



1 Peter

by Bernard Gabbott

Memory verse:

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation,
a people for His possession,
so that you may proclaim the praises of the One who called
you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people;
you had not received mercy,
but now you have received mercy.

1 Peter 2:9-10

The Setting of 1 Peter

C. A.D. 62–63

Peter, probably writing from Rome (called "Babylon" in 5:13), addressed 1 Peter to believers in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. These names all referred to Roman provinces in Asia Minor, north of the Taurus Mountains.



Some basics...

I love Peter—we are so like him. The man known for the heights of theological knowledge—'You are the Messiah' (Mark 9:29) - is also the man who is rebuked in the next phrase for having the desires of 'Satan' (Mark 9:33), the man who denies Jesus three times, and the man who doesn't seem to grasp grace for all humans until Acts 15!

This man writes a letter to the 'diaspora', the 'temporary residents' in Asia Minor (1 Pet. 1:1, see opposite). He writes whilst in 'Babylon' - probably a code for Rome (1 Pet. 5:13). The timing is hard to nail down, but it seems to be sometime in the first half of the AD60s—probably around AD62-63.

The letter itself is warm and has links through to the rest of the New Testament history—the 'Silvanus' mentioned in 1 Pet. 5:12 is most likely the 'Silas' of Acts. It describes a life for God's people that is similar to our's—not high-level orchestrated oppression or persecution (although that will be soon!), but the reality of living as God's people in a world fundamentally opposed to God, his rule in Jesus, and the reality of obedience to his design and rule.

In this sense, 1 Peter describes life as we know it. In our time, as we are now regarded as 'the bad guys' (Stephen McAlpine, and 1 Pet. 2:12), this is a remarkably present kind of letter. It is one worth listening to, praying about, and applying, as we wait for our certain hope in Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 1:1-12)

Study 1: 1 Peter 1:1-12

Comprehend

1. Read 1 Peter 1:1-2.
2. Who wrote this letter? (vs.1)

Who is he? What do you know about him?

3. Who is he writing to? (vs.2)

How does Peter describe them?

4. Read 1 Peter 1:3-12.
5. What does Peter offer to God? (vs.3)

Why does God deserve this? (vs.3-5)

What has this granted to 'us'? (vs.3-5)

6. What should 'you' do with this? (vs.6-7)

What is the context for this?

And what will this prove, and result in? When?

7. What is their approach to Jesus? (vs.8-9)

Why is this surprising? And why is this understandable?

8. What is the wonderful reality of this salvation we have? (vs.10-12)

Consider

1. What is Peter so certain about, in terms of what God has done, and what he has provided for his people? Why?
2. What is Peter so clear about, in terms of the context within which God's people live?
3. What is Peter so forceful about, in terms of how God's people respond to what they certainly have, in the environment they live in? Why?
4. What is Peter so encouraging about, in terms of where God's people exist in the timeline of God's plans? Why?

Contact

1. What do you find encouraging, and hard, about Peter's opening two verses? Why?
2. What do you find encouraging, and hard, about what God has done and what his people have been given? Why?
3. What do you find encouraging, and hard, about Peter's description of our response to what we have, in this context? Why?
4. What is so good, and hard, about where we live in God's timeline?

Study 2: 1 Peter 1:13-25

Consider

1. Read 1 Peter 1:13-25.
2. What does the 'therefore' in vs.13 refer to?

What is the command? And how? (vs.13)

3. Who are Christians now? And what does this mean, and lead to? (vs.14-16)
4. If Christians are 'obedient children', then who is God? And what does this mean for their behaviour? (vs.17)
5. What/who is the foundation of this identity, and frame, for life? (vs.18-19)

How is he described? (vs.20-21)

6. What are Christians to do with each other? Why? (vs.22-23)

What gives Christians this new identity, this new 'imperishable' life? (vs.24-25)

Comprehend

1. There is a very clear call here to reflect the nature of God, to obey him, in holiness. This creates a certain type of community—how is that community described here?
2. Who, or what, is the foundation of this community? And

what are we told about him?

3. At the heart of this new community is reworked desire. How is that new desire described, what is its contrast with the 'old desire', and how is this change worked/expressed?
4. What is the nature of God's word? Why is this so important for the life of this community, and its members?

Contact

1. In what ways is this description of the life of God's mob, and its members, so confronting?
2. How do we apply 'holiness' in our lives as God's people, and community? How do we not?
3. How does this passage exhort, and create, a community that is noticeably different in this world? Why?

Study 3: 1 Peter 2:1-10

Comprehend

1. Read 1 Peter 2:1-10.
2. How does verse 1 begin? Why? And what does it command?
3. What are God's children to 'crave'? Why? (vs.2-3)
4. As the people of the Lord come to him, what is done to them? What do they become? (vs.4-5)

What does this lead to? And how does this bring to a climax God's promise? (vs.6-8)

5. What impact does this have on the world around them—their existence as this type of community? (vs.7-8)

In what interesting way is this described in vs.8?

6. In comparison to those who 'stumble, how are God's people described? And what is their purpose in life? (2:9-10)

Consider

1. What is striking about the 'craving' of God's people?

What will be striking as if produces what it should?

2. What is 'good' about the Lord, and his 'taste'?

3. There seems to be a double-level of meaning in verses 6-8. Who causes 'men to stumble'? And how might this apply to God's people, as they are built into a 'spiritual house'?

Why/how might this be the case?

4. In what way does verses 9-10 echo the reworking of desires in 1:14-15 and the impact of 2:2-3?

Contact

1. Why do we struggle to 'rid' as verses 1 commands?
2. What do you crave?
3. In what way are God's people a type of community that is both the display of the good life under God, and a stumbling block?
4. What/who do you praise? Why?

Study 4: 1 Peter 2:11-25**Comprehend**

1. Read 1 Peter 2:11-25.
2. How are God's people described? (vs.11)

How is this expressed, and why? (vs.12)

3. How is this to be displayed in vs.13-14?

Why?

How is this summarized in vs.16-17?

4. The theme of submission continues into vs.18-20. Who is this applied to, and why?

How is this unpacked in vs.20?

5. Who is the foundation for living like this? (vs.21-25)

How did Jesus do this?

What did Jesus achieve in this?

What does this lead us to?

Consider

1. Why do you think being described as 'aliens and temporary residents' is so uncomfortable for God's people?

How might it be misunderstood, and misapplied?

How does this create a community identity that stands out?

2. What does 'conduct yourselves honourably among the Gentiles' look like?
3. How might we actively, and actually, negate the reasons for 'submission' in vs.12 and 15?
4. What do you find confronting about verses 13-17?
5. What is so crucial about the foundation explanation of Jesus as the source of our 'submission'?

Contact

1. What might we need to work on to be known for our 'honourable conduct'?
2. Where/why do we struggle to 'submit' to political authorities?
3. How might we under-estimate the significance of 'following Jesus' from vs.21-25?

Study 5: 1 Peter 3:1-7

Comprehend

1. Read 1 Peter 3:1-7.
2. What does 'in the same way' (vs.1) mean?

What are wives being encouraged to do? (vs.1)

Why? (vs.1-2)

3. What 'beauty' is Peter encouraging? And what is the context for this? (vs.3-6)

4. What does 'in the same way' (vs.7) mean?

What do you think 'weaker' nature means? (vs.7)

What are husbands encouraged to do? (vs.7)

How and why? (vs.7)

Consider

1. Looking back to 2:13, what progression have you seen in Peter's discussion of 'submit'? Why?
2. What is striking about Peter's exhortation to wives about their beauty, and the context for displaying it?
3. What is striking about Peter's exhortation to husbands

and its context?

4. Why might such a view of marriage stand out in our culture?

Contact

1. What do you find confronting, and comforting, about Peter's exhortations here?
2. What might you find hard in these exhortations?
3. What might they look like in practical every-day living?

Study 6: 1 Peter 3:8-22

Comprehend

1. Read 1 Peter 3:8-22.
2. In verses 8-12, Peter outlines the life of the 'righteous person'. What are its characteristics?

Where does Peter turn for its foundation? (cf. Ps.34)

And, how good is this life?

3. In verses 13-22, Peter seems to turn to how this will be received in the wider context of society. How does he describe the 'righteous life' in vs.13?

How should a righteous person understand suffering (for being righteous)?

How should they conduct themselves?

Who do they serve?

What/who is the foundation for this?

What did Jesus do in this?

Consider

1. How do verses 8-12 transform personal relationships within God's people?

2. How might living with Jesus as Lord create questions about our 'hope'?

What answer could we give?

3. How are verses 19-22 a discussion of baptism?

Contact

1. What might you have to change to better live the 'righteous life' described here?
2. Why do you struggle with, or enjoy, this as the good life?
3. How do you react to suffering for being righteous? Do you?
4. Why is what Jesus done so good for you?

Study 7: 1 Peter 4:1-19**Comprehend**

1. Read 1 Peter 4:1-19.

2. Who went ahead of his people in 'suffering'? (vs.1)

How does that affect/shape God's people? (vs.1-3)

What does this lead to? (vs.4-6)

3. What is coming? (vs.7)

How will this shape the life of God's people? (vs.7-11)

Why? (vs.11)

4. As this 'end time' approaches, what also will come? (vs.12)

What should be the attitude of God's people in this? (vs.12-14)

What should not happen? (vs.15)

What should happen? (vs.16)

What framework should God's people have as they view/experience all this? (vs.17-19)

Consider

1. How do we, as God's people, view 'suffering' now? What has/hasn't changed since Peter's day?
2. Why do we find verse 2 so hard?
3. In verses 7-11, how might this be the best evangelistic tool we will have in the near future?
4. How does judgement, and the coming end of all things, place suffering in a different light?

Contact

1. Why are we surprised by suffering? And how does this change our response?
2. In what way might we have to change our 'desires' so that they match God's will?
3. In what ways can we live verses 7-11 better?

Study 8: 1 Peter 5:1-7

Comprehend

1. Read 1 Peter 5:1-7.
2. What does the 'therefore' in verse 1 refer to?
3. How does Peter describe himself? (vs.1)

What does this lead to him doing? (vs.2-4)

What is the substance of his exhortation?

4. He turns to the 'elders-in-training' in vs.5—what is his exhortation to them?
5. Then he turns to God's mob generally—what is his exhortation to them? (vs.5-7)

Why?

Consider

1. What is the role of the elder amongst God's people?

Are elders irreplaceable? Why/why not?

2. How does this section, within God's mob, mirror (perhaps) the section on authority and submission from chapter 2?
3. What is the time framework for all this, and why is that

important?

Contact

1. How does this affirm/change/confront the way you view the role/person of elder in our church community? And, who is an 'elder'?
2. What is the importance of 'humility' within the community of God's mob?

What is humility? (cf. Philippians 2:1-11)

Study 9: 1 Peter 5:8-14

Comprehend

1. Read 1 Peter 5:8-14.
2. This last section looks a little 'bitsy'. That said, what/who does Peter warn about in verses 8-9?

What is the right response, and right context for understanding his work?

3. What is the reassurance of verses 10-11?

How does this continue themes we have already seen in this letter?

4. How does Peter end the letter? (vs.12-14)

What do we learn?

What are we encouraged to do?

Consider

1. How do verses 8-9 help us approach sin, temptation, suffering, evil and godliness rightly? What context does it place all these? What does this avoid doing?
2. What do verses 10-11 reveal about the bedrock of our perseverance and growth and transformation as God's mob?
3. How does verse 12 expand our understanding of grace?

Contact

1. Share some of the truths that 1 Peter has taught you, and reminded you off, and revealed to you...
2. Share some of the ways 1 Peter has changed the way you view your life as a member of God's mob, now, in this time and age.
3. Share some prayer points out of 1 Peter...