

St John's Richmond

1Peter - Fall 2026

Shorter Bible Studies

Introduction

This letter is attested by very early external evidence as a genuine writing of the Apostle Peter. When Peter wrote it he was 'in Babylon' [5.13]. It seems best to regard this as a reference to Rome. A probable date for the writing of the letter is AD 63.

The letter is addressed to 'the exiles of the dispersion' in Asia Minor. But though Peter was the 'Apostle of the circumcision', and the term 'dispersion' was ordinarily applied to Jews scattered among the nations, the letter itself contains clear evidence that its readers at least included converted Gentiles [1.14; 2.9,10; 4.3,4], addressed as 'spiritual Israel', dispersed among the heathen.

1Peter has a double purpose: (a) to comfort and encourage the Christians in a time of persecution - actual, or threatened; and (b), to exhort them - all the more on account of this danger - to holiness of living, and to hope of glory. The problem of suffering, especially the unjust suffering of God's people, was the main subject of the book of Job, and we meet with contributions to its solution in Isaiah, and in the Gospel of John. In the present letter, as in Job, it is of primary importance, and here we find a noble and most satisfying answer to Job's despairing questionings. (Compare, for example, Jb. 10 with 1Pet 1.6-9).

Peter has the 'key' to the problem of unjust affliction which Job had not. Peter knew that a sinless One had suffered and died, bearing our sins in His body on the tree; undeserved sufferings thus have the 'halo' of Christ's glory round it; to bear it rightly is to follow in the very steps of the Redeemer. Also, Jesus' resurrection and heavenly enthronement [1.21; 3.22] are sure and certain proof that suffering in the will of God leads to certain, eternal reward.

STUDIES 1+2 1Peter 1.1-12 *'Living Hope'*

- 1 What do Christians mean by 'salvation'? How is it provided? What benefits does it offer? What kind of understanding and response are essential to its full enjoyment?
- 2 How can Christians 'rejoice with unutterable and exalted joy' while at the same time they 'may have to suffer various trials' [vv. 6, 8]? What causes of joy does Peter list, in vv. 3-9?
- 3 What light is thrown in vv.10-12 upon (a) the work of the prophets, (b) the ministry of the Spirit, and (c) the task of the preachers of the Gospel? What is their common interest and concern? How greatly ought we to share this?

Note. V. 2. 'Sprinkling with his blood': this signifies, for all who come under it, the ratification of the new covenant, and a personal participation in its blessings and demands. Cf. Ex 24.7,8; Heb 9.19-22; 12.24; 13.20, 21.

STUDY 3 1Peter 1.13-21

'Living in the Way You Were Raised'

- 1 What has God provided to make possible (a) our redemption, (b) our new birth, and (c) our growth to full salvation?
- 2 What response is necessary on our part, to enjoy all the benefits divinely intended for us?

Notes

- 1 1.17. 'With fear': *ie.* 'with reverence and awe'. *Cf.* Heb 12.28
- 2 1.17. 'Your exile': *ie.* your temporary sojourning, in a place to which you no longer belong. *Cf.* 2.11.
- 3 1.19. 'Blood' here signifies blood *shed*, or life laid down in sacrificial death.
- 4 2.2. 'Spiritual milk': in Greek the adjective is *logikos*. 'Logical' milk suggests food for the mind, rather than the stomach. Mention in 1.23 of the divine *logos* ('word') suggests a further reference here to the same divine agent - the 'milk of the word' (KJV).

STUDY 4 1Peter 1.22-2.3

'Living Out the New Birth'

- 1 In what ways ought our new God-given life as Christians to be expressed? Why should this be so?
- 2 What changes or new standards should characterize our daily living, in response to the world? How does "standing firm" help us today in our own circumstances?

STUDY 5 1Peter 2.4-10

'Living Stones: God's People'

- 1 Under what figure or image does Peter here speak of the Christian Church? What determines whether or not we shall find our place in it?
- 2 Each picture suggests special blessings and responsibilities: identifying these, how should we confront the practical challenge of each?

Notes

- 1 Vv. 4-8. Peter justifies his comparison of Christ to a stone from 3 OT passages: Ps 118.22; Is 8.14; 28.16. To the believer, Christ is the corner-stone upon which the whole building depends for stability; to the unbeliever, He is the cause of stumbling.

STUDY 6 1Peter 2.11-17

'Living as Exiles in a Hostile World'

- 1 What instructions concerning worthy Christian conduct are given here? In what ways are a right attitude and corresponding right action important (a) for our own Spiritual well-being, and (b) for effective witness for God in the world?
- 2 How can God use our 'good conduct'? *Cf.* Mt 5.16.

Note V. 16. 'A pretext for evil': *ie.* 'an excuse for base conduct' (Weymouth commentary). *Cf.* Gal 5.13.

STUDY 7 1Peter 2.18-25

'The Servant and His Servants'

1 In what ways does Christ's suffering provide an example for us to follow? What does Peter here suggest that 'servants' or 'slaves' should learn from it? How should we appreciate that this is also part of *our own* Christian walk?

2 Why was the sinless Jesus willing, without protest, to submit to the full penalty due to the worst of sinners? What purpose was His sacrifice intended to serve? What response, and what results, ought to follow in our lives?

Note. V. 24. 'Bore our sins': to 'bear sin' means to 'endure its penalty'. 'On the tree': the wording suggests 'up on to the tree', *ie.* to the extreme limit of shameful crucifixion and, in Jewish eyes, of coming openly under the curse of heaven. *Cf.* Dt 21.23; Gal 3.13.

STUDY 8 1Peter 3.1-12

'Live to Honour and Bless Others'

1 Vv. 1-7. What qualities in wife and husband make for a happy and harmonious wedded life? In addition, what special results can sometimes follow if the individuals concerned behave as a Christian wife or husband should?

2 Vv. 8-12. What characteristics are mentioned here which should mark Christians in their relations (a) with one another, and (b) with non-Christians who work or speak evil against them? What is the way to blessing according to (a) Ps. 34.12-16 (here quoted), and (b) our Christian calling? *Cf.* Mt 5.11,12, 44, 45.

STUDY 9 1Peter 3.13-22

'Live to Honour Christ in Goodness'

1 3.13-17. In what spirit should Christians (a) face suffering 'for righteousness' sake', and (b) explain their faith and hope to a hostile questioner?

2 3.18-22. What were the nature, purpose, and result of Christ's sufferings?

Notes

1 3.14. Such suffering should be regarded *not* as one's unhappy lot, but as an added privilege. *Cf.* 4.13,14: it means one is the object of special divine favour. *Cf.* Lk 1.48. If God so wills it (3.17), such suffering must be for some good reason, and purpose. See 3.18; 4.1.

2 3.18b-20. Notoriously-difficult to interpret. After His death on the Cross, Christ was *at once* able, as One alive in the spirit, to go and proclaim His triumph to the rebellious and imprisoned evil spirits who had involved men in sin and judgement.

3 3.20. In the ark, Noah and his family were saved 'through water', *ie.* brought safely through the judgement of God which fell upon a sinful world.

STUDY 10 1Peter 4.1-11

'Living and Loving For the Will of God'

- 1 In what practical activities ought all Christian people to engage? Name a list of them from this passage. In what way do they all start? At what end should they all aim?
- 2 What is *your* gift (v.10), and how ought you exercise it in ministry?

Note. 4.6. This is best understood as meaning that here is why the Gospel was preached during their earthly lives to those believers who are now dead.

STUDY 11 1Peter 4.12-19

'Suffering That Glorifies God'

- 1 What kinds of suffering should the Christian (a) avoid, and (b) rejoice in?
- 2 How should the latter kind of suffering be faced, and what good may be expected to result from our enduring it?

Note. 14b: *ie.*, because God will especially manifest His presence to you, and with you, *Cf.* Ex 40.34.

STUDY 12 1Peter 5.1-7

'Clothed With Humility'

- 1 How is oversight - the shepherd-care of God's flock - to be practised? What characteristics should a good pastor (a) avoid, and (b) exhibit?
- 2 How does Peter speak (a) of himself, and (b) the One who is the Chief Shepherd?

STUDY 13 1Peter 5.8-14

'Standing Firm Away From Home'

- 1 What, according to these vv.'s is 'the true grace of God', and how are we to 'stand fast in it' (v.12)?
- 2 What purpose is God working out for our good, and what must we do to co-operate with Him, so as to enjoy the fullest enrichment of all His grace?