

PRACTICAL LESSONS
FROM
THE EPISTLES OF PETER

by
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LESSON #1 - FIRST PETER (INTRODUCTION)

To Whom Addressed

The epistle is addressed, according to 1:1, to "the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." The contents of the epistle suggest that Peter was writing both to Jews and Gentiles (Especially observe 2:10 and 4:3 as references primarily applicable to Gentiles).

Time And Place Of Writing

The epistle was written from Babylon (5:13). There is little evidence as to when it was written, but commentaries generally place it sometime between 60 and 65 A.D. Concerning Babylon, Albert Barnes says: "The destruction of Babylon was gradual. It had not become an utter desert in the time of the apostles. In the first century of the Christian era a part of it was inhabited, though the greater portion of its former site was a waste.... Babylon, however, continued rapidly to decline, so that in the second century nothing remained but the walls."

Circumstances Surrounding The Epistle

It is obvious that the Christians to whom Peter was writing were enduring much persecution and suffering. See 1:6; 2:19-24; 3:14-17; 4:12-19. Peter, then, writes primarily to comfort them and exhort them to faithfulness as they face their trials and persecutions.

Facts About The Author Which Perfectly Suited Him For Writing These People

Peter is often remembered as the impetuous, often blundering, apostle. His sin in denying the Lord stands out on the pages of the New Testament. No one could question, however, the fact that Peter was filled with a genuine love for the Lord (John 13:8,9), a strong faith in Him as the Son of God (Matt. 16:16; John 6:68,69; 2 Peter 1:16-18), a humble sense of his unworthiness in Christ's presence (Luke 5:8), and a child-like anticipation of heaven. He had experienced persecution and suffering himself, and had even been shown that he would eventually die for the Lord (John 21:18,19; 2 Peter 1:14). He knew the sting of rebuke, the discouragement that comes when one has tried and failed, and the difficulty of picking oneself up when he has fallen. Through all, though, he had persevered and had developed into a strong and mature disciple of the Lord. He was one to whom these suffering and persecuted, possibly discouraged, Christians could relate, the ideal man to encourage them in these difficult times.

Questions From The Above Material

1. To whom was this letter addressed?
2. From what city was it written?

3. What date is generally given?
4. What was Peter's purpose in writing?
5. Discuss briefly what Peter had experienced in his own life that would enable his readers to relate to him.
6. Consider John 14:25,26 and John 16:12,13. What had Jesus promised His apostles that especially qualified them for the writing of scripture?

Questions Concerning The Life And Character Of Peter Himself

1. List two or three occasions when Peter demonstrated great love for Jesus and faith in Him while Jesus was yet on earth.
2. List two or three occasions when Peter faltered.
3. Consider Luke 5:8 along with its context. Does this verse indicate strength or weakness in Peter? Give the reason for your answer.
4. Consider Acts, chapters 1-12. List two or three occasions when Peter demonstrated great courage.
5. List some occasions of suffering found in these same chapters.
6. Consider John 21:18,19. Summarize briefly Jesus' words to Peter, indicating that Peter one day would die for Him.
7. List some practical lessons we can learn from the study of Peter's life.

LESSON #2 - ASSURANCE OF A FUTURE INHERITANCE

Answer the following questions from 1 Peter 1:1-12.

1. According to verse 3, by what means have Christians come to have a lively (living) hope?
2. How is the Christian's inheritance described in verse 4?
3. Verse 5 says that Christians are "kept" unto salvation. What is said of God's part in this "keeping" Of man's part?
4. According to verse 6, what does this hope of salvation produce in a Christian? What was bringing them heaviness at this time?
5. What was being tested by their temptations and trials? How does Peter describe the value of this? v. 7
6. What three things does a Christian do even though he cannot see Christ, according to verse 8?
7. What is the end or outcome of our faith?
8. What is said of the Old Testament prophets as they wrote of this salvation? verses 10,11
9. What evidence do you see in these verses for the inspiration of those prophets?
10. For whose benefit were these things written according to verse 12? What is said of angels in this verse?

Special Challenge: Verses 5 and 9 speak of "salvation" as something to be received at the end of life. But we have salvation now, don't we? Discuss this.

Special Challenge: List some Old Testament prophecies that pointed to man's salvation.

Special Challenge: In what ways would the passage studied in this lesson encourage suffering Christians?

LESSON #3 - INCENTIVES TO A HOLY LIFE

Answer the following questions from 1 Peter 1:13-25.

1. Briefly state the commands found in verses 13-16.

2. Observe the word "wherefore" (therefore) in verse 13. This word suggests that what is being said in verses 13-16 is based upon what had been previously said. What great truth had been taught in the verses just before verse 13 that provides the basis for the commands of these verses?

3. In what manner are we to pass the time of our sojourning (stay) on earth? verse 17

4. What is said of the Father in this same verse that should cause us to do so?

5. What further considerations, given in verses 18-20, ought to cause us to pass our time in this manner?

6. What command is given in verse 22? With what is it to be obeyed?

7. Peter uses the term "purified" and "born again" to describe the state of these Christians. By what means had they reached this state, according to verses 22,23?

8. How is the permanence of God's word described? This is in contrast to what two things? vs. 23-25

Special challenge: The word "precious" is found seven times in 1 and 2 Peter (six times in NASV). Write down the references that contain the word, and tell what is described in each reference as being precious.

Special challenge: What is the meaning of the expression of verse 13: "Gird up the loins of your mind." Explain the imagery used.

LESSON #4 - CHRISTIANS' RELATIONSHIP TO GOD

Answer the following questions from 1 Peter 2:1-12.

1. What two things are essential if one is to grow spiritually, according to verses 1,2?
2. What kind of stone is Christ to the Christian, according to verses 4,6,7?
3. What kind is He to the disobedient? verses 4,7,8
4. To what are Christians compared in verse 5? Compare translations. The King James version use the word "lively" in this verse. What word is used in other translations?
5. What is the Christian's purpose according to this same verse?
6. How are Christians described in verse 9?
7. What is their purpose according to this verse?
8. How are Christians described in verse 11?
9. How are they told to conduct themselves in verses 11,12?

Special challenge: Be prepared to discuss the following.

1. Christians as a spiritual house -
2. Christians as a priesthood -
3. Christians as a chosen generation (race) -
4. Christians as a holy nation -
5. Christians as a peculiar people (His own special people) -
6. Christians as strangers (aliens) and pilgrims -

LESSON #5 - LIFE'S RELATIONSHIPS - PART 1

Answer the following questions from 1 Peter 2:13-25.

The Christian's responsibility to government- verses 13-17

1. Why should Christians submit to every ordinance of man, according to verse 13?
2. What is the purpose of rulers? v. 14
3. What will result from our well doing? v. 15
4. What four relationships are mentioned in verse 17? What is the Christian's attitude to be toward each?

Christian servants' responsibilities toward masters - verses 18-25

1. What two types of masters are mentioned in verse 18? What was to be the Christian servant's attitude toward either type?
2. When is one acceptable to God in his suffering, according to verses 19,20?
3. Discuss the actions of Christ that make Him our perfect example in suffering. verses 21-23
4. Verse 21 says that Christians were called hereunto (for this purpose). Write a brief statement regarding the meaning and application of this statement.
5. What did Christ accomplish in His suffering? vs. 24,25
6. What enabled Jesus to endure His suffering so patiently, according to verse 23? Consider 1 Peter 4:19. What should we do, enabling us to endure our suffering patiently?

Discussion questions:

1. Are there any conditions under which a Christian should refuse to obey the law?

2. To what extent should Bible teaching on master-servant relationships be applied to employer-employee relationships? What options would be open to an unhappy employee of today that would not have been open to an unhappy servant of the first century?

LESSON #6 - LIFE'S RELATIONSHIPS - PART 2

Answer the following questions from 1 Peter 3:1-12

Husband - wife relationships - verses 1-7.

1. What might be accomplished by a Christian wife's subjection to a non-Christian husband? verses 1,2
2. What is not to be emphasized in one's adorning? v. 3
3. With what is a godly woman to adorn herself? How does God look upon this adornment? v. 4
4. With what attitude should husbands dwell with their wives? v. 7
5. What is said of prayers in verse 7?

The Christian's relationship to fellow-Christians - verses 8-12.

1. Briefly summarize the proper attitude of Christians toward fellow-Christians as given in verses 8,9.
2. What steps can one take if he desires to love life and see good days? vs. 10,11
3. What blessings does the Lord have for the righteous according to verse 12? What is His attitude toward those who do evil?

Special challenge: Observe the "Not....But...." construction of verses 3,4. Consider the New American Standard translation. What word is supplied to help in understanding verse 3? Can you think of any other passages that contain this "Not....But...." construction?

LESSON #7 - PROPER CONDUCT IN SUFFERING

Answer the following questions from 1 Peter 3:13 - 4:6.

1. What is to be the Christian's attitude when he suffers for righteousness' sake, according to verse 14?
2. What must he be prepared to do according to verse 15?
3. With what attitude is he to do this?
4. What must the suffering Christian always maintain, according to verse 16? Why?
5. To what spirits did Christ preach, according to verses 19 and 20 (two answers)? By what medium did He preach to them, according to verses 18,19?
6. How is Noah's salvation by water compared to our salvation?
7. Unto whose example of suffering are we to be conformed, according to 4:1?
8. How should the Christian spend the rest of his time? verse 2
9. How do other people react when one turns from his evil life, according to verses 3,4?
10. What value is there in gospel preaching, according to verse 6?

Special Challenge: Consider 1 Peter 3:21. In baptism, what is not put away? For what should one be seeking in baptism (The New American Standard might help)? What gives power and effectiveness to baptism?

Special Challenge: Find proof in the scriptures that when death occurs, there is no more opportunity to prepare for eternity; that at that point one's eternal destiny is sealed.

LESSON #8 - FIERY TRIALS ARE COMING

Answer the following questions from 1 Peter 4:7-19.

1. What did Peter say was at hand in verse 7?
2. Consider 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4. Did the apostles believe that the Lord's second coming and the end of the world were at hand? According to this passage, what had to take place before the Lord's second coming?
3. Four commands are given in verses 7-9. Name them.
4. What must characterize the man who speaks? The man who ministers (serves)? Why?
5. In what are we partakers (sharers) when fiery trials come upon us, according to verses 12,13? With what attitude should we accept these?
6. For what should one not suffer? v. 15
7. What should be the attitude of one who suffers as a Christian? v. 16
8. Where was the judgment of which Peter wrote to begin? What questions did he raise in consideration of this fact? verses 17,18
9. By what means can a Christian endure his suffering, according to verse 19?

Special Challenge: The word "Christian" is found only three times in the Bible. Find the references and be prepared to tell what is said regarding the word in each reference.

Special Challenge: Find the reference in an earlier chapter in First Peter to one who committed himself to God while suffering. Who was this one?

LESSON #9 - ELDER-CHURCH RELATIONSHIPS AND FINAL EXHORTATIONS

Answer the following questions from I Peter 5:1-14.

1. To what is Peter comparing elders in verses 1-4?
2. Remove from your mind at this point the work of elders and think of literal shepherds. What are the primary responsibilities of a shepherd toward his sheep?
3. Read carefully verses 1-4. Think! What limitations are placed on elders in these verses?
4. What will be the faithful elder's reward according to verse 4?
5. Consider verses 5,6. What is commanded in these verses that would require humility? What does God do for the humble?
6. What can a Christian do with his cares and anxieties? v. 7
7. What is the devil's goal according to verses 8,9? What actions must a Christian take in regards to him?
8. What would God do for these Christians according to verse 10? When?
9. By whom was this letter sent? v. 12

Special Challenge: Find other scriptures that refer to Silvanus.

Special Challenge: Look back over First Peter. Write a brief paragraph summarizing the actions and attitudes of Christians in time of persecution.

SECOND PETER

LESSON #10 - MAKING ONE'S ETERNAL SALVATION SURE

Answer the following questions from 2 Peter 1:1-15.

1. To whom is this epistle written according to verse 1?
2. Name two things that have been "given (granted) unto us" according to verses 3,4.
3. In what have we become partakers?
4. Verse 5 begins, according to the King James Version, with the words, "And beside this." How does this compare with other translations?
5. List the qualities of character to be added to (supplied in) our faith. Compare translations if you have several available. vs 5-7
6. Discuss the importance attached to these qualities of character (your answer should cover verses 8-11).
7. At what points in time did Peter intend to bring these things to their remembrance according to verses 12-15?
8. In verse 14 Peter refers to a time when the Lord spoke of Peter's death. Read John 21:18-23 and tell of this incident.

Thought Question: In verses 3,4 Peter makes a transition in his wording from the pronoun "us" to the pronoun "ye" (you). To whom does Peter refer when he speaks of "us"? When he speaks of "you"?

Special Challenge: Find evidence in Second Peter that this epistle was written to the same people to whom First Peter was written.

LESSON #11 - ASSURANCE OF OUR FAITH

Answer the following questions from 2 Peter 1:16 - 2:3.

1. What proof did Peter give that "we have not followed cunningly devised fables"? vs 16-18

2. In verse 19, the King James Version speaks of "a more sure word of prophecy." What is the wording in other translations?

3. How does Peter describe the diligence with which one should take heed (pay attention) to the word of prophecy, according to verse 19?

4. Does verse 20 teach that one cannot interpret the scriptures for himself? What does it teach?

5. Since the Old Testament scriptures did not result from private interpretations, how did they come to exist according to verse 21?

6. Consider 2:1. To what people does Peter refer when he says, "There were false prophets also among the people"?

7. How does Peter describe the methods used by false teachers of his day? What does he say is the motivation behind them? vs 1-3

8. What expressions does Peter use to describe the punishment of these false teachers? vs 1-3

Special Challenge: In 2 Peter 1:18 Peter speaks of hearing the voice in the holy mount. Give the scripture references that describe this incident. What part did Peter play on that occasion?

Special Challenge: List some of the false prophets of the Old Testament.

LESSON #12 - FURTHER DESCRIPTION OF FALSE TEACHERS

Answer the following questions from 2 Peter 2:4-22.

1. What examples does Peter give of the wicked being punished and the righteous being blessed? vs 4-8
2. What is said of Lot in verse 8?
3. What contrast is made between the actions of these false teachers and those of angels in verses 10,11?
4. How are these false teachers described in verses 13,14?
5. To whom are they compared in verses 15,16? What specific sin is charged against him in these verses?
6. To what two things are the false teachers compared in verse 17? What do you think is suggested by these expressions?
7. Through what means do they deceive others? Who are the people allured (enticed) by them (Comparing translations will help)? vs. 18,19
8. What is said of those who once escaped the pollutions of the world, but are again overcome? vs. 20,21
9. To what two things are such people compared? v. 22

Thought Question: Peter obviously had specific false teachers in mind as he wrote this epistle. Would a person have to be guilty of all of these charges to be a false teacher? On the other hand, does just one wrong explanation of a difficult verse make one a false teacher? What is a false teacher?

Can you think of a passage that warns us to beware of false prophets or teachers?

LESSON #13 - ASSURANCE OF THE LORD'S RETURN

Answer the following questions from 2 Peter 3:1-18.

1. Of what two things did Peter want his readers to be mindful, according to verse 2 (use the New American Standard Version if available)?
2. Who would come in the last days? How would they live? v. 3
3. What argument would these scoffers make, according to verse 4?
4. In the following verses Peter provides three answers for the scoffers. Give the answer found in each passage:
verses 5-7 -

verse 8 -

verse 9 -
5. What will happen to the present creation when Christ comes? vs 10-12
6. What effect should this truth have on God's people according to these same verses (also consider verse 14)?
7. For what do God's people look, according to verse 13?
8. How should God's people interpret His longsuffering, according to verse 15? Look back over verses 8 and 9. How had the scoffers interpreted His longsuffering?
9. What does Peter say of Paul's epistles in verse 16? What do the unlearned and unstable do with them?
10. Find evidence in verse 16 that Paul's writings were accepted by the early church as scripture.
11. What danger does Peter warn about in verse 17?