

**THE
GRACE
BIBLE**

1 PETER 2

SAMPLE CHAPTER

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What is The Grace Bible?

My only aim is to complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me – the task of testifying to the good news of God’s grace.
(Acts 20:24)

The good news of God’s grace declares that God is not mad at you, he’s mad about you. The One who sits on a throne of grace blesses you, not because you are good, but because he is good and he longs to be good to you.

Grace declares that God is for us and with us, and he freely gives us everything we need for life and godliness. Grace invites you to come in from the cold, rest from your labors, and feast at the table of his abundance. Grace is what makes the new covenant new and the good news *good news*.

If you have ever asked, “How do I read this scripture through a new covenant lens?” *The Grace Bible* is for you.

This book is not a law Bible with rules to follow, nor is it a works Bible that tells you what to do. It is not a judgment Bible to fear, or a guilt Bible to make you feel bad. It is a *grace* Bible that reveals the good news found on every page of scripture.

In this study Bible, you will find no guilt or condemnation and none of the usual calls for blood, sweat, and tears. Our focus will be on Jesus Christ—who he is, what he has done, and what you can do because of what he has done.

The Grace Bible is for the weary and those tired of pretending. It’s for the burned out, the fed up, and the knocked down. It’s for those who are in distress, or debt, or are discontented.

It’s for all of us who need grace.

1 Peter 2

1 Peter 2:1–3

¹ Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, ² like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, ³ if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.

2:1 **Therefore.** Because you have been born again of imperishable seed (1 Pet. 1:23), you can partake in the divine nature of Christ (2 Pet. 1:4).

Putting aside. Lay aside the old life and put on the new self. Many believers are trying to reform their old selves. They think that if they tried a little harder, they could make themselves good and holy. Peter demolishes that dead-end thinking. “You have been born again (1 Pet. 1:3, 23). You are a royal priesthood and a holy nation (1 Pet. 2:9).”

If Peter was an old covenant law preacher he would say, “Thou shalt not be malicious, deceitful, or hypocritical lest the hand of the Lord smite thee for thy disobedience.” But Peter is a new covenant grace preacher who reminds us who we are (chosen, born again, holy, royal) and then shows us how to experience the new life that is already ours in Christ.

Malice, deceit, hypocrisy. Peter’s list of fleshly deeds is similar to Paul’s lists (Gal. 5:19–21, Eph. 4:31, Col. 3:8). All these things proceed from a selfish heart and corrupt us (Mark 7:20–23).

2:2 **Newborn babies** are known for their hunger and rapid growth. If we want to grow, we need to feed on the Bread of Life (John 6:51) and consume the pure milk of the Living Word.

Long for. The operative verb in this passage indicates we are to crave or earnestly desire the word. This does not mean we need to study the Bible for hours every day. It means we grow by feeding on Jesus the Living Word (see also 2 Pet. 3:18).

The pure milk of the word is the Living Word of God. It is the Lord himself (1 Pet. 1:23).

May grow. Growth is a natural process that can be hindered by malnutrition and poor diet (e.g., the cares of the world that choke the word (Matt. 13:22)).

Salvation. Growing in respect to salvation means growing into who you are in Christ. You are a child of God, so act like it. You are holy, so be holy (1 Pet. 1:15). Be who you truly are. This is Peter's version of "work out your salvation with fear and trembling" (Php. 2:12).

2:3 **If you have tasted** or "if you are a believer." Peter is speaking to "you who believe" (1 Pet. 2:7).

Two kinds of people tasted the kindness of the Lord. There are those who have heard the gospel, but they have not allowed it to take root in their heart and grow (Jas. 1:21). They've had a taste but spat it out.

Then there are those who have received the word with thanksgiving and faith and have been born again (1 Pet. 1:23). Peter is talking to the second group here. He is saying, "If you have tasted that the Lord is good, then taste some more. Crave the pure milk of his word and grow. Feast on his goodness and be satisfied."

Tasted. Peter is riffing on Psalm 34:8: "O taste and see that the Lord is good." The Hebrew word for good in this psalm is an expansive word that means beautiful, best, better, bountiful, cheerful, at ease, favour, fine, glad, joyful, kindly, loving, merry, pleasure, precious, prosperity, ready, sweet, wealth, welfare. The Lord is the very definition of good.

Some Bibles translate Peter's words as "if you have tasted that the Lord is *gracious*." The kindness or graciousness of God was demonstrated on the cross (Tit. 3:4), and it is his kindness that leads us to repentance (Rom. 2:4). God reveals his grace and kindness to us today, tomorrow and forever more (1 Cor. 2:9, Eph. 2:7).

1 Peter 2:4-5

⁴ And coming to him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, ⁵ you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

2:4 **A living stone.** Jesus is the living stone not cut with human hands (Dan. 2:34). Peter, whose name meant rock, liked rocky metaphors. He referred to Jesus as the cornerstone, the stumbling stone, a choice stone, and the rock of offense; see 1 Pet. 2:8.

Rejected by men. The Messiah was rejected by the nation he came to save and by his own disciples. Indeed, he was rejected three times by Peter himself (Matt. 26:34).

Choice or chosen by God; see 1 Pet. 2:6.

Precious. The One who was rejected by men is highly valued by God. The Living Stone became the cornerstone and foundation of his spiritual habitation.

2:5 **Living stones.** In union with Christ the Living Stone, we are the living stones of God's holy habitation.

Being built up. We are being built *up* not built *into*. We are already God's holy habitation.

Peter uses a number of corporate words to describe the church. We are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, and a holy nation (1 Pet. 2:9). We are the household of God (1 Pet. 4:17) and the flock of God (1 Pet. 5:2). Here the church is described as a spiritual house or sanctuary that is being built up or built together one stone (or believer) at a time (Eph. 2:22).

A spiritual house. We are the house or temple of God and his Spirit dwells within us (1 Cor. 3:16). In the New Testament, believers are often referred to as the family or household of God (Matt. 12:50, Mark 3:35, John 11:52, 2 Cor. 6:18, Eph. 2:19, Gal. 3:26, 6:10, 1 Pet. 4:17).

A holy priesthood. In Christ you are holy.

You were sanctified by God the Father (Jude 1:1, KJV), God the Son (Heb. 2:11, 10:10, 14, 13:12), and God the Holy Spirit (Rom. 15:16, 2 Th. 2:13, 1 Pet. 1:2). You are well and truly sanctified.

Priesthood. In the old covenant, only certain people could serve as priests, but in the new covenant, every believer is a priest or minister offering spiritual sacrifices to the Lord. Indeed, you are not just a priest, but a king-priest and a royal priesthood; see 1 Pet. 2:9.

Spiritual sacrifices. In the old covenant, the priests brought animal sacrifices that could not take away sins (Heb. 10:4), but in the new covenant we bring “sacrifices” of praise and thanksgiving to the One who carried all our sins (Heb. 13:15). We present our bodies as holy and living sacrifices in a spiritual act of worship (Rom. 12:1). We don’t do this out of a sense of obligation, but in response to God’s great love.

God is for us and with us and he wants the best for us. He treasures us and adopts us into his family. He watches over us and gives us everything we need. Why wouldn’t we worship such a good God?

1 Peter 2:6–8

⁶ For this is contained in Scripture: “Behold, I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious cornerstone, and he who believes in him will not be disappointed.”⁷ This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, “The stone which the builders rejected, this became the very cornerstone,”⁸ and, “A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense”; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed.

2:6 **In Scripture.** Peter is quoting Isaiah 28:16, a prophecy which he heard from the Lord (see Matt. 21:42).

Zion is another name for the city of God. It is the place God dwells, which in the new covenant is the body of Christ (Heb. 12:22).

A choice stone. The original word for choice (*eklektos*) is the same word which is sometimes translated as chosen (e.g., Luke 23:35). Jesus is both the choice stone and the Chosen of God.

Cornerstone. The cornerstone is the first stone laid in a new structure. As such, it sets a mark for the rest of the building. Jesus is the cornerstone on which God's house is being built (Eph. 2:20).

He who believes in him. The chief takeaway of the new covenant is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:16).

Will not be disappointed. You will never regret putting your faith in the Lord.

In his original prophecy, Isaiah said, "He who believes in it (the costly cornerstone) will not be disturbed" or panicked or be in haste. Peter interprets this as "not be disappointed" or disgraced or put to shame. (Paul draws a similar conclusion in Romans 9:33.) Put your faith in imperfect people and you will be disappointed, but the Lord will never let you down. His love never fails (1 Cor. 13:8).

2:7 **Precious value.** Unlike those who reject Jesus, believers honor Jesus as the cornerstone of God's habitation, and the foundation of his redemptive purposes.

The original word for precious value (*time*) is the same word that is translated elsewhere as honor (1 Pet. 1:7, 3:7, 2 Pet. 1:17). Believers honor Jesus Christ as the Son sent to save us, the high priest who represents us, and the Lord whose Name is above all.

The stone which the builders rejected. Peter starts with a prophecy (see previous verse), then segues into a psalm (Ps. 118:22). This psalm must have been one of his favorites for he included it in his sermon on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 4:11). Perhaps he was inspired by the Lord who also quoted this psalm (see Matt. 21:42).

The builders. The Jews were so proud of the temple they had built that they bragged to Jesus about its magnificent stones (Mark 13:1). In their minds, they had created something that would impress God himself. Yet when the Son of God and the

Living Stone showed up, they didn't want to know him. Those who are trying to impress the Lord with their works and sacrifices are dishonoring the Lord and his sacrifice.

2:8 **A stone of stumbling.** Jesus is the cornerstone (Ps. 118:22, Is. 28:16, Zech. 10:4, Eph. 2:20), the top stone (Zech. 4:7), and the living stone (1 Pet. 2:4) who is in the path of every person. Either we will fall on the stone and be broken in repentance (Matt. 21:44), or we will stumble over the stone offended. The unbelieving Jews were in the second group.

A rock of offense. Those who have invested their lives in works of righteousness are offended by the message of grace. They do not care to hear that their good works count for nothing in the economy of grace.

They stumble. By rejecting God's Son, the Jews stumbled or fell from their privileged position as God's chosen people (Rom. 9:31–32).

Disobedient to the word. The original word for disobedient (*apeitheo*) means to disbelieve. Those who are disobedient, such as the religious Jews who rejected the cornerstone, disobey Christ's call to repent and believe the gospel (Mark 1:15).

This doom they were also appointed. Those who trust in themselves and their works will fall, and this was foreseen by the prophets (e.g., Is. 8:14–15).

1 Peter 2:9–10

⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light; ¹⁰ for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

2:9 **But you.** Believers (1 Pet. 1:8). Those who see Jesus as the precious cornerstone (1 Pet. 2:6–7).

A chosen race. Believers are God's tribe, his kin and household. Once upon a time, we were part of Adam's family. But then we were chosen and adopted into the family of God (Rom. 8:15).

A royal priesthood. Like Melchizedek, who was a king and a priest (Heb. 7:1), Christians are king-priests or priest-kings (Rev. 1:6, 5:10).

If we are to rule and reign in the Name of the Servant-king, we need to understand our dual vocation as kings and priests. If you get the priestly part but not the kingly part, you'll be servant-minded instead of servant-hearted. And if you get the kingly aspect but not the priestly part, you'll be a tyrant. As kingly-priests we minister with power and authority. As priestly kings we rule as servant-hearted ministers.

A holy nation. We are a holy priesthood, a holy house, and a holy nation. You are not primarily an American, Australian, or Argentinian. You are a Christian, a citizen of a heavenly kingdom and a holy nation belonging to God.

This wonderful promise was originally given to the nation of Israel (Ex. 19:5-6), but the Jews broke the covenant and cut themselves off from God through unbelief. Now the blessings promised to the children of Abraham are for all who share Abraham's faith (Gal. 3:9).

God's own possession. You have been bought with a price (1 Cor. 6:20, 7:23, Tit. 2:14). Since you belong to God, your welfare is his concern. You can be sure that the One who paid such a high price for you can be trusted to keep you safe and secure to the end (1 Cor. 1:8-9).

In the old covenant, the Israelites were told they would be a treasured possession if they kept the law (Ex. 19:5-6). But the new covenant reveals that you are a treasured possession because God loves and treasures you. You are the pearl of great price. Jesus happily gave everything he had to purchase you.

So that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who has called you. To proclaim (*exaggello*) is to publish or show forth. The original word is related to the word for messenger (*aggellos*). As believers, we have been called to proclaim the

message of God's salvation. That doesn't mean we will all be preachers behind a pulpit, but we are all called to shine with the gifts that God has given us (1 Pet. 4:10).

The excellencies or praises (*arete*) of God refer to his manly attributes in rescuing us from the kingdom of darkness. Although God's nature has feminine and nurturing characteristics (e.g., Is. 49:15, 66:13, Luke 13:34), his mighty deliverance is portrayed here in masculine terms.

Who has called you. God did not negotiate with the powers of darkness to secure your release. Nor did he engage in some kind of prisoner exchange. When God called you, you came because the word of the king has power (Ecc. 8:4).

Out of darkness. Darkness is a metaphor for evil and sin and anything untouched by the God-who-is-light. Any place the good news of Jesus is not heard or received remains in darkness.

His marvelous light. The light of God's love is revealed in Jesus Christ, the light of life and the light of the world (John 8:12).

2:10 **Not a people.** Once upon a time, we were nobodies.

The people of God. But now we are somebodies, the dearly-loved children of God (1 John 3:1).

In context, Peter is speaking to believers in churches across five Roman provinces (1 Pet. 1:1). These churches probably contained mixed audiences of Jewish and Gentile believers.

Received mercy. Every believer has received God's grace and mercy.

Mercy is one facet of God's grace (Heb. 4:16). Mercy is God's compassion for those in need. Just as we are saved by grace (Eph. 2:5), we are saved by mercy (Tit. 3:5). And just as we are forgiven by grace (Eph. 1:7), we are forgiven by mercy (Heb. 8:12). Just as we receive grace (Rom. 5:17), we receive mercy (2 Cor. 4:1).

Some people beg God for mercy as though God were harsh and aloof, but the gospel declares God's mercy has been freely given and all we need to do is receive it. The mercy we need is found at the throne of grace (Heb. 4:16).

1 Peter 2:11–12

¹¹ Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. ¹² Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.

2:11 **Beloved.** The original word (*agapetos*) means dearly loved, esteemed, favorite and worthy of love. It is closely related to a verb (*agapao*) that means to be well pleased or fond of or contented. This word captures God's heart for you. Your heavenly Father is fond of you. You are his esteemed favorite and he is well pleased with you. He looks at you with a feeling of deep contentment knowing that you are his dearly loved child.

I urge you. If Peter was preaching old covenant law he would say, "I command you..." But since he is preaching new covenant grace, he urges, implores, and exhorts us to make the life-giving choice.

Aliens and strangers. Since you are a citizen of a heavenly kingdom (Php. 3:20), don't act as though you belong to the fallen kingdoms of this world.

Abstain. A preacher of works twists these words into a fitness test. "You have to abstain and avoid sin to purify your soul and make yourself pleasing and acceptable to God." But that is not how Peter does it. Having established your secure identity (you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood and a holy nature; see 1 Pet. 2:9), he begins to address your behavior, and he does this in a most gracious way. "I urge you." In the new covenant, behavior always follows identity.

Fleshly lusts are natural desires as opposed to spiritual desires. Some examples of destructive desires are listed in 1 Peter 2:1 and 4:3.

Wage war. When we feed our flesh, but neglect our spirits, our souls wither.

The desires of the self-life are inherently destructive. Just as the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23), the fruit of the flesh is

corruption (Gal. 6:8). A mind focused on the preservation of self can never fully experience the abundant life that God offers through his Spirit (Rom. 8:6).

Against the soul. The lusts of the flesh wage war against our purified souls (1 Pet. 1:22).

Your born-again soul does not want to sin (1 John 3:9). When you were born again, you were given a new nature with new desires to please the Lord. This is why the former lusts of the flesh wage war against you. They are not on your side. The devil would love for you to reclaim ownership of those old habits, but a better response is to die to sin and live for righteousness (1 Pet. 2:24).

2:12 **Your behavior.** Live in such a way that others see your good works and praise your Father in heaven (Matt. 5:16). Peter contrasts the good behavior or holy conduct of believers (1 Pet. 1:15, 17, 2:12, 3:1, 8, 16, 2 Pet. 3:11) with the lawless and sensual deeds of the ungodly (1 Pet. 4:3, 2 Pet. 2:7–8, 13–14, 18).

The Gentiles. Unbelievers. Technically a Gentile was a non-Jew or foreigner. But since Peter's letter was sent to churches that had Gentile believers in them (1 Pet. 1:1), he is referring to those outside the church.

Slander. False accusations may seem relatively benign, but historically they have been used by the enemies of the church to great effect. In New Testament times religious Jews falsely accused Christians of being opposed to Caesar. "They're godless heretics who stir up trouble all over the world" (see Acts 17:6–7, 21:28). By spreading slander, they hoped to stir up civil unrest and provoke the Romans into taking action against Christians.

In Corinth, the Jews brought Paul into the Roman courts on the charge of persuading men to worship God in ways contrary to Jewish law (Acts 18:12–13). On that occasion the Roman proconsul did not take the bait. But there were times when the Jews played the Romans like fiddles (e.g., Acts 21:27ff).

Your good deeds are the things you do when you have been apprehended by the goodness of God.

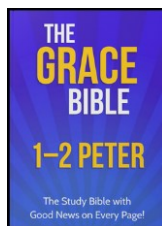
Since the time of Christ, Christians have been at the forefront of the arts and sciences. Christian trailblazers promoted education, built hospitals, created industries, freed slaves, and defended the rights of women and children. Every year, millions of Christians volunteer to feed the poor, visit the sick and imprisoned, and help refugees. Although Christians can be recognized by their good deeds, we are not defined by our good deeds. We are defined by the love of Christ. The good deeds we do are a response to his great love. See also 1 Peter 3:16.

Glorify God. Those unbelievers who are slandering you may yet be won over by your witness and join you in worshipping the Lord when he returns (*cf.* 1 Pet. 4:16).

Visitation. The original word (*episkope*) means inspection. It is the same word that is used to describe the Lord's first coming to Israel in Luke 19:44. In context, "the day of visitation" implies the Lord's final coming or the day of the Lord; see 2 Pet. 3:10.

The Grace Bible: 1–2 Peter

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