

As is typical of many closings to NT letters, these final verses of Peter contain numerous general comments and instructions. But in verse 12 there is a significant summary of Peter's purpose for writing this letter, followed by a final, overarching exhortation: stand firm in the true grace of God. A truly Biblical gospel message is one of salvation by grace alone through faith alone. An overview of 1 Peter reminds us that this salvation includes not only justification and glorification but also the spiritual life after justification until glorification. This understanding of grace in our lives should not be neglected.

I. Final miscellaneous comments and instructions

1. *Peter's assistant*: Silas (Latin: Silvanus) may have been the same Silas reported in Acts 15-18, which would make "faithful" a very apt description. He functioned either as an "amanuensis" (like a secretary with editorial responsibility), the one who delivered the letter, or both.
2. *Greetings sent*: The identity of the two sending greetings represents an unresolved debate.
 - a. Options for the identity of "she who is in Babylon" have generally included (1) Peter's wife or (2) a church, of which the latter is more likely. Since tradition mentions Peter being in Rome but not in the Mesopotamian city of Babylon, the term "Babylon" is frequently understood as a figurative reference to Rome. The term associates Rome with the OT enemy of God's people and place of exile.
 - b. "My son Mark" is identified as the physical son of Peter by those who believe that "she who is in Babylon" is Peter's wife. The majority understand Mark to be John Mark, a sometime companion of Paul, and historically the recorder of Peter's gospel preaching which bears the name, "the Gospel according to Mark".
3. *Mutual greetings with a kiss of love*: The kiss was a common Near Eastern greeting in both OT and NT times. Paul instructs readers to greet with a holy kiss (Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 The 5:26). Since the greeting was not uniquely Christian, it seems that Peter's (and Paul's) command is concerned with the heart intent, i.e., that the kiss of greeting be genuine and pure.
4. *Benediction*: The closing is similar to the salutation: "grace and peace be yours in abundance." Peace with God is the condition of everyone who is in Christ as well as a valid prayer for every believer.

II. A final summarizing exhortation

1. *General observations establishing the basis to examine this exhortation*: (1) The reference is to the entire letter. (2) "Encouraging" also means exhorting, comforting, and instructing. (3) "Testifying", uniquely here in the NT, stresses the reliability of what Peter has witnessed to. (4) By true grace Peter means genuine. The readers could rely upon the grace to which he testified.
2. *What is this grace to which Peter is testifying?* It is the grace by which we are saved (cf. 1:10).
 - a. This includes election (1:1-2), the gift of new life (1:3; 3:7), and our final glorification (1:5, 13).
 - b. But the main body of the letter shows that God's grace is more. God's grace is what we must have to live now in a manner pleasing to Him. Cf. Galatians 3:3.
 - 4:10 – It is what we need in order to serve and what we have that we should administer.
 - 5:5b – We continue to receive grace to live as we humble ourselves before God.
 - 5:10 – Apparently our strength, firmness and steadfastness comes by the grace of God.
 - 2:2 – The life which we have is from God by grace which is revealed in spiritual growth, a product then of grace.
 - 2:15, 21; 3:8, 17; 4:19 – It is logical that God equips (by and with His grace) to do His will.
 - 2:25; 5:4 – God as our Shepherd graciously leads, feeds and protects us.
 - 3:12 – The answered prayer of the righteous is logically a work of God's grace.
3. *How is it then that we are to stand firm in this work of God?*
 - a. We need to humble ourselves before God. Cf. 5:5-6.
 - b. We should praise God for who He is and for His actions, past, present and future. Cf. 1 Peter 4:11.
 - c. We should trust God by obeying His commands, a theme which permeates the letter.
 - 2:2 – By desiring (and consuming) His word we grow and stand firm in God's grace.
 - 2:11-12 – We trust God in that we do right while enduring false accusations and stand firm in grace.
 - 2:13f, 15 – We trust God in that we submit to human authorities and stand firm in grace.
 - 2:18-21 – Believing employees respectively submit even to harsh employers and stand firm in grace.
 - 3:1-7 – Spouses treat each other as God as commanded by His grace and thereby establish ourselves upon that grace.
 - 4:1-6 – Living differently than the pagan world around us marks God's grace at work in us, like the fruit of the Spirit.
 - 4:7-11 – By treating members of the Body as God commanded by grace we stand firm in grace.
 - 4:12-19 – We commit ourselves to God in the face of suffering for doing good and stand firm in grace.
 - 5:1-4 – When leadership within the church follows God's pattern, we stand firm in grace.

Salvation is by God's grace from beginning to end. We are proclaimed righteous before God by His grace. We will be glorified by grace. We live the Christian life today by God's grace. It may seem paradoxical that we need God's grace to live as we should and yet receive God's grace as we submit ourselves to Him. But it is the same challenge as understanding human responsibility and divine sovereignty.

Despite the challenge we should choose to live properly and thereby take our stand firmly in God's grace. God's grace is sufficient to do all which He commands. As we submit we will grow in grace and experience the fullness of His grace. This is genuine grace. Stand firm in it.