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*Digging Deeper*

## LESSON NOTES

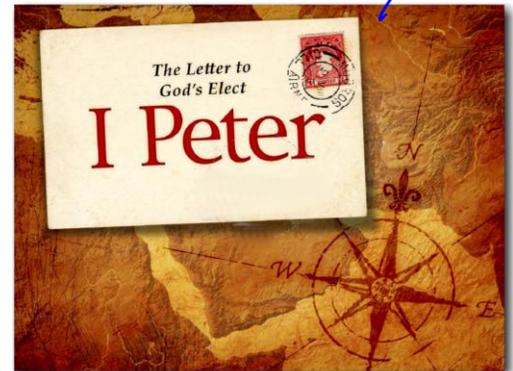
### A WORD FROM THE ROCK A STUDY OF 1 & 2 PETER

#### Rationale & Background

*D. Thomas Porter*

#### WHY STUDY 1 & 2 PETER

Regardless of our other frailties, we humans know, down deep, we are not God—even though we often act as if we were, fooling ourselves, and almost no one else. Yes, down deep we know we are fragile—like the grass or flowers of summer, we are colorfully green for awhile but we soon fade and then die without the Son and His refreshing reign.<sup>1</sup>



**A QUESTION TO GET YOU THINKING:**  
**HOW DO WE KNOW ARE NOT GOD,  
EVEN WHEN WE ACT AS IF WE WERE?**

Peter writes to those who have been chosen by God to glorify Him. With glory comes suffering, and Peter seeks to encourage those who glorify the Lord God, that there

is a living hope, a new birth of freedom. For we are dedicated to the proposition that all people were created to honor the Lord God. We are endowed by the Creator with certain inalienable rites, among them the pursuit of holiness through the indwelling of Holy Spirit. We here highly resolve that the Christ did not die in vain, that we as believers have a new birth of freedom, and that the creation of His glory, by His glory, and for His glory shall not perish.<sup>2</sup> We are God's elect, we are His church, we are His people—He is our God.

Given our God, and our status as His people, we are to live a holy, reverent and obedient life. For it is in holiness, reverence, and obedience that grace (the power to be righteous) becomes an instrument to honor and glorify the Creator. Peter speaks to this power—we seek holiness because God is holy; we revere the Lamb because the Lamb is perfect; and, we seek obedience because Holy Spirit guides us to ever increasing grace. May They be pleased by our holy, reverent, and obedient life. Amen.

<sup>1</sup>Yes, I believe this phrase is original with me, inspired no doubt by Holy Spirit.

<sup>2</sup>This is no homage to Abraham Lincoln. Read the text of the Gettysburg Address again, right after reading 1 Peter. You will recognize who copied Who.

## BACKGROUND REGARDING THE BOOKS ENTITLED "1 & 2 PETER"<sup>3</sup>

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Authorship. The author identifies himself as the apostle Peter (1:1), and the contents and character of the letter support his authorship. Moreover, the letter reflects the history and terminology of the Gospels and Acts (notably Peter's speeches); its themes and concepts reflect Peter's experiences and his associations in the period of our Lord's earthly ministry and in the apostolic age. That he was acquainted, e.g., with Paul and his letters is made clear in 2 Peter 3:15-16; Galatians 1:18; 2:1-21 and elsewhere; coincidences in thought and expression with Paul's writings are therefore not surprising.

From the beginning, 1 Peter was recognized as authoritative and as the work of the apostle Peter. The earliest reference to it may be 2 Peter 3:1, where Peter himself refers to a former letter he had written. 1 Clement (A.D. 95) seems to indicate acquaintance with 1 Peter. Polycarp, a disciple of the apostle John, makes use of 1 Peter in his letter to the church at Philippi. The author of the *Gospel of Truth* (140-150 A.D.) was acquainted with 1 Peter. Eusebius (fourth century) indicated that it was universally received.

The letter was explicitly ascribed to Peter by that group of church fathers whose testimonies appear in the attestation of so many of the genuine NT writings, namely, Irenaeus (A.D. 140-203), Tertullian (150-222), Clement of Alexandria (155-215) and Origen (185-253). It is thus clear that Peter's authorship of 1 Peter has early and strong support.

Nevertheless some claim that the idiomatic Greek of this letter is beyond Peter's competence. But in his time Aramaic, Hebrew and Greek were used in Palestine, and he may well have been acquainted with more than one language. That he was not a professionally trained scribe (see Acts 4:13) does not mean that he was unacquainted with Greek; in fact, as a Galilean fisherman he in all likelihood did use it. Even if he had not known it in the earliest days of the church, he may have acquired it as an important aid to his apostolic ministry in the decades that intervened between then and the writing of 1 Peter.

It is true, however, that the Greek of 1 Peter is good literary Greek, and even though Peter could no doubt speak Greek, as so many in the Mediterranean world could, it is unlikely that he would write such polished Greek. But it is at this point that Peter's remark in 5:12 concerning Silas may be significant. Here the apostle claims that he wrote "with the help of" (more literally "through" or "by means of") Silas. This phrase cannot refer merely to Silas as a letter carrier. Thus, Silas was probably the intermediate agent in writing. Some have claimed that Silas's qualifications for recording Peter's letter in literary Greek are found in Acts 15:22-29. It is known that an amanuensis (a well educated secretary) in those days often composed documents in good Greek for those who did not have the language facility to do so. Thus, in 1 Peter Silas's Greek may be seen, while in 2 Peter it may be Peter's rough Greek which appears.

Some also maintain that the book reflects a situation that did not exist until after Peter's death, suggesting that the persecution referred to in 4:14-16; 5:8-9 is descriptive of Domitian's reign (A.D. 81-96). The situation that was developing in Nero's time (54-68), however, is just as adequately described by those verses. The book can be satisfactorily dated in the early 60's. It cannot be placed earlier than 60 since it shows familiarity with Paul's Prison Letters (e.g., Colossians and Ephesians, which are to be dated no earlier than 60): Compare 1:1-3 with Ephesians 1:1-3; 2:18 with Colossians 3:22; 3:1-6 with Ephesians 5:22-24. Furthermore, it cannot be dated later than 67/68, since tradition holds Peter was martyred during Nero's reign.

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<sup>3</sup>Adapted, revised and edited by D. Thomas Porter from Compton's Interactive NIV © 1996.

## PLACE OF WRITING

In 5:13 Peter indicates that he was in Babylon when he wrote 1 Peter. Among the interpretations that have been suggested are that he was writing from:

- (1) Egyptian Babylon, which was a military post,
- (2) Mesopotamian Babylon,
- (3) Jerusalem, or
- (4) Rome.

Peter may well be using the name "Babylon" symbolically regarding Rome, as it seems to be used in the book of Revelation (see Revelation 17:9-10). Tradition connects him in the latter part of his life with Rome, and certain early writers held that 1 Peter was written there. On the other hand, Babylon existed in the first century as a small town on the Euphrates. Furthermore,

- (1) there is no evidence that the term Babylon was used figuratively to refer to Rome until Revelation was written (prior to A.D. 70), and
- (2) the context of 5:13 is not at all figurative or cryptic.

Although 1 Peter is a short letter, it touches on various doctrines and has much to say about Christian life and duties. Different readers have found it to have different principal themes. For example, it has been characterized as a letter of separation, of suffering and persecution, of suffering and glory, of hope, of pilgrimage, of courage, and as a letter dealing with the true grace of God. Peter says he has written "encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God" (5:12). This is a definitive general description of the letter, but it does not exclude the recognition of numerous subordinate and contributory themes. The letter is composed also of a series of exhortations (imperatives) which run from 1:13 to 5:11.

## CONTEXT, CONTEXT, CONTEXT

Peter's grand epistle addresses some of the most significant aspects of being a Christian—the glories of suffering, the expanse of hope, and the joy of being born again, not of the imperishable, but of the eternal seed. There was a time when people thought their legacy as a people justified them before the Lord God Jehovah.

### MINDBYTE NO. 1:

WHY DO WE THINK THAT IF WE JUST KNOW ENOUGH, KNOW THE RIGHT STUFF, OR DO THE RIGHT STUFF WE'LL BE JUSTIFIED BEFORE THE LORD GOD?

Later, we thought that if we just knew enough, obeyed enough, or gave enough we would somehow be justified before a Holy God. Nonetheless, regardless of our other frailties, we humans know, down deep, we are not God—even though we often act as if we were, fooling ourselves, and no one else. Yes, down deep we know we are fragile—like the grass of summer, green for awhile but we die without the Son and His refreshing reign.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Yes, I believe this phrase is original with me, inspired no doubt by Holy Spirit. And, yes, I love puns.

## KEY ISSUES: 1 PETER 1

1 Peter 1:1-5—Peter, one of the original Twelve, now an Apostle of Jesus the Christ, writes to us in general and God's elect in Asia Minor<sup>5</sup> in particular. We have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of Father God, by means of Holy Spirit's sanctifying power of grace and our obedience to Jesus the Christ, and the sprinkling of His blood. Peter wants abundant power to be righteous (grace) and reconciliation (peace, εἰρήνη) for all his readers.

Appropriately, a doxology follows: Father God is recognized as the Father or our Lord Jesus the Christ. Father God is praised for His great mercy through our new birth into a living hope by means of the Christ's resurrection from the dead. There is a new inheritance, one which can never perish, spoil, or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for us! Through our faith, we are shielded by God's power until the shield is no longer needed because our salvation will be revealed in the last time.

### 1 PETER 1:1-5

Peter, an apostle of Jesus [the] Christ,

To God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia,<sup>2</sup> who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus [the] Christ and sprinkling by his blood:

Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

<sup>3</sup>Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus [the] Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus [the] Christ from the dead,<sup>4</sup> and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you,<sup>5</sup> who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

- Q 1 Is Peter an apostle (see Acts 14:4; Romans 16:7; Hebrews 3:1-2) or an Apostle? Are we apostles?<sup>6</sup> [Distinguish between title and function; e.g., being a pastor and a Pastor.]
- Q 2 What advantage is there to being the "chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father?" (See Romans 8:28-39) Disadvantage? (See Romans 9:30-32; entitlement).
- Q 2 By what means is our sanctification accomplished? Because of what?
- Q 2 Why do we need/desire abundant power to be righteous (grace) and reconciliation (peace) with the Lord God Jehovah?
- Q 3 Who is the Father of our Lord Jesus the Christ? Who is the God of our Lord Jesus the Christ? What are the pragmatic problems with this metaphor for Their relationship?
- Q 3 Through what means has He given us a new birth? A birth to do what? [Hint: grow.]
- Q 3 We have been given a "living hope." What would be a dead hope?
- Q 3 How does this resurrection of Jesus the Christ from the dead affect our hope?
- Q 4 What is the nature of this inheritance we receive? Why does it not perish, spoil, or fade?
- Q 5 What shields us (Ephesians 6:16) until the coming of salvation which is revealed in the last days?

<sup>5</sup>Those scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia (modern day Turkey) and Bithynia. Jewish and Gentile Christians scattered throughout much of Asia Minor. People from these areas were in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (see Acts 2:9-11). Paul preached and taught in some of these provinces (see, e.g., Acts 16:6; 18:23; 19:10,26).

<sup>6</sup>By definition, an apostle of God is a *messenger of God* - even [Jesus the Christ](#) is referred to in this way: "Therefore, holy brethren, who share in a heavenly call, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession. He [see [The Logos](#)] was faithful to Him [see [The Father](#)] Who appointed Him." (Hebrews 3:1-2 RSV)



## HARD TIMES AHEAD: GOLD, SILVER OR BITCOIN?

1 Peter 1:6-9—Given God’s largess, we can rejoice and do so with fervor. Yes, for a little while we have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These trials have refined our faith, so much more valuable than gold. Yes gold is made genuine by the dross which perishes through refining. Your faith can be proved and thus provide glory, praise, and honor when Jesus the Christ is revealed to the whole world (Philippians 2:9-11). Of course, you have not seen Him, but you love Him. You believe in Him are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy. Yes, you are receiving the goal of your faith—the salvation of your soul.



### 1 PETER 1:6-9

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. <sup>7</sup>These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though re-fined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

<sup>8</sup>Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, <sup>9</sup>for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Q 6 Why does Peter call our time to grieve our losses and trials a “little while?” How do we comfort those who do not believe their trials are a “little while?”

Q 7 What is the purpose of these trials?

Q 7 Why is faith more valuable than gold, or is this mere hyperbole?

Q 7 To whom is your faith proved to be pure through refiner’s fire? For what purpose?

Q 8 What are some manifestations of the joy of which Peter spoke?

Q 9 What is the goal of your faith? Why does faith seek salvation instead of sight? Why can’t, in other words, sight seek salvation?

1 Peter 1:10-12—Now, regarding this salvation, the goal of your faith, prophets spoke of this power to do righteousness (grace) which was to come to you. They searched intently and with great care trying to find the time and circumstances when the Spirit of Christ was pointing them to predict Christ’s sufferings and glories which would follow. When they spoke of the things you have been told by those who preached the gospel by Holy Spirit’s guidance, God told them they were not serving themselves but us. Even the angels would love to understand what we understand from Holy Spirit’s guidance.

### 1 PETER 1:10-12

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Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, <sup>11</sup> trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. <sup>12</sup>It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

- Q 10 What was this power to do righteousness (grace) that the prophets were to foretell?
- Q 11 What were the prophets trying to find out about this grace?
- Q 11 Who was guiding them in their efforts?
- Q 11 What are the sufferings of Christ? Why are they associated with His glories?
- Q 12 Who were the prophets serving? Why?
- Q 12 What is it that the prophets tell us that even angels want to understand?

### APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

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- Q What trials should we seek to refine our faith?
- Q What righteous act refines our faith by causing trials? [Obedience.] How so?
- Q Why and how does the resurrection of Jesus the Christ from the dead give us a living hope?
- Q What do we understand about the Christ that even angels want to understand?

1 Peter 1:13-16—Given our new birth, living hope, and Holy Spirit’s guidance (verses 1-12), get ready to act! Control the self and set your hope completely on the grace to be given when Jesus the Christ is revealed. Do not conform to the evil desires of your ignorant days (before Christ was revealed to you); you are obedient children. In contrast to your days of ignorance, remember He who called you is holy, so you be holy in all you do. It is written in the Law, Leviticus 11:44, “Be holy because I am holy.”

### 1 PETER 1:13-16

Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. <sup>14</sup>As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. <sup>15</sup>But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; <sup>16</sup>for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.” [cf., Leviticus 11:44]

- Q 13 What does it mean to prepare our minds for action? Why not just change our minds?
- Q 13-16 How are we to prepare our minds for action? Self-control; setting our hope on grace; obedience to the new revelation, rejecting past ignorance; be holy.
- Q 13 Of what were we particularly ignorant before the revelation of Christ was revealed to us?
- Q 13 Why does self-control matter in the move to be holy? Setting our hope on grace? Rejecting evil desires resulting from our ignorant past?
- Q 14 Why does obedience matter in the move to be holy? (see 1 Peter 1:6-7; obedience refines our faith; i.e., our trust in His trustworthiness)
- Q 16 What is the significance of Peter quoting Leviticus where the LORD God says to us, “Be holy for I am holy?”

**Consider:** Holiness is the key theme of Leviticus, ringing like a refrain in various forms throughout the book (e.g., Leviticus 11:45; 19:2; 20:7,26; 21:8,15; 22:9,16,32). So much of what appears to be capricious rules (e.g., do not mix linen with wool in your garments) are in fact some of God’s more creative reminders—to be holy.

According to some scholars, the word “holy” appears more often in Leviticus than in any other book of the Bible. We are to be totally consecrated to God. For example, Israel’s holiness was to be expressed in every aspect of life, to the extent that all of life had a certain ceremonial quality. Because of who God is and what he has done (Leviticus 11:45), we must dedicate ourselves fully to Him (cf., Matthew 5:48, or 1 Peter 1:13). For a full representation of this holiness, see Paul’s description in Romans 12:1; to wit, “... I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.”

1 Peter 1:17-21—We have a heavenly Father who judges our work individually and impartially. Therefore, we must live our lives as strangers in a strange land with reverent fear of Father God. We know we were not redeemed from the empty way of life we inherited from our ancestors with perishable things like silver or gold. We were redeemed by the blood of the Christ, a perfect lamb. He was chosen before the world was created, yet revealed in these last times for our sake. Through the Christ we believe in Father God who raised Him from the dead and glorified Him; thus, are faith and hope are in God.

Q 17 Why is it important to worship a God who judges us individually and impartially?

Q 17 What makes this land strange? What are the spiritual advantages and disadvantages of remembering this is not our land?

Q 18 What makes our previous life “empty,” especially that which we inherited from our culture? What makes it perishable?

Q 18-19 Why must the price of our redemption be imperishable?

Q 19 Why must the lamb be free of defect or blemish? Why is that lamb particularly precious?

Q 20 When was the Christ chosen to become human in this world? When was this revealed to us? Why then, chosen, and revealed?

Q 21 By what means do we believe in Father God? Who raised Him from the dead? For what purpose? (see also Romans 3:24) And the result?

### 1 PETER 1:17-21

Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear. <sup>18</sup>For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, <sup>19</sup>but with the precious blood of [the] Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. <sup>20</sup>He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. <sup>21</sup>Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

1 Peter 1:22-25—Obedience to the truth has purified you so that you can love sincerely and deeply from your very core. You have been born from above—not from a perishable beginning, but of imperishable—by the living and enduring Word (λογος) of God. Remember, all people fade like the grass and the flowers of the field; the grass withers and flowers fall. BUT, the word (ρημα, 4487, spoken word)<sup>7</sup> of the Lord stands forever [Isaiah 40:6-8]. And, this is the word (ρημα) that was preached to you.

Q 22 What purifies you? To what end?

From what beginning? How does obedience purify one's love? Make it sincere?

Q 23 What does it mean to be born again, to be born from above? Why must our new seed be imperishable?

Q 23-24 Through what means are we born from above, born again? (λογος) How do we know this to be true? (ρημα) How do we know this ρημα is true?

Q 24 Why are people like grass whose glory withers like flowers? [Because the Son does not reign.]

Q 24 Who preached the ρημα to you? Who made it true to the λογος? [Holy Spirit] How so?

#### APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS<sup>8</sup>

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Q Previously we learned obedience brings on the suffering which refines our faith (i.e., our trust in the trustworthiness of the Lord God). This week we learn obedience also purifies our love by making it sincere and deep, from the very heart of who we are. What can we do to improve our obedience to the Lord God Jehovah?

Q Since our hope, faith, and obedience rest on the resurrection of Jesus the Christ from the dead, on what basis do we build this hope, faith and obedience? How do we know that Jesus did indeed rise from the dead?

Q Why was the Christ chosen to manifest God before time began and revealed only in the last days?

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<sup>7</sup>An utterance (individually, collectively or specially); by implication, a matter or topic (especially of narration, command or dispute).

<sup>8</sup>Previous questions included:

Q What trials should we seek to refine our faith? What righteous act refines our faith by causing trials? [Obedience.] How so?

Q Why and how does the resurrection of Jesus the Christ from the dead give us a living hope?

Q What do we understand about the Christ that even angels want to understand?

#### 1 PETER 1:22-25

Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart [some early manuscripts read: *from a pure heart*].<sup>23</sup> For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.<sup>24</sup> For,

*“All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall,<sup>25</sup> but the word of the Lord stands forever.”*  
[Isaiah 40:6-8]

And this is the word that was preached to you.