

**Sermon or Lesson: 1 Peter 1:1-2** (NIV based)  
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Selected To Live Righteously, Even In The Midst Of Suffering Persecution For The Faith

INTRODUCTION: Have you ever pondered the thought that you were placed on this Earth for a reason - a purpose? Have you ever questioned why you are here - why you exist? Have you ever contemplated whether there is more to life than what you see around you? Have you ever experienced a moment in which you felt as one with your surroundings - completely at peace with and in absolute harmony with your surroundings?

In this first study in the Book of 1 Peter, we are going to encounter some information from our Creator about why we are here - why we exist. Let's read and discover what God reveals about this topic.

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[Lesson Questions: For those of you who have a study Bible, summarize what it says about the background for the writing of this Book of 1 Peter. From a consensus or compilation of those summaries within your group, what might be a good theme (phrase) for the Book of 1 Peter?  
- - An excellent theme choice: 'Called to Endure Unjust Suffering' (Believers are called by God to endure suffering like Christ did. (v.2:21))]

READ: 1 Peter 1:1-2

v.1

[Lesson Question: Discuss, determine, and describe the status of the writer and the situation of the audience that prompt the writing of this letter.]

SECTION POINT: Under direct authorization from Jesus Christ, Peter is writing this letter to convey instruction from God to true believers who were suffering persecution for their faith in Christ.

**"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,"**

- - In verse 1, the author of this book is identified as Peter, one of the Twelve Disciples that accompanied Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry activities.
- - Peter was commissioned as an "apostle" by Jesus Christ, as recorded in Mark 3:14-16 and Luke 6:13-14.
- - Within the commission of being an "apostle of Jesus Christ", Peter is a "delegate and ambassador" of Jesus Christ, in other words, "a person authorized to act as representative for another". (Strong's #0652; AHD - 'a delegate')
  
- To be an official "apostle of Jesus Christ", the requirements were:
  - - - - the person had to be with the group of disciples that was "with the Lord Jesus the whole time He went in and out among [them], beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from [them]"; (Acts 1:21-22)
  - - - - this person also had to be "a witness with [them] of [Christ's] resurrection"; (Acts 1:22)

- - - - Jesus can and did deviate from these requirements, for example when He commissioned Paul as an apostle, and apparently Jesus' half-brother James also; (1 Corinthians 15:7-10a)
- - - - the Twelve disciples (eleven plus the replacement for Judas) and "all" of the other men, who were commissioned as an apostle, had a direct audible verbal appointment to this position from Jesus Himself; (1 Corinthians 15:5,7,8; Matthew 10:1-4)
- - - - and Paul was the "last" person to be designated as an apostle, in this official and direct manner. (1 Corinthians 15:8)

- - It is reasonable to assume that during the millenniums since this time, other men have performed the general functions of an apostle but without a direct audible verbal appointment, and in a somewhat lesser capacity, lesser authorization, and lesser empowering from God than the original apostles.

**"To God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia,"**

- - Apostle Peter is writing this letter to the "elect" or people whom God "selected" to receive salvation and eternal life through Christ. (Strong's #1588; cf. vv.1:3-5, 4:14,16)
- - They are "resident foreigners" who have been "dispersed", now living in various locations throughout Asia Minor, which today is the region of the western half of the nation of Turkey. (Strong's #3927, #1290)
- - Considering the historical information pertaining to this time, these people probably were Hebrews from the nation of Israel, who were previously of the Jewish faith but had converted to being believers in Jesus Christ. (cf. James 1:1, Galatians 2:9; cf. 1 Peter 1:3)
- - Subsequent to their conversion, they were persecuted for their faith to the extent that for safety reasons they had to flee their home country, in effect becoming "strangers in the world" who were "scattered" to find and live in a safer foreign country. (cf. James 1:1)
- - By means of the direct authority that Jesus Christ gave him to be an apostle, Peter is writing to these believers to convey teaching and commands from God, which thereby are authoritative upon and applicable to all believers since that time, including for us believers today.

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**v.2 - READ**

[Lesson Questions: Discuss, determine, and describe the characteristics relating to the "elect" that are cited in verse 2. Then, correlate those characteristics with aspects of what God is doing.]

**SECTION POINT: Specific persons have been selected by God to become true believers, and thereupon to obey God for His holy purposes.**

- - The "elect" (v.1) are those persons "who have been chosen" by God the Father "before the creation of the world", "according to" His "foreknowledge" - using His absolute knowledge of the future to select and ordain what is to occur according to His purposes. (Ephesians 1:4-6)
- - At some time in the past, God selected the "elect" to be "sanctified" or set apart for His sacred and holy purposes now, during our lifetime, "through the sanctifying work of the Spirit".

- - God has purposed that His elect or chosen ones would place their faith in "Jesus Christ", the "author and perfecter of the faith". (1 Peter 1:5; Hebrews 12:2; cf. 1 Peter 1:22a)
- - God has further purposed that His elect would live in "obedience to Jesus Christ", which certainly would include living in righteousness in every area of their life, even when they are under persecution for the faith.
- - And God has purposed that His chosen ones would have all of their sins washed away or forgiven by the blood Jesus shed when He was sacrificed on the cross to pay the penalty for their sins. (cf. 1 Peter 1:18-19)
- - The phrase "sprinkling by his blood" is in reference to the precursor ceremonial animal sacrificing to the Lord in the Old Testament, wherein the blood of the sacrificed unblemished animal is sprinkled on the altar and on the people to cover over their sins. (Exodus 24:4-8)
- - The sacrificed unblemished animal was a temporal substitute, representing the suffering of the punishment for the sins of the person, until subsequent sinning required the next sacrifice to be made, again.
- - Jesus permanently fulfilled this required process of making sacrifices for sins through His sacrificial torture, shedding of His blood, and death on the cross, followed by His subsequent resurrection from the dead on the third day. (see Hebrews 9:1-15)
  
- - An interesting characteristic to notice here in 1 Peter 1:2 is this activity of God involves all three persons of the Godhead: God the Father does the selecting of humans to become true believers; God the Son provides the means for cleansing of sins for those humans who believe; and God the Holy Spirit "sanctifies" or 'sets apart' the spiritual hearts of those believers for God's holy purposes.
- - Herein, the Trinity three-in-one God functions together three-as-one.
- - Within that functioning, God brings "grace" or 'undeserved favor' upon humans to reconcile them to Himself, making "peace" between God and those humans who choose to genuinely believe in Jesus Christ as the substitute who suffered the punishment that they deserve for their sins. (cf. Colossians 1:21-22)
- - "Praise be to God" for pouring out such "abundant" "grace", "peace", and blessings upon us undeserving humans. (1 Peter 1:3)
- - However, a reality to appropriately note here is that for all of the people who have not been chosen by God to believe in Jesus Christ for salvation and eternal life, God has ordained that because their sins are not washed away by the blood of Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross, they must each pay the penalty for their own sins eternally, in the place of eternal punishment. (Hebrews 9:22; John 3:18,16)

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**BIG IDEA:** The Book of 1 Peter is written to true believers so that they will conduct themselves in obedience to God's holy purposes, in this specific case when they are suffering persecution for their faith in Christ.

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APPLICATIONS:

- - Are you one of the "elect"? In other words, have you placed your faith in Jesus Christ, that He washed away the penalty for your sins by the blood He shed when He was sacrificed on the cross to pay the penalty for the sins of those who believe in Him?
- - If so, do you regard yourself as being set apart for God's sacred and holy purposes?
- - Are you living in a manner that properly reflects God's sacred and holy purposes?
- - Are you living in a manner that appreciates the cleansing of sins that the "sprinkling by the blood" of Jesus Christ accomplished for you?
- - Are you living in "obedience to Jesus Christ"?
- - Are you an ambassador of Jesus Christ, appropriately and honorably representing Him in everything that you say and do?
- - Has God selected you to represent Jesus Christ in the geographical area or city that you live in?
- - Has God ordained that you represent Jesus Christ in a foreign country?
- - Has God ordained that you represent Jesus Christ in the midst of you now suffering under persecution for the faith?
- - Are you willing to submit to and comply to the authoritative teaching and commands that are contained in the Book of 1 Peter?
- - Whom are you living for?
  
- - For those of you who are not a true believer in Jesus Christ, are you prepared for the day that certainly is coming in which you will be forced to pay the penalty for your own sins - eternally?

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[Additional Lesson Question to ponder (optional, if time allows):

- - What reaction do you have upon contemplating that God has determined that some people are destined to believe and be saved, and all of the other people are destined not to believe and thereby will never be saved - ever?]
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