

A STUDY OF 1 PETER & 2 PETER

Includes 17 lessons with
Study Guide prepared by

Jim Newman

A STUDY OF 1 PETER

The Greeting (1 Peter 1:1,2)

The book of 1 Peter is the first of two letters penned by the Apostle Peter and addressed to Christians in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. The letter was written about the year AD 65.¹

Peter address his readers as “*elect exiles of the dispersion.*”² The word “exile” is sometimes translated as sojourner and literally means “one who lives alongside of.”³

1. In what way are Christians exiles or sojourners? (See also 1 Peter 2:11; Hebrew 11:13; Ephesians 2:19; and Philippians 3:20)



<http://www.bible-history.com/maps/maps/>

The word “*elect*” tells us that they were God’s chosen people. Just as the Israelites in the Old Testament were God’s chosen people, now Christians are God’s elect. God has *foreknowledge* of those who will come to salvation. This does not mean that God predetermines who *can* come to Him, but He knows the ones who *will* obey Him by their own free will. 1 Corinthians 8:3 says, “*But if anyone loves God, he is known by God.*” (Compare Acts 2:23 and John 10:17-18 where we learn that Jesus died according to the foreknowledge and plan of God while Jesus says he lays down his life by his own accord.)

2. Describe the hope that would have come to Peter’s readers when he says to them that even though they are exiles, they are the “*elect.*”

Those who are God’s elect are sanctified by the Spirit. This simply means that the Holy Spirit “sets apart” Christians for obedience to Christ. Acts 2:38 teaches that all who are baptised into Christ receive both the forgiveness of sins AND the gift of the Holy Spirit who dwells within the Christian. Christians are sprinkled with the blood of Christ setting them apart to his service.

3. What is meant by the terms “*grace*” and “*peace*” in verse 2 and how would this help a scattered and persecuted people?

¹ Smith, James E. *Teacher’s Commentary: General Epistles*. Lulu.com, 2010. p. 9.

² All Scripture references unless otherwise noted are taken from the English Standard Version.

³ Smith, Ibid.

The Christian's Hope (1 Peter 1:3-12)

It is important that Christians understand the greatness of what we have in Christ. One can sense the joy of the Apostle Peter as he writes in verses 3-10. He was writing to a persecuted church, but in Christ they had tremendous hope.

4. What is the meaning of the word “mercy” in verse 3 and how is mercy different from grace?

The mercy of which Peter writes is called “great.” The Greek word used here is “*polus*” and means “abundant, plenteous, much; hence: great, strong, intense, large.”⁴ Peter wants these suffering Christians to know the incredible greatness of the mercy of our Father.

The Christian's hope comes through being born again. This new birth takes place in baptism (Titus 3:5; John 3:5) and brings hope.

5. What is the meaning of the word “hope” as it is used in the New Testament? Why is this hope described as “living” in verse 3?



Our hope is grounded in the reality of the resurrection. Because God is merciful, and we have been born again, our hope in the one who was raised from the dead anticipates a great inheritance. Were it not for the resurrection our faith would be in vain (1 Corinthians 15:12-18). The resurrection of Christ is of first importance (1 Corinthians 1:3).

6. What four words or phrases are used to describe the Christian's inheritance in verse 4?

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

In the Old Testament God promised an inheritance to Abraham (Genesis 12:7). For the Israelite in the Old Testament, the promised inheritance was land, for the Christian it is a home in heaven. While we eagerly await a future inheritance we are currently guarded (or shielded) by God's power through our faith. God will not allow us to lose our inheritance so long as we continue to remain faithful.

The tense of the word guarded in the original language indicates “the need for our continual protection in the unending struggle of our soul.”⁵ (In the Old Testament, God is often referred

⁴ Oberst, Bruce. *Letters from Peter* in the Bible Study Textbook Series. College Press: Joplin, MO, 1962.

⁵ Smith, *ibid.*, p. 18.

to as a shield. See Genesis 15:1; Deuteronomy 33:29; Psalm 3:3; 7:10; 18:2; 115:9-11). The word “guarded” is a military term which indicates the vigilant efforts of a protector.

7. What do we learn about salvation in verse 5?

8. List the facts we learn about the Christian’s present trials in verse 6? Compare 1 Peter 1:6 with James 1:2; Romans 5:3; and Matthew 5:11-12.

Trials may not be pleasant, but they prove the genuineness of our faith. Just as gold is refined in fire, so the trials we face, refine us and prove whether or not our faith is genuine.

Trials also prepare the Christian for the coming of the Lord. Those whose faith is proved to be genuine will result in praise, glory, and honour when Jesus Christ comes again.



These trials do not refer to illness or the common struggles that all people endure, but rather trials that come as a direct result of a commitment to Jesus Christ. They may refer to direct persecution or the “struggles of Christian service.”⁶ (See 2 Corinthians 11:23-29; James 1:2-3).

9. Read verse 8. How is it possible to love one that you have never seen?

10. Why does verse 8 describe the Christian’s joy as inexpressible?

11. What is the ultimate goal of our faith (verse 9)?

The Old Testament prophets prophesied about the salvation that Christians enjoy. In Matthew 13:17 Jesus said, “For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.”

The prophets did not completely understand their prophecies and did not know when Jesus would come and when he would die. Furthermore, they were told that they were prophesying of something they would not see in their lifetimes. It is only in the Christian age that their prophecies found fulfillment.

12. Describe what the angels want in verse 12.

⁶ Davids, Peter H.; Arnold, Clinton E. ed. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Background Commentary*. Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 2002, p. 128.

Peter's first readers were undergoing severe persecution and must be encouraged by these words of hope. God promises an inheritance to the faithful and that even the trials result in praise, glory, and honour. Surely Christians today need to know, believe, and understand these words as we live as strangers in our world.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 teaches, *"So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal."*

13. What if any questions arise in your mind from 1 Peter 1:1-12?

14. How will the words of this passage help you as you live for Christ?

A STUDY OF 1 PETER

Called to Be Holy (1 Peter 1:13-25)

In the previous lesson we read of the hope that is a part of the life of the Christian as he looks forward to a great inheritance and an eternal salvation because of the resurrection of the living Lord. Even though a Christian may suffer like Peter's original readers, he is assured that something better is coming and this hope helps to sustain the Christian.

Key Verse



1 Peter 1:15

“but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct.”

In verse 13, Peter begins with the word “therefore” and this word always alerts us that what is coming is built upon what is past. We have this great and abiding hope therefore . . . we need to live holy lives.

As a preface to the call to holiness, Peter calls upon self-discipline in the life of the Christian. In verse 13 he writes, ***“preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ . . .”***

Our modern English translators have tried to make the first phrase in verse 13, a bit easier to understand. The literal translation is: “wherefore girding up the loins of your mind” which pictures a first century man whose long garment could be pulled and tucked under the belt. This exposed the legs and allowed one to run faster or work without hinderance. The mind is the seat of intellect and guides and directs our conduct.

1. Why does Peter use the word “action” in verse 13?

Being sober-minded tells us that God expects us to have complete clarity of mind so that we are not distracted by sin.

2. Why is the word “fully” important in verse 13?

The remainder of this section of 1 Peter is centred on being holy. We will use 1 Peter 1:15 as our key verse. We are called to be holy because God is holy.

What Does Holiness Mean for the Christian?

Before we list all the ways Peter describes holy living for the Christian, we should make some attempt to define holiness. The Old Testament word for holy probably comes from the Hebrew word *qadosh* which means to separate or divide.¹

¹ Cottrell, Jack. *The Faith Once for All: Bible Doctrine for Today*. College Press: Joplin, MO, 2002, p. 338.

In the New Testament the word for holiness is the Greek word *hagios*. As in the Old Testament it carries the idea of being set apart or being consecrated to God. Holiness describes a life that is separated from the world and given to God. To be holy we should abhor sin and love righteousness.

Peter now goes on to describe a number of aspects of holiness:

- A. **Holiness is based on a new relationship.** God is now our father (v. 14, 17); other Christians are our brothers (v22).
- B. **Holiness brings a change in lifestyle** (vss 14-15) Our conduct (or way of living especially in how we interact with others) is to be holy.



3. Describe the lifestyle of Peter's original readers before coming to Christ? (v. 14)

- C. **Holiness is essential since it is commanded in Scripture.** "Written is literally 'it stands written.' The word used in Greek literature of legal documents" that continued to be in force.²
- D. **Holiness is based on the nature of God** (v. 16). God is our father and we are to imitate him as best we are able. (See Leviticus 19:2) People want to measure themselves by one another or by people they see as "less good" than themselves. Verse 16 clearly teaches that we should measure our conduct with a holy God.
- E. **We live holy lives because we fear God who is judge** (v. 17)

4. What is meant by the phrase, "conduct yourselves with fear?"

5. Is anyone but God able to judge impartially? Why or why not?

6. What criteria does God use in his judgment?

7. How is his judgment related to his grace?

8. What is meant by the word exile in verse 17?

² Smith, James R. *Teacher's Commentary: General Epistles*. Lulu.com. p. 29.

Christians have the great privilege of calling upon God (v. 17). We are able to approach God in prayer as his children. We can petition him for those things that we need and can appeal to him as our Father. Still, God expects and demands holy living. His judgements are impartial which both encourages us and causes us to have a great deal of fear or respect for God. While God's grace is essential for our salvation and we cannot be saved by any amount of works, God expects (even demands) obedience from his children. Those who constantly rebel place themselves in a dangerous position before God. (Also see Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:26-30)

F. We live holy lives because of the futility of unholy living (v. 18)

9. What is the meaning of “futile” and why does Peter describe the previous life of his first readers as futile?

10. Describe the contrast between the inheritance of verse 18 and the inheritance of verse 4.

G. We live holy lives because of the high cost that was paid for our ransom (v. 18-19)

In New Testament times it was common for a prisoner or slave to buy his freedom by providing a “ransom.” We might also say that this person had been redeemed. These redemptions could be costly as measured by silver or gold, but our ransom cost the very blood of Christ. Like the Passover Lambs during the Mosaic Age which must have been without spot or blemish, Jesus who was sacrificed for our sin was without any spot or blemish of sin. (See also John 1:29)



H. We live holy lives because redemption was a part of God's original intent (v. 20)

God had foreknowledge of our sin and the necessity of the sacrifice of his Son from the beginning. Beyond that Jesus has always existed (v. 20), but was “made manifest” or made known in these last times. The phrase “*for the sake of you*” tells us that Jesus came so that Gentiles could be incorporated into the people of God.

I. We live holy lives because of the resurrection (v. 21)

11. How was Christ given glory? (v. 21)

J. Holy people love one another (v. 22)

12. Describe the kind of love Christians should have for one another. (v. 22)

K. Holy people have been born of imperishable seed (v. 22)

Peter is alluding to the new birth that he already spoken about in 1:3. In our human bodies we are born through the seed of man, but our new birth comes through the eternal and imperishable Son of God.

13. What role does the Word of God play in our new birth? (v. 23)

K. We live holy lives because our life in the flesh is temporary while the word of God endures forever. (vss. 24-25) -- See also Isaiah 40:6-8

L. We live holy lives because the good news has been preached to us (v. 25)

14. List three practical applications from 1 Peter 1:13-25.

A STUDY OF I PETER

A Living Stone (1 Peter 2:1-10)

1 Peter 2:1 begins with the word “So” which tells us the Peter is referring to what he has written before. In the beginning of chapter one, Peter teaches that Christians live as people of hope, even in the midst of persecution as they await their final inheritance. Later in the chapter he instructs that a people of hope are to be a holy people. The holy life is based on a new relationship with God as our Father. Now Peter moves on to further describe the life of the Christian, shows another contrast with those outside of Christ, and describes the Jesus as the foundation upon which our lives are built.

In 1 Peter 2:1, the Apostle Peter describes how Christians are to treat one another. Among Christians there should be no malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander. These things are to be “put away” or “cast aside” because they have no place in the life of the church. There must be intentional effort to remove these attitudes and actions. While we should treat no one with the attitudes and actions listed below, they are especially harmful in the church and stand in stark contrast to a life of hope and holiness.

1. Briefly define the following words:

A. Malice -

B. Deceit -

C. Hypocrisy -

D. Envy -

E. Slander -

2. How would the attitudes and actions listed above bring harm to the church?

In verse 2, Peter uses the illustration of a new born baby. Previously in 1:3 and 1:23 Peter had written about being “born again.” A person receives the new birth at their baptism and then begins a life of spiritual growth. Peter does not use this illustration to say that his first readers were not growing, but instead uses it to describe the type of intense desire they should have for spiritual nourishment.

The milk of 1 Peter 2 is described as pure since it has no contamination, it is spiritual, and it brings Christian growth.



3. What is the milk of 1 Peter 2:2? (See 1:23,25)

¹ The NIV and the NASB use the word “therefore” in 1 Peter 2:1.

4. Describe the craving that an infant has for milk and why this craving is necessary.

Verse three issues a call to remember the past -- “if you have tasted that the Lord is good” you should crave pure spiritual milk.

In verse 4, Jesus is referred to as a living stone. Jesus stands as the foundation upon which Christians build their lives. He is living because he is the resurrected Lord. This stone was “rejected” by men. In first century construction a builder would carefully examine a stone before using it in a building. Spiritually, the Jewish leaders looked at Jesus, examined him, and decided to reject him. They evaluated him and believed him to be worthless. Many today still examine Jesus and his claims only to reject him for things that are truly worthless.

Psalm 118:22

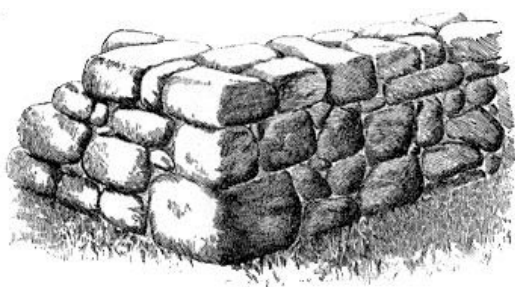
“The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.”

Isaiah 28:16

therefore thus says the Lord God, “Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: ‘Whoever believes will not be in haste.’”

5. Why did the Jesus leaders reject Jesus?

6. Why do people reject Jesus today?



Whereas people rejected Jesus, God has chosen him and finds him to have great value. Christians also find Jesus to be of great value. Peter says in verse 4, “and you come to him . . .” Try to grasp the enormity of the privilege of being allowed to examine Jesus and to accept him!

Because of our relationship with Jesus, we also become “living stones” and are being built into a “spiritual house” which is the church. In this beautiful picture, God is making something beautiful out of our lives. We are only a part of this building because we are made a part of Christ in baptism (Galatians 3:27) and are joined with Christ and one another to be collectively built into a spiritual house.² (See Hebrews 3:5-6)

The metaphor that Peter uses draws on the imagery of the Old Testament. In this picture, the temple was made of physical stones, but the church is a spiritual house, made up of people. In the Old Testament the access of the people to God was through priests, but now God has made all Christians a part of his holy priesthood. In the Old Testament animal sacrifices are made, but as Christians we offer spiritual sacrifices.

7. What are the spiritual sacrifices that Peter writes about in verse 5? (See Hebrews 13:15-16; Romans 12:1; and Philippians 4:18)

² The “you” of verse 5 is plural and refers not to individual Christians, but to the church as a whole.

8. How should we be influenced by understanding that we are living stones, built upon Jesus the chief cornerstone, and that together we “build” the church?

In the Old Testament Zion referred to the mount upon which Jerusalem was located. Later it came to signify heaven and denotes the dwelling place of the people of God.

Every person will encounter Christ whether they accept him or reject him. The Jewish leaders rejected him (verse 7), but God made him the chief cornerstone. To others, he becomes a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, while to the Christian this stone is precious. Every person will either recognise Jesus as the chief cornerstone and build their life on him (believe vs. 7) or will disobey (vs. 8) stumble over him and fall. Those who disobey are (by their own choice) predestined to stumble and fall.

9. What is a stumbling block and how can Jesus be described in this way?

The Privileged Position of Christians

As Peter describes the privileged position of Christians in verse 9, he again uses the collective “you.” This is not spoken just to individual Christians, but all Christians together enjoy these blessings.

- A. **A Chosen Race.** (In the Old Testament, the Jews were God’s chosen people, now Christians are God’s chosen people.)

10. How are Christians Chosen?

- B. **A Royal Priesthood.** All Christians are priests who serve the King of Kings and who will also share an inheritance with Christ. Their priestly duties are indicated in verse 5.
- C. **A Holy Nation.** This indicates the distinctiveness of Christians who are separated from the world and to God.
- D. **A People for His Own Possession.** We belong to Christ (thus we are called Christians.) God is our Creator, Redeemer, and Lord.

11. Describe what it means to be possessed by God?

- E. **A People who Proclaim the Excellencies of God.** “The purpose of the church is to render continuous testimony to the mighty acts of the Lord. The church is to bear public witness to all that God is and all that God has done. Especially, we are to bear witness to how God has called us out of the *darkness* of sin and ignorance into the wonderful *light* of the

gospel.”³ The word “proclaim” means “to tell forth, divulge, publish; to declare abroad, celebrate.”⁴

12. What are some ways in which we can proclaim the excellencies of God?

F. A People Called Out of Darkness and into His Marvelous Light. (1 Corinthians 1:9; Galatians 1:6)

G. Christians are God’s People. This seems to especially be written to Gentile Christians. We once were not God’s people, but we have been adopted as sons.

H. Christians Have Received God’s Mercy. Gentiles were not in a position to receive God’s mercy, but now in Christ Gentile Christians are recipients of God’s mercy.

13. What lessons from 1 Peter 2:1-10 do you think are most important?

³ Smith, James R. *Teacher’s Commentary: General Epistles*. Lulu.com. p. 47.

⁴ *The Zondervan Greek and English Interlinear New Testament* (NASB/NIV). p. 1061.

A STUDY OF I PETER

Christian Submission (1 Peter 2:11-25)

In 1 Peter 2:11, Peter begins a new session. The word “Beloved” indicates a new address and the pivot to a new idea. Peter feels strongly about what he is writing using the word “urge” to indicate the intensity of what he is about to write. He continues to refer to his first readers in a way (sojourners and exiles) that shows they are only temporary residents of this world and in this section it also describes their low social status in the world.

These Christians are confronted by many difficulties. 1) They are under persecution; 2) They lived in this world, but their real home was in heaven; 3) They still faced the persecution of their old lives. Peter strongly urges them to “*abstain from the passions of the flesh, which war against your soul.*” These “*passions of the flesh*” are their own selfish desires and the sinful appetites of the body. These are so strong that they likened to a war. The Greek grammar indicates that this is an ongoing and continual battle.

1. Why are the “passions of the flesh” so difficult to overcome?

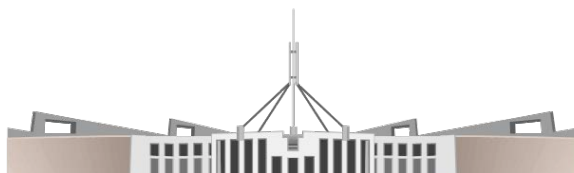
2. Why is this struggle called a “war?”

In the midst of persecution and temptation, the world carefully watches the lives of Christians. Because of this, Peter encourages his readers to keep their conduct honourable. A Christ-like lifestyle will not prevent non-Christians from ridiculing, criticising, or even being untruthful about the conduct of Christians; however Peter says the Gentiles (referring here to all non-Christians) will see the good deeds of the Christian. The word translated as “*they may see*” is the same word that is used in 1 Peter 3:2 and translated “*when they see*” and indicates a long term reflection or observation. As non-Christians observe Christians, sometimes they are convinced to follow Christ and this allows them to “*glorify God on the day of visitation*” which refers to the second coming of Christ.

3. What might a non-Christian observe in the life of the Christian that would convince them to also become a Christian?

The institution of government is by divine design. Though individual governments may be opposed to God, the idea of government is necessary and allows for an orderly society. (See Romans 13:1). We are to obey the government because God desires this from us (v. 13). In verses 13-14, Peter refers to the emperor who is the ruling Caesar or king (probably Nero at this time) and the Roman governor who ruled over a province and who heard court cases and provided local order.

4. What is the role of government? (v.14)



Verse 15 serves as sort of a summary or explanation of the previous verses. It answers the question of why Christians keep their conduct honourable among the Gentiles and why Christians obey those in authority over them. Those who act ignorantly towards those who obey God will silence their critics, if not in this life the in the next. Christians were often falsely accused, even of sedition, but their lifestyles of obedience prove to those who watch that the accusations are false. The word “silence comes from a root that means ‘to muzzle, to gag, to restrain.’”¹

The Scripture often talks of the freedom a Christian has in Christ (Galatians 5:13; John 8:32), so some might argue that this freedom is being undermined by a requirement to submit to authority. The freedom of the Christian is a freedom from sin and the Old Testament Law. Our freedom is not a license to sin and it does not remove our responsibility to obey God and those in authority over us.

5. What responsibilities do we have according to v. 17?

- a. Honour _____.
- b. Love _____.
- c. Fear _____.
- d. Honour _____.

Slavery was common in New Testament times and treatment of slaves could be kind or harsh. Some slaves (or servants) worked in the home and even taught and cared for the children, but their social status was the lowest. Obedience to Christ meant respecting those masters who were in authority; even those who were unjust. Here the Christian is urged to deny self.

6. Why doesn't Peter condemn slavery?

7. For what reason were Christian servants to obey their masters? (v. 19)

8. Define the word “endures” as it is used in v. 19.

Some harsh masters brought “sorrows” and these were to be endured even though they were unjust. These sorrows were endured because of a desire to please God. A slave did not submit and serve their masters because they respected their masters, but because they respected God.

The word “beaten” in verse 20 is also used in Matthew 26:67 and Mark 14:65 in reference to Jesus before his crucifixion. Just as Jesus was beaten unjustly, a Christian who suffers unjustly for Christ it is a gracious thing in the sight of God. (See Acts 5:40-41). Christians should expect to suffer because this is our calling (v. 20-21).

¹ Smith, James E. *Teacher's Commentary: General Epistles*. Lulu.com. p. 53.

Christians often say that they want to be like Jesus, but to be like Jesus means more than to just live a life that is good. Jesus suffered immensely at the hands of those who opposed him. He was beaten, spat upon, unjustly accused, and killed. To be like Jesus can mean severe suffering and in the midst of suffering the Christian slave is told to submit so that he does not suffer for doing evil.

10. What credit comes from suffering for sin?

11. How is Jesus our example? (v. 21)

12. How do we follow in the steps of Jesus? (v. 21)

13. Describe the life of Jesus from verse 22.

14. Much of verses 22-25 comes from Isaiah 53. Read and describe the submission of Christ from Isaiah 53.

The word “*entrusting*” in verse 23 requires a deliberate action on the part of the believer to give allegiance to Christ with confidence that God will always judge justly.

15. What was the purpose of Christ’s suffering? (v. 24)

16. What description is used of the Christians prior to their conversion? (v. 25) (Verse 25 comes from Ezekiel 34:11-16)

A STUDY OF 1 PETER

Wives and Husbands (1 Peter 3:1-7)

The following section must be understood within the context of the previous chapter. Peter has written about the necessity of submission to every human institution and address specifically the need of individuals to submit to the government and for servants to be subject to their masters. Perhaps the key thought is that Christians must be willing to give up their own rights to win others. (1 Corinthians 9:19-23)



The example of Christ is paramount in Peter's mind. Christ lived perfectly in this world in action and speech, and never retaliated against those who abused him. Christ died for the sin of man and the Christian is to die to sin and live a righteous life. Christ sets the ultimate example in denying oneself and showing submission.

When Peter writes that Christ left us an "example" (2:22) he uses a word that described students who learn how to carefully trace letters so that they might be able to write. He says this example is given "so that you might follow in his steps." This pictures one who carefully places their foot in the footprint of another to follow exactly, much like a child sometimes attempts to follow in the footprints of a parent.¹

Within the home, God has designed a structure of leadership that is to be followed by Christian wives. 1 Peter 3:1 says, "...wives, be subject to your own husbands..." Peter begins with the word "likewise" pointing back to 2:13 and 2:18. It is important to recognise that submission does not indicate that wives are inferior to their husbands. Christ is inferior to no one yet he submitted himself to death for mankind.

In 1 Peter 3, the primary concern is for husbands who are unbelievers. A wife who shows respect to her husband and who quietly lives out her faith in Christ serves as a powerful witness to her husband and the world.

1. Does Peter say that women are to be subject to "all" men?
2. In whom or what is ultimate submission based? (1 Peter 2:13)
3. Why might "respectful and pure conduct" be more effective in winning a non-Christian husband than nagging?
4. How does 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 support the teaching of 1 Peter 3:1-6?

¹ Davids, Peter H. *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle of Peter*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1990. (Kindle edition).

The values of a Christian woman are to be on righteous living before God instead of outward adornment that is viewed as beautiful in the eyes of the world. It is the heart and a gentle and quiet spirit that make one beautiful and precious in the eyes of God. The beauty of the heart is said to be imperishable while physical beauty is fleeting. (See also 1 Timothy 2:9-10)

5. Do verses 3-4 indicate that it is wrong to be concerned about outward appearance? What is the proper balance between the desire to have an attractive appearance and the necessity of having a gentle and quiet spirit that will please God?

The holy women of the Old Testament placed their hope fully in God and they tried to please him in their way of living. “The holy women of old were examples to Christian women of all the ages. They cultivated beautiful lives by being supportive of their husbands.”²

Sarah is singled out as an example of a submissive and respectful wife and all Christian women who live gentle and quiet lives are spiritual daughters of Sarah. Such women do not need to fear even if their husbands are non-Christians and are opposed to their Christian faith.

6. Describe how husbands are to treat their wives? (1 Peter 3:7)

Husbands who treat their wives in an understanding way make their submission easier. Peter says to “live with your wives in an understanding way.” This means that a husband is to consider the needs, desires, and emotions of his wife and to treat her in a way that will honour her.



7. In what way or ways is a wife to be considered a “weaker vessel?”

8. What great privilege do husbands and wives share (vs. 7)?

Husbands and wives are equal in the eyes of God (Galatians 3:28) and a submissive, gentle, and quiet wife coupled with a understanding and considerate husband are able to pray together in an effective way. Our relationship with others greatly affects our relationship with God and the closest and most intimate human relationship possible is with our spouse. It is difficult to have an effective prayer life and an abundant spiritual life if our marital relationship is unhealthy.

Submission in Everything (1 Peter 3:8-12)

Peter uses the word “*finally*” to begin verse 8 indicating that he is concluding his remarks on submission. Christians live differently from people around them because their lives are submitted to Christ and to one another.

² Smith, James E. *Teacher’s Commentary: General Epistles*. Lulu.com. p. 67.

9. List the five imperatives of verse 8 and explain what they mean.

- A. _____
- Meaning --
- B. _____
- Meaning --
- C. _____
- Meaning --
- D. _____
- Meaning --
- E. _____
- Meaning --

It does not seem to be a coincidence that “*brotherly love*” stands in the middle of the five imperatives of verse 8. If a person loves others they will find the other imperatives will come naturally.

10. How should a Christian respond to evil and reviling (or insult)?

11. Why are people inclined to react to evil and reviling with evil and reviling?

Verses 10-12 are a quote from Psalm 34:12-16. The teaching is for those who want to “*love life*” and “*see good days*.” As this would describe most people it is beneficial for us to consider what will bring about a life that we can love and days that we can call good.

Psalm 34:12-16

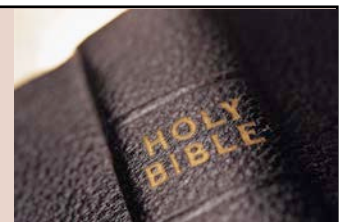
12 What man is there who desires life and loves many days, that he may see good?

13 Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit.

14 Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.

15 The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous and his ears toward their cry.

16 The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth. (ESV)



The standard of submission required to love life and see good days is quite high. The Christian must “*keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit.*” The evil here refers to malicious speech that aims to harm another while deceit refer to speech with is untruthful or meant to mislead.³

It is not enough to keep control of the tongue, but the Christian must actively seek good in the face of evil and peace in the midst of those who seek to cause harm.

12. What is meant by the phrase, “the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous?”

13. Describe the different response of God towards the righteous and those who do evil in verse 12.

³ Smith, Ibid. p. 70.

A STUDY OF 1 PETER

Suffering for the Christian (1 Peter 3:13-17)

1 Peter 3:13 sets forth a principle that is generally, but not universally true. Generally no one will harm you for doing that which is good. Though there is great persecution in parts of our world today, most Christians live without facing daily persecution and suffering at the hands of the government or their fellow countrymen. Doing good brings less strife and less suffering in this world most of the time.

It is true however, that suffering can come and in fact it did come to the first recipients of Peter's letter. Peter instructs those enduring such suffering to "have no fear, nor be troubled" because God will bless them.



1. How can a Christian consider themselves blessed when suffering for Christ? (see also Matthew 5:10)
2. How does one avoid fear while suffering?
3. Describe what it means to suffer and what are some ways in which Christians around the world are suffering for Christ.

Advice to Those Enduring Persecution 1 Peter 3:13-17

1. Do not fear your persecutor
2. Do not allow yourself to be "troubled" (to be filled with grief, anxiety or distress)
3. Set apart Christ as Lord in your heart
4. Be prepared to defend your hope in Christ
5. React with gentleness and respect
6. Have a good conscience (Live in a Christ-like manner)

1 Peter 3:15 has caused anxiety for those who have taken the verse to mean that they must always be able to answer any question that any non-believer might pose. While we should continually grow in our faith and in knowledge of God's Word, this passage has to do with offering an answer to those who ask about the Christian's hope.

The form of the Greek word translated as "asks" indicates that the Christian should be able to provide an answer every time anyone asks about their hope.¹ Every Christian should know and be able to share why they are a Christian, what hope they gain from being in Christ, and what hope others can find in him.

¹ Smith, James E. *Teacher's Commentary: General Epistles*. Lulu.com. p. 73.

4. Define the word “reason” as it is used in 1 Peter 3:15.
5. What is the meaning of the word “revile” in verse 16? (NIV translates this word as “speak maliciously”)
6. In a few words or sentences write below why you have hope in Christ?

The answer of the Christian to his sceptics and persecutors is to be made with “gentleness and respect.” This may differ greatly from the attack of the accuser who may be hostile, loud, overbearing, and disrespectful. The Christian who answers his attacker in a gentle and respectful way, does so with a good conscience (he has nothing of which to be ashamed in his action or attitude). In fact, the gentle and respectful answer of the Christian brings shame onto the one who caused the suffering. Whether or not the attacker feels shame, their actions are shameful.

1 Peter 3:17 is a restatement of the teaching in previous chapter where Peter writes, “For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God” (1 Peter 2:19-20).

7. How could it ever be God’s will that a Christian suffer for doing good (1 Peter 3:17)?

The Suffering of Christ (1 Peter 3:18-22)



Christ set the example in suffering when he went to the cross, dying on behalf of the unrighteous. As one who was completely sinless and righteous, he alone could pay the penalty for sin.

The cause of his suffering was man’s sin; the undeserved nature of his suffering is seen in his righteousness compared to the unrighteousness of man; the purpose of his suffering was to bring us to God; the cost of his sacrifice was his very life (v. 18).

8. Describe the ways in which Christ suffered?
9. What is the importance of the word “once” in verse 18? (See Hebrews 7:27; 9:11-28; 10:10)

10. According to verse 18, what is the purpose of Christ's suffering and death?

The word translated as “bring” in verse 18 “was sometimes used in a nautical sense of a ship or craft that is approaching land, particularly a harbor (Acts 27:27). How good it is when Christ, our Captain, pilots us out of the stormy seas of life into God’s serene harbor, the Church.”²

1 Peter 3:18-20 contain some of the most difficult verses in the entire Bible with many Bible teachers and scholars presenting many interpretations. First, what are the stated facts:

1. Christ was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.
2. Christ made proclamation to spirits who are in prison.
3. These spirits were disobedient in the days of Noah.

The first debate that arises concerns the period of time when Christ preached. A) Some argue that the preaching was between his physical death and physical resurrection. B) Christ preached to these spirits through Noah in Noah’s day. We know that Noah was a preacher of righteousness (2 Peter 2:5) and that the Spirit of Christ was at work through the Old Testament prophets (1 Peter 1:10-11). C) The resurrected Christ, when he ascended to heaven preached to the spirits in prison. This would be a proclamation of his victory over death.

The second debate concerns the identity of these spirits. A) They are fallen angels. B) They are sinners who lived in the days of Noah.

The content of the message of Christ. A) These spirits were offered a “second-chance.” B) It was a proclamation of victory over the grave.

Whatever the case on these debatable matters, certain facts are inescapable.

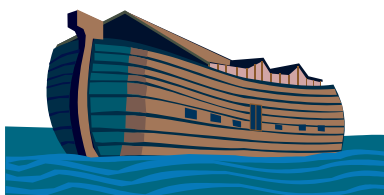
1. Christ died in the flesh, but was made alive in the spirit.
2. The spirits to whom Christ preached are “in prison” (confined so that they are unable to depart from where they are.)
3. There really cannot be any “second-chances” because as Hebrews 9:27 teaches, “it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment.” Likewise, there is no reason to believe that fallen angels have any opportunity to repent (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6).
4. In Noah’s day evil was so prevalent that Genesis 6:5 tells us, “The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”
5. The only message that it seems Christ could preach to these imprisoned spirits is the message of their condemnation which was sealed by his death and resurrection.
6. Our God is a patient, but eventually his patience runs out and punishment will come to the disobedient.

² Oberst, Bruce. *Letters from Peter* in the Bible Study Textbook Series. College Press: Joplin, MO, 1962. p. 88.

1 Peter 3:20-21 addresses the important subject of baptism and sheds light on its significance and purpose. The illustration of Noah and the ark is most helpful. Noah was not saved by the rain or the flood, but was saved because he believed God, obeyed God, built the ark, and got into the ark when instructed to do so.

In the days of Noah only eight survived the flood. The water was the dividing line between those who were saved and those who were lost. The water cleansed the world of sin and provided a new world for Noah and his family.

**NOAH AND HIS FAMILY ARE
SAVED AS THEY OBEY GOD
AND GET INTO THE ARK**



**WATER WAS THE DIVIDING
LINE BETWEEN THOSE
WHO WERE SAVED AND
THOSE WHO WERE LOST**

**THE DISOBEDIENT WORLD
WHO REFUSED TO LISTEN
TO THE MESSAGE OF GOD
PERISHED**

Baptism is said by Peter to be like the event of the flood bringing salvation to man today. Peter teaches that baptism is not a physical bath. We know that there is no power in the water. The power comes from God when he cleanses the obedient person of their sin as a person submits themselves to God. It is here that the blood of Christ is applied to our hearts. Much like the water of the flood it is a dividing line between those who are saved and those who are lost.

Baptism saves because:



1. It is an appeal to God -- This is the manner in which a sinner calls out to God for salvation. In baptism God acts to provide cleansing. It is not a work of man, but a submission to the God who works salvation in our lives at the point of baptism. (See Acts 22:16)
2. It is an appeal to God for a good conscience. -- A person can have a clear conscience because God has cleansed him of his sins. His guilt is removed. (Romans 8:1) "God applies the the blood of Christ to our guilty souls and gives us forgiveness or remission of sins."³ (Hebrews 10:22)
3. Christ arose! -- Jesus Christ conquered death. Christ's resurrection validates all his claims and establishes his authority over all things.⁴ Following the resurrection, Jesus Christ "*has gone to heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.*" (1 Peter 3:22)

³ Cottrell, Jack. *Baptism: A Biblical Study*. College Press: Joplin, MO, 1989. p. 151.

⁴ Ibid.

A STUDY OF 1 PETER

Living for God (1 Peter 4:1-11)

Peter encourages his readers to face persecution like Christ. Just as Christ suffered in the flesh so his followers are to imitate the attitude of Christ. In desire, thought, attitude, and principles think like Christ. One who thinks like Christ thinks and who suffers like Christ suffered will put away sinful lifestyles. The entire remaining years of his life will be spent not on human passions, but on doing the will of God.

Part of the rationale for following Christ comes from the brevity of life. Verse 7 teaches that the end of all things is at hand.

1. How could Peter say in the first century that the “the end of all things is at hand?” (After all, over twenty centuries have passed and life in this world continues.)



Part of the way people make decisions is by considering the length of life and what comes after this life. If this world is all there is, then perhaps we should eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die. The Christian believes that Christ suffered for our sins, died, and rose again. Christians also believe that all “*will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.*” (1 Peter 4:5)

2. Peter describes some of the ways in which these people used to live in verse 3. Write below those sins he lists along with their meaning.
 - A.
 - B.
 - C.
 - D.
 - E.
 - F.

These Christians had changed (vs 3), but the world around them did not understand (vs.4). Non-Christians could not understand this change and ridiculed the Christians for not joining them in their debauchery.

3. Do Christians in Australia today experience the types of persecution that Peter addresses in verse 4? If so, describe how this happens. If not, then why not?

4. Do non-Christians frequently want Christians to engage in sinful behaviour? Why would it matter to them how a Christian lived?

5. How does verse 4 describe the non-Christian lifestyle of those in Peter's day?

Justice always ultimately prevails because all will give account of their lives. This includes those who are now living as well as those who have already died. As Christians we need to consider the brevity of this life compared to the vastness of eternity.

Verse six refers to those who have died and face judgment. While on this earth, (in the flesh) they had opportunity to obey or disobey God. They will be judged on their response to the gospel. Those who obey the gospel will live in the spirit (will be resurrected to live with God for eternity).

Some understand verse 6 to refer to those Christians who faced persecution in this life. They were judged in the flesh by non-Christians who persecuted and abused them, but they will be judged by God in the spirit and will have eternal life with him.

To the persecuted, verse 7 stands as a sobering conclusion: ***“The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.”*** Coupled with this exhortation is the beautiful thoughts of verse 8, ***“Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.”***

When the world turns against Christians, it is helpful to know that our brothers and sisters will not. We are God's home, his family, and we must treat one another as a family would. Our love for one another in the church ought to be strong enough and deep enough to always forgive each other.

6. Why must one be self-controlled and sober-minded to be effective in prayer?

7. How does love “cover a multitude of sins? (Compare Proverbs 10:12)

The word that is translated as “earnestly” in the ESV or “deeply” in the NIV in 1 Peter 4:8 literally means “stretched out” or “strained.” Love isn't always easy or comfortable. It isn't the natural thing to do. It often requires a strenuous effort. Love stretches us. It means stepping out in faith and not being afraid of risk. This kind of love is far more than an emotional feeling. It's a decision to act in the best interest of each other no matter what the cost. This kind of bold, fearless love “covers a multitude of sins.” This does not mean that we ignore or condone sin. But love seeks to “cover” and forgive sin, not merely to expose and condemn it.



Peter moves from love to hospitality which is a natural expression of love. In the world of the New Testament, travelers did not have the abundance of motels, hotels, and caravan parks that are available to us. Instead, they would depend upon the generosity and hospitality of other Christians who would open their homes to provide for their needs. This was especially important for traveling preachers who were limited in funds. Not only could they not afford to pay for lodging; many of the places that took in guests were places of a poor reputation. It might harm the work of Christ if people saw Christian teachers coming in and out of those kinds of places. The gospel was able to spread as people opened up their homes to those who were passing through. These acts of hospitality were costly. Few people had a lot of money, so housing and feeding visitors was a costly proposition that stretched their resources.

8. What is Peter's instruction about hospitality in verse 9 and why is it an important consideration? (See also Romans 12:13 and Hebrews 13:2)

9. What are some ways in which we can show hospitality today?

Peter says that Christians have **“received a gift”** that they are to use **“to serve one another.”** Apparently every Christian has been gifted in a way that enables them to serve others. These gifts are a manifestation of the grace of God, are varied so that every person does not have the same gift, and to neglect using the gift indicates poor stewardship of what God has given.

10. What specific gifts does Peter mention and describe how they are to be utilised.

11. What is the goal in using the gifts given to us by God? (vs. 11).

Verse 11 closes this section of the letter with what is known as a doxology which is a verse of praise. The verse closes with a statement; not a question: **“To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”**

A STUDY OF 1 PETER

Suffering for Christ (1 Peter 4:12-19)

1 Peter 4:11 ends with the word “Amen” and verse 12 begins with “Beloved.” These markers tell us that a new section is beginning, though Peter really reinforces much of the teaching he has already covered. Peter’s personal relationship is seen in his address of the Christians as “Beloved” just as he addressed them in 1 Peter 2:11.

1. Why is it that Christians should not be surprised by trials?
2. Why are the trials called “fiery?” (See also 1 Peter 1:6)



3. What does John 15:18-21 teach and how is this related to 1 Peter 4:12-19?
4. How is a Christian able to view persecution positively? (See James 1:2-4)

Charles Spurgeon looked back upon dark hours in his life and said: “I bear willing witness that I owe more to the fire, and the hammer, and the file, than to anything else in my Lord’s workshop. I sometimes question whether I have ever learned anything except through the rod. When my schoolroom is darkened, I see most.”¹ David said in Psalm 119:67, “Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep your word” and four verses later in verse 71 he reflected, “It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes.”

5. Why were the Israelites tested in the wilderness? (Deuteronomy 8:2)

The Gentile Christians to whom Peter is writing had never experienced persecution prior to coming to Christ. They were at home in their cities and lived as a normal part of the society. After coming to Christ, they are no longer viewed as mainstream by those who lived around them. Now they are subject to isolation and hostility. Peter says to them that this is to be expected and is not strange.²

Christians today find themselves in the same situation as Peter’s first readers. Before coming to Christ we “fit-in” in this world, but after coming to Christ the world views us as strange.

¹ <http://preacherstudy.com/premium/problems.html>

² Smith, James E. *Teacher’s Commentary: General Epistles*. Lulu.com. p. 90.

Peter had said previously in 1 Peter 4:4 that those outside of Christ are surprised when the Christian will no longer engage in behaviour that is immoral and filled with the abuse of alcohol and a lack of self-control.

Peter continues by telling these brothers and sisters that they should rejoice in their suffering because they are sharing in the sufferings of Christ. This suffering allows the Christian to identify with Christ and show unity with him.³ Just as fire refines precious metals, these Christians are proving their faith to be genuine and are growing stronger in Christ.

Rejoicing in suffering allows for the Christian to ultimately “rejoice and be glad” when the glory of Christ is revealed. The NIV translates verse 13 in this way, “*But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.*” The idea is that while a Christian will rejoice in suffering now and much greater and fuller rejoicing is anticipated.

6. Define the word “rejoice.”

In Acts 5:17ff the apostles are arrested and put into prison. During the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors to the prison and released them. Later the apostles are brought before the council and questioned by the high priest. After presenting the message of the death, burial, and resurrection they are beaten, warned and released. Acts 5:41 says, “*Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.*” Christians ought to rejoice when they are able to suffer for Christ.

7. Could it be that if we are not suffering for Christ, we have not been counted worthy to suffer? Explain your answer.

8. What does Jesus teach in Matthew 5:11-12?

Let’s define the word “blessed” in this way: “receiving the favour of God.” While the world insults the Christian because of their faith, God blesses or bestows his favour upon the one who is persecuted for Christ. This blessing comes because the “*Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.*” While every Christian has the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38), it seems that those who are persecuted may receive special strength from him.

Reasons to View Persecution Positively 1 Peter 4:12-19

1. It provides testing which proves the genuineness of our faith (v. 12)
2. It allows the Christian to share in Christ’s sufferings (v. 13)
3. Persecution helps prepare the Christians for eternal glory (v. 13)
4. Insult for Christ brings blessing. (v. 14)
5. The Holy Spirit rests on the persecuted.
6. When suffering as a Christian, we bring glory to God.
7. The suffering of the Christian is temporary while the lost face eternal punishment.

³ Davids, Peter H. *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle of Peter*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1990. (Kindle edition).



9. What negative reasons why a person might suffer does Peter list?

10. What is a “meddler” and why is this such a serious sin?

11. What does it mean to be ashamed? (v. 16) What kinds of things bring shame?

The name “*Christian*” is used only three times in the New Testament and was first used in Antioch in Acts 11:26. Some will persecute the Christian simply for wearing this name; however this suffering is in no way shameful.

12. Why does the name “Christian” sometimes stir people to animosity and persecution?

In verse 17, Christians are called the “*household of God*” which is a descriptive phrase used to refer to the church. The suffering and persecution that these Christians were enduring was a type of judgment. This judgment showed their faith to be genuine as they continued to live faithfully for Christ in the face of these trials. Still, persecution is difficult; so much so that it is called a “*fiery trial*.” It is so difficult that the righteous is scarcely saved.

By contrast those who never obey the gospel are in a precarious position before God and will ultimately find themselves cut off from God in hell for eternity. The Christian faces suffering now while the non-Christian faces punishment in the future. The Christians suffering is mild in comparison to what those outside of Christ will experience.

In verse 18, Peter probably has in mind Proverbs 11:31 which says: “*If the righteous is repaid on earth, how much more the wicked and the sinner!*” Verse 18 is stressing the fact that Christians are a saved people, but they go through great difficulty and persecution while on this earth. Those who refuse to obey the gospel are forever lost and their suffering will be far greater. In view of persecution and judgment, Christians must entrust their souls to “*a faithful Creator*.”

13. What is the meaning of the word “entrust” in verse 19 and what benefits come to the one who entrusts his soul to God?

14. How does one go about entrusting his soul to God?

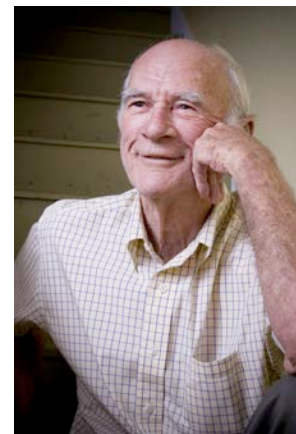
15. Why is it important that Peter refers to God as Creator in verse 19?

A STUDY OF 1 PETER

The Church Under Trial (1 Peter 5:1-7)

At first reading it seems that Peter has moved from suffering to a new topic in chapter 5, but instead he is connecting suffering with the life of the church and offering advice to help the church overcome trials. The elders as leaders within the church are necessary to provide stability and strength to the congregation.

Peter directly addresses the elders and identifies himself as a “*fellow elder*.” This exhortation is not to older men, but rather to those men within the church that hold the office of elder. (Elders are also called shepherds, pastors, overseers, and bishops in the New Testament.) Peter appeals to these men not just as a fellow elder, but also one who was a witness to the sufferings of Christ and one who is a “*partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed*.” Peter here has in mind the reward that Christians will receive.



Peter’s instruction to the elders is: “*Shepherd the flock of God...*” Scripture often uses the image of a shepherd in both the Old and New Testaments for one who cares for God’s people (Psalm 23; Ezekiel 34; John 10:1-18). A shepherd is one who watches over (oversees) a flock. These shepherds are not the owners of the flock, but rather the sheep belong to God.

The elders are to oversee the church NOT under compulsion, BUT willingly; NOT for shameful gain, BUT eagerly; NOT in a domineering manner, BUT as examples. The faithful elder has an “*unfading crown of glory*” waiting when Christ, the chief Shepherd returns.

1. Why might someone serve as an elder if he is not willing (i.e. what would compel him to serve)?
2. What “shameful gain” might an ungodly elder hope to achieve?
3. How does one oversee, correct problems, and lead the sheep without becoming domineering?

The instruction to the elders is to shepherd the flock of God and the instruction to others is to receive shepherding. Peter says to the young, “*be subject to the elders*.” We are sometimes tempted to believe that we can handle any problem or any suffering on our own. Perhaps we think, “We got ourselves into this mess. We can get ourselves out of it.” We are taught that we are to be responsible for ourselves. While there may be some truth to this, we understand that in the church we are community. We are a fellowship. We are a family. Living Godly does

not mean living alone. God in His infinite wisdom designed the Church to be structured with leaders who can help us as we live our lives for Christ.

It is accurate to say that the elders are mentors to the flock. Mentors pull up alongside of others in the church and model behaviour, values, and faith through a shared life. We need shepherds who will show us how to handle persecution, stress, temptation, sex, money, and burnout. We need mentors to show us how to share our faith, how to deal with anger, how to show compassion, how to live with disappointment and grief, and how to serve the Lord.



Those “*who are younger*” are told to be subject to the elders. This is coupled with the call for humility. It is a common trait of some people (and especially young men) to struggle with submission and humility. It is also true that other age groups can struggle to submit and to exhibit humility.

4. Do you agree that younger people sometimes find it more difficult to submit to authority than older people? Explain why you believe this is true.

5. How is submission related to humility?

6. In what ways has Peter previously addressed submission in this letter? (See 1 Peter 2:13, 18; 3:1)

7. How does a person “clothe” themselves with humility?

8. 1 Peter 5:5 comes from Proverbs 3:34 and is also quoted in James 4:6. How does God oppose the proud and give grace to the humble?

When faced with persecution suffering and problems, how do you respond to God? While some react with anger and bitterness, Peter says to “*Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God.*” Again, we have the call to submission. Peter tells Christians that at the point of suffering, they should consciously and deliberately depend on God.

Reference to the “*mighty hand of God*” first appeared in connection with the exodus of God’s people from Egypt. The nation of Israel was in bondage and slavery. They were oppressed by the Pharaohs. They could not save themselves and so they call out to God. In Exodus 6:1 God says, “*Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for with a strong hand he will send them out, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land.*” Throughout the rest of the Old Testament this phrase was used to denote God’s deliverance of His people. It was an active intervention of God into the lives of people.

Peter says, *“Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you.”* When you go through trials, persecution, difficulties, struggles, and problems of all sorts, humble yourself before God and in due time, He will lift you up.

In verse 7, Peter instructs his readers to cast their anxieties onto Christ. This is a part of humbling oneself before God and is something we should do with the realisation that he cares for us.

The word translated as cast in verse 7 is one that is used for draping a piece of clothing over something or someone. The word can picture a person taking off a coat or outer garment and then laying that garment on the shoulders of another. What the scripture is saying then is this: Take your anxiety, remove it, place it on the shoulders of Christ and let Him bear it for you. Remove your apprehension, your worries, your doubts during times of persecution or difficulty and hand them to Him because He cares for you.

9. How is it an act of humility to cast your anxiety onto Christ?

10. Is casting your anxiety on Christ the same as giving up? Explain your answer.

11. Why should we cast our anxiety onto Christ? (verse 7)

12. How do we go about casting our anxiety onto Christ? (See also Philippians 4:6-7)

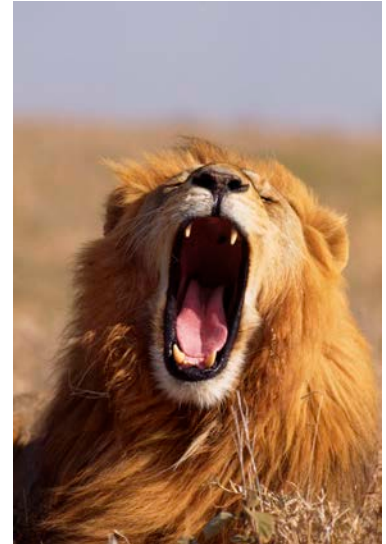
A STUDY OF 1 PETER

The Reality of Satan (1 Peter 5:8-9)

Christians should never doubt or underestimate the ferocity of Satan. Peter warns his readers to be sober-minded and watchful because the devil “prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”

The Christians that Peter first addressed were going through great persecution. This persecution was not some random event, but directed from the devil. Satan is a real being, not an impersonal evil and his desire is to destroy Christians.

In Africa, lions will lay in wait to pounce upon unsuspecting prey. They watch for the weak, the injured, and the straggler. As Christians, we must always be prepared for the devil’s attack. His assault is severe, may come at our most vulnerable times, and aimed at our total defeat.



Peter’s advice is to be sober-minded and watchful. We must be vigilant and be ready for the devil’s offensive. The words “sober-minded” and “watchful” can be translated as “pay attention!” or “wake up!” These are imperatives. Watch Out! You are going to be attacked. GET READY.

1. What does it take in our lives to be “sober-minded” and “watchful?”
2. Why is the thought of being prepared a reoccurring theme in the New Testament? (Matt 24:42-43; 25:13; 26:38-41; 1 Thess 5:6; 2 Tim 4:5)
3. Why is Satan our adversary?
4. Describe why the metaphor of the devil being like a lion is appropriate.

Definitions

Adversary originally was an opponent in a lawsuit. The word came to mean an enemy in general.

The term **devil** means “slanderer” or “false accuser.” It is equivalent in meaning to the term Satan.

Definitions from Dr. James E. Smith in Smith, *Teacher’s Commentary: General Epistles*. Lulu.com. p. 101.

The Christian response to the attacks of Satan is not panic or fear, but firm resistance in faith. Verse 8 tells Christians to “resist him,” and to stand “firm in your faith.” James 4:7 is quite similar to this passage where it reads, “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

The call to resistance tells us that we can control the outcome of our battle with the devil as he cannot defeat us as long as we resist and stand firm in our faith. Though he is powerful, he is not powerful enough to overwhelm us if we remain faithful.

5. What is the definition of the word faith as it is used here by Peter?

Peter gives another word of encouragement to Christians when he says, “the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.” In other words, “you are not in this alone.” The persecution that confronted Christians in the first century was widespread just as many Christians in many places face persecution today. Every Christian is a part of “the brotherhood” and this brotherhood is worldwide in scope.

6. What is the brotherhood? (See also 1 Peter 2:17)

The God of Grace (1 Peter 5:10-11)

Peter closes this letter with additional words of encouragement. First, any suffering endured by Christians is temporary. Peter calls it “a little while.” Second, our God is a God of grace. While we suffer, he is not aloof and disinterested. God loves us and Peter wants all Christians to know that the Father has not abandoned his children, but is involved to provide for their needs. Third is the promise of eternal glory in Christ. Christians should be encouraged to overcome persecution because an eternity in heaven awaits. We should note the contrast between suffering that is for a little while and the glory that will be for eternity. Fourth is the promise that God will provide spiritual power. Peter says he will “restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.”

7. How does it aid the Christian to know that suffering is temporary while glory is eternal?

8. Define the following words:

A. Restore --

B. Confirm --

C. Strengthen --

D. Establish --

Words of Encouragement

1. The devil can be resisted.
2. We are part of a worldwide brotherhood of Christians.
3. We serve a God of grace.
4. Suffering is temporary.
5. Eternal glory awaits the Christian.
6. God will provide spiritual power to restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish the Christian.

1 Peter 5:12 flows naturally out of what Peter has just written. We have a God who is gracious, who is preparing an eternal glory for us, who will restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish us. The natural response is that of praise, so Peter writes, *“To him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.”* The God who provides so wonderfully for his children has all dominion. He has all rule and all authority over all things forever. The word *“Amen”* means *“so be it”* and closes off the section of praise.

Concluding Words (1 Peter 5:12-14)

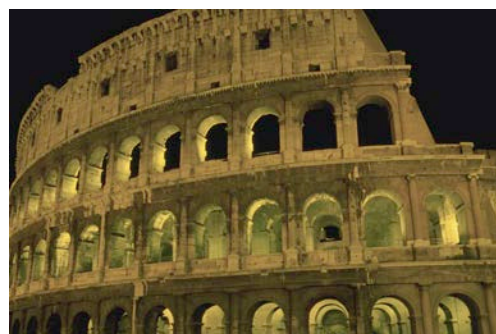
Peter mentions three individuals by name at the end of the chapter. They are Silvanus, a woman in Babylon, and Mark. People were important in the life of Peter and they are important in our lives as well.

Silvanus is the Latin form of the name Silas. We know of him from Acts 15:22-27 and Paul's companion on his second missionary journey in Acts 16-18 (See also 2 Cor. 1:19; 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1.)

In 1 Peter, Silvanus has an important role in the transmission of this letter. There are three possibilities: 1) Peter used Silvanus to carry (or delivered) the letter; 2) Peter dictated the letter to Silas to copy or 3) Silvanus wrote the letter expressing the thoughts of Peter. We know for certain that Peter had a very high regard for Silvanus referring to him as *“a faithful brother.”*

9. What does Peter claim as the purpose for this letter? (1 Peter 5:12)

Peter next mentions *“She who is in Babylon”* in verse 13. This most likely refers to the church in Rome. In Revelation 14:8; 17:5; 18:2 Babylon is used as a designation for Rome. This is a reference for Rome highlights the city as the world headquarters of organised godlessness. *“The verse suggests that Peter himself was with the congregation in Rome when he wrote this letter. Early Christian tradition connects Peter with Rome.”*¹



¹ Smith, James E. *Teacher's Commentary: General Epistles*. Lulu.com. p. 105.



Mark is also named as sending greetings. Peter met with the church at Mark's mother's house in Acts 12:12-17 and they are so close that Peter calls him "my son." John Mark traveled with Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey, but deserted them before the trip was completed. Later Mark and Paul reconciled and Mark spent time with Paul in Rome (Col 4:10; Philemon 24). Now Mark must have been in Rome with Peter. "Beginning in the early second century a strong tradition developed that the Gospel of Mark was written under the influence of Peter. Obviously a very special relationship existed between the old apostle and the younger Mark."²

Finally Peter concludes with the instruction to "*Greet one another with the kiss of love*" (which was a kiss on the cheek and a customary greeting among family and close friends) and the the blessing, "*Peace to all of you who are in Christ.*" If a persecuted church needed anything it was peace.

² Smith, *ibid.* p. 106.

A STUDY OF 2 PETER

The Greeting (2 Peter 1:1,2)

The letter of 2 Peter is the second penned by the Apostle Peter. This letter is not addressed to a particular church or churches though it seems likely that it was sent to the same original audience as 1 Peter. (See 2 Peter 3:1) This would be a primarily Gentile Christians living in Asia Minor including such places as Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

In this letter, Peter indicates that his death is near (1:14). 2 Peter was likely written about AD 67 and early Christian writers tell us that the Apostle Peter was martyred in Rome around AD 68 during the reign of Nero. The persecution against Christians by Nero began in Rome in AD 64.



The letter of 1 Peter addressed problems from outside the church as Christians faced severe persecution. 2 Peter is directed towards internal problems in the church. In 1 Peter, Christians are urged to bear up under persecution through submission to Christ, while in 2 Peter Christians overcome internal pressures through a knowledge of the truth.

1. In what three ways does the author of 2 Peter identify himself and what significance is found in these designations?
2. How does Peter address his original readers? (vs. 1)
3. Who does Peter have in mind when he uses the word “ours” in verse 1?

Peter’s readers had “obtained” their faith. This came by God’s gracious provision as the gospel was preached to them. The words “equal standing” or “equal privilege” in verse 1 was sometimes used “to describe immigrants who received citizenship privileges equal to those of native inhabitants.”² Peter encourages his readers that their faith was equal even to that of the apostles. In using “faith” here, Peter is not saying the level or degree of their faith was equivalent to the apostles, but rather the benefits obtained by faith were the same.

These Christians possessed a precious faith that was made possible through the righteousness of God. The righteousness of God refers to God’s fair and equitable dealing or his justice which

¹ The only other time the apostle is called Simeon is in Acts 15:14 and is the Aramaic rendering of the Hebrew “Simon.” Jesus called the apostle “Peter” in Mark 3:16. In John 1:42, Jesus names the apostle “Cephas,” which means Peter. Cephas is the Aramaic name and Peter the Greek.

² Constable, Thomas. *Notes on 2 Peter*. p. 4.

permitted him to accept the sacrifice of Jesus as payment for the penalty for man's sin. It furthermore indicates that God accepts all men equally whether Jew or Gentile.

Peter uses the exact language of 1 Peter 1:2 in 2 Peter 1:2 when he prays, “*May grace and peace be multiplied to you.*” Grace is undeserved blessing (or unmerited favour) that comes to the Christian from God. Peace describes the absence of conflict with God that is possible in Christ. Peter's desire is that grace and peace are growing or increasing in the life of the Christian.

Grace and peace come “*in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.*” “This knowledge is both informational and relational.”³ Christians both know about God factually as well as knowing him relationally as their Father.

The word translated as knowledge in 2 Peter 1:2 is the Greek word *epignosis* and is used in 1:3, 8, 2:20, and 2:21.” It is more than knowledge as we understand knowledge. This word indicates a “precise and correct knowledge. It is more than acquiring a bundle of facts and placing them in the memory; it is understanding those facts and their relation to one another. It denotes exact or full knowledge, and expresses a greater care and concern on the part of the knower.”⁴ Peter does not just want his readers to know about Jesus; he wants them to know Jesus. Christians are to know both intellectually and personally.

4. How do Christians get to know God?

Blessings in Christ (2 Peter 1:3-4)

The first blessing that Peter identifies is “*his divine power*” which “*has granted us all things that pertain to life and godliness.*” To say that Jesus is divine is to say that He is God. Peter says that this divine power gives Christians everything needed for life and godliness. This power does not come from within the Christian. It does not come from sheer determination. This power comes from Christ. We are drawn to Jesus as we come to know his “*glory and excellence.*” The word glory describes the very nature of God or all his attributes rolled up into one word. Excellence or virtue is his moral character.

5. What is godliness?

6. To what has Christ called us? (verse 3)

7. What is the significance of the words “all things” in verse 3? (Some translations use the word “everything”)



³ Smith, James E. *Teacher's Commentary: General Epistles*. Lulu.com, 2010. p. 114.

⁴ Oberst, Bruce. *Letters from Peter in the Bible Study Textbook Series*. College Press, Joplin, MO 1962. p.137.



8. How does Peter describe God's promises in verse 4?

9. What makes something precious?

10. List some of the promises that God has made to the Christian?

The Christian could not overcome in this world without the precious and very great promises that God makes. These promises change the Christian so that through them "you may become partakers of the divine nature." Christians participate in the divine nature. While this sounds (and is) pretty amazing we may struggle to understand what it means.

To say that we partake in the divine nature is **not** to say that we are divine. We are not all knowing. We are not ever present. We are not all powerful. We are not God and we are not divine. However, we participate or are a part of the one who is divine. Galatians 3:26,27 teaches that, "for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." It is an amazing truth that, as Christians, we are at this very moment partakers or participants of the divine nature with Christ. We are made holy in him, we have his Holy Spirit residing in our lives, and we are promised an eternity in his presence. We partner or share in the life of the one who is divine.

11. According to verse 4, what have we escaped as Christians?

12. Define corruption.

13. What causes this corruption?

The key to life and godliness, glory and excellence, partaking of the divine nature, and escaping the corruption of this world comes in knowing Christ. It is vitally important that we not only know about him (possess information), but that we know him personally. We cannot know him apart from the truth of his word in which he has revealed himself to us.

A STUDY OF 2 PETER

Growing in Faith (2 Peter 1:5-7)

Peter began his letter by assuring his readers that God has blessed them with every resource necessary to live a godly life. Their ability to achieve the result godliness comes through the divine power of God, their knowledge of him, and his precious and very great promises. Now Peter calls these Christians to a growing and mature Christian faith based upon what they have in Christ.

The list of qualities listed in verses 5-7 does not need to be understood as a stair-step method where one completed task leads to another, but rather a group of qualities that a Christian should possess in increasing measure. God has provided all a Christian needs to succeed, now Peter says “*make every effort.*” This phrase tells us that our Christian growth does not come automatically or even easily, but requires a strenuous effort on our part.



1. How does one make every effort and how can we know when every effort has been made?
2. Define the following words or phrases:
 - a. Faith -
 - b. Virtue -
 - c. Knowledge -
 - d. Self-Control -
 - e. Steadfastness
 - f. Godliness -
 - g. Brotherly Affection -
 - h. Love -

Salvation does not come through man's efforts, but those who are Christians should desire to develop the Christ-like characteristics found in verses 5-7. Our desire to incorporate these qualities into our lives is so great that we *"make every effort."*

3. Why did Peter begin his list with faith and complete the list with love?

LOVE					
Virtue	Knowledge	Self-Control	Steadfastness	Godliness	Brotherly Affection
FAITH					

Bearing Fruit (2 Peter 1:8-9)

The qualities listed in verses 5-7 are to be present and growing in the life of any Christian. It is not enough to possess faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, and love. These godly characteristics are to be present in increasing measure so that the Christian's life will be effective and fruitful.

To be *"ineffective"* is to be unprofitable or unable to accomplish a desired result. To be *"unfruitful"* is to lack in producing anything of use to God. The one who does not make every effort to develop a vibrant and growing faith makes himself useless in his knowledge of Christ. *"Knowledge"* is the obtaining of information that is incorporated into the life of the Christian. This knowledge is obtained by learning and obeying what God says in his Word.



The man who lacks the qualities listed in verses 5-7 is *"so nearsighted that he is blind having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins."* This man has both a vision problem and a memory problem. He is nearsighted (Greek word *myopazo*) because he is focused on the present. He shuts his eyes to the truth which leads to sin and separation from God.¹

4. What would cause a Christian to focus on the present with little regard for the future?

The ineffective and unfruitful man intentionally forgets that God has cleansed him from his sins. This forgetting is not that he cannot recall what has happened, but that it makes not practical difference in his life. The cleansing refers to baptism when sins are washed away.

5. Describe what you would find in the life of a Christian who is effective and fruitful.

Avoiding a Fall (2 Peter 1:10-15)

The word *"therefore"* in verse 11 tells us that Peter is drawing his opening thoughts to a conclusion. He continues to urge his readers to be serious about growing their faith. In verse 5 he wrote to *"make every effort"* and now he writes to be *"diligent."* Diligence means *"to be in a hurry, to exert effort"*² Every Christian must be completely engaged in growing, serving, and

¹ Smith, James E. *Teacher's Commentary: General Epistles*. Lulu.com, 2010. p. 121.

² Ibid.

loving Christ. Our faith will not grow and will not be fruitful unless it is a priority in our lives. God has given us everything we need to live a godly life and any failure comes from us. Within this truth stands this promise: If you are diligent in your faith and you practice the qualities of verses 5-7, you will never fall. The one who does not fall will enter into the eternal kingdom of God.

God makes forgiveness possible to man and elects all those who respond to the gospel in faith. A part of that response includes baptism. God's divine power makes it possible to live a godly life, but the Christian is expected to make every effort to grow in faith and if a Christian is ineffective and unfruitful he stands in danger of falling. Paying diligence to a growing faith will protect the Christian so that he will not fall. It is not man's effort that brings salvation and perfection is not possible, but God does expect us to love him, to serve him, and to grow in our faith.

The rich provision of entrance into the eternal kingdom of Jesus Christ pictures "the reception given to a conquering general when he returned to his hometown."³ Those who are faithful and fruitful will not only enter into heaven, but will do so with a great and rich welcome.

6. How are Christians called and how are Christians elected?



7. How many times in verses 12-15 does Peter use the word or thought of reminding his readers of something?

8. What is the importance of the word "always" in verse 12?

9. What did Peter expect to happen in his own life in the near future?

10. How long would Peter keep reminding his readers to be faithful?

Christians need to be reminded of the truth in which we are established. We should never tire of hearing the truth and being reminded of what God says to us. Peter knew that difficult days awaited the church as even those within the body would seek to move them from the truth. What an important and timely reminder Peter provides to the church in the first century as well as the twenty-first century.

³ Ibid. p. 124.

A STUDY OF 2 PETER

The Firm Foundation of Faith (2 Peter 1:16-21)

Peter had previously encouraged his readers that they could live godly lives because of the great blessings provided to them in Christ. Their faith should grow as they bear fruit for Christ. Now Peter tells them that the Christian life is built upon a solid foundation. We live by faith, but our faith is not blind, it stands on multiple pillars of truth and evidence.

The first pillar of truth and evidence is the testimony of the apostles. Until verse 16, Peter had been using the singular “I” and now when speaking of seeing the power and coming of Christ, he uses the plural “we.” Peter was not the only eyewitness to the majesty of Jesus, but shared that great privilege with the other apostles. Elsewhere in Scripture, the coming of the Lord refers to the Second Coming and there is no reason to doubt the same is true here.¹

The apostles did not follow “*cleverly devised myths*” when relating the events surrounding the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The word translated as “*myths*” came from the “stories about Greek gods, the creation of the world, miraculous happening, etc.”²

1. What “myths” are still being pressed today regarding such things as “gods, creation, and miraculous happenings, etc.?”
2. Why is eyewitness testimony so valuable?
3. To what event does Peter refer in verses 17-18? (See Matthew 17:1-8.)
4. What do Moses and Elijah represent at the transfiguration?
5. How did Peter see the majesty of Christ?
6. How did the Father show honour and glory to Christ? (vs. 17)



¹ James Burton Coffman Commentaries reproduced by permission of [Abilene Christian University Press](http://www.searchgodsword.org/com/bcc/view.cgi?book=2pe&chapter=001), Abilene, Texas, USA. All other rights reserved. Accessed at <http://www.searchgodsword.org/com/bcc/view.cgi?book=2pe&chapter=001>.

² Smith, James E. *Teacher's Commentary: General Epistles*. Lulu.com, 2010. p. 128.

7. Why does Peter refer to God as the Majestic Glory? (See Ex. 33:12-23; 34:29-35)

Peter testifies that we were “eyewitnesses” of his majesty in verse 16, in verse 18 the apostles “heard” the voice of God, and also in verse 18 Peter says “we were with him.” Here is the apostolic evidence: we were present, we saw, and we heard.

The second pillar of truth and evidence is the testimony from the Father. At the transfiguration God the Father speaks and says, “*This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.*” The Father looks with satisfaction at all that Jesus had said and done. The transfiguration used by Peter in this context shows that he looked at the event as a foreshadowing of the power and majesty of the Second Coming.³ (Peter deals specifically with those who doubt the Second Coming in 2 Peter 3:3-6.)

The third pillar of truth and evidence is the testimony of Scripture. The Old Testament prophecies add additional verification to the eyewitness testimony of the Apostles and the voice of God on the Mount of Transfiguration. Over three hundred Old Testament prophecies speak of the birth, life, death, resurrection, and Second Coming of Christ. The fulfilled prophecies stand as compelling confirmation of their trustworthiness. 2 Peter 3:15-17 makes clear that Peter also views the New Testament writings to be Scripture just like the Old Testament.



8. In verse 19, Peter makes it clear that Christians should pay attention to the Old Testament. Why is this so?

The words “dark place” in verse 19 do not refer to a place that is totally black, but rather a place that is dingy, dusky, or dirty. The light illuminates the dirt making it possible to be removed.⁴ The idea is that world in which we live is a dark place.

The day that will dawn refers to the Second Coming of Christ. The “morning star” is the planet Venus that is often visible in early morning and is a metaphor for Christ.⁵ (See Revelation 22:16; Numbers 24:17) What Peter is trying to show is that the Lord is coming again and Christians should give their attention to Scripture until the Second Coming. It was especially important for Peter’s first readers to know the Scripture because there were those who promoting false teaching among them.

Verses 20 and 21 teach the very important lesson that Scripture originates with the Holy Spirit and not man. From verses 19-21 we learn these lessons about Scripture: 1) Scripture is as reliable as eyewitness testimony. 2) Attention must be given to Scripture. 3) Scripture should reach into our hearts. 3) The Scripture can illuminate that which is dark. 4) Scripture must be studied and obeyed until Jesus comes again. 5) No Scripture ever originated with any man. 6) All Scripture is delivered to man from God’s Holy Spirit.

³ Coffman, *ibid.*

⁴ Smith, *ibid.* p. 131.

⁵ *ibid.*



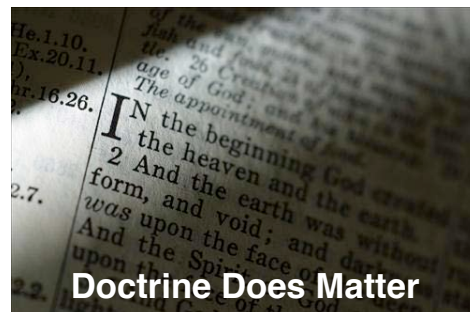
As Christians our faith stands on a firm foundation with the pillars of the testimony of the apostles who were eyewitnesses to the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, the testimony of God the Father who gave honour and glory to the Son, and to the testimony of Scripture. The hundreds of fulfilled prophecies along with the testimony of the apostles and God the Father allow us to know that our faith is not blind, but real and enduring, and that it awaits a returning Lord.

9. How do the evidences discussed above help to strengthen your faith?

A STUDY OF 2 PETER

False Teachers (2 Peter 2:1-3)

Persecution from outside the church can be difficult, but false teaching from inside is even more destructive. Peter, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, unleashes the harshest of words to describe those who desire to deceive the followers of Christ. In the previous chapter, Peter wrote about the authority and trustworthiness of Scripture. It is through understanding and adhering to the Scriptures that Christians are enabled to identify and resist falsehood.



We must acknowledge that false teachers are present in the world and within the church. In verses 1-3 we learn these facts about the false teachers in Peter's day:

1. False teachers are nothing new. They were around in Old Testament times and they are present in New Testament times.
2. They were in the midst of the church (among you).
3. They work secretly.
4. Their teachings are destructive.
5. Their teachings are heretical. (Heresies are teachings that are false.)
6. They deny the Master. (We are not sure how they are denying the Master. It may have been that they denied the Second Coming or some aspect of the behaviour that Christ desires.)
7. They bring upon themselves swift destruction. (Their destruction would come either at their own death or at the Second Coming when they would be eternally condemned.)
8. Their teaching is sensual. (A part of their heretical teaching or lifestyle was immoral.)
9. They bring blasphemy on their way of truth.
10. They are greedy.
11. They exploited Christians.
12. They are liars.
13. They will be condemned and destroyed.

Peter clearly points out the danger, methodology, and motivation of the false teachers along with their bleak and certain future.

1. Why does Peter write so strongly about the false teachers?
2. What methods does Peter say the false teachers use to entice their victims?
3. What was the motivation of the false teachers?
4. How and why might the false teachers have been secretive?
5. How would the false teachers have been destructive?
6. Why would the way of truth be blasphemed because of the false teachers?
7. What will be the ultimate outcome of the false teachers?

Old Testament Examples (2 Peter 2:4-11)

The problem with false teachers is so severe that Peter continues to describe the surety of their destruction with examples of God's judgement in the Old Testament.

First, there are the "*angels who sinned.*" We can assume that this refers to angels who rebelled with Satan against God and the same group that is also mentioned in Jude 6. Those angels who defied the will of God were cast into "*hell.*" The phrase "cast them into hell" is the Greek word *tartaros*. This is the only New Testament reference to Tartarus, described as a place of chains and darkness prior to final judgment.

The second example of God's judgment comes from those in Noah's day who perished in the flood which encompassed the globe. Only eight people; Noah and his family were spared by God. Noah is described as righteous while the world was ungodly.



The third example of God's judgment is that of the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah which were destroyed because of their immorality. These cities serve as an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly. Lot stands in stark contrast to the sinful lifestyle of those around him. He was righteous and God spared him, even while he exacted judgment on those who were sinful.

8. Describe the distress and torment of Lot.

9. What are the four “if” statements in verses 4-10 and what is the one “then” statement and what do these mean for the Christian?

10. Which two characters in verses 4-10 show that God is able to deliver the godly from trials? How long did they endure before their deliverance?

The sinful angels, those who perished in the days of Noah, and the wicked men of Sodom and Gomorrah are under punishment now while their eternal condemnation awaits the final judgment.

The false teachers in Peter’s day await the same judgement as the wicked in Old Testament times. These teachers 1) Indulge in the lust of defiling passion; 2) Despise authority; 3) are bold and willful; 4) they blaspheme the glorious ones without fear.

The lust of defiling passion suggests homosexuality which may be why Peter references the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. These men were teaching that Christians should follow their own desires. Lust is a strong desire while defiling passion is pollution.¹

They despise the authority and Lordship of Christ. Verse 1 said that they denied the Master who bought them. We can assume they would have also despised the authority of the apostles and from what Peter wrote in the latter verses of chapter one, along with their immoral lifestyle and false doctrine, it is reasonable to conclude that they despised the authority of Scripture.

To be bold and willful is to say that they were arrogant, self-willed, proud, and lived to please self.

The blasphemy of the glorious ones is probably a reference to slandering the evil angels. According to verse 11, even the angels, “*though greater in might and power, do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment against them before the Lord.*” (See also Jude 9 where the archangel Michael did not even blaspheme the devil.)

So what are the main points we can take away from this study?

1. There have always been false teachers and they are still with us.
2. False teachers have impure motives and will try to exploit through secret and deceptive means.
3. False teachers stand condemned and await punishment.
4. God will punish evil and reward righteousness.
5. There may be a time of pain while the injustice of false teaching is present.

¹ Smith, James E. *Teacher’s Commentary: General Epistles*. Lulu.com, 2010. p. 142.

A STUDY OF 2 PETER

False Teachers Continued (2 Peter 2:12-16)

In this lesson, we continue our discussion of false teachers and their ultimate destruction. In verse 12, Peter is in the middle of a comparison between the angels and the false teachers. The angels would not even blaspheme the wicked angels while these false teachers were uncontrolled in their speech and action. They had no reference, no restraint, no moral character.

False Teachers are
Dangerous!

Look at this further description of the false teachers:

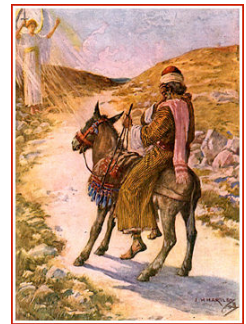
They Were Ignorant	They Were Immoral	They Abused Others
Irrational like animals	They were Hedonistic	They desire to entice the unsteady
Acted on instinct like animals	They reveled in the daytime	They are greedy
Were born to be caught and destroyed like animals	They attended Christian feasts and tried to deceive people there	
Blaspheme about matters of which they are ignorant	Their eyes were full of adultery	
Their destructive acts would destroy them	Their appetite for sin was insatiable	
	They had forsaken the right way	
	They had followed the way of Balaam (loved gain from wrongdoing)	

These false teachers were “out of control.” They did what they wanted, when they wanted, with whomever they wanted. They lived to satisfy self with a hedonistic, self-centred lifestyle that abused and took advantage of others. They acted irrationally and instinctively without any regard for the consequences of their actions or the people they harmed along the way.

Their lifestyle and actions would bring their own demise. W. H. Bennett observes, *“As animals are trapped through their eagerness to satisfy their appetite, so self-indulgence betrays these men to their ruin.”*¹

¹ The General Epistles, James, Peter, John, and Jude, in The Century Bible: A Modern Commentary. p. 274.

1. The word translated as “pleasure” in the ESV is the Greek word “*hēdonē*” from which we get the English word “hedonism.” What is the meaning of this word and what does it tell you about the false teachers?
2. What is reveling?
3. Why is it significant that the false teachers reveled in the daytime?
4. The story of Balaam is found in Numbers 22-24. In a few words describe the story of Balaam and his donkey.
5. How were these men like Balaam?



False Teachers Fail to Deliver (2 Peter 2:17-22)

There is nothing good, noble, or just about these false teachers. They lived lives that were useless like “*waterless springs*” and “*mists driven by a storm*.” Water is often used in the Bible to refer to divine teaching. The teaching of the false prophets brought no lasting satisfaction. It brought no refreshment. Likewise, a mist or a cloud brought the hope of rain, but failed to deliver.² Their doom was the gloom of utter darkness.

The false teachers speak “*loud boasts of folly*.” The NIV says “*they mouth empty, boastful words*” while the NASB translates this phrase: “*speaking out arrogant words of vanity*.” These teachers make grand promises, but their teachings are worse than useless.

They “*entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error*.” They literally appealed or baited new and weak Christians through sinful lusts. They taught that sexual and moral purity were not essential parts of the Christian life.

6. Why did the false teachers concentrate their efforts on new or weak Christians?
7. What if any modern parallels to the false teachers do we see taught today?
8. Explain Peter’s phrase “*for whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved*.”

² Smith, James E. *Teacher’s Commentary: General Epistles*. Lulu.com, 2010. p. 149.

Verse 20 records a warning that those who become Christians and turn away are in a worse state than they were before coming to Christ. Hebrews 10:26-27 states, *“For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.”*

9. Why would turning away from Christ be worse than never coming to him?

10. What are the two proverbs in verse 22 and what is their meaning?

A STUDY OF 2 PETER

The Day of the Lord Will Come (2 Peter 3:1-13)

Peter has just finished an entire chapter on the destructiveness, danger, and destiny of false teachers. His words were strong and biting. There should be no doubt that ignorant, immoral, and abusive teachers will emerge in the church and will with greed work to deceive and entice those who are weak or easily misled. Peter provides Old Testament descriptions of God's judgement on the immoral and ungodly of the past who serve as examples of the coming punishment reserved for these false teachers.

In chapter three Peter moves to further remind and warn Christians of the approaching destruction of the earth and final judgment. These warnings give us strong clues as to the nature of the false teaching that had entered the church.

Peter indicates that this is his second letter to his original readers. We can assume that his previous letter was 1 Peter, but it is possible that he wrote other letters that no longer exist, and that he has one of these letters in mind.

Peter's strong affection for God's people is evident as he writes to those he calls "*beloved*." His purpose in writing is remind them to think sincerely or with purity. He reminds the church of the words of prophecy and Christ which was taught to them by the apostles. Therefore they should be prepared when scoffers come.

1. What is a scoffer?

2. When will scoffers come?

3. What was the topic of the scoffers in verse 4?

4. Why is scoffing linked with sinful desires?

The Last Days

The phrase "last days" sounds mysterious, but simply means the last age of history or the Christian age. The last days began after the coming of Christ, his resurrection, and the beginning of the church (see Hebrews 1:2; Acts 2:17; James 5:3).

The mockery of the scoffers surrounding the Second Coming was designed to ridicule the faith of Christians who believed the prophecies of Scripture. The scoffers did not account for any activity of God in the world since the creation. Peter counters that God has been active in the past and will act again in the future. While the content of 21st century scoffers may differ in approach, those who ridicule Christians still start with doubts about the creation itself.

The most fundamental fact of Scripture is that God is Creator and that is where Peter begins with his defense of the faith. The scoffers "*deliberately overlook*" the fact that God created by the spoken word forming the earth "*out of water and through water*" (see Genesis 1:2-8).



God's willingness destroy the earth is evident from the global flood in the days of Noah. God brought about the flood and with a word he can and will destroy the current heavens and earth by fire. "The teaching that the world will be destroyed by fire is taught only here in the New Testament. The final order will not come to an end through natural disaster or man-made holocaust"¹ (See Malachi 4:1).

God has promised to destroy the present world by fire and there is nothing we can do to alter this truth. Those who forget God's fulfillment of past prophecies and their denial of future prophecies do so at their own peril.

5. What will be destroyed along with the heavens and earth?

6. How does God's reckoning of time differ from man? (See also Psalm 90:4)

7. Why has God waited to destroy the earth?

8. Describe the desire of God's heart for all mankind. (vs. 9)

Verse 10 is emphatic: "the day of the Lord **will** come." God will bring about the destruction of this world and judgment will take place. It may be tomorrow or it may not be for hundreds of years into the future. All we can say with certainty is that God will act in his time. His patience allows time for men and women to repent. His coming will be unexpected like a thief.

The day of the Lord will bring destruction of the heavens with a roar with the noise most likely coming from the fire itself. Peter refers to the same event described in Isaiah 34:4, "All the stars in the sky will be dissolved and the heavens rolled up like a scroll; all the starry host will fall like withered leaves from the vine, like shriveled figs from the fig tree." ^{NIV}

The heavens in verse 10 are most likely the sky or atmosphere while the *heavenly bodies* (ESV) or *elements* (NASB, NIV) probably refers to the sun, moon, and stars which will be burned up and dissolved. The Greek word for elements is *stoicheia* which are the very building blocks of nature. Not only will physical destruction take

The Day of the Lord

The day of the Lord was often used by Old Testament prophets to warn of coming judgment upon sinners and salvation for the people of God (Isaiah 13:9; 58:13; Jeremiah 46:10; Joel 1:15). In the New Testament the day of the Lord refers to the Second Coming and coming judgment (Acts 2:20; 1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Thess. 5:1-4; 2 Thess. 2:2).

¹ Smith, James E. *Teacher's Commentary: General Epistles*. Lulu.com, 2010. p. 160.

place on the day of the Lord, but the works of man will be exposed (1 Cor 3:10-14) to reveal those things that are pure and those that are not.

9. How should the coming destruction of the world affect Christians? (v. 11)

10. What does it mean to “wait for and hasten the coming day of the Lord?”

The destruction of the heavens and the earth that Peter describes is probably one of refinement and purging of all impurities rather than complete annihilation and an *ex nihilo* (out of nothing) creation like the original. Remember that in verse 6, Peter says that the world once perished in the flood, yet we know that the earth that remained was the same sphere which we inhabit now. The earth was completely cleansed, greatly changed, and made new. Likewise, it is possible that the new earth will be the same sphere that we now inhabit, but it will be completely cleansed, greatly changed, and made new after it is refined thoroughly by fire.

Whether the earth is completely annihilated and a new earth created or if the present earth is refined of all impurities and made new, it will be a place free of sin, disease, pain, and death and it will be a place where the righteous dwell for eternity.

A STUDY OF 2 PETER

Closing Words (2 Peter 3:14-18)

Peter's great concern for the church is evident in his strong and repeated warnings concerning false teachers and those who scoff at the promises of God. Peter says he wants to remind the Christians about the present dangers and that he has now written twice about these matters.



No one should doubt that Christ will return and that God will destroy the world by fire. The reason that Christ has not yet come is so that men and women have time to repent. It is God's desire that all come to repentance; however the time will come when God will bring an end to life on earth and the judgement will arrive.

Any who believe that God is slow in fulfilling his promises should remember that God does not count time like human beings. To him, a thousand years is as a day, and a day as a thousand years. When God does destroy the earth it will come in an unexpected manner like the arrival of a thief. Since this will happen, Christians should live lives of holiness and godliness.

Now in 2 Peter 3:14-18, Peter makes a final appeal to his readers and three times in the final chapter Peter calls his readers, "beloved" expressing his emotion and love for these brothers and sisters in Christ.

1. In verse 14, Peter expresses the fact that Christians are a "waiting" people. What does this mean?

Christians are to be 1) diligent; 2) without spot, and 3) without blemish as they wait. In 2 Peter 2:13, Peter had referred to the false teachers as blots and blemishes indicating that the Christian must remain untainted by the false teaching and immorality of those who desire to deceive.

2. In 2 Peter 1:5 urges his brothers and sisters to "make every effort" in their Christian walk and now in 3:14 he says to "be diligent." What do these phrase teach about living the Christian life?

3. What does it mean to live at peace?

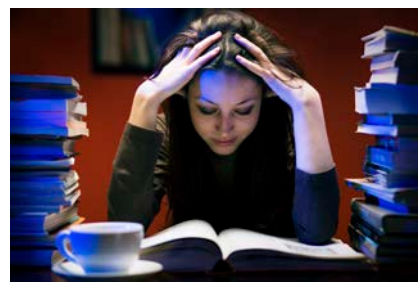
In verse 15, Peter again makes the assertion that God's delay in destroying the earth or his "patience" are for salvation or to allow men and women time to repent. It is the desire of God's heart that every man and every woman would come to Christ in faith, repentance, and baptism. If this is the desire of God's heart then it should be our heart's desire as well.

We learn the following about Paul's teachings in verses 15 and 16:

- 1) Paul wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (*wisdom given to him.*)
- 2) Peter and Paul are in agreement (as are all Scripture writers)
- 3) Some of Paul's writings are hard to understand
- 4) False teachers twist Paul's writings
- 5) Paul's writings were considered Scripture in the 1st century (equal in authority to all Old Testament and other New Testament writings)

4. What makes Paul's writings hard to understand?

5. How can we understand Paul's writings as well as the other Scriptures?



6. How and why do false teachers "twist" Scriptures and how does this lead to their destruction?

Peter is not providing new information since his readers already know about the matters of which he is writing. Knowing about false teachers and their danger does not mean that the danger has been removed. Christians must remain on guard so as not to be carried away by false teaching. It is possible for a Christian to stumble and be lost if they follow those who teach and live in error and lawlessness, but we can be confident not to fall if we follow and obey the Lord.

Christians need to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ. This indicates a continual maturing process throughout life. The nature of this growth is in *"the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."*

7. Why does Peter mention knowledge so often? (1:2, 3, 8; 2:20; 3:18)

Peter closes with the doxology: *"To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity."* This is a prayer for Christ to always be given the glory that is rightfully due him.

8. What are the most important lessons in 2 Peter?