

Investigating the Word of God

First Peter



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An Introduction to First Peter

The Author of the Book

“From the most ancient times the church has assigned the authorship of this epistle to Peter, our Lord’s apostle. In the opening salutation he assigns it to himself (1:1), and there is no reason to doubt” (William S. Deal, *Baker’s Pictorial Introduction to the Bible*, p. 401).

Peter was also called Simon, or Simeon (Acts 15:14; 2 Pet. 1:1). He was born in the city of Bethsaida, a fishing village in Galilee (John 1:44). His father’s name was Jonas (Matt. 16:17) or John (John 1:42).

Along with his brother Andrew and his father, Peter was a fisherman at Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee (Matt. 8:14). He resided at Capernaum as did his wife’s mother (1 Cor. 9:5).

His brother Andrew brought him to Jesus who gave him the surname “Cephas” which means “a stone” (John 1:40-42). Harkening to the call of Jesus, he became His constant companion and one of His apostles (Matt. 4:19; Luke 5:10; Matt. 10:2; Mark 3:14-16).

His ardor, earnestness and courage made him a leader among the disciples from the very first. His name always appears first in the list of the Apostles (Matt. 10:2; Mark 3:16; Luke 6:14; Acts 1:13). He, along with James and John, was also one of the three in the inner circle of disciples accompanying Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration and in the Garden of Gethsemane.

His confession of Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God, in Matthew 16 stands in stark contrast to his denial of Him at His trial in Matthew 26.

On the day of Pentecost recorded in Acts 2, he preached the gospel in its fullness for the first time (vv. 14-41) and continued to preach it (Acts 3:11-26) even though he was put in prison for his preaching (Acts 4:1-22; 5:1-11).

He preached to the first Gentile converts (Acts 9:32 - 10:48). He was imprisoned by Herod Agrippa and miraculously released (Acts 12:1-17). He took a leading part in the Jerusalem conference over circumcision (Acts 15:1-21; Gal. 2:6-10). He had to be rebuked by the apostle Paul for being hypocritical with the Gentile converts (Gal. 2:11-15).

Tradition says that he was crucified “upside-down” in Rome because he said he was unworthy to be crucified in the same manner as Jesus.

Those to Whom the Book Was Written

The book is addressed to the “pilgrims of the Dispersion, in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect...” (1:1-2). The term “elect,” as well as the entire epistle, indicates that they were Christians. They were “pilgrims (sojourners) of the Dispersion” in the sense that they were strangers and sojourners upon the earth (2:11; cf. Heb. 11:13-16; 13:14). The specific reference to Pontus, Galatia, etc., indicates that the letter was probably intended for all the churches of Asia Minor.

“The letter is addressed ‘to the pilgrims of the Dispersion’ (1:1), a term which could indicate that the recipients were Jewish Christians. On the other hand, the recipients are also described in terms more appropriate to gentile converts (1:14, 18; 2:9, 10), and most scholars believe that they were predominantly gentile Christians in churches throughout Asia Minor” (*Nelson’s Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts*, pp. 457, 459).

The Time and Place of Writing

This epistle was most likely written just before the outbreak of persecution under the Roman emperor Nero in A.D. 64.

“From the very nature of this epistle, it is clear it was written during a time of extreme persecution. It is suited to the period from about A.D. 64 to A.D. 67. It breathes an atmosphere of encouragement in great suffering. It may have been written around A.D. 64” (Deal, p. 401).

“This epistle was written from ‘Babylon’ (5:13), but scholars are divided as to whether this refers literally to Babylon in Mesopotamia or symbolically to Rome. There is no tradition that Peter went to Babylon, and in his day it was virtually deserted. On the other hand, tradition consistently indicates that Peter spent the last years of his life in Rome. As a center of idolatry, the term ‘Babylon’ was an appropriate figurative designation for Rome (cf. Rev. 17; 18). Peter used other figurative expressions in this epistle, and it is not surprising that he would do the same with Rome. His mention of Mark (5:13) also fits this view because Mark was in Rome during Paul’s first imprisonment (Col. 4:10)” (*Nelson’s*, p. 457).

Why This Book Was Written

“The purpose of its writing seems quite clearly to have been to encourage Christians during the siege of persecution which was beginning to sweep over the churches. About this time, Nero, the infamous Roman emperor, had started a furious persecution of Christians in and about Rome—upon pretext that they had set fire to Rome, a deed which he had done or directed. There was no empire-wide persecution at this time, but local authorities were doubtless encouraged in their persecution at this time, but local authorities were doubtless encouraged in their persecutions of Christians by the emperor’s acts. It is clear from the general tenor of this epistle that it was a time of ‘manifold temptation’ and ‘fiery trial’....It is evident that the writer wished to comfort the suffering, strengthen the weak, and give general directions how to act under persecution and supreme testings” (Deal, p. 400).

A consideration of the book itself shows that it was written to:

- Explain the relationship of trials to God’s purposes in salvation (1:1-12).
- Provoke the readers to lives of holiness, love, growth and testimony (1:13 - 2:12).
- Call for submission of believers to civil authorities (2:13-17); of servants to masters (2:18-25); and of wives to husbands (3:1-8).
- Discuss the proper attitude of believers in suffering (3:9 - 4:19).
- Give guidelines to elders for the proper performance of their ministry (5:1-4).
- Set forth the nature of true and false wisdom (3:13-18).
- Call the believers to humility (5:5-7).
- Warn against the tactics of Satan (5:8-11).
- Send greetings (5:12-14).

- Robert G. Gromacki, *NT Survey*

An Outline of First Peter

I. Salutation (1:1)

II. The Destiny of the Christian (1:2 - 2:10)

- A. The plan of salvation (1:2-12).
 - 1. Its program (2-5).
 - 2. Its problem (6-9).
 - 3. Its prophecy (10-12).
- B. Products of salvation (1:13-25).
 - 1. Holiness (13-16).
 - 2. Reverence (17-21).
 - 3. Love (22-25).
- C. The purpose of salvation (2:1-10).
 - 1. Growth (1-3).
 - 2. Sacrifices (4-8).
 - 3. Testimony (9-10).

III. The Duty of the Christian (2:11 - 3:12)

- A. Subjection to the state (2:11-17).
- B. Subjection in the household (2:18-25).
- C. Subjection in the family (3:1-12).

IV. The Discipline of the Christian (3:13 - 5:11)

- A. Suffering as a citizen (3:13 - 4:6)
 - 1. Its blessing (3:13-17).
 - 2. Its example (3:18-22).
 - 3. Its purpose (4:1-6).
- B. Suffering as a Christian (4:7-19).
 - 1. Its responsibilities (7-11).
 - 2. Its consolation (12-19).
- C. Suffering as a shepherd (5:1-4).
- D. Suffering as a soldier (5:5-11).

V. Conclusion (5:12-14)

First Peter Chapter One

Keys to This Chapter

Key Passage: Verses 18-19

“Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

Key People

Peter

Key Places

Pontus

Galatia

Cappadocia

Asia

Bithynia

Key Words

Pilgrims

Dispersion

Elect

Foreknowledge

Sanctification

Begotten

Inheritance

Incorruptible

Undefined

Grieved

Loins

Conforming

Redeemed

Foreordained

Manifest

Key Lesson

Questions on the Text

1. Who wrote this book? How does he describe himself in verse one?
2. To whom was the book addressed?
3. According to verse three, to what had these people been begotten?
4. What was reserved in heaven for those who had been begotten?
5. By what were these people kept? Through what were they kept?
6. By what had these people been grieved?
7. What, according to verse seven, is more precious than gold?
8. Whom did these people love even though they had never seen Him?
9. What is said to be the end of faith?
10. Who had inquired about and searched carefully for salvation?
11. According to verse 12, who also desire to look into this salvation?
12. To what were the readers of this book not to conform?
13. Why were the readers of this book to be holy?
14. How were the readers of this book to conduct themselves?
15. By what are Christians redeemed?
16. When was Jesus foreordained to be Savior? When was He manifest as Savior?
17. According to verse 22, what attitudes are Christians to have toward one another?
18. According to verse 22, through what had these people been born again?
19. How long will the word of God live and abide?
20. How long will the word of God endure?

Discussion Question

How can a person “be holy” in all his conduct?

First Peter Chapter Two

Keys to This Chapter

Key Passage: Verse 21

“For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps.”

Key Words

Malice

Deceit

Hypocrisy

Living stone

Cornerstone

Stumbling

Sojourners

Pilgrims

Ordinance

Liberty

Cloak

Vice

Submissive

Commendable

Reville

Key Lesson

Questions on the Text

1. What were these Christians to lay aside?
2. What were these Christians to desire? Why were they to desire it?
3. How is Jesus described in verse four?
4. How are Christians described in verse five?
5. What are Christians to offer up to God? Through whom are they to offer them?
6. Who is the “chief cornerstone” of verse six?
7. According to verse eight, what causes some to “stumble?”
8. How are Christians described in verses nine and ten?
9. According to verse 11, from what were these Christians to abstain?
10. According to verse 12, how could the Gentiles glorify God?
11. According to verse 13, to what are Christians to submit?
12. What, according to verse 15, can one do by doing good?
13. For what is the liberty a Christian has not to be used?
14. According to verse 17:
 - a. To whom is honor to be given?
 - b. Whom are Christians to love?
 - c. Whom are Christians to fear?
15. What were servants to do in regards to their masters?
16. According to verse 16, to what had these Christians been called?
17. Whose example is the Christian to follow?
18. Did Jesus commit any sin?
19. To whom did Jesus commit Himself?
20. According to verse 24, what did Jesus bear on the cross?

Discussion Question

How can a person “follow” the steps of Jesus?

First Peter Chapter Three

Keys to This Chapter

Key Passage: Verse 15

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.”

Key People

Sarah

Abraham

Noah

Key Words

Submissive

Chaste

Adornment

Compassion

Tenderhearted

Courteous

Reviling

Contrary

Threats

Antitype

Key Lesson

Questions on the Text

1. What are wives to be in relation to their husbands?
2. What is the adornment of a woman not merely to be?
3. What, according to verse four, is the adornment of a woman to be?
4. How, in former times, did the holy women who trusted in God adorn themselves?
5. Whose “daughters” are women who do good?
6. How, according to verse seven, are husbands to treat their wives?
7. According to verse eight, what are all to have and do?
8. What are Christians not to return?
9. What should Christians give instead of evil and reviling? Why should they give this?
10. From what are Christians to turn away? What are they to seek and pursue?
11. On whom are the eyes of the Lord? To whose prayers are His ears open?
12. Against whom is the face of the Lord?
13. What, according to verse 14, is the result of suffering for righteousness sake?
14. For what, according to verse 15, should a Christian always be ready?
15. According to verse 16, what should a Christian have? Why should they have it?
16. For what did Christ suffer?
17. Why was Christ put to death in the flesh?
18. According to verse 20, through what were Noah and his family saved?
19. According to verse 21, what “now saves us?”
20. Instead of the removal of the filth of the flesh, what does baptism cleanse? (v. 21)

Discussion Question

How does baptism now save us?

First Peter Chapter Four

Keys to This Chapter

Key Passage: Verse 11

“If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

Key Words

Lewdness

Revelries

Abominable

Dissipation

Oracles

Fiery

Dominion

Reproached

Blasphemed

Busybody

Scarcely

Key Lesson

Questions on the Text

1. Who suffered for us?
2. According to verse two, in what should the Christian no longer live? For what should he live?
3. In what, according to verse three, had some of these Christians formerly walked?
4. To whom will all have to give an account?
5. Above all things, what were these Christians to have for one another?
6. According to verse eight, what does love cover?
7. What, according to verse nine, were these Christians to show to one another?
8. According to verse 10, what must one speak?
9. In what is God to be glorified?
10. To whom belongs glory and dominion forever?
11. What, according to verse 12, was going to try these Christians? How were they to view this?
12. What is the result of being reproached for the name of Christ?
13. According to verse 15, as what is no one to suffer?
14. As what should one not be ashamed of suffering?
15. Where will judgment begin?

True - False

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| T | F | 1. Christ suffered for His own sins. |
| T | F | 2. Sinners think it strange that Christians no longer run with them. |
| T | F | 3. If one ministers he is to do it with the ability God supplies. |
| T | F | 4. The righteous one is scarcely saved. |
| T | F | 5. Those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to themselves. |

Discussion Question

Since “drinking parties” are forbidden because they are a part of the will of the Gentiles, can a Christian participate in social drinking?

First Peter Chapter Five

Keys to This Chapter

Key Passage: Verse 8

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”

Key People

Silvanus

Mark

Key Places

Babylon

Key Words

Elders

Shepherd

Compulsion

Vigilant

Adversary

Devour

Key Lesson

Questions on the Text

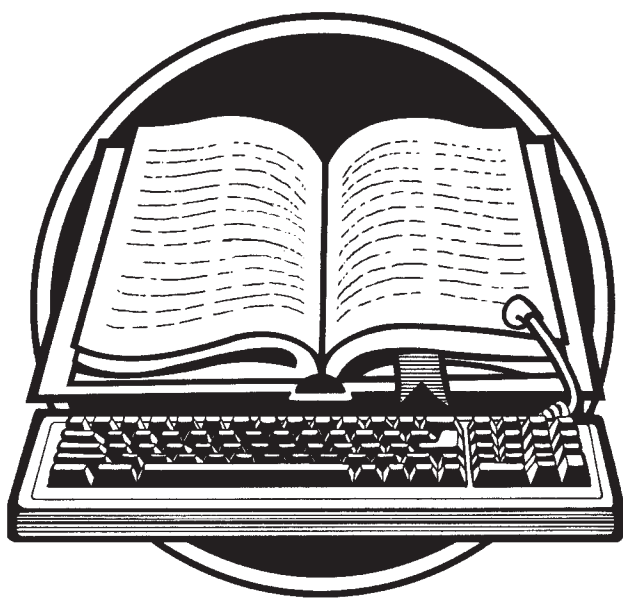
1. What are elders exhorted to do?
2. By what are elders not to serve? How are they to serve?
3. What are elders not to be to those entrusted to them? What are they to be to them?
4. What will faithful elders receive when the “Chief Shepherd” appears?
5. Who is the Chief Shepherd?
6. To whom are younger people to submit?
7. Whom does God resist? To whom does He give grace?
8. Why should one humble himself under the hand of God?
9. Upon whom should one cast all his cares? Why?
10. Who is man’s adversary?
11. What does man’s adversary seek to do?
12. What, according to verse nine, should a person do in relation to man’s adversary?
13. By whom had Peter written this epistle?
14. Who sent greetings to those to whom this book was written?
15. With what did Peter want them to greet one another?

True - False

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| T | F | 1. Elders are to serve by compulsion. |
| T | F | 2. Elders are to be lords over those entrusted to them. |
| T | F | 3. All are to be clothed with humility. |
| T | F | 4. In due time God will exalt those who humble themselves under His mighty hand. |
| T | F | 5. God has given the glory and dominion to man forever. |

Discussion Question

What are some ways in which Satan can be resisted?



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