

1 Peter 1:1-2

Hope in the storm

The Outsider/Insiders



8 Important things to Remember About Peter

1~ Peter was a fisherman, fishing the waters of the “Sea of Galilee” near the city Bethsaida. The “Sea of Galilee” was actually only a big lake. His brother, was also a fisherman as was (most likely) their father before them –

2~Peter was married and Jesus had once healed his mother-in-law (Matt. 8:14,15)

3~He was a member of Christ’s inner circle - James/John/Peter

4~Jesus said that Peter (Petros) was the rock (petra) upon which He would build His church. Jesus blessed Peter for ID-ing Him as the Christ, and then a little later called Him “Satan” for tempting him to not complete His mission (**Matt. 16**)

5~Peter denied Christ 3 times on the night Jesus was arrested. Later, Jesus asked Peter 3 times if he loved him, to which Peter replied each time “You know I love you!”

6~Peter was impetuous and stubborn. Yet He could be flexible and teachable as when he was sent by the Holy Spirit to Cornelius and learned that God loved gentiles as well as Jews.

7~Peter was completely on board with the apostle Paul’s ministry to the gentiles. It was probably Peter’s influence, when he threw in his support behind Paul and Paul’s ministry to the gentiles, that swayed the unanimous decision of the Jerusalem council to back Paul and his theology that salvation was by grace bestowed by faith in Christ alone and *not a mixture* of faith in Christ and the Law of Moses. Guided by the promised Holy Spirit, Paul’s theology became the general apostolic theology on salvation. Most of the letters and epistles of the New Testament address the struggle of the Jewish part of the church with the gentile part, urging/admonishing correct theology (Paul’s interpretation of the teaching of Jesus) over incorrect theology, and also, unity over racial division!

8~Reportedly, Peter was crucified upside down by Roman emperor Nero somewhere around 64-68 A.D.! But that was an apocryphal claim and is suspect!



5 Important things to know about 1 Peter (before we begin)

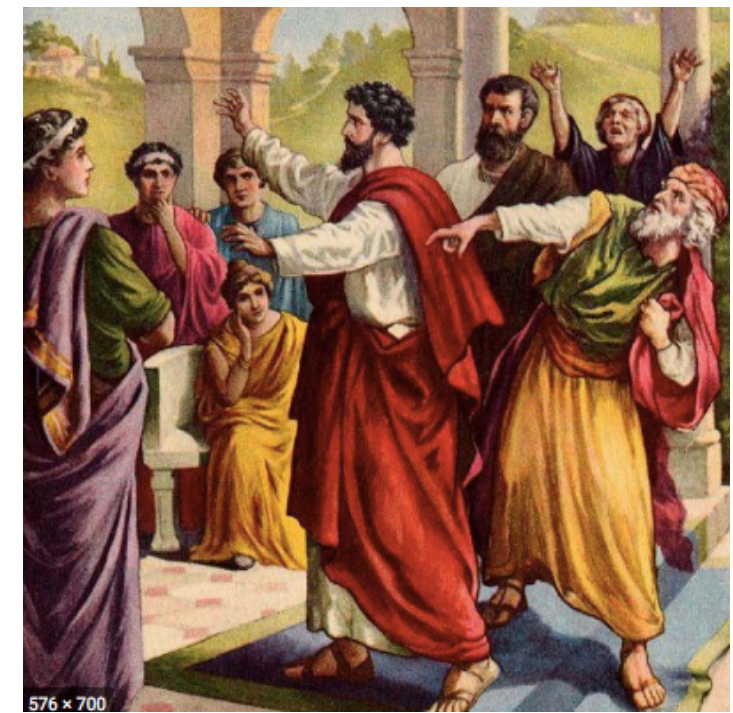
1~1 Peter was written by (you guessed it) Peter, around 60 A.D.

2~The epistle's target was general – to all churches and not aimed at a specific city or situation, so its message was also generally applicable – for all Christ-followers everywhere for all time.

3~Central theme of the epistle – hope for those alienated and persecuted because of Christ. It was a problem for the churches of many cities – maybe most churches. It was hard to be a Christian under pressure!

4~It was written during a time of increasing societal hostilities against Christians from the secular authorities. It was not yet officially coming from the Roman government, but the book of Acts indicates that city governments were increasingly using their power to **try to** rid themselves of the pesky and persistent Christians, especially targeting Christian leadership. It wasn't actually the Christians that were causing the disturbances, but authorities/leaders of other religions, or non-believing Jews who hated Jesus and Christians – **they** were causing the trouble! But, of course, the Christians were blamed! Regardless, Christians could not keep their mouths shut – they just couldn't! The authorities were exasperated because the peace was constantly being disturbed, so they wielded the power of government against Christians in an attempt to suppress what they saw as a new and persistent threat to their social fabric and to their traditional religions.

5~The sufferings of Christ are mentioned in every chapter.



Vs 1 – Peter identifies Himself by using his status as an apostle of Jesus. He will leverage this title to try to influence people to listen to what he has to say, and seriously! He identifies his audience – the “*elect*” (in the many locations where the Gospel of Jesus had been taken and where churches were begun). The “*elect*” is a general term, referring to a people as a group. The Israelites were a chosen (elect) people of God. Contrary to popular belief in many quarters of Christianity, the term has no bearing on individual salvation. It has to do with a task that has been sovereignly given by God. The nation of Israel was God’s chosen people, but most of them will not be with Him in the glory of heaven. They were chosen (elected) as a nation to fulfill the purposes of God in salvation history. God intended that He Himself would enter the human race. The second member of the Trinity that John identifies in his gospel as **the Word** was chosen to become a human through that particular line of humanity – the Hebrews. God had a special but contentious relationship with the Israel throughout most of their history before Jesus the Christ became one of them. Then, for the most part, it remained contentious between Israel and their God. The King of Judea tried to kill him before He was 2! When He was grown and had begun His ministry, He was popular among the people. But, He disrespected and antagonized the religious establishment in Jerusalem, calling out their many hypocrisies. Their hatred for Him grew until they finally murdered Him! But this is what they had been chosen for. If He was going to subject Himself to suffering, and death, at the hands of His own rebellious creation, it was going to be at the hands of His “friends”! Even if they were on-again-off-again friends, they were still His “chosen” ones.



The church was chosen for a task also – a much preferable one! We were explicitly given the task at the end of the gospels [Matt. 28:18-20; Lk. 24:37] and the beginning of Acts [1:8].

*The 2020 fishing season began a couple of weeks ago, I think, and I cannot wait to put the canoe in the water and catch some of them, or, at least *try to* catch some of them. My wife Karen sometimes laughs at me when I come home empty-handed! But I am in good company, so it doesn't really bother me. The Gospel of John ends with a fishing story of how the disciples were fishing all night and had caught nothing. Then, from the shore a man calls out for them to switch their nets to the other side of the boat. They do so and the nets immediately fill with a school of large fish so numerous that they cannot haul it into the boat. They have to drag the net to the shore with the boat to count the fish, which numbered 153! Of course, they discover that man on the shore is the risen Jesus! The story is placed in the end of John's narrative as a pointed illustration of the stated goal of Jesus to make his disciples "fishers of men". With the help of the Holy Spirit they would soon have their nets full of people who came to faith and belief in Jesus. They would found the church out of these people, first in Judea, and then eventually, among the nations of the world! The church they founded, per Christ's instructions, is the chosen vehicle of God - chosen to take the gospel of Jesus Christ to the four corners of the earth! The church is to continue in the legacy of the apostles to bring the love of Jesus, and His offer of salvation, and "sell" Him to a dark and desperate world that does not know it needs Him! Every successive generation of Christ-followers are to become fisherman – or "*fishers of men*" in this same way. From before the creation of the world, this was God's chosen method of canvassing a fallen world with information about Himself and His efforts to woo to Himself whoever was willing to come to Him in faith and trust, receiving/welcoming Him into their **hearts and lives** and placing Him at their internal command center as their most prominent inner voice – as their leader and Lord!



THAT is what election and choseness is all about. It is about a task that we have been handed once we have given ourselves to Jesus. It is not optional. *It is a bit like a subpoena. Taken from the Legal Dictionary – a subpoena is “*A process to cause a witness to appear and give testimony, compelling him to lay aside all pretenses and excuses, and appear before court or magistrate named (in the subpoena), at a time therein mentioned, to testify for the party named, under (threat of) a penalty...*” We have been subpoenaed by almighty God to appear to the court of the world and bear truthful testimony of the true and historical Jesus and to every human being’s need of Him. We do that by bearing witness to what He has done in our own lives! If we are unwilling to do that for whatever reason, we have a problem with God. Unwilling Christians, according to the teachings of Jesus, are unfruitful Christians, and categorized by God as not Christ-followers at all! They are the wolves among the sheep. They are the branches the gardener of the vineyard prunes and burns. They are the goats separated from the sheep, and who will go to eternal punishment. They are the look-a-like weeds among the wheat that are uprooted and burned at harvest time. They are the ones who will be surprised and devastated to hear from the Lord on that great and terrible Day, “***Depart from me, I never knew you***”. Why? Because while they wanted to accept Jesus and go to His heaven, they did not want to accept the mission of Jesus. But when you ask Jesus to save you from your sins and take you into His heaven when you die, you also accept His subpoena to bear witness to other people in your world of what He has done for you, and inviting them to join you in accepting Him as their Savior. They have a sin problem and it must be dealt with through the shed blood of Jesus on the cross! But having deliver that message, then it is up to them how they respond to the invitation. They can reject Him or “receive” Him. And John 1:12 says that to any who receive Him they are made a “son” or child of God! Their sin problem with God eliminated!



“...*chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father*” – The most obvious meaning of this phrase is that God knew how He would redeem for Himself a people from among the people of this fallen world. Not individuals but a group of people – first localized Israel and then the worldwide church. These people would represent His interests in the world. He planned it,.. and He did it! Foreknowledge is a strange thing. I suppose you can have it through seeing ahead to the future events as they will happen. Or, you can have it by planning for it and then doing it – making the future happen as you want it to. Or it can be a mixture of both. We really don’t know God knows the future. It doesn’t make Him greater to do know every single thing. It makes him less actually! If He sees all, then He has no freedom. I don’t know that I want a God like that. But I don’t think that is the way it is. The Bible, overall, simply reveals a God with a plan who knows a great deal about the future because of it. It gets to be mind-boggling. But, what I *do* know is that the Bible actually reveals a God with a great overall plan that presides over history, and He will see to it that the needed parts of His plan are fulfilled! But within that great plan, the Bible shows that the Creator/God interacts with things as they occur, quite freely, and weaves it into the desired conclusion of His plan. But they are not always His will or His doing. They are the work of human choices that He allows and seems to adjust His plan to. Sometimes God influences those choices but not always, and only as often as He has to. Pharaoh made his own choices to reject God request to let His people go, until the seventh time such a request was made by Moses. The last three choices God influenced out of a desire to bring judgment upon Egypt for their genocide of the male babies of Israel. Mostly, God presents alternative futures to men based on their choices. *“If you do this, I will do that. If, on the other hand, you do that, I will do something quite different. But you choose, you know how I will react”*. Consider the blessings and curses that Moses outlines in the Book of Deuteronomy – where God is speaking in the first person and laying before the people their alternative futures depending upon the future choices they would make! He interacts with people and events often as if He has self-limited His knowledge of the future! Remember when Jesus cried out, *“Jerusalem, Jerusalem! How often I would have gathered you under my wings as a hen gathers her chicks, but you refused me”*! They had thwarted the will of a sovereign God, obviously often, and God in His sovereignty had allowed it. Ultimately, I just think it is futile and counterproductive to speculate about what God knows or how he knows it.



Peter is addressed to Christ-followers as outsiders of the world. But as far as the Creator is concerned, we are the insiders. One cannot be more on the inside of God's inner circle than to be in Christ. Through faith in Christ we are "sanctified by the Holy Spirit"! Sanctified means that we are **made** holy by being IN CHRIST. That means that when we place our faith and trust in Him, we are placed IN HIM and secured IN HIM by the Holy Spirit, and share in the holiness of Christ Himself. Even though we are too human and flawed to actually be holy ourselves, we are still holy in God's eyes because being IN CHRIST we are **covered** in holiness – the holiness of Christ Jesus Himself! Sanctification also means that we are dedicated/devoted to God.



*I was watching a singing competition show on TV, and observed many of the contestants dedicating their performance to a family member or special friend. Likewise, when we place our faith in Christ, our lives become a performance dedicated to God. *"I do this for you God! I get up in the morning for you, Lord! I love that on this day, no matter how busy I am, and no matter the demands of the day,.. we get to spend the whole day together – just like yesterday! I love that I am not alone, but you are **always, ALWAYS** with me! You are in me, and I am in you! Today I am again a part of your ancient plan, and I am have become very involved and active within it. So today I dedicate my life to you. My inner conversations will honor you. The attitudes I feel and display will honor you. My choices today, from the way I act and react to the people in my life, to the way I eat, to the way I drive, or do social media, to the way I behave in a game of monopoly or ping pong, the way I do my work. How I do it is all dedicated to my Lord and my Savior Jesus Christ!* You see, we were chosen for OBEDIENCE! We were chosen for a task of showing what God can do when He is in charge! And we are part of a great nation of people called out from among the many nation of the world to be the possession of God and live our lives under His rule and His direction! In a time of great insecurity, we can rest secure in these truths! Unless, of course, someone within the sound of my voice has not received Jesus. I would urge you to become one of the elect nation of God. Trust Christ! Ask Him for His salvation! He will grant it, "sprinkling His blood" upon your sins, and they will be paid for. You will switch sides and be placed "in Christ", receiving everything that He has, including His own "*chosen-ness*"!