



LESSON ONE

An Introductory Word

Scripture Reading:

1 Peter 1

- 1:1** Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the sojourners of the dispersion of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,
- 1:2** Chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father in the sanctification of the Spirit unto the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.
- 1:3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has regenerated us unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
- 1:4** Unto an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled and unfading, kept in the heavens for you,
- 1:5** Who are being guarded by the power of God through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed at the last time;
- 1:6** In which time you exult, though for a little while at present, if it must be, you have been made sorrowful by various trials,
- 1:7** So that the proving of your faith, much more precious than of gold which perishes though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;
- 1:8** Whom having not seen, you love; into whom though not seeing Him at present, yet believing, you exult with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory,
- 1:9** Receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls.
- 1:10** Concerning this salvation the prophets, who prophesied concerning the grace that was to come unto you, sought and searched diligently,
- 1:11** Searching into what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ in them was making clear, testifying beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glories after these.
- 1:12** To them it was revealed that not to themselves but to you they ministered these things, which have now been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, which things angels long to look into.
- 1:13** Therefore girding up the loins of your mind and being sober, set your hope perfectly on the grace being brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.
- 1:14** As children of obedience, do not be fashioned according to the former lusts in your ignorance;
- 1:15** But according to the Holy One who called you, you yourselves also be holy in all your manner of life;
- 1:16** Because it is written, "You shall be holy because I am holy."
- 1:17** And if you call as Father the One who without respect of persons judges according to each one's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear,
- 1:18** Knowing that it was not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, that you were redeemed from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers,
- 1:19** But with precious blood, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, the blood of Christ;
- 1:20** Who was foreknown before the foundation of the world but has been manifested in the last of times for your sake,
- 1:21** Who through Him believe into God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.
- 1:22** Since you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned brotherly love, love one another from a pure heart fervently,
- 1:23** Having been regenerated not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, through the living and abiding word of God.

1:24 For “all flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass has withered, and the flower has fallen off,
1:25 But the word of the Lord abides forever.” And this is the word which has been announced to you as the gospel.

QUESTIONS:

Section 1:

1. Please give some examples to show that Peter’s writings even surpass Paul’s writings.
2. What are the four expressions concerning grace mentioned in 1 Peter? How are they related?

Section 2:

1. What is the span and scope of Peter’s writings?
2. What is the subject of Peter’s Epistles? How can we see it from the Bible?
3. Why do believers still suffer today?

Section 3:

1. How does the word “chosen” bring in the thought of God’s government?
2. What are the three steps taken by God for His elect to participate in His full salvation?

Section 4:

1. What does the word “salvation” imply in Peter’s Epistles? How can we be saved from losing our temper?
2. What are the two aspects of the sanctification of the Spirit? Please share your own experiences.
3. What are the three actions of the operation of the Triune God?

THE CHARACTER OF PETER'S WRITINGS

Paul wrote fourteen Epistles, but Peter wrote only two, containing a total of eight chapters. Nevertheless, even though Peter's writings are brief, he uses certain terms that cannot be found in the writings of Paul. For example, Peter speaks of the precious blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1:19). Although Paul speaks concerning the blood of Christ, he does not use this particular expression, the precious blood.

At this point we need to see that a particular characteristic of Peter's writing is his use of adjectives, especially high adjectives. Along with the precious blood, Peter mentions the incorruptible seed, unfading glory, and divine power. Paul does not use these expressions. Peter, however, had the habit of using such adjectives. But this was more than a habit; it is an indication that something had truly been built into Peter's character.

Through the Spirit of reality something solid, high, rich, and strong was built into the very fibers of Peter's being. Therefore, when he spoke concerning the Lord's blood, he added the word "precious." This adjective touches our feeling. As he uttered this word, Peter must have had a certain feeling within him regarding the preciousness of the blood of Christ. In 1:18 and 19 he says, "Knowing that you were redeemed not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, the blood of Christ." Do you not believe that Peter expressed a particular feeling when he uttered these words? In verse 23 of the same chapter Peter goes on to say, "Having been regenerated, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the living and abiding word of God." In this verse Peter speaks of the incorruptible seed and of the living and abiding word. In 1:4 he describes our inheritance as "incorruptible and undefiled and unfading." Thus, in these verses, as illustrations of Peter's practice of using adjectives, we have the words precious, incorruptible, living, abiding, undefiled, and unfading. This indicates that in this particular characteristic Peter is stronger, higher, and richer than Paul. (1:4, 19)

First Peter 2:21 says that Christ suffered on our behalf, leaving us a model that we should follow in His steps. The Greek word rendered "model" is difficult to translate. Some versions use the word "example." Literally, the Greek word means a writing copy. Thus, the Lord Jesus is our writing copy, an under-writing used by students to trace letters in learning to draw them. A modern term to describe the process of copying is "xeroxing." Xeroxing does not involve following or imitating. On the contrary, xeroxing is a matter of reproducing an original. Christ is a writing copy not for us to imitate nor merely to follow. Rather, He is a writing copy to be xeroxed into us. This means that we all should become reproductions, xerox copies, of Christ. This is the significance of the Greek word translated "model" in 2:21, a term not used by Paul in his writings.

In 3:7 Peter uses another unique expression—"grace of life." We are familiar with the words grace and life, but not with the expression "grace of life." As weaker vessels, the wives are joint-heirs with their husbands of the grace of life. What a sweet expression! We, however, may be familiar with the grace of salvation or the grace of forgiveness without ever having been impressed with the grace of life. In his writings, Paul does not use this particular precious and sweet expression.

In 4:17 Peter says, "Because it is time for the judgment to begin from the house of God." Here we have a particular expression on the negative side: God's judgment beginning from His own household. Paul does not tell us this. But Peter is very particular in the matter of God's judgment beginning from His own household.

Paul often uses the expression "grace to you and peace." Peter, however, twice speaks of grace and peace being multiplied. In 1:2 he says, "Grace to you and peace be multiplied," and in 2 Peter 1:2, "Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the full knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord." Peter desires not only that grace be with the saints, but that grace be multiplied to them. Have you ever thought about what it means for grace to be multiplied? Have you ever heard of a sermon or message telling you that grace and peace can be multiplied? Most of us may find this expression puzzling. Peter's use of the word "multiplied" is another illustration of his particularity. In this matter, not even Paul was as particular as Peter, for he never spoke in his Epistles of grace and peace being multiplied.

The word multiplied indicates that a certain thing is present and that instead of having another of the same thing added, we need what we have to be multiplied. This means that we need the multiplication of the grace we already have. We do not need another grace. What we need is to have multiplied the grace we have already.

With the thought of multiplied grace as the base, Peter goes on to speak in 4:10 of varied grace: “Each one according as he has received a gift, ministering it among yourselves as good stewards of the varied grace of God.” We all should be good stewards of what Peter calls varied grace, grace in different aspects and of different categories. Peter mentions grace again in 5:10, where he speaks of the God of all grace. Therefore, in 1 Peter we have four unique expressions concerning grace: grace of life, multiplied grace, varied grace, and all grace. The grace of life is being multiplied in us. Then it becomes the varied grace and eventually, the all grace. As a result, we do not have grace just from one direction, but from many directions, for example, from the heavens and from the earth, from our husband or wife, and from our children. The more children we have, the more aspects of grace we shall experience. If you have four children, you will enjoy grace in four aspects. But if you have more children, you will enjoy more aspects of grace. In like manner, if a brother is unmarried, he will lack a particular aspect of grace. A married brother will experience grace in a particular aspect.

In 2 Peter 1:3 Peter says, “As His divine power has granted to us all things which relate to life and godliness.” It seems that Peter likes to use the word “all.” In 5:10 he speaks of all grace; here in 2 Peter 1:3, of all things. The words “all things which relate to life and godliness” are a tremendous expression. We cannot find such an expression in the Epistles of Paul. Peter is the one who tells us that the divine power has granted us all things related to life and godliness, that is, all things pertaining to life inwardly and to godliness, the expression of God, outwardly.

In 2 Peter 1:4 Peter goes on to say that God “has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises, that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature.” The Greek word “exceedingly great” is difficult to translate. If it is rendered literally, it should be translated as “greatest.” God has given us promises that are not only precious, but promises that are exceedingly great.

According to 2 Peter 1:4, God has granted us precious and exceedingly great promises so that through them we may become partakers of the divine nature. We are partakers of the divine nature. How marvelous that we can be partakers of the divine nature! Do you realize that you are a partaker of the divine nature, a partaker of the nature of God? We human beings can actually become partakers of the divine nature. This means that, as believers in Christ, we have not only the divine life, but we are now partaking, enjoying, participating in, the divine nature. If Paul were to read such an expression, he would have to say, “Brother Peter, in this matter, your writing surpasses mine.”

In his writings Paul does not tell us anything about the new heavens and new earth. This is mentioned in the writings of Peter and of John, who was intimately related to Peter. (Often in the book of Acts the names of Peter and John are put together.) In the book of Revelation John gives a long record of the new heavens and the new earth. Peter, however, utters only a short word in 2 Peter 3:13: “But according to His promise we are expecting new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.” Peter’s word concerning the new heavens and the new earth is yet another illustration of how his writings contain particulars not found in the writings of Paul.

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THE SPAN AND SCOPE OF PETER’S WRITINGS

Peter’s writings are brief, containing only eight chapters. Nevertheless, the span of Peter’s writings is vast. For example, in 1:2 he speaks of the foreknowledge of God the Father. Then in 1:20 he says that Christ was foreknown before the foundation of the world. Based upon His foreknowledge, God chose us. As we shall see, we were chosen before the foundation of the world. Peter’s mentioning of the foreknowledge of God and of Christ being foreknown before the foundation of the world indicates that the span of his writing begins from eternity past, from before the foundation of the world. Then, as we have indicated, Peter has a word concerning the new heavens and the new earth. This refers to eternity in the future, for it will be in eternity future that there will be the new heavens and new earth. By this we can see that the span of Peter’s writings embraces the two eternities; it goes from eternity past to eternity future.

What about the scope of Peter’s Epistles? The scope also is very broad. The scope of Peter’s ministry is wide. This is indicated by the first two verses of 1 Peter, chapter one: “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the chosen pilgrims of the dispersion of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.” How broad is the scope and how rich is the content of these verses! Here we have the Father’s selection, the Spirit’s sanctification, and the Son’s redemption. Of course, in verse 2 Peter does not use the word redemption. He purposely uses another expression—the “sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.” It would have been too simple merely to use the word redemption. But to

speak of the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ is to expound the matter of redemption, define it, and apply it. The sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ is the application of redemption. It is redemption expounded, defined, and applied.

We may use a special definition to describe the contents of 1:1 and 2. What we have in these verses is the revelation of the economy of the Trinity of the Godhead operating on the elect for their participation in the Triune God. Here we see the operation of the Triune God upon His chosen people for their participation in His full salvation. We shall cover this definition more fully a little later. At this point, we refer to it to indicate how broad is the scope of Peter's writings.

GOD'S UNIVERSAL GOVERNMENT

It is not easy to say what the main subject of 1 Peter is. Even after reading 1 and 2 Peter many times, you still will find it difficult to say what the main subject of these Epistles is. In this matter, Peter is again very particular. He talks about a certain thing, but he does not give us a term to describe that thing.

In his two Epistles Peter is on the subject of God's universal government. These two books speak concerning the universal government of God. As we know, Matthew is on the kingdom. Do not think that the government and the kingdom are identical. No, the kingdom is one thing and the government is another. A country or nation has a government. The government, however, is not the nation; rather, the government is the administrative center of the nation. For example, the government in Washington, D.C., is the administrative center of the United States. Although Matthew presents the kingdom, the government is not found in that book. The government of God is in the writings of Peter.

Mark presents service; Luke, salvation; and John, life. Thus, in the four Gospels we have the kingdom, service, salvation, and life. But we do not have the divine government. In his Epistles Peter makes up this lack by showing us God's universal government.

God's government covers the entire universe. We know this by the fact that Peter speaks of the new heavens and new earth. This indicates God's universal government. Eventually, in eternity future, everything will be right and in good order, for righteousness will dwell in the new heavens and new earth. Today the earth is filled with unrighteousness and disorder. Nevertheless, God is still governing heaven and earth.

In 1 and 2 Peter we have a record of God's judgment. God judged the earth by means of the flood, the deluge. Later He judged Sodom and Gomorrah. The history of God's judgment also includes the judgment upon the children of Israel in the wilderness. During their years of wandering, the children of Israel experienced God's judgment again and again. With the exception of Joshua and Caleb, all those who came out of Egypt, including Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, died in the wilderness under God's judgment. Furthermore, the Bible says that thousands of the disobedient ones were strewn by God in the wilderness. That was God's judgment.

God also judges His own people. According to 4:17, God's governing judgment begins from His own household: "Because it is time for the judgment to begin from the house of God; and if first from us, what will be the end of those who disobey the gospel of God?" This is God's government.

What is the purpose of God's governing judgment? God judges in order to clear up His universe. The universe was created by God for a positive purpose, but Satan came in to defile it. Now God is cleansing the universe through judgment. He is doing a thorough work of cleaning the entire universe. Eventually, the universe will be new. Do you know the significance of the new heavens and the new earth mentioned in 2 Peter 3? The significance is that it indicates the newness of God's universe.

God will not live or dwell in a place that is unclean. Thus, God is cleansing, purifying, the universe. First He purifies us, His household. We are now the center of His cleaning work. Do you not sometimes say to yourself, "Why is it that the more I love the Lord Jesus, the more difficulties I have? My relatives are flourishing; they are doing very well. But my situation seems to get worse and worse." Some saints have problems with their health; others are disappointed with their children. The reason we have difficulties is that God's judgment begins from His own household. You and I are under God's judgment.

The reason the two Epistles of Peter were written, especially the first, was that the dispersed Jewish believers were suffering persecution. They were undergoing a fiery trial. Peter compares this persecution to the burning of a furnace. Because the believers were troubled and perhaps doubting, Peter wrote to instruct them and also to comfort them. In 5:10 he says, “But the God of all grace, who called you into His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself perfect, establish, strengthen, and ground you.” Here Peter seems to be telling the believers that there is no need for them to doubt, for God is perfecting them. Just as stones are cut in order to be fit together in a building, we also need to be “cut” in order to be perfected, established, strengthened, and grounded. Peter wrote to comfort the suffering, persecuted saints, showing them that all of them were under God’s government. The exercise of God’s government is first upon His own children.

The subject of 1 Peter, therefore, is the Christian life under the government of God. The subject of 2 Peter is a little different: it is the divine provision and the divine government. In his second Epistle Peter shows us that God is not only governing us, ruling us, but also providing us with whatever we need. God supplies us all things to live a holy life, a Christian life, under His government.

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A TRANSFORMED PERSON

First Peter 1:1 says, “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the chosen pilgrims of the dispersion of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.” The name Peter denotes his regenerated and spiritual man, whereas Simon denotes his natural man by birth (John 1:42; Matt. 16:17-18). Originally, he was Simon, not Peter. The name Simon denotes the old man, the natural man, full of self. But when Peter came to the Lord Jesus, the Lord immediately gave him a new name. The Lord looked at him and said, “You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas” (John 1:42). The Lord Jesus never does anything merely in name. His changing of Simon’s name had a reality behind it. By changing Simon’s name the Lord Jesus indicated that He would change Simon into Peter, into a stone.

CHOSEN PILGRIMS OF THE DISPERSION

The first Epistle of Peter is addressed to “the chosen pilgrims of the dispersion.” These chosen ones were sojourning on the earth, somewhat like the children of Israel sojourning in the wilderness. Although they were chosen ones, they had been scattered and they were sojourning.

He wants to express Himself... through the judging, cleansing of His chosen people.

The word “chosen” brings in the thought of God’s government. Both of Peter’s Epistles (2 Pet. 3:1) are concerned with the government of God. God’s government is universal; it deals with all His creatures in order that He may have a clean and pure universe (2 Pet. 3:13) to express Himself. In the New Testament age, this dealing begins from His chosen people, His elect, His own household (1 Pet. 4:17), especially from His chosen pilgrims who are dispersed and sojourning among the nations, the Gentiles, as His testimony. Hence, these two books emphasize the believers’ being chosen (2:9; 5:13; 2 Pet. 1:10). As God’s chosen race, God’s choice, God’s particular possession, the dispersed chosen pilgrims need to see that they are under God’s governmental dealing for a positive purpose, regardless of the situation and environment they are in. Anything and everything that happens to them, whether persecution or any other kind of trial and suffering (1 Pet. 1:6; 5:9), is just a part of God’s precious governmental dealing. Such a vision will perfect, establish, strengthen, and ground them (5:10) that they may grow in grace (2 Pet. 3:18).

The Greek word rendered pilgrims can also be translated sojourners. Strictly speaking, this term in this book refers to the Jewish believers who were sojourners, foreigners, dispersed in the Gentile world (2:11-12). However, the principle of pilgrims can be applied to all believers, both Jewish and Gentile, because all are the heavenly pilgrims sojourning as foreigners on this earth. These pilgrims are God’s elect, chosen by God out of the human race, out of all the nations (Rev. 5:9-10), according to His foreknowledge (1 Pet. 1:2).

The term “dispersion” was familiar to all the scattered Jews among the nations. This word indicates that this Epistle was written to the Jewish believers. It is from the Greek word that means to scatter or spread abroad, with a root meaning to sow. This implies that the scattered Jews were sown as seeds among the Gentiles. In verse 1 Peter speaks of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. All these were provinces in Asia Minor, between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean.

CHOSEN, SANCTIFIED, AND REDEEMED

First Peter 1:2 says, “According to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.” The phrase “according to the foreknowledge of God the Father” modifies “chosen” in verse 1. Here, the divine economy through the operation of the Trinity of the Godhead for the believers’ participation in the Triune God is unveiled. God the Father’s choosing, His selection, is the initiation; God the Spirit’s sanctification carries out the selection of God the Father; and God the Son’s redemption, signified by the sprinkling of His blood, is the completion. Through these steps the believers have been chosen, sanctified, and redeemed into the enjoyment of the Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—into whom they have been baptized (Matt. 28:19) and whose virtues they are enjoying (2 Cor. 13:14).

In verse 2 we cannot find the words “Trinity” or “Triune God.” Nevertheless, the fact of the Trinity of the Godhead is contained here, for this verse speaks of the Father’s choosing, the Spirit’s sanctification, and the Son’s redemption. Does this not refer to the Triune God? Is this not the Trinity of the Godhead operating, working, upon His chosen people? Yes, here we see the operation of the Triune God upon the elect for their participation in His full salvation.

In verse 2 Peter speaks of the foreknowledge of God the Father. God chose us before the foundation of the world, in eternity past (Eph. 1:4). Hence, the divine foreknowledge was exercised.

Sanctification of the Spirit here is not the sanctification of the Spirit which comes after justification through the redemption of Christ, as revealed in Romans 6:19, 22; and 15:16. Here, sanctification of the Spirit, as the main emphasis of this chapter, an emphasis on holiness (vv. 15-16), is before the obedience of faith in Christ’s redemption, that is, before justification through Christ’s redemption (1 Cor. 6:11), indicating that the believers’ obedience unto faith in Christ results from the Spirit’s sanctifying work. The Spirit’s sanctification in its two aspects is inclusively revealed in 2 Thessalonians 2:13, which is for the full salvation of God to His chosen people. God’s full salvation is carried out in the sphere of the Spirit’s sanctification.

In 1:2 three different prepositions are used for the three steps taken by the Triune God to bring His elect into participation in His full salvation: *kata*, according to, denotes the ground, the base; *en*, in, the sphere; and *eis*, unto, the end, the result. The believers’ obedience of faith (Rom. 1:5; 16:26) in the redemption of Christ and the application of the sprinkling of the blood to them is the result of the Spirit’s sanctification based upon God the Father’s selection.

THE SPRINKLING OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

This verse also refers to the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. In typology, the sprinkling of the atoning blood ushered the sprinkled people into the old covenant (Exo. 24:6-8). Likewise, the sprinkling of Christ’s redeeming blood brings the sprinkled believers into the blessing of the new covenant, that is, into the full enjoyment of the Triune God (Heb. 9:13-14). It is a striking mark that separates the sprinkled people from the common ones without God.

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GROWING UNTO SALVATION

In his writings Paul does not give us a clear view of God’s entire salvation in the way that Peter does. As used in Peter’s Epistles, the word “salvation” implies full salvation. In 2:2 Peter says, “As newborn babes, long for the guileless milk of the word, that by it you may grow unto salvation.” On the one hand, we have been saved; on the other hand, we still need to grow unto salvation. This means that there is a further salvation that we have not yet reached. In other words we are short of some kind of salvation. We do not yet have it, and we need to grow unto it. We need to keep on growing until we reach, arrive at, full salvation. According to 1:5, this is the salvation that is “ready to be revealed at the last time.” When the Lord Jesus comes back, this salvation will be brought in.

We have been saved, and yet we are still suffering. But why do we suffer if we have already been saved? Others may cause us to suffer, and we may even cause suffering to ourselves. For example, do you not suffer as a result of losing your temper? Are you happy when you lose your temper? Some may pray that the Lord will save them from their temper. They may say, “O Lord, save me from my temper. I don’t want to lose my temper anymore. Lord, You are Immanuel, God with us. You are also Jesus, the One who delivers His people from their sins. I confess that losing my temper is sinful. Lord, You are my Savior. You can deliver me from this sin.” However, instead of saving you from your temper, He may allow you to lose it even more.

On the one hand, the Christian life is a life of enjoyment. But we would all agree that, on the other hand, it is also a life of suffering. Do you not experience suffering in your life as a Christian? What Christian can say that he does not have any suffering? Sometimes we testify that we Christians have a good married life and a happy family life. Yes, this is true, and it is part of our testimony. There are times when the husband, the wife, and the children will happily praise the Lord. But we must also admit that sometimes our family life is not at all like this, for a brother and his wife may argue, and the children may be very unhappy. This indicates that we need the Savior and that we need to grow unto salvation. The Lord does not save us from losing our temper. Rather, it is our growth unto salvation that will save us from this.

We have pointed out that in 1:1 and 2 we have the operation of the Triune God upon His elect for their participation in His full salvation. In these verses the divine economy through the operation of the Three of the Godhead for the believers' participation in the Triune God is revealed. We need to be deeply impressed with this and assimilate the reality of these terms.

GRACE AND PEACE

Verse 2 ends with the words, "Grace to you and peace be multiplied." Grace is God as our enjoyment (John 1:17; 1 Cor. 15:10). Peace is a condition which results from grace. Multiplied grace corresponds to varied grace (1 Pet. 4:10) and all grace (5:10). The believers have received the initial grace; yet this grace needs to be multiplied in them so that they may participate in all grace.

TWO ASPECTS OF THE SPIRIT'S SANCTIFICATION

Concerning the sanctification of the Spirit, there are two aspects. We need to know both aspects and what they accomplish. The first aspect of sanctification precedes justification, and it carries out God's choice, His selection, and brings the chosen ones to the obedience and sprinkling of the blood for their justification. Thus, this aspect of the Spirit's sanctification is before justification through the redemption of Christ. Then, following justification, the Spirit continues to work to sanctify us dispositionally. The sequence is this: God's selection, the Spirit's sanctification, justification, and then subjective sanctification. Not many Christians have seen this. Many Christian teachers say that God's selection comes first, then justification, and then the Spirit's sanctification. However, this does not take into account the two aspects of the sanctification of the Spirit, for it refers only to the second aspect, subjective or dispositional sanctification. We have pointed out that subjective sanctification of the Spirit is revealed in Romans 6 and 15. But before we can have subjective sanctification of the Spirit, we must have the first aspect of the Spirit's sanctification, the sanctifying work that takes place before God's justification.

In eternity past God, according to His foreknowledge, chose us. He selected us and made a decision to gain us. Then in time the Spirit came to us to sanctify us, to set us apart, from the world so that we would obey Christ's redemption. He came to separate us for the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Christ. When we obey, the blood sprinkles us. It is the sanctifying Spirit who separates us from the world unto the obedience of Christ's blood. First we repent and believe, and then we obey what Christ has done on the cross. Following this, we receive the sprinkling of the blood of Christ. This is the sanctifying work of the Spirit following God's selection to carry out God's choice and to bring us to Christ's redemption.

The sanctifying work of the Spirit began before God's justification and it continues afterward. Before justification, we are separated unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Christ. After justification, we are sanctified subjectively, dispositionally. In 1:2 we have the first aspect; in Romans 6:19 and 22, the second; and in 2 Thessalonians 2:13, the all-inclusive sanctification of the Spirit. The goal of this sanctification is to carry out God's full salvation.

THE ENERGETIC WORKING OF THE TRIUNE GOD

Regarding 1 Peter 1:1 and 2, we can speak of the operation, the energetic working, of the Triune God, for here we have the Father's choosing, the Spirit's sanctification, and the Son's redemption. These three actions are the operation of the Triune God.

The Father's choosing was done before the foundation of the world. This selection was according to God's foreknowledge. Peter's word in 1:2 corresponds to Paul's word in Ephesians 1 and Romans 8, chapters where Paul tells us that in eternity, before the foundation of the world, God chose us according to His foreknowledge. This is God's selection.

The Spirit then comes in to carry out God's selection. God's selection was made in eternity, before the foundation of the world. The Spirit's sanctification, however, takes place in time. We were wandering, having no direction, but the Spirit carried out God's selection of us. As a result, we repented, believed, and received the sprinkling of the blood shed by Christ on the cross. Therefore, we have the move of the Father, the Spirit, and the Son. This is the operation of the Trinity of the Godhead upon His chosen people, His elect, so that they may participate in His full salvation. This is one way of speaking concerning what is revealed in 1:1 and 2.