

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JUNE 25TH - 26TH, 2022 // BOOK OF 1 PETER

THE FIRST LETTER OF PETER WHO WROTE 1 PETER?

The author of 1 Peter is identified as, "**Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ**" (1:1). As an apostle, Simon Peter was a **divinely ordained, directly commissioned, authoritative representative** of Jesus Himself.

- There's a sense in which **Peter was the leader of the apostles**—he was probably the oldest, his name is most mentioned in the Gospels (besides Jesus), & **Jesus spoke to Peter more than any other individual.**

In the Gospel accounts, **Peter was portrayed as a fiery, impulsive, and intense man**—Peter was rebuked by Jesus more than anyone else, and Peter was the only disciple who dared to rebuke Jesus.

- Peter is also known for **his great faith**—he was the only disciple who stepped out of the boat to walk on water, and he was the first to **confess Jesus as the Christ.**
- Peter was in his 60s when he wrote this letter around A.D. 62, and he was martyred around A.D. 64.

WHO WAS THE AUDIENCE IN 1 PETER?

The recipients of 1 Peter are "the exiles dispersed abroad"—most likely, **persecuted Gentile Christians** scattered across five Roman provinces of Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey).

- This letter isn't written to one specific congregation, but **really to all Christians.**
- There's a sense in which we *all* are "**exiles dispersed abroad**"—this world is not our home.

BACKGROUND & HISTORICAL SETTING OF 1 PETER

1 Peter 5:13—"She who is in Babylon...sends you greetings"—suggests **Rome as the place of the letter's origin.** "Babylon" is used symbolically to refer to the capital city of the **godless, pagan civilization** of worldly culture—which clearly would've been Rome at the time.

- The letter might have been written as a **response to the persecution of Christians** under the emperor Nero (54-68 A.D.).

WHAT IS 1 PETER ABOUT?

1 Peter emphasizes **the reality of suffering in the lives of Christians**, but also offers us words of encouragement and challenge.

- 1 Peter is about **how we endure as Christians when we go through trials, persevering without bitterness and without losing hope, and living in victory!**

WHY STUDY 1 PETER?

Truth #1: This earth is not our home; our home is in the life to come with the Lord. **Truth #2:** We shouldn't be surprised, shocked, or angry over the fact that we're "**exiles.**" **Truth #3:** God uses adversity, suffering, and trials in this life to strengthen our faith. **Truth #4:** The end of all things is near. This world will continue to grow more evil until Jesus returns. **How then should we live?**

GREETINGS (1 PETER 1:1-2)

Both the **writer and the recipients** of this letter are identified in verse 1.

- Verse 2 tells us how we were **brought into the family of God**—we were, "chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father." There's so much to be said about this, but at **face value, it simply means that if you're a believer, God the Father foreknew and chose you to be a part of His family!**

The Bible says that **we must respond to God and that all who believe in Jesus Christ will be saved** (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 10:9-10), and the Bible never describes God rejecting anyone who believes in Him or turning away anyone who is truly seeking Him (Deut. 4:29). Somehow, in the mystery of God, **election works hand-in-hand with a person being drawn by God** (Jn. 6:44) and **believing unto salvation** (Rom. 1:16). Peter's point in bringing up "**election**" is this—if you have been born again, you belong to God! He has set His love upon you and chosen you.

- This has happened through the "**sanctifying work of the Spirit,**" where the **Holy Spirit sets us apart for His glory and purposes.** His purpose in our lives is for us to be obedient and to be, "**sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ.**"

In Christ, we're justified by the blood of Jesus, but the "**sprinkling**" of the **blood speaks of that** and also **paints a different picture.**

- This phrase reflects the language of Numbers 19 and the **purification rites that took place in the tabernacle and temple.** God's purpose is for us to **be obedient and to live pure and holy lives** as we're purified by Christ's blood—we are saved for a purpose!

A LIVING HOPE (1 PETER 1:3-12)

HOW DOES SOMEONE ENTER THE CHRISTIAN FAITH? (VS. 3)

Through the gift of "**new birth**"—a total transformation happens and a **new person gets born** (2 Cor. 5:17). Into a "**living hope**"—we have eternal life and a **real hope through a living Savior.**

- Through the "resurrection of Jesus Christ"—we have hope that Christ is alive and that **we will live forever because of His resurrection.**

The inheritance **we have is in Heaven, not in this earth.** That's good news because it's "imperishable, undefiled, and unfading" (vs. 4). The promise of our inheritance is certain because **we are guarded** by God's power through faith. The person who **places abiding faith in Christ can be assured that God is guarding them,** and our salvation will be made visible in the last day (vs. 5). While all of this is something as a believer we can rejoice in, **the reality is that now we will suffer through grief in various trials** (vs. 6). Our **suffering is momentary**—we suffer for a "**short time**" in comparison to eternity.

- Our **suffering is redemptive**—the character of our faith (which is more valuable than gold) is refined by the fire of trials and suffering (vs. 7).
- Our **suffering is not meaningless!**

The refining fire of suffering **tests our faith and reveals** whether it's **sincere or false.**

- Suffering **tests the strength of our faith,** and it purifies our faith by **burning away everything**

else we were placing our faith in.

- We can rejoice as our faith is being purified and tested in this life because **someday, we will see Christ visibly and receive the goal of our faith,** the salvation of our souls (vs. 8-9).

The salvation we have in **Christ was foretold by prophets,** who searched and carefully investigated and inquired about it (vs. 10-11). The prophets were serving not themselves, but us! They were **pointing ahead** to those of us who actually know this **Messiah personally** (vs. 12). This unfolding of God's eternal plan of salvation in Christ is **something that the angels desire to catch a glimpse of.**

A CALL TO HOLY LIVING (1 PETER 1:13-21)

Our **living hope and future inheritance** of a great salvation that will be ours when Christ returns doesn't just simply impact the future; **it marks the way that we live today.**

- Because of this **great salvation that God has given us, we're to have our minds** "ready for action," and we're to let our thinking be "**sober**" (vs. 13a).
- It's so easy to get **lulled to sleep** and grow intoxicated by the **meaninglessness and seductiveness** of this present, godless world.

Our hope is to be set "**completely**" on the grace that will be brought to us at **the revelation of Jesus Christ** (vs. 13b). What do we **set our hope on** as believers? Is it in the eternal plan of God? Or is it in politics, ideologies, culture wars, or our **own comfort and utopia here on earth?**

We're to be obedient, and **not conformed to the desires of our former ignorance** (vs. 14). We're to be, "holy in all of our conduct" (vs. 15-17)—**holiness is not perfection,** but rather the idea of "**apartness.**"

- The idea is that **God is separate and different from His creation,** yet God calls us to come to Him and share in this attribute of being, "**set apart.**"
- To the believer, there's no divide between "**sacred**" and "**secular**"—**all of life is to be holy as we live to honor God in all that we do.**

What's our motivation for living a holy life? **Our love for God** (vs. 18-21). We're reminded of who we were—we were slaves to an **empty way of life,** but we've been "**bought back**" (**redeemed**) with the precious blood of Christ (vs. 18-19).

- We're reminded of what Christ did for us—**Christ's death in our place was part of God's plan** before the foundation of the world (vs. 20).

Through Christ, **we believe in God, and our faith and hope are secure** because we know God raised up Christ from the dead (vs. 21). Here's **the big idea**—when we know what Christ has done for us, what He's doing in the world now and how He wants to use us, and what He will do in the future—that **motivates us to stop living "empty"** lives that are drunk on sensuality, narcissism, materialism, and worldliness.

BORN AGAIN (1 PETER 1:22-25)

Holy (or "**set apart**") living is incomplete if it's not accompanied by sincere, brotherly love (vs. 22). We're to love each other "**constantly,**" "**deeply,**" "**fervently,**" "**earnestly**" from a pure heart.

- We love people not so they **can love us back or give us anything in return**—we love them because we've been, "**born again,**" and now we can love people with the same kind of love that **God has shown us.**

We should **love other believers earnestly from a pure heart** because we've been **born again** from imperishable seed through the living and enduring word of God (vs. 23).

- We're in the same family and **we'll spend eternity together.**
- Even the **best and most glorious things we do will fade away,** but love and kindness born out of the living and enduring word will last forever.

"THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER" (VS. 24-25)

Isaiah 40:6-8 is quoted by Peter to **bring home a very powerful point.**

- There are **things that will perish (the things of this earth),** and there are **things that are eternal (that which is born of God and made alive by His Spirit).**
- The **imperishable word of God** is the gospel message of Christ's work (vs. 25).

This **imperishable, enduring word** is preached to a perishable people (vs. 24), which causes them to be born again into an imperishable inheritance (vs. 4) through their **imperishable faith** (vs. 7).

- This is the **heart of the Christian faith**—the enduring, imperishable, eternal word of God that Christ died for sinners so we can be born again.
- The **message of the gospel can't be stopped, silenced, or laid to rest.** It endures forever.

BE WHO YOU ARE.

- A **Christian is not just someone** who subscribes to a culturally defined moral code, has done a few religious rituals, and is **loosely affiliated** with a weekly gathering. A **Christian is someone who has been completely transformed into a new creation by Christ Himself through the miracle of the new birth.** If that is your story, are you **defined primarily by what Christ has done?** Or by other things? If that **hasn't happened** for you, what's holding you back?

STAY SOBER.

- Because of this great salvation that God has given us, we're to have our minds "**ready for action,**" and we're to let our thinking be "**sober**" (vs. 13a). It's so easy to **get lazy and spiritually obese,** and it's easy to grow intoxicated by the **meaninglessness and seductiveness of this present, godless world.** To **get sober,** you've got to **detox first.** Then we **practice abstinence** from certain things and **moderation in others,** as the Holy Spirit leads us.

DON'T DESPAIR IN YOUR SUFFERINGS.

- Even though **we have so much to rejoice in as a believer in Jesus,** we'll still **suffer through grief in various trials in this life.**
- Our **suffering is not meaningless**—it's momentary, it's redemptive, and it **strengthens and purifies** our faith.
- When you **don't know what God is up to,** you can still **look to the cross and know that He's completely in control and He's completely good.**