the rich doctrinal expression in the first two verses opens up avenues for understanding important aspects of Christian experience, as well as signals major themes to be developed in greater detail in the Body of the letter.

a. Historical

External History. The historical circumstances of the writing of the letter are helpful for understanding the content of the entire letter. Precise dating of the letter is not possible, simply because not enough data about time and place inside the letter exists in order to determine an exact time for the writing of the letter. Thus only an approximation of date can be suggested, based loosely on generalized signals of circumstance from the details provided in the letter. Early church history strongly suggests that Peter was martyred by Emperor Nero in Rome in the mid 60s of the first century about the same time as was the apostle Paul. In the assumption of Petrine authorship of the letter,¹ the mid-60s would be the latest possible time for the composition of the letter. Add to that the issue of Second Peter, following First Peter, and this would push back the time of the composition some time prior to Peter's death. Given the clear presupposition of a reasonably well developed Christianity in much of what is modern Turkey today by the letter, the date of the letter would more naturally come at least toward the end of the 50s with the Pauline mission in much of this world establishing churches during the early to middle 50s. So the best estimate of date is sometime between the end of the 50s and the middle 60s of the first Christian century.



The 50s and 60s of the first Christian century was the time of the reign of Nero as emperor of the Roman Empire. The time of Nero's reign during the middle of the first Christian century (AD 54-68) was both good and bad for the empire. The early years were productive in expanding the empire, promoting building programs, and strengthening the borders of the empire.² The latter years, especially that of the 60s, were characterized by challenges to his reign from within and troubles with old enemies. The Roman-Parthian War of 58-63 over control of Armenia to the east of the provinces address in First Peter helped to secure Armenia as a buffer zone between the Romans and the Parthians, and represented the only reasonably successful military campaign of Nero's reign. The stability this gave to the provinces mentioned in First Peter made Nero very popular in this region. Additionally he cultivated popularity among the masses by implementing laws to make life easier for them. Thus during the 50s and early 60s especially the eastern provinces mentioned in First Peter would reflect popular support for Nero. Given the Asian influences of worship of a king as divine, loyalty to him came easily. During the 60s Nero enthusiastically promoted emperor worship, claiming that he was equal to Apollo and the other gods. He is known in history as the first systematic persecutor of Christians as a result of blaming them for the great fire in Rome in AD 64.³ Thus the theme of state sponsored persecution of Christians in Asia and the other eastern provinces by



¹Of course, if one views the letter written in the name of Peter and not by Peter himself, a much later date for the time of composition is possible. Many scholars take this position, but the arguments in favor of such a view are not convincing to me. The traditional view that Peter dictated the letter to Silas at some point prior to his martyrdom is the preferred position. 1 Peter 5:12 is important here: (NRSV) “Through Silvanus, whom I consider a faithful brother, I have written this short letter to encourage you and to testify that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it.” (Διὰ Σιλουανοῦ ὑμῖν τοῦ πιστοῦ ἀδελφοῦ, ὡς λογιζομαι, δι’ ὀλίγων ἔγραψα, παρακαλῶν καὶ ἐπιμαρτυρῶν ταύτην εἶναι ἀληθῆ χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ· εἰς ἣν στήτε.)

²Nero became emperor at 17 years of age. These early years were largely the product of his two main advisers, Lucius Annaeus Seneca and Sextus Afranius Burrus. Jealously by his mother Agrippina of these men led him eventually into a downward spiral. In AD 59 Nero had his mother murdered, which began a series of murders of people close to him. Increasing conflict with the Roman Senate eventually led to his banishment from Rome and his death on June 9, 68 AD.

³“Christian tradition and secular historical sources hold Nero as the first major state sponsor of Christian persecution, and some-

First Peter can easily fit the time frame of the late 50s to middle 60s.

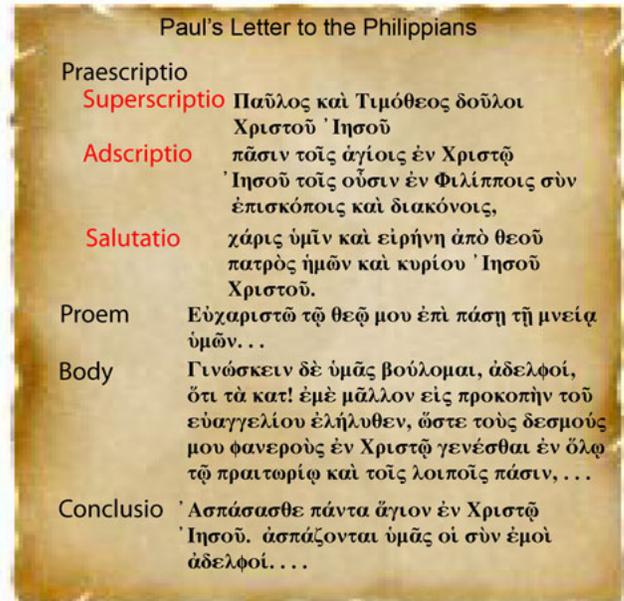
Internal History. Time and place references in vv. 1-2 focus on the listing of the Roman provinces mentioned. The geographical and historical aspects of these spatial references will be treated in the exegesis below. Beyond this, for Peter to have had a direct role in the composition of the letter, the dating would have to be prior to his death at the hands of Nero in the mid-60s.⁴ If one adopts Petrine authorship of Second Peter as well, then First Peter would have preceded this second letter by considerable time.

b. Literary

Literary Form (Genre).

These first two verses stand as the *Praescriptio* of an ancient letter. Both of these aspects are important. Regarding the **'broad genre'** issues, letters in the ancient world served as a substitute presence of the writer. Various circumstances prevented the sender of the letter from being physically present with the recipients of the letter. Consequently in that world, unlike ours today, the only other option was to send a letter to the individual / individuals expressing the thoughts and desires of the sender.

This reality has several implications for interpretation. **First**, the sending of the letter was occasional. That is, some particular circumstance, or set of circumstances, prompted the composition of the letter. This distinguishes the 'letter' from the philosophical tractate, which was composed in order to advocate the philosophy of the writer. The Bible interpreter needs to identify that as a crucial part of the process of making correct sense of the content of the letter. In most ancient letters, especially those of a formal nature, the situation prompting the sending of the letter can be gleaned from the *Praescriptio* and the *Proem* sections of the letter at the outset. Such is the case with First Peter. **Second**, the sending of the letter will assume knowledge of the details of circumstances etc. by the letter recipients that later readers in a different time and situation may not know or understand. This always complicates the understanding but strongly implies the need to understand everything possible about both the letter sender and the letter recipients. The more we can discover about the individuals involved and the situation behind the sending of the letter, the better we can make sense of the words of the letter. **Third**, the occasional nature of the letter means that the issues being addressed in the letter are specific to the initial recipients of the letter. Whether what the sender says to them has relevancy to a modern reader depends entirely on how closely the issues being addressed correspond to similar or the same issues in a modern setting. The basic premise of historical interpretation of ancient texts becomes all the more crucial with ancient letters. Thus one has to carefully sort out the 'then' and 'now' meanings of the text. Building adequate bridges between these two levels of meaning necessitates following solid, time tested principles of hermeneutics. Central to this is the 'analogy of faith' principle that asserts the closer the circumstance of today to that being addressed in the text, the more exact the application of the text to the modern situation.



Ancient Letter on papyrus

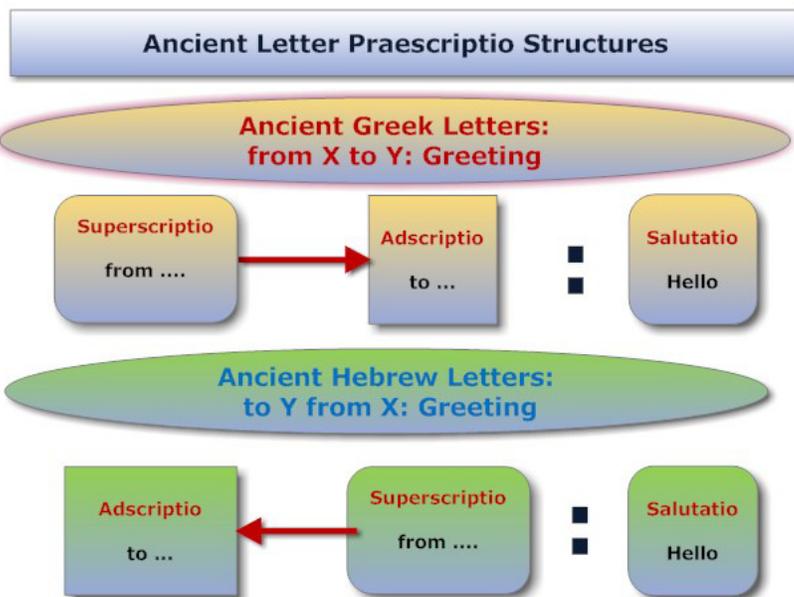
times as the killer of Apostles Peter and Paul. Some 2nd and 3rd century theologians, among others, recorded their belief that Nero would return from death or exile, usually as 'the Anti-Christ.'” [“Nero: Christian Tradition,” Wikipedia online]

⁴“The first text to suggest that Nero killed an apostle is the apocryphal *Ascension of Isaiah*, a Christian writing from the 2nd century. It says, *the slayer of his mother, who himself this king, will persecute the plant which the Twelve Apostles of the Beloved have planted. Of the Twelve one will be delivered into his hands.*¹⁸² Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 275–339) was the first to write that Paul was beheaded in Rome during the reign of Nero.¹⁸³ He states that Nero’s persecution led to Peter and Paul’s deaths, but that Nero did not give any specific orders. Several other accounts have Paul surviving his two years in Rome and traveling to Hispania.¹⁸⁴ Peter is first said to have been crucified upside-down in Rome during Nero’s reign (but not by Nero) in the apocryphal *Acts of Peter* (c. 200).¹⁸⁵ The account ends with Paul still alive and Nero abiding by God’s command not to persecute any more Christians. By the 4th century, a number of writers were stating that Nero killed Peter and Paul.” [“Nero: Christian Tradition,” Wikipedia online]

Significant distances of culture etc. between the ‘then’ and ‘now’ meanings result in less clear applications of the text to today. Always the Bible student needs to be seeking ‘timeless’ truths from the text that will have relevancy to any period of history. Our study of First Peter will be sensitive to this reality in reading the letter of Peter to believers in the middle of the first Christian century.

The intention of the letter is stated in 5:12 as a “letter to encourage you and to testify that this is the true grace of God” (ἔγραψα, παρακαλῶν καὶ ἐπιμαρτυρῶν ταύτην εἶναι ἀληθῆ χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ). This aim is affirmed by the inclusion of large amounts of hortatory and paraenetic material in the letter body. Thus the letter falls under the category of an ancient hortatory letter written to encourage and inspire its readers.

Regarding the ‘*narrow genre*’ concerns, 1:1-2 constitute an ancient letter *Praescriptio*. This Latin term simply means ‘pre-writing’ and designates the labeling of an ancient letter, often found on the outside of the rolled up scroll. This material served to identify the scroll in terms of the sending and the recipients) of the letter. Three elements typically were contained in most ancient letters, although the third element was more optional than the first two.⁵ These elements were the *Superscriptio*, the *Adscriptio*, and the *Salutatio*. The *Superscriptio* identified the sender(s) of the letter, usually by name and also by title. If more than one individual was involved in sending the letter, these persons would typically be identified in the *Superscriptio*.



One important observation to note is that *the sender did not do the actual writing of the letter*, except for very short personal letters to family members. In the more formal letters written to groups of people -- as is the case uniformly in the letters of the New Testament -- a writing secretary was used to do the actual writing of the letter. In the case of First Peter, Silas, who is identified by the Latin form of his name Silvanus in 5:12, did the actual writing of this letter. In that world professional scribes were typically used and paid set fees for their work. In early Christianity various individuals with writing skills voluntarily fulfilled this responsibility for different Christian leaders as a part of their ministry calling from God.

For interpretation purposes, the Bible student should pay close attention to the ‘expansion’ elements contained in the letter *Praescriptio*. When the letter sender ‘expands’ beyond the core elements of identifying himself, his initial readers, and saying hello, he typically adds expansions that signal major themes to be developed in detail in the letter body. Doing this in both the letter *Praescriptio* and the *Proem* sections was common in the ancient world as a communication technique to help the initial readers anticipate the points of the letter that were important to remember. Sometimes also in the *Conclusio* section at the end of the letter a summary of major themes was included for the same purpose. These signals are invaluable to the modern reader seeking to understand the content of the letter.

The *Praescriptio* of First Peter contains the typical elements as follows:

Superscriptio: 1.1 Πέτρος ἀπόστολος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,)

Adscriptio: ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις διασπορᾶς Πόντου, Γαλατίας, Καππαδοκίας, Ἀσίας, καὶ Βιθυνίας, κατὰ πρόγνωσιν θεοῦ πατρός, ἐν ἁγιασμῷ πνεύματος, εἰς ὑπακοὴν καὶ ῥαντισμὸν αἵματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ· (To the exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who have been chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled with his blood:)

Salutatio: χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη πληθυνθεῖη. (May grace and peace be yours in abundance.)

From this one can readily notice that the major expansions are attached to



⁵First Peter contains all three elements, as is illustrated in the block diagram below.

Outline of Contents in First Peter:

Praescriptio: 1:1-2

- *Superscriptio, 1:1a*
- *Adscriptio, 1:1b-2a*
- *Salutatio, 1:2b*

Proem: 1:3-12

- *Core, 1:3a*
- *Expansion, 1:3b-12*

Body: 1:13-5:11

- *Holy living 1:13-2:10*
 - *Ideals 1:13-25*
 - *Privileges 2:1-10*
- *Obligations 2:11-3:12*
 - *Civic 2:11-17*
 - *Haustafeln 2:18-3:7*
 - *Social 3:8-12*
- *Persecution 3:13-5:11*
 - *Encouragement 3:13-4:11*
 - *Explanation 4:12-19*
 - *Proper Conduct 5:1-11*

Conclusio: 5:12-14

- *Sender Verification, 5:12*
- *Greetings, 5:13-14a*
- *Benedictio, 5:14b*

the Adscriptio section. The Superscriptio contains both name and title with minor expansion of the title: [an apostle of Jesus Christ](#). The Adscriptio contains significant religious and geographical details identifying the targeted recipients of the letter. The Salutatio has a Pauline echo with the dual emphasis on grace and peace, but contains the verb expression *πληθυνθειη*, not found in the letters of Paul.

Literary Context.

The *Praescriptio* in ancient letters served to identify the basics about the letter contents contained on the inside of the rolled up scroll. Typically this information was located on the outside of the scroll. Thus the formula nature of the *Praescriptio*. By glancing at this information on the exterior side of the scroll the individual could understand the basic identity of the document in terms of who was sending the letter, to whom it was being sent, and the basic greeting that was intended to bridge sender and reader together in a favorable tone.

Consequently, this material serves as a formal introduction to the letter and comes at the very beginning of the document. Only in more recent translations has the formula nature of the *Praescriptio* been recognized and thus translated in a quasi poetic form which each element indented separately.

The title of the letter found in most modern printed Greek New Testaments (e.g., SBL-GNT: "ΠΕΤΡΟΥ Α") and the translation language title (e.g., NRSV: "The First Letter of PETER") is a later addition to the document for identification purposes for modern readers.

Literary Structure.

The *Praescriptio* of ancient letters stood as independent, formula elements to the letter. And as such do not typically contain complete sentences. But the block diagramming of these formal elements is helpful to see the internal structure of these elements:

1.1 **Peter**

an apostle of Jesus Christ

To the chosen immigrants of the diaspora

in Pontus
Galatia
Cappadocia
Asia
and
Bithynia

1.2

according to the foreknowledge of God
the Father
in sanctification by the Spirit
for obedience
and
the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ,

Grace and peace be multiplied to you

The *Praescriptio* of First Peter follows the standard pattern of ancient Greek letters: **A to B: Greetings**. Peter is identified as the sender; the believers in the specified Roman provinces as the recipients; and an expanded greeting that is distinctive from the Pauline model in the New Testament.

II. Message

The natural structure of the text provides the basis for the outline of the passage. The importance of following such a process is substantial as one aid to help avoid reading false meaning back into the scripture text. When the outline accurately reflects the historical meaning of the text, the applications drawn from the text have a defined framework that will strengthen their accuracy and biblical basis.⁶

The central theme of these verses is the communication of a Christian leader to beloved believers in a way to not just inform them but to inspire them to new levels of commitment to Christ. Peter's preference would have been to make a personal visit to encourage the struggling communities of faith. But circumstances made such impossible. So the next best option in the ancient world was to send a letter of encouragement to them.

a. A Christian leader sends an encouraging message, v. 1a

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

Πέτρος ἀπόστολος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

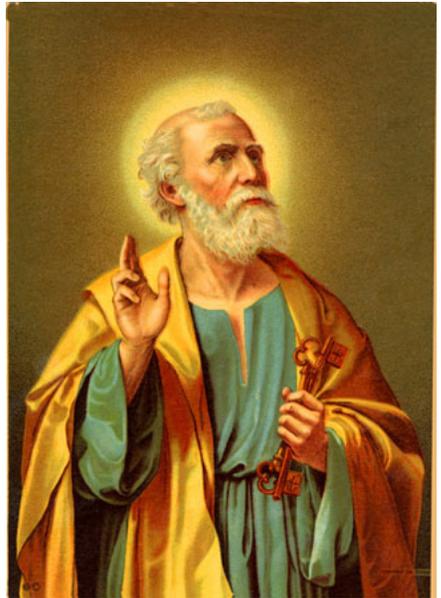
Notes:

Were you to open up your mail on some particular occasion and discover a personal letter from Billy Graham addressed directly to you, what would your reaction be? I suspect you would feel excitement and elation that a Christian leader such as Dr. Graham would take time to write you a personal note of encouragement. You would carefully pour over each word, anxious to glean all the insights possible from the wisdom of such a recognized preacher of the Gospel.

A similar reaction by the various communities of faith where this letter was read most likely took place in the early 60s of the first Christian century. The aged apostle of Christ had sent them a letter! It was read, and re-read, many times. I suspect each congregation eagerly sought to make a copy of it before the letter was carried to another congregation in a different town. Since the letter was addressed to a large number of congregations scattered over a wide territory, having a copy for themselves took on major importance. They wanted to have at least one permanent copy of the letter for their community of faith. And most likely it didn't take very long before multiple copies would begin circulating within the individual communities of faith.

Who was the person responsible for sending this letter? He identifies himself in the *Superscriptio* both by name and by title. Both these identifiers provide important understanding about the letter. The man Simon Peter played a pivotal role in apostolic Christianity as one of its key leaders. Knowing all we can about him helps us understand better what he will say to these ancient believers. Also, understanding the acknowledged role of apostle is important for our grasping the ideas of the text.

Simon Peter: Πέτρος. Who was this person? Norman R. Ericson ("Peter, First, Theology of," *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*) provides a brief synopsis of the self-identity of Peter⁷ inside the letter



⁶I will construct the outline for each of the First Peter studies attempting to reflect these basic hermeneutical principles, that build off of what I taught seminary and university students for four decades. These are summarized in my "Guidelines for Exegeting a Text from the Greek New Testament," at <http://cranfordville.com/Exegeting.html>. See Step 7 in this article for more details. The one deviation from this in these First Peter studies will be an *Expositional Outline* that builds off the *Exegetical Outline*. For details on this difference, see my "Steps to a Literary Structural Analysis of the Greek Text," at <http://cranfordville.com/gkgrma05.pdf>. In essence, the verb tense will be present time and not past time; the thrust of the simple sentence heading will be applicational, rather than just historical etc. The alert Bible student will recognize in these headings a potential sermon and / or teaching outline of the passage.

⁷"The names of Peter. The NT uses four names to refer to Peter. Least used is the Hebrew name Symeon (Παύλος; Σεμεων), which appears only in Acts 15:14 and in most Greek MSS of II Pet. 1:1. The Greek name Simon (Σιμων) occurs much more often: in Matthew, five times; in Mark, six; in Luke, eleven; in John, twenty-two; in Acts, four (all in the Cornelius story); and possibly in II Peter, one (1:1). Nearly twenty times, almost all of them in John, the name Simon is used in the double name Simon Peter. The other two names, Cephas and Peter, are identical in meaning. Both mean "rock." Cephas (κηφας) is the Greek transliteration

itself:

The author calls himself Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ (1:1), a fellow elder, a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a participant in the eschatological glory (5:1). He has written by means of Silvanus (5:12 , or Silas; cf. Acts 15:22 Acts 15:27 Acts 15:32), with greetings from his “son,” Mark (Acts 12:12 ; 15:37 ; Col 4:10) as well as from the elect church in “Babylon” a symbolic name for Rome (5:13 ; cf. Revelation 17:5 Revelation 17:18 ; Revelation 18:2 Revelation 18:10).

This Galilean fisherman was the son of a John (Jhn 1:42) or a Jonah (Mt. 16:17), who grew up on the western side of the Sea of Galilee in northern Palestine. Perhaps Capernaum (Mk. 1:21, 29) or Beth-Saida (John 1:44) was home town. Later on Peter had a home in Capernaum where Jesus healed his wife’s mother (Mt. 8:14 // Mk. 1:30 // Lk. 4:38). We don’t know his wife’s name but she traveled with him on his missionary endeavors for Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 9:5). His brother’s name was Andrew, and they were business partners of James and John before coming to Christ (Lk. 5:10). Andrew led Peter to Christ at the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry in Galilee and Peter quickly become one of the leaders of the group of the Twelve. After Jesus’ ascension back to Heaven, Peter became the leader of the twelve apostles and of the Christian movement in its beginning Jewish days (Acts 1-11). The biblical record doesn’t contain details of his ministry after the 40s of the first century. Acts 12:17 indicates that he left Jerusalem and continued ministry largely outside Palestine. Some of the possible cities where he may have ministered include Antioch, Corinth, and Rome, as well as Asia Minor. From 1 Peter 5:13, he evidently was in Rome at the time of the writing of this letter.⁸ Church tradition asserts that he was put to death in Rome by Emperor Nero in the mid-60s during the same period that the Apostle Paul suffered the same fate.

Peter was an established and widely acknowledged leader of the Christian movement, although the title ‘pope’ doesn’t belong in spite of Roman Catholic tradition. Both his strengths and weaknesses surface in the biblical story of his life. We would like to know more about his education, since the quality of the Greek in First Peter is very good but is very poor in Second Peter. Perhaps Silas as writing secretary of First Peter accounts for the quality of the Greek in the first letter (5:12), but Peter had no writing secretary in the composition of the second letter.

Apostle of Jesus Christ: ἀπόστολος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. In ancient formal letters the *Superscriptio* typically included not only the name of the sender but an indication of his official title as well. This provided the authority base for any demands the sender would make on the recipients in the body of the letter.

Peter’s title is stated simply as ‘apostle of Jesus Christ.’ Three simple words with enormous meaning both then and now. Paul claimed this title in nine of his thirteen letters in the New Testament, but Peter is the only one in the General Letters to make this claim.⁹ Who was an ἀπόστολος? Although the term can mean missionary out of the root meaning of ‘one sent’, in such titular uses as here the term is referring to the Twelve Apostles that Jesus especially commissioned to lead His church after His departure. These men were given unique authority to oversee the launching of the Christian movement in the first century; the New Testament that we have today is the written record of their witness to Christ. The Christian gospel is built on the foundation of the witness of the apostles.¹⁰ They possessed special authority that no one beyond them or since them of the Aramaic word כּהן, “rock.” It occurs in John once, in I Corinthians four times, and in Galatians four times. The Greek word πέτρος has the same meaning (John 1:42). It occurs in Matthew twenty-three times, in Mark nineteen, in Luke seventeen, in John thirty-four, in Acts fifty-six, in Galatians twice, and in I Peter and II Peter once each. Because Greek MSS vary in the name given in some passages, these figures are only approximate, but they show clearly that the name Peter is dominant in NT usage, and that the name Simon, though used often, is much less frequent. The double name Simon Peter and the phrase “Simon called Peter” recall that Simon was the earlier name and the name Peter was given later. The frequency of the name Simon in the gospels and the rare use of Symeon in the NT indicate that the name Simon was not merely a later Greek substitute for Symeon, but that the name Simon was his alternate original name and was in common use during Jesus’ ministry. If this is so, it hints at some Greek background for the pre-Christian life of Peter. He was not an Aramaic-speaking Jew who had no touch with the Hellenistic forces in Galilee, but a bilingual Jew who thereby had some providential preparation for later missionary preaching.” [F.V. Filson, “Peter,” *Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, iPreach online]

⁸NRSV: “Your sister church in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings; and so does my son Mark.” Babylon is a code word for Rome.

⁹See the listing of the epistolary *Praescriptia* in the Greek New Testament at <http://cranfordville.com/g496CLess01RIPraescriptioList.pdf>.

¹⁰Eph. 2:20 NRSV: “19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, 20 built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.”

has been given by God. Consequently when an apostle spoke, his words carried special authority -- both then and now.

What can we learn from the Superscriptio? Most importantly we see in this the effort of an older Christian leader to reach out to struggling believers in order to give them words in insight and inspiration. By this point in time Peter was at least in his 50s if not older. He had been serving Christ well over three decades. His life had not been easy or comfortable. Serving the Lord had taken him well out of his 'comfort zone' of Galilee into places where he faced hostility and all kinds of challenges in preaching the gospel of Christ. And he had been faithful in that service, along with his wife. Now toward the end of the journey he learned of believers in the eastern part of the Roman empire who were struggling with persecution. We can't say whether he had ever visited them personally prior to the writing of this letter. But he cared deeply for them and desired to help them. Not being able to personally journey there to encourage them, Peter composed this wonderful letter of hope and encouragement to be read to each congregation by trusted assistants.

How often do we as Christian leaders continue to care for God's people? Perhaps for believers that we don't know personally? Peter's example challenges us to indeed 'shepherd my flock' as Jesus had instructed Peter to do years before (cf. John 21:15-18).

Many preachers and Christian leaders today claim authority from God. But none possess special authority from God, like that of Peter. And as we will see in chapter five, even Peter's authority as an apostle was gained through shepherding example, not through occupying an office.¹¹ Biblical authority rests solely in God, and not in men. People gain influence over others by being someone intensely dedicated to God. This authority comes out of character and actions. Never out of claiming a title of authority! To see Peter in the 'office of apostle' is to read back into the text something that did not develop until centuries after the writing of this letter. Peter, himself, would have been vehement in rejecting any authority from 'occupying a office.' Apostleship was a *ministry* and a *calling* to serve God, and thereby to serve God's people.

b. Struggling believers need to hear that message, vv. 1b-2a

To the exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who have been chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled with his blood:

ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις διασπορᾶς Πόντου, Γαλατίας, Καππαδοκίας, Ἀσίας, καὶ Βιθυνίας, 2 κατὰ πρόγνωσιν θεοῦ πατρός, ἐν ἁγιασμῷ πνεύματος, εἰς ὑπακοὴν καὶ ῥαντισμὸν αἵματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

Notes:

The *Adscriptio* identifies the initial recipients of the letter. The first readers of this letter were scattered over a wide geographical region in the northeastern Mediterranean world. In the eyes of the government authorities of that region they were 'nobodies,' that is, people of questionable character who needed to either be brought in line with Rome or else eliminated. Against this negative portrayal of these believers, Peter characterizes them 'spiritually' with some of the most beautiful titles possible -- labels that aristocratic Roman society was not worthy to wear. With this expanded *Adscriptio* designation of the initial recipients of the letter we are introduced to themes and tones of Christian status that will permeate the entire letter.

To the chosen exiles of the Dispersion: ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις διασπορᾶς. The identification of the recipients begins with a spiritual designation of them. The first adjective, *ἐκλεκτοῖς*, affirms them as 'chosen of God.' Immediately we sense Peter's view of his first readers as the elect people of God.¹² These folks, both Jewish and Gentile,



¹¹1 Peter 5:1-4 NRSV: "1 Now as an elder myself and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory to be revealed, I exhort the elders among you 2 to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it — not for sordid gain but eagerly. 3 Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief shepherd appears, you will win the crown of glory that never fades away"

¹²"The identification of the readers as "elect" (ἐκλεκτοῖς) employs a term that in the OT refers to Israel's special status as the people chosen by God.²⁹ This term, also familiar to the covenanters of Qumran,³⁰ became a common designation in the NT for Christians.³¹ The idea of Christians as elect receives its fullest treatment in the NT in 1 Pet 1:3–2:10*, with the specific term repeated in 2:9*, indicating the importance the author ascribes to the OT understanding of the special place Israel occupied in God's economy of salvation as paradigmatic for understanding the new elect community. In 1 Peter, such election is based in Christ, whose election as the foundation for the church is from eternity (1:20*; 2:4*). Such election eventuates in final salvation (5:10*), but as the ethical

were now God’s people, rather than ancient covenant Israel. The God of this universe had chosen them to be His own people.

The second adjective phrase, **παρεπιδήμοις διασπορᾶς**, underscores their transient status in this world. Παρεπιδημος basically designates an alien, that is, someone living in a foreign country. These ‘foreigners’ are a part of the διασπορά, i.e., the Dispersion. This very Jewish term¹³ is here applied to believers generally, whether Jewish or Gentile. Beyond the deliberate re-application of these otherwise Jewish designations to the believing community, this designation reminds



believers that life on planet earth is temporary, and that this world is not the real home of God’s people. In general, ancient Roman society considered being a παρεπιδημος as a disaster for it meant the loss of homeland and having to live in a foreign culture etc. usually as a conquered person. Massive numbers of people, mostly having been conquered by the Romans, found themselves living in such a strange circumstance in the empire. The yearning, at least early on, was to return home to things familiar and comfortable. Believers, so declares Peter, are foreigners in this world. Things should be strange and we live ‘out of our comfort zone’ in this world. But as the chosen of God, we are not homeless. We have a wonderful home to go to, the very city of God Himself, prepared for us by none other than Christ (cf. John 14:1-6).

Some older interpreters tend to see these very Jewish oriented terms here as signaling that Peter was writing to Jewish Christians living in the specified provinces. But the remainder of the letter clearly is targeting mostly Gentile Christians (cf. especially 1:18, 4:3-4). The letter sender is re-applying terms previously specifying covenant Israel to the mixed believing community of Jews and Gentiles.

In Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia: Πόντου, Γαλατίας, Καππαδοκίας, Ἀσίας, καὶ Βιθυνίας.

As the above map illustrates, the sequence of the listing of the Roman provinces draws a clock-wise circle¹⁴ beginning with Pontus and ending with Bithynia.¹⁵ This area comprises a major portion of the modern country of Turkey. The region varied in its population density with some provinces like Asia being fairly densely



admonitions throughout the letter make clear, such election puts upon those elected the responsibility to live in accordance with the character of the one who elected them (1:15–16*).³² [Paul J. Achtemeier and Eldon Jay Epp, *1 Peter : A Commentary on First Peter*, Hermeneia—a critical and historical commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1996), 81.]

¹³“Although Peter’s greeting is not quite so specifically Jewish as that of James (‘to the twelve tribes in the diaspora,’ James 1:1), the terms ἐκλεκτοί, παρεπιδημοί and above all διασπορά, appear to be expressions of a Jewish consciousness arising out of the Jewish experience.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 6.]

¹⁴The reason behind this circular listing of the Roman territories is unclear and has prompted speculation along one of two lines of reasoning. **First**, the sequence may suggest the travel route of those carrying the letter to the churches. But the logic assumed here is not entirely sustainable given the layout of the major roads, rivers etc. Also the starting point of Pontus is illogical for a messenger coming from Rome, and given that persecution of believers was the strongest in Pontus. **Second**, the sequence may signal the location of the writing: “the order moves from the area nearest to the area furthest for an author writing in Chaldean Babylon,⁹⁵ or conversely, it moves from the area furthest to the area nearest for one writing in Rome.⁹⁶” [Paul J. Achtemeier and Eldon Jay Epp, *1 Peter : A Commentary on First Peter*, in Hermeneia—a critical and historical commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1996), 86.] In reality neither of these explanations is free of serious problems, and we must conclude that we really don’t know why this sequence is given.

¹⁵“The area included in the opening verse of 1 Peter (Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, Bithynia) was part of the Anatolian peninsula, which was very important in the mission of the early church, and appears to have been Christianized very rapidly.⁵⁴ The five areas named cover virtually the entire peninsula except for the regions south of the Taurus Mountains, in all some 300,000 square miles.⁵⁵ It was not a homogeneous area, either in terms of culture — while in general this area was very Greek in its culture,⁵⁶ Asia, Bithynia, and Pontus were more completely Hellenized, Galatia and especially Cappadocia to a lesser extent⁵⁷ — or in terms of wealth — while the area as a whole was prosperous, there was great inequality in its distribution of wealth,⁵⁸ a general characteristic of the Roman Empire at this time. The area enjoyed for the most part competent administration on the part of the Romans during the time 1 Peter was written,⁵⁹ and was a scene of continuing and extensive road building.⁶⁰ [Paul J. Achtemeier and Eldon Jay Epp, *1 Peter : A Commentary on First Peter*, in Hermeneia—a critical and historical commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1996), 83-84.]

settled, but others like Cappadocia being very sparsely settled. So the culture ranged from mostly rural to largely urban. Ethnically it was diverse. The mixture included local tribal groups, Persians and Iranians who had migrated from the eastern fertile crescent, Greeks (especially in Asia) and Romans, as well as substantial numbers of Jews who had come largely from the Babylonian Exile period in the eastern fertile crescent. Of the mentioned provinces, Asia on the west was more heavily populated, economically wealthier, and more strategically located from the Roman government standpoint.¹⁶ Cappadocia, on the eastern side, was the most sparsely populated that was mostly rural, and the poorest economically of the provinces mentioned here.¹⁷ That Christian congregations had emerged in all of these provinces by the early 60s is a testimony to the faithfulness of believers to spread their new faith. These churches were made up of people out of this diverse cultural background. The letter is then addressed to believers in the churches located in these provinces.

But, in spite of the wide diversity of background of the church members, the language of spiritual status is eloquent and underscores the great blessing of God upon these people. As the Block Diagram above illustrates, the following qualifiers are connected to the adjective “chosen.” The first two qualifiers define the actions of God, and the second two specify the objective or goal of those actions. These immigrants are chosen 1) according to the foreknowledge of God and 2) by the sanctification of the Spirit. This election and sanctification is intended to 3) produce obedience to Christ, and 4) to sprinkle them with the blood of Christ.

Destined by God the Father: *κατὰ πρόγνωσιν θεοῦ πατρός*. Believers are chosen foreigners in this world, and this choosing of believers has been done ‘according to’ (*κατὰ*) the foreknowledge¹⁸ of God the Father. The preposition *κατὰ* defines the reference point of the choosing action. Not just anybody chose them. Rather, the God of this universe chose them to be His own people. And -- most importantly -- He chose them well in advance of their birth on this planet. His selection was not arbitrary or an after thought. He decided to make them His children long before they existed. Against the backdrop of kings and emperors choosing people for special privilege usually because they possessed something attractive that drew the ruler to them, God chooses individuals not because of what they possess or who they are. The divine selection of sinners highlights the grace of God, not the worth of the chosen. And being chosen by God’s foreknowledge stresses the reality that God took the initiative in reaching out to us; not us first deciding to choose God. As 1 John 4:19 stresses, “*We love because he first loved us.*” With this language often used of Jesus and His sacrificial death, we believers should take immense satisfaction in realizing that just as God chose Jesus to be Savior before He created the world, He likewise chose us to be His children. We are privileged and blessed beyond measure!

Sanctified by the Spirit: *ἐν ἁγιασμῷ πνεύματος*. The corollary to divine knowledge is the divine

¹⁶“The Roman province of Asia was the richest and best endowed of all the provinces of the peninsula. In the first century B.C., Cicero wrote: ‘In the richness of its soil, in the variety of its products, in the extent of its pastures, and in the number of its exports, it surpasses all other lands.’ Its cities were centers of culture where the sciences, philosophy, and literature flourished. In the interior the rich natural resources were developed into thriving industries. Woolen fabrics, particularly from Laodicea, were world renowned. The economy was brisk. Trade routes from the east passed down the valleys of the province to the coastal ports where costly merchandise was shipped to Greek and Roman ports to the west. Goods from western countries followed the same routes in reverse, as wealthy entrepreneurs traded with eastern importers. The Roman province of Asia became the crossroads of the empire.” [Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1988), 217.]

¹⁷“The great plateau which dominated central Asia Minor contrasted markedly with its surroundings. Flat, treeless, ringed by forested mountains, broiling in summer and gelid in winter, it constituted a land apart, difficult to reach but then easy to traverse. Its climatic extremes limited most agriculture to cereals and some fruits; most of its surface lay in pasture.” [David Noel Freedman, vol. 1, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 870.]

¹⁸Πρόγνωσις only surfaces twice in the New Testament, here and Acts 2:23. The verb form προγινώσκω is used on five times: Acts 26:5; Rom. 8:29; 11:2; 1 Peter 1:20, and 2 Peter 3:17 with either the meaning 1) to know beforehand or in advance, or 2) to choose beforehand. The noun πρόγνωσις carries the same twofold range of meaning:

“**πρόγνωσις, εὖως**, ἢ (cp. προγνώστης; Hippocr. et al. as a medical t.t.; Plut., Mor. 399d; 982c; Phlegon of Tralles [time of Hadrian]: 257 Fgm. 16e Jac. [in Orig., C. Cels. 2, 14]; Lucian, Alex. 8; Vett. Val. 220, 9; 221, 25; 355, 9; Jos., Ant. 15, 373 πρόγνωσιν ἐκ θεοῦ τῶν μελλόντων ἔχων; 17, 43; PGM 7, 294; Jdth 11:19; Just.; Tat. 1, 1) **1. foreknowledge** πρ. λαμβάνειν τελείαν receive complete foreknowledge 1 Cl 44:2. **2. predetermination**, of God’s omniscient wisdom and intention (so Alex. Aphr., Fat. 30 p. 200, 31 Br.; Proverbia Aesopi 131 P.; Jdth 9:6; Just., D. 92, 5 πρόγνωσιν ἔχων) w. βουλή Ac 2:23. κατὰ πρόγνωσιν θεοῦ πατρός destined by God the Father (NRSV) 1 Pt 1:2 (Just., D. 134, 4; s. WArndt, CTM 9, 1929, 41–43).—DELG s.v. γινώσκω. M-M. TW. [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 866-67.]

action of the Holy Spirit in setting apart these people to God as His children.¹⁹ When God chooses us to be His people, we must be made acceptable to Him as such. In the Gospel, this can only be achieved by divine action; it can never happen through our own efforts to become holy. In the Judaism of that day one had to become holy to God through obeying the Torah. As Paul discovered, this was utterly impossible. But the good news of the Gospel is that God's Spirit works in our life at conversion to consecrate us, i.e., make us holy, to God. Then out of that consecration comes obedience as the consequence of consecration, not as the requirement for consecration. Jesus reversed the process and made it successful, where men had miserably failed in their false notion of becoming acceptable to God by their own efforts.

In a Gentile culture where boundary lines between right and wrong were hardly drawn at all, and even when drawn tended to be horrible distortions of reality, the message of the Christian Gospel came promising people the opportunity to reach out to the true God who as Father sought a relationship with them, and through His Son had provided a way to establish a relationship with sinful humanity. To those with a synagogue heritage, the Gospel came to them with the positive message that relationship with the God of Abraham was indeed possible because of the salvation work of Jesus Christ. Once they committed themselves to Him, God would indeed make them His people in the new community of believers that was open to all humanity. Peter affirms this marvelous message to his readers, both Jewish and Gentile, at the outset of the letter. And later in the letter body these themes will be expanded with further details.

To be obedient to Jesus Christ: εἰς ὑπακοήν. The first objective of God's choosing and consecrating of us is to produce obedience. The full prepositional phrase reads εἰς ὑπακοήν καὶ ῥαντισμὸν αἵματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, thus making Jesus Christ as the 'object' of obedience and the 'subject' of sprinkling.²⁰ Very importantly, our obedience flows out of consecration by the Holy Spirit, not leads to and serves as the basis of. When our lives are set apart to God by the Holy Spirit, the most natural consequence of that is to hear and obey (**ὑπακοή**) our Lord who has saved us from our sins. He has taken over control of our life and we now stand ready to do His will.

To be sprinkled with his blood: καὶ ῥαντισμὸν αἵματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. It is likely that Exodus 24:1-8²¹ stands in the background here, especially vv. 7-8, although not completely certain. Clearly it is the blood²² that comes from Jesus Christ that is 'sprinkled' on the people which brings about cleansing from sin. This blood was poured out as an offering to God on the cross, and now is applied to each individual coming to Christ in faith commitment.²³ A commitment to obey is linked to the sprinkling action



¹⁹“ἁγιασμός πνεύματος in the present passage (as in 2 Thess 2:13) is emphatically a divine act and an aspect of Christian initiation. It refers to that separation by which individuals who are strangers and exiles in their world are gathered into a new community of the chosen. The cognate verb ἁγιάζειν is used similarly in 1 Cor 6:11: ‘But you were washed, you were consecrated, you were justified by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.’ The consecration Peter has in mind takes place through the proclamation of “the gospel with the Holy Spirit sent from heaven” (1:12). Only in connection with this work of setting apart a holy people is the Spirit of God in I Peter designated as ‘holy’ (ἅγιον) or associated with ἁγιασμός.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, vol. 49 in the Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 11.]

²⁰The use of the Genitive case noun with nouns of action either as object or subject. A very creative use here, combining both functions. Michaels in the WBC missed his grammar assessment on both accounts here.

²¹Then he said to Moses, “Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship at a distance. 2 Moses alone shall come near the LORD; but the others shall not come near, and the people shall not come up with him.” 3 Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the ordinances; and all the people answered with one voice, and said, “All the words that the LORD has spoken we will do.” 4 And Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD. He rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and set up twelve pillars, corresponding to the twelve tribes of Israel. 5 He sent young men of the people of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed oxen as offerings of well-being to the LORD. 6 Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he dashed against the altar. 7 Then he took the book of the covenant, and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, “All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient.” 8 Moses took the blood and dashed it on the people, and said, “See the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words.”

²²The sprinkling of blood, ῥαντισμός αἵματος, is found in the NT only here and in Heb. 12:24. Surprisingly the LXX speaks only of the sprinkling of water (ὕδωρ ῥαντισμοῦ; 5x; lit. ‘water for sprinkling’), not blood, in the ceremonial cleansing actions and only in Numbers 19:9-21.

²³“Jesus Christ, the mediator of the new covenant, sprinkles those whom God selected with His own blood, as Moses sprinkled the children of Israel who had promised obedience with the blood of oxen (Exod. 24:7 f.; cf. Heb. 9:19). But references to other

so that both are essential aspects of the conversion moment.

From this elevated designation of the recipients of the letter, we catch sight of the glorious work of God in salvation. Although the Father, Spirit, and Son are referenced here, we should avoid seeing this as full blown trinitarianism, which doesn't emerge in Christianity for some centuries to come. To be sure, the essence of a triune God are clearly present here, but it would take some time before this evolves into the Nicean trinitarian confession in 325 AD from which the Apostles' Creed eventually develops.²⁴

These persecuted believers in ancient Anatolia Peter addresses as the very people of God who have been brought to the Father by divine selection, the blood of Jesus Christ, and consecration by the Holy Spirit. As this letter was read through the various congregations such affirming language at the very outset must have created eager expectation to hear what the revered apostle would say. He got their undivided attention from the beginning of his letter.

What can we take from the Adscriptio? Certainly we can find powerful affirmation about who we are before God as committed believers in Christ. We stand uniquely as the very people of God with Him as our Heavenly Father. He chose us long before we were born and committed Himself to make us His own. At the moment of faith commitment His Spirit set us apart to Him, using the sprinkling of the very blood of Jesus Christ and our commitment to obedience. To be clear, we stand in this world as foreigners, uprooted from our true spiritual home of Heaven. But we are headed home as we look toward death and / or the second coming of Christ. In either instance, we will be carried into the very presence of a holy, pure, and utterly righteous God and will find acceptance before Him through the blood of His Son covering us. Few words are more affirming than these!

c. Bonds of Christian friendship are strengthened by prayer, v. 2b

May grace and peace be yours in abundance.

χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη πληθυνθεῖη.

Notes:

The *Salutatio* of ancient letters sought to establish positive connections between sender and receiver of the letter. The *Salutatio* was expressed as a prayer wish in most ancient Greek letters. The most common form was the single word χαίρειν, as is found in James 1:1c. In the pattern of Paul's greetings to the readers of his letters, the wording of the greeting centers on grace and peace,²⁵ as here, but usually without a stated verb expression and more toward the formula pattern of ancient letters. Sometimes Paul's 'howdy' was expanded with numerous qualifiers such as in Gal. 1:3-5, but most often with designation of the source of this grace and peace as from God and from Christ. In a few of his later writings, it is grace, mercy, and peace that he wishes upon his readers.

The background of this greeting reflects both the Greek and Hebrew ways of greeting one another verbally in the ancient world. The most common Greek verbal hello was χαίρειν, as 2 John 10-11 make clear.²⁶ Quick observation of χαίρειν and χάρις makes clear the spelling connection of these two words. Peter, following

sprinklings of the O.T., unconnected with obedience, must not be excluded. The word ῥαντισμός is appropriated, for example, to the water in which the ashes of the heifer were dissolved (Num. 19); and a less obvious explanation is supported by Barnabas, 'that by the remission of sins we might be purified, that is in the sprinkling of His blood for it stands written... by His bruise we were healed (Isa. 53:5)'. Indeed the best commentary is supplied by the Epistle to the Hebrews in which evidence of the O.T. is reviewed and the conclusion drawn that according to the law everything is cleansed by blood. All the types were summed up in the fulfilment (see especially Heb. 9.) whether they related to the Covenant or to the Worship." [J.H.A. Hart, "The First Epistle General of Peter" In , in *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, Volume V: Commentary (New York: George H. Doran Company), 40-41.]

²⁴**Credo in Deum Patrem** omnipotentem, Creatorem caeli et terrae, **et in Iesum Christum**, Filium Eius unicum, Dominum nostrum, qui conceptus est de Spiritu Sancto, natus ex Maria Virgine, passus sub Pontio Pilato, crucifixus, mortuus, et sepultus, descendit ad inferos, tertia die resurrexit a mortuis, ascendit ad caelos, sedet ad dexteram Patris omnipotentis, inde venturus est iudicare vivos et mortuos. **Credo in Spiritum Sanctum**, sanctam Ecclesiam catholicam, sanctorum communionem, remissionem peccatorum, carnis resurrectionem, vitam aeternam. Amen. [For background details see "Apostles' Creed," Wikipedia online.

²⁵Compare the English language translations in my "Epistolary Divisions in Paul's Letters with Text," cranfordville.com: <http://cranfordville.com/letlstptxts.html>.

²⁶NRSV: 10 Do not receive into the house or **welcome** anyone who comes to you and does not bring this teaching; 11 for to **welcome** is to participate in the evil deeds of such a person.

GNT: 10 εἴ τις ἔρχεται πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ ταύτην τὴν διδασχὴν οὐ φέρει, μὴ λαμβάνετε αὐτὸν εἰς οἰκίαν καὶ **χαίρειν** αὐτῷ μὴ λέγετε· 11 ὁ λέγων γὰρ αὐτῷ **χαίρειν** κοινωνεῖ τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ τοῖς πονηροῖς.

Paul's example through the influence of Silas, 'Christianizes' the Greek hello by wishing God's grace upon the individual in saying hello. And in Hebrew / Aramaic the greeting was shalom, peace, שלום.²⁷ This is simply brought over into the Greek equivalent εἰρήνη. Thus the greeting reflects both Greek and Hebrew heritages, but gives them a distinctive Christian flavor. The optative verb πληθυνθείη reflects clearly the prayer nature of the greeting and asks God to multiply grace and peace upon the letter readers. This was another strong affirmation of the deep concern of the revered apostle for these believers, most of whom he did not know personally.

What can we learn from this *Salutatio*? Since first learning years ago about the nature of the letter greetings in most of the letters of the New Testament, I have often wondered how we could make our greeting of fellow believers more Christian. In the Schwäbisch Alps of central Germany, the pietistic movement of two centuries ago led to the standard German greeting of *Grüß Gott* (praise God) as the customary greeting in that region. Yet from personal experience of having lived there, I'm not sure how many people using it ever think about its religious meaning as they express it. The greeting here in First Peter is clearly Christian in its tone and effectively communicates this perspective in the greeting. Perhaps one enduring lesson here is that we need to communicate our Christian faith even in the way we say hello.

Another important insight from this *Salutatio* is the central role of God's grace and peace in the individual and corporate life of the church. Of all the blessings we could ask God to give fellow believers, the multiplication of His grace and peace upon their lives should be among the most important prayer wishes. Our relationship with the Heavenly Father depends upon His merciful grace and peace enveloping our lives and permeating every aspect of our existence. The deeper we go in that grace and peace the deeper our relationship with Him, and the greater His blessings upon our lives. Oh that we could and would wish that upon our fellow believers, and express it to them in ways that bond us closer to one another.

ΠΕΤΡΟΥ Α

1.1 Πέτρος ἀπόστολος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις διασπορᾶς Πόντου, Γαλατίας, Καππαδοκίας, Ἀσίας, καὶ Βιθυνίας, 2 κατὰ πρόγνωσιν θεοῦ πατρός, ἐν ἁγιασμῷ πνεύματος, εἰς ὑπακοὴν καὶ ῥαντισμὸν αἵματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ· χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη πληθυνθείη.

3 Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ κατὰ τὸ πολὺ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος ἀναγεννήσας ἡμᾶς εἰς ἐλπίδα ζῶσαν δι' ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐκ νεκρῶν, 4 εἰς κληρονομίαν ἄφθαρτον καὶ ἀμίαντον καὶ ἀμάραντον, τετηρημένην ὑμῖν ἐν οὐρανῷ, 5 ἧς ἡμετέρας σωτηρίαν ἐτοίμησεν ἅμα ὑμῖν ἐν ἁγιασμῷ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος, 6 ἧς ἡμετέρας σωτηρίας ἀποκάλυψεν ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις καὶ προφήταις, 7 ἵνα ὑμῖν ἐκδηλώσῃ τὸ ἄκρυστον ἄγαθόν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν αὐτοῦ, 8 ἵνα ὑμῖν ἐκδηλώσῃ τὸ ἄκρυστον ἄγαθόν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν αὐτοῦ, 9 ἵνα ὑμῖν ἐκδηλώσῃ τὸ ἄκρυστον ἄγαθόν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν αὐτοῦ, 10 ἵνα ὑμῖν ἐκδηλώσῃ τὸ ἄκρυστον ἄγαθόν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν αὐτοῦ, 11 ἵνα ὑμῖν ἐκδηλώσῃ τὸ ἄκρυστον ἄγαθόν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν αὐτοῦ, 12 ἵνα ὑμῖν ἐκδηλώσῃ τὸ ἄκρυστον ἄγαθόν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν αὐτοῦ, 13 διὸ ἀναζωσάμενοι ἐν ἀγάπῃ ἀλλήλων, ἡμετέρας ἀγάπης ἀποκάλυψεν ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις καὶ προφήταις, 14 ἵνα ὑμῖν ἐκδηλώσῃ τὸ ἄκρυστον ἄγαθόν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν αὐτοῦ, 15 ἵνα ὑμῖν ἐκδηλώσῃ τὸ ἄκρυστον ἄγαθόν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν αὐτοῦ, 16 ἵνα ὑμῖν ἐκδηλώσῃ τὸ ἄκρυστον ἄγαθόν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν αὐτοῦ, 17 καὶ εἰ πατέρα ἐπικαλεῖσθε τὸν ἀπροσβολοῦν ἡμῶν, ἵνα ὑμῖν ἐκδηλώσῃ τὸ ἄκρυστον ἄγαθόν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν αὐτοῦ, 18 εἰδότες ὅτι οὐ φθαροῖς, ἀργυρίῳ ἢ χρυσίῳ, ἐλυτρώθητε ἐκ τῆς ματαίας ὑμῶν ἀναστροφῆς πατροπαραδότου, 19 ἀλλὰ τιμῶ αἵματι ὡς ἀμνοῦ ἀμόμου καὶ ἀσπίλου Χριστοῦ,



17 Καὶ εἰ πατέρα ἐπικαλεῖσθε τὸν ἀπροσβολοῦν ἡμῶν, ἵνα ὑμῖν ἐκδηλώσῃ τὸ ἄκρυστον ἄγαθόν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν αὐτοῦ, 18 εἰδότες ὅτι οὐ φθαροῖς, ἀργυρίῳ ἢ χρυσίῳ, ἐλυτρώθητε ἐκ τῆς ματαίας ὑμῶν ἀναστροφῆς πατροπαραδότου, 19 ἀλλὰ τιμῶ αἵματι ὡς ἀμνοῦ ἀμόμου καὶ ἀσπίλου Χριστοῦ,

²⁷“The occurrence of εἰρήνη ὑμῖν πληθυνθείη in Dan 4:1; 6:26, Theod.; and 4:37c, LXX, suggests that such a greeting may have been considered especially appropriate in an encyclical letter (cf. also “May your peace be great” in three diaspora letters from Rabban Gamaliel II, according to b. Sanh. 11b).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 13.]