

It certainly was the practice after a few centuries. But if this began it may be Peter's answer. He does not start with declaring his authority as an apostle. He says "a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ."

Peter recognized that none of us are in the same category as the Lord Jesus Christ. We all if we truly know Him are His servants and we should be representing Him on earth, since we should all be apostles. Now Peter addresses this to those who have obtained like precious faith with us. Peter is not writing to the unbelievers. Peter is writing to Christians. These first four verses are his greetings to fellow Christians. It is very important for the Christians to represent the Lord in giving His message to the unbelievers. Evangelism is a very important part of our work. Every person who is truly a Christian should be in a sense an evangelist. He should carry God's message to the unbeliever.

But Peter shows us here we also have a duty every one of us to carry God's message to fellow Christians. God desires that we should strengthen one another, that we should stir one another up, that we should urge one another to faith. It is a great thing to go about and give people the gospel and try to bring them to the Lord, but we should not forget that the one who is next to us, the one who seems to be a tower of strength may be going through a period of temptation, period of difficulty, a period of doubt perhaps. Anyone of us may be God's instrument to that other Christian and encourage them, strengthen them, admonish them, to warn them. So Peter writes to fellow Christians, to those who have obtained like precious faith == the same kind of precious faith that we have. Through the righteousness of ~~our~~ God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

The recent translations, most of them translate this "through the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ." But it can equally well be rendered that way. Peter like Paul believed that Jesus Christ was indeed God. So it is altogether proper to call Him our God and our Saviour. Yet I think an argument can be made for the translation of the KJV: "God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" Because God is a trinity. God the Father, sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Belief in God, we do not mean simply God the Father. We mean the Trinity - God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. All three have their part in the salvation of every one of us. God the Father sent the Son to die that we might live. God the Holy Spirit takes the results of Christ's death and applies them to our hearts. So it is the righteousness of God. We think very particularly of course of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, the Perfect One who died on the cross that we might be saved from our sins. Without His death, without what He did for us, without His taking our place there would be no hope for any one of us.

So he greets us as those who like him rest only on Jesus Christ. for our salvation. He says, "grace and peace be multiplied unto you." This is old English: "be multiplied." I think if we think a little about it it is quite clear what it means. It means may they keep on coming to you; may you constantly be getting more of the grace of God.