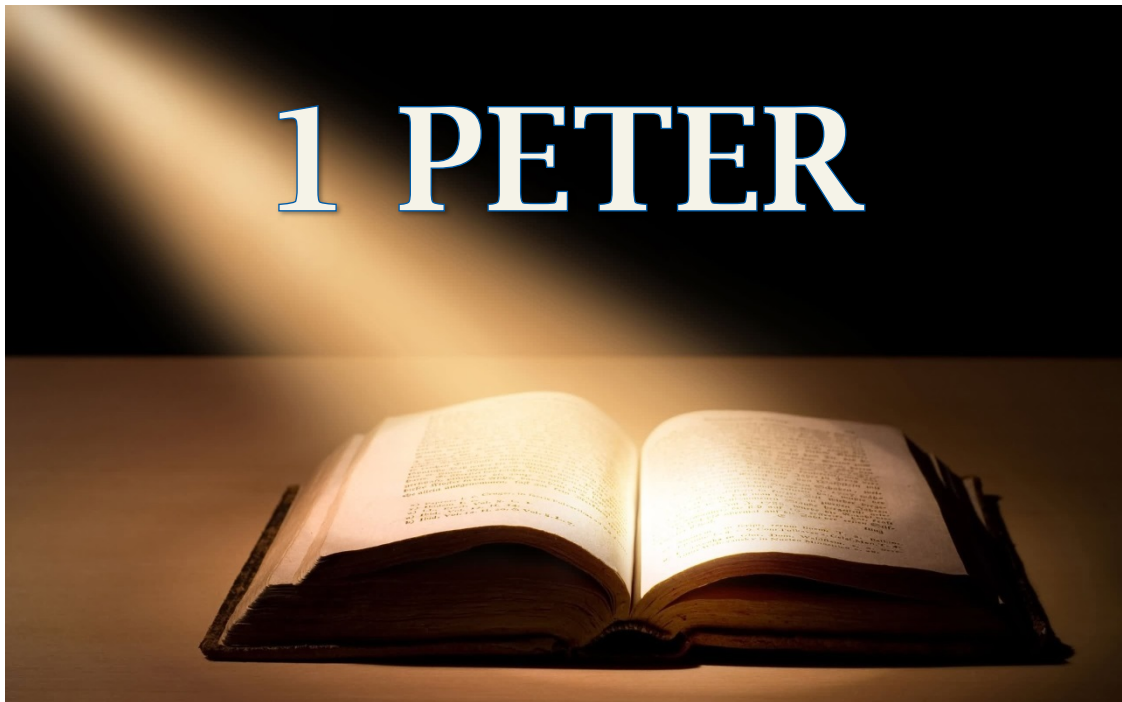


# BIBLE STUDIES



*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. (1 Peter 1:3)*



## Introduction

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This letter tells us it is written by the apostle Peter (1:1). In 5:1 he tells us he was a witness of Christ's sufferings. 5:12 suggests that Silvanus was the messenger who carried this letter to the readers, although it is possible that he was the scribe who had written the letter for Peter.

Peter says he is writing from "Babylon" (5:13). There was not much left of the ancient city of Babylon at this time and the name "Babylon" was used as a reference to Rome in the book of Revelation (Revelation 16:19; 17:5; 18:2). So it is probable that Peter was writing from Rome. Mark, the author of the Gospel and who was Peter's associate, is with him (5:13).

Peter writes to Jewish and Gentile Christians scattered through Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia (1:1), in other words through most of modern Turkey.

It is clear that these Christians are facing suffering (suffering is mentioned 17 times in the letter). Peter encourages them to faithfully trust and obey God in these circumstances, especially to love each other. Their lives are to be a witness to Jesus by what they say and do. He puts before them the hope of heaven and the example of Jesus to encourage them.

These instructions and encouragement are very relevant for us today in a society increasingly hostile to Christian faith but still needing to hear the message of the gospel.

## Study 1 - 1 Peter 1:1-12 - Living Hope

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Peter calls the believers “strangers in the world” (1:1; 2:11) and says they face “all kinds of trials” (1:6). Suffering is mentioned 17 times in the letter (see especially 4:12-13).

1. What would be the natural reaction to facing suffering?  
How do you react to difficulty or discouragement in your Christian life?
  
2. Peter seeks to encourage them by reminding them of the “living hope” they have (1:3-5). What is this hope? What is this hope based on?
  
3. What is it that keeps you going in difficulty? How do you react to the encouragement of 1:3-5?
  
4. What is God’s purpose in the difficulties we face (1:6-7)?

5. 1:3-5 spoke of their future hope. 1:8-9 talks of their present Christian life. How does he describe their experience?
  
6. In 1:9-12 Peter wants to increase our sense of wonder at the salvation we have in Christ. How does he do this? What is your reaction?

## Study 2 - 1 Peter 1:13-2:10 - Holy Living

“Therefore” (1:13) - knowing the hope and salvation we have through Jesus should encourage us to live for God.

1. What evil desires are we tempted to conform to (1:14)?  
What does it mean for us to be holy?
  
2. In 1:17-21 how does Peter seek to motivate us to live a holy life (look at the details)?

3. Holiness is not expressed in abstract piety but in active love for other Christians (1:22; 3:8). How should this work out in practice (see also 2:1)?
4. How does he describe God's word (1:23-25)? How are we to grow (2:2)?
5. In the Old Covenant God was worshipped in a building, a temple made of stones. What is the image in 2:4-8? What part does Jesus play (note the Old Testament quotations)? What does it mean for us to be "living stones"?
6. Look at the details of 2:9-10. What does each say about our privilege and responsibility as Christians? (Each of these is rich in Old Testament background: Isaiah 43:20c, 21; Exodus 19:5-6; Hosea 2:23). What does all of this mean for the way we live?

## Study 3 - 1 Peter 2:11-3:7 - Submission to Authority

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1. What does it mean to be “aliens and strangers in the world” (2:11)? Why should we live good lives (2:12)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Why should we submit to those in authority (2:13-17)? Are there exceptions to this rule?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. We don’t have slavery in our society. How should we apply the teaching of 2:18-20?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. How should we respond to unjust treatment in today’s society (Employees and children may be powerless to resist injustice)? What does it mean, “...to this you were called” (2:21)?

5. How is Jesus an example to us? But he is more than an example. Why did he die (2:24-25)? How should we respond?
  
6. Note that 3:1-6 does not speak of the husbands' rights but of the wife's willing attitude. What is this attitude to be today? What is the wife's aim in 3:1-2? What does 3:3-4 mean? How should men act (3:7)?

## Study 4 - 1 Peter 3:8-22 - Suffering as Christians

1. How are we to treat each other as Christians (3:8)? What does each of these instructions require?
  
2. What does 3:8-12 call us to do as we live in a hostile society? What does "do good" mean in practical terms (cf. 2:12, 15, 20; 3:1, 11, 13, 16, 17; 4:19)?

3. If we live as Christians people may ask us why. How are we to respond (3:15)?
4. How should we respond if we are persecuted (3:13-17)?  
3:14 says, "Do not fear their threats." Why not? And what is 3:15 telling us to do instead?
5. Peter is saying that suffering unjustly is so remarkable that it becomes a powerful witness leading unbelievers to salvation (2:12; 3:1-2). Do you agree? What is the result of Jesus' unjust suffering (3:18)? How does it encourage us?

*[3:19-22 is notoriously difficult to understand. I suggest you leave these verses and move on!]*

6. When society becomes more unchristian it is easy for us to withdraw into a holy huddle and to find our friends just among other Christians. What is this passage saying about engaging with society around us? Why?



## Study 5 - 1 Peter 4:1-19 - Living for God

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1. 4:1 looks back to 3:18. What attitude did Jesus have to suffering? What attitude should we have?
2. In what ways should we be different from the crowd? Why is it hard to be different (think of your family, work or friendship circles)?
3. In the church God is building his new community to be different to the society around us (4:8-11). What should characterise this new community?
4. What gifts does God give (4:10-11)? Who receives them and what are they to do with them?

5. Peter is saying suffering is normal for Christians (4:12). Why is this? How should we respond (4:12-16)?
  
6. Peter talks about “the end” and judgement several times (4:5-6, 7, 13, 17-18). How do these things shape our lives and our thinking? How should our perspective of life be different to unbelievers?

## Study 6 - 1 Peter 5:1-14 - Leadership

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1. What three qualifications does Peter have in encouraging the elders he is writing to? Who would you count as elders in our church?
  
2. What does it mean to be a shepherd? How should each of these alternative attitudes shape our ministries?
  - a. You must - you are willing*
  - b. Greedy - eager to serve*
  - c. Lording it over - examples (See Mark 10:45)*

3. What does it mean to call Jesus the Chief Shepherd (5:4)? Why is the promise here important for leaders?
4. What is to be our attitude to our leaders (5:5)? What does it mean to be humble in this context? How does it differ from low self-esteem?
5. How does he describe Satan's attack (5:8)? How should we resist him? Do we take this warning seriously?
6. What promises are given to those who serve faithfully (5:4, 6-7, 10-11)? When have these promises been of most importance to you?

## NOTES

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