

1 Peter

1:2. “sprinkling with *the* blood of Jesus Christ.” This sprinkling of the blood of Christ is not referring to the new birth, or the cleansing of sin when one gets saved. Rather, this is speaking of a continual cleansing of sin throughout a believer’s life. The Greek of 1 Peter 1:2 literally reads, “In sanctification of spirit resulting in [*eis* # 1519 εἰς] obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.” The obedience and sprinkling of the blood is the result of sanctification. If sanctification means the act of being made holy by God, this verse would be very confusing; we usually think of this sanctified state as the result of being washed by the blood of Christ, forgiven of our sins, and not the other way around (1 Cor. 6:11). Sanctification is not used only in this sense in scripture, however. It can also refer to the progressive holiness in the believer’s life as he sets himself apart from the world (1 Thess. 4:3-7; 1 Tim. 2:15; 21). This is its sense in this passage; this sanctification results in obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

That the sprinkling of Christ’s blood on believers is not merely a one time salvation event can be seen in 1 John 1:7-9 (NIV):

(7) But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

(8) If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

(9) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

In the context of 1 John, to walk in the light is to acknowledge (confess) that one has sin (1 John 1:6); when we do this Christ’s blood purifies us from all sin.

The connection of obedience and sprinkling of blood in here in 1 Peter is an allusion to the Old Testament record of Moses sprinkling the Israelites who claimed they would obey all the words of the covenant (Ex. 24:7-8). The sprinkling of blood in the Old Covenant was not a one-time event either, but had two stages. First, there was the Day of Atonement, the yearly festival when the high priest would sacrifice for his own sin then sacrifice and sprinkle blood for the guilt of the people (Lev. 16). This was done to cover all the sins of the people that year. Secondly, there were all the other offerings that could be done throughout the year—burnt offerings, trespass offerings, guilt offerings—when one has sinned and felt separated from God. The blood of Christ in the New Covenant parallels this twofold purpose of sprinkling in the Old Covenant—there is the one-time sprinkling that covers the guilt of our sin and there is the continual sprinkling of forgiveness for sins throughout life. The difference between the Old and New covenants is that instead of a yearly offering, Christ offered himself once-and-for-all to redeem the people, and instead of cleansing our conscious with the blood of bulls and goats we can appeal to the blood of Christ (Heb. 9:25-26; 10:1-14). 1 Peter 1:18-19, which speaks of Christ’s blood “redeeming” us, is referring to a Day-of-Atonement-like function of Christ’s sacrifice, while 1 John 1:7-9 speaks to the continual sprinkling that has made the various sin offerings obsolete.

1:3 “mercy” Cp. Eph. 2:4. We do not deserve life, but God gives it in His mercy.

“we have been.” Cp. RSV.

“out from among the dead.” See Romans 4:24. Wuest: “out from among those who are dead.”

“born again to a living hope.” The New Birth is not all there is. We are still in our flesh bodies and have many problems. Yet, we are born to a living hope—we shall one day have new bodies in Paradise.

1:3. “who.” The Greek has the article *ho* (#3588 ὁ) before the active participle translated “given us new birth;” this is done for emphasis on “the one” who is doing the action. An expanded translation would read, “The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **the one** who... has given us new birth” (emphasis added).

“has given us new birth.” Another possible translation, although less readable, would be “birthed us again.” The NASB, ESV reading, “caused us to be born again” is not accurate. The Greek word for “born again” is the active aorist participle of *anagennao* (#313 ἀναγεννάω), the active voice shows that God is the one begetting us again, he is performing the action of producing the new birth. But this does not show that he *caused* us to be born again, only that he preformed the action of new birth once the cause was fulfilled. The scope of scripture indicates that it is our faith and free choice that causes us to be saved; once this prerequisite condition is fulfilled God gives us new birth into his family (cp. Eph. 1:13).

1:10. “this salvation.” This is not referring to our new birth salvation, given at the time of believing the gospel, but the “salvation ready to be revealed in *the* last time” (1:5), “at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (1:7).

“The prophets prophesied of the ‘grace.’” The grace they mention will be part of the Millennial Kingdom, and it has now come to Christians unexpectedly as part of the Sacred Secret, the “Grace Administration.”

1:11. The Millennial Kingdom is not well defined in the Old Testament, so the prophets searched for how long it was and what manner of period it was. By the grace of God, many blessings of the Millennial Kingdom, such as the holy spirit, have been given to Christians now.

1:14. “be conformed.” The word translated “be conformed” comes from the Greek *suschematizo* (#4964 συσχηματίζω) in the middle voice. Usually we think of the middle voice as the subject performing the action upon itself; e.g., “he hanged himself” (Matt. 27:5). However, this is the *permissive middle* where the subject allows or permits something to be done *to* itself, or *for* itself (cp. Wallace, *Exegetical Syntax*). The sense would then be, “do not allow yourselves to be conformed to your former lusts.”

1:16. Quoted from Lev. 11:45.

1:19. “without blemish.” See note on Ephesians 1:4.

1:24. Quoted from Isaiah 40:6-8.

1:17. “Since.” The Greek reads “if.” This is a first class conditional sentence in Greek, which assumes the “if” clause to be true for sake of argument. Cp. NIV translation.

1:21. “out from among the dead.” See Romans 4:24. Wuest: “out from among those who are dead.”

1:22. “brotherly affection.” The Greek is *philadelphia* (#5360 φιλαδελφία), a compound Greek word made up of *philos* (a strong liking, a friendship; see note on John 21:15) and *adelphos* (#80 ἀδελφός), which means “brother.” It is the strong bond of friendship that exists between brothers.

2:1. “and.” Figure of speech, *polysyndeton*, “many ands” (See Bullinger, *Figures*).

2:2. “the pure milk of the word.” The Greek adjective *logikos* (#3050 λογικός) is related to *logos*, word. There is quite a controversy over this word, with some commentators and

versions attesting it should be translated “spiritual” (ESV, NIV, RSV), while some holding that “spiritual” does not make as much sense here and thus asserting that it is related to the Word (KJV, NASB, YLT). Robertson simply gives arguments from both sides without drawing a conclusion. Lenski argues quite forcibly that “Word-milk” (i.e., the milk of the Word) is the correct meaning, and the one to be preferred in this context, which refers to the Word in 1:23 and seems to make more sense in reference to the babies in the verse, who were in need of “the milk of the word.” We have gone with “the pure milk of the word” because it does seem to fit the context well, and is more concrete than “spiritual milk,” which is not clear in its reference. It should be noted that the only other occurrence of this Greek word is in Romans 12:1, where it is most often translated “spiritual” service. However, first, if it is “spiritual” in the context of Romans 12:1 it need not necessarily be “spiritual” here. Second, perhaps “service related to the Word” would be better in Romans 12:1 also.

“pure.” The Greek word is *adolos* (#7 ἄδολος), which means, regarding people, “without guile, honest” and regarding things, “pure, unadulterated.” Interestingly, verse 1 tells us to put away “guile (dishonesty)”, and this verse, verse two, tells us to desire the “guileless, honest” milk of the Word. The Word of God, unlike the words of man, contains no guile, no dishonesty.

2:6. Quoted from Isaiah 28:16.

2:7. Quoted from Ps. 118:22.

2:8. Quoted from Isaiah from 8:14.

2:9. “chosen people.” Quoted from Isaiah 43:20. The word for “people” is *genos* (#1085 γένος) and it could be translated “family,” “class/kind,” or “group” (Cp. BDAG). The sense of the word simultaneously points to our common heritage from God as our Father, that we are within our own class as we are the Church, and that together we form a distinct group. The translation “race” is incorrect and unhelpful; the people of God are not set apart based on any racial terms (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11).

“royal priesthood.” Quoted from Exodus 19:6.

“holy nation.” Quoted from Exodus 19:6.

“a people for God’s own possession.” An allusion from Ex. 19:5; Deut. 7:6, 14:2, and 26:18.

“glorious attributes.” The Greek is *arete* {ar-et'-ay} (#703 ἀρετή), which is a word with many meanings, including, “a virtuous course of thought, feeling and action; virtue or moral goodness; any particular moral excellence, as modesty or purity. Due to the many different meanings and shades of meaning in the word, translations vary greatly. “Praises” (KJV; NIV); “excellencies” (ESV, ASV); “mighty acts” (NRSV); “fame” (Lenski). “Glorious attributes” is contributed by Meyer (Meyer’s Commentary). “Greco-Roman publics would in the main be conditioned to hear a stress on performance, which of course would elicit praise (BDAG lexicon).

2:12. See note on 2:15, “of foolish men.”

2:15. “of foolish men.” This is referring back to the Gentiles in verse 12, who speak evil against Christians as evildoers. The Greek has the article, *the* foolish men (Vincent, *Word Studies*). In their ignorance, men like this will speak against the church as evildoers in order to justify not becoming Christians. God tells us to live in such a way that evil speakers may see our righteous behavior in the very areas they are speaking against us,

and that by our doing good we may silence their accusations and rob them of their excuses.

2:18. “reasonable.” See note on 1 Timothy 3:3.

2:22. Quoted from Isaiah 53:9.

2:24, 25. Quoted from Isaiah 53:5-6.

3:2. “respectful.” The Greek literally reads, “in fear.” We feel it is most likely a dative of manner and thus is functioning as an adverb. Lenski, however, takes it as the general “fear of God” spoken in 1 Peter 1:16-18. He is right, though, that the behavior of the wife is not necessarily directed solely towards the husband but is also an act of reverence to God.

3:10-12. Quoted from Ps. 34:12-16.

3:10. “deceitful speech.” Cp. BDAG’s translation, “speak deceitfully” and NIV: “deceitful speech.” Literally, the Greek reads, “keep your lips... from not to speak deceit.” The word for deceit, *dolos* (#1388 δόλος), is a noun, so the sense is, do not speak any *deceitful thing*. The translation “keep your lips from deceitful speech” captures the meaning of “do not speak any deceitful thing.”

3:13. “zealots for that which is good.” In the Greek the word for “zealots” is a noun and not the verb form. However, most versions read something like, “be zealous for what is good.” Instead of calling us to a state of mind, “being zealous” (verb), He is calling us to the identity of being a zealot (noun)—not in the sense of being ultranationalists, but rather, enthusiasts for what is good.

3:14. “do not fear them.” There is a question as to whether the genitive in this phrase is subjective (“their fear,” KJV; NASB; NIV) or objective (“fear them,” ESV; NAB; NET). The context of 1 Peter, however, strongly points towards the objective meaning, “do not fear them.” The book is very much about being persecuted and enduring under suffering, in the immediate context Peter is speaking of those who would “harm you” for doing good and “suffering for righteousness sake.” It would be a strange break in thought to say “do not fear what they fear,” but an encouragement to not fear *them* makes perfect sense. Interestingly, this phrase is alluding to Isaiah 8:12, which clearly has the subjective sense of not fearing what other people fear. In this case Peter is not directly quoting from the O.T. passage but using its language to make a new point in his own context (Lenski).

Quoted from Isaiah 8:12.

3:17. “if the will of God should will it.” It may sometimes be the will of God for one to suffer for doing good. The next verse, 3:18, explains why by using an explanatory “for,” showing how it was God’s will for Christ to suffer to bring about the much greater good of bringing us to God (cp. 4:1). The Greek of this phrase employs the figure of speech polyptoton—“if the will of God should will it” (Cp. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*). This structure deemphasizes God’s role in willing that one should suffer for doing good; it could have easily been written with *theos* (God) as the subject, “if God wills.” But by not making God the subject but rather the will of God the subject, He is a step removed from the action, giving the sense that He is slightly distanced from the statement. The philosophical notion of *primary* and *secondary will* is helpful for understanding this verse—God’s primary will is that no one should suffer, ever; but His secondary will is that, given the fallen situation, suffering must be permitted at times to achieve the greatest good. It is not contradictory for one to hold both wills simultaneously. Interestingly, God can *will* for one to suffer for good but not *want* it to happen.

Furthermore, the verb for “will,” *thelo* (#2309 θέλω), is in the optative mood, expressing scant possibility. Specifically, this is an instance of the Conditional Optative, “used to indicate a *possible* condition in the future, usually a remote possibility” (cp. Wallace, *Exegetical Syntax*). This verse shows us that it may be the will of God that one suffer for doing good and yet simultaneously portrays this as a remote possibility, reminding us that we must never be too quick to claim God’s will as the cause of our suffering. (See also 1 Pet. 4:19).

3:19. “heralded *his victory*.” Jesus was “put to death *in the flesh*, but made alive *in the spirit*” as per 1 Pet. 3:18. This is in accordance with the pattern revealed in 1 Corinthians 15. The flesh, which is corruptible, is changed (1 Cor. 15:52). The natural body is sown in death, and what is raised is a spiritual body (1 Cor. 15:44). Jesus was raised from the dead as a “life giving spirit” (1 Cor. 15:45), or “*in the spirit*” (1 Pet. 3:18). What did Jesus do when he was raised from the dead and had a new, spiritual body? Sometime after he was raised from the dead, he went to the “prison” where the spirits who had defied God before the Flood of Noah were held (the prison is called Tartarus; see note on 2 Pet. 2:4). In Tartarus, Jesus “heralded” his resurrection and victory to the imprisoned demons. The word “heralded” is the Greek word *kerusso*, “to be a herald; to officiate as herald; to proclaim after the manner of a herald. . . to publish, proclaim openly something which has been done” (Thayer). To “proclaim victory” (Gingrich).

It is sometimes taught that Jesus went to see the spirits in prison during the three days and nights between his death and resurrection, but that is clearly not the case. During that time he was “dead;” not alive in any form. 1 Peter 3:18 and 19 teach that he went “in spirit.” He got his spiritual body and became a life-giving spirit at his resurrection (1 Cor. 15:45), so it was after his resurrection that he went to Tartarus. Furthermore, he did not “preach” to these imprisoned demons, as if they could have believed and been released. They had defied God in the days of Noah by working to create a fallen race (the Nephilim; see note on “when they sinned” 2 Peter 2:4), and were imprisoned as a result. They did their best to keep the Messiah from coming and to defeat God, but the Messiah came and achieved victory for God, so Jesus went to the prison and heralded his victory to the demons there.

4:1. “the same way of thinking” The Greek is *ennoia* (#1771 ἐννοια), and means “the content of mental processing, thought, knowledge, insight (BDAG Lexicon). For this verse BDAG has “same way of thinking.” This general definition is very good in this context. The KJV “mind” is not as good, because “mind” is generally translated from the Greek *nous*, and refers to the mind itself, not specifically the products of the mind. Also, while good, “purpose” (NASB); “attitude” (NIV); and “intention” (NRSV); all seem too specific, although the use of one English word to translate one Greek word is always a valuable goal and should be adhered to when possible.

“whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.”

4:7. “the end [*telos*] of all things.” This is not referring to the *utter end* of all things, because life will go on in the new kingdom. The word *teleute* would have been the proper word for a temporal end; but the word here is *telos*, the “goal” (Lenski). BDAG defines *telos* as, “last in a series; the last part of a process; the goal toward which a movement is being directed, end, goal, outcome.” The last part of the series of God’s great end goal has come; we are in the last part of the process, the Grace Administration, waiting for

nothing but Christ's return. (Compare NIV's translation of *telos* in 1 Cor. 10:11: "The fulfillment [*telos*] of the ages has come.")

4:8. Quoted from Prov. 10:12.

4:10. "many-sided." The Greek is *poikilos* (#4164 ποικίλος) and means, pertaining to that which exists in a variety of kinds or various modes, diversified, manifold, varied. "Many-sided communicates very well, and was used by Charles Williams in his New Testament. A less literal, but meaningful translation, comparing the grace of God to a gemstone, would be "many faceted."

4:18. Quoted from the LXX version of Prov. 11:31. The Hebrew reads, "If the righteous will be rewarded in the earth, How much more the wicked and the sinner!" (NASB). See Lenski.

5:5. Quoted from Prov. 3:34.

5:10. "restore." *Katartizo* (#2675 καταρτίζω) can mean to "restore to a former condition" or "to prepare; to outfit" (BDAG). In this context it means to restore—"after one has suffered for a little while," God will put him into proper condition again, and then do more: confirm, strengthen, and establish him.