

BUT AS

He who called you

IS HOLY

YOU ALSO BE HOLY IN ALL ^{OF YOUR} CONDUCT
BECAUSE IT IS WRITTEN

Be Holy

FOR

I AM

HOLY

1 Peter 1:15-16



Lesson 1 – 1 Peter 1:1–25

This epistle was written to first-century Christians dispersed throughout the northern part of what is now modern Turkey, just prior to the outbreak of persecution from the infamous and terrible Emperor Nero, around A.D. 64. It was written from Babylon (or Rome—5:13) to an audience of both Jewish and Gentile believers who were undergoing a time of social, political, and personal persecution. The letter emphasizes the reality of suffering in the lives of all Christians, with the focus being on the challenge to stand firm and persevere in all circumstances of life.

Peter—also known as Simon—was a fisherman and follower of John the Baptist, who was led to the Lord Jesus by his brother Andrew. Known for being short-tempered and impulsive, he was singled out along with James and John for in-depth training by the Lord. Jesus changed his name to *Cephas*, an Aramaic word for *Petros* in the Greek, meaning a “stone” or a “rock.” Jesus called him *Peter* to signify the rock-like character that would distinguish his life, making him one of the founders of the early Christian church. He would emerge after Pentecost as the leading spokesperson for the disciples and was used mightily by the Lord to spread the Good News. History records that when he was sentenced to be crucified, Peter requested that he be hung upside down on the cross, considering himself unworthy to be crucified in the same manner as his Lord. He died in Rome around A.D. 68, during the persecution by Emperor Nero.

Have you ever been the target of someone else’s unkind remarks? Do you know firsthand what it’s like to be persecuted for your faith? If so, this letter is for you. You may not have faced an ego-maniacal emperor, but you have felt the pain of ridicule, harassment, and conflict bearing down on you. Peter wrote this letter to encourage believers in whatever trials they may be facing. For Peter’s original audience as well as today’s, the recurring themes of his letter are the hope, security, peace and steadfastness that are ours through faith in Jesus Christ.

Memory Verse:

“But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy.’” 1 Peter 1:15–16

Review this verse often throughout the week. Write it out a couple of times to help you commit it to memory. By week’s end, try to notice *how* and *where* you are able to put it into practice. Note your results on the last page of your homework.

FIRST DAY – 1 PETER 1:1-2

Begin your study each day with a word of prayer.

Read 1 Peter 1:1–25, focusing on verses 1-2.

Peter begins his introduction with his title: “an ***apostle*** of Jesus Christ . . .” (v.1). It was not possible for a man to appoint himself to be an apostle. It was a divine calling, a commission by God to represent Christ. The job responsibility for this important office was unique and limited to the few hand-selected men who were called to fill it.

1. Using the resources you have on hand, look up the word *apostle* and write a definition for it.

The New Testament has much to say about the office of an *apostle*. Look up the following verses and briefly note what is revealed.

a. Matthew 10:1–4 and 5–8

b. Matthew 28:16–20

c. Acts 1:22; 10:39–43

d. Ephesians 3:4–5

e. At approximately what point in His earthly ministry did Jesus give the title *Apostle* to His disciples? See Luke 6:12–16.

The word *apostle* literally means *one sent out on a mission*, such as an ambassador or envoy. The office carried with it the responsibility and authority to set up and supervise the church and to initiate discipline when necessary. Peter was sent out by none less than his Master and Lord, giving him the authority and power of Almighty God behind him. If you mention the Apostle Peter and most of us immediately think of a strong, impetuous fisherman who had a habit of putting his foot in his mouth by saying the wrong thing at the wrong time. Even those who don't know much about the man recall that Peter denied the Lord Jesus three times. His life presents a vivid illustration of how we fail as human beings, but also how we can succeed and be victorious through the new nature that is ours in Christ. From his initial call by Jesus, to the Holy Spirit's empowering at Pentecost, Peter experienced the unusual, such as what it was like to walk on water. He was a witness at the Transfiguration, recognizing and testifying to Christ's deity. He was rebuked by his Lord and even denied Him, but he also repented and was restored, witnessing the Lord's ascension to heaven.

Peter's life is a lesson in contrasts and his life stands as an example of what the Lord can do with a person determined to become all that God wants him to be!

2. Personal: Think about it . . . would *you* be willing to be remembered for your failures rather than your successes if your life served as an example to others? Please explain.

3. To whom is Peter writing? How does he describe them? vv. 1–2

These are "God's elect" but they were also strangers. In his letter, Peter refers to them as *pilgrims* (1:1), and sojourners or tourists (2:11), people who were away from their homes. The terms he uses imply a temporary separation. These people were foreigners scattered abroad, but they belonged to God and would remain His while living in a world that was not their home.

4. Put yourself in the shoes of a tourist in a foreign land. What are a few of the things you would most be concerned about?

5. Now contrast that line of thought with that of being a pilgrim believer in this world. Currently, how tight would you label your grip and what is your world view? (Circle one.)
- a. **Tight grip:** I have eagerly sought the possessions, pleasures, and position this world has to offer me and I feel very much at home in it.
 - b. **Moderate grip** - I am preoccupied with the busyness of daily life but wanting to find God's place of peace and rest.
 - c. **Loose grip** - The longer I walk with Christ I feel more out of place, like a foreigner who is just passing through this world.
 - d. Personal: Please explain your answer in your own words . . .

If you have received Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, you are God's elect; your citizenship has been transferred from this world to heaven! You have been chosen *according to the foreknowledge of the Father; through the sanctifying work of the Spirit; for obedience to Jesus Christ by the sprinkling of His blood*" (v. 2). Will you take a moment now and thank Him?

SECOND DAY – 1 PETER 1:3-7

Read 1 Peter 1:3–12 for review.

In verses 3–12, Peter links salvation to what he refers as a "living hope" for every believer. The hope Peter has in mind is based on the confident expectation of life after death that is bestowed upon Christians.

1. Who has gifted believers with this inheritance and how? Where is it kept? vv. 3–4

The word *kept* means *to guard or reserve in place*. The tense of the verb indicates that this inheritance already exists; it continues to be there. The trials we experience in this life cannot undermine or diminish the inheritance kept for us in the next one.

2. Does being *kept (shielded)* by God's power mean that His children will not have to go through pain or difficulty? What does it mean? v. 5

3. Based on this hope, what kind of response are we believers to have? vv. 6–7

Remember, Peter wrote this letter to people who were undergoing tremendous opposition. Some of what they endured included being wrapped in freshly slaughtered animal skins and fed to wild animals. Others were dipped in hot tar or pitch and set on fire as human torches that lit up Nero's gardens at night. As horrific as these things are, Peter states that the suffering here upon the earth lasts only "a little while" in light of our inheritance, which lasts for eternity.

4. What is one of the main reasons for trials? How is the believer's faith tested? v. 7

The purification process for metal is always fire. When heated to a high temperature, the metal melts and the impurities rise to the surface and are skimmed off, resulting in a pure reflection on the surface.

a. What is the lesson here for the believer as it pertains to the transforming process of sanctification? Whose reflection becomes more obvious over time?

b. Personal: Can you share a time recently when your faith was put through the fire? What did you learn about your faith and how did it grow?

c. What similar thread do you find in James 1:2–4 that compares to Peter's words of encouragement here in vv. 6–7?

THIRD DAY – 1 PETER 1:8-12

Peter's focus now shifts from the difficulties of this present life to the day of Christ's return. His concern is that of our testimony: the fact that our faith, having been tested and proved genuine, will mean praise, honor, and glory when Jesus Christ is revealed. Choosing to believe in Him though we've not seen Him results in the joy that comes not from our circumstances but from our relationship with Him.

1. What is the end of our faith? v. 9

a. Who is it that longed to know about God's salvation? v. 10

b. In their search to know more, what did they discover about Christ? v. 11

c. It was revealed that their service was not for themselves; who were they serving? v. 12

It's as if Peter asks, *"Do you realize how fortunate you are? Angels would have given anything to be in on this!"* You, dear believer, are a *full heir* to the message of hope the prophets preached thousands of years ago. Think about it: the *weakest* Christian today is capable through the Holy Spirit of understanding more than the greatest prophets who ever lived and who predicted Christ would come!

2. Personal: In your search to know more this week, what new discovery have you made about your salvation?

If you have received Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, you are one of God's elect and your citizenship has been transferred from this world to heaven. Peter states (v. 2) that all three persons of the Trinity—God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ), and God the Holy Spirit—are working together to assure you of your salvation—to give you this *living hope*. If you have not yet prayed to receive Jesus Christ into your heart but would like to, just bow and pray the following to Him: *"Lord Jesus, I confess that I am a sinner in need of Your grace and mercy today. I ask for Your forgiveness and cleansing and for You to fill me with Your Holy Spirit. Thank you for coming to live inside my heart and that I am born again! In Your name I pray. Amen."*

FOURTH DAY – 1 PETER 1:13-25

Read 1 Peter 1:13–25 for review.

The word “therefore” (v.13) is the pivotal bridge between what Peter has just stated regarding our *living hope* and the time in the not-too-distant future when Jesus Christ returns and we, as believers, enter into the reality of that hope. In the remainder of the chapter, Peter explains what is most important and what we are to be occupied with until the day of the Lord’s return.

1. Use the following exercise to help you keep the main thing the main thing, reminding you of what matters most. In a sentence or two, write an explanation as to how you are doing with each one (a brief description is given to you). Be prepared to share with your group.
 - a. **Be prepared** in your mind (*gird up the loins of your mind*); be alert and ready for action. v. 13
 - b. **Be self-controlled** (*sober*); think and act straight. v. 13
 - c. **Be hopeful** to the end (*rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you*); look forward to the special blessings that are yours. v. 13
 - d. **Be obedient** children (*not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance*); don’t let our lives be controlled by your desires. v. 14
 - e. **Be holy** in all your behavior and manner of conversation (*in all your conduct*). v. 15
 - f. **Be holy, for I am holy**; so motivated because He is holy. v. 16
2. Start taking your spiritual character development as seriously as God takes it! What should be your motive for living a holy life as you await His return? v. 17

- a. What realization should affect your perspective and make you *want* to change your behavior? vv. 18–19
 - b. Understand that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ was foreordained prior to creation. For whose sake was it planned and made known? v. 20 (Share your thoughts.)
3. One of the best ways to demonstrate a love for God and practice a walk of holiness is to see that *we love one another fervently with a pure heart* (v. 22).

Personal: On a scale of 1–10, with 10 being best, how are *you* doing?

The instrument that brought about the new birth is the Word of God. Peter would have us remember two aspects about it: (1) it is living; (2) it is enduring.

- a. *Living* suggests the power of the Word to do what?
- b. *Enduring* reinforces the power of the Word to do what?

Verses 23–25 are closely linked to verses 3–4. The living, enduring Word is the agent God uses to give you a living hope and an imperishable inheritance. Cherish this gift and let it motivate you to holiness!

→ Memory Verse Review: Can you recite your memory verse? Have you been able to put it into practice this week?