

*1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,*

*To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure....nasb*

*1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the elect, exiles of the Dispersion throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 chosen by the foreknowledge of God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by His blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance....bsb*

We usually begin with some introduction. Anybody ever hear of Peter? He really needs no introduction for those who are students of the New Testament. He is the second most mentioned person in the NT after Jesus.

He was the unchallenged leader of the 12 and then eleven disciples who would become the apostles of the church. We have 4 lists of the 12 disciples chosen by Jesus. 4 different authors. And in each list, Peter is always the first name. Beyond Peter's name there is no other order except arguably there are 3 groups of four which consistently have the same names but in different orders presented.

Peter is one of those specially gifted humans that just seems to be more exceptional in every way than anyone else in the room. He is a presence wherever he goes. We've all met people like that. We like to be around them and we are painfully aware that they just seem to have more of everything than the rest of us.

Peter is gifted with natural leadership qualities head and shoulders above his peers, and yet it will take 3 years and the Holy Spirit of God to get that natural energy under some control and useful direction. He is raw material in Jesus hands, and when we get to his book we are a little bit amazed that the man who asks all the wrong questions has all the right answers.

2 names. Peter's given name is Simon. Simon barJonah which is son of Jonah or John. The two are interchangeable. But when Jesus meets him He changes his name to Rock. Petros is the greek word for rock or stone.

We'll find out in Peter's beginning sentence of his book that where-as Peter meets Jesus for the first time on the occasion of his name being changed to Petros, Jesus has known him since before time began. That's true for every one of us who are true believers. We can point to a day when we met Him, but He has known us from eternity past to eternity future.

From John's account, Jn. 1:40 *One of the two who heard John speak and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41 He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means Christ). 42 He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).*

There's a story about Tommy LaSorda, the famous Dodgers coach who discovered a young man in the minor leagues who had incredible natural talent at pitching, an incredible arm and control, but whose demeanor was too timid and shy and inconfident. LaSorda got him, and renamed him Bulldog. You know him as Orel Hershiser. That name had some part in forming him into a person famous for his tenacity.

That's how it is with Peter. When he meets Jesus, he's Simon. Full of natural ability but, unfocused. Jesus says you're going to be Rock.

What's humorous is how those names get interchanged. On his Rock days, Jesus calls him Peter. When Jesus says, who do men say that I am, and the disciples give him several possibilities they have heard among the people, and then Jesus says who do you say that I am, and Peter pipes up, he's like the guy on the college challenge show that always slams the button and rings the bell first, whether he knows the answer or not, but this time he does.

"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God" 17 *And Jesus said to*

*him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18 “I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. Mt. 16*

The Rock that Jesus is talking about is the stone cut out without hands in Daniel 2. Jesus is the ROCK, Peter is the little rock that is connected to that rock, the Lord Jesus Christ. Crucified for us and risen from the dead. The church will be built from people of all nations that have that connection to Jesus. Little rocks.

Peter will reflect back on that day with Jesus, in this very book, we'll get there in a few months, he says in chapter 2 verses 4 - 6 *As you come to Him, the living stone, rejected by men, but chosen and precious in God's sight, 5you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6For it stands in Scripture: “See, I lay in Zion a stone, a chosen and precious cornerstone; and the one who believes in Him will never be put to shame.”*

Jesus is the STONE. We, like Peter, become little stones connected to **the** Stone, who are being built into a spiritual house.

On that day, Simon became Rock. Jesus acknowledges I say to you, you are Rock.

Then, in the next paragraph, Peter has soared to unbelievable heights and in the next moment he crashes to unimaginable depths. *21 From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day. 22 Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You.” 23 But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's.”*

One minute, you're Rock. The next minute, full of yourself instead of being connected to The Rock, you fall and become Satan, hindering The

Rock.

And throughout his life with Jesus we see this man, full of natural gifts and talents, stumble bumbling along, painfully becoming Peter instead of Simon.

Every time Peter gets so full of himself that he figures he can jump out of the nest and fly on his own, without that connection to Jesus, he becomes Simon. When we see Jesus use the name Simon instead of Peter, it's always because he's acting like his old self. Dis-connected, he fails. Over and over.

But he gives us hope. Some days' we're Rock. Other days, we're Simon. When some local tax collectors corner Peter and ask him if his Master pays the temple tax, Peter says, Yes, and hopes it's the right answer.

*Then when Peter entered the house, Jesus preempted him. “What do you think, Simon?” He asked. “From whom do the kings of the earth collect customs and taxes: from their own sons, or from others?” in Matt. 17. Oops. Wrong answer. But Peter learns that day that Christians **do** pay their taxes even though they are citizens of heaven, they do not offend the rulers of the country they are sojourning in.*

*Later on Peter, in his book will say; 13 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, 14 or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. 15 For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. 16 Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God. 17 Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.*

When Peter boasts that he will never leave Jesus side, even if it costs him death, we see his natural leadership in view. All of the other disciples likewise say the same thing. Whatever Peter does, these guys follow. Even if it's wrong.

What does Jesus say to him? Which name does he use? 31 "*Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat;* 32 *But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith will not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.*"...

Simon fails. Miserably. Heart wrenching failure. He deny's Christ 3 times, and then that look. That penetrating look of Jesus into a failed soul. And Simon goes out and weeps bitterly.

Then at the seashore, what name does Jesus use? 3 times? *Simon, do you love me? Simon, do you love me? Simon, do you love me?* It's brutal, but effective. After that day, Simon is never Simon again. He becomes Rock. Little rock connected to *the* ROCK. The stone cut out without hands.

That's our brief introduction to Peter. After that day on the seashore, he gets his marching orders, we looked at that last week, and he dominates the first 8 chapters of the book of Acts.

He was married. We know that first because Jesus goes to Simons house, by the way, any time the gospel writers are talking about property, it's Simon. Simon's house. Simon's boat. etc. Jesus goes to Simon's house to heal his mother in law.

Later, Paul is arguing that if he so desired he could lead about a wife. A believing sister, like Cephas and the rest of the apostles. Peter had a wife, and apparently she traveled with him.

The early church historian Eusebius tells us that church tradition is that Peter had to witness his wife's crucifixion with his eyes before they crucified him . . . upside down. He said he did not merit to be crucified the same way as his Lord.

Peter made it to Rome, and history tells us it was in Rome that he was crucified, and that brings us directly to the occasion of the writing of this book.

July 19, 64 AD is a day in infamy. That is the day that Nero fiddled

while Rome burned. Nero was a mad man. His only sense of fulfillment was when his ego was stroked by great building projects. So tradition is that he burned down Rome. So he could rebuild it.

Rome was a city of over a million people, most who lived in tall wooden structures only separated by narrow streets and alleys. And when it caught fire, it went up like so much kindling.

The story was that they almost got it contained and people re-lit the fires to finish the job. The result was that the homeless peoples, destitute and missing their loved ones who died in the flames become enraged and dangerous to their emperor.

He had to think up someone to blame, and the Christians, who were always talking about a day of judgement through flaming fire, were an easy target.

The Christians did it. It's their fault, and thus began a virulent persecution of Christians in Rome and surrounding countries ruled by Rome that would ultimately cost Peter his life.

We'll see that connection throughout this book. The language of those who are living as aliens, persecuted, rejected, hated by the world.

In 1 Peter 4:12 *Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial that has come upon you, as though something strange were happening to you.*

1 Peter 1:6 *In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer various trials, 7so that the authenticity of your faith—more precious than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ....*

1 Peter 2:11 *Beloved, I urge you as **foreigners and exiles**, to abstain from the desires of the flesh, which war against your soul.*

This is timely for us who are lulled to sleep by 200 years of not only religious tolerance, but elevation in society. Christians used to be the

gold standard in America. The uppercrust of society. The baseline for western civilization.

All of that is changing before our eyes. Suddenly, in the last couple of years, it is a shame to be associated with "those christians". More and more, christians are shunned. Big business has drawn the red line that the weak knee'd government could not enforce.

Large corporations have banded together to say, if you honor those folks so-called religious liberties, which are nothing more than thinly veiled bigotry, we will pull the plug on your inflated money pillow. No sports. No conventions. We can control the money and the people of your states will suffer hardship and loss of wealth if you side with the christian world view.

People like Chip and Joanna Gaines who have a popular TV presence, Fixer Upper, are shamed publicly because they associate with christians who openly proclaim that homosexuality is sin. Public shaming. Dis-association. Threat of withholding benefits and wealth by large corporations. This is all just the tip of the iceberg.

We are insulated somewhat out here in the boondocks. What about Southern California mega churches with multi-million dollar budgets to maintain on a weekly basis. What happens when the corporate money structures target anyone associated with those churches? What happens when the day comes that they either decide for Sexual tolerance over religious intolerance, or they cannot pay the bills next week?

This letter of Peter's screams to us. Pay Attention! This is normative. The fiery ordeal is normal. This is your survival guide. Listen up!

That's our introduction. Lets' look briefly at vss 1 and 2, and we're not going to get very far at all. I don't expect to get into the nitty gritty of this book until after Easter Sunday.

I liked how the bsb, Berean Study Bible, which I don't really know much about, but I liked how they approached Peter's greeting more than any of the other's, even my own beloved New American Standard.

*1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,*

*To the elect,*

*exiles of the Dispersion throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2*

*chosen by the foreknowledge of God the Father and*

*sanctified by the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by His blood:*

*Grace and peace be yours in abundance....bsb*

So, I dived into those 50 words this week. 6 subjects all run together in a single greeting. And I listened to 4 sermons that MacArthur gave on 4 different Sunday evenings that encompass those 2 verses.

And I found myself listening, especially on Wednesday, as I worked in the field all day long, it was a gorgeous day, and I listened to the first 3 sermons at least 3 times each, over and over, and found myself rejoicing and saying amen, out loud, several times. I loved it!

But then it dawned on me. And I began to shout and pray out loud to our God. Thank goodness I get to work solo very often, unrestrained by the onlooking world which would have thought me quite mad.

Here's my point. Peter doesn't have to explain anything to his audience. They know exactly what he's talking about! And yet, the very best example of any modern church perhaps anywhere on earth, the saints at Grace Community Church, who have been trained by 40 years of biblical exposition, need 4 Sundays of careful exegetical preaching of these 50 words, to understand what Peter's even talking about.

And that's the best case scenario in the modern church! 4 weeks of preaching on 2 verses! The worst case scenario which is the norm for American evangelicalism is, no one has a clue what Peter's talking



about, and even worse, no one much cares.

Peter, launches like a race horse out of a gate and reaches full speed in about 2.8 seconds elapsed time. It's like the green light at a drag strip and Peter is away, and all you see is the smoke from the tires! He's way down there somewhere.

In these first opening words, Peter has launched into some of the loftiest and most difficult doctrines of Christendom. His hearers needed no explanation.

But I will say further; If the church finds itself in a situation similar to what these christians in Rome were experiencing in 64AD and beyond, we'd *better* know what Peter is talking about.

The doctrines presented here are not for Bible egg heads who enjoy talking forever about 2nd level doctrinal things that normal everyday christians neither need to know or understand. These doctrines are *must haves* for christians who are going to survive a society that throws them away. Shuns them and makes them 2nd class citizens at best, or even, dead at worst.

I believe we are on the threshold of a time when people who believe an ancient book has more authority over their lives and beliefs than the supreme court of the United States, will be classified as radical extremists.

And yes, thank you to Islam for making that descriptor a very frightening classification. Are you ready to defy the United States government, if need be, to hold the beliefs of this book over everything else. Are you ready for your society that has accepted and even thought well of you, to label you as extremists. Radicals. Dangerous people that need to be watched?

That is who Peter is writing these words to, and that is information that we can no longer consider something for elitist specialized religious professionals, not us normal folk. We had better learn what Peter is talking about, because a storm is gathering on the horizon, and we need

to be prepared to withstand whatever gets thrown at us.

Peter didn't have to explain this stuff to his hearers.

The writer of Hebrews, some think it could actually have been authored by Peter, that author says; Heb. 5: 11 *Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. 12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. 14 But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.*

He wants to press on into topics that have some depth, but his hearers are not ready for solid food. They're still babies. They haven't matured.

That is a picture of evangelicalism in 2017 in America. It takes MacArthur 4 weeks to explain to the best of the best, what Peter just says, in his salutation. That is a warning to us.

Brace yourselves. In the next few weeks you are going to hear some doctrines that evangelicalism, class of 2017, has no stomach for. We won't press much farther this morning. These words are too important to our survival in coming days to gloss over them quickly.

No, I'm not going to spend 4 weeks like MacArthur. By the way, for those who are serious about survival, those 4 sermons are available and free. Go to Grace to You dot com. gty.com and search under sermons for 1Peter. I listened to 60-1 through 60-4.

Anyone with a computer, or perhaps just an i-phone, can download those mp3 files and listen to the far better teacher than me for no cost. There is a banquet feast available for Christians. My question is, why is no one hungry?

We're almost out of time, but let's consider just the first few words in vs.

1. *Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,*

Peter, we've looked at, briefly, this morning. No one with any integrity has ever argued against what the church has accepted universally throughout the centuries. This is *that* Peter. *an apostle of Jesus Christ*

And here we want to spend the remaining couple of minutes this morning talking about that word apostolos. Our english is simply the transliteration of the greek word apostolos.

Here are the definitions. a messenger, envoy, delegate, one commissioned by another to represent him in some way, especially a man sent out by Jesus Christ Himself to preach the Gospel; an apostle.

At work there is a lady everyone knows and loves. She makes our desert at the chow hall. Of course we love her. But she is always very very personable. And often she will say 'praise the Lord' about this or that.

So one day I asked her about her faith. Where does she go to church. And she said she goes to the apostolic church.

Those folks are people who are charismatic. They believe that not only have all of the miraculous sign gifts not ceased, they take that to the next logical conclusion; there are still apostles running around. Today.

So I didn't pick a fight, I nicely said, oh, OK or something else weak and excused myself. You don't pick fights with the desert lady, right. BUT;

Are there still apostles around today? Ephesians 2:20 says having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone.

Jesus is the cornerstone. The apostles are the foundation of the church.

And Ephesians 3:4-6 which says *4 In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5 which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by*

*the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. 6 This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are fellow heirs, fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus....*

The apostles were the foundation of the church who received direct revelation, by the Holy Spirit, of this new mystery, the church.

They were foundational. We are building the 21st floor in that building, built on one foundation, the apostles doctrine.

In every case, they were called, and commissioned to reveal the mystery of the new covenant by the risen Christ himself. That's a dramatic statement. New revelation from God. Why would anyone believe that.

God helped them lay that foundation by proving they were who they said they were, by accompanying miracles. They healed the sick. They made men blind from birth to see. They raised the dead. Not these phony baloney miracles that people get all worked up about today. Someone's leg is lengthened? Someone's chronic headache is dispelled? Really.

You can tell right away I have trouble with modern apostles and modern miracle workers. Why? Is God revealing new truth through them? If He is, you can throw this Bible away and just get a looseleaf binder to collect whatever it is He's revealing now.

The apostles were a unique group of men, chosen by Jesus, who had seen Him raised, and who laid the foundations of the church, with new revelation, accompanied by real miracles. Notable miracles. Not the phony baloney stuff that is hyped on TV today to get the weak to mail in a check.

Peter, was one of the real ones. You can take what he is about to reveal to us in his book . . . to the bank. He backed it up with notable miracles. It was the real deal.

In 2 Cor. 12:12 The apostle Paul, forced to make a defense of himself against an onslaught of accusers says; *The true marks of an apostle —*

*signs, wonders, and miracles — were performed among you with great perseverance.*

And finally, Revelation 21:14, talking about the glorious city says;  
*And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*

Did you catch that number? 12 There were 12 apostles of the Lamb. When we get there some day, we'll find out whose name is on that 12th foundation stone. Mathias who drew the straw, or Paul who Jesus appeared to and commissioned to take the gospel to the gentiles.

I think we're going to have a good time in this book. And I think the words of this book are a survival manual for God's people. I hope you do too.