

1:1 *A Servant and an Apostle of Jesus Christ*

Simon Peter.

Hilary of Arles: In his second letter Peter describes himself both as Simon and as a servant, in order to show that he was humble and obedient. In his first letter he confined himself to the name Peter, which had been given to him by the Lord himself and signified that he was the chief of the apostles, but here he reverts to his original name Simon in order to show those who preferred to forget his Jewish origins that he had not rejected them. Introductory Commentary on 2 Peter.¹

The Grace of Baptism the Same.

Andreas: Notice how right from the start Peter encourages the souls of the believers by raising them up to the same spiritual level as that of the apostles. For the grace of baptism is the same in every believer. Catena. ²

A Faith of Equal Standing.

Oecumenius: Simon may also be written as “Simeon,” of which it is the diminutive form. Compare Metras and Metrodorus, Menas and Menodorus, Theudas and Theodosius. Right from the beginning, Peter lifts up the hearts and minds of believers, encouraging us also to share in the apostles’ zeal for preaching. For it would be unjust to suggest that those who have received this gift a little later in time are somehow inferior to them, when they have officially been declared to be their equals in honor. Commentary on 2 Peter.³

1:2 *Grace and Peace in the Knowledge of God*

Pray for the Peace of the Church.

Chrysostom: There is nothing to equal this, which is why we pray and seek after the angel of peace. Everywhere we pray for peace in the churches—in the prayers, in the supplications and in the sermons. And the Guardian of the church gives it to us not once or twice but many times over: “Peace be unto you.”⁴ Why? Because peace is the mother of all good things and the foundation of our joy. For this reason Christ taught his disciples that when they entered people’s houses they were to say: “Peace be unto you.”⁵ Without peace everything else is useless. Catena.⁶

In the Knowledge of God.

Oecumenius: This is not the peace of the world but the peace which comes from knowing God. For the only true peace is the one which delivers us from our transgression and enmity against God. It is the same peace which Christ gave his disciples when he was about to go to the Father, and when he rose again from the dead. ⁷ Commentary on 2 Peter.⁸

1:3 All Things That Pertain to Life and Godliness

Granted All Things.

Hilary of Arles: Here Peter is talking about the Scriptures, the miracles which Christ did in the flesh, the work of baptism and the doctrine which was preached, all of which bring us into the enjoyment of eternal life. Introductory Commentary on 2 Peter.¹

Pertaining to Life and Godliness.

Theophylact: Grace and peace are the means by which God gives us everything we need in order to live godly lives. Commentary on 2 Peter.³

1:4 Participating in the Divine Nature

Fellowship with the Holy Spirit.

Origen: What is the fellowship of the Holy Spirit? ⁴ Peter describes this by calling it “sharing in the divine nature.” Sermons on Leviticus 4.4.2.⁵

We Become Christ-Bearers.

Cyril of Jerusalem: When Christ’s body and blood become the tissue of our members, we become Christ-bearers and “partakers of the divine nature,” as the blessed Peter said. Mystagogical Lectures 4.3.⁸

The Measure of God’s Nature.

Hilary of Poitiers: Since the Christian is conscious of having been made a partaker of the divine nature, as blessed Peter says in his second epistle, he must measure the nature of God not by the laws of our own

nature, but evaluate the divine truths in accordance with the magnificence of God's testimony concerning himself. On the Trinity 1.18.9

A Relationship with Himself.

Ambrose of Milan: The fact is that God made humankind a partaker of the divine nature, as we read in the second epistle of Peter. He granted us a relationship with himself, and we have a rational nature which makes us able to seek what is divine, which is not far from each one of us, in whom we live and are and move. Letters to Priests 49.10

Step Out of Your Former Nature.

Hilary of Arles: Just as God stepped out of his nature to become a partaker of our humanity, so we are called to step out of our nature to become partakers of his divinity. Introductory Commentary on 2 Peter.12

Grace Enables Participation.

Andreas: God has blessed us abundantly—that is the meaning of this passage. We have received thousands of good things as a result of Christ's coming, and through them we can become partakers of the divine nature and be turned toward life and godliness. Therefore we must behave in such a way as to add virtue to faith, and in virtue walk along the way which leads to godliness until we come to the perfection of all good things, which is love. Catena.14

1:5 Beginning the Christian Life

Steps to Complete Responsiveness to Grace.

Theophylact: Peter lays out here the order which we are to follow to come into full maturity. First of all comes faith, which is the foundation and source of all good works. Next comes virtue, by which he means good works, for without them faith is dead, as Saint James said. 16 Next comes knowledge. What is that? It is an understanding of the secret things hidden in God which are not revealed to everyone, but only to those who continue faithfully in the works already mentioned. Commentary on 2 Peter.17

1:6 *Going On in the Christian Life*

Temperance and Patience.

Theophylact: Next in the list comes abstinence, or temperance. This is necessary in order to ensure that those who get this far are not carried away by the magnitude of the gift they have received and become haughty as a result. Patience follows next, because it takes time to acquire temperance, and without patience a person is liable to give up and fall into something even worse than what he has been delivered from. Patience increases our trust in God, which is why godliness comes next. Commentary on 2 Peter.²⁰

1:7 *Mature Love*

Supplement Brotherly Affection with Love.

Theophylact: The more we are like God, the more we are compelled by that likeness to love others, which is why brotherly love is next in the list. Finally, there is charity, the perfection of all virtues, as Paul also confirms. ²² Commentary on 2 Peter.²³

1:8 *Gracious Virtues Keep You from Being Ineffective*

The Overflowing Life of the Virtues.

Chrysostom: These things, as well as those already mentioned, namely, virtue, knowledge, continence, patience, godliness, brotherly love and charity, must not only be present in us, they must be present to overflowing. For if their presence is a good thing, how much more their abundance! What advantage do these things have, and what will it mean to have assurance on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ? Peter is speaking here of his second coming, when Christ will come to judge the living and the dead. Before the great and terrible judgment seat of God, what a good and wonderful thing it will be to have assurance of being acquitted! Catena.²⁴

The Christian Life Begins with Simple Faith.

Cyril of Alexandria: Those who have chosen to live the glorious and beloved way of life devised by Christ must first be adorned with simple and unblemished faith, and then add virtue to their faith. When this

has been done, they must strive to enrich their knowledge of the mystery of Christ and ascend to the most complete understanding of him. Letters 1.3.25

Qualities of the Christian Life.

Oecumenius: What are the qualities which we possess? They are faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly love and charity, all of which must not only be present in us but present in abundance. Commentary on 2 Peter.26