

From the Garden to Glory

First Peter

Author: Peter the Apostle

Written to: Believers scattered abroad

Timeline: c. 64 - 66 A.D.

Theme: Grace in Times of Suffering

Purpose of writing: Peter encouraged those who were suffering and being persecuted for their faith in Jesus Christ by telling them that their hope (and ours) is a *living hope*.

Introduction:

Roman Emperor Nero's persecution of Christians was very severe during the time of this writing. The Church was going through a literal *fiery trial*; Christians were being burned in Nero's gardens. Peter, fulfilling his command from the Lord to feed and tend His sheep (John 21:15), wrote to the suffering Christians encouraging them and instructing them to continue to lead a godly life (1 Peter 4:19).

As we begin our study of the book of 1 Peter consider the following questions and write your responses:

1. Read the following sections of Scripture and make a note of what you learn about Peter.
 - Matthew 14:22-33
 - Matthew 16:13-23
 - John 13:1-17

- Luke 22:31-34 and 54-62

- John 21:15-23

- Acts 2:14-40

- Acts 3:1-10

- Acts 4:13-22

- Acts 10:9-43

2. We can all identify with Peter to some extent. In what way(s) are you like Peter? In what way(s) are different from him?

3. Peter wrote this epistle during a time when the church was experiencing great suffering and trials. Consider a trial that you have experienced. Explain how you kept your eyes on the Lord during this trial. What verses or sections of Scripture were especially helpful to you during this time? (Please **do not** describe the details or people involved in the trial.)

Precious Faith and Hope

Read 1 Peter 1:1-12

1. Peter wrote his letter to *the pilgrims of the Dispersion*. Look up the word *pilgrim* in a dictionary and write the definition. In what way(s) is *every* Christian a pilgrim?

2. Look at verses 3-5. Re-write these verses in your own words. How *alive* is your hope today? Read the following quote from Warren Wiersbe and write your response.

...it is a *living hope* because it is grounded on the living Word God (1 Peter 1:23), and was made possible by the living Son of God who arose from the dead. A "living hope" is one that has life in it and therefore can give life to us. Because it has life, it grows and becomes greater and more beautiful as time goes on. Time destroys most hopes; they fade and then die. But the passing of time only makes a Christian's hope that much more glorious.

3. Read verses 6-9 carefully. How can you *greatly rejoice* in the midst of a trial? Be specific.

Precious Blood

Read 1 Peter 1:13-25

1. Look at verse 13. What was Peter's instruction to his readers concerning their minds? What are some thoughts that can dominate your mind during a difficult trial? How can you remain *spiritually minded*, disciplining your thought life during a trial? (You may want to read 2 Corinthians 10:3-5.)
2. In verses 14-17 Peter described the behavior that should characterize the lives of the *obedient children* of a Heavenly Father.
 - What do you learn about your Heavenly Father from these verses?
 - How are His obedient children to behave? Evaluate your own obedience according to these criteria.

3. Read verses 18-21 slowly, soberly and prayerfully. Respond to what you have read.

Precious Cornerstone

Read 1 Peter 2:1-10

1. Look at verse 2. Think about the way a hungry baby drinks milk. As Christians we need to have the same hunger for the Word of God. It is nourishing, it gives life. To mature spiritually, believers must *feed on* the Word of God. How are you doing so this week?

2. Read verses 4-8. Consider this quote from Matthew Henry. Explain what it means to you to be a *living stone being built up* on Jesus Christ, the *chief cornerstone*.

In this metaphorical description of Jesus Christ, He is called a stone, to denote His invincible strength and everlasting duration, and to teach His servants that He is their protection and security, the foundation on which they are built, and a rock of offense to all their enemies. He is the living stone, having eternal life in Himself, and being the prince of life to all His people.

3. Peter described the Christian's position in verses 9-10. Define each of these illustrations. Which of these means the most to you today? Why?
 - a chosen generation

 - a royal priesthood

 - a holy nation

 - His own special people

Precious Submission

Read 1 Peter 2:11-25

1. Verses 2:13-3:17 emphasize the importance of *submission* in the life of a believer. Define submission. In what ways is worldly wisdom contrary to the idea of submission? What natural instincts of the flesh reject it? How do you maintain a submissive heart in the face of worldly wisdom and your flesh?

2. Peter listed four instructions in verse 17. List one specific thing that you can do this week in obedience to these instructions.
 - honor all people

 - love the brotherhood

 - fear God

 - honor the king

3. Look at verses 21-25. What do you learn about submission from the *example* of our Lord? What can you do to follow His example?

Precious Is a Meek and Quiet Spirit

Read 1 Peter 3:1-22

1. Look at verses 2-6 and answer the following questions.
 - In your own words explain what *chaste conduct accompanied by fear* means. How could this conduct cause a husband who does *not obey the word* to be *won*?

- What does *the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit* mean? Why do you think this is *very precious* in God's sight?
2. What do you learn about the Christian's responsibility to love the brethren from verses 8-12? Ask the Lord for direction. What is one aspect of these instructions that He would have you follow this week?
 3. Look at verse 15. What does the word *sanctify* mean? Are you ready to give a defense for the hope that is in you? If so, how would you do so? If not, what can you do to become ready?

Precious Suffering

Read 1 Peter 4:1-19

1. Read verses 1-4, concentrating on verse 4. Non-believers may *spea*k *evil* of Christians because we do not *run with them in the same flood of dissipation*. Name one thing Christians believe that could cause those in the world to *spea*k *evil* against us. How would you use the Bible to refute their accusation?
2. In verse 7 Peter told his readers that *the end of all things is at hand*; in this context, he gave them several instructions which are listed in verses 7-11. What were they? In your own words, explain what each one means and share how you might follow each of these instructions today.
 - verse 7

 - verse 8

- verse 9

- verses 10-11

3. Look at verses 12-19. Do you know or have you read about someone who has truly suffered for his or her faith? If so, how did this person suffer? How has your own faith been encouraged by their example?

Precious Humility

Read 1 Peter 5:1-14

1. Look at verse 5. The word *clothed* referred to the cloak worn by the lowest rank of servants. What does it look like in your own life when you are *clothed with humility*? What did Peter say was the benefit of humility?
2. Read verses 6-7. Each of these instructions has a blessing attached to it. Write out each instruction, how you will follow it, and the blessing you can expect.
3. What do you learn about our enemy the devil from verses 8-9? How are Christians to resist the devil? Share a time when you did this. What was the outcome?

Summary

As you conclude your study of the book of 1 Peter consider the following questions and write your answer:

- 1.** What is the most significant thing that you have learned from your study about the Lord, His character, or His attributes? How does this encourage you? Take a few moments to thank and praise the Lord for the things that you learned about Him.

- 2.** What is the most important lesson or new insight that you have learned from your study of this book? How can you apply this lesson in your life this week?