

The Epistles of Peter

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HISTORICAL SKETCH ON I PETER

Author:

Simon (or Simeon) was the original name of Peter, the son of Jonas (or John), and brother of Andrew, a disciple of John the Baptist, as Peter also may have been. A fisherman by occupation, he was an inhabitant of Bethsaida on the Sea of Galilee, though subsequently he dwelt with his family at Capernaum. From Mark 1:30 we learn that Peter was a married man during the period of the Gospels.

Living Biography:

Jensen points out that Peter's life can be divided into four parts: (1) Pre-gospel Period; (2) Gospel period; (3) Early Church Period; and (4) Later life Period (time when epistles were written).

Date and Place Written:

I Peter was probably written around the time of the outbreak: of the Neronian persecution, or A.D. 64. Peter says he wrote this Epistle from Babylon. If we are to interpret this literally, there was a Babylon on the Euphrates (Mesopotamia) and also a Babylon on the Nile (City of Egypt). But quite generally it is thought to mean Rome. Merrill Tenney says Babylon was "a mystic name for Rome."

Destination of Epistle:

To the churches in Asia Minor. Many of these had been founded by Paul, but Peter may have visited during evangelistic work between A.D. 49-62.

Occasion for Writing:

The 35-year-old church was experiencing severe persecution. It had always experienced some persecution on the local level; however, Imperial Rome now set its hand to the task of eliminating true Christians. "Thus the Epistle was born in the atmosphere of suffering, shortly before Peter's own martyrdom" (Halley's Bible Handbook).

A Little Help:

You are encouraged to use other translations, commentaries, and other Bible helps in your study of this quarterly.

Quarterly Objective:

In this quarterly you are going to cover many profound truths. Because of their depth and complexity, some of these teachings may be difficult to understand. So, ask the Holy Spirit to grip your heart and life with new ideas. As they are translated into practical reality in your relationship with God and with others, you will come to understand and experience these truths more clearly and intimately.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The following books were very helpful in preparing these studies. All direct quotes are noted.

I & II Peter; A Self-Study Guide; Moody Press; Irving L. Jensen. The Epistles of Peter; Moody Press; Edgar C. James.

An Introduction to the New Testament; Moody Press; D. Edmond Hiebert.

New Testament Survey; Eerdmans Press; Merrill C. Tenney.

Halley's Bible Handbook; Zondervan Press; Henry H. Halley.

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia; Eerdmans Press; 1974.

The New Testament in Modern English; Macmillan Press; J.B. Phillips.

Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible; Baker Book House; Ralph Earle.

LESSON 1: PETER, AN APOSTLE OF CHRIST

Scripture Reading: John 21:15-19.

Memory Verse: “And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” (Matthew 4:19)

INTRODUCTION:

Before studying the writings of Peter, it will be helpful to know something of Peter’s life. His life can be easily broken down into four time periods:(1) Prior to meeting Christ, (2) The gospel era with Christ, (3) Time during the early church shown in Acts chapters 1-15, (4) The last decade or so of his life. Peter was truly a man in transition during a transitional period of history.

The character and personality of Peter is transparent and easily analyzed. He was bold, confident, courageous, frank, impulsive, energetic, vigorous, strong, and loving. We can easily analyze these characteristics from his early days as a disciple and his days of action as a powerful preacher and courageous leader.

In studying Peter’s epistles, we no doubt will get a view of how Peter was during his final years of ministry. They will show a confident, loving, humble man who was truly ready to give his life for the Master.

LESSON QUESTIONS:

1. Who introduced Peter to Jesus, and why do you think he did it? John 1:40-42. What is significant about Peter’s name? Matt 16:13-18.

How did Peter’s occupation relate to the meaning of the name of his hometown? Matthew 4:18; John 1:44.

2. What may indicate that Peter was a family man? Mark 1:30; I Corinthians 9:5. Do you think his wife traveled with him?
3. Did Jesus have an “inner circle,” and, if so, who were its members? Mark 5:37; 9:2; 14:33. What might be the reasons for the limited company?
4. Did Peter experience spiritual defeats as well as victories? Mark 14:66-72; Acts 2:14-16. Can you think of some others?
5. How and why might Peter have been isolated in these scriptures? Mark 16:5-8; I Corinthians 15:5.
6. Does Peter’s ministry in the early church seem effective? Acts 3:6-8; 5:25-29.

☞ We often associate the book of Acts to Paul’s ministry, but it contains much on Peter’s ministry as well. Peter was used mightily in the early years of the Church.

7. What difficult task was given Peter? Acts 10:34; 15:7-9. In what ways would his background make this more difficult?
8. What can we say about the character and personality of Peter? John 18:10, 11; 21:15-17. List three other traits you see.
9. How and when does tradition say Peter died? John 21:18, 19. Was the mode of death significant?

EXTRA-MILE QUESTION: Who was Peter’s wife? How does history say she died and what were Peter’s final words to her?

LESSON 2: THE PURPOSE, REALITY, AND CERTAINTY OF SALVATION

Scripture Reading: I Peter 1:1-12.

Memory Verse: “Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” (I Peter 1:5)

INTRODUCTION:

Many sermons and articles have been presented on salvation. Few can match the doxology presented to the elect by Peter.

Peter rejoiced because salvation was his personally, and for all eternity. As we tip-toe through these first twelve verses we can't help but sense the glory of the Lord.

This panoramic view of salvation is ours to study and experience. The proper perspective we receive will be helpful as we experience trials; and, yes, maybe even a time of “suffering and persecution.”

“When thou art fain to trace a map of thine own heart, An undiscovered land set down the largest part.”

-Richard Chenvix Trench

LESSON QUESTIONS:

1. To whom was this letter written? I Peter 1:1. [See map on page 22.]
2. What is the purpose and function of a salutation? I Peter 1:2. What other significant thoughts are in this verse? Matthew 24:31; Romans 1:20.
3. How is salvation explained? I Peter 1:3. What is the definition of the word “lively?”
4. Describe the certainty of our salvation. I Peter 1:4, 5; Numbers 23:19. What is meant by the word “kept?”
5. What is the purpose for our salvation in times of temptations and trials? I Peter 1:6, 7; II Corinthians 4:17, 18.
6. What is our salvation to be based upon? I Peter 1:8; John 3:3; 20:29. What does the phrase, “Joy unspeakable and full of glory, “mean to you?
7. Define the meaning of “end of your faith.” I Peter 1:9. [Please consult a Phillips or NIV translation.]
8. Whom did God use to present salvation to us? How? I Peter 1:10; Romans 16:25, 26.
9. Did the prophets always understand the fullness of their message? I Peter 1:11; Daniel 12:8, 9. Do we? I Corinthians 13:12; 5:7.
10. Discuss the angels' understanding of the reality, purpose, and certainty of salvation. I Peter 1:12.

EXTRA-MILE QUESTION: Salvation was given to man but withheld from others. What will be our relationship with the angels? Hebrews 1 [whole chapter].

LESSON 3: SALVATION LEAVES ITS MARK-HOLINESS

Scripture Reading: I Peter 1:13-25.

Memory Verse: “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.” (I Peter 1:15, 16)

INTRODUCTION:

Last week our study centered on salvation. Now Peter is going to encourage us to live a life befitting so great a salvation. In a practical application, it’s a challenge with which we often struggle.

We easily understand that God is holy and is to be revered at all times. But, is it our responsibility to be exactly like God in holiness?

W. E. Vine says that the adjective “holy” “... fundamentally signifies a separation from sin and a consecration to God.” Maybe being holy is best understood when we know man’s responsibility to it. We are known by how we conduct ourselves on a day-to-day basis. Our behavior should depict what is in our heart and mind.

Peter does not challenge us here with something that cannot be achieved. The attribute of holiness can be gained by conducting our life according to His Word. This experiential process can reveal to others that we have been born again.

LESSON QUESTIONS:

1. What in I Peter 1:13 alerts us to a preparation? Discuss the imperative “be sober” and its meaning.
2. What kind of pull does the world and your old life have? I Peter 1:14; Hebrews 12:1.
3. If we have the call of God [salvation], what does He expect? I Peter 1:15, 16; II Corinthians 7:1. Define the word “conversation.”
4. How are we going to be held responsible for our conduct? I Peter 1:17; Ecclesiastes 12:14. Do you also detect a call to reverence?
5. Why should we be motivated to a life of holiness and reverence? I Peter 1:18-20; Colossians 1:13, 14. Discuss this as an incentive in your life. I Corinthians 6:20.
6. Who transforms us from the realm of death to the realm of glory? I Peter 1:21.
7. List and discuss the three elements presented in the first part of I Peter 1:22.
8. What is one result from the application of holy living? I Peter 1:22; John 13:34; I John 4:7.
☞ Sacrificial love will play an important part to those addressed in this letter in the near future.
9. What is a good guide in establishing a holy life? I Peter 1:23; Hebrews 4:12.
10. Discuss the life expectancy of God’s Word and its fruit [us]? I Peter 1:24, 25; Matthew 24:35.

EXTRA-MILE QUESTION: List five attributes of the holiness of God that we also can attain Include one scriptural reference for each one.

LESSON 4: HOLINESS LEAVES ITS MARK-A PECULIAR PEOPLE

Scripture Reading: I Peter 2:1-10.

Memory Verse: “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light...” (I Peter 2:9)

INTRODUCTION:

Our study begins with a transition paragraph (I Peter 2:1-3) starting with the word “wherefore.” We should consider this as a connector from what has been said previously to what he is about to present. This should be helpful in our discussion.

After covering salvation, Peter now presents to us some views on Christian growth. A quick look in the mirror will reveal that this can be a bit overwhelming; for instance, his description of the Christian brotherhood. This exalted conception is given by one who was a strict Jew, practiced circumcision, and believed in the Mosaic institutions. These descriptive titles placed upon all Christians become very significant

In our study all of them will be addressed, but let’s look at one that can be misused. Often we hear that we should be able to pick out a Christian from within a group of people. This suggests a certain appearance would be necessary. In our modern usage, “peculiar” has come to mean “odd.” However, the original thought in scripture means to be “purchased.” Brethren, being God’s own possession doesn’t lessen this impact.

In conclusion, this lesson covers thoughts that are far too glorious for the minds of men to totally comprehend.

LESSON QUESTIONS:

1. When one desires to conduct himself properly, what are some hindrances to personal growth? I Peter 2:1; Romans 6:6. Do these ever occur in the church setting? James 4:11.
2. How can we plant seed for personal growth? I Peter 2:2. Can mature Christians also be affected? I Corinthians 3:1-3.
3. Why are there results from planting seed for spiritual growth? I Peter 2:3; Psalm 19:7-11.
4. What changes take place as a result of personal growth? I Peter 2:4.
5. Who are these “lively stones?” I Peter 2:5; Ephesians 2:20-22. What is the desire and character of these stones? Hebrews 13:15, 16. Define the term “to communicate.”
6. How does being part of this spiritual house affect us? I Peter 2:6. What is meant by the word “confounded?” Romans 9:33; 1:16.
7. Why is there a negative aspect revealed? I Peter 2:7, 8.
8. We have in I Peter 2:9a a detailed description of a Christian. Let’s discuss each one.
Chosen generation - I Peter 2:4 may help. Royal priesthood - II Corinthians 5:19, 20. Holy nation - literal and/or spiritual? Peculiar people - see introduction.
9. How should we show our gratitude for such a transformation? I Peter 2:9b, 10; Psalm 15-17.

EXTRA-MILE QUESTION: Compare this lesson with these additional scriptures and apply them to your own personal situation: I Corinthians 6:19, 20; Romans 12:1, 2.

LESSON 5: SUBMISSION BECAUSE OF LOVE

Scripture Reading: I Peter 2:11-25.

Memory Verse: “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.” (I Peter 2:21)

INTRODUCTION:

We are quickly brought back down to earth by Peter as he presents us with our responsibilities and obligations. We should walk carefully as we identify the demands put upon God’s children.

We are first challenged to be subject to the civil government. A good citizen can do much to promote the good name of Jesus Christ. No doubt our churches have been hurt because of the civil misconduct of some of its members. A radical reaction by either a government or its citizens can lead to unnecessary suffering. However, we are given this guideline, which can lead to some persecution.

The message Peter gives to servants in I Peter 2:18 applies to us in whatever capacity we serve in our secular work, whether we are working for an employer or we are self-employed. This applies anytime that we are serving others in any capacity. The way we serve others offers an opportunity to demonstrate the servant attitude that our Savior showed through his life on earth. We work for imperfect people that do not always treat us fairly. What will be our attitude when an injustice happens? Will we continue to do our work as a faithful employee? Are we willing to follow the example of Jesus, who “was oppressed and afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth”?

*Not once or twice in our fair island-story
The path or duty was the way to glory.
He, that ever following her
commands, On with toil of heart and knees and hands,
Thro’ the long gorge to the far light has won His path
upward, and prevailed, Shall find the toppling crags of Duty scaled
Are close upon the shining table lands
To which our God Himself is moon and sun.* -Alfred Tennyson

LESSON QUESTIONS:

1. How is Peter making a special appeal to God’s people? I Peter 2:11, 12. What should be the reason for any accusations against us? Philippians 2:15; Matthew 5:16.
2. Discuss the expected duty these verses call us to. I Peter 2:13, 14. How far should this submission go? Acts 5:28, 29.
3. What is the motivation for submission? I Peter 2:15. Explain the phrase “ignorance of foolish men.”
4. In what ways could we abuse the liberty Christ has given us? I Peter 2:16; Galatians 5:13; I Corinthians 8:9-13.
5. How do we apply this in our contemporary society? I Peter 2:17. Remember, some leaders are a Nero.
6. What should a servant’s attitude be toward his master? I Peter 2:18. What if the master is cruel and difficult to get along with?
7. How is a servant supposed to respond to a harsh taskmaster? I Peter 2:19, 20. Why? Matthew 5:10; II Corinthians 4:17.
8. What example do we have for suffering wrongfully? I Peter 2:21-23; Isaiah 53:1-3.
9. How far was Christ willing to submit Himself? I Peter 2:24; Isaiah 53:4, 5. Why? Romans 5:8; Galatians 5:13.
10. What is our gain from the act of submission as a way of life? I Peter 2:25; Isaiah 53:6.

EXTRA-MILE QUESTION: List some ways that you serve others in your personal life and in your professional life. Can you think of examples of when you have suffered unjustly in that service? How did you handle the situation?

LESSON 6: MARITAL RELATIONS AND CORPORATE CONDUCT

Scripture Reading: I Peter 3:1-12.

Memory Verse: “For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile.” (I Peter 3:10)

INTRODUCTION:

Peter continues his presentation on the expected duties of a Christian. We will center on a husband-wife relationship and also our relationship within the corporate body of Christ

We must be careful in our study that we gain the proper intentions of the writer. Peter is not condoning slavery in the marital setting. “The word subjection has no thought of inferiority or servile subjection. It describes the relation peculiar to believers, that is, the Christian grace of yielding ones’ preference to another. The phrase ‘without the word’ is literally ‘without speech,’ meaning the silent preaching of conduct” (Edgar C. James).

Not to be taken lightly is the tenderness man is to show toward the gentler sex. The mutual consideration, then, is carried over to the corporate conduct of all of God’s people.

LESSON QUESTIONS:

1. What is the purpose for wives to be in submission, especially when their husbands are unbelievers? I Peter 3:1, 2. How does this fit into our current teachings on humanism, equal rights, and personal freedom?
2. How does the world usually judge beauty? I Peter 3:3; I Timothy 2:9. How do most television commercials portray today’s woman?
3. Discuss the more accurate description of a beautiful woman. I Peter 3:4, 5; I Timothy 2:10. Husbands, do you recognize and appreciate this quality when it shines forth?
4. Who is cited from the Old Testament as an example? I Peter 3:6; Genesis 18:12. Discuss the phrase “not afraid with any amazement.”
5. Okay, guys! Does the Lord leave us out? I Peter 3:7; Ephesians 5:25.
6. Analyze the three considerations a husband is expected to show toward his wife.
[a] As unto the weaker vessel.
[b] As being heirs together of the grace of life. Galatians 3:28, 29.
[c] That your prayers be not hindered. I Timothy 2:8.
7. How is the corporate body of Christ supposed to respond to one another? I Peter 3:8; Ephesians 4:32.
8. What does the corporate body forfeit when they resort to carnal tactics? I Peter 3:9. How are those handled who do such? Romans 12:17-19.
9. Discuss the advantages of an environment of PEACE in the church. I Peter 3:10, 11.
10. What is a strong reason for enforcing proper corporate conduct? I Peter 3:12.

EXTRA-MILE QUESTION: Are you a blessing to your marriage and your church? As you address these thoughts, seek God for guidance and strength. Find and list five scriptures that will encourage you to improve.

LESSON 7: SUFFERING-A PART OF THE EARTHLY PILGRIMAGE

Scripture Reading: I Peter 3:13-4:11.

Memory Verse: “But and if ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled....” (I Peter 3:14)

INTRODUCTION:

A study on the suffering of a Christian should never be easy. Peter presents to us the position of a Christian suffering both as a citizen and a saint.

This lesson deals more with our attitude towards suffering. Many of those that Peter is directing this letter to will be persecuted and even die for their personal commitment to Jesus Christ. When all is said and done it’s this individual commitment that really matters. As we read earlier, Peter also faced a martyr’s death.

The passage of scripture that has always been most difficult to interpret we will save for the extra-mile question. The language is not consistent enough to imply a doctrine of a second chance. We should also consider that Noah and his family were saved in spite of the flood, not because of the flood. It’s also interesting to note that Noah was considered a preacher of righteousness.

There is even in normal times a period of physical suffering, mental suffering and heartbreak. Often the providence of God takes us through difficult personal times. In many cases God is allowing us a time to apply spiritual principles and preparing us to be a more effective servant.

LESSON QUESTIONS:

1. Why is it unnatural to suffer for doing good? I Peter 3:13. How should we react if it happens to us? I Peter 3:14; Matthew 5:10-12.
2. Why will others notice that we have a special hope? I Peter 3:15. What opportunity might present itself? Colossians 4:6.
3. Should we feel guilty if we suffer because of our good Christian behavior? I Peter 3:16, 17. What kind of assurance can we have during these difficult times?
4. What was the character and consequences of Christ’s suffering? I Peter 3:18; Hebrews 9:26-28; Romans 8:11.
5. In what way does suffering for Christ affect our attitudes and conduct? I Peter 4:1, 2; Titus 2:12.
6. How does the world view it when we leave our past life of sin to serve the Lord? I Peter 4:3, 4; Ephesians 4:17-19. Witnessing to old friends and relatives is often difficult; how can we do it?
7. What must those who mock and make fun of Christians also face? I Peter 4:5. Is I Peter 4:6 talking about the Gospel being taught previous to or after physical death? I Peter 4:6.
8. Is this verse talking about the second coming of Jesus or their own personal death by persecution? I Peter 4:7; Genesis 6:13; Romans 13:11.
9. Why is it essential for our love to be literally “stretched out?” I Peter 4:8, 9.
10. As we near the second coming of Christ, we’ll very likely need this intense love to survive.
11. How does the Holy Spirit use us for the glory of God? I Peter 4:10, 11; Romans 12:6-8.

EXTRA-MILE QUESTION: Read I Peter 3:19-22. Part 1 - Did Christ preach between His death and resurrection? Part 2 - Did Christ offer them a second chance? Part 3 - Does water baptism save us?

LESSON 8: CONDUCTING A MINISTRY AMID SUFFERING

Scripture Reading: I Peter 4:12-5:14.

Memory Verse: “Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.” (I Peter 4:19)

INTRODUCTION:

Our desires would be that the world would be without trials and suffering. However, as realists we know that even devout Christians face suffering and hardship. C. H. Spurgeon said, “You begin to reign the moment you begin to suffer well.”

Persecution can come in various forms. It can be vile slander or ridiculous false charges. It can come from not engaging in the evil others promote. The extreme is actual physical abuse. Whatever the mode, it should always force us nearer to the Heavenly Father.

Leadership has a grave responsibility to help the church and its individual members through difficult times. We should rally around those who are in testings and trials. So often they are shunned and even disfellowshipped.

These final 22 verses are a resounding conclusion to this enlightening epistle. May they always be a light in the dark times of oppression and discouragement

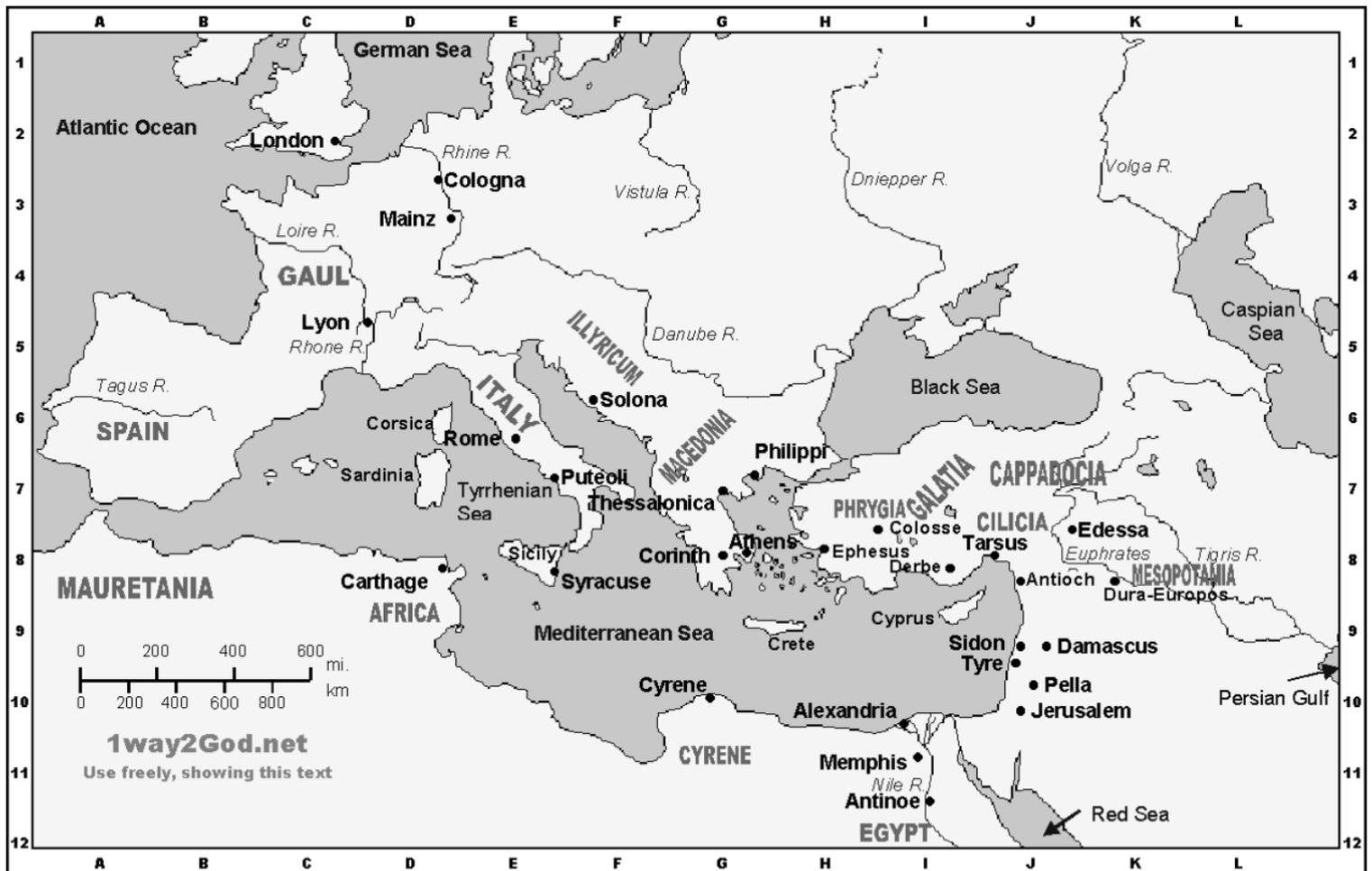
*I thank thee, Lord, that all my joy
Is touched with pain;
That shadows/all on brightest hours;
That thorns remain;
So that earth's bliss may be my guide,
And not my chain.*

-Author Unknown

LESSON QUESTIONS:

1. What is the necessary attitude toward severe tests and trials? I Peter 4:12-14; Acts 5:41.
2. How important is the cause for our suffering? I Peter 4:15, 16. If the cause is justified, do we need to be afraid? Luke 10:16; 12:8.
3. To whom and why does the test come first? I Peter 4:17, 18; Luke 12:48; Matthew 5:13.
4. When we are called upon to endure trials, what should be our main concerns? I Peter 4:19; Romans 8:38, 39.
5. What appeal is given to the leaders of the church, and what is to be their attitude? I Peter 5:1-3; I Corinthians 9:23-27.
6. Why are leaders not alone in the often-difficult tasks they perform? I Peter 5:4. Is this type of incentive selfish?
7. Discuss the difference between self-exaltation and being exalted by God. I Peter 5:5, 6. How does this affect our being used of God? II Timothy 2:21.
8. Why is it difficult to commit obstacles to the Lord's care? I Peter 5:7; II Samuel 22:3.
9. Why should Peter's warning concerning our adversary carry so much weight with us? I Peter 5:8, 9; Luke 22:31, 32.
10. What is the result of conducting a ministry amid suffering? I Peter 5:10, 11.

EXTRA-MILE QUESTION: Read I Peter 5:12-14. Discuss and provide information about Silvanus, Marcus, and Babylon.



HISTORICAL SKETCH ON II PETER

Author:

The authorship of this epistle has been challenged by critics. Modern critics say it's a work of the second century by some unknown person. It seems the epistle states some helpful facts to identify its writer.

- (1) The name of Simon Peter is in the introduction (1:1).
- (2) The writer is also an apostle (1:1).
- (3) The writer has written an earlier epistle (3:1).
- (4) The writer knew the Apostle Paul (3:15, 16).
- (5) Was at the mount of transfiguration (1:16-18).
- (6) It foretells of Peter's death (1:13-15).

With this evidence and for the purpose of this study we will acknowledge Peter as the author.

Date and Place Written:

This epistle was written shortly before Peter's death, around A.D. 67. It is thought it was written on the way to or at Rome.

Destination of Epistle:

To the churches in Asia Minor; however, the intent and distribution may have been more widespread than I Peter.

Occasion for Writing:

The theme of II Peter is knowledge. It seems to have a two-fold purpose. The first being a stern warning. The second being exhortation and encouragement. The growth of the church brought in some who were espousing false doctrine. The world also was pushing against God's truth. The focal point of the epistle is to resist error and grow in knowledge.

LESSON 9: STABILITY THROUGH GROWTH

Scripture Reading: II Peter 1:1-11.

Memory Verse: For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (II Peter 1:8)

INTRODUCTION:

Peter was greatly concerned that all would learn to know and accept the counsel of God. He was convinced this would provide a church with stable Christians.

It was his desire that they should be able to detect error and meet the dangers of their particular time period. Christians today also face the same struggles with only the mode or method changing.

The main thrust is knowing the truth of God’s Word and applying it to our everyday life. Peter presents to us several qualities that can and will help us toward spiritual maturity.

The spiritual progression grants to us the power to “be diligent.” The end result is the ability to proceed in the Christian walk without falling or stumbling.

“The insuring of one’s election is spoken of, not in respect of God, for there is no uncertainty on His part, but on our part. Real joy comes from being sure we’re saved. That does not come by sitting down and waiting for religious feelings. Active pursuit of spiritual things and the service of Christ is the quickest way to find inner assurance that the Holy Spirit is indwelling” (Edgar C. James).

LESSON QUESTIONS:

1. In the epistle introduction, how is the foundation of our precious faith described? II Peter 1:1, 2.
2. How do we acquire the things that pertain unto life and godliness? II Peter 1:3. Discuss the concept of true knowledge being bestowed as a gift of God through His power. James 1:17.
3. What is meant by being partakers of the divine nature? II Peter 1:4; John 1:12; I John 3:1, 2. List some benefits of escaping the corruption of this world.

The next three questions come from II Peter 1:5-7. Discuss these fruits as they relate to Christian growth and stability.

4. Faith—Romans 10:17. Virtue—Courage or fortitude. Knowledge—True wisdom from God.
5. Temperance—Proper use through restraint. Patience—Bearing all trials and difficulties. James 1:3. Godliness—Reflecting the attributes of God.
6. Brotherly Kindness—Hebrews 13:1, 2. Charity—The grease that makes it all work. I Corinthians 13:13.
7. What is the result of adding the above fruits to our lives? II Peter 1:8.
8. What is the result of NOT adding these fruits to our lives? II Peter 1:9; Titus 2:14. How would this hinder growth and stability?
9. When we practice God’s ways in our lives, what can we be sure of? II Peter 1:10; I John 2:10.
10. Discuss the witness a stable Christian represents to others. II Peter 1:11.

EXTRA-MILE QUESTION: Discuss the phrase in II Peter 1:10, “Make your calling and election sure.” Is this done on our part or on God’s part? Check other translations including Phillips’.

LESSON 10: THE AUTHORITY FOR MANAGING A CHRISTIAN WALK

Scripture Reading: II Peter 1:12-21.

Memory Verse: “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” (II Peter 1:21)

INTRODUCTION:

The key to any religion is what its beliefs are based upon. Peter bares his heart that all may see Jesus. This revelation was based upon his actual experience and the responsibility he felt toward God’s people.

His open discussion about his soon coming death should not be taken lightly. His life was changed because of the time he spent with Jesus, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and the testimony of the prophets. These experiences gave him great strength as the time of his death drew near. God inspired him to share this compelling faith so that it might help others.

No other religion is based upon a supernatural authority that was eye witnessed by thousands. Even historians pen the mighty counts of this era. Other religions survive by intellectual assent. A Christian bases his authority upon a known and proven power, one that has been seen, experienced, and recorded from a divine viewpoint.

*Anew we pledge ourselves to thee,
To follow where thy truth shall lead;
Afloat upon its boundless sea,
Who sails with God is safe indeed.*

-Author Unknown

LESSON QUESTIONS:

1. What value is there of being reminded of truths we know and practice? II Peter 1:12.
2. How long did Peter feel responsible to remind and encourage his brethren? II Peter 1:13. What does it take to “stir you up” regarding God’s world?
3. How was Peter handling the fact that his martyrdom was near? II Peter 1:14; John 13:36; 21:18, 19.
4. What provision was Peter making as his death drew near? II Peter 1:15. Do we make the most of every opportunity?
5. Why was Peter so certain that his teachings were based upon the authority of God? II Peter 1:16; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 5:15.
6. What supernatural event was Peter using as an example of this authority? II Peter 1:17, 18; Marie 9:2-8. Do you think this experience was helpful to Peter in facing death?
7. What authority are we to depend upon? II Peter 1:19; Psalm 119:105. Do you think these men were grounded in the Old Testament scriptures?
8. To what great event was Peter feeling very close? Titus 2:13; Revelation 22:16.
9. Where does our authority NOT come from, and how should we react to the human viewpoint? II Peter 1:20; I Corinthians 2:13.
10. What is the authority of the scriptures based upon? II Peter 1:21; II Samuel 23:2. What should be the final authority for managing the Christian walk? II Timothy 3:15-17.

EXTRA-MILE QUESTION: Describe the basis for interpreting difficult passages of scripture. Use scriptures or examples not given in this lesson.

LESSON 11: THE DANGERS OF ABANDONING TRUE KNOWLEDGE

Scripture Reading: II Peter 2:1-22.

Memory Verse: “For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.” (II Peter 2:21)

INTRODUCTION:

In our recent studies we have read about the many rewards and advantages of acquiring the knowledge of God. It is encouraging when we can dwell upon the positive benefits of the gospel. It should also be encouraging when we are able to identify and recognize the deceit of Satan.

Even as Peter wrote, the devil was seeking to make inroads to dilute the purity of the church. “The tone of the epistle now changes from grave exhortation to stern warning concerning error. Having set forth the true light, Peter now puts his readers on guard against dangerous false teachers” (Edgar C. James).

Striking examples are provided on how the judgment of God dealt severely with those who sought to pervert the truth of God. This lesson reveals the conduct, character, and condemnation of false teachers. It further reveals the results as they make inroads into the church.

The weaker Christian appears to be the most vulnerable, but even stable Christians must be aware of Satan’s tactics. When we know the way of God and turn aside from it, the result is devastating. Recognizing and espousing the dangers of abandoning true knowledge can lead to a stronger church. A stronger church can better equip and protect themselves from those who seek to demoralize God’s people through false teaching.

LESSON QUESTIONS:

1. How does Peter describe false teachers, their message, their motive, and their future? II Peter 2:1-3. How are they further described by Paul and Jude? Romans 16:18; Jude 4.
2. Discuss the three examples of divine judgment that dealt with those who sought to pervert God’s truth? II Peter 2:4-6.
3. What is said of Lot in spite of his surroundings? II Peter 2:7, 8. Study the word “vexed” and how it should affect us when we see truth perverted. Psalm 119:53; Ezra 9:1-5.
4. What fate awaits those who pervert the truth? II Peter 2:9. How are some of them described? II Peter 2:10; Jude 10, 16.
5. Why don’t false teachers realize what they’re doing? II Peter 2:11, 12. In whose hands must we leave them for judgment? II Peter 2:13.
6. Who is affected most by false teachers? II Peter 2:14. What should this compel the church to do?
7. What happened when Balaam chose the wrong way? II Peter 2:15, 16; Revelation 2:14.
8. What do we gain by abandoning true knowledge for deceit? II Peter 2:17, 18; Jude 12, 13.
9. Instead of promised freedom from God’s restraints, what really takes place? II Peter 2:19, 20; Matthew 12:43-45.
10. Why would it be better to be an unbeliever than to have believed and turned aside? II Peter 2:21, 22; Luke 9:62.

EXTRA-MILE QUESTION: What steps can we take to prevent the perversion or substitution of God’s truth?

LESSON 12: THEY LAUGHED AT NOAH, TOO

Scripture Reading: II Peter 3:1-9.

Memory Verse: “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” (II Peter 3:9)

INTRODUCTION:

No one really enjoys being embarrassed by others. Have you ever thought about the scoffing and ridicule that Noah must have put up with? There are those in the world who like to make fun of all Christians. Have you ever been embarrassed because of your stand for the Lord?

Evidently there were scoffers who posed a question about why their Lord hadn't returned. Peter accepted the challenge and cited three supernatural events to support his answer. Firstly, the creation of their universe. Secondly, the universal flood in which the world (scoffers included) perished. Thirdly, that they, too, will face judgment when the world is refined by fire.

He further points out that the delay they refer to could be to their advantage. It allows them time to turn from their wicked ways and serve the Lord. This seems to offer us a way to deal with modern-day scoffers. We are encouraged to stand our ground and offer them an alternative. This of course, is salvation through Jesus Christ. Oh, yes! Remember, they laughed at Noah, too.

LESSON QUESTIONS:

1. What was the purpose in writing this epistle? II Peter 3:1.
2. What method was he using to stir them up? II Peter 3:2; II Peter 1:21.
3. Why was Peter's warning important? II Peter 3:3; Jude 18. How do you think the term “last days” should be interpreted?
4. Peter gives us an example of their mocking; could this still be used today? II Peter 3:4; Matthew 24:48-51. Can you think of other examples used against Christians?
5. What can we do? II Timothy 2:23.
6. What is the basic problem with those who mock? II Peter 3:5. Why are these men lacking knowledge?
7. What form of catastrophic judgment did God once use? II Peter 3:6; Genesis 7:11, 21. During the construction of the Ark, do you think Noah faced scoffers.
8. How will scoffers from our day be dealt with? II Peter 3:7. What does the term “perdition” mean?
9. Unlike the scoffers, how should we regard time concerning the second coming of the Lord? II Peter 3:8; Psalm 90:4.
10. How does God really feel about the ungodly and scoffers? II Peter 3:9; Isaiah 59:1; Ezekiel 18:23. What should be our attitude towards the scoffer?
11. How did the Lord treat us in our time of being an unbeliever? I Timothy 1:15-17.

EXTRA-MILE QUESTION: There is a great likeness between Noah's day and ours. Do you believe that history often repeats itself! Explain your answer.

LESSON 13: PETER, AN APOSTLE OF CHRIST

Scripture Reading: II Peter 3:10-18.

Memory Verse: “Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” (II Peter 3:13)

INTRODUCTION:

We are bringing to a close our study of Peter’s concern for his labor of love. Just as a good lawyer often combines all his thoughts in the closing argument, so does Peter in this epistle.

He brings us back to reality with the fact that Jesus will return, and that judgment will come. For some it will be the end of them and their works. To others, it is a springboard to the future.

This reward is something to long for—a kingdom where righteousness is commonplace, not the exception. He then repeats an earlier appeal for them (and us) to be diligent in our Christian living. He culminates his thinking by presenting that Paul and he desire the same things.

His closing doxology contains both positive and negative appeal. “One who grows in grace without knowledge of the Word becomes a ‘hothouse’ Christian. To grow in knowledge without accompanying grace is to be equally ineffective. We must have the Word as food for the soul, study it regularly and systematically, and always be fully yielded to the Spirit’s control” (Edgar C. James).

“Ready”

*I would be ready, Lord,
My house in order set,
None of the work thou gavest me
To do unfinished yet.*

*I would be ready, Lord,
My house in order set,
None of the work thou gavest me
To do unfinished yet.*

*I would be waking, Lord each day,
each hour for thee;
Assured that thus I wait thee well,
Whene'er thy coming be.*

*I would be watching, Lord,
With lamp well-trimmed and clea
Quick to throw open wide the door,
What time thou drawest near.*

*I would be waiting, Lord,
Because I cannot know
If in the night or morning watch
I may be called to go.*

*I would be living, Lord,
As ever in thine eye;
For whoso lives the nearest thee
The fittest is to die.*

-Margaret J. Preston

LESSON QUESTIONS:

1. How will the day of the Lord come? II Peter 3:10; Matthew 24:43 I Thessalonians 5:2.
2. What judgment is brought upon the earth? II Peter 3:10; Micah 1:4, 7. Could there be a period of 1,000 years in II Peter 3:10? Revelation 20:4.
3. Why must we be careful what we spend our life building? II Peter 3:10; I Corinthians 3:12, 13.
4. Knowing the outcome of man’s accomplishments, what question is posed to both the believer and the unbeliever? II Peter 3:11, 12.
5. What superlative reward awaits those who accept Peter’s challenge? II Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1-7.
6. Is this reward automatic, or do we have a grave responsibility? Explain. II Peter 3:14; Philippians 1:10.
7. Does Peter stand alone in his great exhortation? II Peter 3:15, 16. What do you think his purpose was in making this reference?
8. Describe Peter’s final warning and the effect it should have on us. II Peter 3:17.
9. What would be the best response we could make to Peter’s warnings? II Peter 3:18a. Compare with Ephesians 4:14, 15.
10. How does his final doxology challenge you? II Peter 3:18b.

EXTRA-MILE QUESTION: Peter’s and Paul’s approaches were quite different, even leading to times of personal conflict; but in the end, what can we say? II Peter 3:18b; Romans 11:36.