



BULLEEN BAPTIST CHURCH

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SERIES : Studies in 1 Peter - "A Living Hope"

June 3, 2007. Study 1 : "A NEW CITIZENSHIP" 1Ptr1:1-2

INTRODUCTION TO "A LIVING HOPE"

Peter was a practical man! Most fishermen are. The Gospels reveal him as a man of action, with a quick tongue - often speaking or acting without thinking the issue through. He was solid and dependable, but also slow to see or understand spiritual things. But see and understand, he did! While Jesus was on trial, Peter denied to a servant girl that he even knew him (Jn18:17). But forgiven and restored to ministry by the risen Jesus (Jn21:15ff), life could never be the same again.

Peter, the rough and uneducated fisherman, became a leader of the early Church and the leading missionary among the Jewish people (Gal2:7-8). What had been confusing about Jesus' teaching came into sharp focus through the lens of his death, resurrection and continued presence. Convinced of the reality of the Resurrection, and of forgiveness and new life through Jesus, Peter knew that life was to be lived, attitudes formed and priorities selected in the light of eternity - an eternity already guaranteed by Jesus' Resurrection and to be delivered in full at his Return.

As the early Christian communities began to suffer persecution, Peter wrote to his brothers and sisters in Christ to encourage them. The principles that guided and shaped his life, guided and shaped his letter. The first principle? Christians have "A New Citizenship."

STUDY 1 : "A NEW CITIZENSHIP." - 1 Peter 1:1-2

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

These two verses are the formal introduction to the letter.

It follows the usual layout of correspondence from the period - specifying the writer and the recipients, and including a greeting.

Peter has managed to pack a lot into a few words!

A. THE WRITER (v1a)

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ : Peter's self identification is simple in the extreme.

"Apostle" : Lit. MESSENGER. Peter uses the name given him by Jesus. He is not only a commissioned eye witness of all that Jesus said and did but , as the change of name from Simon to Peter (Mt16:17) indicates, he is a changed man - having had his life and character transformed by the Lord himself.

"Of Jesus Christ" : - not only his AUTHORITY as an Apostle, but also his IDENTITY as person - one who belongs to the Lord.

B. THE RECIPIENTS (v1b - 2a)

Peter uses just three words to describe his readers. They are:

1. "STRANGERS ... in the world."

PETER GREETES HIS READERS AS BEING TEMPORARY RESIDENTS

By faith Abraham ... made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents ... For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. ... they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth ... instead, they were longing for a better country - a heavenly one. Therefore God has prepared a city for them from Heb11:8-16, see also Heb13:12-14.

Since this world is not our home, we are called to live according to different

VALUES and PRIORITIES "Seek first the Kingdom of God" Mt6:33

"Where your treasure is, so is your heart" Mt6:21

Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs. 2Tim2:3-4

Demas, because he loves this present world, has deserted me. 2Tim4:10

Don't be engrossed by the things of this world for it is passing away. 1Cor7:31

2. "SCATTERED ... throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia"

Literally: "Diaspora"- "Scattered SEED" .

They are not of the world, even as I am not of it ... As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. Jn17:16,18

Not "of the world", but "in the world" for its GOOD ("Salt and light" Mt5:13-14)

PETER GREETES HIS READERS AS BEING GOD'S EFFECTIVE WITNESSES

Peter states this theme clearly a little later in his letter :

Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world ... Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us 1Ptr2:11-12

3. "CHOSEN" ... God's Elect.

From Deuteronomy 7:6-9

For you are a people holy to the LORD your God (who) has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession.
The LORD ... set his affection on you ... loved you ... and brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery ... he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands.

.... from these verses we learn that being "Chosen" implies:

- a. An EXCLUSIVE choice - "out of all the peoples"
- b. A SPECIFIC purpose - "holy to the Lord"
- c. A VALUED status - "his treasured possession"
- d. A LOVING relationship - "set his affection on you ... loved you"
- e. A REDEMPTIVE act - "brought you out with a mighty hand ... from slavery"
- f. An ONGOING responsibility - "those who love him & keep his commands"

PETER GREETES HIS READERS AS THE PEOPLE OF GOD, BELONGING TO HIM

The first two descriptors - "Strangers" and "Scattered" would have resonated with the original readers who were suffering real and acute persecution because they had given their allegiance to Jesus as Lord. ("Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering insulted because of the name of Christ" See 1Ptr4:12-16) They would have felt themselves to be "not at home" and isolated.

Peter expands on the fact they are "chosen" by God to be his people in 2:4-9 with terms borrowed from the Old Testament descriptions of the nation of Israel.

The true reality is that they were not isolated and rejected. They (and we) belong - together as one body and to the Lord - "rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him." 1Ptr2:4

C : THE GREETING (v2b)

Loved of God, belonging to Him ... and just PASSING through :

with "Grace & Peace" in abundance for the JOURNEY