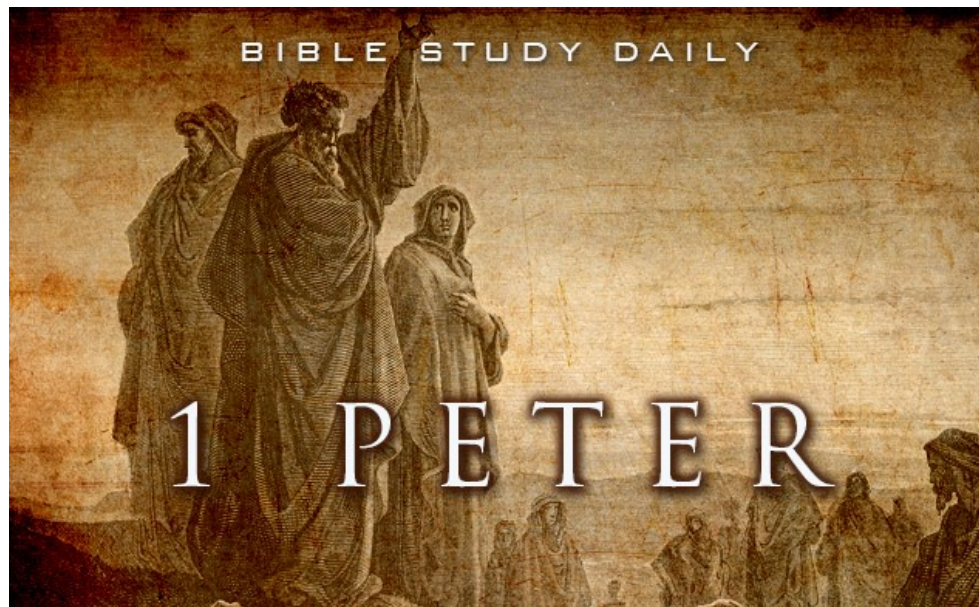




BIBLE STUDY DAILY



This document contains the introduction to the book of 1 Peter as well as my study notes for the book.

Name

The title "1 Peter" comes from the author Peter who identifies himself in 1:1. His given name was Cephas, but Jesus changed his name to Peter (John 1:42). Both names mean "rock" or "stone."

Author

Peter, an apostle of Christ, identifies himself as the author in 1:1. Additional internal evidence is seen in the similarity of style between the Peter's epistles and his sermons recorded by Luke in Acts.

Some claim Peter could not have been the author because he was a fisherman and lacked formal Rabbinical training. However, as noted in 1 Peter 5:12 Peter used Silvanus as an amanuensis (secretary). Silvanus (Silas) was a highly educated Jewish Christian and a Roman citizen. Furthermore, Peter had some 30 years of public speaking in the ministry in which he likely refined his communication of Gospel truths with the guidance of the Holy Spirit..

External evidence comes from early church fathers who all accepted Peter as the author, including: Eusebius, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Polycarp, and Clement of Alexandria.

Genre

General Epistle

Literary Form

The epistle of 1 Peter is an encyclical, meaning it was intended to be read by a wide audience carried from city to city (see 1 Peter 1:1).

Time Frame

Peter likely wrote the epistle sometime after Paul was released from prison in A.D. 62 (because he does not mention Paul in prison) and just before A.D. 64 when persecution of the Christian church under Nero began, and certainly no later than A.D. 67 when he was martyred. Peter discusses the trials of Christians in the Roman Empire, and it seems the governments are operating as usual. He does not mention severe persecution of Christians, but alludes to it coming in the future.

Emphasis

Peter's intended audience was composed of both Jewish and Gentile Christians, who were living in northern provinces of what is modern day Turkey. As the minority population they lived under Roman law, and many were probably household servants or slaves. With this in mind, Peter's emphasis is on combining solid doctrine with practical issues of living out their lives as Christians, while maintaining their hope in their heavenly home.



Outline

- Salutation (1:1)
- Chosen for salvation (1:3-2:10)
- The Christian life and testimony (2:11-3:7)
- Be alert to coming persecution (3:8-4:19)
- Instructions to elders, leaders, and the community (5:1-11)
- Concluding doxology (5:12-14)

What I Noticed Today (1 Peter 1-2)

1 Peter 1

In verses 1-2 Peter opens the letter using the typical format: the author (Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ), the recipients (the dispersed Christians), and a greeting.


Note: Peter's opening makes a point of reminding the readers they are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God, and set apart by the Spirit (for service). The next phrase *for obedience and for sprinkling with the blood of Jesus Christ* describes the purpose of God's election as a covenant relationship with man (Exodus 24:3-8) which comes through the blood of Christ.

In verses 3-12 Peter encourages the readers that is through the resurrection of Christ that have been born again:

- Praise God for He has given us a new birth into an inheritance that is imperishable through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- You are being protected by God's power through faith for salvation that is ready to be revealed (in the rapture).
- You rejoice in this.
- You struggle in trials now so the genuineness of your faith is refined and result in praise, glory, and honor at the return of Jesus.
- You love Him though you have not seen Him.
- You believe in Him and rejoice because you receive the goal of your faith: salvation.
- The message of grace given by the Old Testament prophets has been revealed to you by those preaching the Gospel, directed by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven.

In verses 13-25 Peter issues a call to the new believers to live a life of holiness befitting their new birth:

- Therefore (because these things have been revealed to you) prepare your minds and get serious about the grace brought to you by Jesus.
- Do not be conformed to the evil desires of the world.
- But be holy in all your conduct, because the One who called you is holy (Leviticus 11:44-45).
- Conduct yourselves in reverent fear of God who judges impartially.

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- For you know you were redeemed from an empty life by the precious blood of Christ.
 - He (Jesus) was chosen before the foundation of the world to be made known to you, who through believing in God who raised Jesus from the dead and gave him glory, is your savior.

Note: The phrase “these last times” or “at the end of times” means these present times, whereas the phrase “the last time” refers to the coming age of Christ.

- Obedience to the truth should cause a sincere love for your brothers.
- Love one another earnestly since you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, by the living and enduring word of God (Isaiah 40:6-8).


1 Peter 2

In verses 2-10 Peter calls on the believers to repent of their sins and live a holy life:

- Rid yourselves of malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander.
- Desire pure spiritual milk so that you may grow in your faith. (Psalm 34:8)
- You are living stones being built into a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifice to God through Christ (Isaiah 28:16).
- Honor will come to you who believe,
- But those unbelievers will stumble because of their disobedience to God (rejection of God’s message) (Psalm 118:22, Isaiah 8:14).
- You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a possession of God (Deuteronomy 7:6, Exodus 19:6).
- Once you were not a people, but now you are.
- You had not received mercy, but now you have.

In verses 11-16 Peter urges the believers to live holy lives among Gentiles wherever they live, and do good works, so your example will draw others to God.

- Avoid the fleshly desires that war against you.
- Conduct yourselves honorably, so they will see your good works and glorify God.
- Submit to every human authority (obey the law) for the Lord’s sake.
- For it is God’s will that you silence foolish people by doing good.
- **Note:** Apparently Christians were being slandered, so Peter’s



admonition is for them to obey the law, and do good works to silence those who slandered them.

- As God's slaves live as free people, but don't use your freedom to conceal evil.
- Honor (respect) everyone, love Christian brothers, fear God, and honor (respect) the emperor.

In verses 18-25 Peter directed Christian slaves to submit to their masters:

- Household slaves submit to you masters, not only to the good, and gentle but also to the cruel.

Note: The Greek word translated "slaves" is not the word usually used for slaves, but the word meaning household servants.

- It brings favor from God to endure suffering unjustly.
- There is no credit if you sin and endure punishment because you deserved it.
- Peter uses Christ's example of enduring unjust suffering:
 - You were called to this because Christ suffered for you, as an example for you.
 - He did not commit sin when he was reviled by reviling back.
 - He did not threaten, but trusted God who judges justly.
 - He bore our sins upon the cross so that having died to sin we might live in righteousness.
 - You were healed by His wounds.
 - You were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd.

Some thoughts for additional consideration:

It is only through the grace of God that we have the strength to live as aliens in a foreign land. In some countries very real persecution of Christians occurs on a daily basis. In other countries Christians face the kind of slander that Peter refers to in this letter. Regardless, we are called to be a light to the World, that others might see and come to Christ as a result of our witness.

Our life in Christ is one of growth. Much like an infant who becomes a toddler, a teenager, and an adult, so to we grow in our relationship with Christ. We become spiritually mature, not all at once, but over time, and then only if we pursue growth in Christ.

What I Noticed Today (1 Peter 3-5)

1 Peter 3

In verses 1-6 Peter gives instructions for wives regarding their Christian conduct:

- “In the same way” refers back to the previous section.
- Wives, submit to your husbands, even if some disobey the Christian message, so they may be won over by the way their wives behave.

Note: The instruction is specific to wives submitting to the own husbands, not to men in general. The purpose of maintaining their Godly behavior is to restore their husbands, or if they are unbelievers to win them to Christ.

- Wives, your true beauty is not found in outward appearance, but the gentleness of spirit that resides in your heart.
- Peter refers to Sarah who submitted to Abraham as an example of a Godly women.
- You have become Sarah’s children (like Sarah) when you do what is good, and are not fearful (putting their trust in God).

In verse 7 Peter instructs husbands “in the same way” live with your wives, and show them honor as coheirs of grace so your prayers will be answered.

Note: It is not clear if Peter’s reference to “grace of life” (or “gift of life”) refers to wives that are Christians or unbelievers. If Christians, it refers to their salvation. If unbelievers, it suggests treating them well may lead them to a life with Christ and answered prayer.


Note: The word “weaker nature” relates to physical strength, not moral or intellectual capacity.

1 Peter 3:8-4:19

In the first two chapters Peter’s emphasis was on practical matters of Christians with living in pagan society. In this next section, Peter warns of increased persecution against faithful Christians and how they should respond.

In verses 8-12 Peter directs the next section to everyone (“Finally”):

- You should be like-minded, sympathetic, love other believers, compassionate, humble, not paying back evil for evil or insult or insult.
- Rather, you should give a blessing. You were called for this so you can inherit a blessing. (Verses 8-9 summarize Psalm 34:12-16)

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- Peter then quotes Psalm 34:12-16 making three points. If you love life:
 - then keep your tongue from evil, and from speaking deceitfully.
 - turn away from evil, do what is good,
 - seek peace and pursue it.
 - Because the eyes and ears of the Lord are upon the righteous and their requests, but He opposes those who do evil.

In verses 13-22 Peter discusses the believer's response to underserved persecution results in blessing:

- Even if you should suffer for righteousness you will be blessed.
- Do not fear (Isaiah 8:12), but honor the Lord.
- Always be ready to give a defense to anyone who asks about your Christian belief.

Note: The Greek word used for “defense” is *apologian*. It is where we get the English word apology, which originally meant to give a reasoned argument or a defense.

- But do it with respect and gentleness so that those who denounce your Christian life will be put to shame.
- It is better to suffer for doing good when it is God's will than do evil.
- For Christ suffered for the sins of all; the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring you to God.
- Verses 19-20 are difficult to interpret. Some scholars believe the reference is to Christ when He descended into Hell between His death and resurrection. Others believe it references Christ's descent into Hell after His crucifixion to declare victory over fallen (evil) angels.
- Peter equates God waiting to save Noah and the eight people in the ark through water with baptism, which now saves you through the resurrection of Christ.
- Christ is now at the right hand of God with angels, authorities, and powers subject to Him.

1 Peter 4

In chapter 4 Peter's focus is on Christian's willingness to suffer as Christ did, to minister to one another, and to maintain their faith in God.

In verses 1-6 Peter discusses the Christ-like attitude:

- Therefore (referring to Christ's suffering), since you know Christ suffered in the flesh you should also be resolved to suffer, not for human desires but for the will of God.
- You lived like pagans in the past, but now you must separate yourself

from that lifestyle (debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and idolatry).

- They (the pagans) are surprised you don't live like they do anymore, so they slander you.
- They will give an account to God. For this reason, the Gospel was preached to everyone. Some will reject it, but some will accept the Gospel and live by God.

In verses 7-11 Peter discusses Christ-like service:

- The end of all things is near (refers to Christ's second coming).
- Therefore, be serious and disciplined for prayer.
- Maintain intense love for one another (Proverbs 10:12).
- Be hospitable without complaining.
- Use your (spiritual) gifts to serve one another, as good managers (stewards) of God's grace.
- If anyone speaks it should reflect God's words. If anyone serves it should be through God's strength.
- Whether speaking or serving it should be done to the glory of God.

In verses 12-19 Peter discusses the importance of enduring Christ-like faith:

- Do not be surprised when persecution (fiery trials) come against you.
- Instead, rejoice that you share in the suffering Christ suffered, so you can also rejoice at the revelation of His glory.
- If you are ridiculed in the name of Christ, you are blessed because the Spirit of the glory of God rests on you.

Note: This refers to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit when someone makes a confession of faith in Christ.

- None of you should suffer for evil acts (murderer, thief, evildoer, meddler). Christians should behave in a such a way that they are not guilty of these things.
- If you suffer as a Christian do not be ashamed, but glorify God.
- For the time has come for judgement to begin in God's people. How much worse will judgement be for those who reject God? (Proverbs 11:31)
- So those who suffer in God's will, while doing good, should trust their faith in God.

1 Peter 5

In chapter 5 Peter discusses new responsibilities within the church because of the coming persecution, the need for elders to care for the people, for

young men to submit to their elders, and for everyone to maintain their faith.

In verses 1-4 Peter, as a fellow elder, addresses the elders:

- Shepherd God's flock not out of compulsion but freely according to God's will, not for money but eagerly, not lording over those entrusted to you but as examples.
- When the chief shepherd (Jesus) appears you will receive an unfading crown of glory.

In verses 5-7 Peter addresses young men:

- Younger men be subject to elders.

Note: The word for elders in verse 5 may refer to older, more senior men, not the office of an elder.

- Practice humility with one another, because God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble ((Proverbs 3:34).
- Humble yourselves under God so He can exalt you at the proper time.
- Put your cares on Him, because He cares for you.

In verses 8-10 Peter concludes the letter with his final admonition to be strong in the faith:

- Be alert! The Devil is looking for anyone he can devour.
- Resist him, and be firm in the faith.
- Know that you are experiencing the same sufferings as other believers around the world.

In verses 11-13 Peter issues his benediction and final encouragement:


- The God who called you into His glory in Christ Jesus will personally restore, establish, strengthen, and support you in your suffering.
- Take your stand in the true grace of God.
- The church in Babylon, also chosen, sends greetings as does Mark, my son.
- Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all who are in Christ.

Note: The *Babylon* Peter referred may be a disguised reference to Rome, or it may be the actual city of Babylon on the Euphrates River. In Revelation the city of Babylon refers to Rome (Revelation 17:1, 18:10, 21).

Note: Mark was not Peter's biological son, but John Mark, his son in the faith.

Some thoughts for further consideration:

- *Christians continue to live in difficult times. Our testimony is demonstrated by the example we show as we live out our lives in Christ.*

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- *With regards to our lifestyle, are we of the world or have we separated ourselves living to God's glory?*
 - *Whatever suffering we endure for His name's sake is nothing compared to His suffering on the cross. Nonetheless, it will earn us a crown of glory in heaven.*