

1st Peter:

Living Faithfully in a Hostile World



BIBLICAL EDUCATION BY EXTENSION

1 Peter

*Living Faithfully
In a Hostile World*

1 PETER; LIVING FAITHFULLY IN A HOSTILE WORLD

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1 Peter

Living Faithfully in a Hostile World

Course Introduction

Of all the original disciples that Jesus trained during His relatively brief ministry on earth, Peter certainly stands out as the most unique. He was brave and bold on the one hand, but often stubborn and brash on the other. We see him making solid steps of faith in one moment, but in another repeatedly saying the wrong thing at the wrong time. Based on how he is depicted in the gospels, we might think he had little chance of graduating from his training. In the crucial moments on the final visit to Jerusalem, Peter even denied the Lord three times. Despite this mixed bag of characteristics and actions, it was none other than Peter who became the primary spokesman for the newly formed messianic community of believers on the Day of Pentecost, and it was Peter who played the key leadership role in the early chapters of the book of Acts.

Before finally dying as a martyr for the Lord Jesus in the late A.D. 60's—tradition tells us he was crucified upside down—God also used him to write two epistles of the New Testament. The rough, rugged fisherman from Galilee served his Lord faithfully all the way to the end of his life. He was well-acquainted with the hardships of ministry as he lived out his faith in the context of the first-century A.D. Roman world. Although the church grew rapidly during those early decades, it was not without cost. In a world where idolatry was rampant and worship of the Roman Caesar as “lord of lords” was expected, Peter “the rock” stood steadfast as an example of faithfulness to His Lord.

In writing this epistle, Peter sought to minister to Christians in the Roman Empire who suffered for their faith in Christ. His message to them was to remain faithful to Christ as they lived in a world hostile to Christianity and awaited their Lord’s triumphant return. 1 Peter also speaks to us today, teaching us how and why we should *live faithfully in a world hostile to our faith*.

Reasons for Taking This Course

There are several reasons as to why this course, *1 Peter; Living Faithfully in a Hostile World*, is important for you to study. The first and foremost reason is that Christianity in all parts of the world has come under tremendous attack unlike that in any previous generation since the early centuries. On the one hand, Christianity is ridiculed philosophically on most college campuses, and Christians are made out to be the dregs of society who stand in the way of “the new morality.” In society at large, Christians are often deprived of rights and job opportunities. In many countries, the lives of Christians are even in physical danger. The point is that with each passing year, the world is becoming increasingly more hostile to Christianity, and Christians need to know how to live in such an environment. A second reason for taking this course is to gain conviction that living faithfully for Christ in the present—despite whatever hardships and suffering must be faced—is worth it considering the Bible’s promise of our Savior’s return in glory. Faithfulness now will mean great reward then! A third reason for taking this course is to learn how we can all better support our fellow believers in such difficult times. The church needs to stand united, building up one another in love. Finally, a fourth reason for taking this course is to learn how we, as Christians, are to respond to various authorities under whom we are placed, particularly government rulers and authorities over us in our respective countries.

By the end of this course, you will:

- Understand the theme and purpose of 1 Peter.
- Be able to trace that theme and purpose throughout the epistle.
- Have developed your own overview chart of 1 Peter.
- Be able to explain several of the difficult passages in the epistle.
- Be better prepared to live faithfully for Christ in a world increasingly hostile to Christianity.
- Have strengthened your conviction that Christ will return victoriously to vindicate your faith in Him and reward you for standing faithfully for Him in this generation.

About the Author

This course was written by Dr. J. Paul Tanner, who holds both a ThM and PhD degree in Hebrew Language and Old Testament studies. He is versed in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek, and he has been teaching the Bible for over forty years in various theological seminaries around the world. He has authored numerous articles in professional Christian journals and written several courses for BEE World. He is also the author of an in-depth commentary on Daniel for the Evangelical Exegetical Commentary series produced in conjunction with Logos Bible Software.

Course Organization

For those taking this course online at the Internet Biblical Seminary website, at any time during your online study, you can click the "Course Outline" button located in the top frame to get the linked course outline to display in the left frame.

Units of Study

There are twelve lessons for this course, grouped into four units:

UNIT 1: An Introduction to First Peter and the Opening Verses (1 Pet 1:1-12)

Lesson 1: A Biblical Introduction to Evil, Tribulation, and Suffering

Lesson 2: Background and Overview of 1 Peter (incl. 1 Pet 1:1-2)

Lesson 3: Three Perspectives to Guide Our Lives on Earth While Awaiting Christ's Return and Future Salvation (1 Pet 1:3-12)

UNIT 2: The Call to Live Faithfully as the New People of God in Facing Suffering as Christians (1 Pet 1:13-2:10)

Lesson 4: Facing Suffering by Holy Living in Expectation of Christ's Return (1 Pet 1:13-2:3)

Lesson 5: Facing Suffering by Identifying with the Rejected Christ as the New People of God (1 Pet 2:4-10)

UNIT 3: Reminders and Counsel for Christians who Suffer Innocently (1 Pet 2:11-4:6)

Lesson 6: Christian Responsibilities that May Incur Conflict and Suffering: Part 1 (1 Pet 2:11-20)

Lesson 7: Christian Responsibilities that May Incur Conflict and Suffering: Part 2 (1 Pet 3:1-12)

Lesson 8: Suffering Innocently: Counsel for Christians and Reflections on Christ's Sufferings (1 Pet 3:13-22)

Lesson 9: Faithfully Following Christ to Face a World Hostile to Christians (1 Pet 4:1-6)

UNIT 4: Final Words of Encouragement and Exhortations (1 Pet 4:7–5:14)

Lesson 10: Final Guidance and Consolations for Christians Who Face Suffering (1 Pet 4:7-19)

Lesson 11: Exhortations to Help the Christian Community Make a United Stance (1 Pet 5:1-11)

Lesson 12: Summary and Final Reflections (1 Pet 5:12-14)

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Answers to the Unit Exams

Appendix 2: An Overview Chart of 1 Peter

As you plan your study schedule, decide on what dates you want to finish each unit. You can then divide this time into study periods for each lesson. We suggest that you try to do one lesson each week (at least three lessons per month). The lessons vary in length, but you should allocate about three to four hours per lesson. You can do this if you study about one hour each day. At this rate, you should be able to complete the course in three to four months. Or you may speed this up by doing two or three lessons per week.

Lesson Organization

Please give careful attention to each part of the lesson:

Title

Lesson Introduction

Lesson Outline

Lesson Objectives

Lesson Reading Assignments

Lesson Content

Lesson Self Check Quiz

Answers to Questions in Lesson

Self-Check Quiz Answers

The title, introduction, outline, and objectives provide a preview of the lesson. Your mind will be more alert and receptive, and you will learn better because of this preview. The lesson reading assignments instruct you in any reading material or any exercises that need to be completed.

The lesson development follows the lesson outline. Its comments, suggestions, and questions all help you understand the material and apply God's Word to your life. Be sure to check your answers with the ones provided. These will fix your attention once more on the main points of the lesson. This procedure is designed to make your learning more effective and long-lasting.

Make special note of the maps, charts, and other illustrations that accompany each lesson.

Student Instructions

This course is comprised of twelve lessons, in which you will systematically study through the epistle of 1 Peter to discover the author's intended meaning and apply relevant principles from the text to your life.

Each lesson is made up of approximately 20-25 questions along with pertinent comments that help guide you through the epistle of 1 Peter. Each lesson is designed to be completed in approximately 2 to 4 hours. We highly recommend that you have a study partner for working through these lessons. This helps with accountability, and it makes the process more enjoyable and interesting.

You and your study partner should plan to do a complete lesson in one sitting. To begin, you simply need to turn to Lesson One and start reading the lesson. Each lesson is sub-divided into “topics,” which usually correspond with paragraphs in the biblical text. Your study should proceed like this:

1. Read the biblical passage that corresponds to the “topic” you are studying.
2. Read the notes in the lesson for that “topic.”
3. When you come to a “Question,” stop and carefully write your answer in the space provided. You should try to write down your answer to all the questions for the lesson before checking your answers.
4. The answers for the questions are provided near the end of each lesson in a section entitled “Answers to Questions.” As mentioned above, you should try to complete all the questions for the lesson before checking your answers.
5. After you and your study partner have read the Answer, you may wish to quickly discuss the question and answer, depending on how much time you have remaining. In some cases, this may prompt you to do further study of your own.
6. After you and your study partner have completed the entire lesson and checked your answers, the final step will be for you to complete the Lesson Self Check Quiz located near the end of the lesson. The Lesson Self Check consists of ten questions that are designed to test that you have understood some of the main points of the lesson. Answers to the Lesson Self Check are provided at the very end of the lesson.
7. At the end of each Unit, there is also a Unit Exam. Unless you have been instructed to do so otherwise, you should wait to take this exam when your group meets together for facilitation.

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Map of Asia Minor in the First Century A.D.



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Unit 1: An Introduction to First Peter and the Opening Verses (1 Pet 1:1-12)

Unit 1 is introductory to the whole course. We begin with a biblical and theological probing about the issues of evil, tribulation and suffering. This is appropriate, since the epistle of 1 Peter is very much concerned with these matters and how believers in Christ face them while living the Christian life. Many times in history, Christians have had to suffer for their faith. At times, this has even meant persecution and martyrdom. Of course, the intensity of persecution varies from one century to another and from one country to another. But by and large, the church has suffered at the hands of a hostile society in which she has been called to live as “salt and light” in its midst.

Following a probe into the causes and reasons for evil and suffering, Lesson 2 will explore the essential background matters of 1 Peter, including the original audience to whom Peter wrote. Then, in Lesson 3, we will examine the opening paragraph of the epistle (1 Pet 1:3-12) that sets the stage for the study of the remainder of Peter’s epistle.

Unit Outline

Lesson 1: A Biblical Introduction to Evil, Tribulation, and Suffering

Lesson 2: Background and Overview of 1 Peter (incl. 1 Pet 1:1-2)

Lesson 3: Three Perspectives to Guide Our Lives on Earth While Awaiting Christ’s Return and Future Salvation (1 Pet 1:3-12)

Unit Objectives

By the end of this unit, you will be able to do the following:

- Understand the reasons for the existence of evil and Satan’s role in propagating evil in this world.
- Deepen your commitment to facing suffering and persecution as a committed disciple of Christ.
- Explain the essential background information of 1 Peter.
- Develop an overview chart of 1 Peter and identify the theme and purpose of the epistle.
- Appreciate the positive value that trials can have for your life, and why faithfully enduring them will prove to be important when Christ returns.

Lesson One: A Biblical Introduction to Evil, Tribulation, and Suffering

Lesson Introduction

This course is primarily meant to be a study through the epistle of 1 Peter, the theme of which concerns trials, suffering and persecution. As a prelude to our study of 1 Peter, this lesson is intended to provide the necessary theological foundation by exploring the problem of evil and suffering in general. There are important questions we all have, such as why evil and suffering exist. Are these the result of Satan's activity? If so, where did he come from and why did God allow him to be part of His creation? Finally, when evil leads to persecution because of our faith in Christ, how does this affect our commitment to discipleship?

Lesson Outline

- Topic 1: The Problem of Evil and Suffering
- Topic 2: The Origin of Evil in Satan's Rebellion
- Topic 3: Job: An Early Suffering Saint of God
- Topic 4: Persecution and the Challenge of Discipleship

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- List and describe four types of suffering that mankind experiences.
- Explain why God has chosen to allow evil to exist in His creation.
- Understand how Satan became an *evil angelic being* and what role he has in propagating evil.
- Identify with Job's longing for an explanation to his suffering and how he had to learn to trust God even when he did not have his questions answered.
- Apply Jesus' teaching on persecution and discipleship to your own life.

Topic 1: The Problem of Evil and Suffering

If the God of the Bible is inherently a good God, and if He has unlimited power, then the question naturally arises: Why does God not use His power to eradicate all forms of evil and suffering, especially for His children who have put their trust in Him? Such questions pose a dilemma for our human minds as we try to reconcile what we think we know of God with what we observe in the world around us. Consider the following sad experience of a Christian couple from the Middle East.



A Testimony from the Middle East

The following is one couple's story of how they suffered when the radical followers of ISIS invaded their city and persecuted the people living there, especially the Christians.

Trying to remember and write one of life's worst experiences is not easy. War is the worst experience that someone wants to be reminded of. War is one of the worst things that can happen to people. It's all about loss. You lose joy, peace, belongings, family members, and the comfort of home. Even memories are scattered all around with nothing left to cling to.

Our family had been living in our country in the Middle East since our marriage in 1991 until the year 2011. Then chaos started spreading all over the country and reached our city in July 2012. At first, we thought that it would soon be over, and we could continue our lives as before. Unfortunately, it did not work out that way. Destruction with all its power fell upon us. There were so many stories of car bombings everywhere resulting in blood, death, scattered bodies and fear.

Armed extremists brought enmity amongst families. Brothers in the same family killed each other for the sake of radical beliefs, bringing great shame on humanity. Our family was living at the border line of the hostilities as we heard the voices of radicals coming from behind the walls saying, "Get ready; we're here to cut off the heads of Christians from their bodies." We shivered in fear, and it nearly drove us mad to have to listen to their taunting day after day.

In late August of 2012, we fled to a safer region and waited, but things only became worse. They started throwing bombs into our area which killed many families. With this, my father could not go to work any longer, since the area was no longer safe. He had two small shops where he worked on plastic molds and casting. At first the militant radicals robbed his store but later destroyed it completely.

During the next two very long years the situation went from bad to worse. We always had to walk about cautiously because of snipers. They spared no one's children, elderly people or even pet animals. People mourned, crying for their loved ones whom they had lost, but no one could comfort them. Our daughter was a student at the local university studying nursing, and when the radicals bombed the university, many students died. The sight of so many running and bleeding was horrifying. During this time, we did not hear from our daughter for many hours, though by God's grace she was one of the survivors. Then the extremists closed all the exits of the city, so that there was no food, no water, no electricity, and no medicine. They threatened people by every means, so that everyone inside the city lost hope and thought it would be the end.

In 2014 as the world was preparing to celebrate Palm Sunday, our neighborhood suffered heavy bombardment. With this, our nerves collapsed, and we decided we would have to flee the city. Fortunately, some friends in another place opened their doors for us. But during the presidential election, fire bombs were continually being thrown, and many cities were set ablaze. We could hear the ambulances but feared to come out of our shelters. There was a terrible massacre in which we lost many friends and neighbors. Blown up bodies lay strewn over the stones of the ruins. The tears that flowed reflected how downcast our souls were.

By June of 2014, we left the country for good. At first, we travelled to a nearby country where we stayed for three months before a family member invited us to still another country. We stayed there for three long years trying to survive, but it was hopeless as we had no work. So, we had to move still again to another country in the Middle East where until this day we are trying to make a meager living and survive.

We would like to share with you lessons that we, as Christians in the Middle East, learned through all our suffering:

1. Throughout our crisis, His presence has been our hiding place.
2. When walking by faith with no clear destination in sight, we found we could trust Him and that He is the best captain ever.
3. We learned never to worry about the future and never cling to yesterday, for He is in complete control of the details of our lives.
4. Finally, we learned that everything we own is not ours, yet heavenly blessings go with us when we are moving in His direction.

Yes, we live in a world that is full of evil and suffering. Yet the question screams at us: *do we really have to live in a world like this?* Is the problem with God? Or is there a better explanation? That God has allowed evil to exist within His creation is rather obvious, but He is not the cause of that evil. In fact, at the time of the original creation, God warned the first couple that they were not to know evil.

But you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will surely die (Gen 2:17).

This verse presumes that *evil* already existed before the creation of the first man and woman. The immediate appearance of the serpent (Satan in disguise) with the garden scene ties the propagation of evil back to his diabolical intentions and schemes. Yet the first couple's disobedience allowed the presence of evil to disrupt God's created order, and it did not take long before the first murder occurred when Cain killed his brother Abel. After several generations, we read that evil had contaminated God's creation so profusely that God decided to destroy the earth by a flood, sparing only Noah and those with him:

But the Lord saw that the wickedness of humankind had become great on the earth. Every inclination of the thoughts of their minds was only evil all the time (Gen 6:5).

Despite the worldwide flood of Noah's day, evil was not eliminated, for it was embedded in the fiber of every man and woman's soul (Gen 8:21). Each person was born a sinner with the capacity for doing great evil. Only through the redeeming grace of God and walking in the way of the Lord could one rise above his own inherent evil. The story of the remainder of the Bible, then, is the story of conflict between God and Satan, between good and evil. God has allowed both Satan and evil to exist in His creation, because ultimately, they serve a good purpose. Among other reasons, this will allow God to show the indescribable love He has for all mankind as Jesus dies for the sins of everyone on the cross. Second, as mankind observes how destructive the presence of Satan and evil are in God's creation, they will agree with God that evil should not and cannot be allowed to co-exist in His kingdom. They will also understand why God ultimately must banish evil, Satan, and all those aligned with him from His presence for all eternity.

QUESTION 1

The origin of evil goes back before the creation of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. *True or False?*

QUESTION 2

Which of the following are valid reasons as to why God would allow evil to exist in His creation?

Select all that apply

- A. Because there is evil and people are sinners, this will allow God to show His incredible love for mankind when Jesus (the Creator) dies for their sins on the cross.
- B. There was a debate among the angels about whether evil should be allowed, and they made the decision to allow evil.
- C. God allowed evil, so that ultimately He could prove He was stronger than Satan.
- D. By allowing evil to exist throughout history and to witness how terrible it is, mankind will come to understand that Satan and evil must ultimately be banished from God's creative realm.

Until the time when God makes a new heaven and new earth, we who are part of God's family are called to separate ourselves from evil. The author of Proverbs writes in Proverbs 14:16,

A wise person is cautious and **turns from evil**,
but a fool throws off restraint and is overconfident.

When one becomes a Christian, he gradually learns why a wise person turns from evil, but he also must learn *how* one can effectively do so. As we study the New Testament, we come to understand that God has given us the Holy Spirit within, so that by walking in the Spirit we can have victory over the flesh within, and thus not be dominated by evil desires.

QUESTION 3

As New Testament believers, we recognize that we need the help of the _____ if we are to have success in our battle with the flesh and overcoming evil desires.

Because there is evil in God's creation, there is suffering. In some cases, this is *general or undeserved suffering* that all mankind experiences, regardless of one's relationship to God. Examples of this are natural disasters, animal attacks, and disease. There is also *societal suffering*, that is, suffering because of evil in society in general, regarding which, one may or may not have much personal influence. For instance, evil desires within man are ultimately the cause of war in which multitudes suffer. There is also *deserved suffering* that one brings upon himself. For instance, if one steals something that does not belong to him, there is a good chance (according to the laws in most countries) that he will be punished for his crime. Then there is *Christian suffering*, the harassment or persecution that one experiences simply because he or she is a disciple of Christ who names Jesus as Lord and Savior. It is this last form of suffering that will be the focus of this course and of our study in 1 Peter. Simply put, we who are Christians live in a world that is hostile to our faith in Christ. This hostility is rooted in Satan's rebellion against God, and it is perpetrated by those who have been blinded by Satan's devious schemes and lies.

QUESTION 4

Which of the following is *not* one of the categories of suffering discussed above?

- A. General (or undeserved) suffering.
- B. Christian suffering.
- C. International suffering.
- D. Societal suffering.
- E. Deserved suffering.

QUESTION 5



Meditate for a moment on Proverbs 14:16. As you reflect upon your country and society, where do you see an example of evil for which you need to apply the truth of this verse? In your Life Notebook, describe the evil situation. How does this affect you? Why is it important to “turn from evil”?

Topic 2: The Origin of Evil in Satan’s Rebellion

In the previous topic, we saw that the problem of evil and suffering stems from the devious work carried out by one called Satan, and that the first couple were deceived by his trickery in the garden of Eden. But where did this one we call “Satan” come from? Did God create him evil? If so, is God ultimately guilty of the evil and suffering we see in the world? *Before answering these questions, we will pause to consider a true story of a Christian living in West Africa and the suffering he has had to experience.*¹



A Testimony from a Christian in West Africa

Mobo was known throughout his region of West Africa as the single most-feared anti-Christian zealot, wanting nothing but to punish Christians in the most brutal way possible.

Suddenly one evening, in the middle of ranting to his wives, he slumped onto their living room floor fast asleep. Five minutes later he woke, asking where the man in gleaming white had gone. “He wants me to follow Him, and I must. He said His name is Jesus.”

Four times in the next two weeks Mobo walked nearly three hours each way to the home of the Christian leader he once persecuted. He sought not to kill, but to be counseled.

After realizing his story was genuine, the believers meeting in the house taught him from the Bible. He was baffled that God would forgive him for his gruesome deeds, but upon hearing the gospel, he received Jesus and His gift of forgiveness.

Only two weeks after his conversion, Mobo was captured by his former men, interrogated, and bribed with money, a new wife, possessions ... anything a man could want. He refused, and instead boldly declared the truth of the gospel to them.

Despite being beaten and tortured, he fearlessly proclaimed his story—he’d met Jesus, Jesus forgave him, and Jesus loves them. The zealots were stunned and furious, thinking he was demon-possessed.

When their magic spells against him failed, they sought to kill him. Over the course of 15 months, Mobo escaped more arson attempts to kill him; was severely beaten, injured, and hospitalized for weeks on end. Yet he refused to deny Jesus.

Mobo is not safe today. He is separated from his family and fighting daily for his life. But more than that, he fights for the God who forgave and saved him.

¹ Adapted from “Mobo: A modern-day apostle Paul,” *SIM Global* 161 (Feb 2019): 1-2.

The Bible has a lot to say about Satan, and by studying the Bible we can safely conclude that God did not create Satan as an evil creature. Since God Himself is perfect and holy, everything He thinks and does is perfect and holy, including everything He has created. The name “Satan” (meaning “adversary”) was not the original name for this evil one. The Bible appears to address him as “O shining one [or ‘star of the morning’], son of the dawn” (Isa 14:12). The Hebrew term for “shining one” is *Hêlêl*, and when this was translated into the Latin Vulgate, it was rendered as *Lucifer* (the term for the morning star).

QUESTION 6

Satan was originally referred to as the “shining one” or “star of the morning.” *True or False?*

Furthermore, Ezekiel 28:14-15 gives us insight into his original nature. First, he was created as an angelic being (“you were the anointed cherub who covers;” Ezk 28:14, NASB). Second, he was created pure and blameless, but subsequently sinned. Ezekiel 28:15 tells us, “You were blameless in your behavior from the day you were created, until sin was discovered in you.” His sin was one of pride and thinking that he could be like God. He said, “I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High” (Isa 14:14; NASB). For this reason, the LORD God had to judge and condemn him. Later, in stating the qualifications for elders, Paul said, “and not a new convert, so that he will not become *conceited* [‘puffed up, prideful’] and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil” (1 Tim 3:6; NASB).

QUESTION 7

Satan has always existed as an evil, demonic being opposed to God. *True or False?*

The Bible has many names and ways of referring to him:

Satan (53 times) – first in Job 1:6 – meaning “adversary”
devil (34 times, but only in the New Testament) – meaning “slanderer, accuser”
the serpent (reflecting his disguise in the garden) – Genesis 3:1; 2 Corinthians 11:3;
Revelation 12: 9, 14, 15; 20:2
dragon (depicting him as a terrifying creature) – Revelation chapters 12 and 13; 16:13; 20:2
the tempter – Matthew 4:3; 1 Thessalonians 3:5
the evil one (10 times) – Matthew 13:19; 1 John 5:19
the accuser of the brethren – Revelation 12:10
the prince of the power of the air – Ephesians 2:2
the god of this age (or world) – 2 Corinthians 4:4
the ruler of this world – John 12:31; 16:11

QUESTION 8

Which of the following is *not* one of the ways that Satan is referred to in the Bible?

- A. The god of this world
- B. The tempter
- C. The Devil
- D. The Antichrist
- E. The accuser of the brethren

In addition to his own downfall, we understand from the Bible that he led a rebellion against God and influenced many other angelic beings to participate in this with him. Hence, Matthew 25:41 speaks of “the devil and his angels” (cf. Rev 12:9). Those angels who joined Satan (and were likewise judged) became known as “demons” (or fallen angels).

In short, Satan is the *arch-enemy* of God, and (knowing that his ultimate fate is in hell) his purpose is to do everything he can—while he can—to hinder, oppose, and prevent God from carrying out His purposes with mankind. He will lie, murder, steal, tempt, and attack believers. He is out to deceive people that God is not really just and loving. He tried to keep Jesus from going to the cross (Mt 4:1-11). He has enormous power in this age to direct the spread of evil and propagate ungodliness in society, which is why the Bible speaks of him as “the ruler of this world” (Jn 12:31; 16:11) and “the prince of the power of the air” (Eph 2:2). As such, he works to turn the leaders of nations against the LORD God (Ps 2:1-2) and causes the persecution of Christians (Acts 4:18-31; 8:1; 2 Tim 3:12). He blinds the minds of the unbelieving to keep them from believing the gospel (2 Cor 4:4). He torments the lives of Christians, causing discouragement and depression (2 Cor 1:8-9). He hinders the advancement of the gospel and the cause of missions (1 Thess 2:18). He works disunity in the church and disrupts the harmony between believers (Eph 4:3; Phil 4:2). Finally, he will try to prevent the return of Christ to establish His kingdom upon earth by raising up and empowering a false messiah known as the Antichrist or “lawless one” (2 Thess 2:8-10; Rev 13:2-4).

QUESTION 9

Match the verse references in the left column with the correct statement in the right column:

<i>Verse Reference</i>	<i>Statement</i>
2 Corinthians 4:4	All who want to live godly lives in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.
John 16:11	He blinds the minds of those who do not believe
2 Timothy 3:12	We wanted to come to you ... but Satan thwarted us.
1 Thessalonians 2:18	The ruler of this world has been condemned.

As we prepare for our study of 1 Peter with its theme of trials, persecutions and sufferings, we need to be able to see that ultimately this is part of the activity of Satan. Once we believe the gospel and take the side of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have made ourselves a “target” of Satan and an enemy that he is determined to crush. Thanks to our Lord Jesus, however, we know that we are on the winning side!

^{2:14} But thanks be to God who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and who makes known through us the fragrance that consists of the knowledge of him in every place. ^{2:15} For we are a sweet aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing—^{2:16} to the latter an odor from death to death, but to the former a fragrance from life to life (2 Cor 2:14-16).

QUESTION 10



Having studied through Topic 2, is there any new insight you have learned about Satan? Why do you think it is important for Christians to have an understanding of Satan and how he works? Write your answers in your Life Notebook.

Topic 3: Job: An Early Suffering Saint of God

The book of Job gives us keen insight into the attitude of Satan toward God's people and his determination to afflict them and see them suffer.² By studying this book of the Old Testament, we can learn a lot about Satan, his motives, and how our sufferings fit into the sovereignty of an all-wise, all-powerful, and all-loving Creator God. The book also helps us better understand that righteous people sometimes suffer undeservedly. Before we look closer at the book of Job, we will pause to consider a true story of a Christian lady living in East Asia. Her spouse did not understand her faith in God, just as Job's spouse questioned his faith in God.



A Testimony from a Christian in East Asia

The following is a true story of how one Christian sister in East Asia had to endure ill-treatment at the hands of an unbelieving husband. But Christ-like love helped change the situation.

When I first became a Christian, my husband was very opposed to my new-found faith. He would often beat me in an attempt to get me to renounce my faith. When I went to church, he would often lock me out of our house. One night he refused to let me in all night. The Lord gave me strength to persevere in following Christ despite his opposition.

One day, however, my husband became very sick. God gave me compassion for him despite the way he had treated me, and I lovingly cared for him for many months. As a result, God softened his heart, and he eventually put his faith in Christ.

Many Bible scholars think that the book of Job was one of the earliest books of the Old Testament (if not *the* oldest book). It tells the story of a man named Job who was a believer in the LORD God and who lived in a country called Uz (an uncertain location but outside the land of Canaan). He was very righteous, very wealthy and had a large family. The setting of the story is given in chapters one and two. At a time when the angelic beings came before the presence of God, Satan also came among them (Job 1:6). Satan made the accusation that Job did not really love and worship God because of who God was, but because of the benefits he received from God. That is, because God blessed Job and protected him. If these things were taken away (so Satan argued), Job would cease fearing God. So, Satan was allowed to afflict Job. He suffered the loss of his possessions and wealth, his children were killed, and Job himself was afflicted with boils over his whole body. Not only was Job utterly miserable, but even his wife ceased to support him. She taunted him, "Are you still holding firmly to your integrity? Curse God and die!" Throughout all this ordeal, Job did not blame God but instead worshiped Him (Job 1:20-22). Nevertheless, in his great misery and suffering, he did curse the day of his birth and lamented his woes (Job 3:1-26). He also raised the philosophical question of why man should even be born, if his lot was merely to suffer:

²⁰ Why does God give light to one who is in misery, and life to those whose soul is bitter, ²¹ to those who wait for death that does not come, and search for it more than for hidden treasures,

²² who rejoice even to jubilation, and are exultant when they find the grave? (Job 3:20-22).

² For a helpful study on this topic, see Larry J. Waters, "Reflections on Suffering from the Book of Job," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 154 (Oct-Dec 1997) 436-51.

QUESTION 11

The reason why God allowed Satan to attack Job was because Job had become too rich and consequently too proud. *True or False?*

Hearing of his sad condition, his three friends (Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar) came to comfort him. Although their intentions were good, their counsel only served to antagonize him. The problem was that Job was truly innocent of any wrongdoing, but his three friends were convinced that it was some sin he had committed that caused God to afflict him. They subscribed to what theologians call “retribution theology.” This theology assumes that if one lives righteously, then God will bless him; but if one sins, then God will punish. The problem with such a theology is that although it may sometimes be true, it is *not* universally true. Larry Waters explains how this false theology ties in with Job’s situation:

Satan basically asked the question: Is it love or is it self-serving greed that motivates a person to be righteous, to fear God, and to be separate from sin? Satan wrongly assumed that since God protected and blessed Job, greed was the foundation of his righteousness rather than Job’s personal intimate relationship based on love, trust, and fear of God (1:8-10; 2:3). Traditional wisdom reasoned that since God is in control of the world and because He is just, the only way wise people can maintain faith in Him is to see all blessing as evidence of goodness and righteousness and all suffering as evidence of unrighteousness and sin.³

QUESTION 12

Which of the following statements best describes “retribution theology”?

- A. All good gifts coming from God are due to His grace.
- B. Without exception, man either obeys God and is blessed, or he disobeys and is punished.
- C. Man is inherently a sinner, and therefore deserves nothing from God.
- D. If we practice “knocking and seeking,” God will answer our prayers and bless us.

Although Job’s friends were wrong (he had not done anything to deserve his suffering), as their dialogue progressed, we find Job struggling with his view of God. He vigorously contended that he was innocent (which was true), but he felt that God was treating him like an enemy and that God owed him an explanation. Job even demanded that God answer him (see Job 31:35-37).

QUESTION 13

Job believed in his heart that he had done nothing to bring about his sad misfortune, and therefore God owed him an explanation. *True or False?*

Eventually a fourth friend named Elihu spoke. He avoided the faulty accusations that the first three counselors gave to Job. Instead he tried to help Job realize that he had been wrong in his attitude toward God. Elihu pointed out that Job had no right to demand that God give him an explanation. He asked, “Why do you contend against him, that he does not answer all a person’s words?” (Job 33:13). Did Job really want God to treat him according to what he deserved? If God were to do that, Job would be utterly devastated. If Job were truly wise, he would want God to deal with him based on *grace* rather than based on what he deserved.

³ Larry J. Waters, “Reflections on Suffering from the Book of Job,” 441.

Furthermore, Job needed to trust that God would never be guilty of any wrongdoing. Elihu pointed out, “Indeed, in truth, God does not act wickedly, and the Almighty does not pervert justice” (Job 34:12). Also, Job needed to accept that he was incapable of understanding God and the ways that God worked. Elihu reminded Job that God was beyond Job’s ability to understand. “Yes, God is great—beyond your knowledge! The number of his years is unsearchable” (Job 36:26). Since God’s wisdom, knowledge and power were so much beyond Job’s, then Job ought to trust that God would be wise enough to choose the best course of action ... even if it meant that Job would suffer in the process.

Finally, Elihu concluded,

²³ As for the Almighty, we cannot attain to him! He is great in power, but justice and abundant righteousness he does not oppress. ²⁴ Therefore people fear him, for he does not regard all the wise in heart. (Job 37:23-24; the “wise in heart” means those who are wise in their own estimation).

QUESTION 14

In Elihu’s counsel, what things did he point out to Job? *Select all that apply.*

- A. Job had no right to demand that God give him an answer.
- B. God would never do anything that was wrong or sinful.
- C. Since God was beyond Job’s understanding, he should not think he could debate God.
- D. If Job did not cease from his arrogance, God would take away his life.

Larry Waters (445) points out the wisdom of Elihu’s counsel:

Elihu presented a totally different perspective on suffering from that of the three. He said Job’s suffering was not because of past sin, but was designed to keep him from continuing to accept a sinful premise for suffering, to draw him closer to God, to teach him that God is sovereignly in control of the affairs of life, and to show him that God does reward the righteous, but only on the basis of His love and grace.

In chapters 38–41 of the book, we finally hear from God. When God spoke, however, he did not address Job’s suffering directly during his discourse nor did He answer Job’s attack on His justice. Instead, God pointed out for Job’s consideration many of the incredible things He had done in His creation, even the extraordinary creatures He had made. This powerfully demonstrated that God’s power and knowledge are infinitely beyond that of Job’s. God did not owe Job an explanation for his suffering, but based on what Job did know about God, he should have been able to simply trust God. God can be counted on to do what is right and, rather than giving us what we deserve, to deal with us in grace! If there is suffering that comes along with this, then we can trust God that it is for the best.

QUESTION 15

When God replied to Job, He carefully and patiently explained why it was necessary for Job to suffer. *True or False?*

In the final chapter, following Job’s repentance of his faulty view of God, we see God’s amazing grace poured out on Job afresh. God restored to him more than he had lost. Larry Waters concluded (448), “Job’s prosperity was returned only after everyone involved understood that all blessing comes by God’s grace alone, not because of an individual’s piety nor because of accepting a retribution/recompense theology.” This lesson, then, helps prepare us for our study of 1 Peter and the matter of why we as Christians are left to often suffer at the hands of a godless society in which we live. Even when we do not know why God has allowed these things to happen to us, we can trust that He is wise enough, righteous enough, and loving enough to do what is best. He can be trusted!

QUESTION 16



Are you or someone you know having to suffer, and yet you do not understand why? Perhaps you even feel frustrated with God. How can you *apply* what God taught Job in chapters 38–41 to your situation? Write your answers in your Life Notebook.

Topic 4: Persecution and the Challenge of Discipleship

In the previous three topics, we have reflected on the problem of evil and suffering. We have noted its origin in Satan and the rebellion he continues to lead against God’s kingdom. We also considered how Satan instigated an attack upon Job’s life which led to our gaining tremendous insight into the relationship between God and His people. God is absolutely righteous in His dealings with us, all in accordance with grace. We can trust Him who is all-wise and all-loving, even when unjust suffering comes our way that we do not deserve. This final topic of Lesson One will consider the matter of persecution that we, as Christians, may have to go through as we await our Savior’s return. Persecution for being a follower of Christ is something we must be prepared to face.



A Testimony from a Young Christian in Iran

The following is a true story of Hamid (not his real name), a young believer from the country of Iran.

For youth in Iran, following Jesus comes with a cost. “**All of them are discriminated against if it’s discovered that they are Christians,**” says Hamid, a Christian in his twenties who supports the house church movement in Iran. “Some youth have to deal with stronger forms of persecution—their families don’t agree with their new faith and are violent toward them.”

Hamid had to leave Iran at age 15. His family was involved in ministry among Muslim-background believers, which led to serious threats directed at his father. Living abroad, he is in regular contact with young Iranian believers through internet and secret meetings.

Additionally, Christians who are part of unregistered churches face the constant threat of raids and arrests. “After an arrest, the whole church is startled,” Hamid explains. “The arrested persons can’t come back to church because they will jeopardize the security of the whole church. This means that young people often have to say goodbye to people they have grown to feel connected with. Sometimes, their whole church ceases to exist.”

And yet, Hamid sees God doing amazing things among the young Christians of Iran. “There are three things that always inspire me about the youth in Iran,” Hamid says. “First, their passion for the Lord and how important this relationship with the Lord is to them. Second, I am always amazed by the level of the questions they ask. Finally, most of them have a vision in their mind and are happy to pay the price to move toward their vision.”

One of the more difficult things about being a Christian is that we must be prepared to suffer for our faith, and for some, maybe even to be martyred. This is even truer for those living outside the “Western world,” though even in western countries the enormous cultural shift in recent decades has brought about a significant diminishment of Christian freedoms and an attack upon our faith by the secular media and academic world.

The Bible has a lot to say about persecution and suffering for Christ. Jesus repeatedly challenged those who followed Him that they must be prepared for this. A classic example is found in Jesus' remarks in Matthew 5:10-12 from the Sermon on the Mount:

¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to them. ¹¹ Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you and say all kinds of evil things about you falsely on account of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad because your reward is great in heaven, for they persecuted the prophets before you in the same way.

The Apostle Paul—one who had suffered much in his service to Jesus—penned these words for the Christians at Philippi (keep in mind that Paul was beaten and thrown in jail at Philippi; Acts 16:22-24):

²⁹ For it has been granted to you not only to believe in Christ but also to suffer for him, ³⁰ since you are encountering the same conflict that you saw me face and now hear that I am facing. (Phil 1:29-30).

The New Testament has so many references to Christian suffering and persecution that we cannot even begin to consider them all here. But you will find further help in Lesson 10 of the BEE course on *The Christian Life*. Lesson 10 is entitled, “Trusting God when Life Hurts: Making Sense of Suffering.” If you have already taken that course, you might wish to review that material. That lesson has five topics that are very helpful to Christians who are suffering:

- Topic 1: The Causes of Suffering
- Topic 2: The Dangers of Suffering
- Topic 3: How God Uses Suffering
- Topic 4: Ministering to the Suffering
- Topic 5: Preparing for Suffering

Christians have suffered through the ages, and that is certainly no less true today. In fact, some have estimated that there have been more Christians martyred for Christ since 1900 than in all previous centuries combined. In a 2001 publication entitled “World Christian Trends AD 30-AD 2200” (published by William Carey Library), the authors present evidence for the startling conclusion that, over the 20 centuries of the Christian faith, some 70 million believers have been murdered for the Christian faith and hence are called martyrs. They define Christian martyrs as “believers in Christ who have lost their lives prematurely, in situations of witness, as a result of human hostility” (p 228). Elsewhere, Glenn Penner writes, “There is a clear scriptural link between persecution and discipleship. Indeed, there can be no discipleship without persecution; to follow Christ is to join Him in a cross-carrying journey of reconciling the world to the Father.”⁴

To study 1 Peter is to study a book of the Bible meant to prepare us for the hard calling of suffering and persecution as a committed disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. All of us who claim to be Christians must ask ourselves this question: “Am I willing to suffer—perhaps even be martyred—because of the faith I profess in Jesus Christ?” This takes us to the essence of *true discipleship*. Are we willing to totally surrender our will to Jesus, trusting Him in whatever may come our way, even if we must pay a high price to be faithful to Him? That is a tough question, but it is that level of commitment that He wants from each one of us.

⁴ Glenn Penner, “A Biblical Theology of Persecution and Discipleship,” in *Sorrow & Blood; Christian Mission in Contexts of Suffering, Persecution, and Martyrdom*, ed. W. D. Taylor, A. van der Meer, and R. Reimer (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2012), 72.

²⁴ Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. ²⁵ “For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. (Mt 16:24-25).

These words were spoken in response to Peter’s objection to Jesus’ announcement that He was going to Jerusalem to suffer and be killed. Jesus was telling Peter and the other disciples that if they really were serious about wanting to follow Him, they would have to deny themselves and take up their cross. That is, they would have to give up whatever agenda for their life they might have had to accept what God wanted of them (= denying self), and would need to be prepared to suffer, perhaps even be martyred, in doing His will (= taking up their cross). That is what they must do to “save” their life. This latter statement in verse 25, however, is not talking about salvation from the penalty of sins. Only Jesus can do that for us. Rather, “to save our life” means to come out victorious in the day when we stand before the Lord Jesus Christ.⁵ It is to be commended by Him for being a faithful disciple rather than His being ashamed of us, and receiving from Him the rewards He has promised to those who are faithful (compare Mk 8:38).

QUESTION 17

What things did Jesus demand of faithful disciples in Matthew 16:24? *Select all that apply.*

- A. They would need to deny themselves (give up their own agenda for God’s).
- B. They would need to take up their cross (prepared to suffer and possibly be martyred).
- C. They would need to forsake all their earthly possessions and live a simple life.
- D. They would need to follow Jesus.

The sad news is that suffering and persecution of Christians are on the rise in most countries around the world. In 2018, the Pew Research Center released a carefully documented study of 198 countries with statistics showing increased government restrictions on religion and social hostilities:

In total in 2016, 83 countries (42%) had high or very high levels of **overall restrictions** on religion – whether resulting from government actions or from hostile acts by private individuals, organizations and social groups – up from 80 (40%) in 2015 and 58 (29%) in 2007.⁶

QUESTION 18

The Pew Research Center reported that in the year 2016, 83 countries had high or very high levels of restrictions on religion. *True or False?*

More recently, Open Doors released its annual “World Watch List” of the top 50 countries where it is most dangerous to be a Christian.⁷ The two most populous countries of the world are on that list and have risen higher on the list than in previous years. Each of these countries is home to more than a billion people. Of course, there are many other countries of the world where Christians face persecution, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa. Looking at the numbers, 245 million Christians in the

⁵ For more discussion on this difficult verse, see “Topic 2: Requirements of a True Disciple” in Lesson 7 of the BEE course *Following the Master*.

⁶ “Global Uptick in Government Restrictions on Religion in 2016,” published by the Pew Research Center, June 2018. Available online at < <https://www.pewforum.org/2018/06/21/global-uptick-in-government-restrictions-on-religion-in-2016/>>.

⁷ “World Watch List 2019; The 50 Countries Where It’s Most Dangerous to Follow Jesus,” published by Open Doors and available online at < <https://www.opendoorsusa.org/2019-world-watch-list-report>>.

top 50 countries in the World Watch List are expected to face high levels of persecution in the coming year. Also, as many as 4,136 Christians were murdered last year because of their faith, while 1,266 churches or Christian buildings were attacked.

QUESTION 19

According to Open Doors' "World Watch List 2019," 245 thousand Christians in the top 50 countries on its list are expected to face high levels of persecution in the coming year.

True or False?

Also to be noted, is what the report describes as the "shocking reality of persecution against women." According to the report,

In many places, they experience a 'double persecution' — one for being a Christian and one for being a woman. Even in the most restricted circumstances, gender-specific persecution is a key means of destroying the minority Christian community. This kind of persecution is difficult to assess because it is complex, violent and hidden — in many cultures where women are specifically targeted, it is difficult if not impossible to report accurate numbers.

As saddening as it is to consider the topic of Christian persecution, the good news is that the church of Jesus Christ has *never* been defeated because of suffering. History testifies that it has often been in her most difficult and painful hours that the church has advanced the most. One of the great hymns of the Christian faith in English is "The Church's One Foundation." Consider stanzas four and five of that song.

4 The church shall never perish!
Her dear Lord, to defend,
to guide, sustain, and cherish,
is with her to the end;
tho' there be those that hate her
and false sons in her pale,
against the foe or traitor
she ever shall prevail.

5 'Mid toil and tribulation,
and tumult of her war,
she waits the consummation
of peace for evermore;
till with the vision glorious
her longing eyes are blest,
and the great church victorious
shall be the church at rest.

Those who take up the mantel of committed discipleship—no matter what their sufferings—will one day rejoice in victory as the Lord Jesus Christ returns to banish the evil one and inaugurate His blessed kingdom. To that day may we all look with hearts of faith!

QUESTION 20



Take a few moments to reflect again on the words of Jesus as recorded in Matthew 5:10-12. What consolations did Jesus have to offer for those who were persecuted, insulted or falsely accused on His account? Do you find His words to be helpful? Why or why not? Write your answers in your Life Notebook.

Lesson 1 Self Check

QUESTION 1

Which of the following are valid reasons as to why God would allow evil to exist in His creation? [Check all that are true].

- A. Because there is evil and people are sinners, this will allow God to show His incredible love for mankind when Jesus (the Creator) dies for their sins on the cross.
- B. There was a debate among the angels about whether evil should be allowed, and they made the decision to allow evil.
- C. God allowed evil, so that ultimately He could prove He was stronger than Satan.
- D. By allowing evil to exist throughout history and to witness how terrible it is, mankind will come to understand that Satan and evil must ultimately be banished from God's creative realm.

QUESTION 2

As New Testament believers, we recognize that we need the help of the Holy Spirit if we are to have success in our battle with the flesh and overcoming evil desires. *True or False?*

QUESTION 3

Of the different types of suffering that a believer may experience, "deserved suffering" refers to suffering that I may have brought upon myself because of my own disobedience or foolish actions. *True or False?*

QUESTION 4

Satan was originally referred to as the "moon god" or "the evening star." *True or False?*

QUESTION 5

Which of the following is *not* one of the ways that Satan is referred to in the Bible?

- A. The god of this world
- B. The lord of the pit
- C. The Devil
- D. The tempter
- E. The accuser of the brethren

QUESTION 6

The accusation that Satan made against Job was that Job only worshiped God because of the benefits He received from God (God's blessings and protection). *True or False?*

QUESTION 7

Which of the following statements best describes "retribution theology"?

- A. All good gifts coming from God are due to His grace.
- B. Without exceptions, man either obeys God and is blessed, or he disobeys and is punished.
- C. Man is inherently a sinner, and therefore deserves nothing from God.
- D. If we practice "knocking and seeking," God will answer our prayers and bless us.

QUESTION 8

Job believed in his heart that he had done nothing wrong to bring about his sad misfortune, and therefore (he reasoned) God owed him an explanation. *True or False?*

QUESTION 9

In Elihu's counsel, what things did he point out to Job? [Check all that are true].

- A. Job had no right to demand that God give him an answer.
- B. God would never do anything that was wrong or sinful.
- C. Since God was beyond Job's understanding, he should not think he could debate God.
- D. If Job did not cease from his arrogance, God would take away his life.

QUESTION 10

What things did Jesus demand of faithful disciples in Matthew 16:24? [Check all that are true].

- A. They would need to deny themselves (give up their own agenda for God's).
- B. They would need to take up their cross (prepared to suffer and possibly be martyred).
- C. They would need to forsake all their earthly possessions and live a simple life.
- D. They would need to follow Jesus.

Lesson 1 Answers to Questions

QUESTION 1: True

QUESTION 2: Answers “A” and “D” are both correct.

- A. Because there is evil and people are sinners, this will allow God to show His incredible love for mankind when Jesus (the Creator) dies for their sins on the cross.
- D. By allowing evil to exist throughout history and to witness how terrible it is, mankind will come to understand that Satan and evil must ultimately be banished from God’s creative realm.

QUESTION 3

Holy Spirit

QUESTION 4

- C. International suffering.

QUESTION 5: *your answer.*

QUESTION 6: True

QUESTION 7: False

QUESTION 8

- D. The Antichrist

QUESTION 9

<i>Verse Reference</i>	<i>Statement</i>
2 Corinthians 4:4	He blinds the minds of those who do not believe.
John 16:11	The ruler of this world has been condemned.
2 Timothy 3:12	All who want to live godly lives in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.
1 Thessalonians 2:18	We wanted to come to you ... but Satan thwarted us.

QUESTION 10: *your answer.*

QUESTION 11: False

QUESTION 12

- B. Without exceptions, man either obeys God and is blessed, or he disobeys and is punished.

QUESTION 13: True

QUESTION 14: Answers “A,” “B” and “C” are all true.

- A. Job had no right to demand that God give him an answer.
- B. God would never do anything that was wrong or sinful.
- C. Since God was beyond Job’s understanding, he should not think he could debate God.

QUESTION 15: False

QUESTION 16: *Your answer*

QUESTION 17: Answers “A,” “B” and “D” are all true.

- A. They would need to deny themselves (give up their own agenda for God’s).
- B. They would need to take up their cross (prepared to suffer and possibly be martyred).
- D. They would need to follow Jesus.

QUESTION 18: True

QUESTION 19: False

QUESTION 20: *Your answer*

Lesson 1 Self Check Answers

QUESTION 1: Answers A and D are both correct.

- A. Because there is evil and people are sinners, this will allow God to show His incredible love for mankind when Jesus (the Creator) dies for their sins on the cross.
- D. By allowing evil to exist throughout history and to witness how terrible it is, mankind will come to understand that Satan and evil must ultimately be banished from God's creative realm.

QUESTION 2: True

QUESTION 3: True

QUESTION 4: False

QUESTION 5

- B. The lord of the pit

QUESTION 6: True

QUESTION 7

- B. Without exception, man either obeys God and is blessed, or he disobeys and is punished.

QUESTION 8: True

QUESTION 9: Answers A, B and C are all correct.

- A. Job had no right to demand that God give him an answer.
- B. God would never do anything that was wrong or sinful.
- C. Since God was beyond Job's understanding, he should not think he could debate God.

QUESTION 10: Answers A, B and D are all correct.

- A. They would need to deny themselves (give up their own agenda for God's).
- B. They would need to take up their cross (prepared to suffer and possibly be martyred).
- D. They would need to follow Jesus.

Lesson Two: Background and Overview of The Epistle of 1 Peter

Lesson Introduction

In Lesson One, you were given a general introduction to the problem of evil and an explanation of why there is suffering in this world in which we live. This is important for us as Christians to understand, because not only do we live in a world where evil abounds and demonic forces are at work, but we as Christians are often singled out for ridicule, persecution and in some cases even martyrdom. Hence, we need to understand the issue of Christian suffering and how to face this as we live out our life on earth. The epistle of 1 Peter addresses many of these concerns, especially Christian suffering, and helps prepare us to live faithfully in a world that is often hostile to Christianity.

Lesson Two is designed to help you prepare for a systematic study of 1 Peter. One thing you will learn in the BEE course on *Studying the Bible* is that before studying any book of the Bible, you should take time to study important background information like who wrote the book, to whom was it written and why, where were the addressees located, and what were the circumstances they were facing at that time. In addition to studying these matters, we will also develop an overview chart of 1 Peter to help us identify the theme and purpose of the epistle.

Lesson Outline

- Topic 1: Date and Authorship of the Epistle
- Topic 2: The Addressees, Occasion, and Historical Setting (1 Pet 1:1-2)
- Topic 3: Developing an Overview Chart of 1 Peter
- Topic 4: Identifying the Theme and Purpose of 1 Peter

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- State the arguments that favor the identity of Peter as the author of the epistle.
- Draw lessons for your own life based on a study of both Peter's failures and his faith as a Christian leader.
- State evidence from the epistle that indicates Peter wrote to both Jewish and Gentile Christians.
- Identify the ways that each member of the Trinity works to bring about our salvation.
- Develop an *analysis chart* of a book of the Bible and apply this method to 1 Peter.
- Identify the theme and purpose of a book of the Bible and apply this method to 1 Peter.

Topic 1: Date and Authorship of the Epistle

The first verse of the epistle identifies the author for us. The opening words, "From Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ," inform us that this epistle was written by none other than Peter, one of the original twelve disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. Furthermore, he is identified as an *apostle* of Jesus Christ, which reminds us that he played an important and authoritative role in the formation of the early church.

The historic Christian position has been to accept verse one as a reliable indication of the authorship of the epistle, that is, that this epistle was authored by Peter, the fisherman from Galilee who became one of the original twelve. Not all scholars, however, have accepted the notion of Petrine authorship. Some have taken the position that what we have is a pseudonymous author who was connected to Peter (or his teachings) and has written in such a way as representing the thoughts of Peter. One of the reasons for thinking this is that the epistle is written in a high-quality Greek which almost seems too good for a Galilean fisherman whose native language was probably not Greek. [Most likely Peter's first language was Aramaic, though he undoubtedly knew some Greek]. In Acts 4:13, the Jewish leaders observed that Peter and John "were uneducated and ordinary men." Hence, some assert that this epistle was written by a native-Greek speaker, not Peter. A second reason for doubting the authorship of Peter is the conjecture that the epistle was written in the late first-century (after Peter's death). Those who believe this way argue that the areas mentioned in verse one may not have been reached with the gospel until a time after Peter's death.

QUESTION 1

For those scholars who object to the traditional understanding that 1 Peter was written by the apostle Peter, which of the following are arguments they might rely on? [There is more than one possible answer].

- A. The author states that he never traveled to places like Pontus, Cappadocia and Bithynia.
- B. The Greek of 1 Peter seems to be a high-quality Greek that one would not expect of a Galilean fisherman.
- C. The author could not have been a Jew because of his obvious unfamiliarity of the temple.
- D. The places mentioned in 1 Peter 1:1 supposedly did not have Christian communities until after Peter's death.

Despite the questions raised about the authorship of the epistle, the evidence strongly favors the traditional understanding that the apostle Peter himself wrote this. First, the Greek manuscripts we have of 1 Peter indicate that according to 1 Peter 1:1, Peter wrote it. The Bible is the inerrant Word of God and therefore trustworthy. Any conjecture about the author's language or time that the gospel penetrated these regions must yield to the clear statement of verse one. Second, Mark (Peter's son in the faith) is mentioned in 1 Peter 5:13: "The church in Babylon, chosen together with you, greets you, and so does Mark, my son." Most likely "Babylon" is a code-word for Rome. Also, we know that Mark had been in Rome, as had Peter (see Col 4:10). There is a strong tradition that Mark was closely associated with Peter, and that Mark (who wrote the gospel of Mark) obtained much of his information from Peter. The early church father Irenaeus stated, "After their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what *had been preached* by Peter" (*Against Heresies*, 3.1.2). Third, there are parallels between this letter and Peter's sermons that appear in Acts (e.g., 1 Pet 1:20 with Acts 2:23, and 1 Pet 4:5 with Acts 10:42). Of particular interest is the similarity of 1 Peter 2:7-8 with Acts 4:10-11, where in each passage Psalm 118:22 is quoted and applied to Christ. Recall that Peter was present when Christ Himself used Psalm 118:22 to explain His rejection by the Jewish leaders.

QUESTION 2

One of the arguments favoring Peter as the author is the mention of Mark in 1 Peter 5:13, who was known to have had a close association with the apostle Peter. *True or False?*

Regarding the use of the rather polished Greek in 1 Peter, this could be accounted for by the fact that following Christ's crucifixion, Peter had most of three decades of ministry in Greek-speaking regions during which time his competency in the Greek language would have significantly improved. Furthermore, the statement in Acts 4:13 need not imply the disciples were illiterate, but rather that they

had not been trained in rabbinical tradition. Peter's sermons in Acts reveal him to have been a capable speaker and thinker, and he obviously knew the Scriptures well. Some scholars take the position that though Peter *authored* the contents of the epistle, he utilized an amanuensis (someone who penned the words) to write it out. The reference to Silvanus in 1 Peter 5:12 ("Through Silvanus . . . I have written to you briefly") could be taken this way, but Jobes (320-21) presents evidence that this more likely means Silvanus (probably the "Silas" associated earlier with Paul) was the courier of the letter rather than Peter's amanuensis.

QUESTION 3

In 1 Peter 5:12, Peter mentions "Silvanus" who apparently was the courier of the letter. This is probably the same as the person named _____ who was a traveling companion of Paul.

The conclusion is that Peter, one of the original twelve, was the author of the epistle that bears his name. In calling himself an "apostle," Peter was asserting more than the fact he was a disciple of Jesus or that he was *sent* by God. According to Ephesians 2:20, the "church"—the newly formed new covenant people of God—is "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone." The apostles were men with special authority (divinely appointed and gifted by God) to help lay the foundation of the church (cf. 1 Cor 9:1, 2; 15:9; Gal 1:1; 2 Tim 1:11). Not only was Peter an apostle, but he was chief of the apostles and the primary spokesman and leader of the early church, as witnessed by the fact that (1) his name appears first in the apostolic lists (Mt 10:2–4; Mk 3:16–19; Lk 6:13–16), (2) he was the one who spoke on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2), and (3) he was the one whom God chose to preach to the Gentiles that they might hear the gospel message and believe (Acts 15:7; a reference to Peter's visit to Cornelius in Acts 10).

In surveying the New Testament as a whole, Peter stands as one of the major characters throughout. He figures prominently in the gospel accounts as one of the original twelve disciples. In John 1:40-42, John records how Peter was first introduced to Jesus:

⁴⁰ Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of the two disciples who heard what John said and followed Jesus. ⁴¹ He first found his own brother Simon and told him, "We have found the Messiah!" (which is translated Christ). ⁴² Andrew brought Simon to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon, the son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).

So, his original name was "Simon ben John," (Aramaic "Simon Barjona"), but Jesus renamed him "Cephas," (an Aramaic term meaning "rock"). The word Peter (Gk *petros*) was a translation of the word Cephas, but it is the name Peter that he is most commonly referred to in the New Testament.

Although Peter was associated with the founding of the church, he was often seen in the gospel accounts as being *rock-headed*, often saying the wrong thing at the wrong time. No sooner had he rightly identified Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mt 16:16), then he turned right around and rebuked Jesus for suggesting that He was going to be martyred in Jerusalem at the hands of the Jewish religious leaders (Mt 16:22). For this, Jesus sharply rebuked Peter: "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me, because you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but on man's." Later, Peter declared at the Last Supper that he would lay down his life for Jesus (Jn 13:37), only to end up denying Jesus three times. Nevertheless, the Lord loved Peter and was very patient with him. Shortly before His ascension to heaven, Jesus instructed Peter to feed His sheep (Jn 21:15-17), and then followed this with a prediction of Peter's martyrdom later in life (Jn 21:18-19):

¹⁸ I tell you the solemn truth, when you were young, you tied your clothes around you and went wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and others will tie you up and bring you where you do not want to go." ¹⁹ (Now Jesus said this to indicate clearly by what kind of death Peter was going to glorify God.) After he said this, Jesus told Peter, "Follow me."

Despite his earlier denials, Peter did *follow Jesus*. He abandoned his pursuit of the fishing industry to help lay the foundation of the church. He preached a mighty sermon for all Israel to hear on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2), and he proclaimed the gospel to the Gentile Cornelius (Acts 10), thereby extending the church to include Gentiles. Peter also took part as one of the primary leaders at the Jerusalem Council of A.D. 49, defending the notion that Gentiles are saved by the grace of God, not by circumcision or observing the Law of Moses (Acts 15:6-11). As God called the apostle Paul to be the primary agent for taking the gospel throughout the Gentile world, apparently Peter's primary ministry was to those of Jewish descent (Gal 2:7). Peter remained faithful to Jesus until the very end of his life, and (as tradition tells us) he was crucified upside down in Rome during the reign of Emperor Nero. Since Nero died in June of A.D. 68, Peter died sometime before this date, although the exact time is not known. A common suggestion is that Peter died about A.D. 67.

QUESTION 4



The brief survey above reveals that though Peter made a lot of mistakes in the early days of his walk with Jesus, he went on to serve Jesus faithfully and finish his earthly pilgrimage well. In what ways can you identify with Peter and his Christian experience? What would you like the conclusion to your life to look like? Open your life notebook and write down your thoughts.

Prior to A.D. 67, then, Peter would have written both 1 Peter and 2 Peter. Unfortunately, we cannot be sure exactly when he did so. Nero's persecution of Christians in Rome broke out after the Great Fire of Rome in July of A.D. 64. But we do not know for certain that this was the impetus for Peter writing his epistles, especially since he encouraged submission to the government and honoring of the king (1 Pet 2:13-17). He could just as easily have written 1 Peter shortly before the outbreak of Nero's persecution. There is substantial historical testimony that most of the final decade of Peter's life was spent in Rome. The fact that Silvanus was also with him (1 Pet 5:12)—Paul's traveling companion—suggests that Peter was writing in the A.D. 60's when Paul would have also been in Rome. [Paul probably reached Rome in the early part of A.D. 60]. A search for further clues within the book for the time of writing is inconclusive, and perhaps the most we can say is that 1 Peter was written sometime during the period of A.D. 60-67 (though several scholars believe it would have been before the Great Fire of A.D. 64).

QUESTION 5

Although we do not know the exact date when 1 Peter was written, the probable time period was:

- A. Shortly after Christ's crucifixion when Peter's experience with Jesus was still fresh on his mind.
- B. Shortly before the Jerusalem council in the autumn of A.D. 49.
- C. About the time of Claudius's expulsion of the Jews from Rome in A.D. 49-50 (Acts 18:2).
- D. Sometime during the period A.D. 60-67 during the final years of Peter's life.

Topic 2: The Addressees, Occasion and Historical Setting (1 Pet 1:1-2)

Having discussed the matter of authorship and date of writing, we will now try to discover what we can about those to whom the author wrote, the occasion that might have prompted his writing, and any



historical details pertaining to the author or those to whom he wrote.

READING: Open your Bible and read 1 Peter 1:1-2 and 1 Peter 5:12-13

Based on the statement in 1 Peter 5:12-13, Peter implied that he was writing from “Babylon,” and that Silvanus (Silas) and Mark were with him. Did Peter mean literal Babylon on the Euphrates river, or was this a code-word for another place? Most commentators understand “Babylon” to be a cryptic reference to Rome. [See the discussion in Lesson 12]. Since tradition has it that Peter spent most of the final segment of his life in Rome (where he was eventually martyred), this conclusion is the most reasonable one.

QUESTION 6

When Peter wrote the epistle of 1 Peter, most agree that he was probably staying at that time in:

- A. Babylon on the Euphrates River
- B. Antioch of Syria
- C. Rome
- D. Jerusalem

At the beginning of his epistle, Peter states that he was writing to “those temporarily residing abroad (in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, the province of Asia, and Bithynia).” The five place-names are all Roman provinces of what the upper part of western Turkey is today. Unfortunately, we do not know for certain why Peter wrote to Christians in these regions. We have no record that he visited these regions, but on the other hand we have very little record of Peter’s ministry. The last mention of him in Acts locates him at the Jerusalem council in A.D. 49 (Acts 15:7).



QUESTION 7

The book of Acts records that early in his ministry, after leaving Palestine, Peter brought the gospel to the regions of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, the province of Asia, and Bithynia. *True or False?*

Peter addressed the epistle to “those temporarily residing abroad,” a translation of two Greek words, *parepidēmois diasporas*, literally, “sojourners of the Diaspora.” The word *parepidēmos* means one who is a foreigner, stranger, sojourner or resident alien (residing temporarily in a place not their home or native country). Peter used the word one other time in 1 Peter 2:11. It could be used to refer to one who has formally been forced into exile in a foreign country, but it does not have to have that meaning. For example, the word is used in Hebrews 11:13 of Abraham who dwelt voluntarily in the land of Canaan as a stranger or foreigner (see Gen 23:4). However, the term *diaspora* (a word meaning “scattering”) was a term commonly used in Jewish literature for those Jews living outside Israel, especially in the Babylonian exile (see e.g., Ezk 11:17; 20:23). We also find the term used in extra-biblical literature like 2 Maccabees 1:27 in which a priest prays to God: “Gather together our scattered people [lit., ‘our diaspora’], set free those who are slaves among the Gentiles, look on those who are rejected and despised, and let the Gentiles know that you are our God.”

QUESTION 8

The Greek word *diaspora* that Peter used in 1 Peter 1:1 was a term commonly used in Jewish literature, both in the Bible and in extra-biblical literature, for Jewish people living outside Israel. *True or False?*

Even after the Babylonian exile ended (ca. 538 B.C.), minority communities of Jews continued living there in the Diaspora of their own volition (so Jn 7:35). Peter Davids notes, “At the time of Peter perhaps a million Jews were living in Palestine and two to four million outside of it, a significant group in the Empire, to be sure” (46). Many others lived in Egypt, and eventually smaller pockets of Jews were relocated to various places of the Greco-Roman world, including Rome itself (which explains why there were cities in Turkey with Jewish communities and synagogues as we see in the book of Acts). So, Peter, in addressing his audience, used terms that would have had special meaning in Jewish thinking. But was Peter thinking of Jewish Christians who resided in these provinces of Turkey? Most commentators do not think so. They suggest that Peter was simply using these words in a new spiritual sense, referring to Christians “dispersed” throughout the world and living away from their heavenly homeland.

Nevertheless, a good case can be made that Peter specifically had Jewish Christians in mind (so Fruchtenbaum, 318-19). Acts 18:2 informs us of Paul’s meeting of Aquila and Priscilla, Jewish Christians: “There he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to depart from Rome.” This expulsion of Jews from Rome (which obviously included Jewish Christians, since Aquila was affected) took place in the ninth year of the reign of the Emperor Claudius (about the year A.D. 49). It is possible, then, that large numbers of Jewish Christians (and possibly Gentile Christians as well) had left Rome and relocated to the regions listed in 1 Peter 1:1. If this is the case, then it could also mean that Peter had personally known many of these Jewish Christians while they still resided in or near Rome (presuming, of course, that Peter was in Rome that early). Some support for this view of Jewish Christians is possible from 1 Peter 2:12 (“keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles,” NASB) which could be understood as distinguishing the addressees from Gentiles. Finally, this view makes sense in light of the fact that Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised (Gal 2:7-8). They were his special concern and his primary ministry.

On the other hand, some verses in the epistle seem to be aimed at Gentiles, for example 1 Peter 4:3: “For the time already past is sufficient *for you* to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries” (cf. 1 Pet 1:18; 2:10). The mention of *idolatries* in this verse would be more descriptive of Gentiles in the Greco-Roman world than Jews. Even though the Jewish people were guilty of idolatry in their past (primarily before the Babylonian Exile of the fifth-century B.C.), this was not generally true of first-century Judaism.

Although we cannot be dogmatic about the identity of the intended audience, it seems reasonable that Peter—the apostle to the circumcised—wrote the epistle of 1 Peter to Jewish Christians living in the Diaspora, specifically the regions of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, the province of Asia, and Bithynia. If they had been affected by Claudius’s expulsion of Jews and Jewish Christians from Rome, this would help explain the emphasis given in the epistle to the theme of tribulation and suffering. Among this audience would also have been Gentile Christians, as was commonly true for first-century A.D. Christian communities. Regardless of the primary make-up of the original audience, the lessons of 1 Peter were applicable to all Christians—whether of Jewish or Gentile background—just as they are to us today.

QUESTION 9

There is no evidence whatsoever for thinking that Peter wrote his epistle primarily for Jewish Christians living in the Diaspora of what is today northern Turkey. *True or False?*

In 1 Peter 4:12 we read, “Dear friends, do not be astonished that a trial by fire is occurring among you, as though something strange were happening to you.” These words need not be taken to refer to Nero’s burning of Christians about the year A.D. 64—as some have suggested. This could simply have in mind the imagery of smelting of gold, in which trials test the mettle of one’s faith (cf. 1 Pet 1:6-7). Although

commentators have attempted to identify a specific time of persecution, Jobes has concluded that Peter did not have in mind a specific local persecution. She writes (9),

In general, the specific persecution referred to throughout the book seems limited to verbal slander, malicious talk, and false accusations (1:6; 2:12, 15; 3:9, 16; 4:12, 16). While these problems would also be present in times of martyrdom, the situation in 1 Peter appears to reflect a time when the threat had not yet escalated to that point.

In support of the idea that the persecution was not local but more general, we read in 1 Peter 5:9: “Resist him, strong in your faith, because you know that your brothers and sisters throughout the world are enduring the same kinds of suffering.”

QUESTION 10



Sometimes when we as Christians face very difficult circumstances in our own culture, we tend to forget about our fellow Christians in other parts of the world that may also be suffering. In your Life Notebook, write down one example that you know of regarding Christians in another country (not your own) that are facing persecution or having to go through very difficult circumstances because of their faith in Christ. Take a moment right now to stop and pray for them.

While Claudius’s expulsion of Jewish Christians from Rome may have contributed to their sufferings, it seems there was general disdain and opposition to the emerging Christian movement that was taking place throughout the Roman Empire. For example, when Paul brought the gospel to Philippi (about the autumn of A.D. 50), he and Silas were dragged before the city magistrates where their accusers declared,

²⁰ These men are throwing our city into confusion. They are Jews ²¹and are advocating customs that are not lawful for us to accept or practice, since we are Romans (Acts 16:20-21).

Shortly afterwards in Thessalonica (about the winter of A.D. 50-51), Jason and some of the brethren were brought before the city authorities where similar accusations were hurled against them,

⁶ These people who have stirred up trouble throughout the world have come here too, ⁷ and Jason has welcomed them as guests! They are all acting against Caesar’s decrees, saying there is another king named Jesus! (Acts 17:6-7).

With these examples, not to mention Paul’s earlier troubles in several cities of Galatia (Acts 13–14), it is not difficult to imagine the anti-Christian spirit that was already developing in many parts of the Empire by the late A.D. 40’s and early 50’s. It is because of such developments that Peter felt led to write this epistle, hoping to strengthen the faith of these early believers, to encourage them as they faced various trials and sufferings, and to help them fix their hope on the grace to be brought to them at the return of Jesus Christ.

In his attempt to encourage the suffering Christians to whom he wrote, Peter explained that though they might be living as “sojourners” in this world—often despised by non-Christians among whom they lived—they were nevertheless the “chosen” (or “elect”) of God. This concept would have had special meaning to those Jewish Christians among them, since in Old Testament times Israel had been a *chosen nation* through whom God was working out His plan of salvation-history. The concept of being “chosen” also had *covenant implications*. At Mount Sinai, the Jewish people agreed to the terms of the Mosaic covenant (i.e., the old covenant) whereby they formally became God’s chosen nation (Ex 19:5-6; Deut 7:6; 14:2). Now these first-century A.D. Christians (both Jew and Gentile) had become God’s “chosen people” as participants in the new covenant in Christ’s blood.

Peter also explained that their being “chosen” was a result of the work of the triune God...Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. [See 2 Thess 2:13-14 for a statement similar to 1 Pet 1:2]. They were “chosen ...

- according to the foreknowledge of God the Father
- by the sanctifying work of the Spirit,
- to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood” (1 Pet 1:2, NASB).

The word “foreknowledge” (Gk *prognōsis*) means not only that God “knows beforehand,” but it implies *intimate relationship* and *divine design*. [See Acts 2:23 and compare the use of the verbal form of this word regarding Christ in 1 Pet 1:20]. Regarding those who are foreknown, God initiated the process by which they were brought into relationship with Himself in accordance with His own plans and purposes, even before they had done anything to deserve it. One scholar writes,

With this prepositional phrase, ‘chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,’ Peter reminds his readers that the God who took the initiative in their lives has drawn them into an intimate, loving, and redemptive relationship with him, but also one in which God claims supreme authority over their lives. [Jobes, 69]

Of course, those “chosen” by God also needed to recognize Jesus as Lord and Savior and respond to Him in faith. This is where the “sanctifying work of the Spirit” came into play. The Holy Spirit worked to draw them to Christ and open their eyes to the truth. Finally, they had a responsibility to make a response ... to “obey Jesus Christ,” that is, to obey the gospel message of Christ (what Scripture calls “the obedience of faith;” Rom 1:5; 16:26). God the Son had provided the atoning blood that made the forgiveness of their sins possible. In stating that they had been “sprinkled with His blood,” Peter alluded to Exodus 24:3-8. The people entering the old covenant agreed to obey the terms of the covenant and were subsequently sprinkled with animal blood. Correspondingly, the blood of Christ is the superior sacrifice by which one enters the new covenant (Lk 22:20).

QUESTION 11

The word “foreknowledge” not only means that God “knows beforehand,” but it implies intimate relationship and divine design. *True or False?*

Topic 3: Developing an Overview Chart of 1 Peter

One of the important skills you will learn when you take a course on Bible study methods is how to develop an overview chart of a book of the Bible. There are various ways to do this and several types of charts that can be produced, depending on the intended purpose of the chart. In this topic, you will learn *one way* to develop an “analysis chart” that can be used to help identify the theme and purpose of the book.

How to Proceed

Step One. Take a sheet of paper and make four columns with rows down the page about a half inch each with dotted lines. The columns should be of differing widths and should resemble the picture of the blank chart you see on the right. [Following Step Four, there is a chart provided for you].

Step Two. Read through the entire book in one sitting, trying not to pause for meditation. Your purpose at this stage is to gain an overview of the book, not to interpret all the details.

Step Three. Now you want to try to identify the paragraphs (the smallest units) of the book. Read through the book again, and as you do, write down the verse numbers of each paragraph in the second column on your chart. Then in the third column, try to write a descriptive statement that summarizes each paragraph. In the chart below, you will see an illustration of Step Three using chapters 1–2 of Galatians as an example.

[illegible]

		The Book of Galatians	
	1:1-5	Initial Greeting	
	1:6-10	PROBLEM CONFRONTED: The Galatians' departure from the gospel based on grace	
	1:11-12	Paul's gospel was not from men but was directly from God	
	1:13-24	Paul's gospel was independent of human sources	
	2:1-10	Paul's gospel was confirmed by the Jerusalem apostles	
	2:11-14	Paul was even willing to rebuke Peter when the gospel message was at stake	
	2:15-21	CONCLUSION: Justification is by faith alone in keeping with grace	

Step Four. Now that you have identified each paragraph of 1 Peter and summarized its contents, your next step is to try and identify the *major sections* of the book. This means you will compare each paragraph with those around it to try and discern if there is something they have in common...something that binds them together and distinguishes them from other paragraphs of the book. Remember: you are looking for paragraphs that “go together,” that is, they have a common topic, they address a similar doctrine, or perhaps they have a common historical connection. For example, in the book of Acts, all the

paragraphs comprising chapters 13–14 are historically connected, because they are the record of Paul’s first missionary journey (in contrast to Acts 15, the Jerusalem counsel, and Acts 16–18, the second missionary journey). Normally, a major section will have at least two paragraphs (but it could have one, or even three or more).

In marking the *major sections* on your chart, use this procedure:

- (1) Meditate on the various paragraphs you identified in Step Three. Then try to discern how these might be grouped into larger units we have called “major sections.”
- (2) Draw a solid line above and below each major section to set it off from other sections.
- (3) In the far-left column, write the verse numbers for the major section.
- (4) To the right of your paragraph descriptions, try to write a summarizing statement for the whole major section.

Study the example below for the first two chapters of Galatians. You will notice in this case that you can add still another level beyond the major sections to identify one or more major sections that “go together.” We could call these *major divisions* of the book. In the example below, Galatians 1:11–12 is a paragraph slightly distinct from what follows. The four paragraphs of 1:13–2:21 form a major section. Yet 1:11–12 goes together with 1:13–2:21 to form a major division of the book, which we have labelled the “Personal Section” (in distinction from chapters 3–4, the “Doctrinal Section,” and chapters 5–6, the “Practical Section”).

1:3-12

1:3-12

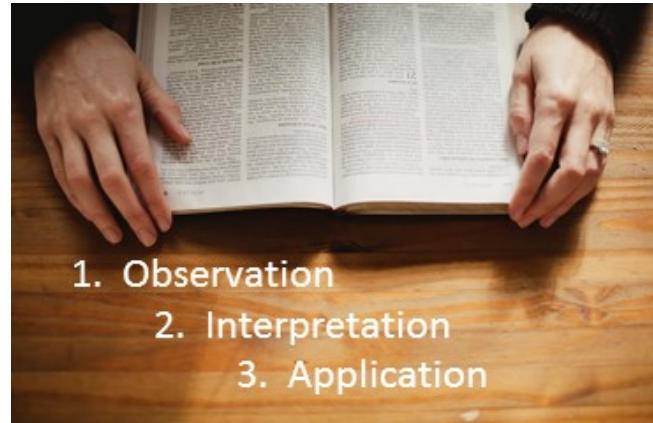
Lesson Two: Background and Overview of 1 Peter

purpose in doing this is to help you get a better feel for this book of the Bible, and to use this to help determine the primary theme and purpose of the book.

Topic 4: Identifying the Theme and Purpose of 1 Peter

When you take the BEE course on how to study the Bible, you will learn that there is a proper approach that should be taken for the study of any biblical passage. Good Bible study involves three stages of study, all of which are vitally important:

- (1) **Observation of the text** (carefully observing what I read)
- (2) **Interpretation of the text** (deciding what the author meant)
- (3) **Application of the text** (applying the truths to my life today)



What we are doing in this lesson is part of the stage of *observation*. In fact, we might even say it is an early or preliminary step of observation. We try to collect as much background information as we can (e.g., the author, his audience, when he wrote, and the historical circumstances at the time), and then we try to get better acquainted with the book by an overview reading of it, analyzing the parts (making the analysis chart), and finally trying to determine the main idea of the book and the author's purpose in writing it.

The **theme** is essentially the book's central or primary subject and the author's treatment of it. What is the author's main concern, and what is the author saying about this? Let's take the book of Galatians for example (hopefully you have already taken the BEE course on Galatians before now). We know that the key thought in Galatians is "justification by faith." The meaning of "justification" is *having a righteous standing before God*. But what is the Apostle Paul trying to say about justification? We also know that Galatians has something to do with the gospel message. A very complete expression of the theme of Galatians might be stated like this:

The gospel message is that justification is by faith alone in Christ and His substitutionary death for us on the cross, so that—being free from bondage to the Law—we might live a life pleasing to God by loving others as a result of walking by the Spirit.

While that statement is very complete, it is too wordy. Once we have the *full idea*, however, we can rework that to form a more concise statement. Consider this revised statement of the theme:

The true gospel is that justification is by faith alone in Christ who died for our sins, thereby freeing us from the Law to walk by the Spirit.

Naturally, we give up a little when we try to reduce the sentence and make it more concise. The important thing, however, is that we retain the most essential elements as we reword it.

Now that we have identified the theme of Galatians, we want to try and state *the purpose* Paul had in writing this epistle. Why did he write this message to the churches of Galatia? Basically, the **purpose** reveals the author's motivation in writing and the response he desired from the readers. The process for identifying the purpose is more complex than identifying the theme (at least in some cases). Obviously,

this involves a careful study of the whole book and trying to pick up on important clues. Here are a few clues or guidelines that are helpful:

- (1) Look to see if the author states his purpose for writing what he did (sometimes an author does; especially examine the introduction and closing of the book)
- (2) If the author does not state his purpose, what was the occasion that prompted him to write?
- (3) Reflect on the general context of the book to discern clues as to why the author may have written it (does the theme itself provide any clues?)
- (4) Try to learn as much as possible about the audience
- (5) Identify the circumstances that the audience were facing (especially their struggles, attacks on their faith, or questions they were wrestling with)
- (6) If possible, reflect on the structure of the book to see if this might reveal the author's purpose (this is where doing a good book chart can prove helpful)

In the case of Galatians, there are several rather obvious clues as to the author's purpose in writing this epistle:

- (1) Paul had brought the gospel to these churches, but subsequently received a report that they were deserting the gospel of grace (Gal 1:6; 3:1).
- (2) The source of the problem stemmed from false teachers who were advocating a different gospel (Gal 1:7; 5:7, 12).
- (3) The false gospel involved trying to live under the Mosaic Law (Gal 3:1-2; 5:1-3; 6:12-13).

From these observations, we can conclude that Paul's *purpose* in writing Galatians was:

To persuade the Galatian Christians not to be deceived by the Judaizers who were advocating that one needed to live by the Mosaic Law for both justification and sanctification.

Once we have identified both the theme and the purpose of the book, we can combine these into a statement of the MESSAGE of the book. That is, the Message Statement is a synthesis of the Theme and Purpose statements. So, for Galatians, we could derive the Message Statement as:

THEME: The true gospel is that justification is by faith alone in Christ who died for our sins, thereby freeing us from the Law to walk by the Spirit.

PURPOSE: To persuade the Galatian Christians not to be deceived by the Judaizers who were advocating that one needed to live by the Mosaic Law for both justification and sanctification.

MESSAGE STATEMENT OF GALATIANS: Paul wrote to defend justification by faith alone in Christ who died for sins, so the Galatians would not be deceived by Judaizers who advocated living by the Mosaic Law rather than walking by the Spirit.

Identifying the Theme and Purpose of 1 Peter

With the above instruction and examples in mind, we are now ready to identify the theme and purpose of 1 Peter. This is not easy, but one way to get started on this is to make a list of the important sub-themes of the book and to organize these into categories. You can use your analysis chart for this, and you may need to read over the book again as you work on this. The following is a list of the more important sub-themes of 1 Peter:

A. The Focus on Christ, Past and Future

1. Christ's example of suffering (1:11; 2:21-24; 3:18; 4:1, 13; 5:1)
2. Christ's resurrection victory (1:3, 3:18-19, 21)
3. Christ's return in glory and future salvation (1:5, 7, 10-11, 13; 4:13)

B. The Privileges Christians Have

1. Chosen by God (1:1)
2. Redeemed by Christ's blood (1:2, 18-19)
3. Having a living hope of future resurrection (1:3, 9; 5:10)
4. Expectation of grace at Christ's return (1:10)
5. Expectation of receiving a heavenly inheritance (1:4)
6. Will be honored and rewarded for faithfulness (1:7; 5:4)
7. Protected by the power of God for our future (1:5)
8. Members of the new "people of God" (2:9-10)
9. Participants as priests in the new spiritual temple of Christ (2:5)

C. The Expectation of Trials and Suffering

1. Knowing our faith will be tested (1:6-7; 4:12-13; 5:8-9)
2. Suffering as Christians even for what is right (2:18-21; 3:13-17; 4:1, 4; 4:12-16, 19)
3. Expectation of demonic opposition (5:8-10)

D. The Call to Live Responsibly and Faithfully

1. Living a holy life and fleeing earthly lusts (1:15-16; 2:2, 12; 3:8-12; 4:2-3)
2. Being properly submitted to authority (2:13-20; 3:1-7)
3. Not retaliating against oppressors (3:9)
4. Living for the will of God (4:2)
5. Relying on prayer (4:7; 5:7)
6. Pursuing humility (5:5-6)
7. Being firm in faith (1:9,21; 5-9)

The book ends with this remark: "Through Silvanus, whom I know to be a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly, in order to encourage you and testify that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it" (1 Pet 5:12).

QUESTION 12

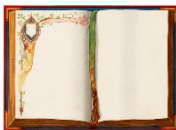


Open your Life Notebook and write down what you think is the Theme of 1 Peter. In doing this, look over your analysis chart, the list above, and possibly even by reading over the book again. Do not check the answer section until you have completed the next question.

Another possible clue as to the author's purpose is found at the end of the book:

"Through Silvanus, whom I know to be a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly, in order to encourage you and testify that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it." (1 Pet 5:12)

QUESTION 13



In your Life Notebook, write down what you think is the Purpose of 1 Peter. Once you are content that you have correctly stated the theme and purpose of 1 Peter, compare your results with that recorded in the answer section.

Lesson 2 Self Check

QUESTION 1

Although some scholars claim that the Greek of 1 Peter is too “polished” to have been written by a Galilean fisherman, the statement in 1 Peter 1:1 that the author was “Peter the apostle” is a more reliable guide identifying the true author of this epistle. *True or False?*

QUESTION 2

What is the significance of the mention of Silvanus in 1 Peter 5:12?

- A. This indicates that Silvanus was the author of this epistle.
- B. Since Silvanus was known to have been a travelling companion of Paul, this is a clue that the book was probably written after A.D. 60 when Paul was known to have come to Rome.
- C. Since Silvanus was martyred by Nero in A.D. 64, this epistle had to have been written before that date.
- D. This indicates that Peter learned his theology from Paul by way of Silvanus.

QUESTION 3

Which of the following statements is NOT TRUE of Peter?

- A. Peter was the primary spokesman for the Jewish believers on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2.
- B. Peter was the primary instrument that God used to bring about the inclusion of Gentiles into the church (Acts 10).
- C. Peter accompanied Paul on the first missionary journey to Galatia as recorded in Acts 13–14.
- D. Peter was one of the early Christian leaders who argued for salvation by grace at the Jerusalem Council of A.D. 49.

QUESTION 4

In what book and chapter did Jesus predict how Peter would die?

- A. Matthew 28
- B. John 13
- C. John 21
- D. Mark 8

QUESTION 5

Since Peter is known to have died before Nero was assassinated in July A.D. 64, we can conclude that the epistle of 1 Peter was written during the period A.D. 60-64. *True or False?*

QUESTION 6

1 Peter 1:1 indicates that Peter wrote to believers in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, the province of Asia, and Bithynia. In what country are these provinces located today?

- A. Armenia
- B. Syria
- C. Iraq
- D. Turkey

QUESTION 7

Peter indicated that he was writing to “sojourners of the Diaspora,” and—though we cannot be certain—there is a possibility that those to whom he wrote had been affected by Claudius’s expulsion of the Jews from Rome in A.D. 49. *True or False?*

QUESTION 8

The reference to “abominable idolatries” in 1 Peter 4:3 is a probable indication that the Christians to whom Peter wrote were from a Jewish background. *True or False?*

QUESTION 9

When Peter told his readers that they had been “chosen according to the foreknowledge of God,” he meant that God not only knew what they would do beforehand, but that He initiated the process by which they were brought into relationship with Himself in accordance with His own plans and purposes. *True or False?*

QUESTION 10

Match the items in the left column with the correct statement in the right column:

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Correlating Statements</i>
Argument for Peter as the Author	To challenge and motivate Christians to live faithfully for Christ as they face trials, opposition and sufferings in the present life.
Theme of 1 Peter	Before the death of Nero in June of A.D. 68
Date of 1 Peter	An encouragement for Christians to relish the grace of God as seen in the rich spiritual privileges they have and the glorious future awaiting them at Christ’s return.
Purpose of 1 Peter	“My son, Mark” is mentioned in 1 Peter 1:13, and Peter is known to have had a close association with Mark.

Lesson 2 Answers to Questions

QUESTION 1

- B. The Greek of 1 Peter seems to be a high-quality Greek that one would not expect of a Galilean fisherman.
- D. The places mentioned in 1 Peter 1:1 supposedly did not have Christian communities until after Peter's death.

QUESTION 2: True

QUESTION 3: Silas

QUESTION 4: *Your answer*

QUESTION 5

- D. Sometime during the period A.D. 60-67 during the final years of Peter's life.

QUESTION 6

- C. Rome

QUESTION 7: False

QUESTION 8: True

QUESTION 9: False

QUESTION 10: *Your answer*

QUESTION 11: True

QUESTION 12: *Your answer*

Suggested Theme statement: An encouragement for Christians to relish the grace of God as seen in the rich spiritual privileges they have and the glorious future awaiting them at Christ's return.

QUESTION 13: *Your answer*

Suggested Purpose statement: To challenge and motivate Christians to live faithfully for Christ as they face trials, opposition and sufferings in the present life.

Message statement: An encouragement for Christians to relish God's grace (their rich spiritual privileges and the glorious future awaiting them at Christ's return), to motivate them to live faithfully as they face trials, opposition and sufferings in the present life.

Lesson 2 Self Check Answers

QUESTION 1 True

QUESTION 2

- B. Since Silvanus was known to have been a travelling companion of Paul, this is a clue that the book was probably written after A.D. 60 when Paul was known to have come to Rome.

QUESTION 3

The statement that is *not true* is:

- C. Peter accompanied Paul on the first missionary journey to Galatia as recorded in Acts 13–14.

QUESTION 4

- C. John 21

QUESTION 5: False

QUESTION 6

- D. Turkey

QUESTION 7: True

QUESTION 8: False

QUESTION 9: True

QUESTION 10

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Correlating Statements</i>
Argument for Peter as the Author Theme of 1 Peter	“My son, Mark” is mentioned in 1 Peter 1:13, and Peter is known to have had a close association with Mark. An encouragement for Christians to relish the grace of God as seen in the rich spiritual privileges they have and the glorious future awaiting them at Christ’s return.
Date of 1 Peter Purpose of 1 Peter	Before the death of Nero in June of A.D. 68. To challenge and motivate Christians to live faithfully for Christ as they face trials, opposition and sufferings in the present life.

Lesson Three: Three Perspectives to Guide Our Lives on Earth While Awaiting Christ's Return and Future Salvation (1 Peter 1:3-12)

Lesson Introduction

In the previous lesson, we examined various introductory matters pertaining to the epistle of 1 Peter. The epistle was written by Peter the apostle, one of the original twelve disciples who had personally known and been trained by the Lord Jesus. He addressed his epistle to Christians in the provinces of what is now northwestern Turkey. Although they were “sojourners in the Diaspora” (possibly indicating that many of them—though not all—were Jewish Christians who had been displaced by Roman policies), Peter consoled them with the truth that they were the “chosen” of God and that all three persons of the Trinity had played a part in their salvation. The words “sprinkled with His blood”—an obvious reference to Christ’s atoning sacrifice to make forgiveness possible—alluded back to the inauguration ceremony of the *old covenant* under Moses. The point was that these believers in Jesus Christ were now part of a better covenant, namely, the *new covenant* in Christ’s blood.

In lesson three, our study will focus on 1 Peter 1:3-12. This section is made up of three parts, with each part presenting an encouraging truth for the readers, one regarding the past, one the present and one the future. In the past, a prophetic word was made of the coming Messiah who would suffer but ultimately triumph in glory. In the present, those of His followers may face trials now, but they will ultimately be vindicated and honored for their faith. In the future, a heavenly inheritance awaits those who have been born again through faith in Jesus Christ. Peter presents these three truths starting with the future, and each one is meant to bring encouragement to the readers and provide a healthy perspective by which to guide their life on earth. Each perspective is also related in some way to the *future salvation* that Jesus will bring about at the time of His second coming.

By presenting these three encouraging perspectives at the beginning of the epistle, Peter has laid the groundwork for how he can help them face trials and sufferings in this present life as they await the return of their Lord from heaven.

Lesson Outline

- Topic 1: *Our Future*: Hope of a Heavenly Inheritance as We Await Christ’s Future Salvation (1 Pet 1:3-5)
- Topic 2: *Our Present*: Rejoicing in Christ’s Return Despite the Present Testing of Our Faith (1 Pet 1:6-9)
- Topic 3: *Our Past*: Recollection of God’s Prophetic Word Regarding Christ’s Suffering and Future Glory (1 Pet 1:10-12)

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- Understand what Peter means by the believer’s “living hope” and how this relates to the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

- Be able to discuss the issue of “inheritance” in the New Testament and how this affects the interpretation of that word in 1 Peter 1:4.
- Be comforted in knowing that you are spiritually protected by the power of God.
- Appreciate the positive value that trials can have for your life, and why faithfully enduring them will prove to be important when Christ returns.
- Explain how a “proven faith” is related to the “salvation of one’s soul.”
- Identify key Old Testament passages that depicted the sufferings and glories of the coming Messiah.

Topic 1: *Our Future: Hope of a Heavenly Inheritance as We Await Christ’s Future Salvation (1 Pet 1:3-5)*

In verses 3-5, Peter focuses on the future that awaits his Christian readers. Because they have been born again through faith in Christ, they now have a living hope based on Christ’s resurrection, and an inheritance that awaits them beyond this life. This is meant to encourage them as they face a life of difficulties and trials.



READING: Open your Bible and read 1 Peter 1:3-5.

The Christian’s “New Birth.” Following the introduction to the epistle, Peter immediately opens with a praise for what God the Father has mercifully done for the readers. He caused them to be “born again.” The word that Peter uses for this *new birth* is closely related to that which Jesus used in His conversation with Nicodemus when He told him, “unless a person is born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (Jn 3:3). [The words “born from above” can also be translated “born again”]. Jesus went on to explain that this new birth was the result of being “born of the Spirit” (Jn 3:8). The way that one receives this new birth is the very way that Jesus revealed to Nicodemus:

For this is the way God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life (Jn 3:16).

By “believing,” that is, by faith in the person of Jesus Christ as one’s Savior, one receives a new birth and enters the family of God. The Holy Spirit spiritually unites him to Christ, and he then becomes a Christian ... a “new creation” (2 Cor 5:17). From that moment on, he has eternal life dwelling in him according to Jesus’ promise in John 3:16 (cf. 1 Jn 2:25; 5:11-13).

QUESTION 1



Have you experienced the “new birth” in Jesus Christ? In your Life Notebook, write out in one or two paragraphs your experience of coming to faith in Christ. Also describe the changes this brought about in your life.

The “Living Hope” (1 Pet 1:3). The word “hope” can sometimes be used of what one wishes for, regardless of whether there is any chance of this becoming a reality. For example, one might wish that their salary would double, or one might wish that they would win a contest and receive a special prize. These things may or may not happen. But Peter is not talking about a hope that is merely a wish. Instead, he calls this a “living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” In other words, it is Jesus’ own resurrection that is the ground for this “living hope.” Since He is alive forevermore, believers

also can look forward to being resurrected in the future. Later in this chapter, Peter uses the corresponding verb form of this word “hope” in connection with the second coming of Christ:

Therefore, get your minds ready for action by being fully sober, and set your hope completely on the grace that will be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed (1 Pet 1:13).

When Jesus comes again, believers throughout the ages—both those who have died as well as those still living—will be resurrected and begin to enjoy their glorified bodies. This is the “living hope” that Peter wants his readers to keep in mind.

QUESTION 2

What did Peter mean when he told his readers they now had a “living hope”?

- A. They could ask God in prayer for anything that they hoped for, and He would give it to them.
- B. They now had a better hope of getting into heaven.
- C. Because of Christ’s own resurrection, they were assured that they, too, would be resurrected.
- D. No matter how bad things might get for the readers, there was always hope.

QUESTION 3

This “living hope” that Peter proclaimed would eventually be fulfilled at the time of the believer’s death, for “to be away from the body” is to be “at home with the Lord” (2 Cor 5:8). *True or False?*

The Heavenly Inheritance (1 Pet 1:4). The second benefit of the new birth that Peter wants his readers to consider is the “inheritance” that is reserved in heaven for them. But what is this inheritance? The background for this concept comes from the Old Testament. One scholar writes, “Abraham was promised an inheritance, the land of Canaan (Gen 12:7), and this promise became fundamental in Old Testament theology (Gen. 50:24; Deut. 34:4; Josh. 1:2, 6; cf. Jer. 7:1-7)” (P. H. Davids, 52). Just as God chose or elected Abraham and Israel of old for an inheritance in Canaan, so Peter now reminds his readers that they have been “chosen” and in an analogous way have an inheritance awaiting them as participants of the new covenant. Yet an inheritance far better than the Old Testament land promise awaits them, for Peter describes it as “imperishable, undefiled, and unfading.” Furthermore, it is not of this earthly realm, for it is reserved in heaven.

QUESTION 4

The background imagery for the concept of the believer’s inheritance is found in the promise to Abraham that he would inherit the _____ of _____.

The word “inheritance” and its corresponding verb form (“to inherit”) are used many times in the New Testament. In some places, such as Hebrews 6:12, the inheritance in view is one that must be gained “through faith and perseverance.” That is, it comes as a reward for one’s faith and faithfulness (cf. Col 3:24). It is not automatic but depends on how one has lived ... how faithful he has been. Indeed, the New Testament clearly teaches that at the “judgment seat of Christ,” the Lord will reward believers for their faith and the good works they have done in the right way and with the right motives (for this, see 1 Cor 3:10-15; 1 Cor 9:24-27; Heb 10:35-36). Although rewards could be involved in the inheritance of 1 Peter 1:4, it seems that the emphasis in this verse is on an inheritance that will be true for all believers. Peter does not depict it as being conditioned on their faith or works, but rather presents it as the birthright of those who are “chosen” and who have been “born again.”

The New Testament elsewhere presents an inheritance that awaits all Christians. In fact, Ephesians 1:13-14 indicates that at the moment one places his faith in Jesus, he is sealed with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is then the pledge or “down payment of our inheritance, until the redemption of God’s own possession.” In other words, we are promised resurrection (the redemption of God’s own possession), and until the time that happens, we have been given the Holy Spirit as an assurance that God will ultimately do what He has promised. Our ultimate resurrection is an assured inheritance.

QUESTION 5

The Bible teaches that every inheritance a Christian receives is *conditional*, meaning that he will only receive it as a result of persevering in faith and doing good deeds. *True or False?*

Also, even though we as Christians already possess eternal life, there is another sense in which we will *inherit eternal life* in the future (there is both a present and future dimension to this). Jesus promised His disciples:

²⁹ I tell you the truth, there is no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for my sake and for the sake of the gospel ³⁰ who will not receive in this age a hundred times as much—homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, fields, all with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life (Mk 10:29-30; cf. Mt 19:29; Lk 10:25; 18:18).

Considering the way Peter describes this inheritance in verse four, however, something more than eternal life seems to be in view (notice that it is “reserved in heaven for you”). Another way that the New Testament uses the inheritance concept is in regard to *gaining* or *entering* the kingdom.

Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world’ (Mt 25:34; cf. 1 Cor 6:9-10; 15:50; Eph 5:5).

All believers will be *in the kingdom*, though only those who have faithfully endured with Christ will be given the privilege of reigning with Him (2 Tim 2:11-12). Closely connected with the concept of inheriting (or entering) the kingdom is the expectation of enjoying the city of the living God, the New Jerusalem, that will be a key feature of the eternal kingdom. The author of Hebrews reminded his readers that as participants in the new covenant, they “have come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” (Heb 12:22) and moments later added, “since we are receiving an unshakable kingdom, let us give thanks, and through this let us offer worship pleasing to God” (Heb 12:28). He explained in Heb 11:16 that Abraham, by going out from Ur of the Chaldees, desired a *better country*, and this desire will ultimately be realized in the heavenly city God has prepared for him (Heb 11:16; cf. 13:14).

Although we cannot be certain that the inheritance Peter has in mind in 1 Peter 1:4 is the heavenly Jerusalem which constitutes a key feature of the ultimate kingdom of God, this is a possibility. At least this illustrates a type of inheritance that awaits every child of God.

QUESTION 6

Although Peter does not specifically identify the “inheritance” he had in mind, which of the following does the author of this course suggest as a possible identification of the inheritance of 1 Peter 1:4?

- A. The inheritance of eternal life.
- B. The inheritance of a “crown of righteousness.”
- C. The inheritance of a special reward for remaining faithful to Christ while enduring persecution.
- D. The inheritance of entering the kingdom of Christ and enjoying the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem.

The Future “Salvation” (1 Pet 1:5). Although some of Peter’s readers may be suffering now, they have the assurance that they are protected by the power of God. Obviously, this protection is primarily spiritual, not physical. Later in the epistle, Peter admonishes the readers to be prepared for physical suffering, even martyrdom (1 Pet 4:1). In Jesus’ high priestly prayer in John 17, He prayed on behalf of all believers,

¹⁴ I have given them your word, and the world has hated them, because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. ¹⁵ I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but that you keep them safe from the evil one (Jn 17:14-15; cf. 1 Jn 5:18).

QUESTION 7

1 Peter 1:5 teaches that Christians will be physically protected from all harm as long as they have enough faith to believe that God will not let anything bad happen to them. *True or False?*

This spiritual protection of the believer is not dependent on the believer’s exercise of enough faith to maintain it. Rather, the words “through faith” probably refer to the faith one placed in Christ as Savior at the moment of the new birth, as they frequently do in the New Testament (Rom 3:22; Gal 2:16; Eph 2:8; Phil 3:9; 2 Tim 3:15). In any case, God protects the believer spiritually throughout the remainder of his life on earth, and no one can take eternal life from him. Jesus Himself promised us, “I give them eternal life, and they will never perish; no one will snatch them from my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one can snatch them from my Father’s hand” (Jn 10:28-29). Peter wanted his readers to know that no matter what might happen to them, they had this security and would be protected all the way until the time of the future “salvation” ... one that would “be revealed in the last time.”

Because the word “salvation” is so closely related to the experience of the new birth, this statement may be confusing for some. It will help us to understand that the general meaning of the word “salvation” is that of *deliverance*, and the context determines what kind of deliverance is in view. Not only is there an initial salvation or deliverance from the penalty of sin that takes place at the moment one trusts Christ as Savior, but there is also a salvation that occurs in the future. The Scriptures depict this future salvation as occurring at the second coming of Christ. In Hebrews 9:28, for instance, we are told that Christ “will appear a second time, not to bear sin but to bring salvation.” Upon His return, Jesus will save or deliver the world from the tyranny of the evil one, and we will be resurrected to participate in the glorious kingdom that Jesus Himself will rule over as king.

QUESTION 8

What is the “salvation” that Peter speaks of in 1 Peter 1:5?

- A. The salvation from the penalty of sin that one receives upon trusting Christ as Savior.
- B. Deliverance from the power of Satan, so that the evil one cannot harm him as a Christian.
- C. The believer’s deliverance from the power of sin in his life.
- D. A salvation/deliverance of the world that takes place at the second coming of Christ and that will include the believer’s glorification.

There are many promises in the Old Testament depicting the kingdom of God that will find their fulfillment at the time of Christ’s return (see especially Ps 72:8, 11-14; Isa 11:1-10; and Dan 7:14). In the book of Revelation, as the judgments of God are running their course and the time of the Great Tribulation draws to a close, a heavenly chorus proclaims in anticipation of Christ’s victory, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever” (Rev 11:15). Those to whom Peter wrote will eventually see this great day of the Lord’s

salvation/deliverance—no matter what suffering and persecution they may face in this life—because they are protected by the power of God.

Topic 2: *Our Present: Rejoicing in Christ's Return Despite the Present Testing of Our Faith* (1 Pet 1:6-9)

Having mentioned several things in verses 3-5 that should have encouraged his readers, Peter then turned in verses 6-9 to acknowledge the trials they presently faced as Christians. As distressing as these trials might have been, this gave opportunity for the testing of their faith. Peter sought to instruct them that a *proven faith* was a faith that would be ultimately rewarded in God's presence. If they adopted this perspective, they could rejoice even in their trials.



READING: Open your Bible and read 1 Peter 1:6-9.

Facing Trials (1 Pet 1:6). In verse six, though acknowledging that trials are indeed distressing or grievous, Peter points out three things we should understand about trials. First, there are “various” kinds of trials, meaning that there are different types of trials that Christians may be faced with. Persecution is certainly one type, but there is no reason to limit the meaning of trials to that. This could be any type of suffering or difficulty that a believer might be facing that is going to challenge his faith and cause him to rely on God. Second, Peter says the trials are “for a little while.” To us, they may seem to go on forever, but from the perspective of eternity, they are short-lived. Third, he inserts the words “if necessary (NASB and also in the original Greek text).” The trials a believer faces are first carefully screened by a loving God, and He allows into our lives only that which He deems necessary. We might not understand the reason why we are having to go through a given trial, but God certainly does. They are not random events in our lives but *purposeful* ... intended to bring about some greater good in our lives. James points out how God uses trials to build character in our lives:

² My brothers and sisters, consider it nothing but joy when you fall into all sorts of trials, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴ And let endurance have its perfect effect, so that you will be perfect and complete, not deficient in anything. (James 1:2-4)

By “perfect,” James means *spiritually mature*. Rightly responding to trials and enduring through them leads to greater spiritual maturity in our lives. Seen in this way, trials are “necessary” in our lives.

QUESTION 9

What are the things that Peter points out about *trials* in 1 Peter 1:6? [Check all that are true].

- A. By mentioning “various trials,” Peter is not limiting his teaching to persecution.
- B. Trials are not forever but will come to an end, in contrast to a proven faith that is eternally rewarded.
- C. Trials are always given by God as a punishment for sin that we have done.
- D. Trials are not *purposeless* but necessary for the development of our Christian character.

QUESTION 10



Think for a moment about a trial that you have experienced in your life on account of your faith in Christ. In your Life Notebook, write a brief description of the trial, and then describe an important lesson you learned from this experience (or how you grew spiritually as a result).

A Proven Faith (1 Pet 1:7). In verse seven, Peter goes on to speak about “the proof” of our faith. The Greek word translated “proof” (*dokimion*) means “genuineness as a result of a test.” The trials that God allows into our lives need to be met with faith, and the process of going through a trial is to give opportunity for the genuineness of our faith to be tested, verified, and strengthened. Peter reinforces this point with an illustration. Gold is the most precious of all metals, but even gold must undergo the refining process of fire to remove any impurities and to bring out the best in the gold. Similarly, trials have a purifying effect upon our faith. One writer puts it this way, “Stress deepens and strengthens a Christian’s faith and lets its reality be displayed” (R. Raymer, 841).

In this verse, Peter emphasizes the positive outcome. When a believer’s faith is tested and proved genuine—meaning that he has responded properly and endured the trial—the result is a glorious one. In such a case, the Christian can expect “praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” By “the revelation of Jesus Christ,” Peter means the return of the Lord at His second coming. Peter mentions this again in 1 Peter 1:13 (cf. 2 Thess 1:7 and 1 Cor 1:7). In 1 Peter 4:13, he calls this “the revelation of His glory,” since at that time Jesus Christ will descend to earth in all His majestic glory in utter triumph over all His enemies. In describing this grand event, Matthew 24:30 indicates that those on the earth “will see the Son of Man arriving on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” Subsequently, Christians will then stand before the Lord to give an account of themselves (Rom 14:10-12). Those who have been faithful will hear the words of praise, “well done, good and faithful servant” (Mt 25:14-30). They will receive “praise and glory and honor” from the Lord. Although some commentators think these three terms apply to Jesus (what He receives because of their faith), T. Schreiner rightfully concludes,

‘Praise, glory and honor’ are given on that day to the person whose faith has been tested and approved by fire The eschatological reward will be given to them because of the genuineness of their faith, which is proved by the sufferings they endure (T. Schreiner, 68).

This expectation conforms to what is taught in 1 Corinthians 4:5, “Wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men’s hearts; and then each man’s praise will come to him from God” (NASB).

QUESTION 11

Match the items in the left column with the correct identifying statement in the right column:

<i>Words and Verses</i>	<i>Correct Identification</i>
“proof” (<i>dokimion</i>)	A reference to the second coming of Jesus
“the revelation of Jesus Christ”	A verse that mentions the Son of Man coming in the clouds with power and glory
Matthew 24:30	A word meaning “genuineness as a result of a test.”
1 Corinthians 4:5	A verse that indicates Jesus will give praise to Christians at the time of His second coming

QUESTION 12

1 Peter 1:7 teaches that when a Christian’s faith has been tested and proven genuine, Jesus will be “praised and glorified and honored” when He is revealed from heaven. *True or False?*

Joy That Overshadows the Trials (1 Pet 1:8). The thought of receiving praise from the Lord causes us to look ahead to that day when we will see Him face to face. Although Peter had seen the Lord in the flesh (both before and after His resurrection), Peter’s readers had not. Nor have we today. Yet despite the fact

we have never personally seen the Lord Jesus, we believe in Him and love Him. Peter may very well have had John 20:29 in mind when Jesus spoke to Thomas following His resurrection, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are the people who have not seen and yet have believed.” Despite the trials and despite their not having ever seen the Lord, Peter pointed out to his readers, “you rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy.” Why would that be? Two reasons seem apparent from the context. First, those who endure through trials are also those who have trusted the Lord in such times and found Him faithful. The Psalmist reminds us that those who seek refuge in the Lord will be comforted and strengthened: “Taste and see that the LORD is good! How blessed is the one who takes shelter in him!” (Ps 34:8). Second, they rejoice at the thought of one day moving beyond this life and all its trials to the blessedness of being in God’s presence.

QUESTION 13



In 1 Peter 1:8, Peter spoke to those who had never seen the Lord Jesus face to face as he had. Amazingly, they not only believe in Him, but they “love Him” and “rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy.” Does that describe your own life? Why or why not? Record your answer in your Life Notebook.

The Outcome of a Proven Faith (1 Pet 1:9). In the final verse of this paragraph, Peter speaks of the goal or outcome of one’s faith. By “faith,” Peter is not speaking here about the initial moment of their faith when they trusted Christ as Savior and received the new birth. The preceding verses clarify that he is talking about a believer’s faith *after* regeneration, namely, a persevering faith a Christian makes in response to trials. What then is in store for the believer that has responded to trials by trusting in the Lord and enduring them, so that his proven faith is now deemed more precious than purified gold? The answer is “the salvation of his soul.” This could be interpreted in one of two possible ways.

One interpretation is that this speaks of the completion of the Christian’s salvation when (at the Lord’s return) he receives his glorified body. In this view, “salvation” is understood as a *process*: one receives eternal life at the moment of trusting Christ as Savior, but salvation is not completed until the time one experiences bodily resurrection. While such a view of salvation is correctly taught elsewhere in Scripture, this does not seem to be what Peter had in mind in verse 9. One weakness to it is that all believers will experience bodily resurrection, not just those with a proven faith. Also, the Greek word translated “obtaining, receiving or attaining” (*komizō*) in verse 9 is a word that most often means to be *recompensed* or *repaid* for something done, either as a reward or because of doing wrong (see 1 Pet 5:4; 2 Cor 5:10; Col 3:25; Eph 6:8; Heb 10:36). Yet the salvation of this first view is a graciously given gift, not a recompense.

An alternative interpretation is that Peter is recalling the teaching of Jesus in Mark 8:34-38 where the concept “to save one’s soul” looks at the faithful Christian who has willingly taken up his cross to follow Jesus. Although he agrees to “lose his soul” in this life for Jesus’ sake and that of the gospel (that is, suffer persecution if need be and perhaps even martyrdom), yet in the end he will “save his soul” when he has to stand before God (being blessed and rewarded for all eternity). On the other hand, the Christian who lives to gain the whole world or “save his soul” in this life (avoid persecution and perhaps martyrdom) will end up the loser in the long run. Eventually when he stands before the judgment seat of Christ, he may be denied the opportunity to reign with Christ and will suffer the loss of rewards. Of such a one, Jesus warned, “For if anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.” Notice that this interpretation also has the second coming in view, but the emphasis is not

on receiving a glorified body but on being commended and rewarded for having lived a faithful life in which Jesus was truly honored as Lord.

QUESTION 14

When Peter mentioned “your faith” in 1 Peter 1:9, he was not referring to their initial faith in Christ by which they became a Christian but rather their persevering faith in response to the trials they faced. *True or False?*

QUESTION 15

The *only* valid way that “salvation of your souls” can be interpreted is to understand that this refers to the completion of the salvation process at the time one receives his resurrection body in preparation for eternity. *True or False?*

Topic 3: *Our Past*: Recollection of God’s Prophetic Word Regarding Christ’s Suffering and Future Glory (1 Pet 1:10-12)

In these verses, Peter backs up to the past when God moved in the hearts of the Old Testament prophets and spoke through them. They spoke of the grace that would eventually come to the followers of the Messiah.



READING: Open your Bible and read 1 Peter 1:10-12.

The Prophecies of the OT Prophets (1 Pet 1:10-11). By the “Spirit of Christ,” Peter means the Holy Spirit. In Romans 8:9, the Spirit is called both “the Spirit of God” and “the Spirit of Christ.” The Holy Spirit—the same as worked in and through Jesus Christ—was at work in the Old Testament prophets to reveal things to them and then lead them to write down these revealed truths as part of Holy Scripture. Peter called attention to these things recorded by the prophets of old, and in doing so, he drew out the continuity between God’s program with Israel under the old covenant and what was now being realized in the life of Jesus and the messianic community of believers under the new covenant. In 2 Peter 1:21, Peter recorded that “no prophecy was ever borne of human impulse; rather, men carried along by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”

QUESTION 16

Even though the Holy Spirit did not come to indwell all believers until the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit did work in the lives of certain Old Testament prophets and reveal truths to them that they would record as Scripture. *True or False?*

1 Peter 1:10 indicates that their prophecies pertained to “this salvation.” In the preceding context, Peter spoke of “a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Pet 1:5). As previously discussed, this “salvation” was connected to the second coming of Christ when all enemies of Jesus would be subdued, and God’s people would be resurrected to share in the blessings of Christ’s messianic kingdom. Even the prophets of old had anticipated this climactic time of history. It would be during this time of Christ’s kingdom that the predictions of God’s “grace” for the people of God would be realized. Peter confirmed this timing a few verses later when he wrote, “set your hope completely on the grace that will be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed” (1 Pet 1:13). But what exactly is the “grace” that they can expect

will come to them? The text does not specifically tell us, but based on a general study of Scripture, this could potentially include such things such as:

- Those who remain alive at the time of Christ's return will be delivered from this evil world and given relief from all persecution (2 Thess 1:7).
- Believers will receive resurrected bodies (Dan 12:2; 1 Thess 4:14-17).
- Believers of all ages will see the Lord Jesus face to face, be completely conformed to His image, and be with Him forever (1 Jn 3:2).
- Believers will be given the inheritance that was spoken of in 1 Peter 1:4, and rewards will be given to those who had been faithful (1 Cor 3:14).
- Believers will participate in Christ's glorious millennial kingdom in which He will rule as king over a redeemed world (Rev 11:15; 20:4-6).

QUESTION 17

Which of the following will NOT be part of God's grace that we can expect to come about at the second coming of Christ?

- A. Believers in Christ will receive resurrection bodies.
- B. Believers in Christ will receive the inheritance spoken of in 1 Peter 1:4.
- C. Satan and the wicked angels will be cast out of heaven according to Revelation 12.
- D. Jesus' messianic kingdom will be formally inaugurated.

Because of what the Spirit revealed to them, the Old Testament prophets knew about and predicted "the sufferings appointed for Christ and his subsequent glory" (1 Pet 1:11). The "sufferings" were reflected in such passages as Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53, whereas the "subsequent glory" probably looks at His resurrection (Ps 16:9-11; comp. Acts 2:25-28), His ascension to the Father's right hand (Ps 110:1; comp. Acts 2:32-36), and His kingdom reign (2 Sam 7:12-16; Ps 72; Isa 11:1-10).

QUESTION 18

Match the verses in the left column with the correct identifying statement in the right column:

<i>Bible Passages</i>	<i>Correct Identification</i>
Isaiah 53	The sufferings of Christ foretold
Psalm 16:9-11	Glimpses of the future kingdom of Jesus Christ
Psalm 110:1	The resurrection of Christ anticipated beforehand
Isaiah 11:1-10	Prediction that David's Lord would sit at God's right

At the same time, there were certain things the Old Testament prophets did not know, but for which they "searched and investigated carefully." They probed to know "what person or time" this pertained to. This phrase can also be translated, "trying to find out the time and circumstances" (NIV). That is, they knew as they prophesied that they were writing about the coming Messiah, but they did not fully understand when this might come about and how the circumstances would unfold.

The Prophecies Now Announced (1 Pet 1:12). The prophecies of Christ given to the Old Testament prophets sat for several centuries awaiting fulfillment. But in God's own timing, Jesus the Christ was born in Bethlehem, and all things written of Him came to pass. Even though the Old Testament prophets did not personally live to see the coming of the Messiah, they knew that the things of which they wrote were meant for a future generation. Hence, as they wrote, they knew they were serving others. In the days of His earthly ministry, Jesus declared to His disciples, "Your eyes are blessed because they see, and your

ears because they hear. For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it” (Mt 13:16-17).

QUESTION 19

The Old Testament prophets wrote of the sufferings of Messiah and the glories that would follow, but they thought they were only writing for the sake of the generation in which they lived. *True or False?*

Following the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the church began to expand beyond the borders of Roman Palestine, and as it did, the gospel message was carried throughout the Roman Empire by “those who proclaimed the gospel.” In due time, Peter’s audience also heard the gospel proclaimed to them, and with it, the incredible prophecies of the Old Testament prophets.

The same Holy Spirit that moved in the hearts of the Old Testament prophets to reveal truths about the coming Messiah also worked in and through those who proclaimed the gospel in the first-century A.D. In speaking of the Holy Spirit, Peter indicated that the Spirit had been “sent from heaven.” This sending of the Holy Spirit refers to the action of Jesus Himself beginning with the day of Pentecost, just as He had foretold in John 15:26: “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me.” In keeping with this prediction, Peter—on the day of Pentecost—testified that what was happening that day was nothing less than the pouring out of the Holy Spirit by the exalted Jesus: “So then, exalted to the right hand of God, and having received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father, he has poured out what you both see and hear” (Acts 2:33).

QUESTION 20

Jesus predicted that He would send the Holy Spirit, and Peter later confirmed that the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost came as a result of Jesus being exalted to the right hand of God the Father. *True or False?*

Peter closed this paragraph with a comment about the interest of angels in these prophecies and the proclamation of the gospel: “things angels long to catch a glimpse of.” From this, we learn that angels are very interested in observing events that take place on earth. More than anything else, they desire to observe God’s redemptive plan being played out, as Jesus’ sufferings are proclaimed in the gospel message, and multitudes of lost men and women *believe* and are *saved from their sins* (cf. Lk 15:10).

QUESTION 21



In 1 Peter 1:12, Peter reminded his readers that they heard about the sufferings of Messiah and the following glories (His resurrection and ascension) when God sent someone to proclaim the gospel to them. In your Life Notebook, write down a description of when you heard the gospel message. Who was it that proclaimed the gospel to you? What did you understand that caused you to want to place your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior?

Lesson 3 Self Check

QUESTION 1

What did Peter mean in verse 3 when he told his readers they now had a “living hope”?

- A. They could ask God in prayer for anything that they hoped for, and He would give it to them.
- B. They now had a better hope of getting into heaven.
- C. No matter how bad things might get for the readers, there was always hope.
- D. Because of Christ’s own resurrection, they were assured that they, too, would be resurrected.

QUESTION 2

In Eph 1:13-14, we read that the Spirit is the pledge or “down payment of our inheritance, until the redemption of God’s own possession.” From this we learn that we are promised resurrection (the redemption of God’s own possession), and until the time that happens, we have been given the Holy Spirit as an assurance that God will ultimately do what He has promised. *True or False?*

QUESTION 3

When Peter spoke of an imperishable inheritance in 1 Peter 1:4, he meant that believers would receive the inheritance of eternal life. *True or False?*

QUESTION 4

According to 1 Peter 1:5, believers are “protected by the power of God.” This probably means that God protects the believer spiritually throughout the remainder of his life on earth, and no one can take eternal life from him. *True or False?*

QUESTION 5

Which of the following best represents the “salvation ready to be revealed” that Peter speaks of in 1 Peter 1:5?

- A. The salvation from the penalty of sin that one receives upon trusting Christ as Savior.
- B. A salvation/deliverance of the world that takes place at the second coming of Christ and that will include the believer’s glorification.
- C. The believer’s deliverance from the power of sin in his life.
- D. Deliverance from the power of Satan, so that the evil one cannot harm him as a Christian.

QUESTION 6

When Peter says that trials may be “necessary” for the believer (1 Pet 1:6), he means that trials are not *purposeless* but necessary for the development of our Christian character. *True or False?*

QUESTION 7

When Peter speaks in 1 Peter 1:7 of those with a “proven faith,” he is thinking of those people who heard the gospel and placed their faith in Christ and so experienced the new birth. *True or False?*

QUESTION 8

According to 1 Peter 1:7, for whom will a proven faith bring “praise, glory, and honor”?

- A. For every person who puts their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior.
- B. For Jesus Christ who provided His blood for their redemption.
- C. For the Christian whose faith has been tested and proven genuine, meaning that he has responded properly and endured the trial.
- D. For all the churches scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia.

QUESTION 9

When Peter speaks in verse nine of “the salvation of your souls,” some understand this to mean the completion of the salvation process when one is resurrected, but an alternative interpretation is that this refers to the outcome for the Christian who will be commended and rewarded at the time of Christ’s return for having lived a faithful life in which Jesus was truly honored as Lord. *True or False?*

QUESTION 10

Match the verses in the left column with the correct identifying statement in the right column:

<i>Bible Passages</i>	<i>Correct Identification</i>
Isaiah 53	The resurrection of Christ anticipated
Psalms 16:9-11	The sufferings of Christ foretold
Psalms 110:1	Glimpses of the future kingdom of Jesus Christ
Isaiah 11:1-10	Prediction that David’s Lord would sit at God’s right hand

Lesson 3 Answers to Questions

QUESTION 1: *Your answer*

QUESTION 2

C. Because of Christ's own resurrection, they were assured that they, too, would be resurrected.

QUESTION 3: False

QUESTION 4: Land of Canaan

QUESTION 5: False

QUESTION 6:

D. The inheritance of entering the kingdom of Christ and enjoying the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem.

QUESTION 7: False

QUESTION 8

D. A salvation/deliverance of the world that takes place at the second coming of Christ and that will include the believer's glorification.

QUESTION 9: A, B and D are all correct.

A. By mentioning "various trials," Peter is not limiting his teaching to persecution.

B. Trials are not forever but will come to an end, in contrast to a proven faith that is eternally rewarded.

D. Trials are not purposeless but necessary for the development of our Christian character.

QUESTION 10: Your answer

QUESTION 11

<i>Words and Verses</i>	<i>Correct Identification</i>
"proof" (<i>dokimion</i>)	A word meaning "genuineness as a result of a test."
"the revelation of Jesus Christ"	A reference to the second coming of Jesus
Matthew 24:30	A verse that mentions the Son of Man coming in the clouds with power and glory.
1 Corinthians 4:5	A verse that indicates Jesus will give praise to Christians at the time of His second coming

QUESTION 12: False

QUESTION 13: *Your answer*

QUESTION 14: True

QUESTION 15: False

QUESTION 16: True

QUESTION 17

C. Satan and the wicked angels will be cast out of heaven according to Revelation 12.

[Note: this event happens about 3 ½ year prior to the second coming of Christ].

QUESTION 18:

<i>Bible Passages</i>	<i>Correct Identification</i>
Isaiah 53	The sufferings of Christ foretold
Psalms 16:9-11	The resurrection of Christ anticipated
Psalms 110:1	Prediction that David's Lord would sit at God's right hand
Isaiah 11:1-10	Glimpses of the future kingdom of Jesus Christ

QUESTION 19: False

QUESTION 20: True

QUESTION 21: *Your answer*

Lesson 3 Self Check Answers

QUESTION 1

D. Because of Christ's own resurrection, they were assured that they, too, would be resurrected.

QUESTION 2: True

QUESTION 3: False

QUESTION 4: True

QUESTION 5

B. A salvation/deliverance of the world that takes place at the second coming of Christ and that will include the believer's glorification.

QUESTION 6: True

QUESTION 7: False

QUESTION 8

C. For the Christian whose faith has been tested and proven genuine, meaning that he has responded properly and endured the trial.

QUESTION 9: True

QUESTION 10

<i>Bible Passages</i>	<i>Correct Identification</i>
Isaiah 53	The sufferings of Christ foretold
Psalms 16:9-11	The resurrection of Christ anticipated
Psalms 110:1	Prediction that David's Lord would sit at God's right hand
Isaiah 11:1-10	Glimpses of the future kingdom of Jesus Christ

Unit 1 Exam: 1 Peter

QUESTION 1

Which of the following are valid reasons as to why God would allow evil to exist in His creation? [*Select all that apply*].

- A. Because there is evil and people are sinners, this will allow God to show His incredible love for mankind when Jesus (the Creator) dies for their sins on the cross.
- B. There was a debate among the angels about whether evil should be allowed, and they made the decision to allow evil.
- C. God allowed evil, so that ultimately He could prove He was stronger than Satan.
- D. By allowing evil to exist throughout history and to witness how terrible it is, mankind will come to understand that Satan and evil must ultimately be banished from God's creative realm.

QUESTION 2

Of the different types of suffering that a believer may experience, "deserved suffering" refers to suffering that comes upon mankind in general, regardless of one's relationship to God. *True or False?*

QUESTION 3

Satan was originally referred to as the "shining one" or "star of the morning." *True or False?*

QUESTION 4

Which of the following is *not* one of the ways that Satan is referred to in the Bible?

- A. The god of this world
- B. The tempter
- C. The Devil
- D. The Antichrist
- E. The accuser of the brethren

QUESTION 5

Which of the following statements best describes "retribution theology"?

- A. All good gifts coming from God are due to His grace.
- B. Without exception, man either obeys God and is blessed, or he disobeys and is punished.
- C. Man is inherently a sinner, and therefore deserves nothing from God.
- D. If we practice "knocking and seeking," God will answer our prayers and bless us.

QUESTION 6

Job believed in his heart that he had done nothing wrong to bring about his sad misfortune, and therefore God owed him an explanation. *True or False?*

QUESTION 7

In Elihu's counsel, what things did he point out to Job? [Check all that are true].

- A. Job had no right to demand that God give him an answer.
- B. God would never do anything that was wrong or sinful.
- C. Since God was beyond Job's understanding, he should not think he could debate God.
- D. If Job did not cease from his arrogance, God would take away his life.

QUESTION 8

What things did Jesus demand of faithful disciples in Matthew 16:24? *Select all that apply*

- A. They would need to deny themselves (give up their own agenda for God's).
- B. They would need to take up their cross (prepared to suffer and possibly be martyred).
- C. They would need to forsake all their earthly possessions and live a simple life.
- D. They would need to follow Jesus.

QUESTION 9

For those scholars who object to the traditional understanding that 1 Peter was written by the apostle Peter, which of the following are arguments they might rely on? [There is more than one possible answer].

- A. The Greek of 1 Peter seems to be a high-quality Greek that one would not expect of a Galilean fisherman.
- B. The author states that he never traveled to places like Pontus, Cappadocia and Bithynia.
- C. The author could not have been a Jew because of his obvious unfamiliarity of the temple.
- D. The places mentioned in 1 Peter 1:1 supposedly did not have Christian communities until after Peter's death.

QUESTION 10

Although we do not know the exact date when 1 Peter was written, the probable date was about the time of Claudius's expulsion of the Jews from Rome in A.D. 49-50 (Acts 18:2). *True or False?*

QUESTION 11

Look over the following list of events. Which one was NOT true of Peter?

- A. He was listed first in the lists of apostles that we find in the gospel accounts.
- B. He was the one who responded, "You are the Christ," when Jesus asked, "But who do you say that I am?"
- C. He was the primary spokesman for the Jewish Christians on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2).
- D. He was the apostle that first brought the gospel to the Gentiles at Antioch (Acts 11).
- E. He was one of the primary speakers at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15).

QUESTION 12

Because of the mention of "Babylon" in 1 Peter 5, most Bible scholars conclude that Peter wrote his epistle from Babylon on the Euphrates River. *True or False?*

QUESTION 13

Shortly after the Jerusalem Council of A.D. 49, Peter brought the gospel to the regions of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, the province of Asia, and Bithynia. *True or False?*

QUESTION 14

In 1 Peter 1:2, Peter told the Christians to whom he wrote that they had been “chosen,” and then mentioned the part that each member of the Trinity played in their salvation. The third and final part was “to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood.” What did Peter mean “to obey Jesus Christ”?

- A. They had a responsibility to obey Jesus Christ rather than Nero.
- B. This is what is known as “the obedience of faith,” that is, to obey the gospel message by believing upon Jesus Christ for their spiritual salvation.
- C. Only those who lived obediently after trusting Christ as Savior would ultimately go to heaven.
- D. This meant that each person had to come before the church and acknowledge Jesus as Lord in order to be saved from their sins.

QUESTION 15

In stating that his readers had been “sprinkled with His blood,” Peter was alluding to the event in Exodus 24:3-8 when the Hebrew people who entered the old covenant agreed to obey the terms of the covenant and were subsequently sprinkled with animal blood. *True or False?*

QUESTION 16

Which of the following would not be considered one of the sub-themes of 1 Peter?

- A. A focus on Christ (both past and future)
- B. An historical account of the spread of the gospel throughout Bithynia, Galatia, and Cappadocia
- C. Spiritual privileges that Christians already possess
- D. An expectation of trial and sufferings that Christian must be prepared to face
- E. A call to live responsibly and faithfully in expectation of Christ’s return

QUESTION 17

Which of the following represents the *purpose statement* for 1 Peter?

- A. An encouragement for Christians to relish the grace of God as seen in the rich spiritual privileges they have and the glorious future awaiting them at Christ’s return.
- B. To challenge and motivate Christians to live faithfully for Christ as they face trials, opposition and sufferings in the present life.
- C. To persuade Christians not to be deceived by the Judaizers who were advocating that one needed to live by the Mosaic Law for both justification and sanctification.
- D. To motivate the readers to spread the gospel through all the regions of Bithynia and Cappadocia.

QUESTION 18

What did Peter mean when he told his readers they now had a “living hope” (1 Pet 1:3)?

- A. They could ask God in prayer for anything that they hoped for, and He would give it to them.
- B. They now had a better hope of getting into heaven.
- C. No matter how bad things might get for the readers, there was always hope.
- D. Because of Christ’s own resurrection, they were assured that they, too, would be resurrected.

QUESTION 19

Peter did not specifically identify the “inheritance” that awaited his readers (1 Pet 1:4), but one possibility is that this is the inheritance of entering the kingdom of Christ and enjoying the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem. *True or False?*

QUESTION 20

What is the “salvation” that Peter speaks of in 1 Peter 1:5?

- A. The salvation from the penalty of sin that one receives upon trusting Christ as Savior.
- B. Deliverance from the power of Satan, so that the evil one cannot harm him as a Christian.
- C. A salvation/deliverance of the world that takes place at the second coming of Christ and that will include the believer’s glorification.
- D. The believer’s deliverance from the power of sin in his life.

QUESTION 21

What are the things that Peter points out about *trials* in 1 Peter 1:6? *Select all that apply*

- A. By mentioning “various trials,” Peter is not limiting his teaching to persecution.
- B. Trials are not forever but will come to an end, in contrast to a proven faith that is eternally rewarded.
- C. Trials are always given by God as a punishment for sin that we have done.
- D. Trials are not *purposeless* but necessary for the development of our Christian character.

QUESTION 22

When a believer’s faith is tested and proved genuine—meaning that he has responded properly and endured the trial—the Christian can expect to receive “praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” *True or False?*

QUESTION 23

By “the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet 1:7), Peter means the return of the Lord at His second coming. *True or False?*

QUESTION 24

Which of the following will NOT be part of God’s grace that we can expect to come about at the second coming of Christ?

- A. Believers in Christ will receive resurrection bodies.
- B. Satan will be released from his imprisonment.
- C. Believers in Christ will receive the inheritance spoken of in 1 Peter 1:4.
- D. Jesus’ messianic kingdom will be formally inaugurated.

QUESTION 25

Jesus predicted that He would send the Holy Spirit, and Peter later confirmed that the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost came as a result of Jesus being exalted to the right hand of God the Father. *True or False?*

Unit 2: The Call to Live Faithfully as the New People of God in Facing Suffering as Christians (1 Pet 1:13–2:10)

Introduction

In Unit 1, we accomplished three goals. We considered the problem of evil, its origin, and how this relates to persecution that Christians may have to endure. Second, we considered the background information for 1 Peter and developed a chart by which we could get an overview of the book. Third, we examined the opening section of the epistle (1 Pet 1:3-12) that looked at various blessings to come about at the return of Christ for those who have been born again. At the time of His return in glory, Christ will bring about a future “salvation” of the world.

Unit 2 (Lessons 4 and 5) covers the next two major sections of the epistle found in 1 Pet 1:13–2:10. In Lesson Four, we will examine several exhortations that Peter makes to his readers for how they are to live in expectation of Christ’s return. We will also consider motivating reasons he gives them for living “holy lives.” In Lesson Five, we will consider the metaphor of the “new spiritual temple” with Christ as its foundation stone. Believers in Christ are already priests of this new temple with responsibilities for spiritual sacrifices and for living as faithful witnesses as the “new people of God.”

Unit Outline

Lesson 4: Facing Suffering by Holy Living in Expectation of Christ’s Return (1 Pet 1:13–2:3)

Lesson 5: Facing Suffering by Identifying with the Rejected Christ as the New People of God (1 Pet 2:4-10)

Unit Objectives

By the end of this unit, you will be able to do the following:

- Identify the “grace” that will come to Christians at the time of Christ’s return in glory.
- Understand the importance of living a “holy life” while practicing self-control.
- Explain the importance of exercising “ferveat love” with one’s fellow Christians.
- Have a sincere longing to draw upon the Word of God for spiritual growth.
- Understand the concept of “the new spiritual temple” with Christ as its cornerstone.
- Know your responsibility as a believer-priest who lives to be a faithful witness to Christ.

Lesson Four: Facing Suffering by Holy Living in Expectation of Christ's Return (1 Peter 1:13–2:3)

Lesson Introduction

In the previous lesson, Peter sought to encourage the readers to whom he wrote by having them consider the spiritual privileges that were already theirs as a result of being “born again,” and by reminding them that their enduring faith through the trials they faced would not go unrewarded. He challenged them to look forward to the return of Christ and the grace that would come to them at that time. Christ’s return would usher in a *future salvation*, one in which the world would be delivered from evil and in which Jesus Himself would rule over a kingdom of peace, righteousness, and universal blessing. Lesson Four continues the emphasis on the return of Christ by challenging the readers to turn from evil and to live obediently in the interim with a fervent love for one another.

Lesson Outline

- Topic 1: The Call to Holy Conduct Based on a Steadfast Hope in Christ’s Return (1 Pet 1:13-16)
- Topic 2: Motivations for Holy Conduct in View of Christ’s Redemption of Us by His Blood (1 Pet 1:17-21)
- Topic 3: The Call to Fervently Love Fellow Christians (1 Pet 1:22-25)
- Topic 4: The Call to Turn from Evil and Long for God’s Word (1 Pet 2:1-3)

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- Describe the mindset and desire for holy living that Christians are to have as they await the return of Jesus Christ.
- List three motivations that should prompt every Christian to pursue a life of holiness.
- Know and practice three vital ways that born-again Christians are to respond obediently to God:
 - ✓ Fervently loving fellow Christians from the heart
 - ✓ Repenting of and forsaking sin
 - ✓ Hungering for the Word of God in order to grow spiritually

Topic 1: The Call to Holy Conduct Based on a Steadfast Hope in Christ’s Return (1 Pet 1:13-16)

The word “Therefore” at the beginning of 1 Peter 1:13 signals that what Peter is about to say in the following verses is based on the spiritual truths presented in the preceding verses concerning God’s mercy (1 Pet 1:3-12). Starting with verse 13, Peter describes the response the readers should make, that is, how they are to live as they await Christ’s return.



READING: Open your Bible and read 1 Peter 1:13-16.

The Call for Preparedness (1 Pet 1:13). Of the many things that impact how a Christian lives out his life on earth, one of the most influential factors should be “the revelation of Jesus Christ.” Peter had already mentioned this in 1 Peter 1:7. As previously explained, this is a reference to the second coming of Christ when Jesus will return to earth in glory (1 Pet 4:13 calls it the “revelation of His glory”). This, says Peter, is what every Christian should have his “hope” fixed on. Peter did not mean a mere *wish* for what might happen, but the expectation of what is certain to happen. This should be regarded as an extremely important event for every Christian because of the “grace” that each will receive at that time, not least of which is resurrection to a glorified body. [For a discussion of what is entailed in this “grace,” see comments at 1 Pet 1:10].

QUESTION 1

Setting one’s hope on the “grace that will be brought to you” is a reference to being saved by grace, not one’s resurrection in the future. *True or False?*

In view of Christ’s return and the grace awaiting them, Peter told his readers to “get your minds ready for action.” Literally, the Greek says, “girding up the loins of your mind.” In the days when most men wore flowing robes, they would gird up the ends of their garments into their belt around their waist to allow for greater freedom of movement. Drawing on this imagery, Peter applies it to their mental thinking, a *mental readiness*. By their “minds,” Peter was not thinking of some narrow view of mere intellectual reasoning, but as that which guided their conduct. The second phrase “being fully sober” reflects this understanding. This meant not just sobriety regarding the use of alcohol but (figuratively) of *self-control* in general. A mind “ready for action” was a mind guided by self-control. Jobes (111) notes, “Self-control of the mind facilitates prayer (1 Pet. 4:7) and an awareness of the devil’s ways (5:8).”

Negatively: What Must be Avoided (1 Pet 1:14). Following the call to mental alertness and self-control in verse 13, Peter immediately called for an ethical response. Negatively, evil desires must be cast aside (v 14), and positively, a life of holiness must be pursued (v 15).

Addressing them as “obedient children” reminds them of their new birth (1 Pet 1:3) by which they entered the family of God and now have a relationship with God the Father. Even an earthly parent would expect *obedience* from his children, and so it is with their heavenly Father. Therefore, Peter urged them not to “comply with the evil urges you used to follow in your ignorance.” The time of their “ignorance” refers to their life as non-Christians before their new birth. At that time, they were not indwelt by the Spirit of God but were led by the “flesh” (the sinful nature) in doing evil desires. Similar statements about life before knowing Christ are found in Ephesians 2:3 and 4:17-20:

^{2:3} among whom all of us also formerly lived out our lives in the cravings of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath even as the rest ...

^{4:17} So I say this, and insist in the Lord, that you no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking.¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding, being alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardness of their hearts.¹⁹ Because they are callous, they have given themselves over to indecency for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.²⁰ But you did not learn about Christ like this.

QUESTION 2

What did Peter mean when he referred to “your ignorance”?

- A. Peter knew that his readers were not very educated but were ignorant people.
- B. Peter was referring to their previous life before knowing Christ when they were spiritually ignorant.
- C. Peter was making a point that his readers did not know very much about the second coming.
- D. Peter told them they were like “children” and therefore ignorant of spiritual truths.

Regarding such evil desires, Peter says they are not to “comply with” them (NASB: “be conformed to”). Here Peter uses a word (Gk *suschēmatisō*), found elsewhere in the New Testament only in Romans 12:2, “Do not be conformed to this present world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may test and approve what is the will of God—what is good and well-pleasing and perfect.” This is a helpful observation, because the way to overcoming such evil desires is not found in mere *human effort* (trying harder) but in experiencing a *renewed mind*. Only the Holy Spirit can renew our minds, as we read, study and meditate on the Word of God, and then submit ourselves to God’s will (applying it to our lives).

QUESTION 3

The word translated “comply with” (or “be conformed to”) was also used in Romans 12:2, which suggests that if we are to resist the evil desires we once practiced, we need to experience a *renewed mind* as a result of studying and applying God’s Word to our lives. *True or False?*

Positively: Pursuing a Holy Life (1 Pet 1:14-15). Having discussed the evil desires of one’s past life that must be cast aside, Peter now turned to the positive aspect of the new life to be pursued. This new life is one of reflecting the person and character of God who called us out of darkness. In short, He is “the Holy One.” This expression was used numerous times in the Old Testament of God (e.g., 2 Kgs 19:22; Job 6:10; Ps 78:41; Prov 9:10; and repeatedly in Isaiah), and is often used in the New Testament of Jesus (Mk 1:24; Lk 4:34; Jn 6:69; Acts 2:27; 13:35; and 1 Jn 2:20). Based on the Old Testament verse, “You shall be holy, because I am holy” (Lev 19:2), Peter exhorted his readers, “become holy yourselves in all of your conduct.” In citing Leviticus 19:2, Peter was not calling for a rigorous obedience to all the commands of the old covenant, as though he was demanding they live by the Mosaic Law. Peter understood they were now living under the new covenant. But he was establishing the principle that God’s people of all ages (whether under the old covenant or the new) were accountable to God and called to walk in His ways. Their holiness should be expressed in ways appropriate to the historical age in which they live.

“BE HOLY”

To be holy means that the thinking and behavior of Christians should conform to God’s character.

QUESTION 4

The Christian today who seriously wants to obey God’s command, “You shall be holy, because I am holy,” must strive to live by the commands of the Mosaic Law of the Old Testament. *True or False?*

To the modern reader, such urging to “be holy” might seem foreign or hard to comply with. We are tempted to think of being a “holy man” who abandons society to pursue a monastic way of life, or of being a monk in a secluded monastery. But that is not what Peter is urging. To be holy means that the

thinking and behavior of Christians should conform to God's character. Even Jesus did not abandon society but actively participated in it. And yet he did not let society dictate how He thought and lived. The command in verse 15 was a call to live obediently in relationship to Christ, though in practicality this would often set them apart from the customs and values of the non-Christian world around them.

We would do well to pause for a moment and carefully consider what this call to "be holy" means for us as Christians today. First, it does not mean that we must live a life of drudgery without having any fun in life. Second, it does not mean a life of *legalism*, trying to live by a code of conduct, especially one consisting of man-made rules. In some cultures, for example, women are forbidden from wearing any sort of makeup on their face. What it does mean is a pursuit of the Spirit-filled life described in Galatians 5:16-23, in which one overcomes the desires of the flesh by walking in the Spirit. We also need to understand the biblical teaching of "sanctification," which means that conformity to the image of Christ is a gradual and life-long process, not an instantaneous leap to perfection. Louis Barbieri (44) offers some wise words concerning the pursuit of holiness:

While the standard is clear, we must recognize that the believer is unable to attain absolute holiness in this life. He never loses his old nature and lives in a sinful world. Does this mean he should throw up his hands and quit? Absolutely not! While the believer cannot achieve perfect holiness in his life, he can seek to be holy in the eyes of his God. He can maintain a holy walk with the Lord. It is apparent that some Christians walk closer to the Lord than others, but the standard remains the same: the absolute holiness of the Lord Himself. Most of the problems encountered by the average Christian stem from measuring himself by the wrong standard. The proper standard is the Lord, not some other Christian.

QUESTION 5



As you think about our responsibility today to "be holy," what are some examples of *holy living* that might put you as a Christian in conflict with the society in which you live? Sometimes in an attempt to practice *holy living*, Christians can resort to legalism, that is, the practice of man-made rules (and trying to pressure other Christians to do the same). Can you think of any examples of this in your culture? Write your answers in your Life Notebook.

Topic 2: Motivations for Holy Conduct in View of Christ's Redemption of Us by His Blood (1 Pet 1:17-21)

Having mentioned in the previous paragraph the responsibility that Christians must be holy in all their conduct, Peter now presents several motivating reasons why his readers should seriously pursue this.



READING: Open your Bible and read 1 Peter 1:17-21.

The Motivation of Avoiding God's Judgment (1 Pet 1:17). God's judgment is not just a matter for non-Christians. Even Christians are subject to the judgment of a holy God, though it is a judgment of a different nature. For non-Christians they will face the judgment of God after death when they must stand before Him at the Great White Throne judgment (Rev 20:11-15). Because they rejected Christ's substitutionary death on their behalf, they will have to bear the responsibility for their own sins. They will be judged according to their deeds and sentenced to an eternity in hell. The Christian, on the other hand, does not face God's judgment for his sinful deeds, since they were all forgiven at the time he

believed in Christ. This was possible, because Jesus took the place of the believer's punishment (Jn 5:24; Col 2:13-14).

However, there are two primary ways in which the Christian is still subject to God's judgment. First, he is subject to God's *discipline* in this life, which may or may not be directly related to sin in his life (see Heb 12:3-13). The Christian who chooses to sin must be prepared to face God's corrective discipline. In some cases, God may even afflict a sinning Christian with sickness and in very rare cases even take him home, that is, cause his death (1 Cor 11:27-32; 1 Jn 5:16-17).

QUESTION 6

Read Hebrews 12:3-13. *Select all that apply:*

- A. Discipline in the life of a believer stems from God's love for him.
- B. Discipline in the life of a believer serves as a warning that a sinning Christian might lose his salvation, if he does not repent of his sin.
- C. Whenever God disciplines a believer, it is ultimately for his good . . . helping him to grow in holiness.
- D. Although God's discipline can be painful, those who accept it and are trained by it experience a blessing (the peaceful fruit of righteousness).

Second, following this life the Christian must stand before "the judgment seat of Christ" where he will have to give an account of his life and have his works judged. He will either be rewarded for his faithfulness and his works that were done in faith for God's glory, or he will suffer loss for works that did not survive God's judgment (Rom 14:10-12; 2 Cor 5:9-10; 1 Cor 3:10-15).

QUESTION 7

Look up the following verses: Romans 14:10-12; 2 Corinthians 5:9-10; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15. *Select all that apply:*

- A. The judgment seat of Christ is for non-Christians, not Christians.
- B. At the judgment seat of Christ, every Christian will stand before the Lord to give an account of himself.
- C. The ambition of every Christian ought to be to please the Lord, because one day all Christians will have to appear before Him to be evaluated and recompensed.
- D. A Christian's works will be reviewed and evaluated at the judgment seat of Christ to determine if they are of such a quality as to be rewarded.

Peter points out that God does not play favorites with His Christian children. He "impartially judges according to each one's work" (1 Pet 1:17). Whether it be God's corrective discipline while on earth or the evaluation we receive at "the judgment seat of Christ," God will treat each of us with the same sense of justice and impartiality. In other words, none of us are an "exception" to the rule. For this reason, each of us should conduct ourselves in fear—having a healthy and holy reverence for God—during the remainder of our time on earth. If we want what is good for us, we will take the command to "be holy" very seriously, rather than continuing in the evil desires of our former way of life.

The Motivation of Christ's Redeeming Sacrifice (1 Pet 1:18-19). In verse eighteen, there is a shift in thought from God's discipline to God's love as seen in the amazing sacrifice that Jesus Christ made on behalf of the church. Peter reminded them that they have been "redeemed" from their empty or useless way of life that had been handed down to them from their ancestors. The word *redeem* (Gk *lutroō*) means "to free by paying a ransom." By the payment of a ransom price, a slave could be bought out of slavery, or a soldier captured by the enemy could be released. Here, Peter uses the concept to speak of their being set free from the ancestral way of life that had been passed down to them, a life that was inherently sinful

and devoid of true worship for the Creator God of the Bible. The price that had to be paid, however, was extremely high ... much higher than even silver or gold. As valuable as those might be, they were ultimately perishable. The necessary price for this redemption was nothing less than the precious blood that Jesus Christ shed at Calvary. It was there that Jesus was led forth as an innocent sacrificial lamb to be slaughtered.

QUESTION 8

The word translated “redeem” means to set someone free as a result of the payment of a ransom price. *True or False?*

In describing Christ as a sacrifice, Peter draws on the Old Testament requirement that the sacrificial lamb had to be “unblemished and spotless” (Ex 12:5; Lev 22:18-20; 23:12). The point, of course, is that Jesus Christ was perfect, having never committed any sin (Isa 53:9; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15; 7:26; 1 Pet 2:22; 1 Jn 3:5). He had to be, or else He would not be qualified to die as our sin substitute.

God made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we would become the righteousness of God (2 Cor 5:21).

To comprehend the incredible extent to which God went to demonstrate His love for us must surely be one of the most compelling motivations to pursue a life of increasing holiness.

The Motivation of God’s Eternal Plan Confirmed by Christ’s Resurrection (1 Pet 1:20-21).

The greatest display of the love of God for all mankind has been the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on the cross, as Christ took our place, bearing the punishment that we ourselves deserved (Rom 5:8). Before man was ever created, God had planned to do this. That is why Peter states, “He was foreknown before the foundation of the world.” The Trinity—God the three in one—has always existed, and it was the Triune God’s plan that God the Son would become incarnate and die on the cross. Peter said something similar in Acts 2:23 when he stated, “this man, who was handed over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you executed by nailing him to a cross at the hands of Gentiles.”

QUESTION 9

After Adam and Eve sinned in the garden of Eden, God decided there would need to be a plan to save mankind by having Jesus go to the cross to die in our place. *True or False?*

The plan was made in eternity past, but Jesus “was manifested in these last times for your sake” (1 Pet 1:20). By “these last times,” Peter simply meant the present age in which he and the readers were living, that is, the days of the new covenant following Messiah’s arrival (cf. Heb 1:1-2). [This phrase should not be confused with “the last time” mentioned in 1 Pet 1:5. A different Greek word was used in that case]. Peter goes on to add that God “raised him from the dead and gave him glory,” because it is the resurrection that gives us confidence that Jesus really is the Christ and that His death was indeed effectual for us.

QUESTION 10



The New Testament clearly teaches that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead. Since you did not personally witness this event, how can you be sure that it really happened? Write your answer in your Life Notebook.

Topic 3: The Call to Ferently Love Fellow Christians (1 Pet 1:22-25)

Lesson Four is concerned with the personal response to God that we as believers ought to make in view of our new birth and future salvation. Peter urged his readers to live holy lives (1 Pet 1:13-16) and followed this with several motivations for doing so (1 Pet 1:17-21). Now he turns to admonish them how living a holy life ought to affect how they lived in practical ways. Raymer (844) explains the connection:

The response of holy living that should result from the new birth is now applied to three areas. Obedience to the truth purifies and produces (a) a sincere love for the brethren (1:22-25), (b) repentance from sin (2:1), and (c) a desire for spiritual growth (2:2).



READING: Open your Bible and read 1 Peter 1:22-25.

How we think of fellow Christians and how we treat them reflects the extent that we are willing to obey God. We must remember that our fellow Christians have also been redeemed, and those whom God has chosen and who have been born again are now joined together as part of a new Christian community. Our relationships within this new community—the body of Christ—are vitally important, because the Christian life cannot be lived authentically in isolation. If we are to experience a changed life and spiritual growth (from living in ignorance and rebellion to that of living a holy life), we will need one another's help. None of us can do this on our own. So, for this Christian community to function properly in which we mutually build up one another, there must be a culture of fervent love for one another. There can be no place for an arrogant attitude toward fellow Christians, resentment of them, or an unwillingness to work with them on behalf of Christ's kingdom. Loving one another from the heart is commanded of us!

QUESTION 11

Look up and read John 13:34-35. Circle all the following that are true:

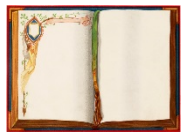
- A. The new commandment that Jesus commanded His disciples was to baptize new believers.
- B. The disciples were commanded to love one another, because Jesus had first loved them.
- C. The command to love one another only applies to those with whom we are in complete doctrinal agreement with.
- D. When other people saw the disciples practicing love for one another, this would lead them to believe that they were one of Jesus' disciples.

Ultimately, the command to love one another stems from our obedience to the truth, that is the truth of God's Word. Peter reminded the readers that they had made an obedient response to the truth by purifying their souls to love their fellow Christians. So, they must really do this from the heart. Then, in the remaining verses of this paragraph (1 Pet 1:23-25), Peter focuses their attention on the word of God that had brought about their new birth in Christ (recall 1 Pet 1:3). In verse 23, he describes the word of God as "living and enduring." As such, it brought about their supernatural transformation to that of being spiritually alive. Peter reinforced this point by quoting Isaiah 40:6-8. There are temporal things, like grass and flowers, that quickly wither and perish. Yet God's Word is not like that, for it "endures forever." It will not go out of fashion or become irrelevant or obsolete. Obedience to this *enduring Word of God* is thus the logical choice to make, and those who do so will also practice loving one another fervently from the heart.

QUESTION 12

In order to teach his readers that God's Word endures forever, Peter quoted a passage from Isaiah 53:4-6. *True or False?*

QUESTION 13



Think of a moment in your Christian life where you have experienced another brother or sister doing something for you that demonstrated they were fervently loving you from the heart. Write a description of this in your Life Notebook. Be prepared to share what you have written in class.

Topic 4: The Call to Turn from Evil and Long for God's Word (1 Pet 2:1-3)

In the preceding section, we learned that the Word of God is imperishable, living and enduring (1 Pet 1:23-25). The gospel message is itself the Word of God, and this was powerful enough to have brought about a spiritual new birth when it was preached to those whom Peter wrote to. Just as the Word of God had brought about their initial entry into the Christian life, so the readers must continue to submit themselves to the Word, that they might grow spiritually and that their character might be transformed. Naturally, the same is true for us today.



READING: Open your Bible and read 1 Peter 2:1-3.

The admonitions in verses 1-3 follow what Peter had already taught about God's "living and enduring" Word (see 1 Pet 1:23-25). The right conclusion to draw from the nature of God's Word is that believers need to submit their lives to it, since the Word reflects the will of God. If Jesus is to be Lord of our lives (as He is, and as we should want Him to be), then we as believers must be willing to submit to what He says in His Word. Peter begins by listing five sinful character traits that need to be ridged from the lives of Christians: all evil, deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander. Of course, this is not an exhaustive list of vices out of keeping with Christian character. The verb translated "get rid of" (Gk *apotithēmi*)—"put aside" or "put off" in some translations—is used in other places in the New Testament of sinful vices from one's non-Christian past that the believer must now put aside. For instance, Colossians 3:7-9 states,

⁷You also lived your lives in this way at one time, when you used to live among them. ⁸But now, put off all such things as anger, rage, malice, slander, abusive language from your mouth. ⁹Do not lie to one another since you have put off the old man with its practices.

We also observe that Peter did not mention any sexual vices in this list, as is often the case in other passages (e.g., Gal 5:19-21 and Col 3:5). Perhaps Peter mentioned these specific vices, then, because these would have been especially detrimental to the experiencing of fervent love between believers that he had urged of them (1 Pet 1:22). Take "slander," for instance. This means to speak ill of someone else or to defame them. For a young Christian to continue a habit of slandering others, when once he has joined a local church, would be antithetical to *fervent Christ-like love*. It would be like pouring poison on the Christian community of believers.

QUESTION 14

When a Christian says something about another believer that hurts that person's reputation, he is guilty of the sin of *slander*. *True or False?*

The call to rid themselves of the sins listed in 1 Peter 2:1 was essentially a call to repentance and decisive action against sins that had once characterized them as non-Christians. If, as believers, they were to truly experience what it meant to be part of the body of Christ living in sweet communion and building one another up—especially as together they faced a world hostile to their faith—then they needed to take the call to repent and change seriously. This would help promote love among them and thus foster greater unity.

QUESTION 15



Another of the sins that Peter singles out in verse one is that of “envy.” How would you define or describe “envy.” Have you been guilty of this in regard to your fellow Christians in your church? Why would a continual practice of envy contribute to a breakdown in the unity of the church? Write your answer in your Life Notebook.

Their response to God's Word had both a negative and positive component. Verse one was obviously the negative component (what they must no longer practice). In verse two we have the flip-side, the positive admonition: “yearn like newborn infants for pure, spiritual milk.” They are to have a *yearning* for God's Word. Peter illustrated the kind of yearning they were to have by likening it to the way a newborn infant might long for the milk of its mother. The analogy was quite appropriate. Even though a person might experience new birth in Christ as an adult, at that point they are actually an infant in Christ (spiritually). Just as an infant in the natural realm has a need of milk that will enable it to grow physically, so new Christians have a need to partake of a healthy diet of God's Word to be able to grow spiritually. Of course, this is true for older Christians as well. Verse two is not meant to limit the need for the Word and spiritual growth to new Christians. This attitude should characterize our lives until the day the Lord takes us home.

QUESTION 16

Peter's admonition to “yearn like newborn infants for pure, spiritual milk” applies only to new Christians. *True or False?*

Peter further describes the result of yearning for the milk of God's Word by saying “so that by it you may grow up to salvation” (or “in respect to salvation”). As in 1 Peter 1:5, 9, this “salvation” is more likely that aspect of salvation still awaiting them at the second coming of Christ (when they are delivered from their body of sin and become completely conformed to the image of Christ). At the moment of new birth, their sins were forgiven, and they received eternal life. As they await their future resurrection and the completion of their salvation, they are to be *growing* spiritually. This will happen as they both feed on the Word of God and (in cooperation with the Holy Spirit) repent and “put off” sin in their life.

QUESTION 17

Spiritual growth should be taking place in our lives from the moment we receive Christ until the time our salvation is complete, and we are totally transformed into the image of Christ. *True or False?*

Finally, Peter says in verse three, “if you have experienced the Lord’s kindness.” Peter certainly did not mean by this to call their salvation into question, to cast doubt on the reality of their faith in Christ. In the Greek language, there are different ways to express a conditional statement. This particular “if” is what is known in Greek as a *first-class condition*, meaning that it is presumed to be true. Also, this verse is an allusion to Psalm 34:8: “Taste and see that the LORD is good! How blessed is the one who takes shelter in him!” The Psalmist was inviting God’s people to experience the goodness of God for themselves. If they would take refuge in the Lord and walk in the fear of the Lord (as the Psalmist had done), they would experience the path that would lead to God’s blessing in their life. Peter desired the same result for his Christian readers.

QUESTION 18

When Peter said in verse three, “if you have experienced the Lord’s kindness,” he meant that a failure to yearn for the pure milk of the Word would indicate that this person had not really become a true Christian but was still “unsaved.” *True or False?*

QUESTION 19

Read Psalm 34:8-14. These verses are meant to instruct true believers how to experience a life of God’s blessing as a result of taking refuge in Him and walking in the fear of the Lord. *True or False?*

QUESTION 20



Do you have a yearning for the pure, spiritual milk of God’s Word? On a weekly basis, how often do you spend time alone in the study of God’s Word? Do you feel like you are growing spiritually? Why or why not? Write your thoughts in your Life Notebook.

Lesson 4 Self Check

QUESTION 1

When Peter says, “set your hope completely on the grace that will be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed,” he is talking about the grace believers will experience at the time of Jesus’ second coming.

True or False?

QUESTION 2

When Peter said, “do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance,” what did he mean by the words “your ignorance”?

- A. Peter knew that his readers were not very educated but were ignorant people.
- B. Peter was referring to their previous life before knowing Christ when they were spiritually ignorant.
- C. Peter was making a point that his readers did not know very much about the second coming.
- D. Peter told them they were like “children” and therefore ignorant of spiritual truths.

QUESTION 3

The word translated “comply with” (or “be conformed to”) was also used in Romans 12:2, which suggests that if we are to resist the evil desires we once practiced, we need to experience a *renewed mind* as a result of studying and applying God’s Word to our lives. *True or False?*

QUESTION 4

In which chapter of the New Testament would you be likely to find the teaching that when God disciplines a believer, it is ultimately for his good . . . helping him to grow in holiness.

- A. Philippians 2
- B. Revelation 3
- C. John 3
- D. Hebrews 12

QUESTION 5

In view of the New Testament teaching about the “judgment seat of Christ,” the ambition of every Christian ought to be to please the Lord, because one day we will all have to appear before Him to be evaluated and recompensed. *True or False?*

QUESTION 6

Which of the following words means to set someone free as a result of the payment of a ransom price?

- A. Justify
- B. Redeem
- C. Save
- D. Sanctify

QUESTION 7

In view of Jesus' instruction of the "new commandment" in John 13, circle all the following that are true:

- A. The new commandment that Jesus commanded His disciples was to baptize new believers.
- B. The disciples were commanded to love one another, because Jesus had first loved them.
- C. The command to love one another only applies to those with whom we are in complete doctrinal agreement with.
- D. When other people saw the disciples practicing love for one another, this would lead them to believe that they were one of Jesus' disciples.

QUESTION 8

In the passage that Peter quoted from Isa 40:6-8, "all flesh" was said to be like grass to make a contrast with what?

- A. Flowers that retain their beauty forever.
- B. The word of the Lord that endures forever.
- C. The eternity of Jesus Christ who was raised from the grave.
- D. The power of the Holy Spirit to enable Christians to live holy lives.

QUESTION 9

When a Christian says something about another believer that hurts that person's reputation, he is guilty of the sin of *hypocrisy*. *True or False?*

QUESTION 10

The point that Peter was making in 1 Peter 2:2 was that Christians ought to long for the "pure, spiritual milk" of God's Word in a similar way to how a newborn infant longs for milk. *True or False?*

Lesson 4 Answers to Questions

QUESTION 1: False

QUESTION 2

- B. Peter was referring to their previous life before knowing Christ when they were spiritually ignorant.

QUESTION 3: True

QUESTION 4: False

QUESTION 5: *Your answer.*

QUESTION 6: All are true except for B.

- A. Discipline in the life of a believer stems from God's love for him.
- C. Whenever God disciplines a believer, it is ultimately for his good . . . helping him to grow in holiness.
- D. Although God's discipline can be painful, those who accept it and are trained by it experience a blessing (the peaceful fruit of righteousness).

QUESTION 7: All are true except for A.

- B. At the judgment seat of Christ, every Christian will stand before the Lord to give an account of himself.
- C. The ambition of every Christian ought to be to please the Lord, because one day we will all have to appear before Him to be evaluated and recompensed.
- D. A Christian's works will be reviewed and evaluated at the judgment seat of Christ to determine if they are of such a quality as to be rewarded.

QUESTION 8: True

QUESTION 9: False

QUESTION 10: *Your answer.*

Here are some things you might include in your answer. (1) The Romans and the Jewish religious leaders had carefully secured the stone of the tomb, placed a seal on it, and had it guarded (Mt 27:62-66). So, there is no good explanation as to how anyone could have moved the stone without being detected. (2) With possibly one exception, all the original twelve (other than Judas) were martyred for their faith without ever having recanted their belief in the resurrection. Had the resurrection not been true, surely at least one of them would have broken silence and corrected the account. (3) Not only does the New Testament record that the original twelve saw the resurrected Christ, but 1 Corinthians 15:6 records that more than five hundred brethren had seen Him at one time. (4) The New Testament reports that the first witnesses of the resurrection were women, including Mary Magdalene (Mt 28:1). If someone were fabricating a story of the resurrection in that time and culture, they would not have made the primary witnesses to be women. [In that time, a woman's witness in court was not considered as valuable as a man's].

QUESTION 11: Answers B and D are both correct.

- B. The disciples were commanded to love one another, because Jesus had first loved them.
- D. When other people saw the disciples practicing love for one another, this would lead them to believe that they were one of Jesus' disciples.

QUESTION 12: False

QUESTION 13: *Your answer.*

QUESTION 14: True

QUESTION 15: *Your answer.*

QUESTION 16: False

QUESTION 17: True

QUESTION 18: False

QUESTION 19: True

QUESTION 20: *Your answer.*

Lesson 4 Self Check Answers

QUESTION 1: True

QUESTION 2

B. Peter was referring to their previous life before knowing Christ when they were spiritually ignorant.

QUESTION 3: True

QUESTION 4

D. Hebrews 12

QUESTION 5: True

QUESTION 6

B. REDEEM

QUESTION 7

B. The disciples were commanded to love one another, because Jesus had first loved them.

D. When other people saw the disciples practicing love for one another, this would lead them to believe that they were one of Jesus' disciples.

QUESTION 8

B. The word of the Lord that endures forever.

QUESTION 9: False

QUESTION 10: True

Lesson Five: Facing Suffering by Identifying with the Rejected Christ as the New People of God (1 Peter 2:4-10)

Lesson Introduction

In the previous lesson, Peter reminded his readers that their belief in the gospel message had resulted in their being born again. Now their responsibility was to turn aside from evil and yearn for the pure spiritual milk of God's Word, so that they might grow spiritually as they awaited their future salvation at Christ's return.

Beginning with 1 Peter 2:4, Peter shifts from the metaphor of milk to that of a stone. Drawing on imagery from several Old Testament verses depicting Jesus as the "living stone," Peter reminds his readers that they are participants in the messianic community of believers that are identified with Jesus the Messiah. As the new "people of God," they enjoy an identity and mission that is in some ways analogous to the privileges that once belonged to Israel of old. Yet in their identification with Messiah Jesus, they must be willing to accept rejection by those outside Christ, just as Jesus Himself was rejected.

Lesson Outline

- Topic 1: Our New Leader: Christ, the "Living Stone" of the New Temple (1 Pet 2:4)
- Topic 2: Our New Purpose: A Community of Priests Offering Up Spiritual Sacrifices to God (1 Pet 2:5-6)
- Topic 3: Our Blessing in Contrast to Those Who Did Not Believe (1 Pet 2:7-8)
- Topic 4: Our New Privilege as the New People of God (1 Pet 2:9-10)

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- Realize that just as Christians rejoice in the vindication of Jesus by His resurrection, we must also be willing to identify with Him in His experience of rejection.
- Understand that there is now a new spiritual temple that replaces the Jerusalem temple, and that all believers are now priests of this new temple with a responsibility to offer spiritual sacrifices.
- Be encouraged by God's promise that those who believe in Jesus will ultimately not be put to shame regardless of any temporal shame and suffering they may have to endure.
- Gain a greater appreciation of God's sovereignty in discovering how the Old Testament predicted Jesus' rejection by the Jewish religious leaders and subsequent victory.
- Develop a deeper conviction of the importance of believing the gospel of Jesus Christ, in view of the serious fate that awaits those who reject the Savior.
- Realize that with the privilege of being the new "people of God" also comes the responsibility to be faithful witnesses of Him in the present world.

Topic 1: Our New Leader: Christ, the “Living Stone” of the New Temple (1 Pet 2:4)

Peter begins this next unit (1 Pet 2:4-10) by focusing on Jesus as the Messiah predicted by the Old Testament Scriptures. He is the object of the Christian’s faith.



READING: Open your Bible and read 1 Peter 2:4.

Peter describes his readers who have been born again through faith in the gospel message as those who have “come to him.” In using this phrase, Peter still has Psalm 34 in mind. He quoted the words of Psalm 34:8 (“Taste and see that the LORD is good!”) in 1 Peter 2:3. The words “come to him” in 1 Peter 2:4 are an allusion to the Greek Septuagint translation of Psalm 34:5. [In the Septuagint, this is verse 33:6. Peter’s quotations from the Old Testament are typically drawn from the Greek Septuagint translation rather than the Hebrew text]. The Septuagint translated Psalm 34:5, “They came to Him and were enlightened.” So, Peter understands that the words in Psalm 34:5 about “coming to Him” are realized as one comes to Jesus Christ through faith.

QUESTION 1

The words “come to him” in 1 Peter 2:4 are used to speak of coming to Jesus Christ through faith, that is, by believing the gospel message. *True or False?*

QUESTION 2

When Peter quoted the Old Testament, he typically chose to quote from the Hebrew text rather than from the Greek Septuagint text. *True or False?*

The metaphor of a “stone” is repeatedly used of the Messiah in various Old Testament passages (for example, Ps 118:22; Isa 8:14; 28:16). Hence, coming to God’s stone reflects the fact of their faith in Jesus as the true Messiah. Furthermore, He is called a “living stone,” because He has been resurrected from the dead and is alive forevermore. The stone metaphor, on the one hand, reflects an important stone for building purposes (in this case, a new temple). Yet, on the other hand, the same stone is something that those disobedient to God’s Word will stumble over.

QUESTION 3

Peter highlights the metaphor of a “stone” in this passage, because it was commonly used in the Old Testament to represent what?

- A. The kingdom of God being as mighty as a stone mountain.
- B. The mighty power of God as a stone which cannot be moved.
- C. The promised Messiah as a choice but rejected cornerstone.
- D. Mount Zion as the center of God’s rule.

QUESTION 4

Peter speaks of Messiah Jesus, not merely as a “stone,” but as a “living stone.” Why does he call Him a “living stone”?

- A. Because God can command even the stones to become children of Abraham.
- B. Because this serves to remind us that Christ was resurrected and is alive forevermore.
- C. Because Christ will rule from Mount Zion, making all things new and alive.
- D. Because Jesus had the Holy Spirit dwelling within Him.

Though Jesus is truly the Messiah, Peter reminded his readers that He is *a rejected Messiah*. But His rejection is only by men, not by God. Instead, He is “chosen and priceless in God’s sight.” Peter spoke of Messiah Jesus as “chosen” and “priceless,” because these were the very words used in Isaiah 28:16 (which Peter quoted from in verse 6). In verse 7, Peter will go on to show that Messiah’s rejection was anticipated by the Old Testament Scriptures (Ps 118:22). Yet, by highlighting Messiah’s rejection, Peter is sending a message to his readers that like their Lord, they too need to be prepared for accepting rejection by those outside Christ. They should not expect better treatment than their Lord Himself. To “come to Him” through faith means not only to gain eternal life and a glorious future salvation, but also rejection and suffering in the interim.

QUESTION 5



In what ways do you feel that you have experienced *rejection* by those who do not share your faith in Jesus Christ? How does the fact of Christ being “rejected by men” help you face the rejection you have experienced? Write your thoughts and answers in your Life Notebook.

Topic 2: Our New Purpose: A Community of Priests Offering Up Spiritual Sacrifices to God (1 Pet 2:5-6)

Peter wanted his readers to understand that coming to Christ in faith to receive eternal life was not an end in itself. Rather, this step of faith had made them a vital part of a community of believers who now had a new mission of spiritual worship and service. To help them understand their spiritual privilege and responsibilities, he drew an analogy to the Old Testament temple.



READING: Open your Bible and read 1 Peter 2:5-6.

In the Old Testament, God had instructed the nation under Moses to build a tabernacle as the focal point of earthly worship. Later, under King Solomon, a more permanent temple was built in Jerusalem to replace the tabernacle. This took place about 967 B.C. (see 1 Kgs 6:1). Solomon’s temple was subsequently destroyed by the Babylonians about 586 B.C., and a new (second) temple was built to replace it about 516/515 B.C. under the leadership of Zerubbabel. The second temple was eventually enlarged and enhanced under Herod the Great, but finally destroyed by the Roman armies under Titus in A.D. 70. In every period of its history, the temple was served by a high priest who was assisted by priests from the tribe of Levi (all of whom comprised the *Levitical priesthood*). These priests were responsible for the sacrifices that took place at the temple in Jerusalem.

QUESTION 6

The *second temple* period extended from about 516/515 B.C. until its destruction by the armies under the command of the Roman general Titus in A.D. 70. *True or False?*

The destruction of the earthly temple in A.D. 70 was no accident. Jesus had predicted this event shortly before His crucifixion (see Mt 24:1-2). In fact, the destruction of the earthly temple was God’s judgment upon the first-century Jewish nation that had rejected Jesus as Messiah (note Mt 23:37-39 and compare Lk 21:20-24). Yet the earthly temple, whose construction and operation God had once commanded, was no longer needed for the ministry of the new covenant. A *spiritual temple* had now replaced it. Rather than being built of literal stones, the new spiritual temple was to be composed of *spiritual stones*. Jesus was the “cornerstone” for this new temple, and those who placed their faith in Him (becoming Christians)

would be the building stones (cf. 1 Cor 3:16-17). For this reason, Peter could announce, “you yourselves, as living stones, are built up as a spiritual house” (1 Pet 2:5) ... a dwelling of God in the Spirit. [The word “house” was often used as a synonym for temple. For example, see Mt 21:13.]. Just as Jesus was described in verse four as a “living stone,” Christians are said to be “living stones.” Spiritually, we have already died and been resurrected with Christ (so Rom 6:3-5), and we have been given the Holy Spirit as a pledge until that time in the future when we are physically resurrected (Eph 1:13-14).

If, then, there is now a spiritual temple, by analogy there must also be a *priesthood* for spiritual service in this temple. Although under the old covenant, only men from the tribe of Levi could serve as priests, under the new covenant all believers are now priests (so Rev 1:6; 5:10). Each believer is part of a “holy priesthood” ... holy because they have been cleansed by the blood of Christ and are called to live holy lives (1 Pet 1:15). In this role, each believer has immediate access to God and needs no other human priest to mediate on his behalf.

QUESTION 7

Which of the following statements is *not true* regarding the temple and its priesthood?

- A. At the time Peter wrote this epistle (1 Peter), the earthly temple in Jerusalem was still standing.
- B. Jesus predicted that Herod’s temple would be destroyed in Matthew 24:1-2.
- C. Under the new covenant in this age, the temple of God is *spiritual*, meaning that it is not made of physical stones but rather of the Christians who are “living stones.”
- D. Under the old covenant, only those of the tribe of Levi could serve as priests. Therefore, in the new spiritual temple of the new covenant, only pastors can be considered priests.

The sacrifices that we as “believer-priests” help administer are not animal sacrifices, but rather “*spiritual sacrifices* that are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Pet 2:5). Related ideas are found elsewhere in the New Testament. Our bodies are to be offered to God as a living and holy sacrifice (Rom 12:1). According to Hebrews 13:15-16, confessing Jesus’ name constitutes a sacrifice of praise, and “to do good and to share what you have” is also a pleasing sacrifice to God.

QUESTION 8

Which of the following can be regarded as a valid spiritual sacrifice by new covenant believers?

[Check all that apply].

- A. When believers have the faith and courage to confess to others that Jesus is our Lord and Savior.
- B. When believers share some of their earthly wealth or possessions to help missionaries or others who are serving in the cause of Christ.
- C. When believers purchase a lamb from the market and sacrifice it as a memorial of what Jesus Christ did for us on the cross.
- D. When believers consciously present themselves to God in an act of surrender to His will.

This idea of a spiritual temple and priesthood might seem novel to the readers, but Peter supports this reality from Scripture by citing Isaiah 28:16:

Look, I lay in Zion a stone, a chosen and priceless cornerstone,
and whoever believes in him will never be put to shame.

The stone that God lays in Zion (Jerusalem) is, of course, the Lord Jesus Christ. As such, He is “a chosen and priceless cornerstone.” A cornerstone is the most important stone of a building project, and all other stones must align with it. The very mention of a “cornerstone” in Isa 28:16 suggests there must be a structure for which it serves as the primary foundation stone, and this structure is the spiritual temple already taught in the previous verse. Peter goes on to say that “whoever believes in him will never be put to shame.” The words “in him” were not in the original Hebrew text, but were included in the Greek Septuagint translation, because the context is clear that the “belief” mentioned here is to be in the



Some of the massive foundation stones of Herod's temple in Jerusalem can weigh as much as 200 tons.

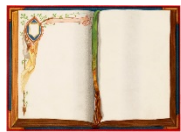
“stone” that God has placed in Zion. God used the prophet Isaiah to declare some 700 years before the birth of Jesus that those people who believed in Messiah Jesus would never be put to shame. This truth would have great consolation for Peter’s readers, many of whom had been persecuted or ostracized for their faith in Christ. They had believed in Jesus, the cornerstone of this new spiritual temple, and thus they had full right to claim the promise that they would never be put to shame. They might face persecution and shame in the present age by hostile people outside Christ, but their future promised to be one of glory and honor as they shared in the privilege of gathering around the throne to worship the Lord throughout all eternity. K. Jobes (149) writes, “Even if Peter’s readers find themselves alienated from their society and suffering a loss of status, Peter assures them that they have become part of a much grander and everlasting community.”

QUESTION 9

Which of the following statements are true regarding Isaiah 28:16? [*Check all that apply*].

- A. The verse predicts the rebuilding of the temple by Zerubbabel about 516/515 B.C.
- B. The verse is a messianic prediction that finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ as the cornerstone of the new spiritual temple.
- C. The verse predicts a blessing for the one who believes in this “stone,” namely, that he will not be put to shame.
- D. The Greek Septuagint translation added the words “in him” to clarify that one’s faith was to be placed in this special stone of God.

QUESTION 10



The consolation of Isaiah 28:16 is that the person who believes in the “cornerstone” that God has laid (that is, the Messiah) will never be put to shame. In many cultures today, Christians do face shameful treatment. If this is true in your culture, what examples can you give? How does the promise of this verse help you to face shameful treatment or ridicule by non-Christians? Write your thoughts in your Life Notebook.

Topic 3: Our Blessing in Contrast to Those Who Did Not Believe (1 Pet 2:7-8)

The prophecy in Isaiah 28:16 described God's cornerstone as "priceless" or "precious." Yet not everyone can see the *precious value* of this "stone," Jesus Christ. Those who do are certainly blessed, because in Christ are found forgiveness of sins and eternal life (not to mention the many temporal blessings that we, as Christians, enjoy in this life). In verses 7-8, Peter drew a contrast between those who did see the value (and believe) and those who chose not to believe. Again, Peter quotes relevant passages from the Old Testament that reinforce this contrast.



READING: Open your Bible and read 1 Peter 2:7-8.

Even though God's "stone" (Jesus) is of precious value, not all can see it. The Old Testament passages that Peter quoted from (Ps 118:22 and Isa 8:14) pertained primarily to the people of Israel, revealing that some would believe in Messiah and some would not. However, the same principle applied to those beyond the borders of Israel, for Gentiles, too, must not reject God's only provision for forgiveness and eternal life.

In 1 Peter 2:7, Peter quoted a verse from Psalm 118:22 that anticipated Messiah's rejection. Since Jesus Himself had quoted this verse during His earthly ministry, Peter was quite correct to interpret the "rejected stone" as Jesus (see Mt 21:42; Mk 12:10; Lk 20:17). The "builders" mentioned in the verse were the Jewish religious leaders who were responsible for the governance and decisions of the nation before God. It was their responsibility to have recognized Jesus as the Messiah and to have instructed the people of Israel to believe in Him. Instead, these leaders were the ones who rejected Him and killed Him. In the face of their rejection of Him, Jesus warned them:

For this reason I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit (Mt 21:43).

Because these Jewish religious leaders were the official representatives of the nation, their decision of rejecting Jesus was also the nation's official response to Jesus. Hence, the oversight of God's kingdom program was now being removed from their care and being given to another "people." This people would be the new community of messianic believers who correctly viewed Jesus as Messiah and who put their faith in Him. This new people would be the church, initially made up of Jewish believers (like Peter and the other apostles) but which would in the course of time come to include Gentiles as well.

QUESTION 11

That Peter interpreted the "stone" of Psalm 118:22 as Jesus was a new and novel idea, for none of the other apostles had ever heard of such an idea before. *True or False?*

QUESTION 12

In the quotation from Psalm 118:22, what is meant by "the builders"?

- A. This refers to the workmen who built the original temple under Solomon
- B. This refers to the workmen who built the second temple under Zerubbabel.
- C. This refers to the kings of Israel who were responsible for *building up* the people in faith.
- D. This refers to the religious leaders of the nation who were responsible for recognizing and submitting to Jesus as the true Messiah.

The same verse that Peter quoted from Psalm 118:22 was a verse that Peter had once boldly declared to the Jewish religious leaders in the early days of the church. When Peter and John were placed on trial before the Jewish Sanhedrin, we are told in Acts 4:8-12,

⁸ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, replied, “Rulers of the people and elders,⁹ if we are being examined today for a good deed done to a sick man—by what means this man was healed—¹⁰ let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, this man stands before you healthy. ¹¹ This Jesus is *the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, that has become the cornerstone*.¹² And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among people by which we must be saved.”

QUESTION 13

Peter had quoted Psalm 118:22 about the “stone which the builders rejected” on a previous occasion when he had been arrested and stood before the Jewish _____.

The predicted rejection by the “builders” (the nation’s religious leaders) was also reflected in Isaiah 8:14, a verse which mentioned “a stumbling-stone and a rock to trip over.” This prophecy in Isaiah was given in a context of the Immanuel prediction (the Hebrew word “Immanuel” means “God is with us”). The nation at that time was being threatened by hostile enemies, but God exhorted the prophet Isaiah not to fear, but to put his trust in “the Lord of hosts.” For Isaiah and those in the nation who chose to trust in the Lord at that time, they would discover that God’s promise of *being with them* (i.e., delivering them) would prove true. He would be a protective *sanctuary* for them. Yet to those in the nation who failed to trust God, He would be a stone that they would stumble over. They would forfeit His protective care.

The Old Testament context of Isaiah 8:14 was stated in more general terms of one’s view toward the Lord God ... either to regard Him as holy and trust in His delivering power, or to turn from Him in unbelief and reap the consequences. Peter saw in this verse from Isaiah 8:14 a higher fulfillment in Jesus Christ. Jesus could be a protective sanctuary for those who put their trust in Him, or He would be a stone they would stumble over if they chose not to believe.

In a way similar to that in Isaiah’s day, many of Peter’s Jewish kinsmen failed to put their faith in the Lord Jesus as Messiah. In the latter part of 1 Peter 2:8, Peter elaborates on the significance of their “stumbling” over Jesus: “they stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.” To be disobedient to the word means they had consciously rejected the gospel message (cf. Rom 10:21; 11:31; 15:31). Yet why would Peter say they were destined to stumble in this way? This is a great mystery of the Bible, but it goes back to their historic disobedience and judgment from God in Isaiah’s day. Because of their continued disobedience to God’s covenant over hundreds of years, their hearts were hardened, and God brought a spiritual blindness upon them (Isa 6:9-10; John 12:37-41; Rom 11:7-10).

QUESTION 14

Which of the following statements are true regarding the verse from Isaiah 8:14? *Select all that apply*

- A. This verse has *a fulfillment* in Isaiah’s own day in which the nation was faced with a choice to either put their faith in the Lord God to protect them or to turn away in unbelief.
- B. Peter misunderstood the interpretation of Isaiah 8:14, since it was only for Isaiah’s own time.
- C. Ultimately, the “stumbling-stone” of Isaiah 8:14 refers to Jesus Christ.
- D. The “stumbling” that Israel would experience led to the nation’s spiritual blindness, which helps explain their failure to recognize Jesus as their Messiah.

The principle of being disobedient to the word (the gospel message) applies to all people. Rejection of Jesus and the gospel offer results in eternal consequences. Not all people will believe, but those who do are the ones that will be blessed for all eternity.

QUESTION 15



Whenever we are tempted to feel sorry for ourselves because we are insulted or mistreated by non-Christians around us, we must not forget that we who believe in Jesus are the ones who are blessed. An eternity separated from God's presence awaits those who reject the gospel. Take a moment to write down the names of three non-Christians that you hope will accept Jesus Christ as their Savior. Write out a prayer for them in your Life Notebook, and then take a few moments right now to pray for them.

Topic 4: Our New Privilege as the New People of God (1 Pet 2:9-10)

Since most of the Jewish nation rejected Jesus as Messiah at the time of His first coming, the privileges they enjoyed as "the people of God" had now become the rightful possession of those individuals who put their faith in Jesus. In these two verses, Peter took several descriptions and verses from the Old Testament that originally pertained to Israel as a nation and showed how they were now true of all Christians, whether of Jewish or Gentile background.



READING: Open your Bible and read 1 Peter 2:9-10.

Peter took four descriptions of God's people originally uttered to ethnic Israel and stated that they were now true of all Christians. All four are drawn from the Old Testament:

1. A Chosen Race - an allusion to Isaiah 43:20-21 (cf. Deut 14:2)
2. A Royal Priesthood - Exodus 19:6
3. A Holy Nation - Exodus 19:6
4. A People of His Own - an allusion to Exodus 19:5 (cf. Deut 7:6; 14:2; 26:18; Ps 135:4)

Under the old covenant, Israel was chosen as a special nation through whom God would carry out a special work in the world. Israel would be a nation of priests, meaning that they were to be a light to the other nations of the world ... revealing whom the true God was and what His will was. Israel was offered this special status in Exodus 19:5-6 on the condition that they agreed to enter into a covenant with God at Mount Sinai. Through this nation, God would work out His plan of salvation, eventually bringing the Messiah into the world who would fulfill the Abrahamic promise of blessing. Israel did agree to keep God's covenant (the Mosaic covenant).

QUESTION 16

The people of Israel became the covenant "people of God" after they came out of Egypt and came to Mount Sinai by agreeing to keep the terms of the Mosaic covenant. *True or False?*

Yet, throughout most of their history, Israel was disobedient to the Mosaic covenant and rebelled against God. The climax of this was the nation's rejection of Jesus as Messiah, which resulted in God changing how He would carry out His salvation history. "His people" would now be those of the church. Although

individually they would be from different nations, from God's perspective they were "a holy nation" ... "a chosen race" ... "a kingdom of priests" ... and "a people for God's own possession." This does not mean, however, that God was dismissing Israel from His plans (as though the church has replaced Israel). Romans 11 and other passages make it clear that there is still a place for ethnic Israel in the plan of God (but only for those who believe). Eventually, God will restore them to participate in the fulfillment of His kingdom program. But in the meantime, He is using the church to represent and serve Him on earth.

In the second half of 1 Peter 2:9, Peter declares the fundamental purpose of the church on earth: "so that you may proclaim the virtues of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." Before coming to faith in Christ, each of us lived in spiritual darkness, being held captive by Satan to do his will (Eph 2:1-3). By God's grace, we were delivered from that realm and became citizens of the kingdom of God. Colossians 1:13 instructs us, "He delivered us from the power of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of the Son he loves." Now we have a mission to tell others in the world of the love and grace of God, and how they can also be redeemed, forgiven and set free.

QUESTION 17

Which of the following statements correctly represents the purpose and mission of the church as stated in 1 Peter 2:9?

- A. To baptize as many people as possible.
- B. To proclaim to a lost world the excellence and greatness of God, and how lost men and women can be delivered from Satan's realm of darkness.
- C. To construct large church buildings that reflect that God is a big God.
- D. To construct hospitals for the care of those who are suffering and in pain.

In verse 10, Peter draws on verses from Hosea 1:10 and 2:23 that are now applied to those in the church. In their original context in Hosea, these verses pertained to God's dealings with Israel. Because of their covenant unfaithfulness, God—for a time—declared the sons of Israel "not My people" (Hos 1:9). They were temporarily removed from covenant blessing and set aside, as it were. Yet in the future, they will be restored once again to being God's "people" (Hos 1:10; 2:23). The point of the material in Hosea 1–2 was to depict their reversal of covenant status. Their renewal to the status as God's people would be accomplished through the new covenant. But just as God could accomplish this reversal of covenant status with Israel, so He could do so with Gentiles. Through faith in Jesus Christ, the status of Gentiles changed from not being God's covenant people to that of being His covenant people ... that is, God's people under the new covenant. As such, they were the recipients of God's mercy (cf. Rom 11:30-32).

QUESTION 18

Match the verse reference in the left column with the correct statement in the right column:

<i>Verse Reference</i>	<i>Correlating Statements</i>
Exodus 19:5-6	God can take those who are “not God’s people” and make them “the people of God”
Ephesians 2:1-3	Israel was called to be a “holy nation” and a “kingdom of priests”
Colossians 1:13	Before coming to faith in Christ, people are spiritually dead and under the wrath of God
Hosea 1:10	For those who believe the gospel, Jesus delivers them from the realm of darkness

QUESTION 19

Hosea 1:10 and 2:23 teaches that God can reverse the covenant status of Jewish people, but Peter recognized that this same principle can be applied to Gentiles by their entering into the new covenant. *True or False?*

The great news for Peter’s audience was that no matter what troubles and persecution had come their way (or would come), they could take consolation in knowing they were special in God’s eyes. Because of their faith in Christ, they were now “the people of God.”

QUESTION 20



Now that you have come to faith in Christ, what privilege or benefit do you see in being part of “the people of God”? Write your answers in your Life Notebook.

Lesson 5 Self Check

QUESTION 1

Peter highlighted the metaphor of a “stone” in 1 Peter 2:4-8, because it was commonly used in the Old Testament to represent what?

- A. The kingdom of God as mighty as a stone mountain.
- B. The mighty power of God as a stone which cannot be moved.
- C. Mount Zion as the center of God’s rule.
- D. The promised Messiah as a choice but rejected cornerstone.

QUESTION 2

The reason Peter spoke of Messiah Jesus not merely as a “stone” but as a “living stone,” was because He was destined to rule from Mount Zion, making all things new and alive. *True or False?*

QUESTION 3

Which of the following statements is *true* regarding the temple and its priesthood?

- A. At the time Peter wrote this epistle (1 Peter), the earthly temple in Jerusalem was no longer standing.
- B. Jesus predicted that Herod’s temple would be destroyed in Matthew 28:19-20.
- C. Under the new covenant in this age, the temple of God is *spiritual*, meaning that it is not made of physical stones but rather of the Christians who are “living stones.”
- D. Under the old covenant, only those of the tribe of Levi could serve as priests. Therefore, in the new spiritual temple of the new covenant, only pastors can be considered priests.

QUESTION 4

An example of a “spiritual sacrifice” under the new covenant that one can offer would be when believers have the faith and courage to confess to others that Jesus is their Lord and Savior. *True or False?*

QUESTION 5

Which of the following statements are true regarding the “precious cornerstone” of Isaiah 28:16 that God promised to lay in Zion? [*Check all that apply*].

- A. The verse predicts the rebuilding of the temple by Zerubbabel about 516/515 B.C.
- B. The verse is a messianic prediction that finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ as the cornerstone of the new spiritual temple.
- C. The verse predicts a blessing for the one who believes in this “stone,” namely, that he will not be put to shame.
- D. The Greek Septuagint translation added the words “in him” to clarify that one’s faith was to be placed in this special stone of God.

QUESTION 6

That Peter interpreted the “stone” of Psalm 118:22 as Jesus was not an interpretation that originated with him, since Jesus Himself had declared this truth in His dialogue with the Jewish religious leaders. *True or False?*

QUESTION 7

In the quotation from Psalm 118:22, what is meant by “the builders”?

- A. This refers to the workmen who built the original temple under Solomon.
- B. This refers to the religious leaders of the nation who were responsible for recognizing and submitting to Jesus as the true Messiah.
- C. This refers to the kings of Israel who were responsible for *building up* the people in faith.
- D. This refers to the workmen who built the second temple under Zerubbabel.

QUESTION 8

Regarding the quotation from Psalm 118:22 about the “stone which the builders rejected,” Peter had quoted this verse on a previous occasion when he stood before the nation of Israel on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2 and proclaimed that Jesus was the true Messiah. *True or False?*

QUESTION 9

The significance of Exodus 19:5-6 at Mount Sinai is that the people of Israel became the covenant “people of God”—a “holy nation”—by agreeing to keep the terms of the Mosaic covenant. *True or False?*

QUESTION 10

Based on Hosea 1:10 and 2:23, if God could take some of the Jewish people whom He regarded as “not My people” and change their covenant status to “My people,” then by extension He could do the same thing for Gentile people. *True or False?*

Lesson 5 Answers to Questions

QUESTION 1: True

QUESTION 2: False

QUESTION 3

C. The promised Messiah as a choice but rejected cornerstone.

QUESTION 4

B. Because this serves to remind us that Christ was resurrected and is alive forevermore.

QUESTION 5: *Your answer.*

QUESTION 6: True

QUESTION 7: [The following is the answer that is *not true*].

D. Under the old covenant, only those of the tribe of Levi could serve as priests. Therefore, in the new spiritual temple of the new covenant, only pastors can be considered priests.

QUESTION 8: Correct answers are A, B, and D (C is not correct).

A. When believers have the faith and courage to confess to others that Jesus is our Lord and Savior.

B. When believers share some of their earthly wealth or possessions to help missionaries or others who are serving in the cause of Christ.

D. When believers consciously present themselves to God in an act of surrender to His will.

QUESTION 9: Correct answers are B, C, and D.

B. The verse is a messianic prediction that finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ as the cornerstone of the new spiritual temple.

C. The verse predicts a blessing for the one who believes in this “stone,” namely, that he will not be put to shame.

D. The Greek Septuagint translation added the words “in him” to clarify that one’s faith was to be placed in this special stone of God.

QUESTION 10: *Your answer.*

QUESTION 11: False

QUESTION 12

D. This refers to the religious leaders of the nation who were responsible for recognizing and submitting to Jesus as the true Messiah.

QUESTION 13: Sanhedrin.

Alternative answers: “High Priest” or (Jewish) Council.

QUESTION 14: Correct answers are A, C, and D (B is not correct).

A. This verse has *a fulfillment* in Isaiah’s own day in which the nation was faced with a choice to either put their faith in the Lord God to protect them or to turn away in unbelief.

C. Ultimately, the “stumbling-stone” of Isaiah 8:14 refers to Jesus Christ.

D. The “stumbling” that Israel would experience led to the nation’s spiritual blindness, which helps explain their failure to recognize Jesus as their Messiah.

QUESTION 15: *Your answer.*

QUESTION 16: True

QUESTION 17

D. To proclaim to a lost world the excellence and greatness of God, and how lost men and women can be delivered from Satan’s realm of darkness.

QUESTION 18

<i>Verse Reference</i>	<i>Correlating Statements</i>
Exodus 19:5-6	Israel was called to be a “holy nation” and a “kingdom of priests”
Ephesians 2:1-3	Before coming to faith in Christ, people are spiritually dead and under the wrath of God
Colossians 1:13	For those who believe the gospel, Jesus delivers them from the realm of darkness
Hosea 1:10	God can take those who are “not God’s people” and make them “the people of God”

QUESTION 19: True**QUESTION 20:** *Your answer.*

Lesson 5 Self Check Answers

QUESTION 1

D. The promised Messiah as a choice but rejected cornerstone.

QUESTION 2 False

QUESTION 3

C. Under the new covenant in this age, the temple of God is *spiritual*, meaning that it is not made of physical stones but rather of the Christians who are “living stones.”

QUESTION 4 True

QUESTION 5: Answers B, C, and D are all correct.

B. The verse is a messianic prediction that finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ as the cornerstone of the new spiritual temple.

C. The verse predicts a blessing for the one who believes in this “stone,” namely, that he will not be put to shame.

D. The Greek Septuagint translation added the words “in him” to clarify that one’s faith was to be placed in this special stone of God

QUESTION 6: True

QUESTION 7

B. This refers to the religious leaders of the nation who were responsible for recognizing and submitting to Jesus as the true Messiah.

QUESTION 8: False

QUESTION 9: True

QUESTION 10: True

Unit 2 Exam: 1 Peter

QUESTION 1

When Peter says, “set your hope completely on the grace that will be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed,” he is talking about the grace believers will experience at the time of Jesus’ second coming. *True or False?*

QUESTION 2

When Peter said, “do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance,” what did he mean by the words “your ignorance”?

- A. Peter knew that his readers were not very educated but were ignorant people.
- B. Peter was referring to their previous life before knowing Christ when they were spiritually ignorant.
- C. Peter was making a point that his readers did not know very much about the second coming.
- D. Peter told them they were like “children” and therefore ignorant of spiritual truths.

QUESTION 3

When Peter said, “do not comply with the evil urges you used to follow,” the word translated “comply with” (or “be conformed to”) was also used in Romans 12:2, which suggests that if we are to resist the evil desires we once practiced, we need to experience a *renewed mind* as a result of studying and applying God’s Word to our lives. *True or False?*

QUESTION 4

In which chapter of the New Testament would you be likely to find the teaching that when God disciplines a believer, it is ultimately for his good . . . helping him to grow in holiness.

- A. Philippians 2
- B. Revelation 3
- C. John 3
- D. Hebrews 12

QUESTION 5

If a Christian today wants to obey the command, “You shall be holy, because I am holy,” the best way to do this would be to try to keep all the commands of the Mosaic Law of the Old Testament. *True or False?*

QUESTION 6

According to the New Testament, the judgment seat of Christ is for both Christians and non-Christians. *True or False?*

QUESTION 7

In view of the New Testament teaching about the “judgment seat of Christ,” the ambition of every Christian ought to be to please the Lord, because one day we will all have to appear before Him to be evaluated and recompensed. *True or False?*

QUESTION 8

Which of the following words means “to set someone free” as a result of the payment of a ransom price?

- A. Justify
- B. Redeem
- C. Save
- D. Sanctify

QUESTION 9

In view of Jesus’ instruction of the “new commandment” in John 13, circle all the following that are true:

- A. The new commandment that Jesus commanded His disciples was to baptize new believers.
- B. The disciples were commanded to love one another, because Jesus had first loved them.
- C. The command to love one another only applies to those with whom we are in complete doctrinal agreement with.
- D. When other people saw the disciples practicing love for one another, this would lead them to believe that they were one of Jesus’ disciples.

QUESTION 10

In the passage that Peter quoted from Isa 40:6-8, “all flesh” was said to be like grass to make a contrast with what?

- A. Flowers that retain their beauty forever.
- B. The word of the Lord that endures forever.
- C. The eternality of Jesus Christ who was raised from the grave.
- D. The power of the Holy Spirit to enable Christians to live holy lives.

QUESTION 11

When a Christian says something about another believer that hurts that person’s reputation, he is guilty of the sin of *hypocrisy*. *True or False?*

QUESTION 12

The point that Peter was making in 1 Peter 2:2 was that Christians ought to long for the “pure, spiritual milk” of God’s Word in a similar way to how a newborn infant longs for milk. *True or False?*

QUESTION 13

Peter highlighted the metaphor of a “stone” in 1 Peter 2:4-8, because it was commonly used in the Old Testament to represent what?

- A. The kingdom of God as mighty as a stone mountain.
- B. The mighty power of God as a stone which cannot be moved.
- C. Mount Zion as the center of God’s rule.
- D. The promised Messiah as a choice but rejected cornerstone.

QUESTION 14

The words “come to him, a living stone” in 1 Peter 2:4 should be understood to mean that Christians should come to Jesus in prayer each day, as this will make them feel alive for God and thankful for God’s blessings. *True or False?*

QUESTION 15

The reason Peter spoke of Messiah Jesus not merely as a “stone” but as a “living stone,” was because He was destined to rule from Mount Zion, making all things new and alive. *True or False?*

QUESTION 16

When Peter referred to Jesus as a “living stone,” he also said that He was “rejected by men but chosen and priceless in God’s sight.” If some of Peter’s readers felt rejected by society, this ought to have helped them by identifying with the rejected Christ. *True or False?*

QUESTION 17

Which of the following statements is *true* regarding the temple and its priesthood?

- A. At the time Peter wrote this epistle (1 Peter), the earthly temple in Jerusalem was no longer standing.
- B. Jesus predicted that Herod’s temple would be destroyed in Matthew 28:19-20.
- C. Under the new covenant in this age, the temple of God is *spiritual*, meaning that it is not made of physical stones but rather of the Christians who are “living stones.”
- D. Under the old covenant, only those of the tribe of Levi could serve as priests. Therefore, in the new spiritual temple of the new covenant, only pastors can be considered priests.

QUESTION 18

An example of a “spiritual sacrifice” under the new covenant that one can offer would be when believers have the faith and courage to confess to others that Jesus is their Lord and Savior. *True or False?*

QUESTION 19

Which of the following statements are true regarding the “precious cornerstone” of Isaiah 28:16 that God promised to lay in Zion? [*Check all that apply*].

- A. The verse predicts the rebuilding of the temple by Zerubbabel about 516/515 B.C.
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- C. The verse predicts a blessing for the one who believes in this “stone,” namely, that he will not be put to shame.
- D. The Greek Septuagint translation added the words “in him” to clarify that one’s faith was to be placed in this special stone of God.

QUESTION 20

That Peter interpreted the “stone” of Psalm 118:22 as Jesus was not an interpretation originating with him, since Jesus Himself had stated this truth in His dialogue with the Jewish religious leaders. *True or False?*

QUESTION 21

In the quotation from Psalm 118:22, what is meant by “the builders”?

- A. This refers to the workmen who built the original temple under Solomon
- B. This refers to the religious leaders of the nation who were responsible for recognizing and submitting to Jesus as the true Messiah.
- C. This refers to the kings of Israel who were responsible for *building up* the people in faith.
- D. This refers to the workmen who built the second temple under Zerubbabel.

QUESTION 22

Regarding the quotation from Psalm 118:22 about the “stone which the builders rejected,” Peter had quoted this verse on a previous occasion when he stood before the nation of Israel on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2 and proclaimed that Jesus was the true Messiah. *True or False?*

QUESTION 23

The significance of Exodus 19:5-6 at Mount Sinai is that the people of Israel became the covenant “people of God”—a “holy nation”—by agreeing to keep the terms of the Mosaic covenant. *True or False?*

QUESTION 24

The concept of “a royal priesthood” is related to Israel’s calling in Exodus 19:5-6 of being a “kingdom of priests.” *True or False?*

QUESTION 25

Based on Hosea 1:10 and 2:23, if God could take some of the Jewish people whom He regarded as “not My people” and change their covenant status to “My people,” then by extension He could do the same thing for Gentile people. *True or False?*

Unit 3: Reminders and Counsel for Christians who Suffer Innocently (1 Pet 2:11—4:6)

Introduction

The theme of suffering and persecution continues to be developed in unit three. In the previous unit (lessons 4-5), believers were encouraged to live faithfully in the face of suffering. In this unit (lessons 6-9), suffering is addressed from a slightly different perspective. If believers suffer as Christians, it should be for the right reasons. Peter reminds his readers that any wrongdoing on their part that brings suffering is not commendable. It is when they suffer in doing what is right and patiently endure it that they find favor with God. Therefore, they must strive to keep their behavior excellent as they live out their faith in the eyes of a world that is hostile to Christianity. Peter then gives them several practical examples of how this should work in real life, both in public and in the home. He crowns his exhortations by holding up Jesus Christ as the supreme example of one who suffered innocently while on earth and yet who went on to experience triumph following His suffering. Christians, then, are called upon to follow His example.

Unit Outline

Lesson 6: Christian Responsibilities that May Incur Conflict and Suffering: Part 1 (1 Peter 2:11-20)

Lesson 7: Christian Responsibilities that May Incur Conflict and Suffering: Part 2 (1 Peter 2:21-3:12)

Lesson 8: Suffering Innocently: Counsel for Christians and Reflections on Christ's Sufferings (1 Peter 2:21-3:22)

Lesson 9: Faithfully Following Christ to Face a World Hostile to Christians (1 Peter 4:1-6)

Unit Objectives

By the end of this unit, you will be able to do the following:

- Understand the responsibilities that Christians have to human governments under whose authority they must live out their faith.
- Describe how a Christian is to behave regarding the one whom he works for.
- Recognize that the Christian's responsibility of submission is based on the example of Christ Himself.
- Understand God's calling for how wives and husbands should relate to one another, even when one of them might be married to an unbeliever.
- Describe the proper Christian response to those who might treat them with evil or insults.
- Explain what is meant by Christ making proclamation to the spirits now in prison (1 Pet 3:19) and the preaching of the gospel to "those who are dead" (1 Pet 4:6).

Lesson Six: Christian Responsibilities that May Incur Conflict and Suffering:

Part 1 (1 Peter 2:11-20)

Lesson Introduction

In 1 Peter 2:4-10, Peter comforted his readers with the truth that they were now “the people of God,” analogous in several ways to Israel under the old covenant. Since Israel as a nation had rejected Jesus as Messiah, God’s plan in this age was to work through the church, a new people comprised of both Jews and Gentiles. This new people of God were also to have a temple ministry. Yet in this case, the temple was a spiritual one composed of living stones, that is, those who had placed their faith in the Lord Jesus. In addition, all new covenant believers were now regarded as priests, with the responsibility of offering up spiritual sacrifices to God. Though in the eyes of non-Christians they might experience rejection, in the sight of God they enjoyed the highest privilege as those who had been called out of darkness to become “the people of God.”

Beginning with 1 Peter 2:11, we come to a new section of the epistle. Having highlighted their identity and privilege in 1 Peter 2:4-10, Peter now transitions from words of encouragement to a challenge of living faithfully for God in the sight of unbelievers. In the next major section, 1 Peter 2:11–3:12, Peter confronts his Christian readers with their responsibility for ethical behavior while still living in the world. Their testimony before non-Christians is important, even though their faith may lead them at times into conflict and suffering with others.

Lesson Outline

- Topic 1: The Charge to Keep our Behavior Excellent Before the Gentile World (1 Pet 2:11-12)
- Topic 2: Our Responsibility for Submission to Civil Government (1 Pet 2:13-17)
- Topic 3: The Responsibility for Submission by Slaves, even to Masters Who Are Unjust and Harsh (1 Pet 2:18-20)

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- Understand the importance of abstaining from fleshly lusts in order to maintain a good testimony before unbelievers.
- Discern when Christians have a responsibility to obey governing authorities and when they need not do so.
- Explain how the grace of God works in a Christian’s life when he (or she) patiently endures harsh or unjust suffering.

Topic 1: The Charge to Keep our Behavior Excellent Before the Gentile World (1 Pet 2:11-12)

1 Peter 2:11-12 is the introduction to a new section of Peter’s epistle, namely, 1 Peter 2:11–3:12. Each of the six paragraphs that make up this section stress the kind of godly behavior that should characterize the

lives of believers. As such, this builds on the admonition that Peter had given earlier in his epistle, “become holy yourselves in all of your conduct” (1 Pet 1:15).



READING: Open your Bible and read 1 Peter 2:11-12.

In addressing his readers, Peter referred to them as “dear friends” (or “beloved”), stressing the warm affection he felt for them. Then, describing them as “foreigners and exiles,” he reminded them that their true citizenship was not to be found in an earthly country but in heaven. The word translated “exile” refers to a person who stays temporarily in a foreign place, that is, as a sojourner. The Greek terms translated “foreigners and exiles” are the very same terms that were used in the Greek Septuagint translation of Genesis 23:4, when Abraham described himself to his Hittite neighbors as he sought to purchase a burial site: “I am a stranger and a sojourner among you” (NASB). Here was Abraham, a man possessing the promises of God (including the inheritance of the land of Canaan) who lived as a sojourner in it. That is why the author of Hebrews could say of him, “By faith he lived as a foreigner in the promised land as though it were a foreign country” (Heb 11:9). Perhaps Peter had Abraham in mind as he wrote these words to his readers. Like Abraham, the readers were living in a place that was not their true home. Something better awaited them.

QUESTION 1

Abraham may have travelled to Egypt, but the Bible never speaks of him being a “stranger and sojourner” in a foreign land. *True or False?*

What was important for Peter’s readers as they lived out their lives on this earth was to do so in a godly way. This would not be easy because of the battle within, that is, with the “flesh” or sinful nature that they still possessed, even after having become Christians. Because of this sinful nature, they would experience “fleshly desires that do battle against the soul.” The expression “fleshly desires” could refer to sexual lusts but need not be limited to such desires. The same term “fleshly” (Gk *sarkikos*) was used in 1 Corinthians 3:3 for jealousy and strife. In any case, such fleshly desires need not rule in their life. Because they now possessed the Holy Spirit within, they did have the power to “keep away from” (or abstain from) such desires. Peter did not go into an explanation as to how they could be victorious; his purpose at this point was to simply stress the responsibility they had, as Christians, to keep the flesh (sinful nature) in check. [For help in understanding how victory over the flesh is achieved, you may wish to see Gal 5:13-23 and Rom 8:1-13]. The important thing to understand at this point is that keeping control over one’s sinful desires arising from the flesh is not something that one can do in his or her own human strength. Only as one *walks in the Spirit* can one do this!

QUESTION 2

Which of the following might be considered a “fleshly desire” as mentioned in 1 Peter 2:11?

- A. Impure sexual desires
- B. Hunger for food
- C. Jealousy
- D. Strife between fellow Christians

QUESTION 3

Although Peter gave no detailed instruction for how a Christian was to abstain from fleshly desires, we know from other passages in the New Testament that one must have the help of the Holy Spirit to be able to successfully live like this. *True or False?*

In verse 12, Peter reminds his readers to “maintain good conduct among the non-Christians.” The NASB translation reads, “Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles,” but the word Gentiles was often used as an expression for non-Christian Gentiles rather than all Gentiles. As Christians excelled in “good conduct,” non-Christians would not be able to accuse them of being *ungodly*. Non-Christians might malign them as “wrongdoers” because they were different and rejected the philosophy of the world, including the Greco-Roman practice of idolatry. K. Jobes writes (171),

First-century Greco-Roman society marginalized Christians simply because they were known to be different. The Roman writer Suetonius considered Christianity to be a mischievous superstition (*Nero* 16). Tacitus similarly described Christianity as a dangerous superstition and Christians as a race detested for their evil practices (*Annals* 44).

The challenge for Christians was not to retaliate in either attitude or action, but to do good. Despite the bias that non-Christians might have had toward Christians, they ought to acknowledge that their faith in Christ led indeed to self-control over their passions and thus an upright and respectful way of life.

QUESTION 4

What kind of attitudes were first-century non-Christians known to have had toward Christians?

- A. They resented Christians who did not participate in the worship of Greco-Roman gods and idols.
- B. They considered Christians to be naïve, followers of a “mischievous superstition.”
- C. They hoped that Christians would become political rulers in the empire.
- D. They felt badly that Christians had been misunderstood.

The final part of verse 12 expresses the hope that they (the non-Christians) “may see your good deeds and glorify God when he appears.” Literally, the text says, “in the day of visitation.” The NET Bible assumes (correctly) that “the day of visitation” is a reference to the return of Jesus Christ, that is, the second coming. [A similar phrase had been used of Christ’s incarnation in Luke 19:44]. Scholars, however, debate how the non-Christians in view will glorify God at the time of Christ’s return. Most understand that the “day of visitation” implies God’s coming day of judgment (cf. Isa 10:3). For those non-Christians who persist in their rejection of Christ, the “day of visitation” will mean judgment and condemnation. Yet, God will be glorified in the case of those unbelievers who—having observed the good deeds of Christians whom they had at one time slandered—turned in faith to Christ to be “saved.” The lesson from this is that the testimony of a godly life before unbelievers is important, realizing that some non-Christians will be impacted by such an example and be led to faith in Christ.

QUESTION 5



It is certainly not easy to always live an exemplary life before non-Christians. When people are hateful to us or mock our faith, the temptation is to detest them and not truly care about them. Yet the life we live before them might be one of the things that the Lord uses to bring them into a saving relationship with Christ. In your Life Notebook, write down the name of one non-Christian that you have difficulty loving. In addition to being a “living witness” to them, what practical good deed could you do to be a blessing to this person? Write this down, and then plan a time to do this.

Topic 2: Our Responsibility for Submission to Civil Government (1 Pet 2:13-17)

The next paragraph of the epistle, 1 Peter 2:13-17, treats the subject of the Christian's responsibility toward civil government, and in particular to those who hold positions of authority in the government. Peter lays down the general principle that Christians have a responsibility of submission to those in positions of authority.



READING: Open your Bible and read 1 Peter 2:13-17.

Peter began this unit by stating “Be subject to every human institution for the Lord’s sake.” This exhortation is based on the fundamental truth that God is the sovereign ruler over all mankind, and all human rulers are subject to His authority. He has established human government and controls those who hold positions of authority. Several verses confirm this truth:

“The LORD owns the earth and all it contains, the world and all who live in it” (Ps 24:1).

“For the LORD is king and rules over the nations” (Ps 22:28).

“He rules by his power forever; he watches the nations” (Ps 66:7).

Furthermore, because the Lord is absolutely sovereign, He exercises control over the nations. No one can thwart His will or His purposes, and He will frustrate any attempt to circumvent His will.

“The LORD frustrates the decisions of the nations; he nullifies the plans of the peoples.”

The Lord’s decisions stand forever; his plans abide throughout the ages” (Ps 33:10-11).

In His role as supreme commander, the Lord even decides who will be allowed to hold positions of authority in earthly kingdoms. When He chooses to do so, He will also remove rulers from their positions of power.

“The Most High has authority over human kingdoms, and he bestows them on whomever he wishes” (Dan 4:17).

“He changes times and seasons, deposing some kings and establishing others” (Dan 2:21).

QUESTION 6

Match the verse reference in the left column with the correct statement in the right column:

<i>Verse Reference</i>	<i>Correlating Verse</i>
Psalm 22:28	Human rulers only have their authority to govern because God has chosen to put them in their place of ruling
Psalm 33:10-11	The Lord is the true king who rules over the nations on earth.
Daniel 2:21	If an earthly ruler attempts to go against the plans of God, the Lord will frustrate his decisions and efforts.
Daniel 4:17	If the Lord chooses to depose an earthly king, He can.

Subjection to human government is “for the Lord’s sake.” This is done in recognition that the Lord is the ultimate ruler and that He has ordained the institution of human government. Christians, by being subject to earthly rulers, are thereby acknowledging and showing respect for what God has ordained. The Apostle Paul taught the same truth in Romans 13:1-7:

¹ Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except by God's appointment, and the authorities that exist have been instituted by God. ² So the person who resists such authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will incur judgment ³ (for rulers cause no fear for good conduct but for bad). Do you desire not to fear authority? Do good and you will receive its commendation, ⁴ for it is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be in fear, for it does not bear the sword in vain. It is God's servant to administer retribution on the wrongdoer. ⁵ Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of the wrath of the authorities but also because of your conscience.⁶ For this reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants devoted to governing.⁷ Pay everyone what is owed: taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due.

QUESTION 7

According to Romans 13:1-7, God has given the right to human governing authorities to inflict punishment on people in society who are guilty of wrongdoing. *True or False?*

The call for submission applies not only to a "king" (the ultimate ruler of a given kingdom or empire) but also to "governors," that is, officials at various levels commissioned by the "king" and responsible for carrying out official government business. Ideally, all kings and lesser officials are responsible to God to govern righteously (though obviously all do not do so). Hence, Peter says that their responsibility is "to punish wrongdoers and praise those who do good" (1 Pet 2:14). Human governments are ordained by God and entrusted with the responsibility to restrain sin and maintain an orderly society.

The more that any government aligns its policies and adheres to the will of God, the more it can expect to be blessed by God (Prov 14:34). Yet, whether rulers govern righteously or not, Christians of their domain have the responsibility—in general—to obey them as law-abiding citizens. One intention of this principle is that of maintaining a good testimony: "God wants you to silence the ignorance of foolish people by doing good" (1 Pet 2:15). Peter probably means by this that the doing of good amid a pagan society will help to silence the slander about Christianity. This would include *good behavior* as well as *good deeds*.

In stating this principle of submission, Peter was not suggesting that Christians should obey rulers to the extent that they would have to disobey God. Other Scripture clarifies that obedience to God comes before obedience to the government that one lives under. Years earlier, when Peter and John were brought before the Jewish Sanhedrin and ordered not to speak any longer in the name of Jesus, they replied, "Whether it is right before God to obey you rather than God, you decide, for it is impossible for us not to speak about what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:18-19). Subsequently, Peter and the apostles told the same authorities, "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). So, the admonition in 1 Peter 2:13-17 is aimed at those commands or laws that do not violate the clearly revealed will of God, or what we might call "ordinary situations." This would apply, for example, to government regulations about automobiles on the road, housing regulations, or policies of taxation.

QUESTION 8

Which of the following verses could be used to support the case that Christians may not always have to obey the commands and laws of those who are their rulers?

- A. Acts 4:18-19
- B. Romans 13:1-2
- C. 1 Peter 2:15
- D. Acts 5:29

Christian submission to government, however, does not mean *Christian slavery*. By virtue of their salvation in Christ, Christians were now “free men.” Peter exhorted his readers, “Live as free people, not using your freedom as a pretext for evil, but as God’s slaves” (1 Pet 2:16). As a result of being a new creation in Christ, Christians were now “free.” But this freedom was one of being set free from the bondage of sin. Christians also had become part of a higher kingdom, in that their citizenship was now in heaven (Phil 3:20). Yet this new identity and citizenship was not to be misused, as though they had no obligation to the kingdom or nation in which they resided on earth. Since they had been bought with a price, the blood of Christ (1 Cor 6:20), they were now God’s slaves. If His will is for Christians to obey human government and kings, then they are obligated to do so.

QUESTION 9

Since Christians have been made “free people” as a result of their faith in Christ, this means they no longer have an obligation to obey the rulers and authorities of the countries in which they live. *True or False?*

Peter certainly understood that this principle of submission to civil authority would not always be easy to put into practice. There will sometimes be those human rulers and governments that will be very oppressive, especially against God’s own children. Where Christians can do so and where there is no conflict with God’s commands, Christians are expected to be obedient to the government under which they reside. The hope is that such behavior will not only be a testimony to their society (that Christianity is good and does not foster political rebellion) but that Christians might be looked upon with favor, treated decently, and allowed to peacefully co-exist with the society at large. If persecution against Christians should nevertheless arise, then the Christian’s responsibility is to trust that God is in control, to pray, and to live as faithfully as one can in the situation. This does not mean that one is forbidden from taking any action to change the situation. There is certainly a place for speaking out in an appropriate manner, but resorting to violence is not a legitimate Christian option.

Peter concluded this paragraph by exhorting his readers, “Honor all people, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the king” (1 Pet 2:17). This statement referred to the various contexts in which a Christian lived. Each type of relationship was to be given its due. The king (or emperor) was to be given honor, but God was to be feared. Christ taught, “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Instead fear the one who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Mt 10:28).

QUESTION 10



this?

In view of the country in which you live, have there been instances when it was difficult for you as a Christian to submit to the ruling authorities? Describe the situation in your Life Notebook, and then explain how you think the principles in 1 Peter 2:13-17 apply to this situation. How did you handle the situation, and what has God taught you through

Topic 3: The Responsibility for Submission by Slaves, even to Masters Who Are Unjust and Harsh (1 Pet 2:18-20)

Having addressed the responsibility that Christians had to their government and those who ruled over them, Peter next turned to address the topic of slaves. His concern was not to comment on the rightness or wrongness of slavery (which was prevalent in the Greco-Roman world), but to give some important instruction to those slaves who might be serving unjust or harsh masters. Peter’s primary concern was that

they respond in a way that reflected the character of Christ Himself and thereby prove to be good witnesses to those outside the faith.



READING: Open your Bible and read 1 Peter 2:18-20.

The issue of slavery may seem a bit archaic to most of today's Bible students, but it was an extremely relevant topic in Peter's day for people throughout the Greco-Roman world and even in those cultures beyond the borders of the Roman Empire. Many people were slaves or servants, and many others either had them or frequently encountered them. K. Jobes (186) has pointed out, "It is estimated that almost one-quarter of the empire's population were slaves, so their role was significant to socioeconomic stability." Most every well-to-do Roman family had slaves, some even in great numbers. Undoubtedly, many of those to whom Peter wrote fell into the category of slaves or servants, so it was entirely appropriate that Peter offer godly advice for them.

QUESTION 11

Which of the following statements reflect the relevance of the slavery issue to Peter's readers living in the first-century Greco-Roman world? [Select all that apply].

- A. The high esteem enjoyed by the Roman Empire was due to its practice of slavery.
- B. About one-fourth of the population of the Roman Empire consisted of slaves.
- C. Many of those to whom Peter wrote would probably have been slaves.
- D. Most well-to-do Roman families had slaves.

Peter began this paragraph by addressing those who were "servants." He used the term *oiketēs* for them, which differed from the Greek term *doulos* (a bond-slave). The term *oiketēs* meant a household or domestic servant. In the Greco-Roman world, there existed some very clear expectations for relationships within the household, especially for wives, children and household servants. The key idea was that of "stability" within the household. Not surprisingly, the male husband figure was the primary figure, and household servants had the position of being "least." How these servants would be treated would vary, of course, from one household to another. Some might be fortunate enough to have kind and understanding masters, but oftentimes servants would be harshly treated, even unjustly.

QUESTION 12

In the typical Roman home, household servants were viewed as just slightly more important than the children of the home. *True or False?*

So, for those servants who had become Christians, how were they to conduct themselves? Biblically, they were now free in Christ, totally loved by God, and destined for a royal future in the kingdom of Jesus Christ. Yet, at the same time, they were still on earth and subject to the laws and conventions of Roman society. Peter (writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit) instructed them to "be subject to your masters with all reverence." In saying this, Peter was not affirming that slavery was morally good or that it was a valid practice. Many things in society—both in that day as well as in ours—are not what God would commend, but we as Christians must learn how to live the best we can within a world system that is tainted by evil. Elsewhere, the Apostle Paul wrote,

Were you called as a slave? Do not worry about it. But if indeed you are able to be free, make the most of the opportunity. For the one who was called in the Lord as a slave is the Lord's freedman. In the same way, the one who was called as a free person is Christ's slave (1 Cor 7:21-22).

What Paul was telling us is that all of us who are Christians are actually slaves in some way. We have become slaves of Christ, because He bought us with a price (His blood), and He has left us here on earth

to obey and serve Him. Hence, no Christian is totally free. Also, we must remember that even Jesus Himself was the “suffering servant” of Isaiah 53, taught that the Son of Man came to serve (Mk 10:45), and that if any believer wanted to be “great,” he must be “servant of all” (Mk 10:43-44).

QUESTION 13

Which of the following historical figures made the following statement? “Whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of all.”

- A. Karl Marx
- B. Moses
- C. Julius Caesar
- D. Jesus Christ

In stating that servants were to be subject to their masters, Peter used the same word (“be subject to”) that he had used previously in 1 Peter 2:13 regarding earthly rulers. The same restraints would then apply, meaning that servants were to obey their masters, but not if their commands violated the will of God. For example, if an ungodly master tried to force a servant girl to submit to his sexual advances on her, she would not be obligated to obey him. In this case, she must obey God rather than man. But, if the master’s orders did not amount to disobedience to God, they were to be obeyed. Furthermore, Peter indicated that the attitude in which one obeyed was also important. Servants were to be submissive “with all reverence.” In this way, Christian servants were to be different from others, for they were not to be disrespectful or despise their masters. By obeying “with all reverence,” they were bearing witness of their Christian faith that controlled their actions and motives. Peter also clarified that such obedience was not to be limited to those that might be considered “good masters,” but also “to those who are perverse.” That is, if one’s master was unjust or harsh (causing suffering), they were still to be obeyed.

QUESTION 14

As long as a household servant obeyed his master, that is all that mattered. The attitude that he had in doing so was not important, only the act of obedience. *True or False?*

In verses 19-20, Peter went on to explain an important principle about unjust suffering that would be applicable to those who served harsh masters. The principle had to do with how God would look upon and treat that person who suffered in this way when his motivation was that of enduring hardship to keep a good conscience before God. Serving an unjust or harsh master was certainly not easy, and for some it might even be terribly brutal. The temptation would be to resist, rebel, or even attempt to flee such masters. Yet for that Christian servant who willingly endured such hardship because He wanted to have a good conscience with God, that was a response of faith that God would certainly approve. That servant would find God’s “favor,” which is literally the Greek word for “grace” (*charis*). God would pour out *grace* on that servant!

QUESTION 15

The proper motivation for enduring hardship at the hands of a harsh or unjust master was to be able to keep a good conscience before God. *True or False?*

The final verse of this paragraph (1 Pet 2:20) unites the issue of suffering at the hands of an unjust master with the issue of unjust suffering in general. Some people bring suffering upon themselves because of their own sin. In such cases, patient endurance of their suffering means nothing. That is, they do not deserve any credit for that, since they are responsible for what they reaped in the first place. But what

results in God's favor (grace) is when a Christian patiently endures unjust or harsh treatment when he had not sinned but had rather done that which would be considered "good" or right. This principle would apply not only to the case of servants being submissive to masters but to every other situation in life where unjust suffering might be experienced. Enduring such treatment for the sake of Christ—which takes faith—is what God commends and blesses with His grace.

QUESTION 16



This topic concluded by observing a principle that extends beyond that of slaves in regard to masters. There are other situations in life where we might suffer unjustly for doing what is right, and we will find favor with God by patiently enduring through those difficult times with a motive of keeping a good conscience before God. How have you personally experienced this principle in your own life? Write your answer in your Life Notebook.

QUESTION 17



Imagine that a younger Christian has come to you to seek your advice. They work in a government office, and their boss has a problem with uncontrollable anger and makes unreasonable demands. This young Christian would like to quit his job but cannot do so, because jobs are scarce and he has no other source of income. In light of what you have learned in Topic 3, how would you counsel this person? [Write your answer in your Life Notebook].

Lesson 6 Self Check

QUESTION 1

Which of the following might be considered a “fleshly desire” as mentioned in 1 Peter 2:11?

- A. Jealousy
- B. Hunger for food
- C. The desire to marry and have a family
- D. Impure sexual desires

QUESTION 2

When Peter said, “they now malign you as wrongdoers” (1 Pet 2:12), which of the following would be an example of this kind of treatment by non-Christians?

- A. They hoped that Christians would become political rulers in the empire.
- B. They felt badly that Christians had been misunderstood.
- C. They resented Christians who did not participate in the worship of Greco-Roman gods and idols.
- D. They believed that Christians were responsible for the lack of good morals among young people.

QUESTION 3

Peter’s instruction about submission to civil government was consistent with the fact that God establishes and removes earthly rulers, as stated in the book of Daniel, “He changes times and seasons, deposing some kings and establishing others” (Dan 2:21). *True or False?*

QUESTION 4

According to 1 Peter 2:13-14, Christians are only responsible for obeying the king, not the government officials serving under the king. *True or False?*

QUESTION 5

Human governments are ordained by God. According to 1 Peter 2:14, which of the following represents a God-given responsibility of human government?

- A. To force minority religions to embrace the religion favored by the government.
- B. To punish wrongdoers and praise those who do good.
- C. To feed the hungry and provide clothing for the poor.
- D. To take enemy captives and use them as labor for building projects.

QUESTION 6

If you wanted to know more about the responsibility of Christians to civil government, which of the following passages would you turn to?

- A. Matthew 5:1-12
- B. 1 Corinthians 13:1-13
- C. Romans 13:1-7
- D. Romans 8:1-11

QUESTION 7

In which book of the Bible would you expect to find the following verses: “Whether it is right before God to obey you rather than God, you decide, for it is impossible for us not to speak about what we have seen and heard;” and “we must obey God rather than men.”

- A. The Gospel of John
- B. The Book of Revelation
- C. The Book of Exodus
- D. The Book of Acts

QUESTION 8

Which of the following statements reflect the relevance of the slavery issue to Peter’s readers living in the first-century Greco-Roman world? [Select all that apply].

- A. Most well-to-do Roman families had slaves.
- B. About one-fourth of the population of the Roman Empire consisted of slaves.
- C. The Christians in Asia could sell slaves for a profit and have more money to give.
- D. The high esteem enjoyed by the Roman Empire was due to its practice of slavery.

QUESTION 9

The Apostle Paul is famous for having made the following statement: “Whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of all.” *True or False?*

QUESTION 10

The proper motivation for enduring hardship at the hands of a harsh or unjust master was to be able to keep a good conscience before God. *True or False?*

Lesson 6 Answers to Questions

QUESTION 1: False

QUESTION 2: Answers A, C, and D.

- A. Impure sexual desires
- C. Jealousy
- D. Strife between fellow Christians

QUESTION 3: True

QUESTION 4: Answers A and B are correct.

- A. They resented Christians who did not participate in the worship of Greco-Roman gods and idols.
- B. They considered Christians to be naïve, followers of a “mischievous superstition.”

QUESTION 5: *Your answer*

QUESTION 6

<i>Verse Reference</i>	<i>Correlating Verse</i>
Psalm 22:28	The Lord is the true king who rules over the nations on earth.
Psalm 33:10-11	If an earthly ruler attempts to go against the plans of God, the Lord will frustrate his decisions and efforts.
Daniel 2:21	If the Lord chooses to depose an earthly king, He can.
Daniel 4:17	Human rulers only have their authority to govern because God has chosen to put them in their place of ruling.

QUESTION 7: True

QUESTION 8: Correct answers are “A” and “D”

- A. Acts 4:18-19
- D. Acts 5:29

QUESTION 9: False

QUESTION 10: *Your answer.*

QUESTION 11: Answers B, C, and D are all correct.

- B. About one-fourth of the population of the Roman Empire consisted of slaves.
- C. Many of those to whom Peter wrote would probably have been slaves.
- D. Most well-to-do Roman families had slaves.

QUESTION 12: False

QUESTION 13: Answer D.

- D. Jesus Christ

QUESTION 14: False

QUESTION 15: True

QUESTION 16: *Your answer.*

QUESTION 17: *Your answer.*

Lesson 6 Self Check Answers

QUESTION 1

- A. Jealousy
- D. Impure sexual desires

QUESTION 2

- C. They resented Christians who did not participate in the worship of Greco-Roman gods and idols.

QUESTION 3: True

QUESTION 4: False

QUESTION 5

- B. To punish wrongdoers and praise those who do good.

QUESTION 6

- C. Romans 13:1-7

QUESTION 7

- D. The Book of Acts

QUESTION 8

- A. Most well-to-do Roman families had slaves
- B. About one-fourth of the population of the Roman Empire consisted of slaves

QUESTION 9: False

QUESTION 10: True

Lesson Seven: Christian Responsibilities that May Incur Conflict and Suffering:

Part 2 (1 Peter 2:21–3:12)

Lesson Introduction

In this lesson, we will complete the section of 1 Peter that deals with Christian responsibility for submission that might entail conflict and suffering. In the previous lesson, Peter reminded his readers of their responsibility for maintaining good behavior before the non-Christian world in general, and then discussed the particular application in regard to obeying civil authorities. Finally, in instructing slaves to obey their masters, Peter brought out the principle that God views favorably the Christian who patiently suffers unjustly while doing what is right, when his motive is that of maintaining a good conscience toward God.

In lesson seven, Peter begins by holding up Christ as the perfect example of suffering unjustly (and how God the Father worked through His suffering to bring about good). Then, the theme of submission that Peter had previously discussed regarding civil authorities and slave/master relations is now examined regarding marital relationships. Though the wife is responsible to submit to her husband, the marriage relationship only works well when both understand their God-given roles and responsibilities. Finally, Peter sums up the discussion of Christian submission and how believers are to properly respond when they are insulted or treated harshly.

Lesson Outline

Topic 1: The Example of Christ who Suffered Unjustly in Procuring our Salvation (1 Pet 2:21-25)

Topic 2: The Responsibilities of Wives and Husbands in Their Marital Relations (1 Pet 3:1-7)

Topic 3: The Responsibilities of Christians for Righteous Behavior Summed Up (1 Pet 3:8-12)

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- Be motivated to follow the example of the Lord Jesus who suffered unjustly while entrusting the outcome of His circumstances to the sovereign will of the Father.
- Understand the proper way for a Christian wife to influence her non-Christian husband to the Lord.
- [For wives]. Understand the true inner beauty that Christian wives should seek to cultivate in their lives and be motivated to develop in this way.
- [For husbands]. Learn that the wife's submission to your leadership is to be balanced by the right treatment of your wife, honoring her and seeking to live with her in an understanding way.
- Be able to explain the principle of how a Christian can gain God's blessing while resisting the temptation to retaliate when insulted or mistreated.

Topic 1: The Example of Christ who Suffered Unjustly in Procuring our Salvation (1 Pet 2:21-25)

There could be no better illustration of what it means to patiently endure unjust suffering than that experienced by the Lord Jesus Himself. Having set forth the principle in 1 Peter 2:19-20 that God's favor (grace) awaits the believer who—in seeking to keep a good conscience toward God—willingly endures suffering and harsh treatment without retaliating in anger, Peter holds up the Lord Jesus as the Christian's model to follow. In doing so, he identifies Jesus as the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 (the most explicit New Testament passage to do so).



READING: Open your Bible and read 1 Peter 2:21-25.

Peter opens this paragraph by reminding Christians of God's purpose for their lives. Not only slaves but by extension all Christians are called both to suffer unjustly (if need be) and to continue to do right as they follow the example of Jesus Christ in the suffering He endured. He was the most righteous of all humans to have ever walked on earth, yet He endured the greatest of all sufferings. The suffering He endured, He did not deserve. And yet it was not in vain.

Though we, as Christians, will never suffer for the sins of the world (as Christ did), His unjust suffering serves as an “example” for us. The word translated “example” (Gk *hupogrammos*) only occurs here in the New Testament but was used in other Greek literature to refer to a pattern of letters of the alphabet that children who were learning to write would trace. This was to help them form the letters as close as possible to the original. So, every Christian should see that their calling is to follow their Lord as closely as possible . . . to live as a servant who suffers unjustly in doing right, yet who does not lash back either verbally or physically when so treated.

QUESTION 1

How does the Greek word translated “example,” (Gk *hupogrammos*) help us understand Christ as our example?

- A. By studying the Greek language, Christians can learn to read the New Testament in Greek.
- B. As a child would seek to form the letters of the alphabet by tracing an original pattern, so Christians should seek to follow the Lord Jesus as closely as possible.
- C. As a child would go to school to learn about many subjects, so Christians should study to learn all they can about Christ.
- D. As a child would memorize the letters of the Greek alphabet, so Christians can grow spiritually by memorizing verses from the Bible.

In painting a portrait of Christ's suffering, Peter drew heavily from the Suffering Servant passage of Isaiah 53. At least four times he quoted directly from it, but also alluded to it at least three times. Peter's order of presentation, however, does not follow the same order as Isaiah. In general, Peter first highlighted those parts of Isaiah 53 pertaining to Christ's trial (vv 22-23), and this is followed by those parts pertaining to His crucifixion (v 24).



READING: Open your Bible and read Isaiah 53:1-12.

The following diagram indicates how Peter drew upon parts of Isaiah 53 to express the example of Christ's suffering. Direct quotations are put in bold type, and allusions are italicized.

^{2:22} **He committed no sin** [Isa 53:9]

nor was deceit found in his mouth.

^{2:23} When he was maligned, *he did not answer back*; [Isa 53:7c-d]
when he suffered, *he threatened no retaliation*,

but *committed himself* [Isa 53:6c] *to God who judges justly.* [Isa 53:8a]

^{2:24} **He himself bore our sins** [Isa 53:4a, 12] in his body on the tree,
that we may cease from sinning and live for righteousness.

By his wounds you were healed. [Isa 53:5d]

^{2:25} **For you were going astray like sheep** [Isa 53:6a]

but now you have turned back to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

QUESTION 2

Of all New Testament writers, Peter makes the most extensive use of the Isaiah 53 passage to depict Jesus as the Suffering Servant. *True or False?*

1 Peter 2:22-23 seems to be primarily focused on the events that Jesus went through during the final week of His life prior to His crucifixion, and in particular during His trials before the Sanhedrin and Roman authorities. He experienced verbal abuse when slandered by the Sanhedrin (Mk 14:65), denounced by the Jerusalem crowd (Mk 15:12-15), ridiculed by the Roman guards (Mk 15:16-20), mocked while being crucified (Mk 15:29-32), and derided by the crucified thief (Mt 27:44; Lk 23:39-42). The point of 1 Peter 2:22 is that in all He experienced, Jesus did not sin, either by lies or by deception.

QUESTION 3

Which of the following represent ways in which Jesus suffered verbal abuse? [*Select all that apply*].

- A. During His crucifixion, his brothers scolded him for pretending to be the Messiah.
- B. Prior to His crucifixion, Jesus was denounced by the Jerusalem crowd.
- C. During His final week in Jerusalem, all the officers of the Roman military were demanding that Pilate condemn Jesus as a criminal.
- D. Prior to His crucifixion, Jesus was repeatedly slandered during His trial before the Jewish Sanhedrin.

Furthermore, when He was verbally maligned and mistreated, He did not seek to retaliate or threaten His accusers. Instead, He accepted injustice, and often in silence (Mk 14:61; 15:5). What Jesus did do was to “commit himself to God who judges justly” (1 Pet 2:23). That means He entrusted His situation and welfare to God’s sovereign purposes for His life. This is evidenced by His prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane as He submitted Himself to the Father’s will (Mt 26:39, 42), and on the cross as He committed His spirit into the Father’s hands (Lk 23:46).

QUESTION 4

When Peter stated that Jesus “committed himself to God who judges justly,” he meant that Jesus was pleading for the Father to deliver Him from the danger of crucifixion. *True or False?*

In 1 Peter 2:24, Peter focused specifically on the suffering that Christ endured while crucified to the cross. Yes, it was physically painful as well as spiritually tormenting, yet it was not in vain. By doing so, “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree.” Theologians speak of this as the substitutionary atonement of Christ. That is, Jesus died as our substitute to atone for our sins. Rather than God punishing us for the sins we have committed, Jesus took all the guilt of all our sins upon Himself and bore the punishment we deserved (cf. 1 Cor 15:3; 2 Cor 5:14; 1 Pet 3:18). That God would do this for us is more remarkable than can be expressed by words. Romans 5:8 tells us that this was the supreme way for God to express His love for us: “But God demonstrates his own love for us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” If we truly believe this, there should be no doubt in our minds that God loves us.

QUESTION 5

What is the meaning of “substitutionary atonement”?

- A. It means that believers, if possible, should be willing to substitute themselves in the place of another Christian who is suffering.
- B. It means that when a Christian sins, he should try to atone for his wrongdoing by offering up prayers to God for forgiveness.
- C. It means that when we finally stand before God, no other person can act as our substitute.
- D. It means that Jesus took all the guilt of all our sins upon Himself and bore the punishment we deserved.

QUESTION 6



Are you convinced that God loves you personally? On what do you base your answer? Write your thoughts in your Life Notebook.

The atoning work of Christ is the heart of the gospel message. Yet man has a responsibility to *believe* the gospel and place his trust in the Lord Jesus . . . trusting Jesus as his Savior. The moment we do this, the benefit of the cross becomes ours. God declares us “righteous” (we are justified), and all our sins are forgiven. Acts 10:43 declares,

About him all the prophets testify, that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.

To know that all our sins are forgiven by God is probably the most consoling truth we could have, yet we must remember that this was only possible because of the ransom price Jesus paid *by His blood*. “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph 1:7).

Peter goes on in verse 24 to teach that Christ’s suffering on the cross has ethical implications for those who have trusted Him as Savior. He bore our sins, “that we may cease from sinning and live for righteousness.” As K. Jobes (197) puts it, “Peter’s understanding of Christian ethics is thoroughly grounded in the Christology of suffering.” Hence, the “good conduct” (1 Pet 2:12) and doing of “good” (1 Pet 2:20) that Peter exhorts his readers to do is based on the understanding of the grace of God they have received by virtue of Christ’s suffering on their behalf.

Drawing again on Isaiah 53:5, Peter reminded his readers, “By his wounds you were healed.” In this context, the “healing” in view is not physical healing but the salvation they experienced at the moment of faith. This is supported both by the context as well as the verb tense. The verb’s past tense (“you were

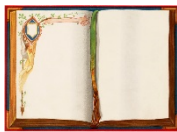
healed”) indicates completed action; the “healing” is an accomplished fact. The Christian readers may have once strayed “like sheep” (an allusion to Isa 53:6, “all of us like sheep have gone astray”), but now they have turned back to the shepherd and guardian of their souls. Peter was probably thinking of the time Jesus depicted Himself as the good shepherd in John 10: “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep” (Jn 10:11; cf. Heb 13:20). Peter’s Christian readers may be suffering in various ways because of their faith in Christ, but they can be assured that *the good shepherd* is caring for them and watching over their souls.

QUESTION 7

Match the verse reference in the left column with the correct statement in the right column:

<i>Verse Reference</i>	<i>Correlating Verse</i>
Isaiah 53:6	Now you have turned back to the shepherd and guardian of your souls
John 10:11	Because of his wounds you have been healed.
Isaiah 53:5	I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.
1 Peter 2:25	All of us had wandered off like sheep.

QUESTION 8



Try to think of an experience you have had in the recent year in which someone mistreated you because of the fact you are a Christian. Perhaps this was an insult made to you. Perhaps someone wronged you or took advantage of you, simply because you were a Christian. Describe the situation in your Life Notebook, and then comment on how what you have learned in your study of 1 Peter 2:21-25 applies to this situation.

Topic 2: The Responsibilities of Wives and Husbands in Their Marital Relations (1 Pet 3:1-7)

The call to “good conduct” in 1 Peter 2:12 was meant to serve as the basis for submission to civil authorities (1 Pet 2:13-17) and submission of slaves to masters (1 Pet 2:18-20). Following the brief digression to consider the example of Jesus as the Suffering Servant who patiently endured the scorn of man and the agony of the cross (1 Pet 2:21-25), Peter continued the subject of submission by applying it to wives in marriage. During the first century A.D., as the gospel continued to expand, there would be many women coming in faith to Christ whose husbands remained as pagans in Greco-Roman culture. For many of these women, marriage was very difficult, especially if their husbands rejected their newfound faith and opposed the idea of becoming a Christian. As these women suffered in the home, Peter sought to counsel them as to how “good conduct” by a wife was important in winning her husband to Christ. Of course, Peter’s counsel was not limited to such marriages, but this was probably his primary concern. He concluded this section with a brief note (1 Pet 3:7) as to how Christian husbands ought to treat their wives.



READING: Open your Bible and read 1 Peter 3:1-6.

The opening words, “In the same way,” indicate that the wife is to respond to her husband with all respect, just as slaves were to be submissive to their masters “with all reverence.”

Her motivation for submitting to her husband is her reverence for God, regardless of whether the husband is harsh or kind.

The purpose of submission was to help further order within the home. Raymer (848) notes, “A wife is to accept her place in the family under the leadership of her husband whom God has placed as head in the home.” God’s design is that husbands are submissive to Christ (following His leadership and direction), and wives are submissive to the leadership of their husbands, so that the home reflects God’s love and harmony. Of course, reality is often far from what is ideal, especially when one of the spouses is not even a born-again believer in Christ.

The imbalance of instruction in this passage (six verses addressed to the wife and only one to the husband) reflects the uniqueness of this passage as compared to other submission passages found in Ephesians 5:22 and Colossians 3:18. The most likely reason for this is that 1 Peter 3:1-6 is aimed primarily at Christian wives whose husbands had not yet become believers. This is supported by the reference in verse one to husbands who were “disobedient to the word.” The word translated “disobedient” (Gk *apeitheō*) is used fourteen times in the New Testament and always of those who are opposed to the gospel. Peter had used the same expression earlier in 1 Peter 2:8 of those Jews who rejected Jesus as Messiah, and he uses it again in 1 Peter 4:17 of those who are “disobedient to the gospel of God.” The Christian wife whose husband was still an unbeliever (and most likely still a worshiper of Romans gods) found herself in a very difficult position. [Note: This passage is aimed at marriages in which both began as non-Christians, and subsequently the wife became a Christian. Otherwise, it was expected that Christian young women who were single would only marry a Christian man (2 Cor 6:14-18; 1 Cor 7:39).]

QUESTION 9

Although 1 Peter 3:1-6, Ephesians 5:22 and Colossians 3:18 all call for the wife to live in submission to her husband, the 1 Peter passage is different from the others, because it puts greater emphasis on how husbands should treat their wives. *True or False?*

QUESTION 10

What did Peter likely mean when he spoke of husbands who were “disobedient to the word”?

- A. He was referring to husbands who refused to obey their wives, because he calls them “disobedient.”
- B. He was referring to Christian husbands who were consistently living in disobedience to the Word of God, refusing to obey God’s commands in Scripture.
- C. He was referring to non-Christian husbands, because the word translated “disobedient” is consistently used in the New Testament of those who reject the gospel.
- D. He was referring only to Jewish husbands, because they were the ones who had rejected Jesus as Messiah.

One must understand the societal norms of the Greco-Roman world to appreciate how sensitive a matter this was for a Christian wife to be married to a non-Christian. In such society, the expectation for the wife was that she would have no friends of her own and would worship the gods of her husband (so Plutarch, *Advice* §19). For her to adopt any religion other than her husband’s religion was considered in violation of the ideal of an orderly home. Christians were already suspect for introducing a “new god,” and for a wife to embrace the Lord Jesus as Savior was viewed as upsetting the religious status quo of the empire. Furthermore, the wife would be viewed by her non-believing husband as acting in rebellion to his authority. So, a wife’s turning in faith to Christ could potentially have far-reaching implications for both her marriage and the stability of her home and family.

In such cases, the wife, of course, had done nothing wrong by becoming a Christian. Jesus is Lord, and placing her faith in Christ is absolutely the right thing to have done. Rather than despising her husband for his spiritual ignorance and failure to come to Christ, the wife's responsibility is to do her part in helping him become a believer. Although ultimately it is the Holy Spirit that opens the eyes of unbelievers and draws them to Christ, the wife has a role, too. But her role is not that of lecturing her husband or scolding his unbelief. Rather, it is the way she "lives" (that is, her behavior) that is the key to reaching her husband for Christ. The wife must realize that her actions speak louder than her words. Peter calls such behavior as her "pure and reverent conduct" (1 Pet 3:2). This involves a morally pure life-style combined with an exemplary character.

QUESTION 11

What was Peter's advice for a Christian woman married to a non-Christian man?

- A. It does not matter what she does, because only the Holy Spirit can give her husband a desire to come to Christ.
- B. The only thing the wife can do in such a situation is to pray for her husband.
- C. The wife should scold her husband for being stubborn in his refusal to accept Christ, in hopes that he will feel guilty and change his mind.
- D. He was referring only to Jewish husbands, because they were the ones who had rejected Jesus as Messiah.
- E. The wife should seek to live a morally pure life and exhibit a godly character, because *how she lives in front of her husband* can be used of the Lord to draw him to Christ.

In Greco-Roman culture of that time (as is often the case today), women were prone to focus on their external beauty and attire. The way women looked outwardly was typically what drew comments of praise and admiration. But the Bible says, "God does not view things the way men do. People look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart" (1 Sam 16:7). Also, Proverbs 31:30 teaches us, "Charm is deceitful and beauty is fleeting, but a woman who fears the LORD will be praised." So, although there is nothing wrong with a woman wearing attractive clothing and appropriate jewelry, as well as fixing her hair, that is not to be her primary concern. Peter's point is that she is to be *more concerned* with her internal beauty, or what he calls the "inner person of the heart" (1 Pet 3:4). This refers to her inner character, notably, a "gentle and tranquil spirit." Derickson (1157) explains, "Gentle (*praeos*) involves the aspects of humility, considerateness, and meekness, like Jesus' qualities (Mt 11:28-29). Quiet reflects how she responds." Such inner character may not be as readily observable to the public, but God—who sees the heart—clearly observes her real beauty and considers this "precious" in His sight.

To support his call for the wife to focus on her behavior and character (in hopes of winning an errant husband to the Lord), Peter turns to an illustration from the Old Testament in verses five and six. Sarah, the wife of Abraham, serves as a model for Christian wives who are to be submissive to their husbands. If Abraham was looked upon as the father of those who are justified by faith (so Gen 15:6), then Sarah should be viewed as the "first lady" of God's covenant people. Peter points out two things from Sarah's life: (1) she obeyed Abraham; and (2) she called him "lord" (a term of respect and acknowledgment of him as leader in their relationship). Regarding the latter, Peter seems to have had Genesis 18:12 in mind, a verse reflecting her recognition of Abraham as her "lord." As for her obedience, the passage of greatest relevance is perhaps Genesis 12:13. This was the account of their trip to Egypt, when she implicitly *obeyed* Abraham by cooperating with his deceptive trickery in Pharaoh's court. On this occasion, he asked her to lie by telling the Egyptians that she was his sister (actually, a half-truth). His conduct in that instance was less than exemplary (he was like a husband disobedient to the word), and yet she made a Christlike decision to obey him and thereby save her husband's life by being willing to suffer for his sake.

QUESTION 12

According to Genesis 12:13, Sarah called Abraham “my lord” in acknowledging him as the leader in their relationship. *True or False?*

K. Jobes (2006) summarizes the lesson of 1 Peter 3:1-6 when she states,

Therefore, Christian women married to unbelieving men are not to despise and reject their husbands, making the household climate one of hostility, but to subject themselves even to unjust treatment because of their faith in Christ, and in so doing accomplish God’s better way.

The call for Christian wives to submit to their husbands is readily dismissed by most in the secular world today, especially those embracing what is often called a *feminist agenda*. Yet Christians are called to obey God’s eternal Word, not the passing philosophy of the day. Having said that, we should acknowledge that submission does not mean obeying to the point of having to disobey God, any more than it did when submission to civil authorities was in view. Also, a few clarifications should be made on the practical side:

- Submission does not mean always having to agree on everything.
- Submission does not mean leaving your brain at the altar. Wives are entitled to their opinion, even though they may in the end need to submit to their husband’s wishes.
- Submission does not mean a wife cannot try to influence her husband. In appropriate ways, she can (and a wise husband will respect the viewpoint and contribution his wife makes).
- Submission is not putting the will of the husband before the will of Christ. The Lord must be obeyed first.
- Submission does not mean having to submit to various forms of abuse. [In abusive situations, a wife should seek the counsel of her pastor or older and wiser Christians].

QUESTION 13



Imagine the following scenario: Susan is a young woman who has been married for five years. She recently became a Christian, but her husband is not a believer and does not seem interested in spiritual things. Susan has trouble accepting the biblical teaching about a wife’s submission to her husband. She has tried praying for her husband, but when she attempts to witness to him, he just gets angry and leaves the house. Now Susan is coming to you for counsel. What counsel do you have for her? Write your answer in your Life Notebook.



READING: Open your Bible and read 1 Peter 3:7.

Wives who had Christian husbands were indeed fortunate, especially in first-century A.D. Christianity. Christian husbands had an obligation to treat their wives the way Christ would want them to, and so Peter turns to address them briefly in verse seven. He exhorts husbands to “live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker” (NASB). This means that a husband needs to be considerate of his wife’s spiritual, emotional, and physical needs. He has a responsibility to protect and care for her in

all regards ... not just put food on the table. He is to love his wife “just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her” (Eph 5:25). By a “weaker” partner, Peter certainly did not mean one of intellectual inferiority. God obviously created women different than men for a purpose. In general, women are not as strong physically and—being typically more sensitive and compassionate—could be said to be more emotionally fragile. This is not to say that women are not brave or unfit for demanding situations. Many are, and God has used many women, for example, on the mission field and other places of service where their unshakeable faith in God made them quite *strong* and fit for challenges that others would shy away from. The main point is that the husband is not to run roughshod over his wife, thereby taking advantage of his stronger assets.

QUESTION 14

Which of the following are expected of Christian husband? *Select all that apply*

- A. A Christian husband should scold his wife and even beat her, if he feels she is not submitting to his authority.
- B. A Christian husband is responsible to love his wife as Christ loved the Church, meaning he should be “giving” of himself and “sacrificing” for her sake.
- C. A Christian husband is to live with his wife in “an understanding way,” meaning that he needs to do whatever is necessary to make sure she *understands* what he is wanting her to do.
- D. A Christian husband is to live with his wife in “an understanding way,” meaning that he seeks to *understand her* and respects her point of view, even if he does not always agree with her.

Peter also exhorted husbands to honor their wives “as fellow heirs of the grace of life.” Wives do not want to be treated like “property”; they have a need to be loved and honored. By speaking of the wife as a “fellow heir of the grace of life,” Peter seems to have Christian marriage partners in view. The husband is not spiritually superior, though God has given the husband and the wife different (but complementary) roles in their service to Christ. Yet both husband and wife are equal spiritually before the Lord and are called to enjoy *together* the grace of life ... living out their lives on earth in mutual support of one another, building one another up, and serving Christ together for the sake of His glory.

QUESTION 15



A Christian husband is to honor his wife as “a fellow heir of the grace of life.” What do you think are some practical ways that a Christian husband could do this? Write your thoughts in your Life Notebook.

Topic 3: The Responsibilities of Christians for Righteous Behavior Summed Up (1 Pet 3:8-12)

This paragraph concludes the larger section of the epistle found in 1 Peter 2:11–3:12. One of the primary themes of this section was Peter’s challenge to his Christian readers to live faithfully for God in the sight of unbelievers. They had a responsibility for ethical behavior while still living in the world. He also challenged them to live out their faith with good conduct in the home. In this concluding paragraph, he reminds them of the Christlike virtues they are to emulate and counsels them to respond lovingly when mistreated or insulted by others.



READING: Open your Bible and read 1 Peter 3:8-12.

The opening word “Finally” at the beginning of verse eight signals that Peter has reached the conclusion to a major section of the epistle. The present passage, 1 Peter 3:8-12, is the concluding words for the section of the epistle that began with the words in 2:11-12, “I urge you as foreigners and exiles to keep away from fleshly desires that do battle against the soul, and maintain good conduct among the non-Christians.” He showed them how this applied as citizens to civil authorities, as slaves to masters, and as wives to husbands. He also gave them the example of Christ who suffered unjustly though innocent (1 Pet 2:21-25).

QUESTION 16

The word “Finally” at the beginning of 1 Peter 3:8 initiates a conclusion to a larger section of the epistle that began in 1 Peter 2:11. *True or False?*

Their responsibility in fulfilling the exhortation of 1 Peter 2:11-12 has both a positive and a negative aspect. There are things they must do and be (the positive side), and there are things they must avoid doing (the negative side). Positively, all Christians are responsible to “be harmonious, sympathetic, affectionate, compassionate, and humble” (1 Pet 3:8). Such behavior would be particularly beneficial in the marriage relationship and in the home environment, though it would certainly apply to the larger Christian community as well. These qualities would be essential for the Christian community to be a place of support and refuge.

The first quality (“be harmonious”) would be essential for producing the cohesion needed to sustain a Christian community living amid an antagonistic society. The quality of being “sympathetic” suggests an understanding of one another, seeing things from another’s point of view. “Affectionate” is more literally “brotherly love,” suggesting a resolve to do right by others with whom we are substantially related by faith in Christ. “Compassionate” means to have tender feelings for someone, by which one is prompted to extend kindness. Finally, Peter exhorted them to be “humble.” Being “humble,” however, was not considered virtuous in first-century Greco-Roman society. To do so was quite countercultural, for humility was regarded as a sign of weakness and shame, an inability to defend one’s honor. Yet in God’s eyes, “humility” was a sign of a great person, being the opposite of detestable pride. In commending these five virtues, Peter was suggesting that his readers would be strengthened in their relationships within their Christian community, and thereby better able to stand together as sojourners living in a world that was suspicious of Christians and even hostile to them.

QUESTION 17



All five of the virtues listed in 1 Peter 3:8 are important for having a healthy church where brothers and sisters truly love one another and build up one another in the Lord. In your personal church experience, which one of these five virtues do you feel your church is most in need of to move closer to being a mature, healthy church? Why? Write your thoughts in your Life Notebook.

In verse nine, Peter laid out the negative concern ... what they must be careful not to do. They are not to “return evil for evil or insult for insult, but instead bless others” (1 Pet 3:9). As they live in the world, they are going to encounter many people who will be hostile to their Christian faith. They should expect they will sometimes be insulted by those who do not know the Lord Jesus Christ, while some will even do evil things against them. They must remember that they are not to take their own revenge. Romans 12:19

(drawing on Deut 32:35) sets forth the principle Christians are to live by, “Do not avenge yourselves, dear friends, but give place to God’s wrath, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord.” So, if they are insulted, they must not retaliate with insulting remarks in return. If they are mistreated (given evil), they are not to respond with evil. Instead, they must be prepared to do what would be the unexpected in the eyes of the world: they are to bless the person offending them. In saying this, Peter was reiterating what he had learned from the Lord Jesus Himself as recorded in Luke 6:27-31:

²⁷ But I say to you who are listening: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. ²⁹ To the person who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other as well, and from the person who takes away your coat, do not withhold your tunic either. ³⁰ Give to everyone who asks you, and do not ask for your possessions back from the person who takes them away. ³¹ Treat others in the same way that you would want them to treat you.

QUESTION 18

Match the verse reference in the left column with the appropriate verse in the right column:

<i>Verse Reference</i>	<i>Biblical Verse</i>
Deuteronomy 32:35	“Do not return evil for evil or insult for insult, but instead bless.”
Luke 6:27-28	“I will get revenge and pay them back.”
Romans 12:19	“Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.”
1 Peter 3:9	“Do not avenge yourselves, dear friends, but give place to God’s wrath.”

Blessing others who have mistreated us may seem illogical from a worldly perspective, but it makes sense when one considers how the Lord deals with us. So, Peter explains, “bless others because you were called to inherit a blessing” (1 Pet 3:9). There are many blessings that the Christian receives from the Lord, the most important being our spiritual salvation and receiving the Holy Spirit. But Peter was not thinking of those blessings, but of blessings from the Lord that we can receive in this life as a result of how we live and treat others. This is clear from verses ten through twelve that follow. Notice the word “For” at the beginning of 1 Peter 3:10. Peter is now *explaining* the matter of “inheriting a blessing”:

¹⁰ **For** the one who wants to love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from uttering deceit. ¹¹ And he must turn away from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it. ¹² For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous and his ears are open to their prayer. But the Lord’s face is against those who do evil.

These words are from Psalm 34:12-16. In its original context, these verses immediately follow the offer to be taught “the fear of the LORD” (Ps 34:11). Notice in this passage from Psalm 34 the emphasis given to what one utters with his lips and how one must turn away from doing evil. It is quite apparent, then, why Peter quotes this passage following his admonition not to return evil for evil or insult for insult. Rather, one must “do good” and “seek peace and pursue it.”

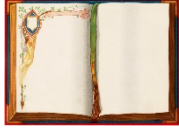
The latter part of the quotation from Psalm 34, namely verse twelve, is meant as an encouragement to the believer who would take these words seriously and live by them. To say that “the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous and his ears are open to their prayer” is to teach us that He hears and sees all that we experience, and He certainly considers our cries for help. This would be particularly relevant and meaningful for any of Peter’s Christian readers who were suffering in some way for their faith. But the Psalmist (and Peter in turn) reminds the believer that though they may encounter evildoers in life, “the Lord’s face is against those who do evil.” There is no need for a Christian to insult or do evil in return,

because the Lord will take care of those who do evil. Vengeance belongs to the Lord! Those who heed the words of Psalm 34:12-16 put themselves in position to inherit a blessing from the Lord.

QUESTION 19

The reason that Christians should not insult or do evil in return (when so treated) is because “the Lord’s face is against those who do evil”—He will deal with them. *True or False?*

QUESTION 20



Reflect again on 1 Peter 3:12 (a quotation from Psalm 34): “For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous and his ears are open to their prayer. But the Lord’s face is against those who do evil.” Considering our studies above, how do you find this verse to be applicable and helpful to you in your current situation? Do you find this to be relevant to anything you might currently be going through? Write your thoughts in your Life Notebook.

Lesson 7 Self Check

QUESTION 1

In seeking to present Jesus Christ as an example of one who suffered unjustly in 1 Peter 2:21-25, Peter drew heavily upon the Suffering Servant passage of Isaiah 53 and related that to the events that Jesus went through during the final week of His life, both in His trials and in His crucifixion. *True or False?*

QUESTION 2

What is the meaning of “substitutionary atonement”?

- A. It means that believers, if possible, should be willing to substitute themselves in the place of another Christian who is suffering.
- B. It means that when a Christian sins, he should try to atone for his wrongdoing by offering up prayers to God for forgiveness.
- C. It means that when we finally stand before God, no other person can act as our substitute.
- D. It means that Jesus took all the guilt of all our sins upon Himself and bore the punishment we deserved.

QUESTION 3

When we are told in 1 Peter 2:23 that Jesus “committed himself to God who judges justly,” this means He entrusted His situation and welfare to God’s sovereign purposes for His life. *True or False?*

QUESTION 4

Although 1 Peter 3:1-6, Ephesians 5:22 and Colossians 3:18 all call for the wife to live in submission to her husband, the 1 Peter passage is different from the others, because it puts greater emphasis on how husbands should treat their wives. *True or False?*

QUESTION 5

What did Peter likely mean when he spoke of husbands who were “disobedient to the word”?

- A. He was referring to husbands who refused to obey their wives, because he calls them “disobedient.”
- B. He was referring to non-Christian husbands, because the word translated “disobedient” is consistently used in the New Testament of those who reject the gospel.
- C. He was referring to Christian husbands who were consistently living in disobedience to the Word of God, refusing to obey God’s commands in Scripture.
- D. He was referring only to Jewish husbands, because they were the ones who had rejected Jesus as Messiah.

QUESTION 6

In 1 Peter 3:6, what things did Peter point out about Sarah that made her a good example of a biblical woman who was submissive to her husband? [Check all that apply].

- A. She was a fabulous cook and able to prepare tasty meals for her husband.
- B. She is said to have obeyed Abraham.
- C. She referred to her husband as “my lord.”
- D. She gave Abraham the son that he longed to have.

QUESTION 7

Which of the following are expected of Christian husband? [Check all that apply].

- A. A Christian husband should scold his wife and even beat her, if he feels she is not submitting to his authority.
- B. A Christian husband is to live with his wife in “an understanding way,” meaning that he needs to do whatever is necessary to make sure she *understands* what he is wanting her to do.
- C. A Christian husband is to live with his wife in “an understanding way,” meaning that he seeks to *understand her* and respects her point of view, even if he does not always agree with her.
- D. A Christian husband is responsible to love his wife as Christ loved the Church, meaning he should be “giving” of himself and “sacrificing” for her sake.

QUESTION 8

In teaching that the husband and wife are “fellow heirs of the grace of life,” Peter meant that they were spiritually equal before God, even though they had different responsibilities. *True or False?*

QUESTION 9

The word “Finally” at the beginning of 1 Peter 3:8 initiates a conclusion to a larger section of the epistle that began in 1 Peter 3:1. *True or False?*

QUESTION 10

To support the idea that believers should not return “evil for evil or insult for insult, but instead bless,” Peter quoted from what Old Testament passage?

- A. Genesis 12
- B. Deuteronomy 32
- C. Psalm 23
- D. Psalm 34

Lesson 7 Answers to Questions

QUESTION 1

- B. As a child would seek to form the letters of the alphabet by tracing an original pattern, so Christians should seek to follow the Lord Jesus as closely as possible.

QUESTION 2: True

QUESTION 3: Answers “B” and “D” are both correct.

- B. Prior to His crucifixion, Jesus was denounced by the Jerusalem crowd.
D. Prior to His crucifixion, Jesus was repeatedly slandered during His trial before the Jewish Sanhedrin.

QUESTION 4: False

QUESTION 5

- D. It means that Jesus took all the guilt of all our sins upon Himself and bore the punishment we deserved.

QUESTION 6: *Your answer*

QUESTION 7

<i>Verse Reference</i>	<i>Correlating Verse</i>
Isaiah 53:6	All of us had wandered off like sheep.
John 10:11	I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.
Isaiah 53:5	Because of his wounds you have been healed.
1 Peter 2:25	Now you have turned back to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

QUESTION 8: *Your answer*

QUESTION 9: False

QUESTION 10

- C. He was referring to non-Christian husbands, because the word translated “disobedient” is consistently used in the New Testament of those who reject the gospel.

QUESTION 11

- E. The wife should seek to live a morally pure life and exhibit a godly character, because *how she lives in front of her husband* can be used of the Lord to draw him to Christ.

QUESTION 12: False.

QUESTION 13: *Your answer*

QUESTION 14: Answers “B” and “D” are both correct.

- B. A Christian husband is responsible to love his wife as Christ loved the Church, meaning he should be “giving” of himself and “sacrificing” for her sake.
D. A Christian husband is to live with his wife in “an understanding way,” meaning that he seeks to *understand her* and respects her point of view, even if he does not always agree with her.

QUESTION 15: *Your answer*

QUESTION 16: True.

QUESTION 17: *Your answer*

QUESTION 18

<i>Verse Reference</i>	<i>Biblical Verse</i>
Deuteronomy 32:35	"I will get revenge and pay them back."
Luke 6:27-28	"Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you."
Romans 12:19	"Do not avenge yourselves, dear friends, but give place to God's wrath."
1 Peter 3:9	"Do not return evil for evil or insult for insult, but instead bless."

QUESTION 19: True.

QUESTION 20: *Your answer*

Lesson 7 Self Check Answers

QUESTION 1: True

QUESTION 2

- D. It means that Jesus took all the guilt of all our sins upon Himself and bore the punishment we deserved.

QUESTION 3: True

QUESTION 4: False

QUESTION 5

- B. He was referring to non-Christian husbands, because the word translated “disobedient” is consistently used in the New Testament of those who reject the gospel.

QUESTION 6

- B. She is said to have obeyed Abraham.
- C. She referred to her husband as “my lord.”

QUESTION 7

- C. A Christian husband is to live with his wife in “an understanding way,” meaning that he seeks to *understand her* and respects her point of view, even if he does not always agree with her.
- D. A Christian husband is responsible to love his wife as Christ loved the Church, meaning he should be “giving” of himself and “sacrificing” for her sake.

QUESTION 8: True

QUESTION 9: False [The larger section began in 1 Pet 2:11].

QUESTION 10

- D. Psalm 34

Lesson Eight: Suffering Innocently: Counsel for Christians and Reflections on Christ's Sufferings (1 Peter 3:13-22)

Lesson Introduction

1 Peter 3:13 brings us to a new major section of the epistle that extends to 1 Peter 4:19. In the previous major section (1 Pet 2:11–3:12), Peter exhorted the readers to keep their behavior excellent before unbelievers and highlighted several areas where submission was called for, but which could result in conflict and suffering. Peter summed up that section in 3:8-12 by calling for the readers to live in a Christ-like way and—when insulted or mistreated—to respond by giving a blessing to the offender. That, after all, was how God had dealt with them.

Now in 1 Peter 3:13–4:19, Peter elaborates on this sensitive subject of Christian suffering, providing further guidance and consolations for those who might have to suffer. He calls on his readers to be prepared to suffer at the hands of a hostile world and offers them the model of Christ as one who also suffered. Christ suffered unjustly but subsequently realized a triumphal outcome for having done so. As the body of Christ faced hostility while in the present world, the members could help alleviate the pain of suffering by fostering loving relationships with one another and ministering to those who suffered. Yet Peter first clarified in 1 Peter 3:13-22 that any suffering they might experience should be for doing what is right, not what they might have brought on themselves by their own inappropriate words or actions.

Lesson Outline

- Topic 1: Counsel for Christians who Suffer in Doing What is Right (1 Pet 3:13-17)
- Topic 2: Reflections on Christ's Sufferings: The Cross Led to His Triumph in Resurrection (1 Pet 3:18-20)
- Topic 3: Reflections on Christ's Sufferings: Keeping a Good Conscience When Suffering (1 Pet 3:21-22)

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- Learn how to overcome fear in testifying to non-Christians by “sanctifying Christ as Lord” in your heart.
- Understand the importance to God of your willingness to suffer for doing what is right.
- Explain how Christ's example of suffering and victory is meant to encourage us in our struggles with those who are hostile to our Christian faith.
- Explain the strengths and weaknesses of the various views of Christ preaching to “the spirits now in prison.”
- Describe the practical benefit to Christians of Christ's ascension to heaven.

Topic 1: Counsel for Christians who Suffer in Doing What is Right (1 Pet 3:13-17)

This paragraph forms the opening counsel that Peter offered to those who were experiencing suffering. Of course, the kind of suffering that Peter had in mind is that which comes as a result of doing what is right, not that which is a result of one's own sins or mistakes in life.



READING: Open your Bible and read 1 Peter 3:13-17.

Peter opened this paragraph with a rhetorical question: “who is going to harm you if you are devoted to what is good?” The question is meant to prompt the reader to carefully consider whom he is most accountable to. One can either be in fear of those who afflict Christians, or one can sense his allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ and be guided by a desire to please Him. The answer to the question is that *ultimately* no one can harm the Christian who is seeking to do good out of his devotion to God. True, unbelievers can abuse and even put Christians to death, but their ability to inflict harm is temporal and limited to the physical realm. The Christian, however, lives with the promise of eternal life and with the certainty that he will be resurrected to spend eternity worshiping the Lord . . . something unbelievers have no hope for (as long as they remain in unbelief). Hence, Christians are to “fear” the Lord God, because He is greater than those who can only harm or kill the body (cf. Mt 10:28).

QUESTION 1

Peter promised his readers that if they were devoted to doing good, no harm of any kind would come upon them. *True or False?*

Peter's question in verse 13 was not a mere hypothetical one. As he himself pointed out, some of his readers had already been the target of slanderous accusations (1 Pet 2:12), ignorant talk (1 Pet 2:15), evil and insults (1 Pet 3:9; 4:14), threats (1 Pet 3:14), and malicious talk (1 Pet 3:16). Yet at this point in church history, martyrdom of Christians was not widely practiced, though there certainly were instances of this (Nero's persecution in A.D. 64-67 was a localized event that does not seem to have significantly touched the other areas of the empire). Following the first century A.D., however, the persecution of Christians would certainly intensify and lead to widespread instances of martyrdom.

QUESTION 2

Which of the following forms of Christian suffering are mentioned in 1 Peter? *Select all that apply.*

- A. Slanderous accusations
- B. Taking children away from their parents
- C. Threatening remarks
- D. Widespread martyrdom of Christians throughout the Roman Empire
- E. Insulting remarks

Eckhard Schnabel, in a careful study of Christian persecution throughout the first century based on the book of Acts, summarized the kind of charges leveled against Christians:

Charges against Christians include unauthorized teaching (Acts 4:2), proclamation of the risen Jesus (4:2), teaching in the name of Jesus (4:2), blasphemy (7:57), profanation of the temple in Jerusalem (21:27-30; 24:6), attacking the patron deity of the city (19:27), introduction of new customs which are unlawful for Roman citizens (16:21; 18:13; 19:26), sedition (16:20; 17:6; 24:5), acting contrary to the decrees of the emperor (17:6).

Schnabel went on to identify the kinds of hostile actions experienced by some Christians, both within Judea and in other parts of the Roman Empire:

Measures taken against the Christians include slander (Acts 13:45), threats (4:21), banning further activity (4:18), incitement of hostility among the population (6:12; 13:50; 17:5; 17:13); hostile house visits (8:3), arrest (4:1; 5:18; 6:12; 9:2; 12:1; 16:19; 21:27), stripping of clothes (16:22), floggings and beatings with rods (5:40; 16:23), stoning (14:19; cf. 14:5), incarceration (4:3; 5:18; 16:23; 23:35), legal proceedings before courts of law (4:7; 5:21, 27; 16:19-21; 24:1-9), paying bail for missionaries (17:9), expulsion (13:50-51; often Paul leaves a city voluntarily), plots to kill or execute (5:33; 9:23-24, 29-30; 20:3; 21:31; 23:12-15; 25:3); killings and execution (7:47-60; 12:1-3).

[“The Persecution of Christians in the First Century,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 61.3 (2018), 547].

Many of the things that Schnabel mentions in these lists are still experienced by Christians today in some parts of the world. Despite the hatred and hostility that Christians have endured over the centuries, Christianity has not only survived but has spread to most of the world. Yet the once mighty Roman Empire has long since ceased to exist, something only one reads about in ancient history books.

QUESTION 3

In view of what we know from the Book of Acts, some Christians in the first century A.D. were threatened, some were warned not to meet for worship, some were arrested, and some were brought before courts of law. *True or False?*

We should notice the emphasis by use of repetition that Peter gave to undeserved suffering for the sake of Christ in this paragraph (as opposed to deserved suffering). He used expressions like being “devoted to what is good” (1 Pet 3:13), “suffer for doing what is right” (1 Pet 3:14; lit., “for the sake of righteousness”), and “suffer for doing good” (1 Pet 3:17). From God’s perspective, a Christian who experiences this kind of suffering is “blessed.” This may seem, at first consideration, a contradiction. But the idea is not that such a Christian is expected to find delight in this, but that he is “highly privileged.” Great reward awaits such perseverance, as even the Lord Jesus taught in Matthew 5:10-12,

¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to them. ¹¹ Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you and say all kinds of evil things about you falsely on account of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad because **your reward is great in heaven**, for they persecuted the prophets before you in the same way.

QUESTION 4

Why would a Christian who suffers unjustly for his faith in Christ be considered “blessed”?

- A. He will live to one day see his tormenters suffer in hell.
- B. He knows that God will come to his rescue and undo all the wrong he has received.
- C. He has the consolation of knowing that great reward in heaven awaits him.
- D. He knows that suffering will help him put to death the deeds of the flesh, so as to live for the Spirit.

Peter backed up his call to do what is good and right without fearing harm by those hostile to Christianity with a loose quotation from Isaiah 8:12, “But do not be terrified of them or be shaken.” In its original context, the exhortation in Isaiah 8:12 was a prophetic encouragement to the southern kingdom of Judah not to fear the allied kings of Israel and Syria, or the powerful kingdom of Assyria. If the inhabitants of Judah would trust in the Lord, He would be their protection. Failure to trust Him, however, would bring

about a greater danger for them than the enemies. Isaiah went on to say in the next verse, “It is the LORD of hosts whom you should regard as holy. And He shall be your fear, and He shall be your dread” (Isa 8:13; NASB). This latter verse from Isaiah is probably what led Peter to say, “but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts” (1 Pet 3:15; NASB), thereby identifying Christ Jesus as the LORD of hosts. The words “regard as holy” and “sanctify” are from the same Greek root. The NET Bible translated verse 15, “But set Christ apart as Lord in your hearts” (“to sanctify” means “to set apart”). Peter’s use of Isaiah 8:13 suggests that a faithful Christian is to recognize Jesus Christ as Lord in his heart and be more concerned about obeying Him than worrying about the threats of the enemy. The point is that Christians must recognize the divine identity of Jesus Christ and be surrendered to Him as their Lord.

QUESTION 5

Peter’s call to “sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts” is probably an allusion to Isaiah 8:13 (“It is the LORD of hosts whom you should regard as holy”), since (1) the word “to sanctify” means to regard as holy or set apart, and (2) Peter had just quoted Isaiah 8:12 (indicating he had this passage from Isaiah in mind). *True or False?*

In addition, Peter called upon his readers to “always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks about the hope you possess” (1 Pet 3:15). This “hope” Peter spoke of is that which he had spoken of earlier in 1 Peter 1:3, namely, “a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (cf. 1 Pet 1:21). As possessors of eternal life, the readers lived with the hope of being resurrected with Christ in glory. While some unbelievers might be hostile and challenging of the Christians, they could also expect that others would be inquisitive about the Christian faith. In either case, then, they were to stand ready—humbly and respectfully—to defend their hope in Christ to anyone who might ask.

QUESTION 6

When Peter spoke of being ready to give an answer to anyone about the hope they possessed, what he meant by “hope” was the hope of Christianity being declared a legal religion in the Roman Empire. *True or False?*

The *manner* in which they defended their hope in Christ was also important, for a hateful response or hostile counterattack on society would be counterproductive. As they defended their hope in Christ, they must also be diligent to keep a good conscience (1 Pet 3:16). For a testimony of Christ to be effective, it should be matched by living in such a way so as not to contradict that hope. Personal integrity is essential, as hypocrisy undermines one’s testimony.

Despite one’s best effort in defending his hope in Christ, he must be prepared to expect rejection and be slandered. Yet by keeping a good conscience, “those who slander your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame when they accuse you” (1 Pet 3:16). K. Jobes (231) remarks, “If offense is to be taken, it should be over the content of the gospel message, not because the message was offered in a manner that invalidates Christ’s love for seekers.” By a humble defense of the gospel—showing all respect for those to whom they witnessed—Christians could defeat the malicious talk of those who might malign the faith.

In some cases, those who accuse and slander Christians might take things to the next level by inflicting suffering on the Christian who sought to defend his hope in Christ. This suffering could take one of several forms: financial pressure, public humiliation, ostracism from society, or even physical harm. Regardless of the form of suffering, Peter reminded his readers that “it is better to suffer for doing good, if God wills it, than for doing evil” (1 Pet 3:17). Retaliating with evil is not an option for the Christian. He must keep in mind that God’s will may at times include suffering, but God can use suffering in the life of a Christian to develop perseverance and godly character (cf. Phil 1:29-30). One should also remember

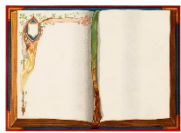
that suffering that is part of God's will is also suffering that is under His sovereign control. Finally, it is only "for a little while" (1 Pet 1:6), whereas the sinner who dies without Christ faces eternal suffering.

QUESTION 7

Which of the following provide a measure of consolation for the Christian who finds himself suffering unjustly for the name of Christ? [*Check all that apply*].

- A. God can and does use suffering in the life of a Christian to develop perseverance and godly character.
- B. The Christian knows that great reward awaits him in heaven when persecuted for Christ's sake.
- C. Even though his suffering may be painful, he also knows that such suffering is under God's sovereign control.
- D. A Christian can pray and ask God for a creative way to take revenge on his oppressors.
- E. Whatever suffering a Christian faces in this life is only "for a little while," not eternally.

QUESTION 8



1 Peter 3:16 speaks of a believer being slandered by non-Christians on account of his faith in Christ. The word "slander" means to say something false or malicious against another person so as to hurt their reputation. Have you personally experienced this? If so, how did you respond? Were you able to maintain your good conduct in Christ? Write down a description of the situation and how you responded in your Life Notebook.

Topic 2: Reflections on Christ's Sufferings: The Cross Led to His Triumph in Resurrection (1 Pet 3:18-20)

The previous paragraph of study (1 Pet 3:13-17) focused on the issue of Christian suffering for the sake of righteousness. Having sanctified Jesus Christ as *Lord* in one's heart and keeping a good conscience, the Christian is responsible for good behavior in his obedience to God, even if that should result in suffering at the hands of those hostile to the Christian faith. Peter now turns to place before his readers the example of Christ Himself as one who suffered in doing what was right. He suffered for the right reasons (providing our salvation). Yet He went on to experience victory by His resurrection and triumph over all His enemies.



READING: Open your Bible and read 1 Peter 3:18-20.

Scholars admit that this passage is one of the most difficult to interpret in all the New Testament. For instance, there are questions as to what is meant by "made alive in the spirit" in verse 18. The word "spirit" can mean—depending on the context—the Holy Spirit, the human spirit, or even an angelic spirit. Likewise, who are "the spirits now in prison" in verse 19? How and what did Christ proclaim to them, and when did He do so? Despite these troubling questions (and more), we should not miss the main point of these verses. The author wants us to consider the fact that Christ suffered innocently but ultimately experienced victory.

QUESTION 9

What is the author's primary purpose in writing 1 Peter 3:18-20?

- A. He wants the readers to realize that Christ died only once for sins.
- B. He wants the readers to understand more about spirits now in prison.
- C. He wants to present Christ as one who suffered innocently but ultimately experienced victory, so the readers will follow His example.
- D. He wants the readers to understand that they are “unjust” in the eyes of God; only Christ is just.

Most translations have the word “for” at the beginning of verse 18. This indicates the connection between the previous paragraph and these truths about Christ. The author begins by telling us that “Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust.” He did not suffer for anything personally He had done wrong. Quite the contrary, He suffered as one who was “just” (literally, “righteous”). In stating this, Peter may have been thinking of Christ as “the righteous one” of Isaiah 53 (see Acts 3:14). The statement that He “suffered once for sins” and that He did so for those who are “unjust” is a perfect depiction of His substitutionary atonement for our sins. His death on the cross involved His having to bear the punishment that all of us were due for our sins before God (cf. Rom 4:25; 1 Cor 15:3). Furthermore, unlike animal sacrifices under the old covenant which had to be made year after year, Christ’s death for sins was “once for all,” a truth underscored elsewhere in Hebrews 9:26, 28.

QUESTION 10

One of the unique contributions of Peter is his teaching that Christ “suffered once for sins,” a truth not found elsewhere in the Bible. *True or False?*

The purpose in Christ’s substitutionary death on the cross is affirmed in the words “to bring you to God.” This means He opened the way to God for us, so we could be reconciled to God (2 Cor 5:19). The debt of guilt for our sin has been paid. To do this, however, meant that He had to pay a heavy price, namely, by experiencing death. Yet though He died while on the cross (“being put to death in the flesh”), this was not the end of Him, for He was subsequently “made alive in the spirit.” The word “made alive” means that He was resurrected to life again. [The word translated “made alive”—Gk *zōopoieō*—is used elsewhere of resurrection. See John 5:21; Rom 8:11; and 1 Cor 15:22]. Scholars debate what is meant by “in the spirit.” Some would understand this to refer to the Holy Spirit, that is, He was resurrected *by the Spirit*. Yet today, most scholars reject that interpretation, on account of the parallel made between “in the flesh” and “in the spirit.” They prefer the interpretation that Christ was put to death *in the flesh* (the physical realm) but was made alive—resurrected—to life *in the spirit* (the spiritual realm, i.e., the resurrected sphere of life). Although both interpretations are biblically valid, the latter makes better sense in the context (how Christ is an example for us). Peter’s readers who might suffer innocently because of their devotion to Christ have the consolation that they, too, will go on to experience the resurrected sphere of life. Christ’s experience through suffering into victory gives assurance that those joined to Him will share the same destiny!

QUESTION 11

Most scholars understand “in the spirit” in light of its parallel with “in the flesh,” that is, a contrast of the physical realm with the spiritual realm into which Christ was resurrected. *True or False?*

The opening words of verse 19 indicate the close connection of this verse to the preceding verse, though the point is not clear. The opening phrase could be translated “in whom” or “in which.”⁸ Following the first option, some translations render the opening words “by whom also He went,” meaning the Holy Spirit, assuming that the Holy Spirit is meant at the end of verse 18. Yet, if the closing to verse 18 means the *spiritual realm* (as argued above), that is, the resurrected sphere of life, then verse 19 is better translated “in which also He went,” meaning that Christ went to the spirits now in prison in His resurrected state of being. This understanding implies a *temporal* relationship between the close of verse 18 and the opening phrase in verse 19. K. Jobes (242) points out, “Today most interpreters take it to be temporal with respect to the resurrection, meaning that at the time when Christ was made alive in spirit or was in that state, he went and preached.”

QUESTION 12

The most natural way to understand the relationship of verse 19 to verse 18 is to recognize that Christ’s proclamation to “the spirits now in prison” *follows* the time of His resurrection. *True or False?*

What remains to be determined is *where* Christ went and who are “the spirits now in prison.” Many different interpretations have been suggested over the years, but three primary ones have been dominant:

(1) The Descent to Hell View

In this view, Christ descended into hell (or hades) sometime during the three days He was in the grave.⁹ Usually this is taken to mean that He preached the gospel to those who lived before the time of the cross, to give them the chance to be saved. This was a view that some in the early church held but is mostly rejected today. This view presumes a *second chance* at salvation which has no support elsewhere in the Bible. An alternative of this view is that Christ’s descent was not to offer salvation but to proclaim their condemnation.

(2) The Preaching of Repentance to Noah’s Generation View

⁸ Grammatically, the opening phrase is a prepositional phrase, consisting of a preposition followed by a relative pronoun. Both the preposition as well as the pronoun are capable of multiple translations. However, in all other places that Peter uses this construction (Gk *en hōi*), he uses it in the sense “in which” or “in this” (1 Pet 1:6; 2:12; 3:16; 4:4), not as a personal reference (“in whom”). Yet the latter is possible, as attested elsewhere in the New Testament (see Mt 3:17).

⁹ This view is sometimes related to the Apostle’s Creed. In some versions of that Creed, the statement is made that Christ “descended into hell.” However, the more reliable translations of the Creed merely state that Christ “descended to the dead” (meaning He went to the grave). A version having Christ descend into hell was apparently given by Rufinus in A.D. 390 but then did not appear again in any version of the creed until A.D. 650. Also related to View #1 is the interpretation of Ephesians 4:9 which is sometimes translated: “Now this *expression*, ‘He ascended,’ what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth?” (NASB). Although this has sometimes been interpreted as meaning that Christ descended into hell, this is probably not the correct interpretation. If the contrast is between Christ coming to earth and His ascending back to heaven, then this simply refers to His descent to earth in His incarnation. The NIV’s translation reflects this when it says, “What does ‘he ascended’ mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions?” Another possibility is that “the lower parts of the earth” is a reference to the grave, i.e., the realm of the dead to which Christ descended (but not hell). This would make sense: Christ first descended into the grave, and then later arose.

In this view, the preincarnate Christ (through Noah and by the Spirit) preached a message calling for repentance to the disobedient people in the days of Noah before the Flood came upon the earth and destroyed them. Because of their rejection of the message at that time, they are *now* in prison (hades or hell) as they await the final judgment of God. This view was first advanced by Augustine in the 4th century A.D., was held by many in the Reformation period, and is still embraced by some scholars today (so the NET Bible, G. Derickson, and W. Grudem).

(3) The Victory Proclamation to Fallen Angels View

In this view, Christ proclaimed not the gospel but the victory His resurrection had made possible to those fallen angels of Genesis 6 that had been largely responsible for the flood judgment in Noah's day. They had been kept imprisoned since the time of their gross violation described in Genesis 6:1-4. Following His resurrection, Christ made this victory proclamation as He ascended to take His rightful place in heaven as ruler over all. This is the more dominant interpretation today (so P. Davids, J. R. Michaels, E. Blum, G. Osborne and K. Jobes).

QUESTION 13

Regarding the statement that Christ "preached to the spirits in prison" (1 Pet 3:19), match the views listed in the left column with the correct description in the right column:

<i>Name of the View</i>	<i>Description of the View</i>
The Descent to Hell	While in the grave, Christ went to hell to preach the gospel to people that lived before the time of the cross.
The Preaching of Repentance to Noah's Generation	Following His resurrection, Christ proclaimed His victory to those angels that had participated in the sin of Genesis 6:1-4.
The Victory Proclamation to Fallen Angels	In His preincarnate state, Christ was preaching through Noah to the people on earth who lived while the ark was being built.

Naturally, there are numerous variations of these three main views, but most interpretations tend to follow by and large one of these three. Let us agree from the outset of the discussion that there are good scholars on both sides of the debate between views two and three. We cannot and should not be dogmatic.

Those who hold to view two put a stress on the words "as an ark was being constructed" (1 Pet 3:20), thinking that the subjects in view are not the angels (whose violation occurred before the ark) but the *people* that were alive while the ark was being constructed. They would also argue that this view makes sense in the context of 1 Peter: Noah (a preacher of righteousness, 2 Pet 2:5) presented a message of repentance to his generation, a parallel to what Peter's readers were expected to do in sharing the gospel in their day (1 Pet 3:15). The words "when God patiently waited in the days of Noah" (1 Pet 3:20) suggests that the focus was on giving those humans of Noah's day a chance to repent.

Despite those arguments that seemingly favor view 2, there are many good arguments that can be given in support of view 3. [Admittedly this view is dependent on an interpretation of Gen 6:1-4 in which "sons of God" is understood as a reference to fallen angels who in some way violate human women]. First, the word "spirits," when not accompanied by other modifiers, rarely has humans in view (Heb 12:23 is an exception). Rather, the word "spirits" is normally applied to supernatural beings, that is, angels. This is the common use of the term in the New Testament. Second, 2 Peter 2:4-5 and Jude 6 appear to have the same event in mind, namely, the confining of demonic angels in the ancient days of Genesis because of the sin of abandoning their proper abode. If these verses are related to 1 Peter 3:19-20, observe that 2

Peter 2:4 specifically calls them “angels,” not “spirits.” Third, the whole passage appears to have a temporal progression. If verse 18 concludes with Christ entering His resurrected state, then verse 19 would be expected to speak of an act *subsequent* to that of His resurrection, not lapsing back to an action carried out in the days of Noah. Fourth, there is an abundance of extra-biblical literature written prior to Christ’s first coming that elaborates the account in Genesis 6 and the subsequent imprisonment of the fallen angels that participated in this sin.¹⁰ Although the flood was a judgment upon the unrepentant people of Noah’s day, some of this extra-biblical literature links the flood judgment to angels also.¹¹ Although scholars debate the reliability and significance of this material, the fact remains that there was a rather well-known tradition connecting Genesis 6:1-4 with the sin of angels and their subsequent confinement in judgment in connection with Noah and the flood event.

QUESTION 14

Which of the following is NOT an argument in favor of View #3 of Christ preaching to “the spirits now in prison”?

- A. The word “spirits” is commonly used in reference to angels and very rarely to humans.
- B. 2 Peter 2:4-5 and Jude 6 seem to have the same situation in mind, but specifically mention “angels.”
- C. The relationship between verse 18 and 19 suggests that Christ did this preaching *after* having entered into His resurrection state.
- D. Genesis 6:1-4 contains a prophecy that Christ would come in the future to proclaim His victory over the angelic rebellion.

Without ruling out the possibility of view 2, a slight preference is given to view 3. Although view 2 could claim to make sense regarding Peter’s preceding context (preaching the gospel), the same could be said of view 3. If the main point of 1 Peter 3:18-20 is to lift Christ up as a worthy model of one who suffered innocently while living in expectation of eschatological victory and reward, then the fact that Christ would proclaim His victory over His opposing enemies—even angelic ones—by virtue of His resurrection would certainly impress upon Peter’s readers that their present sufferings by those hostile to Christianity would one day result in their eschatological triumph as well.

QUESTION 15



Peter’s main objective in giving this portrayal of Christ in 1 Peter 3:18-19 was to provide his readers with a principle meant to help them as they suffered in doing what was right. The principle is that even though the present life in the flesh might entail sufferings, one must stay focused on the victorious outcome awaiting him in the life of resurrection. This is exactly what Christ did: He knew He had something to look forward to as He suffered. How do you see this principle applying to your life? Write your thoughts in your Life Notebook.

Peter does not specifically indicate when Christ proclaimed His triumph over the fallen angels, nor exactly where and how they were “imprisoned.” Certainly, it was after He had entered into His resurrection state of existence. If 1 Peter 3:22 is intended to be sequential to verse 19, then perhaps the

¹⁰ One of the foremost records is found in *1 Enoch* 12–16. Jobes (244) states, “This tradition as documented in 1 En. 12–16 appears to offer a background that fits well with 1 Pet. 3:19-20.” Cf. *1 Enoch* 6–7; 21:6, 10; 106:13-15; *Jubilees* 5.1; 10.1-6; 2 *Baruch* 56.12-15; as well as Josephus, *Antiquities* 1.3.1 (73); and Philo, *On the Giants*, 6.

¹¹ One might wish to consult *1 Enoch* 67:8-13; *Jubilees* 10:4-5; and *Testament of Naphtali* 3:5.

proclamation was before His actual ascension and entrance to heaven. Likewise, the place of their imprisonment is not of great importance, since the main point is the victory over them that had been secured by His resurrection.

Peter concluded verse 20 by acknowledging that eight persons were brought safely through the waters of the flood. The idea of their being delivered (saved) from the flood waters becomes a picture of Christians being “saved” spiritually. If Peter’s readers felt they were in the minority while living in the 1st century A.D. of the Roman world, they would do well to consider how it must have felt for Noah and his family—such a small number—in the days of the flood.

Topic 3: Reflections on Christ’s Sufferings: Keeping a Good Conscience When Suffering (1 Pet 3:21-22)

In verses 19-20, Peter’s main point was that Christ, following His resurrection, went to proclaim His victory to the fallen angels that had participated in the sin of abandoning their proper abode as described in Genesis 6:1-4. With that in view, he then began a slight digression to mention Noah and those who were brought safely through the flood waters, thereby escaping the judgment God brought upon the earth. Peter saw in that earlier “saving event” a foreshadowing of a greater “salvation” in Christ, with the waters of the flood having a connection to the waters of Christian baptism.



READING: Open your Bible and read 1 Peter 3:21-22.

The original language that Peter wrote in was Greek, and scholars agree that the translation of 1 Peter 3:21 from the original Greek is very difficult. Various translations have been proposed, each of which leads to a different interpretation. For this reason, verse 21 is very difficult to interpret. If all we had were the words “baptism now saves you,” we might conclude that Christian baptism was essential for salvation from the penalty of sin. However, Peter does make a couple of qualifying comments that help us understand that he was not trying to say that the ritual of water baptism is what saves a person.

Christian baptism is an important Christian ritual, being commanded by the Lord Jesus Himself (Mt 28:19-20). However, the ritual in and of itself does not provide salvation from sin but is a symbol of Christian regeneration and a public testimony of one’s faith in Christ. This is true for several reasons. First, the Bible is clear elsewhere that salvation from sin is a result of one’s faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His work on the cross in dying for our sins. Faith alone is the key (Eph 2:8-9; Acts 16:31)! If baptism could save us, that would be a work on man’s part, but the Bible is clear that we cannot be saved by works (Rom 4:5; Titus 3:5-6). Second, if baptism was required for salvation from sin, then that would be part of the gospel message. However, the Apostle Paul clearly excluded baptism from the gospel message in 1 Corinthians 1:17: “For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel.” Third, Peter’s qualifying remarks in the remainder of 1 Peter 3:21 reveal that he was not trying to say that water baptism saves a person.

QUESTION 16

Which of the following are good arguments showing that water baptism is NOT what saves a person from the penalty of their sins?

- A. Christ instructed His followers to make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- B. Baptism is not part of the *gospel message* in view of Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 1:17 that Christ did not send him to baptize but to preach the gospel.
- C. Jesus was baptized by John the baptizer.
- D. Although some verses regarding baptism might be debated, verses like Ephesians 2:8-9 and Acts 16:31 give us clear examples demonstrating that faith alone is the requirement for salvation from sin.

Having said that, we should recognize that baptism is an important step in the Christian life, and anyone who wants to be a faithful disciple of Christ should do so. In the first century A.D., they would not have thought about becoming a Christian without also following Christ in baptism. That is why Peter can speak of the two so closely.

QUESTION 17



Today, Christian baptism may be viewed differently in different cultures. How is Christian baptism viewed by the people in your country (by both believers and non-believers)? Have you personally been baptized as a public testimony of your faith in Christ? If so, what did that mean to you? What were the reactions of your family members and other people who know you? Write your answers in your Life Notebook.

After saying “baptism now saves you,” Peter made two qualifying remarks to clarify what he was trying to get across, one negative and one positive. First, the negative—it is “not the washing off of physical dirt.” That is, the water itself has no saving effect. [Some scholars think Peter is not talking about physical dirt but the moral aspect. That is, Peter was saying that baptism does not produce the removal of moral defilement from the “flesh”]. The second qualification (the positive aspect), however, is very difficult to translate and consequently difficult to interpret. Scholars are divided as to whether Peter is talking about a “pledge to God” or an “appeal to God.” Furthermore, the words “good conscience” presumably are part of a prepositional phrase, but there is no preposition in the Greek text (it must be supplied based on context). So, this could be translated “from a good conscience,” “by a good conscience,” “in good conscience,” or even “of a good conscience.”

Scholars who prefer the translation “pledge” (hence, “the pledge of a good conscience”) typically relate this to the ceremony of Christian baptism in which the candidate for baptism would not only affirm their faith in Christ but would make a public pledge to live their life keeping a good conscience before God. That might support what Peter had said about a “good conscience” in 1 Peter 3:16. This understanding is possible and is preferred by several major commentators and Bible translations (so the NET Bible). One weakness to this view is that the translation “pledge” is a rare meaning of the Greek term.

QUESTION 18

Some scholars prefer the translation “pledge” in 1 Peter 3:21 (“the pledge of a good conscience toward God”), thinking that in the practice of Christian baptism in the 1st century A.D., a candidate for baptism would not only be asked to affirm his faith in Christ but also to make a public pledge to live a life keeping a good conscience before God. *True or False?*

QUESTION 19

What is a weakness in using the word “pledge” in the translation of 1 Peter 3:21?

- A. Water baptism was not practiced in the 1st century A.D.
- B. The translation “pledge” is a very rare meaning of this word (it normally means something else).
- C. No one could be expected to live with a “good conscience.”
- D. Using the word “pledge” would have made a new Christian feel very guilty when they could not live up to keeping a good conscience.

Other scholars prefer the translation “appeal.” They would either understand this as “an appeal for a good conscience,” or even “an appeal to God from a good conscience” (similarly, “an appeal to God in good conscience”). Although the Greek word translated *pledge* or *appeal* occurs only once in the New Testament (Gk *eperōtēma*), the corresponding verb form (Gk *eperōtaō*) occurs over 50 times in the New Testament in the sense of *asking* a question. In Matthew 16:1, the verb has the sense of making a request, and this would support the idea of “an appeal.”

QUESTION 20

Matthew 16:1 is a good example to support the translation “pledge” in the suggested translation, “the pledge of a good conscience to God.” *True or False?*

Finally, Peter adds “through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” This could connect back to the word “baptism.” Hence, baptism now saves you through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The other option is to connect this phrase with the “appeal” made to God. In this case, what saves is an appeal to God in good conscience (or for a good conscience) *based on* the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Despite the difficulties of translating and interpreting 1 Peter 3:21, several things are clear. First, Peter was trying to draw an analogy between the flood waters of Noah’s day to the waters of Christian baptism. In both cases, the waters marked a dividing point in which those who went through the waters escaped God’s judgment and enjoyed God’s “salvation.” Second, the waters of Christian baptism had no saving effect in and of themselves, as Peter’s comment “not the washing off of physical dirt” makes clear. Third, his mention of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the confirming indication of Christ’s work on the cross, assuring the Christian of the reliability of the gospel promise in which he has placed his faith.

Having returned to the topic of Christ’s resurrection following the brief digression in verses 20 and 21, Peter concluded on a note about the Lord’s ascension to heaven. Peter’s flow of thought could be traced by the following outline:

- 3:19 Christ *went* to the spirits now in prison
- 3:20 Noah and his family were *saved* through *water*
- 3:21 The *water* of baptism reflects *salvation* as assured by Christ’s resurrection
- 3:22 Christ *went* into heaven, with all cosmic powers subjected to Him

As Peter proceeded in his explanations, he did so by chronologically tracing the major events that brought Christ’s incarnation to a close. He died (v 18); He was made alive, that is, resurrected (v 18); He returned to heaven (v 22); and He was given the seat of honor at the Father’s right hand (v 22). In mentioning that Christ returned to heaven, Peter himself would have had a vivid recollection of that moment, for he himself had been one of the earthly witnesses of that event (Lk 24:51; Acts 1:9-11). Peter along with other disciples witnessed Jesus rising above the earth until the clouds took Him out of sight. How could they ever forget such a dramatic moment?

In stating that Christ is now “at the right hand of God,” Peter was alluding to Psalm 110:1, “Sit down at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.” The mission for which He came to earth was accomplished, and He was now placed in a position that reflected the exalted role He would have from that point onward. In the culmination of his sermon on the day of Pentecost, Peter also quoted Psalm 110:1 at that time and then declared its significance: “Therefore let all the house of Israel know beyond a doubt that God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36). He was “Lord” in the sense that He had earned the right to rule God’s creation, reigning as king over it. Although the full imposition of His reign would await His second coming in power and glory (it would be at that time that His kingdom would be formally inaugurated and fully realized), He was already king. In this capacity, He uses His authority for building His church, and while seated at the Father’s right hand, He intercedes for us (Rom 8:34).

QUESTION 21

Match the verse references in the left column with the correct verses in the right column:

<i>Biblical Reference</i>	<i>Description of the View</i>
Luke 24:51	David’s Lord was told to sit at God’s right hand.
Acts 1:9-11	While at God’s right hand, Christ intercedes for His own.
Psalm 110:1	As Christ ascended to heaven, He was blessing the disciples.
Romans 8:34	As Christ ascended to heaven, a cloud received Him out of the disciples’ sight.

This exalted status had cosmic implications. By virtue of His resurrection and ascension, the defeat of the angelic rebellion led by Satan was confirmed, and He now reigned as Lord and Christ “far above every rule and authority and power and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come” (Eph 1:20-21; cf. Mt 28:18; Col 1:16; Eph 6:12; Phil 2:9-11). This truth had very relevant implications for Peter’s readers. If even the forces of evil (demonic spirits) that opposed God were now subject to Christ’s rule, then no effective opposition stood before them. Earthly suffering would not stand in the way of eventual triumph and reward.

QUESTION 22

In view of other New Testament passages, the reference to “authorities and powers” in 1 Peter 3:22 probably refers to Roman rulers of that time. *True or False?*

QUESTION 23



Open your Bible and carefully read the words of Acts 2:32-36. Peter’s certainty about the risen Christ rested on three things: (1) he and the other apostles had personally seen the risen Christ; (2) they had received the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost that Jesus had promised; and (3) they had the testimony of God’s Word from Psalm 110:1.

Because of this, they boldly testified about Jesus to their fellow citizens in Jerusalem. There was no mistake in their minds that Jesus was “both Lord and Christ.” Is that your conviction also? In what ways does that affect how you live? Write your answers in your Life Notebook.

Lesson 8 Self Check

QUESTION 1

Why would a Christian who suffers unjustly for his faith in Christ be considered “blessed”?

- A. He has the consolation of knowing that great reward in heaven awaits him.
- B. He knows that God will come to his rescue and undo all the wrong he has received.
- C. He will live to one day see his tormenters suffer in hell.
- D. He knows that suffering will help him put to death the deeds of the flesh so as to live for the Spirit.

QUESTION 2

When Peter spoke of being ready to give an answer to anyone about the hope they possessed, what he meant by “hope” was the hope of being resurrected with Christ in glory. *True or False?*

QUESTION 3

Which of the following provide a measure of consolation for the Christian who finds himself suffering unjustly for the name of Christ? [Check all that apply].

- A. God can and does use suffering in the life of a Christian to develop perseverance and godly character.
- B. The Christian knows that great reward awaits him in heaven when persecuted for Christ’s sake.
- C. Even though his suffering may be painful, he also knows that such suffering is under God’s sovereign control.
- D. A Christian can pray and ask God for a creative way to take revenge on his oppressors.
- E. Whatever suffering a Christian faces in this life is only “for a little while,” not eternally.

QUESTION 4

The statement in 1 Peter 3:18 that Christ was “made alive in the spirit” probably means that even though He had to suffer on the cross, He was still able to experience the joy and fellowship of the Holy Spirit. *True or False?*

QUESTION 5

In 1 Peter 3, the most natural way to understand the relationship of verse 19 to verse 18 is to recognize that Christ’s proclamation to “the spirits now in prison” *follows* the time of His resurrection rather than relapsing to a time in His preincarnate state. *True or False?*

QUESTION 6

Of the various interpretations of Christ preaching to “the spirits now in prison,” which of the following was NOT listed as one of the three primary views?

- A. The Victory Proclamation to Fallen Angels View.
- B. The Preaching of Repentance to Noah’s Generation View.
- C. The Day of Pentecost Proclamation View.
- D. The Descent to Hell View.

QUESTION 7

The word “spirits” in the phrase “the spirits now in prison” probably means *human beings*, because this is how the word “spirits” is commonly used in the New Testament. *True or False?*

QUESTION 8

Which of the following is NOT an argument in favor of View #3 of Christ preaching to “the spirits now in prison”? [View #3 = Christ’s victory proclamation to the fallen angels].

- A. The word “spirits” is commonly used in reference to angels and very rarely to humans.
- B. 2 Peter 2:4-5 and Jude 6 seem to have the same situation in mind, but specifically mention “angels.”
- C. The relationship between verse 18 and 19 suggests that Christ did this preaching *after* having entered into His resurrection state.
- D. Genesis 6:1-4 contains a prophecy that Christ would come in the future to proclaim His victory over the angelic rebellion.

QUESTION 9

Which of the following are good arguments showing that water baptism is NOT what saves a person from the penalty of their sins?

- A. Christ instructed His followers to make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- B. Baptism is not part of the *gospel message* in view of Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 1:17 that Christ did not send him to baptize but to preach the gospel.
- C. Jesus was baptized by John the baptizer.
- D. Although some verses regarding baptism might be debated, verses like Ephesians 2:8-9 and Acts 16:31 give us clear examples demonstrating that faith alone is the requirement for salvation from sin.

QUESTION 10

In view of other New Testament passages, the reference to “authorities and powers” in 1 Peter 3:22 probably refers to demonic spirits. *True or False?*

Lesson 8 Answers to Questions

QUESTION 1: False

QUESTION 2: Correct answers are “A,” “C” and “E.”

- A. Slandorous accusations
- C. Threatening remarks
- E. Insulting remarks

QUESTION 3: True

QUESTION 4

- C. He has the consolation of knowing that great reward in heaven awaits him.

QUESTION 5: True

QUESTION 6: False

QUESTION 7: All are correct except for “D.”

QUESTION 8: *Your answer*

QUESTION 9:

- C. He wants to present Christ as one who suffered innocently but ultimately experienced victory, so the readers will follow His example.

QUESTION 10: False

QUESTION 11: True

QUESTION 12: True

QUESTION 13

<i>Name of the View</i>	<i>Description of the View</i>
The Descent to Hell	While in the grave, Christ went to hell to preach the gospel to people that lived before the time of the cross.
The Preaching of Repentance to Noah’s Generation	In His preincarnate state, Christ was preaching through Noah to the people on earth who lived while the ark was being built.
The Victory Proclamation to Fallen Angels	Following His resurrection, Christ proclaimed His victory to those angels that had participated in the sin of Genesis 6:1-4.

QUESTION 14: “D” is NOT an argument in favor of View #3.

- D. Genesis 6:1-4 contains a prophecy that Christ would come in the future to proclaim His victory over the angelic rebellion.

QUESTION 15: *Your answer*

QUESTION 16: Correct answers are “B” and “D.”

- B. Baptism is not part of the *gospel message* in view of Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 1:17 that Christ did not send him to baptize but to preach the gospel.
- D. Although some verses regarding baptism might be debated, verses like Ephesians 2:8-9 and Acts 16:31 give us clear examples demonstrating that faith alone is the requirement for salvation from sin.

QUESTION 17: *Your answer*

QUESTION 18: True

QUESTION 19

- B. The translation “pledge” is a very rare meaning of this word (it normally means something else).

QUESTION 20: False

QUESTION 21:

<i>Biblical Reference</i>	<i>Description of the View</i>
Luke 24:51	As Christ ascended to heaven, He was blessing the disciples.
Acts 1:9-11	As Christ ascended to heaven, a cloud received Him out of the disciples' sight.
Psalms 110:1	David's Lord was told to sit at God's right hand
Romans 8:34	While at God's right hand, Christ intercedes for His own.

QUESTION 22: False**QUESTION 23:** *Your answer*

Lesson 8 Self Check Answers

QUESTION 1

A. He has the consolation of knowing that great reward in heaven awaits him.

QUESTION 2: True

QUESTION 3

All are correct except answer “D.”

QUESTION 4: False

QUESTION 5: True

QUESTION 6

C. The Day of Pentecost Proclamation View.

QUESTION 7: False

QUESTION 8: “D” is NOT an argument in favor of View #3.

D. Genesis 6:1-4 contains a prophecy that Christ would come in the future to proclaim His victory over the angelic rebellion.

QUESTION 9: Correct answers are “B” and “D.”

B. Baptism is not part of the *gospel message* in view of Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 1:17 that Christ did not send him to baptize but to preach the gospel.

D. Although some verses regarding baptism might be debated, verses like Ephesians 2:8-9 and Acts 16:31 give us clear examples demonstrating that faith alone is the requirement for salvation from sin.

QUESTION 10: True

Lesson Nine: Faithfully Following Christ to Face a World Hostile to Christians (1 Peter 4:1-6)

Lesson Introduction

The theme of Christian suffering for doing what is right continues in the opening paragraph of 1 Peter 4. Peter had previously covered the topic of Christians having to live in the face of unjust suffering in 1 Peter 3:13-17. He followed that by offering the example of Christ for their consideration (1 Pet 3:18-22). Christ Jesus suffered in the flesh (He was crucified), yet He was made alive in the spirit (resurrected) and went on to experience the triumph of proclaiming His victory to rebellious angelic beings. Now, in 1 Peter 4:1-6, Peter returned to addressing his readers who faced the challenge of having to suffer for their faith in Christ. Following Christ's example, they also needed to resolve to live godly lives (in contrast to their pagan neighbors), even if it might mean suffering and persecution to the point of martyrdom. Peter reminded his readers that those who rejected Christ and were hostile to Christians in this life would eventually have to stand before God to face His judgment. In contrast, Christians would enjoy life in the spirit.

Lesson Outline

- Topic 1: Choosing to Live for the "Will of God" Even If It Results in Suffering (1 Pet 4:1-2)
- Topic 2: Suffering Mockery and Abuse from Unbelievers (1 Pet 4:3-4)
- Topic 3: The Expectation of God's Judgment Awaiting Unbelievers (1 Pet 4:5)
- Topic 4: The Benefit of the Gospel "to those who are dead" (1 Pet 4:6)

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- Follow Christ's example of what it means to suffer in the flesh.
- Realize that your calling as a Christian is to live for the will of God, not the lustful desires of men.
- State your conviction why you as a Christian need to make a break from sins you participated in before coming to faith in Christ.
- Be prepared for being maligned and verbally abused by non-Christians because you have chosen not to participate in certain sins that they do.
- Contrast the outcome in life between non-Christians who are hostile to Christianity, and those Christians who may have suffered for their faith while living on earth.

Topic 1: Choosing to Live for the "Will of God" Even If It Results in Suffering (1 Pet 4:1-2)

The word "So" (or "Therefore") at the beginning of verse one signals a connection between the previous paragraph (3:18-22) and the opening paragraph of chapter four.



READING: Open your Bible and read 1 Peter 4:1-2.

What Christ did in His willingness to suffer unjustly in obeying the will of God—even to the point of giving up His life—is meant to serve as an example for every Christian. The opening words in 4:1, “since Christ suffered in the flesh” is a reiteration of what Peter had previously said in 1 Peter 3:18, “being put to death in the flesh.” What Peter means by Christ having “suffer in the flesh” is that He suffered to the point of death. Two observations confirm this. First, the word “suffer” (Greek *paschō*) is used in both 1 Peter 3:18 and 1 Peter 4:1. 1 Peter 3:18 states that “Christ also suffered once for sins,” while 1 Peter 4:1 states that “Christ suffered in the flesh.” Second, both verses use the same phrase “in the flesh” (*sarki*). So, we should interpret 1 Peter 4:1 in view of 1 Peter 3:18 to which it clearly alludes.

QUESTION 1

Which of the following observations help us to understand what it means for Christ to have “suffered in the flesh”? [Circle all that are correct].

- A. Jesus experienced many sufferings, and these are recorded for us in the gospel accounts.
- B. The Greek word for “suffered” is *paschō*, and this same word was used in 1 Peter 3:18 to indicate that Jesus was put to death.
- C. Jesus experienced many things “in the flesh” (in His physical body), including hunger and lack of sleep.
- D. The phrase “in the flesh” (Gk *sarki*) in 1 Peter 4:1 was used earlier in 1 Peter 3:18 where Christ’s suffering “in the flesh” meant that He was *bodily* (physically) put to death.

Just as Christ suffered to the point of death (though He was innocent and suffered unjustly), Christians must follow their Lord’s example in being prepared to do the same. Peter said that we who are Christians must arm ourselves with the same attitude that Jesus did. What Peter is conveying here is really the same lesson that he himself had learned from the Lord as recorded in Mark 8:31-34. In Mark 8:31, the Lord announced that He was leading the disciples to Jerusalem where He would be rejected and killed. Peter, not understanding yet that Christ intended to die for sins on the cross, objected rather passionately. In response, Christ sharply rebuked Peter and laid down the terms of what He expected from a committed disciple: “If anyone wants to become my follower, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.” To “deny” oneself meant that a disciple must learn to give up his own agenda and expectations and seek to follow God’s agenda (His plans and purposes). To “take up one’s cross” meant in the first-century Roman world to be prepared to die, for one who carried a cross was on his way to be executed. The point of Christ’s statement was that He was looking for disciples so committed to Him and His kingdom purposes that they would even be willing to die for Him and for the sake of the gospel.

QUESTION 2

1 Peter 4:1 says that Christians are to arm themselves with the same mind (or “purpose”) as Christ. In this context, this means to constantly quote Scripture in our minds. *True or False?*

QUESTION 3

What were the three requirements for being a committed disciple according to Jesus in Mark 8:34?

- A. A willingness to become a missionary, read the Bible seven times, and plant a new church.
- B. To deny oneself, take up his cross, and abide in the Word of God.
- C. To deny oneself, give up the lusts of men, and take up one’s cross.
- D. To deny oneself, take up his cross, and follow Jesus.

In the final part of 1 Peter 4:1, Peter gives a reason why Christians should live with the same purpose in mind that Christ did, that is, living to do the will of God no matter what the cost. Peter says, “because the one who has suffered in the flesh has finished with sin.” Some scholars understand “the one who has suffered” to be a reference to Christ Himself. However, K. Jobes is probably correct when she argues that it is not Christ in view in this case but rather the Christian who is armed with the same purpose as Christ. Two reasons support this view. First, the overall context would suggest that Peter is thinking of the believer. In 1 Peter 3:13-17, he exhorted believers to be willing to suffer unjustly in doing the will of God. Then he gave the example of Christ in 1 Peter 3:18-22 who modeled this very thing. Beginning in 1 Peter 4:1, Peter is returning to exhort believers again in view of Christ’s example. Second, the following verse (1 Pet 4:2) clarifies what he means by “ceasing from sin.” It is to live for the will of God rather than for the lusts of men. As the following verses bear out, this applies to believers.

QUESTION 4

Regarding the statement “the one who has suffered in the flesh has finished with sin,” some scholars think that this refers to Christ and some think it refers to Christians. *True or False?*

QUESTION 5

Which of the following supports the interpretation that to be “finished with sin” is meant to refer to Christians rather than to Christ?

- A. We know that Christ never had any personal sins.
- B. The following verse (1 Pet 4:2) is directed at believers and how they are to live for the will of God during their remaining years on earth.
- C. In the overall context starting with 1 Peter 3:13, Peter moved from exhorting believers to giving an example of Christ in suffering (3:18-22), and then in 1 Peter 4:1 taking up his concern again for how believers are to be willing to suffer unjustly in doing what is right.
- D. Peter wants the gospel to be preached to all men, so that the Roman Empire would be a better place in which to live.

But if the final clause in 1 Peter 4:1 has believers in view, how is their suffering in the flesh related to being “finished with sin”? Surely this is not talking about sinless perfection in the life of a believer. 1 John 1:8 reminds us, “If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us” (NASB). As long as we are still in the body, we will sin, and we will continue to struggle with sin. A better solution as to the meaning of 1 Peter 4:1 is to be found in the intended attitude and conviction that Peter is hoping his readers will come to. To “suffer in the flesh” meant, for Peter, to be willing to suffer in doing what is right, even if it meant having to give up one’s own life in the process. Obviously, it takes a lot of courage and conviction to be a Christian of this much commitment. The person who has this level of conviction—who is willing to be martyred for the sake of Christ—demonstrates that he takes following God seriously and therefore pursues a godly lifestyle that reflects the holiness to which God calls him. The words of 1 Peter 1:14-16 are worth considering again at this point:

¹⁴ Like obedient children, do not comply with the evil urges you used to follow in your ignorance,
¹⁵ but, like the Holy One who called you, become holy yourselves in all of your conduct, ¹⁶ for it is written, “*You shall be holy, because I am holy.*”

QUESTION 6

To be “finished with sin” (or “cease from sin”) means for a believer to have reached a point in his Christian life where he no longer sins. *True or False?*

The point, then, of verse one is not that a Christian is “finished with sin” in the sense that he no longer sins but that he demonstrates the hatred he has for sin that goes hand-in-hand with his willingness to suffer for Christ. Peter was calling his readers (and us) to demonstrate a commitment to pursuing the will of God relentlessly, so much so that they would choose to suffer rather than to follow the sinful lifestyle practiced by the non-Christian world around them. K. Jobes (265) explains it this way:

Peter’s readers face the choice of either taking the path of least resistance—going along with the values, norms, and practices acceptable and expected by their society—or being obedient to God and suffering the consequences of criticism and condemnation by unbelieving family and friends. Their willingness to suffer this way therefore **demonstrates that they have resolved to be through with sin.** [emphasis mine]

QUESTION 7

According to K. Jobes, to be “finished with sin” (or “cease from sin”) has more to do with one’s attitude toward sin rather than sinless perfection, for one who is willing to suffer for Christ is also a person that is likely to want to be obedient to Christ. *True or False?*

This level of commitment (a resolve to live a holy life and a willingness to suffer if need be in doing so) is given further elaboration in verse two. Peter describes the committed Christian as one who “spends the rest of his time on earth concerned about the will of God and not human desires” (literally, “the lusts of men”). This is now the third time in this epistle that Peter has urged the readers to forsake the fleshly lusts that they once pursued before coming to know Christ (cf. 1 Pet 1:14; 2:11). The wise Christian is one who realizes he only has a brief time of being here on earth and that it is imperative to make the most of this time. Death eventually comes to all of us (unless we happen to be alive at the moment of Christ’s return), and in either case we know that we will one day have to stand before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account of ourselves (Rom 14:10-12; 2 Cor 5:9-10; 1 Cor 3:10-15). Our future in eternity (what we do and what rewards we will enjoy) is directly related to our faithfulness in living for Christ in this life. Even the psalmist realized the importance of a life well-lived when he wrote,

¹⁰ The days of our lives add up to seventy years, or eighty, if one is especially strong. But even one’s best years are marred by trouble and oppression. Yes, they pass quickly and we fly away. . . . ¹² So teach us to consider our mortality [lit., “*number our days*”], so that we might live wisely (Ps 90:10, 12).

QUESTION 8

Match the verse reference in the left column with the appropriate quotation in the right column:

<i>Verse Reference</i>	<i>Biblical Quotation</i>
Psalm 90:12	“we make it our aim . . . to be well pleasing to Him”
Romans 14:10-12	“each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will reveal it”
1 Corinthians 3:10-15	“each of us shall give account of himself to God”
2 Corinthians 5:9-10	“teach us to number our days”

No one knows how much time they have left to live “in the flesh” (that is, on earth), but however little or much it might be, it ought to be for doing “the will of God.” Peter had mentioned this earlier in his epistle when he wrote, “such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men” (1 Pet 2:15; NASB). Before they came to faith in Christ, they joined in with non-Christians in pursuit of

“human desires.” Literally, the text says they pursued “the lusts of men.” [Peter will give several examples of this in verse three]. Now that they had become Christians, having been bought with the blood of Christ, they were to live a new kind of life. This was a strong concern of Peter’s, as reflected by similar statements he had expressed earlier in his epistle:

Like obedient children, do not comply with the **evil urges** you used to follow in your ignorance (1 Pet 1:14).

Dear friends, I urge you as foreigners and exiles to keep away from **fleshly desires** that do battle against the soul (1 Pet 2:11).

QUESTION 9



In essence, sanctification is *the process of our being changed* from the person we were when we first met Christ to becoming more and more like Christ. Peter says that the believer in Christ “no longer should live the rest of *his* time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.” That is a very challenging statement for any of us to pursue. Actually, it is one we are not capable of doing except through a close walk with the Lord and the help of the Holy Spirit. What one thing of the will of God do you believe the Lord is calling you to seek in your life? Is this a change that needs to be made in your life to better conform to His will? Write down your thoughts in your Life Notebook, and then take a few moments to ask the Holy Spirit to help you change in this area of your life.

Topic 2: Suffering Mockery and Abuse from Unbelievers (1 Pet 4:3-4)

No one enjoys being made fun of, laughed at, mocked or insulted. We are all emotional human beings with feelings. The words and actions of others, when directed at us, do affect us. Yet we all live in a world where sinful human nature operates. People say and do things to others that are often cruel and abusive. In becoming a Christian, we are happy that our sins have been forgiven, we have peace with God, and we have the promise of eternal life that will one day result in our resurrection. However, there is a certain price we must be willing to pay as Christians. The non-Christian world does not understand the reality of our faith, what it means to be born-again, or what it means to know God in a personal way. Many non-Christians will look down on us for our faith in Christ, even considering it foolishness. Some will even act in hostile ways against us. This can range from offensive comments made about us (or the Lord) to physical threats and even bodily harm. Literally thousands of Christians have been martyred for Christ in the past century, a trend that continues to this very day. In verses 3-4, Peter points out one of the chief reasons the non-Christian world maligns and speaks evil of us. As Christians, we recognize that many of the things done by non-Christians are sinful, and our desire to cease from these things draws out their ire against us.



READING: Open your Bible and read 1 Peter 4:3-4.

Peter began verse three by reminding his readers of their “past lifetime.” By this he meant that period of time in the past before they had become Christians. In the first century A.D., most of his readers lived where the gospel message was just beginning to reach their area. In fact, there were still many places in the Roman Empire where the gospel had not even advanced that far. The newness of the gospel meant that many of his readers became Christians as adults, having lived a good part of their life as non-Christians before the gospel reached them. During that time before

becoming Christians, many would have lived typical pagan lives (unless they came from a Jewish background). Many would have even participated in idolatrous practices (worshiping Greek and Roman gods) that were prevalent in that day. Their moral values would have no doubt resembled that of the general population, meaning that they may have been sexually immoral or indulged in drinking and drunkenness. Upon hearing the gospel and believing in Christ, their worldview would have started changing. As they heard the Scriptures preached, they would realize that much of their old lifestyle needed to change. They had spent enough time in the past pursuing “the desire of the Gentiles” (NASB), but now that they were Christians, they were called to a whole different way of life in which they were to leave behind those things the Gentiles desired. By “Gentiles,” Peter obviously meant those people who were part of the *non-Christian* Gentile world. The NIV translates verse three, “doing what pagans choose to do.” Earlier in his epistle, Peter challenged them to leave behind their old way of life and pursue a new life marked by holiness:

- ¹⁴ Like obedient children, do not comply with the evil urges you used to follow in your ignorance,
¹⁵ but, like the Holy One who called you, become holy yourselves in all of your conduct (1 Pet 1:14-15).

They had spent enough time in the past doing “the will (or ‘desire’) of the Gentiles.” Undoubtedly Peter’s readers were well-acquainted with the things he meant by this, those things that Gentile non-Christians enjoyed doing. Nevertheless, Peter gave a representative list: “lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.” Certainly, this was not an exhaustive list (he could have mentioned many other things), but this was enough to make his point. There was a big difference between how non-Christians lived in the Roman Empire of that day and how Christians were to live as witnesses for Christ. The latter were to live (as the Apostle Paul put it in Phil 2:15) as “lights in the world” amid a crooked and perverse generation.

QUESTION 10

Which of the following did Peter mention in his list of sins in 1 Peter 4:3?

- A. Stealing money
- B. lewdness
- C. Using filthy language
- D. drunkenness
- E. Angry outbursts
- F. lusts

QUESTION 11

None of Peter’s readers had ever done any of these things, because people who had done such things would never be able to become Christians. *True or False?*

The first term in the list (translated “lewdness” or “debauchery”) is the Greek term *aselgeia*. This refers to any behavior lacking moral restraint, particularly sexual acts. Looking over the list, the first five items involve unrestrained indulgence, whether it be regarding sex, food or drink. The final item in the list (“abominable idolatries”) pertains to participation in any one of many forms of pagan worship as practiced in the Greco-Roman world of the day. Excessive acts of eating and drinking would often be associated with pagan festivals, such as that of Bacchus (Dionysus) and Saturnalia. Bacchus was known as a god of wine and ecstasy. Saturnalia was a Roman festival held each December dedicated to the agricultural god Saturn and noted as a time of feasting and exchanging of gifts. Some of those to whom Peter wrote had participated in such revelry before coming to faith in Christ, but Peter reminded them that

such activities of the past now had no place in their life as Christians. Such a change of lifestyle would be offensive to many of their acquaintances. K. Jobes (262) writes,

These attitudes toward contemporary Roman customs and morals, combined with the Christians' refusal to burn incense to the emperor—a gesture of civic gratitude intended to assure the well-being of the empire—earned Christians the reputation of being haters of humanity and traitors to the Roman way of life.

QUESTION 12

Bacchus was a Roman deity whose festival was held each December in dedication to him as the god of agricultural blessing, at which occasion there was much feasting. *True or False?*

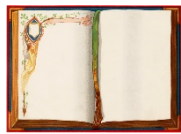
QUESTION 13

Looking at the list of sins mentioned by Peter, the first five items involve unrestrained indulgence, whether it be regarding sex, food or drink. *True or False?*

When Christians declined to participate in normal cultural activities, this could be seen as a sense of betrayal and even as a threat to the welfare of the community. J. M. G. Barclay explains,

Moreover, it was highly dangerous for even one segment of the community to slight the gods, whose wrath was ever to be feared. Civic peace, the success of agriculture, and freedom from earthquakes or flood were regularly attributed to the benevolence of the gods.
[“Conflict in Thessalonica,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* (1993), 515; cited in K. Jobes, 269].

QUESTION 14



In today's world, worship of the Roman gods is no longer practiced. Instead, other forms of religion have taken their place. In many non-Christian cultures today there is a strong social pressure for people of a particular country or region to be loyal to the religion or system of worship practiced by the majority of that country's citizens. All citizens are expected to conform and go along with what the majority holds to. This can cause innumerable problems for those who have trusted Christ as their Savior. In your Life Notebook, describe the religious expectations that are put on people of your local community. Does this make it difficult for Christians of your area? If so, how?

That same cultural tension faced by the early Christians is still true today. When we as Christians break from our old way of life, this can lead to an alienation from friends, family, and business associates. Peter was well-aware of this problem, and in 1 Peter 4:4 he wrote, “In regard to these [sinful practices], they think it strange that you do not run with *them* in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of *you*.” The words translated “speaking evil of you,” are in Greek but one word, *blasphēmeō*. In addition to the meaning “to blaspheme,” it can also mean to “slander, hurl abuse at, speak against.” Hence the NIV translates it, “they heap abuse on you.” The cultural pressure was strong for these early Christians to conform to the morality and religious pagan worship of that day. Those who dared to be different might face abusive language, social ostracism, and financial pressures to conform. Christians today can and often do face the very same challenges by the non-Christian culture about them.

QUESTION 15

What did Peter mean by using the Greek word *blasphēmeō* in 1 Peter 4:4?

- A. Non-Christians would curse God to make the Christians feel bad.
- B. Non-Christians would demand that Christians be locked up in a jail.
- C. Non-Christians would slander or verbally abuse Christians who worshiped Jesus.
- D. Non-Christians would take away jobs from Christians and do other things to financially hurt them.

Topic 3: The Expectation of God's Judgment Awaiting Unbelievers (1 Pet 4:5)

In the previous topic covering 1 Peter 4:3-4, we considered the mockery and abuse that non-Christians were known to have brought against believers in Jesus Christ who no longer chose to participate in the sinful ways and idolatrous worship so characteristic of the culture in which they lived. In one sense, these non-Christian antagonists were “judging” the Christians, albeit unfairly. In verse five, Peter reminded the Christians who suffered in this way that ultimately it will be these abusive non-Christians that will be “judged,” and that at the hands of a holy and righteous God.



READING: Open your Bible and read 1 Peter 4:5.

P. Davids (152) explains the *turn-around* of circumstances that verse five reveals: “While the Christians may feel abandoned by God and unable to defend themselves, it is their accusers, not they, who have a problem, for the detractors will have to answer to God.” One day they will have to stand before God and give an account of themselves to “Him who is ready to judge.” The “Him” being referred to will ironically be the Lord Jesus Christ, the very one that they had mocked the Christians for believing in. Support for the fact that their judge will be Jesus Christ comes from the following phrase, “the living and the dead.” This phrase is used in Acts 10:42 and 2 Timothy 4:1 of Christ as the one appointed by the Father to judge:

He commanded us to preach to the people and to warn them that he is the one appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead (Acts 10:42).

I solemnly charge you before God and Christ Jesus, who is going to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom (2 Tim 4:1).

During His earthly ministry, Jesus himself affirmed the fact that God the Father had entrusted the judgment of mankind to God the Son:

²² Furthermore, the Father does not judge anyone, but has assigned all judgment to the Son, ²³ so that all people will honor the Son just as they honor the Father. The one who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. ...²⁷ (the Father) has granted the Son authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man (Jn 5:22-23, 27).

QUESTION 16

The reason that the Lord Jesus Christ has been assigned to judge the living and the dead (rather than God the Father) is so all people will honor the Son just as they honor the Father. *True or False?*

The judgment that Jesus spoke of in these verses is the eternal judgment that awaits the unrighteous, because the very next verse affirms that believers in Jesus are exempt from this judgment:

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life (Jn 5:24, NASB).

By the words “does not come into judgment,” what Jesus is speaking about is a judgment as to where a Christian spends eternity. That issue is settled at the moment one puts his faith in Christ. According to Jesus’ promise in John 3:36, “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life” (cf. Jn 10:27-29; 11:25). There is a judgment, however, that Christians will experience (“the judgment seat of Christ”), but that will not be for determining where one spends eternity but for how he should be rewarded for his walk and service to Christ during his lifetime on earth. The Christian’s life goal ought to be to hear the words “Well done, good and faithful servant” when he eventually stands before the Lord.

QUESTION 17

Christians may hope they have eternal life, but they have no way of knowing this for sure until they first stand in judgment before the Lord Jesus Christ. *True or False?*

Peter does not provide details as to how and when the Lord’s judgment of non-Christians will take place. For that understanding, we must turn to other scriptural passages. All people will eventually be resurrected, although they will have different destinies.

²⁸ Do not be amazed at this, because a time is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice ²⁹ and will come out—the ones who have done what is good to the resurrection resulting in life, and the ones who have done what is evil to the resurrection resulting in condemnation (Jn 5:28-29).

Although Jesus says that all will be resurrected, we must be careful not to assume that the resurrection of the righteous takes place at the same time as the resurrection of the wicked. Other scriptural passages reveal that these resurrections will occur at different times in the future. Christians will be resurrected at the time of Christ’s return (1 Cor 15:23; 1 Cor 4:5; 1 Thess 4:15-17; 1 Pet 1:7, 13). But non-Christians will have their resurrection at the time of the Great White Throne judgment *after* the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth (see Rev 20:1-15). This will be for the purpose of judging them according to their deeds. Yet because they never placed their trust in the Lord Jesus as Savior and received His forgiveness, their deeds cannot save them, and a righteous God has no choice but to pronounce them “guilty” as sinners. Sadly, we are told, “if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, that person was thrown into the lake of fire” (Rev 20:15).

QUESTION 18

Match the verse reference in the left column with the appropriate quotation in the right column:

<i>Verse Reference</i>	<i>Biblical Quotation</i>
1 Corinthians 4:5	“if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, that person was thrown into the lake of fire.”
1 Corinthians 15:23	“Wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness.”
1 Thessalonians 4:15	“... all will be made alive (resurrected) ... Christ, the first fruits; then when Christ comes, those who belong to him.”
Revelation 20:15	“we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will surely not go ahead of those who have fallen asleep.”

In 1 Peter 4:5, we are simply told that the non-Christians who mistreated Peter’s Christian readers will one day have to “give an account to” Jesus. The fulfillment of this comes at the time of the Great White Throne judgment when they will be judged according to their deeds:

And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne. Then books were opened, and another book was opened—the book of life. So the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to their deeds (Rev 20:12).

QUESTION 19



The thought of anyone being judged according to their deeds and then thrown alive into the lake of fire is a terrifying thought. As much as we may be saddened, angered, or grieved by the way non-Christians treat us and say abusive things about us, we certainly would never want them to have to spend eternity in hell. The truth is, however, that the only hope they have of avoiding hell is to trust Christ as their Savior before they die.

And it is our responsibility to witness to them and hopefully have a chance to share the gospel with them. In your Life Notebook, write down the names of three non-Christians you know whom you are concerned about and hope to share Christ with? Then write down a short prayer that you want to offer up on their behalf.

Topic 4: The Benefit of the Gospel “to those who are dead” (1 Pet 4:6)

In one sense, this verse continues the thought of “judgment” that was introduced in the previous verse. While 1 Peter 4:5 focused on judgment awaiting non-Christians after death, this verse looks at the blessed outcome awaiting Christians after death. The latter may have been “judged” by non-Christians and suffered accordingly, but these Christians—because of having believed in the gospel while they were alive—have resurrection life to look forward to after death. Seen in this light, the suffering and even martyrdom of Christians is less of a tragedy than it may at first seem.



READING: Open your Bible and read 1 Peter 4:6.

This verse, upon first reading, may sound strange, in that it *almost* sounds as though the gospel will be preached to people who are already dead. But that is a very unlikely interpretation, though in the course of church history, some have taken it this way. Some would also assume that this verse is related to 1 Peter 3:19 and Christ’s preaching to the spirits now in prison. Of course, that interpretation also assumes that the “spirits” are human spirits, which is very

unlikely (see notes for 3:19). Another problem for this view has to do with the vocabulary. In 1 Peter 3:19, Christ “made proclamation” to the spirits, and the Greek verb used was *kērussō*, which is a more general word for making proclamation. It is only rarely used in the sense of proclaiming the gospel (as in Mk 16:15) and would need an expressed object to clarify that, if proclaiming the gospel were in view. In 1 Peter 4:6, however, the Greek word used is *euangelizō*, meaning to *preach (the gospel)* or *evangelize*. [The word “gospel” (Gk *euangelion*) comes from this verb].

QUESTION 20

The best way to interpret the preaching of the gospel to the dead in 1 Peter 4:6 is to understand it in view of Christ’s proclamation to “spirits” in 1 Peter 3:19. *True or False*

QUESTION 21

Which of the following are *problems* for understanding 1 Peter 4:6 in view of 1 Peter 3:19?

- A. The word “spirit” in 1 Peter 3:19 really refers to the Holy Spirit.
- B. One would have to assume that “spirits” in 1 Peter 3:19 is a reference to “human spirits,” but this is very unlikely.
- C. All people will be saved anyway, so there is no need to preach the gospel to them after death.
- D. The Greek word for “proclaiming” in 1 Peter 3:19 is a different word than “preaching” in 1 Peter 4:6, the former more likely meaning a *general proclamation* rather than preaching of the gospel.

Another interpretation understands the preaching of the gospel in 1 Peter 4:6 to those who are *spiritually dead*. Yet this is also unlikely, especially since Peter just referred to Christ as the judge of the living and the dead in the previous verse (1 Pet 4:5) where it is clearly the *physically dead* that are in view.

QUESTION 22

“Preaching the gospel to the dead” in 1 Peter 4:6 does not mean preaching to people physically dead but to those who are spiritually dead. *True or False*

Most commentators today understand verse six as referring to those who are physically dead now but who had the gospel preached to them (and believed) at the time they were alive on earth. The preceding context supports this view, since the point of verses 4-5 is that people will be judged for their actions while living. Furthermore, there is no other verse in the Bible that supports the idea of a second chance of salvation *after* one has died, and Hebrews 9:27 stands against it, as does the parable of the rich man and Lazarus in Lk 16:19-31.

QUESTION 23

Most commentators today understand verse six as referring to those who are physically dead now but who had the gospel preached to them (and believed) at the time they were alive on earth. *True or False?*

Primarily Peter seemed to be thinking of those who had suffered as Christians, especially those who might have been martyred for their faith in Christ. They had been “judged in the flesh as men,” meaning that they had been “judged” at the hands of non-Christians—as evidenced by their hostile actions against them. Here, “in the flesh” (Gk *sarki*) means the same thing as it does in 1 Peter 3:18 and 4:1, namely, *in the physical realm*, that is, while they were bodily alive. The point is that the Christians who suffered for their faith while bodily alive had been “judged” by non-Christians (persecuted). Their faith in Christ and their accompanying lifestyle had been rejected, and verbal and physical abuse was made against them.

QUESTION 24

What does it mean that those who had the gospel preached to them were “judged in the flesh”?

- A. This refers to Christians who were taken before the Roman authorities (judges) in the law courts.
- B. This refers to non-Christians whose flesh will be judged at the Great White Throne.
- C. This refers to Christians who were judged (persecuted) at the hands of non-Christians during the time they were physically on earth.
- D. This refers to non-Christians who were put to death, because they refused to believe in the gospel that was preached to them.

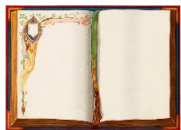
Although they were dead now, these Christians had believed the gospel at the time they were bodily alive. They may have suffered at that time, but they were not suffering now. The result for them was now being able to “live according to God in the spirit” (literal translation). Here, “in the spirit” means the same thing as it meant for Christ in 1 Peter 3:18, that is, “in the spiritual realm.” Their time of suffering as believers while on earth had now been replaced by something far better: being *spiritually alive* with Christ and in His presence. As the Apostle Paul said in Philippians 1:23, he had “a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.”

QUESTION 25

The phrase “in the spirit” in 1 Peter 4:6 refers to believers (physically alive) who walk according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh. *True or False?*

This interpretation, then, is a consolation to those Christians who experienced suffering for the sake of Christ during the time they were on earth. Fortunately, their belief in the gospel while on earth not only “saved” them at that time from the penalty of their sins but also made it possible for them to have a glorious future *after death*. Whatever suffering they may have had to endure was now overshadowed by the glories of being with Christ in the spiritual realm as they awaited physical resurrection. If they had been persecuted (judged) by non-Christians while on earth, they were now vindicated, and the eternal life they began to experience on earth was now greatly enhanced! The lesson for all Christians is that no matter what people may say about us or how hostilely they may act toward us, what matters above all else is what happens to us in the end.

QUESTION 26



If you are a Christian, then you have the promise from God’s Word that no matter how badly you may be treated because of your faith in Christ, after death you will experience eternal life in the spiritual realm. You will “be with Christ, which is far better.” On the other hand, those who reject the gospel of Christ until the very end of their life will be the real losers, for they will have to face God in judgment. How does this consolation from 1 Peter 4:6 help you face the challenges of living in the culture that you do? Write your answer in your Life Notebook.

Lesson 9 Self Check

QUESTION 1

Which of the following observations help us to understand what it means for Christ to have “suffered in the flesh” (1 Pet 4:1)? [Circle all that are correct].

- A. Jesus experienced many things “in the flesh” (in His physical body), including hunger and lack of sleep.
- B. The Greek word for “suffered” is *paschō*, and this same word was used in 1 Peter 3:18 to indicate that Jesus was put to death.
- C. The phrase “in the flesh” (Gk *sarkī*) in 1 Peter 4:1 was used earlier in 1 Peter 3:18 where Christ’s suffering “in the flesh” meant that He was *bodily* (physically) put to death.
- D. Jesus experienced many sufferings, and these are recorded for us in the gospel accounts.

QUESTION 2

Which of the following supports the interpretation that to be “finished with sin” (1 Pet 4:1) is meant to refer to Christians rather than to Christ? [Circle all that are correct].

- A. We know that Christ never had any personal sins.
- B. The following verse (1 Pet 4:2) is directed at believers and how they are to live for the will of God during their remaining years on earth.
- C. In the overall context starting with 1 Peter 3:13, Peter moved from exhorting believers to giving an example of Christ in suffering (3:18-22), and then in 1 Peter 4:1 taking up his concern again for how believers are to be willing to suffer unjustly in doing what is right.
- D. Peter wants the gospel to be preached to all men, so that the Roman Empire would be a better place in which to live.

QUESTION 3

In 1 Peter 4:1, to be “finished with sin” (or “cease from sin”) means for a believer to have reached a point in his Christian life where he no longer sins. *True or False?*

QUESTION 4

In view of the list of sins found in 1 Peter 4:3, it is obvious that some of his Christian readers had once participated in such things as idolatry and sexual immorality. *True or False?*

QUESTION 5

Peter’s point in making the list of sins in 1 Peter 4:3 was to warn his Christian readers that if they continued doing these sorts of things, they would lose their salvation. *True or False?*

QUESTION 6

The reason that the Lord Jesus Christ has been assigned to judge the living and the dead (rather than God the Father) is so all people will honor the Son just as they honor the Father. *True or False?*

QUESTION 7

According to 1 Peter 4:5, Christ is the judge of the living and the dead, but He will judge non-Christians at the “Judgment Seat of Christ” and Christians at the “Great White Throne” judgment. *True or False?*

QUESTION 8

The best way to interpret the preaching of the gospel to the dead in 1 Peter 4:6 is to understand it in view of Christ's proclamation to "spirits" in 1 Peter 3:19. *True or False*

QUESTION 9

Which of the following are *problems* for understanding 1 Peter 4:6 in view of 1 Peter 3:19?

- A. One would have to assume that "spirits" in 1 Peter 3:19 is a reference to "human spirits," but this is very unlikely.
- B. The word "spirit" in 1 Peter 3:19 really refers to the Holy Spirit.
- C. The Greek word for "proclaiming" in 1 Peter 3:19 is a different word than "preaching" in 1 Peter 4:6, the former more likely meaning a *general proclamation* rather than preaching of the gospel.
- D. All people will be saved anyway, so there is no need to preach the gospel to them after death.

QUESTION 10

What does it mean that those who had the gospel preached to them were "judged in the flesh"?

- A. This refers to non-Christians who were put to death, because they refused to believe in the gospel that was preached to them.
- B. This refers to Christians who were judged (persecuted) at the hands of non-Christians during the time they were physically on earth.
- C. This refers to non-Christians whose flesh will be judged at the Great White Throne.
- D. This refers to Christians who were taken before the Roman authorities (judges) in the law courts.

Lesson 9 Answers to Questions

QUESTION 1: “B” and “D”

- B. The Greek word for “suffered” is *paschō*, and this same word was used in 1 Peter 3:18 to indicate that Jesus was put to death.
- D. The phrase “in the flesh” (Gk *sarki*) in 1 Peter 4:1 was used earlier in 1 Peter 3:18 where Christ’s suffering “in the flesh” meant that He was *bodily* (physically) put to death.

QUESTION 2: False

Having the same mind as Christ means having the same willingness to suffer in doing the will of God.

QUESTION 3

- D. To deny oneself, take up his cross, and follow Jesus.

QUESTION 4: True

QUESTION 5: “B” and “C”

- B. The following verse (1 Pet 4:2) is directed at believers and how they are to live for the will of God during their remaining years on earth.
- C. In the overall context starting with 1 Peter 3:13, Peter moved from exhorting believers to giving an example of Christ in suffering (3:18-22), and then in 1 Peter 4:1 taking up his concern again for how believers are to be willing to suffer unjustly in doing what is right.

QUESTION 6: False

QUESTION 7: True

QUESTION 8

<i>Verse Reference</i>	<i>Biblical Quotation</i>
Psalm 90:12	“teach us to number our days”
Romans 14:10-12	“each of us shall give account of himself to God”
1 Corinthians 3:10-15	“each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will reveal it”
2 Corinthians 5:9-10	“we make it our aim . . . to be well pleasing to Him”

QUESTION 9: Your answer

QUESTION 10: “B”, “D”, and “F”

- B. lewdness
- D. drunkenness
- F. lusts

QUESTION 11: False

QUESTION 12: False

QUESTION 13: True

QUESTION 14: Your answer

QUESTION 15

- C. Non-Christians would slander or verbally abuse Christians who worshiped Jesus.

QUESTION 16: True

QUESTION 17: False

QUESTION 18

<i>Verse Reference</i>	<i>Biblical Quotation</i>
1 Corinthians 4:5	“Wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness.”
1 Corinthians 15:23	“... all will be made alive (resurrected) ... Christ, the first fruits; then when Christ comes, those who belong to him.”
1 Thessalonians 4:15	“we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will surely not go ahead of those who have fallen asleep.”
Revelation 20:15	“if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, that person was thrown into the lake of fire.”

QUESTION 19: *Your answer***QUESTION 20:** False**QUESTION 21:** “B” and “D” are correct.

B. One would have to assume that “spirits” in 1 Peter 3:19 is a reference to “human spirits,” but this is very unlikely.

D. The Greek word for “proclaiming” in 1 Peter 3:19 is a different word than “preaching” in 1 Peter 4:6, the former more likely meaning a *general proclamation* rather than preaching of the gospel.

QUESTION 22: False**QUESTION 23:** True**QUESTION 24**

C. This refers to Christians who were judged (persecuted) at the hands of non-Christians during the time they were physically on earth.

QUESTION 25: False**QUESTION 26:** *Your answer*

Lesson 9 Self Check Answers

QUESTION 1

- B. The Greek word for “suffered” is *paschō*, and this same word was used in 1 Peter 3:18 to indicate that Jesus was put to death.
- C. The phrase “in the flesh” (Gk *sarki*) in 1 Peter 4:1 was used earlier in 1 Peter 3:18 where Christ’s suffering “in the flesh” meant that He was *bodily* (physically) put to death.

QUESTION 2

- B. The following verse (1 Pet 4:2) is directed at believers and how they are to live for the will of God during their remaining years on earth.
- C. In the overall context starting with 1 Peter 3:13, Peter moved from exhorting believers to giving an example of Christ in suffering (3:18-22), and then in 1 Peter 4:1 taking up his concern again for how believers are to be willing to suffer unjustly in doing what is right

QUESTION 3: False

QUESTION 4: True

QUESTION 5: False

QUESTION 6: True

QUESTION 7: False

QUESTION 8: False

QUESTION 9

- A. One would have to assume that “spirits” in 1 Peter 3:19 is a reference to “human spirits,” but this is very unlikely.
- C. The Greek word for “proclaiming” in 1 Peter 3:19 is a different word than “preaching” in 1 Peter 4:6, the former more likely meaning a *general proclamation* rather than preaching of the gospel.

QUESTION 10

- B. This refers to Christians who were judged (persecuted) at the hands of non-Christians during the time they were physically on earth.

Unit 3 Exam: 1 Peter

QUESTION 1

Peter referred to his readers as “foreigners and exiles” in 1 Peter 2:11, because this would help them identify with Abraham who had the promises of God yet lived as a sojourner on earth. *True or False?*

QUESTION 2

Which of the following might be considered a “fleshly desire” as mentioned in 1 Peter 2:11?

- A. Impure sexual desires
- B. Jealousy
- C. A desire to eat meat
- D. Strife between fellow Christians

QUESTION 3

What kind of attitudes were first-century non-Christians known to have had toward Christians?

- A. They felt badly that Christians had been misunderstood.
- B. They considered Christians to be naïve, followers of a “mischievous superstition.”
- C. They hoped that Christians would become political rulers in the empire.
- D. They resented Christians who did not participate in the worship of Greco-Roman gods and idols.

QUESTION 4

According to Romans 13:1-7, the principle of Christ’s forgiveness means that God has removed the right of human governing authorities to inflict punishment on people in society who are guilty of wrongdoing. *True or False?*

QUESTION 5

Although Christians have been made “free people” because of their faith in Christ, this means they no longer have an obligation to obey the rulers and authorities of the countries in which they live. *True or False?*

QUESTION 6

Which of the following statements reflect the relevance of the slavery issue to Peter’s readers living in the first-century Greco-Roman world? [Select all that apply].

- A. The high esteem enjoyed by the Roman Empire was due to its practice of slavery.
- B. Most well-to-do Roman families had slaves.
- C. Many of those to whom Peter wrote would probably have been slaves.
- D. About one-fourth of the population of the Roman Empire consisted of slaves.

QUESTION 7

As long as a household servant obeyed his master, that is all that mattered. The attitude that he had in doing so was not important, only the act of obedience. *True or False?*

QUESTION 8

The proper motivation for enduring hardship at the hands of a harsh or unjust master was to be able to keep a good conscience before God. *True or False?*

QUESTION 9

Of all New Testament writers, Peter makes the most extensive use of the Isaiah 53 passage to depict Jesus as the Suffering Servant. *True or False?*

QUESTION 10

Which of the following represent ways in which Jesus suffered verbal abuse? [*Select all that apply*].

- A. During His crucifixion, his brothers scolded him for pretending to be the Messiah.
- B. Prior to His crucifixion, Jesus was denounced by the Jerusalem crowd.
- C. During His final week in Jerusalem, all the officers of the Roman military were demanding that Pilate condemn Jesus as a criminal.
- D. Prior to His crucifixion, Jesus was repeatedly slandered during His trial before the Jewish Sanhedrin.

QUESTION 11

When Peter stated that Jesus “committed himself to God who judges justly” (1 Pet 2:23), he meant that Jesus entrusted His situation and welfare to God’s sovereign purposes for His life. *True or False?*

QUESTION 12

In 1 Peter 3:1, what did Peter likely mean when he spoke of husbands who were “disobedient to the word”?

- A. He was referring only to Jewish husbands, because they were the ones who had rejected Jesus as Messiah.
- B. He was referring to Christian husbands who were consistently living in disobedience to the Word of God, refusing to obey God’s commands in Scripture.
- C. He was referring to husbands who refused to obey their wives, because he calls them “disobedient.”
- D. He was referring to non-Christian husbands, because the word translated “disobedient” is consistently used in the New Testament of those who reject the gospel.

QUESTION 13

In the Greco-Roman world of the first century A.D., it was perfectly normal (and acceptable) for a wife to adopt a religion other than her husband’s, while he worshiped the gods of his choice. *True or False?*

QUESTION 14

Which of the following are expected of Christian husband? [*Check all that apply*].

- A. A Christian husband should scold his wife and even beat her, if he feels she is not submitting to his authority.
- B. A Christian husband is responsible to love his wife as Christ loved the Church, meaning he should be “giving” of himself and “sacrificing” for her sake.
- C. A Christian husband is to live with his wife in “an understanding way,” meaning that he needs to do whatever is necessary to make sure she *understands* what he is wanting her to do.
- D. A Christian husband is to live with his wife in “an understanding way,” meaning that he seeks to *understand her* and respects her point of view, even if he does not always agree with her.

QUESTION 15

In Peter's exhortation in 1 Peter 3:9 not to "return evil for evil or insult for insult, but instead bless others," Peter was suggesting to his readers that if they are insulted, they must not retaliate with insulting remarks in return. *True or False?*

QUESTION 16

To say that "the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous and his ears are open to their prayer" is to teach us that God is keeping a record of the wrongs done to us, so that He can take revenge against our enemies in the day of final judgment. *True or False?*

QUESTION 17

In view of what we know from the Book of Acts, some Christians in the first-century A.D. were threatened, some were warned not to meet for worship, some were arrested, and some were brought before courts of law. *True or False?*

QUESTION 18

According to 1 Peter 3:14, even if a Christian is made to suffer for doing what is right, he is "blessed." Why would a Christian who suffers unjustly for his faith in Christ be considered "blessed"?

- A. He will live to one day see his tormenters suffer in hell.
- B. He knows that God will come to his rescue and undo all the wrong he has received.
- C. He has the consolation of knowing that great reward in heaven awaits him.
- D. He knows that suffering will help him better appreciate the "blessings" that God gives him.

QUESTION 19

Peter instructed his readers to "set Christ apart as Lord in your hearts and always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks about the hope you possess." What *hope* does he seem to have had in mind?

- A. The hope that Christ would deliver them from their suffering.
- B. The hope that Christ would soon return and establish the kingdom of heaven on earth.
- C. The hope that the Roman emperor would make Christianity legal throughout the empire.
- D. The hope of being resurrected with Christ in glory.

QUESTION 20

According to 1 Peter 3:18, Christ was "put to death in the flesh, but ... made alive in the spirit." Most scholars understand "in the spirit" in light of its parallel with "in the flesh," that is, a contrast of the physical realm with the spiritual realm into which Christ was resurrected. *True or False?*

QUESTION 21

Which of the following is NOT one of the main views discussed in Lesson 8 regarding Christ making proclamation to the spirits now in prison (1 Pet 3:19)?

- A. The Descent to Hell View
- B. The Preaching of Repentance to Noah's Generation View
- C. The Great White Throne View of a Final Offer of the Gospel
- D. The Victory Proclamation to Fallen Angels View

QUESTION 22

Which of the following is NOT an argument in favor of the view that making proclamation to the spirits now in prison refers to Christ's victory proclamation to fallen angels?

- A. Genesis 6:1-4 contains a prophecy that Christ would come in the future to proclaim His victory over the angelic rebellion.
- B. 2 Peter 2:4-5 and Jude 6 seem to have the same situation in mind, but specifically mention "angels."
- C. The relationship between verses 18 and 19 suggests that Christ did this preaching *after* having entered into His resurrection state.
- D. The word "spirits" is commonly used in reference to angels and very rarely to humans.

QUESTION 23

Which of the following are good arguments showing that water baptism is NOT what saves a person from the penalty of their sins?

- A. Christ instructed His followers to make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- B. Baptism is not part of the *gospel message* in view of Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 1:17 that Christ did not send him to baptize but to preach the gospel.
- C. Jesus was baptized by John the baptizer.
- D. Although some verses regarding baptism might be debated, verses like Ephesians 2:8-9 and Acts 16:31 give us clear examples demonstrating that faith alone is the requirement for salvation from sin.

QUESTION 24

Some scholars prefer the translation "pledge" in 1 Peter 3:21 ("the pledge of a good conscience toward God"), thinking that in the practice of Christian baptism in the first-century A.D., a candidate for baptism would not only be asked to affirm his faith in Christ but also to make a public pledge to live a life keeping a good conscience before God. *True or False?*

QUESTION 25

What is a weakness in using the word "pledge" in the translation of 1 Peter 3:21?

- A. Water baptism was not practiced in the first-century A.D.
- B. Using the word "pledge" would have made a new Christian feel very guilty when they could not live up to keeping a good conscience.
- C. No one could be expected to live with a "good conscience."
- D. The translation "pledge" is a very rare meaning of this word (it normally means something else).

QUESTION 26

Which of the following observations help us to understand what it means for Christ to have “suffered in the flesh” (1 Pet 4:1)? [Circle all that are correct].

- A. Jesus experienced many things “in the flesh” (in His physical body), including hunger and lack of sleep.
- B. The Greek word for “suffered” is *paschō*, and this same word was used in 1 Peter 3:18 to indicate that Jesus was put to death.
- C. The phrase “in the flesh” (Gk *sarki*) in 1 Peter 4:1 was used earlier in 1 Peter 3:18 where Christ’s suffering “in the flesh” meant that He was *bodily* (physically) put to death.
- D. Jesus experienced many sufferings, and these are recorded for us in the gospel accounts.

QUESTION 27

In 1 Peter 4:1, to be “finished with sin” (or “cease from sin”) means for a believer to have reached a point in his Christian life where he no longer sins. *True or False?*

QUESTION 28

Peter’s purpose in giving the “sins list” in 1 Peter 4:3 was to illustrate the kinds of sins that non-Christians do, but Peter did not mean to suggest that any of his readers had ever participated in such things as idolatry and sexual immorality. *True or False?*

QUESTION 29

The reason that the Lord Jesus Christ has been assigned to judge the living and the dead (rather than God the Father) is so all people will honor the Son just as they honor the Father. *True or False?*

QUESTION 30

According to 1 Peter 4:5, Christ is the judge of the living and the dead. According to the coursebook, God will judge Christians at the “Judgment Seat of Christ” and non-Christians at the “Great White Throne” judgment. *True or False?*

QUESTION 31

The best way to interpret the preaching of the gospel to the dead in 1 Peter 4:6 is to understand it in view of Christ’s proclamation to “spirits” in 1 Peter 3:19. *True or False?*

QUESTION 32

Which of the following are problems for understanding 1 Peter 4:6 in view of 1 Peter 3:19?

- A. One would have to assume that “spirits” in 1 Peter 3:19 is a reference to “human spirits,” but this is very unlikely.
- B. The word “spirit” in 1 Peter 3:19 really refers to the Holy Spirit.
- C. The Greek word for “proclaiming” in 1 Peter 3:19 is a different word than “preaching” in 1 Peter 4:6, the former more likely meaning a *general proclamation* rather than preaching of the gospel.
- D. All people will be saved anyway, so there is no need to preach the gospel to them after death.

QUESTION 33

What does it mean that those who had the gospel preached to them were “judged in the flesh”?

- A. This refers to non-Christians who were put to death, because they refused to believe in the gospel that was preached to them.
- B. This refers to Christians who were judged (persecuted) at the hands of non-Christians during the time they were physically on earth.
- C. This refers to non-Christians whose flesh will be judged at the Great White Throne.
- D. This refers to Christians who were taken before the Roman authorities (judges) in the law courts.

Unit 4: Final Words of Encouragement and Exhortations (1 Pet 4:7–5:14)

Introduction

The theme of trials and suffering, so prominent throughout the epistle, continues in the remaining chapters of 1 Peter. If the readers are to arm themselves with the same purpose of suffering in the flesh as Christ their Lord did, then they need divine counsel in how to best prepare themselves for that. Peter clearly answers that need in 1 Peter 4:7-19 (Lesson 10). Then he moves on to practical advice for how the Christian community can be led by caring leaders while maintaining unity, and how the believers might resist the attacks of the evil one himself (Lesson 11). After surveying the concluding paragraph (1 Pet 5:12-14), the final lesson identifies the most important principles found in 1 Peter, and then gives the student an opportunity to develop a “teaching outline” of a passage from 1 Peter.

Unit Outline

Lesson 10: Final Guidance and Consolations for Christians Who Face Suffering (1 Peter 4:7-19)

Lesson 11: Exhortations to Help the Christian Community Make a United Stance (1 Peter 5:1-11)

Lesson 12: Summary, and Final Reflections (1 Peter 5:12-14)

Unit Objectives

By the end of this unit, you will be able to do the following:

- Gain greater motivation for how important it is to be a part of a growing Christian community and doing your part to build up and encourage your fellow believers.
- Recognize the blessings that suffering Christians have, both presently and at the return of Christ, so as to face such sufferings unashamedly while trusting God.
- Understand the key principles as to how elders are to faithfully lead the church, and the importance of humility for all within the church.
- Identify key principles to practice in countering Satan’s attack against Christians.
- List eight of the most important principles taught in the epistle of 1 Peter.
- Know a method for developing a “teaching outline” of a biblical passage and gain experience in doing so.

Lesson Ten: Final Guidance and Consolations for Christians Who Face Suffering (1 Peter 4:7-19)

Lesson Introduction

The theme of suffering as a Christian continues in this lesson. In the first topic (1 Pet 4:7-11), Peter pauses to emphasize the things that will help the Christian community be supportive of one another as they face harassment or persecution, above all praying and actively loving one another. In topics two through five, Peter deals more specifically with how they are to respond when suffering for Christ, as well as the eternal outlook they need to have about their sufferings while on earth. Their fate, in contrast to the fate of the unbelievers who are behind such persecution, is infinitely better.

Lesson Outline

- Topic 1: The Need to Reflect Love and Concern in Prayer and Ministry (1 Pet 4:7-11)
- Topic 2: The Need to Stay Focused on the Blessings When Suffering for Christ (1 Pet 4:12-14)
- Topic 3: Clarification About Right and Wrong Suffering (1 Pet 4:15-16)
- Topic 4: Suffering in Relation to God's Judgment (1 Pet 4:17-18)
- Topic 5: Conclusion: Trust God Even While Suffering Unjustly (1 Pet 4:19)

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- Gain greater motivation for how important it is to be a part of a growing Christian community and doing your part to build up and encourage your fellow believers.
- See more clearly the eternal benefits of suffering for Christ now by keeping your focus on what awaits you at the return of Christ in glory.
- Overcome the temptation to feel a sense of *shame* because of your identification with Christ.
- Realize that any suffering you experience now as a Christian pales in comparison to the suffering that unbelievers will eventually have to face in God's judgment.
- Recognize that God, the all-wise and all-powerful Creator, is faithfully overseeing your life, so that you can focus on doing good in the face of suffering.

Topic 1: The Need to Reflect Love and Concern in Prayer and Ministry (1 Pet 4:7-11)

In this paragraph, Peter lays down four exhortations that his Christian readers are to undertake as a priority in their lives. They are to do this, because “the culmination (or end) of all things is at hand.” In view of the crucial time in which they find themselves and in view of the hostility that they face as a community of believers, they cannot afford to live careless or undisciplined lives. Living by these priorities will help promote a healthy community of believers.



READING: Open your Bible and read 1 Peter 4:7-11.

Despite what appears to be a random list of Christian responsibilities, this small section does flow quite naturally from the preceding paragraph. The preceding paragraph concluded with the mention of *judgment* for both non-Christians and Christians in a context of suffering and persecution. For the non-Christian who callously maligned and otherwise mistreated Christians, he will have to give an account of himself to Christ, the judge of the living and the dead. For the Christian who is mistreated—perhaps even martyred—he has the consolation of knowing he will enjoy “life in the spiritual realm” following death on account of having believed the gospel when he was alive on earth. The thought in 1 Peter 4:5 that Christ “is ready to judge” prompts an expectation of the close of history and the return of Christ as judge. Hence, Peter can say, “the culmination of all things is near.” What did Peter mean by that? In what sense was it “near”?

QUESTION 1

There is a natural connection of 1 Peter 4:7-11 and the previous paragraph in view of the mention in 1 Peter 4:5 that Christ “is ready to judge the living and the dead.” *True or False?*

Following the resurrection and ascension of Christ to the right hand of God, the last stage of God’s great redemptive plan is in progress and will find its consummation with the return of Christ in glory. With that, the fulness of the kingdom program will come about. Although that great event of the Savior’s return is unknown to any on earth, the Christian is nevertheless to live in expectation of His return at any time. The main point is that the following exhortations should be lived out as though the final days are upon them, because the stage is fully set for the last remaining events to occur. When they take place (during the Great Tribulation), they will do so quickly. Since this could happen in any generation, Christians need to always be in a state of readiness. Such an expectation honors the words of Christ: “Therefore stay alert, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come” (Mt 24:42).

Any confusion about verse seven (the end of all things being near) is removed when we understand that Peter is talking about a stage of time, not a point of time. Because the Christians reading Peter’s epistle were living in the *last stage* of a divinely initiated process, their behavior ought to reflect that reality. They ought to be living responsibly in view of His return. With that being said, Peter then pointed to four practical areas where the expectation of Christ’s soon return ought to be impacting how they lived:

1. Earnestly given to prayer.
2. Fervently loving one another.
3. Willingly practicing hospitality.
4. Serving one another using spiritual gifts.

QUESTION 2

According to the notes, what is meant by the statement, “the culmination of all things is near”?

- A. Peter thought that Christ was going to return in the first-century A.D., but he was mistaken.
- B. Peter was referring to the end of the Roman Empire which he expected to happen soon.
- C. Peter was referring to the culmination of judgment that was to come upon Jerusalem (A.D.70) because of the Jews having rejected Christ as Messiah.
- D. Peter meant that his readers were already living in the last stage of God’s program that would conclude with Christ’s return to formally inaugurate the kingdom.

The practice of earnest prayer (1 Pet 4:7). Peter said his readers needed to think rightly and to be clear-minded, that is, to be fully in control of their thoughts in expectation of the Lord coming soon. Such a

mindset stood in sharp contrast to their former lifestyle as described in 1 Peter 4:3, a lifestyle in which they had once pursued the “desire of the Gentiles.” Rather than having minds dulled by excessive drinking, immoral sexual conduct, debauchery and idolatry, their minds needed to be engaged in prayer. For some, their suffering at the hands of an antagonistic non-Christian society around them might have led to a certain complacent fatalism. In any case, a life characterized by frequent prayer and communion with God was to be made a priority, as this was the first resource for living out Christ’s victory in the Christian community. Just as they were called to abide in Jesus, they needed to express their dependency on Him in prayer.

QUESTION 3

Look up the following verses, and then match the verse reference in the left column with the appropriate quotation in the right column:

<i>Verse Reference</i>	<i>Biblical Quotation</i>
Proverbs 15:8	“Be devoted to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving.”
Ephesians 6:18	“Do not be anxious about anything.”
Philippians 4:6-7	“Pray at all times in the Spirit, and to this end be alert.”
Colossians 4:2-4	“The prayer of the upright pleases him.”

Fervent love for one another (1 Pet 4:8). The words “above all things” remind us how important the practice of *agape love* is among fellow Christians. “Agape” (the Greek word used here for love) means an unselfish love and care for others that is more interested in *giving* than in receiving. It is not a mushy emotional experience (as often portrayed in movies) but a love that seeks the best interest in the one loved, as beautifully described in 1 Corinthians 13:1-7. Christ made it very clear during His earthly ministry that agape love was to be the foremost indicator that one was truly His disciple: “I give you a new commandment—to love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. Everyone will know by this that you are my disciples—if you have love for one another” (Jn 13:34-35; cf. Mk12:30-33; Jn 15:12, 17).

For a Christian community living amid a pagan society hostile to Christianity, the fervent practice of agape love would do much to soften the blows of the harsh realities experienced by so many Christians. Peter added a reason they were to relate to one another by extending agape love, “for love will cover a multitude of sins.” Though not an exact quotation, Peter apparently had in mind the words of Proverbs 10:12:

Hatred stirs up dissension,
but love covers all transgressions.

Dissension was one thing they certainly did not need in the Christian community, if they were to experience unity and encourage each other in trying to live out their faith in a hostile environment. Yet then (as now), Christians could hurt one another by words or actions, and this could so easily lead to bitter feelings and even unforgiveness. Though offenses are bound to happen between fellow Christians, failing to resolve them and to practice forgiveness only leads to barriers and greater difficulty in working together to serve Christ. When Peter said that love covers a multitude of sins, he did not mean that we simply “sweep things under the carpet” and act as though nothing had happened. Certainly, he did not mean to say that sin in the church should be ignored or denied (covered up). In view of the parallel line of Proverbs 10:12 (“hatred stirs up dissension”), the point is that we, as Christians, need to be very forbearing and not let wrongs done within the Christian community come to their fullest and most bitter expression. If love suffers long and bears all things (1 Cor 13:4, 7), then Christians should be willing to

make the maximum effort to forgive and keep peace in the body. This may mean having to talk things through with a brother or sister with whom one is at odds, and in certain cases seeking the counsel of an older and wiser Christian to get guidance in how best to handle a difficult situation. In his commentary on 1 Peter, Ed Blum (246) gives this helpful reminder: “Christians forgive faults in others because they know the forgiving grace of God in their own lives.”

QUESTION 4



As mentioned above, offenses are bound to happen between Christians sooner or later, because we are all imperfect human beings. The crucial thing is what we do about it to resolve the conflict, extend forgiveness and seek to love the other brother or sister as Jesus has commanded us. Is there another Christian with whom you are having a conflict right now or a strained relationship. In light of the command to “keep your love for one another fervent,” what do you think God wants you to do to be reconciled? Describe your situation and write your answer in your Life Notebook.

The practice of hospitality willingly (1 Pet 4:9). In a world without modern inns and hotels, hospitality was very important in the early church, especially for those travelling from one place to another to further the cause of Christ. Yet, hospitality should not be thought of as merely taking in to one’s home and hosting overnight guests such as travelling evangelists and other servants of Christ. In a time when public churches may have been a rarity, there was a need for Christians to open their homes to host Christian worship and fellowship. Christians were urged not only to be “hospitable” but to do so “without grumbling.” To open one’s home but to do so with a reluctant spirit (even complaining) would not be pleasing to the Lord.

QUESTION 5

Which of the following would be considered examples of hospitality without grumbling? [Check all that you consider correct].

- A. Inviting the pastor and other leaders of your church to your home for a special meal after the church service.
- B. Hosting a traveling evangelist in your home during a week of evangelistic meetings.
- C. Allowing the members of your church to meet in your home for a weekly Bible study.
- D. Offering to have the members of your church meet in your home for a time of worship and fellowship.

Using one’s spiritual gift to serve others (1 Pet 4:10-11). At the moment of spiritual birth when one trusts Christ as his personal Savior, he is not only justified and forgiven but also receives the Holy Spirit to permanently indwell him (Eph 1:13-14; Rom 8:9). In addition, every believer is given at least one spiritual gift (“each one has received a gift;” 1 Pet 4:10). The same truth is echoed in 1 Corinthians 12:7: “To each person the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the benefit of all.” This spiritual gift is a God-given ability for doing something special that ministers to the body of Christ and which is intended to bring glory to God. This spiritual gift is given to the believer at the moment of regeneration, although the effectiveness of the use of this gift will typically increase as the believer matures, gains experience, and learns how to properly use his gift. The gift is not to be used for one’s own selfish pride (seeking glory for oneself) but to “serve one another.” By the effective working of each individual part, the goal is to contribute to the building up of the body of Christ in love (Eph 4:15-16).

Further instruction about spiritual gifts can be found in 1 Corinthians 12:1-31, Romans 12:3-8, and Ephesians 4:7-16. Each of these passages identifies some of the spiritual gifts, but none of them lists all the gifts. There are many spiritual gifts given by the Holy Spirit, and together they manifest the “varied grace of God” (1 Pet 4:10). Peter simply speaks of spiritual gifts in two broad categories: gifts related to speaking and gifts related to serving others. One who has a gift of speaking (pastors and teachers would be prime examples) must remember that he is to do so carefully, realizing that he speaks about “the oracles of God.” Anyone who handles the Word of God must realize what a precious treasure this is and refrain from carelessly uttering mere human speculation. Therefore, diligent study and preparation accompanied by prayer and dependence on the Lord are necessary preliminary steps before instructing others from God’s Word.

If one’s gift is a *serving gift* (e.g., helps or administration), then he must not try to do this in his own strength but rather “with the strength that God supplies.” Furthermore, if anyone feels he is incapable of serving (unskilled or inadequate), he should remember that if God has gifted him in this way, then God will also be faithful to give the ability and strength for using this gift. In one sense, all Christians are inadequate, and therefore every Christian must look, not to himself, but to God to make him adequate.

To sum up, regardless of the gift given, the recipient is to make use of this as a “good steward” (1 Pet 4:10). That is, he has been entrusted with a gift that is meant to be used for the glory of God (1 Pet 4:11), and to fail to do so would be to squander what God has entrusted to him. The latter would result in robbing God of the glory due Him.

QUESTION 6



What spiritual gift (or gifts) do you believe the Lord has given you? Do not feel badly if you are not sure (but know that God has given you a spiritual gift). Usually it takes time before one discovers the spiritual gift God has given him, and this typically comes with experience. Often, other Christians will recognize your gift and affirm this to you. How have you seen God using you in the area of your spiritual giftedness? Write your thoughts in your Life Notebook.

Topic 2: The Need to Stay Focused on the Blessings When Suffering for Christ (1 Pet 4:12-14)

The previous paragraph (1 Pet 4:7-11) was something of an interlude from the main topic of suffering. In that paragraph, Peter highlighted four priorities they should be pursuing that would help strengthen and unify the congregation of believers as they faced a hostile society about them. Now in 1 Peter 4:12-14, he returns once again to the main topic of suffering. The focus in this case is on the *positive benefit* that his readers need to remember whenever they suffer for Christ’s sake.



READING: Open your Bible and read 1 Peter 4:12-14.

Though Peter spoke to them tenderly, calling them “dear friends” (or “beloved”), at the same time he was much aware that they—as first-century Christians—were having to endure some very painful trials. He spoke of this as “a trial by fire,” using a Greek term meaning “burning.” The imagery, then, is of a refiner’s blazing hot fire that is used to burn away the impurities of metal. Such imagery underscored not only the intensity of the trials they were called upon to endure but the positive effect it was intended to have upon their faith. Even though these trials were intense and painful, he reminded his readers that they were not to be astonished at having to go through such experiences. Part of our calling as Christians is to suffer for His sake (Phil 1:29).

QUESTION 7

A Christian should not be expected to suffer, because he is a child of the king of the universe. *True or False?*

Peter explained that it “comes upon you for your **testing**” (NASB). The word “testing” (Gk *peirasmos*) was used earlier in the epistle in 1 Peter 1:6 where Peter told them, “you may have to suffer for a short time in various **trials**.” The following verse (as in 1 Pet 4:12) utilized the imagery of the purification of metal by fire to describe the positive benefit of their trials: “Such trials show the proven character of your faith, which is much more valuable than gold—gold that is tested by fire” (1 Pet 1:7). The point, then, is clear. Though we may view trials as painful and unwanted, God sees them as having the positive benefit of refining our faith, and our faith is what is so precious to Him. The temptation is for us to think that God should deliver us from all trials, because He has the power to do so. Certainly, God does deliver His children from trials, but when He chooses not to (or delays doing so), we must remember that He knows what is best.

QUESTION 8

When Peter spoke of the fiery trial that came upon them for their testing, what kind of testing did he have in mind?

- A. They were being tested to see if they really were Christians.
- B. They were being tested with trials to find out if they would abandon their faith in Christ and thus lose their salvation.
- C. Their Christian faith was being tested to refine it and make it stronger.
- D. Their faith was being tested to see if they were worthy of entering the kingdom of God.

In verse thirteen, Peter encouraged them to adopt the *right attitude* they should have about their sufferings. Rather than complaining about or bemoaning their fiery trials, they should be rejoicing in them. They can do this, if they see their sufferings as sharing in “the sufferings of Christ.” What Peter primarily had in mind are the sufferings of persecution. Just as Christ was rejected and persecuted, they were now standing in His place and facing a world that rejected them on account of Him. Whatever persecution they might face is actually persecution of Christ Himself (cf. Acts 9:4-5; 2 Cor 1:5; Col 1:24).

This idea of rejoicing in the face of persecution goes contrary to human nature and thus can only be done by faith. However, verse 13 goes on to give them motivation for doing so: “so that when his glory is revealed you may also rejoice and be glad.” Hence, one is not expected to enjoy suffering for its own sake; rather, rejoicing can be had in view of the future reward that awaits the sufferer. Peter had already mentioned “the revelation of Jesus Christ” twice earlier in the epistle (1 Pet 1:7, 13). In those cases, the second coming of Christ was in view, for it is at that grand event that He will be revealed in power and glory along with the holy angels (Mt 16:27; 25:31; 2 Thess 1:7). This verse, 1 Peter 4:13, stresses that He will be revealed *in glory*. At that climactic moment of history, Peter reminds his readers that they will “rejoice and be glad.” In addition to seeing Christ in all His glory, there will be many other reasons for such gladness in that day. First, those who have believed in Christ will be vindicated (they will be shown to have been on the winning side all along). Second, Christ will put an end to the Antichrist and all human rebellion against the Lord God, and Satan will be imprisoned. Third, Christ will begin His millennial reign on earth, bringing universal peace and righteousness as the entire world is brought into submission to Him. Fourth, believers will be resurrected to enjoy being a part of Christ’s kingdom, and rewards for faithfulness to Christ will be given.

QUESTION 9

Which of the following are true regarding the glory of Christ being revealed?

- A. The revealing of His glory that Peter spoke about refers to the day of Christ's resurrection.
- B. The revealing of His glory refers to the time of the second coming of Christ.
- C. At the revealing of His glory, Christians will receive their resurrection bodies.
- D. At the revealing of His glory, Christ will put an end to all opposition to His rule.

In 1 Peter 4:14, Peter reminded his readers that they are blessed when they are “insulted for the name of Christ” (cf. Mt 5:11; Lk 6:22). This refers to those times in which they are mocked, reproached or reviled. Such verbal hostility against Christians was intended as a way of shaming them. The reason they are “blessed” is because “the Spirit of glory, who is the Spirit of God, rests on” them. The wording of this statement reflects the messianic promise of Isaiah 11:2, where we are told that the Lord’s Spirit will *rest upon* the descendant of Jesse (i.e., the Messiah in the line of David, the son of Jesse). The Holy Spirit that strengthened the Lord Jesus as He faced insults and persecution is the same Holy Spirit available to help Peter’s audience in whatever they might have to face. This consolation is a reminder that God has not forsaken the Christian who suffers for His sake. Rather, God is powerfully present in the experience of suffering for Christ.

QUESTION 10



Peter consoled his readers who faced persecution and verbal hostility by reminding them they were blessed, because the Spirit of God rested upon them. After reading and reflecting on Isaiah 11:1-2, how do you think this promise is helpful to a Christian facing persecution and insults? Write your thoughts in your Life Notebook.

Topic 3: Clarification About Right and Wrong Suffering (1 Pet 4:15-16)

In the previous verses, Peter sought to console those Christians who were suffering innocently and unjustly for their faith in Christ as they faced persecution and verbal hostility. Now he paused to clarify for them that not all suffering falls into this category. Suffering that comes because of sin in a Christian’s life does not warrant the blessing of God.



READING: Open your Bible and read 1 Peter 4:15-16.

These two verses form a contrast between inappropriate suffering in verse 15 (not commended by God) and legitimate Christian suffering in verse 16 (for bearing the name “Christian”). Although Peter could have certainly written a much longer list in verse 15 of illegitimate activities for which a Christian might suffer the consequences of his wrongdoing, he does specify four situations by way of example: “a murderer or thief or criminal or as a troublemaker.” The first three examples are rather clear and quite serious. In fact, murder and stealing were not only prohibited by the Ten Commandments but were prosecuted under Greco-Roman law as well. The third one (“criminal”) could also be translated *evildoer*, but considering its usage in 1 Peter 2:14, it seems to refer to one who has broken some type of civil law. The fourth and final item is rather uncertain, this being the only occurrence of it in the New Testament (as well as the LXX). Although translated “troublemaker” here, other translations render it as “meddler” or “troublesome meddler.” If that is the correct idea, such an offense would be far less serious compared to the first three. Hence, the NIV renders this: “or *even* as a meddler.” The idea, then, would be that not only should you be innocent of any serious

crime but innocent of even a lesser matter such as wrongly meddling in the affairs of another. Regardless of how the last item should be understood, Peter was urging his readers to avoid attracting hostility if at all possible, without renouncing their faith in Christ. They may be falsely slandered as evildoers (1 Pet 2:12), but they must never actually be guilty of such offenses.

QUESTION 11

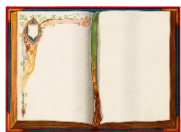
Which one of the following is not included in Peter's list of offenses?

- A. Murder
- B. Adultery
- C. Criminal acts (evildoing)
- D. Thievery

In verse sixteen, Peter took up the positive side of the issue ... suffering for bearing the name "Christian." For this "offense," they should not feel ashamed, for they have actually done no wrong in the eyes of God. Society may reject and revile them, perhaps through social ostracism or even official persecution, but what God thinks of them is infinitely more important than any caricature of them made by man. Therefore, they are to bring glory to God by unashamedly bearing the name "Christian." One day when they stand face to face with Christ, they will fully realize the importance of such a stance, and they will be glad for having done so!

In many cultures of the world, the dynamics of honor and shame play a significant role in how one lives in society and the decisions one makes. A person's "honor" is to be carefully guarded and even defended. Yet if a person is reviled for being a Christian, he must carefully distinguish between present shame and potential future shame when he stands before Christ. If for the sake of his personal honor, he is unwilling to face shame in being identified as a Christian, then he faces a real dilemma. If he is swayed by the desire to defend his personal honor now (and denies or even hides his true identity as a Christian), then one day when it matters infinitely more, he will have to come to grips with the shame he will certainly feel when he gives an account of himself to Christ. Jesus reminded His followers, "If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mk 8:38). To be a Christian is the greatest honor any of us could ever have, and of this we must never be ashamed!

QUESTION 12



In some societies today, being a Christian is reasonably tolerated and perhaps even respected. Yet in other societies, to bear the name "Christian" will likely bring disrespect, and perhaps even hostile attitudes or persecution. In your society, do Christians incur "shame" in identifying themselves as such? Have you personally had to face *shame* at the hands of man in order to be *unashamed* as a Christian? Write your thoughts in your Life Notebook.

Topic 4: Suffering in Relation to God's Judgment (1 Pet 4:17-18)

These verses provide an *explanation* as to why the Christian who suffers for Christ is not to be ashamed. Although he may suffer now, it is the Christ-rejecting unbeliever who will ultimately face a suffering of far greater magnitude than that experienced by the Christian.



READING: Open your Bible and read 1 Peter 4:17-18.

These two verses continue the subject of Christian suffering at the hands of a Christ-rejecting society in whose midst Christians find themselves trying to live out their faith.

Peter confronted his Christian readers (he called them “beloved” or “dear friends” in verse 12) with an unpleasant truth: “For it is time for judgment to begin, starting with the house of God.” By “house of God,” Peter clearly means the “church,” the new temple of God in the Spirit composed of living stones of which Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone (see his reference to the “spiritual house” in 1 Pet 2:4-5). The word “For” at the beginning of verse 17 indicates that Peter was explaining why they were not to be ashamed in having to suffer for the sake of Christ. Although the suffering was coming at the hands of Christ-rejecting unbelievers, Peter wished them to see that in some sense this was “judgment” from God. By “judgment,” he did not mean *punishment*, for this whole paragraph presumes that his readers were suffering unjustly for their faith in Christ (not for sins they had committed). Nor did Peter mean that God had orchestrated their suffering for the purpose of finding out who truly was a Christian and who was not. After all, the judgment is for “the household of God,” not those who merely professed to be Christians but were not. Furthermore, the next verse speaks of the difficulty “the righteous” have in their pathway to salvation.

QUESTION 13

What is meant by “the house of God” in 1 Peter 4:17?

- A. Peter is referring to the temple in Jerusalem where God will begin His judgment.
- B. Peter is referring to “heaven” (the heavenly house of God) and God’s judgment of evil angels.
- C. Peter is referring to those churches mentioned in 1 Peter 1:1 whom God was bringing judgment upon for their disobedience.
- D. Peter is referring to the universal church in general using the imagery found in 1 Peter 2:4-5.

QUESTION 14

According to the notes, this judgment upon “the house of God” was for the purpose of finding out who was truly a Christian and who was not. *True or False?*

The most logical way to view this judgment of God is by connecting it with what Peter had said earlier in his epistle in 1 Peter 1:6-7 about the testing of their faith for the purpose of purifying it and making it stronger:

⁶ This brings you great joy, although you may have to suffer for a short time in various trials. ⁷ Such trials show the proven character of your faith, which is much more valuable than gold—gold that is tested by fire, even though it is passing away—and will bring praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Seen in this way, Peter was suggesting to his readers that they should see their sufferings for Christ as one of God’s means for developing, purifying and strengthening their faith. In this light, God acts as “judge” but not punisher. As judge (of that which He has chosen and designed), His judgment is that His church must go through such purifying trials. Though it will be difficult, it will ultimately bring glory to Him and will result in relief for them at His return to usher them into the kingdom.

QUESTION 15

One way of understanding the judgment upon “the house of God” (as suggested in the notes) is to see it in view of 1 Peter 1:6-7 and the various trials that God allows to come into the life of a Christian to purify and strengthen his faith. *True or False?*

In stating “it is time for judgment to begin,” Peter also seemed to suggest that this was somehow connected to God’s judgment of the last days, as though to say that the judgment expected on a Christ-rejecting world must first be preceded by judgment upon His church. Nevertheless, the judgment on one is markedly different than the other. Now that Jesus had come, been resurrected and ascended to the right hand of the Father, humanity has embarked upon the final era ... an era that will culminate with the Great Tribulation and the defeat of Christ’s enemies. Hence, the author of Hebrews can say that “in these last days” God has spoken to us in His Son (Heb 1:2). Now that the new covenant has been inaugurated at the cross, the “last days” are advancing to their culmination at Christ’s return in glory and the completion of His judgment. Ed Blum (249) clarifies the connection to final judgment:

Here in 1 Peter the idea seems to be that the coming of the Lord in his eschatological judgment has, as a harbinger, a beginning of “birth pains” that will purify believers.... Now if the preliminary judgment (Christian suffering) is already taking place, the final doom on the disobedient is certain to follow shortly.

The final part of 1 Peter 4:17 turns to consider what is in store for those who remain in unbelief. Peter says, “if it starts with us, what will be the fate of those who are disobedient to the gospel of God?” Those who are “disobedient to the gospel” are those who have refused to accept God’s offer of forgiveness and the gift of eternal life. For them, their fate is one of eternal punishment in hell (Jn 3:36).

QUESTION 16

When Peter spoke of those who were “disobedient to the gospel of God,” he was referring to Christians who were being disobedient to God’s Word and needed to be disciplined. *True or False?*

QUESTION 17

Peter raised the question, “What will be the fate of those who are disobedient to the gospel of God?” What *fate* did he have in mind for them?

- A. Peter was thinking of the discipline that God might render them in this life, such as sickness or poverty.
- B. Peter was thinking of their eternal destiny in hell.
- C. Peter was thinking of what God might need to do in their life to convince them to believe in Christ.
- D. Peter was thinking that such people will be made to go through the Great Tribulation.

In verse 18, Peter reinforced his point by quoting Proverbs 11:31. The righteous (seen here as Christians who have believed the gospel) are saved, yet with difficulty. This does not mean that it is difficult for God to save them nor that they must do anything for their salvation other than to believe. It simply means that in the process of being saved, their pathway will be difficult, meaning that it will be marked by trials. But if the pathway is difficult for the Christian whose destination is the completion of his salvation, how much more difficult can we expect God to make it for those who have refused the gospel (the ungodly and sinners). The Apostle Paul, after being stoned during his first missionary journey, cautioned the new believers at Derbe by saying, “Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22; NASB). The lesson is that it is better to enter the kingdom in this manner than never to enter it at all!

QUESTION 18



God has judged (or ruled) that His children will be allowed to suffer at the hands of unbelievers in this age, but the judgment awaiting the unbeliever is eternity in the lake of fire. Seen in this light, the Christian is obviously the more fortunate person. Apart from this issue, however, what other advantages does the Christian have that the non-Christian does not? Write your answer in your Life Notebook.

Topic 5: Conclusion: Trust God Even While Suffering Unjustly (1 Pet 4:19)

1 Peter 4:19 is the final verse of this paragraph on Christian suffering that began with 1 Peter 4:12. Peter concluded with a call for suffering Christians to trust God, knowing He will do what is right.



READING: Open your Bible and read 1 Peter 4:19.

The word “Therefore”(or “So then”) stands at the head of verse 19 introducing this as the concluding verse to 1 Peter 4:12-19. The exhortation is directed at “those who suffer according to the will of God.” This picks up on what was said in 1 Peter 4:15-16. There is a type of suffering that is not appropriate for Christians and that is outside the will of God, namely, suffering on account of some crime or evil deed. Suffering that is “according to the will of God” is suffering that a Christian incurs simply by the fact that he bears the name “Christian” and has done nothing deserving of verbal assault, mistreatment, or persecution.

QUESTION 19

To “suffer according to the will of God” means that a Christian will accept the discipline that God uses to correct his bad behavior, knowing it is God’s will for him. *True or False?*

As Peter counseled earlier in his epistle, a Christian is not to retaliate in a hostile way—returning evil for evil or insult for insult—but rather try to bless instead (1 Pet 3:9). At the same time, the Christian is to “entrust” his soul to God. The word translated “entrust” (Gk *paratithēmi*) can have the meaning of turning something valuable over to another person for safekeeping. In one of the books of the Septuagint called “Tobit,” we see a good example of this:

Until his death I used to go into Media, and buy for him there. While in the country of Media I left bags of silver worth ten talents **in trust** with Gabael, the brother of Gabri (Tobit 1:14; NRSV).

The same word was used of Jesus upon the cross as he *entrusted* (or committed) his spirit to the Father: “Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, ‘Father, into your hands I **commit** my spirit!’” (Lk 23:46). As He was about to undergo death, Jesus had to trust that the Father would protect Him and bring Him back from the grave. The example of Christ becomes, then, the model for Christians who face suffering (cf. 1 Pet 2:23). They must entrust their souls to God, believing He can be trusted in what He has sovereignly ordained for them to have to endure.

Interestingly, Peter does not say they should entrust their souls to God but to “a faithful Creator.” Of course, God is the Creator, but by using these words for God, Peter was reminding them that their God is the Creator of everything. Genesis 1 testifies to this. Being the Creator, this reflects His infinite wisdom, careful design and planning, the power to accomplish what He has willed, and His ownership over all He has created. Furthermore, as Creator, He is rightfully the judge over what He has created. This is the One

whom Peter's readers were called upon to trust, and they could be assured that He is *faithful*. He will not let them down!

QUESTION 20

Why does Peter say they should entrust their souls to a faithful Creator?

- A. God can be counted on to *create* a new resurrected body for those who suffer martyrdom.
- B. This was a reminder of God's creative ability, for His creation in Genesis 1 was beautiful.
- C. God's identity as Creator suggests that what He does is marked by infinite wisdom, careful planning, and the power to bring about the desired result of what He has purposed.
- D. The readers can be assured that God's creation of a new heavens and earth will be perfect for them to dwell in.

Finally, while they entrust their souls to their faithful Creator, they are to continue to "do good." That is, their lives are to be characterized by good deeds, even to those who might be antagonistic to them. This, in fact, is how their trust in God is to be expressed. This has been a repeated theme in the epistle. In 1 Peter 2:12, he exhorted his readers, "maintain **good conduct** among non-Christians, so that though they now malign you as wrongdoers, they may see **your good deeds** and glorify God when he appears." Then in 1 Peter 3:17, he reminded them, "For it is better to suffer for **doing good**, if God wills it, than for doing evil" (cf. 1 Pet 2:15, 20; 3:6, 11, 13). K. Jobes (296) sums up the thought of "doing good" in the face of suffering this way:

Continue to live as a Christian; continue to observe appropriate social relationships; continue to minister to one another in the Christian community. Do not let persecution and suffering deflect you from your calling in Christ, because they are a part of this calling.

QUESTION 21



The notion of continuing to do what is "right" when we are being persecuted or mistreated is very pervasive in the epistle. Read each of the following verses: 1 Peter 2:12, 15, 20; 3:6, 11, 13, 17. Take a moment to think about an incident in your life where you were tempted to depart from doing right after being persecuted, mistreated, or made to suffer. How did that go? What did you learn from this situation that will help you to do better in the future? Write your answer in your Life Notebook.

Lesson 10 Self Check

QUESTION 1

1 Peter 4:7 begins by saying, “The culmination of all things is near.” There is a natural connection of 1 Peter 4:7-11 and the previous paragraph in view of the mention in 1 Peter 4:5 that Christ “is ready to judge the living and the dead.” *True or False?*

QUESTION 2

According to the notes, what is meant by the statement, “the culmination of all things is near”?

- A. Peter thought that Christ was going to return in the first-century A.D., but he was mistaken.
- B. Peter was referring to the end of the Roman Empire which he expected to happen soon.
- C. Peter was referring to the culmination of judgment that was to come upon Jerusalem (A.D. 70) because of the Jews having rejected Christ as Messiah.
- D. Peter meant that his readers were already living in the last stage of God’s program that would conclude with Christ’s return to formally inaugurate the kingdom.

QUESTION 3

When Peter spoke of the fiery trial that came upon them for their testing (1 Pet 4:12), what kind of testing did he have in mind?

- A. They were being tested to see if they really were Christians.
- B. Their Christian faith was being tested to refine it and make it stronger.
- C. They were being tested with trials to find out if they would abandon their faith in Christ and thus lose their salvation.
- D. Their faith was being tested to see if they were worthy of entering the kingdom of God.

QUESTION 4

Which of the following statements is true regarding the time when the glory of Christ will be revealed?

- A. The revealing of His glory that Peter spoke about refers to the day of Christ’s resurrection.
- B. At the revealing of His glory, Christ will put an end to all opposition to His rule.
- C. At the revealing of His glory, Christians will receive their resurrection bodies.
- D. The revealing of His glory refers to the time of the second coming of Christ.

QUESTION 5

According to 1 Peter 4:15-16, there was one thing they might be guilty of as Christians that they were not to be ashamed of. What was it?

- A. Being a criminal, because Christ had forgiven all their sins.
- B. Refusing to worship Caesar as their Lord.
- C. Being known as a “Christian.”
- D. Being a faithful Roman citizen.

QUESTION 6

What is meant by “the house of God” in 1 Peter 4:17?

- A. Peter is referring to the temple in Jerusalem where God will begin His judgment.
- B. Peter is referring to “heaven” (the heavenly house of God) and God’s judgment of evil angels.
- C. Peter is referring to those churches mentioned in 1 Peter 1:1 whom God was bringing judgment upon for their disobedience.
- D. Peter was referring to the universal church in general using the imagery found in 1 Peter 2:4-5.

QUESTION 7

In 1 Peter 4:17 we read, “it is time for judgment to begin, starting with the house of God.”

According to the notes, the correct way to understand Peter’s statement is that God is using the trials experienced by the Christian community to determine who was truly a Christian and who was not. *True or False?*

QUESTION 8

Peter raised the question, “What will be the fate of those who are disobedient to the gospel of God?”

What *fate* did he have in mind for them?

- A. Peter was thinking of the discipline that God might render them in this life, such as sickness or poverty.
- B. Peter was thinking of what God might need to do in their life to convince them to believe in Christ.
- C. Peter was thinking that such people will be made to go through the Great Tribulation.
- D. Peter was thinking of their eternal destiny in hell.

QUESTION 9

To “suffer according to the will of God” means that a Christian will be willing to accept mistreatment or persecution on account of the fact that he bears the name “Christian” without retaliating against those who treat him this way. *True or False?*

QUESTION 10

Why does Peter say they should entrust their souls to a faithful Creator?

- A. God can be counted on to *create* a new resurrected body for those who suffer martyrdom.
- B. This was a reminder of God’s creative ability, for His creation in Genesis 1 was beautiful.
- C. God’s identity as Creator suggests that what He does is marked by infinite wisdom, careful planning, and the power to bring about the desired result of what He has purposed.
- D. The readers can be assured that God’s creation of a new heavens and earth will be perfect for them to dwell in.

Lesson 10 Answers to Questions

QUESTION 1: True

QUESTION 2

- D. Peter meant that his readers were already living in the last stage of God's program that would conclude with Christ's return to formally inaugurate the kingdom.

QUESTION 3

<i>Verse Reference</i>	<i>Biblical Quotation</i>
Proverbs 15:8	"the prayer of the upright pleases him"
Ephesians 6:18	"pray at all times in the Spirit, and to this end be alert"
Philippians 4:6-7	"Do not be anxious about anything."
Colossians 4:2-4	"Be devoted to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving."

QUESTION 4: *Your answer.*

QUESTION 5

All are correct.

QUESTION 6: *Your answer.*

QUESTION 7: False

QUESTION 8:

- C. Their Christian faith was being tested to refine it and make it stronger.

QUESTION 9: All are true except for "A."

- B. The revealing of His glory refers to the time of the second coming of Christ.
C. At the revealing of His glory, Christians will receive their resurrection bodies.
D. At the revealing of His glory, Christ will put an end to all opposition to His rule.

QUESTION 10: *Your answer.*

QUESTION 11

- B. Adultery

QUESTION 12: *Your answer.*

QUESTION 13

- D. Peter was referring to the universal church in general using the imagery found in 1 Peter 2:4-5.

QUESTION 14: False

QUESTION 15: True

QUESTION 16: False

QUESTION 17

- B. Peter was thinking of their eternal destiny in hell.

QUESTION 18: *Your answer.*

QUESTION 19: False

QUESTION 20

- C. God's identity as Creator suggests that what He does is marked by infinite wisdom, careful planning, and the power to bring about the desired result of what He has purposed.

QUESTION 21: *Your answer.*

Lesson 10 Self Check Answers

QUESTION 1: True

QUESTION 2

- D. Peter meant that his readers were already living in the last stage of God's program that would conclude with Christ's return to formally inaugurate the kingdom.

QUESTION 3

- B. Their Christian faith was being tested to refine it and make it stronger.

QUESTION 4

- D. The revealing of His glory refers to the time of the second coming of Christ.

QUESTION 5

- C. Being known as a "Christian."

QUESTION 6

- D. Peter was referring to the universal church in general using the imagery found in 1 Peter 2:4-5.

QUESTION 7: False

QUESTION 8

- D. Peter was thinking of their eternal destiny in hell.

QUESTION 9: True

QUESTION 10

- C. God's identity as Creator suggests that what He does is marked by infinite wisdom, careful planning, and the power to bring about the desired result of what He has purposed.

Lesson Eleven: Exhortations to Help the Christian Community Make a United Stance (1 Peter 5:1-11)

Lesson Introduction

1 Peter 4:12-19 marked the conclusion to the lengthy section of 3:13–4:19 that was characterized as *words of encouragement* for Peter’s Christian readers who faced suffering on account of their faith in Christ. Peter provided them with both guidance in how to navigate in such difficult waters as well as consolations to give them strength in persevering. In this lesson covering 1 Peter 5:1-11, Peter offered some final exhortations aimed at helping them stand *united* as a Christian community in living out their faith amid a society hostile to Christianity. In doing so, Peter laid down the gauntlet challenging them to live faithfully for God.

Lesson Outline

Topic 1: A Charge to Elders to Faithfully Shepherd the Flock of God (1 Pet 5:1-4)

Topic 2: A Charge to Younger Men to Be Humble and Patient (1 Pet 5:5-7)

Topic 3: A Charge to All to Resist the Devil and Stand Firm in Suffering (1 Pet 5:8-11)

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- List three key principles that all elders need to be mindful of and practice in their ministry.
- Understand the importance of *humility* in how elders and younger men in the church relate to one another.
- Know why you need to stay in a state of spiritual alertness and how you can resist the attacks of Satan upon your life.

Topic 1: A Charge to Elders to Faithfully Shepherd the Flock of God (1 Pet 5:1-4)

If there is to be a strong Christian community standing firm in the face of suffering, there must be strong leadership that both guards the flock and lives in such a way as to set a good example for others in the church. Hence, this paragraph is aimed at the leaders of the church, the elders.



READING: Open your Bible and read 1 Peter 5:1-4.

At the beginning of the epistle, Peter had introduced himself as “an apostle of Jesus Christ.” That designation reflected the authority he had been invested with by the Lord Jesus to advance the spread of the church. As the book of Acts clearly reveals, Peter had been the chief spokesman on the Day of Pentecost and subsequently for the early church. His key role was underscored again at the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15. Despite the significant position of authority he held in the early church, when speaking to other elders within the church in 1 Peter 5, he humbly referred to himself as a “fellow elder.”

That these early church leaders were designated “elders” (Gk *presbuteroi*, from which we get the English words “presbytery” and “Presbyterian”) was not an invention of the church. The ancient nation of Israel had its “elders” (see Ex 24:1), and when the Old Testament was translated into Greek in the 3rd century B.C., this term was translated as *presbuteroi*. Similarly, the same term was used for religious leaders during Maccabean times (1 Macc 14:20), and we also see evidence in the New Testament of its use for Jewish religious leaders in Jerusalem at the time of Christ (e.g., Mk 15:1). Primarily, the term reflected the age of the person (older) along with the expectation that with age would come greater wisdom. As the office of “elder” became a formal designation of church leaders (see Acts 11:30; 21:18), character qualities were given primary emphasis as requirements for the office (see 1 Tim 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9). Initially, the elders of a church were appointed by the apostles and missionaries who started the church. Subsequently, each church was responsible for choosing its own elders to lead the congregation.

QUESTION 1

The practice of having elders in the church who were responsible for shepherding God’s people stems from the ancient Jewish role of having elders. *True or False?*

In addition to describing himself as a “fellow elder,” Peter listed two other distinguishing things that qualified him as one who could exhort other elders:

- a witness of the sufferings of Christ
- a partaker of the glory that will be revealed

Those elders to whom he wrote had most likely never seen the Lord Jesus during the time of His earthly ministry, but Peter had. During the years of his training by Jesus, Peter had witnessed first-hand what Jesus had to go through. There were many sufferings that Jesus received, ranging from simple rejection to the physical agony of the cross. His reference to being “a partaker of the glory that will be revealed” undoubtedly was meant to recall the time that he, along with James and John, went with Jesus to the Mount of Transfiguration (see Mt 17:1-8). As they saw Jesus transfigured before their very eyes, what they were seeing was the way Jesus will look when He is seen in His coming kingdom (note Mt 16:28). Peter referred to this event again in 2 Peter 1:16-19. This phrase about being a partaker of Christ’s glory anticipates the reference to Jesus’ second coming in 1 Peter 5:4 and the reward for faithful elders. That Peter would mention both the sufferings of Christ and the glory that would follow was also another reminder to these elders of the path they should tread. Sufferings for Christ will one day be eclipsed by reigning with Christ in glory.

QUESTION 2

What is the correct way to understand Peter’s claim of being a partaker of the glory that will be revealed?

- A. Peter was anticipating that God would reveal Peter’s glory to the churches, since he was an apostle.
- B. Peter was thinking of the glorified body that he would receive at the second coming.
- C. Peter was looking forward to the glories of the kingdom when there will be peace and righteousness throughout the world.
- D. Peter was reflecting on the experience he had in seeing Jesus momentarily transformed in glory, a “preview” of how Christ will appear when He comes again.

Peter’s exhortation for the elders begins in 1 Peter 5:2. He instructed them, “Shepherd the flock of God which is among you.” The imagery of God’s people as a flock of sheep needing a shepherd had deep roots in Jewish tradition (Gen 48:15; Ps 23; Ps 95:7; 100:3). Considering the multiple references to Isaiah 53 in Peter’s epistle (1 Pet 2:21-25), the primary background for Peter’s exhortation of shepherding the flock is

likely drawn from Isaiah 53:6: “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” Also, Peter was probably thinking of the charge that had been laid on him in his reconciliation with Christ (Jn 21:15-19). Jesus instructed Peter, “Shepherd My sheep.” Just as Jesus had made Peter an *undershepherd*, so Peter was now inviting these elders to share in that awesome responsibility of caring for Christ’s precious lambs.

QUESTION 3

Match the verse reference in the left column with the correct verse in the right column:

<i>Verse Reference</i>	<i>Biblical Verse</i>
Genesis 48:15	All of us had wandered off like sheep; each of us had strayed off on his own path.
Psalms 95:7	We are the people of his pasture, the sheep he owns.
Isaiah 53:6	You were going astray like sheep but now you have turned back to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.
John 21:16	Jesus told him, “Shepherd my sheep.”
1 Peter 2:25	God ... has been my shepherd all my life long to this day.

On the one hand, Peter described the elders as “those who shepherd” (Gk verb *poimainō*), a verb from the same root from which we get the word “pastor” (Gk noun *poimēn*). Yet he also says they are to “serve as overseers” (Gk verb *episkopeō*). This latter term is that from which we get the word “bishop,” one who *oversees* the ministry of the church. In the early church, there did not seem to be any differentiation between elder (*presbuteros*), pastor (*poimēn*), and overseer (*episkopos*). In Titus 1:5-7, Paul used the terms “elder” and “overseer” synonymously. Also, in Acts 20:17 and 28, Paul used all three terms (elders, overseers, and shepherds/pastors) for the same church leaders. Only later in church history did a distinction come about. K. Jobes (303) adds this insight:

At the end of the first century, Clement of Rome refers to only two church offices, using *episkopoi* and *presbyteroi* interchangeably alongside *diakonoi* (1 Clem. 42.4; 44:4-5). The early second-century writings of Ignatius (ca. AD 106) distinguish between three offices, where the elders (*presbyteroi*) and deacons (*diakonoi*) serve below an *episkopos* (e.g., Ign. *Magn.* 6.1; 13.1; Ign. *Trall.* 3.1).

QUESTION 4

Based on the data from the Bible itself, we can conclude that during the time of the early church in the first century A.D., bishops were appointed to be over pastors, and pastors were appointed to be over elders. *True or False?*

Peter next laid out three sets of opposing qualifiers on their motivation for serving as elders:

First, those who served as elders were to have their heart in this. They were not to be pressured into serving but to do so willingly. Second, their motivation must not be for any financial benefit they would stand to gain, whether obtained dishonestly or simply by greed. Third, they needed to beware the danger of lusting for personal power. Rather than lording it over others, they were to be examples of what it meant to serve others, just as Jesus had taught (Mt 20:25-27):

²⁵ But Jesus called them and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those in high positions use their authority over them. ²⁶ It must not be this way among you! Instead whoever wants

to be great among you must be your servant,²⁷ and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave.

QUESTION 5

Which of the following were principles that Peter laid out for elders to obey? [*Check all that apply*].

- A. Elders should be at least sixty years of age.
- B. Elders should not be pressured into serving but do so willingly.
- C. Elders should serve in the church for a maximum of four years.
- D. Elders were not to serve for the purpose of any financial gain they might derive from doing so.
- E. Elders should be men who wanted to have power and control over others.

Finally, in 1 Peter 5:4, he directed their attention to the future when their faithfulness as elders will be rewarded. He called Jesus the “Chief Shepherd,” a reminder that all elder-shepherds are ultimately accountable to Him. The author of Hebrews instructed Christians, “Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account” (Heb 13:17). Elders in the church are tasked with the duty of watching out for the souls entrusted to their care, and one day they will have to give an account to the Lord as to how faithful they were in doing so. This time of accountability will be “when the Chief Shepherd appears.” The fundamental sense of the Greek verb translated “appears” is that of a *visible appearance* and is thus a reference to the second coming of Christ. That is when He will appear in power and glory. The same term translated “appear” (Gk *phaneroō*) is used of His second coming in Colossians 3:4 and 1 John 2:28; 3:2. If the elders are faithful in following Peter’s exhortation, they “will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.”

QUESTION 6

When will the reward for faithful elders be given and on what basis can we know that?

- A. Faithful elders will be given a gift by their church at the time they stop serving, since gifts of appreciation are normally given when one completes his duty.
- B. Faithful elders could expect a reward at the time of the next church council, since more leaders would be present to witness the event.
- C. Faithful elders would receive their reward at the time of their death, since Philippians 1:23 promises that to die and be with Christ is “better by far.”
- D. Faithful elders could expect to be rewarded at the time of Christ’s return, since the word translated “appear” refers elsewhere to the second coming of Christ.

The expression “crown of glory” only occurs here in the New Testament. The word “glory” may be meant to modify the crown; hence, a *glorious crown*. The description “does not fade away” (Gk *amarantinos*) is related to the word in 1 Peter 1:4 (*amarantos*), also translated “does not fade away,” and which described the imperishable inheritance reserved in heaven for believers. The Greek word used for “crown” is *stephanos*, not *diadēma*. The latter is normally used of a crown worn by royalty. A *stephanos*, however, was commonly used of a wreath of leaves placed upon the head of a winner in the athletic competitions (though Jesus wore a *stephanos* of thorns). Although the exact nature of this “crown” is not apparent, those who have served as elders can be assured that God will appropriately reward those who have been faithful to shepherd the sheep of God for a job well done.

QUESTION 7

The type of crown that will be given to faithful elders when Christ appears will be a type that was commonly used for kings and other royal officials in the Roman world, since these elders will be allowed to reign with Christ. *True or False?*

QUESTION 8



Every church needs good leadership. Does your particular church have “elders”? [Some churches have a plurality of elders, though in some churches the pastor is the only elder]. Why do you believe it is important for a church to take seriously the principles that Peter laid out in 1 Peter 5:2-3? What can a church do to make sure these principles are faithfully observed? Write out your answers in your Life Notebook.

Topic 2: A Charge to Younger Men to Be Humble and Patient (1 Pet 5:5-7)

This paragraph is concerned with the relationship between the elders and the younger men of the church who are responsible for submitting themselves to the authority of the elders. This requires humility on the part of both in order for the church to enjoy a spirit of unity and for there to be harmony as they work together for the sake of Christ.



READING: Open your Bible and read 1 Peter 5:5-7.

Peter continued his exhortation in verse five but shifted to address the younger men in the church. These stood in contrast to the elders who were older (and presumably of mature character). The need to define the authority of the elders in the previous paragraph may reflect that the churches in this area were in an early stage of development regarding church structure. Peter may have felt the need to clarify leadership roles and the proper lines of authority. Younger men in the church may have thought that in certain matters they could do things *better* than their more senior leaders, and thus there was the temptation for them to challenge the authority of their elders. This is why Peter cautioned them, “be subject to the elders.” In God’s economy, respect for authority and a willingness to obediently submit oneself are marks of Christian maturity. If Christians were responsible to obey kings and civic leaders (as Peter instructed them to do in 1 Pet 2:13-14), then how much more readily should they submit to elders within the church who presumably would be men of prayer who sought the will of God.

QUESTION 9

In view of Peter’s exhortation to the younger men in 1 Peter 5:5, what kind of temptation might they have been facing?

- A. The temptation to act in an improper way toward Christian sisters in the church.
- B. The temptation of thinking they knew better than the elders and wanting to challenge their authority.
- C. The temptation of wanting the rewards that were promised to faithful elders.
- D. The temptation of wanting to become an elder in order to get more riches.

Of course, not all elders are necessarily walking with the Lord as they should. Being human, they are susceptible to walking in the flesh and serving out of impure motives. This is why Peter exhorted them as he did in 1 Peter 5:1-4. Such elders may at times make unwise decisions or act in ways unbecoming of Christian leaders. This is where it can become frustrating for younger men to submit to their leadership. Realizing this potential for tension between elders and younger men of the church, Peter exhorted both sides, “clothe yourselves with humility toward one another.” G. Derickson (1167) wisely remarks:

It is only with humility that an elder can avoid base motives. It is only with humility that a younger person can willingly follow in a voluntary society such as the church

QUESTION 10

The key thing that younger men can do to be submissive to the elders of the church is to be faithful to attend all church meetings. *True or False?*

Both parties needed to keep in mind that God was calling them to operate out of a heart of humility. God was not asking the younger men to submit to their elders because the latter were right. In some cases, their decisions might not be the best. But God was asking the younger men to submit to them anyway and allow God—in His sovereignty and wisdom—to worry about how best to handle the situation. This does not mean, of course, that younger men cannot respectfully share their ideas and make recommendations. They ought to be able to do so without the elders feeling threatened. If both the elders and the young men operate out of a heart of humility, then harmony is more likely to flourish, and the church will experience God's blessing.

QUESTION 11



John was a younger man in his church. One day he heard that the elders of the church had decided to remove the senior pastor, because they felt his sermons were not inspiring enough. John disagreed and believed that this was a bad decision by the elders. If John came to you for advice on how to handle the situation, what would you advise him? Write your response in your Life Notebook.

Peter reinforced the call to humility by citing a verse from Proverbs 3:34: “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” Without a doubt, God is all-powerful, and one would be foolish to oppose Him. However, those who are walking in pride do just that! On the other hand, those who are exercising humility are going to be the recipients of God's grace. And who does not feel the need or have the desire for God's amazing grace?

QUESTION 12

Which of the following statements has the correct wording of Proverbs 3:34?

- A. God opposes the rich but provides for the needs of the poor.
- B. God opposes earthly rulers but gives grace to the church.
- C. God opposes the proud but gives grace to peacemakers.
- D. God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

The call for humility applied to all church members, not just elders and the younger men of the church. Yet, in verse six, Peter was primarily addressing the younger men when he said, “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God” (NASB). If the principle of Proverbs 3:34 is true (and it is!), then that is exactly what the younger men ought to do, *to humble themselves*. To do so honored God, recognizing that it was ultimately He who established leadership in the church under His own authority. The reference to “the mighty hand of God” recalled the sovereign power by which God delivered the Hebrews from Egypt at the time of the Exodus (see Ex 32:11). Those who resisted the call to humility are reminded that to oppose God is to oppose the God known for His mighty hand. If Pharaoh could not resist Him, why should anyone else think they would be able to successfully do so? On the other hand, choosing to humble oneself under the mighty hand of God would not leave one defenseless. He would be secure under the mighty hand of God.

QUESTION 13

The reference to “the mighty hand of God” is taken from Proverbs 3:34. *True or False?*

For those who obediently heeded the call for humility, a blessing awaited them. Peter declared, “God will exalt you in due time” (1 Pet 5:6). This could mean one of two things: (1) the younger men should be patient, submissive, and humble; in due season God will exalt them to a position of greater authority in the church; or (2) God will exalt them at the time of Christ’s return by rewarding them for their humility and submissiveness. Most commentators think the latter is more likely in view. P. Davids (187) notes, “For Peter the due or opportune time is surely the return of Christ, the parousia, this expression here being a shortened form of that in 1:5.” The main point is that exaltation comes in God’s time, not man’s. One should not seek to exalt himself but rather to humbly respect God’s design for leadership and take the role of being a servant to others (as Christ our Lord modeled for us). Whatever exaltation comes, let it be that which God brings, not what we try to manufacture for ourselves!

QUESTION 14

Which of the following are possible interpretations of 1 Peter 5:6, “God will exalt you in due time”?

- A. Younger men should resist the temptation of financial gain, because God will give them what they need in His own timing.
- B. Younger men should be patient, submissive, and humble; God will exalt them to a position of greater authority in His own timing.
- C. Younger men who are humble and submissive to elders can expect to be exalted and rewarded at the time of Christ’s return.
- D. Younger men who are humble and submissive to elders will eventually be commended by the elders.

Finally, in 1 Peter 5:7, Peter provided some balance to the call for humility: “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you” (NIV). This tender exhortation echoes the thought of 1 Peter 4:19 where they were encouraged to entrust their souls to a faithful Creator. One may be troubled by concerns within the church or by other matters. And, without a doubt, a church that faced opposition and persecution from non-Christians was sure to have many concerns. K. Jobes (313) describes the concerns that the original audience would have likely felt:

Many anxieties result from professing faith in Christ in a polytheistic society that is hostile to the exclusive claims of the gospel. The loss of status and respect, loss of family standing, loss of friends, perhaps even loss of one’s livelihood and, in extreme cases, of one’s life—these are real possibilities for the Christians of Asia Minor.

Whatever the case may be, our concerns and anxieties are to be cast on God. He is certainly not indifferent to our struggles and our sufferings but cares for us and the things that trouble us. Matthew 10:29-31 reminds us of this:

²⁹ Aren’t two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father’s will. ³⁰ Even all the hairs on your head are numbered. ³¹ So do not be afraid; you are more valuable than many sparrows.

E. Blum (251) wisely reminds us, “The application of his exhortation embraces all the difficulty a believer who wants to live godly in a fallen world must face.” God is intimately concerned for His children, and because of that, we can bring all our cares to Him in prayer.

QUESTION 15



1 Peter 5:7 encourages us, “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you” (NIV). Perhaps there are things weighing on your heart right now that would be good for you to *cast upon God*. Take a few moments to think about this and then have a season of prayer with God. After all, the Bible says that He really does “care for you.” Write your reflections from this exercise in your Life Notebook.

Topic 3: A Charge to All to Resist the Devil and Stand Firm in Suffering (1 Pet 5:8-11)

Having addressed both the elders and the young men of the churches to whom he wrote, Peter turned in verses eight to eleven to offer some helpful counsel for all believers. Behind all suffering and persecution lies the evil one, the devil, and believers must expect and be prepared for spiritual warfare with the great enemy of our faith.



READING: Open your Bible and read 1 Peter 5:8-11.

Though it is true that Christians can cast their concerns upon God because of His care for them (1 Pet 5:7), nevertheless there is one who does not care for Christians but rather wants to destroy them, namely, the devil. Throughout his epistle, Peter has spoken repeatedly of the trials, sufferings and persecution of his readers, yet until now he has not brought the matter of Satan’s role into the discussion. Indeed, it would have been a glaring absence not to have considered how Satan and demonic forces play into the matter of Christian suffering. So, as he neared the completion of the epistle, Peter reminded his Christian readers of the ultimate source behind their struggles and suffering, namely, Satan, the archenemy of God.

Peter called the evil one both “your adversary” (NASB; NET has “enemy”) and “the devil.” The first term (adversary) often has a more technical meaning of one who brings a charge against another in a lawsuit, that is, an *accuser*. Satan is certainly an accuser of the brethren (cf. Rev 12:10), as he delights in accusing believers of their unworthiness (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-5; Zech 3:1). The term “devil” (Gk *diabolos*) means *one who slanders* another, and was the Greek term used to render the Hebrew word *Satan* (e.g., Job 1:6). Satan lies to believers, and he lies about believers.

QUESTION 16

Which term has a more technical meaning (sometimes used in a court of law) of bringing a charge against another person, and hence meaning “an accuser”?

- A. Satan
- B. The devil
- C. Adversary
- D. The dragon of old.

The Bible certainly depicts Satan as having great power (note Jn 14:30 and Eph 2:2). Therefore, Christians—if they do not want to be crushed by Satan and his schemes—need to remain in a state of high-alert. Peter warned his readers in verse eight, “Be sober and alert.” Both terms have to do with maintaining a state of mental and spiritual sobriety and alertness. The command to “be alert” was emphatically used by the Lord Jesus as He exhorted His disciples to remain vigilant in expectation of His return at the second coming (see Mt 24:42-43; 25:13). This same concern is reiterated in Revelation 3:3 and 16:15, where believers are admonished to remain alert and expecting the Lord’s return at any time,

lest they be caught unprepared by the unfolding of end-time events. Both terms (“sober” and “alert”) are used together in 1 Thessalonians 5:6 in an eschatological context regarding the expectation of the Day of the Lord. The emphasis throughout 1 Peter on the Lord’s return forms the backdrop for the exhortation in 1 Peter 5:8 to be spiritually sober, alert and expectant. Negligence in doing so will just provide greater opportunity for Satan to take advantage of them and work his havoc. The imagery of a roaring lion “looking for someone to devour” is an apt description of Satan’s intentions. As Jesus said, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy” (Jn 10:10).

QUESTION 17

The Christian who heeds Peter’s exhortation to be “sober and alert” is one who lives in spiritual readiness for the Lord’s return, while failure to do so puts one in greater danger of becoming the prey of the devil. *True or False?*

Satan will not cease “prowling about” looking for a victim. Despite our best intentions to remain sober and alert, we will inevitably face his attack at one time or another. Yet there are two things we can and must do as we encounter him:

- (1) We must resist him.
- (2) We must be mindful that we are not the only believers facing his assault.

In 1 Peter 5:9, Peter exhorted his readers, “Resist him, strong in your faith.” This was the same counsel given by the Apostle James: “resist the devil and he will flee from you” (Jas 4:7). Believers are not instructed to go on the offensive against Satan but rather to take a defensive posture. The way we do battle with Satan and his demonic cohorts is to resist them. We do that by remaining true to our Christian convictions, by putting our trust in God, and by putting on the spiritual armor of God as described in Ephesians 6:10-18.

¹⁰ Finally, be strengthened in the Lord and in the strength of his power. ¹¹ Clothe yourselves with the full armor of God so that you may be **able to stand against** the schemes of the devil. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens. ¹³ For this reason, take up the full armor of God so that you may be able to **stand your ground** on the evil day, and having done everything, **to stand**. ¹⁴ **Stand firm therefore**, by fastening the belt of truth around your waist, by putting on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ by fitting your feet with the preparation that comes from the good news of peace, ¹⁶ and in all of this, by taking up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ And take *the helmet of salvation* and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹⁸ With every prayer and petition, pray at all times in the Spirit, and to this end be alert, with all perseverance and requests for all the saints.

When we resist the attack of Satan in this way, the Bible promises us that he will flee from us (Jas 4:7), just as he left Jesus after unsuccessfully tempting Him (Mt 4:11).

QUESTION 18

The promise that the Bible gives to the Christian who *resists* the devil is that the devil will _____ from you.

A second thing we are to do has to do with our attitude. We are not to think we are alone—as though we were the only ones suffering for our faith (1 Pet 5:9). Rather, we are to be mindful that other believers the world over are also suffering for their faith in Christ and engaged in spiritual warfare with Satan. Whenever we focus only on ourselves and the struggles we face, we can easily become disillusioned,

discouraged and even overcome with fear. By thinking of our fellow believers in Christ and the sufferings they endure—and especially by praying for them—the more victorious we will be.

QUESTION 19



Can you think of a Christian whom you personally know that is suffering *on account of their faith in Christ* in a greater way than you have had to do? Write down what you know about this person's suffering in your Life Notebook. When you are finished, take a few moments right now to stop and pray for this brother or sister. Is there anything you can do to encourage them?

The Bible does not promise that spiritual warfare will be enjoyable. In fact, it is not. But in verse ten, Peter offered several words of consolation: “And, after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace who called you to his eternal glory in Christ will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.” First, Peter reminds us that whatever sufferings we experience in spiritual warfare, they are only “for a little while.” Considering the remainder of the verse, this should probably be understood in comparison with eternity. Some sufferings may last a long while from our earthly perspective, perhaps even life-long. But our days on earth are actually quite short when compared with eternity, so whatever sufferings we must endure in this life will one day be eclipsed by eternity in the presence of Christ.

Second, Peter reminds us that our God is “the God of all grace.” By His grace, we can persevere in our trials and tribulations. God's grace can enable us to endure whatever sufferings come our way. When Paul prayed in 2 Corinthians 12 for God to remove his “thorn in the flesh,” God's reply to him was “My grace is enough for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor 12:9). Later in his ministry, Paul instructed Timothy, “So you, my child, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim 2:1). Grace it is that saved us, and grace it will be that sees us through!

QUESTION 20



As you think back on some of the trials and sufferings that you have personally experienced in the past year, how do you see the “grace of God” at work in your experiences? Write out your answer in your Life Notebook. Be prepared to share your answer with others in your study group.

Third, Peter reminds us that God has called us to His eternal glory in Christ (1 Pet 5:10). Sufferings in this life are limited to the relatively short life we live here on earth. But our future is an eternal one of sharing in the glory of Christ. This means that like Christ, we will be resurrected to enjoy glorified bodies, and we will also be eternally *with the glorified Christ* while living in a world without sin, without suffering, and without spiritual warfare.

Fourth, Peter reminds his readers (and us) that after suffering, God will “restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you” (1 Pet 5:10). Some Bible scholars view this as happening *later*, after life on earth, but other scholars see this as being fulfilled in the present life. Both views are possible, but a study of these terms and how they are used elsewhere in the New Testament tends to affirm the second view. [J. R. Michaels (302-303) has even suggested that both views are true when he states that the “victory described is future and eschatological ..., yet ... the process by which it comes to realization is already underway”]. Peter has piled up these closely related terms to reassure us that suffering does not have to be a setback for us.

God will restore us and strengthen our faith. Spiritual strength often comes as a result of enduring times of trouble and suffering in which we cling to our Savior even more and learn to trust Him amid the storm.

QUESTION 21

In 1 Peter 5:10, Peter gave four consolations for the Christian who is suffering. Circle the ones that he mentioned.

- A. Believers are assured that they will share in future glory with Christ.
- B. Believers are assured that Christ will defeat Satan at His return in glory,
- C. Believers are assured God's amazing grace will be available to help them .
- D. Believers are reminded that their sufferings are for "a little while" in contrast to eternity.

Peter closed out this paragraph with a benediction: "To him belongs the power forever. Amen" (1 Pet 5:11). The word translated "power" (Gk *kratos*) emphasizes the *sovereign power* that God alone has. For Peter's first-century readers, this was a reminder that it was not Rome that ultimately held power, but their Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Despite our sufferings in this life, we can be assured that it is our God who is more powerful than anything Satan can hurl against us, or the government under which we live, or a hostile society that surrounds us.

Lesson 11 Self Check

QUESTION 1

What did Peter mean when he claimed to be a “partaker of the glory that will be revealed”?

- A. Peter was anticipating that God would reveal Peter’s glory to the churches, since he was an apostle.
- B. Peter was recalling his experience at the Mount of Transfiguration when he had the privilege of seeing Christ in His kingdom glory.
- C. Peter was looking forward to the glories of the kingdom when there will be peace and righteousness throughout the world.
- D. Peter was thinking of the glorified body that he would receive at the second coming

QUESTION 2

Based on the data from the Bible itself, we can conclude that during the time of the early church in the first century A.D., the designation “elder” was used synonymously with “overseer” and “pastor.” *True or False?*

QUESTION 3

Which of the following were principles that Peter laid out for elders to obey? [Check all that are correct].

- A. Elders had to be men who were married.
- B. Elders had to have the approval of two-thirds of the congregation in order to serve.
- C. Elders should serve in the church for a maximum of four years.
- D. Elders were not to serve for the purpose of any financial gain they might derive from doing so.
- E. Elders should be men who are not motivated by a desire to have power and control over others.

QUESTION 4

When will the reward for faithful elders be given and on what basis can we know that?

- A. Faithful elders will be given a gift by their church at the time they stop serving, since gifts of appreciation are normally given when one completes his duty.
- B. Faithful elders could expect a reward at the time of the next church council, since more leaders would be present to witness the event.
- C. Faithful elders would receive their reward at the time of their death, since Philippians 1:23 promises that to die and be with Christ is “better by far.”
- D. Faithful elders could expect to be rewarded at the time of Christ’s return, since the word translated “appear” refers elsewhere to the second coming of Christ.

QUESTION 5

In view of Peter’s exhortation to the younger men in 1 Peter 5:5, what kind of temptation might they have been facing?

- A. The temptation to act in an improper way toward Christian sisters in the church.
- B. The temptation of thinking they knew better than the elders and wanting to challenge their authority.
- C. The temptation of wanting the rewards that were promised to faithful elders.
- D. The temptation of wanting to become an elder in order to get more riches.

QUESTION 6

The expression “the mighty hand of God” was used in Exodus 32:11 in reference to God’s *sovereign power* that He exercised against the Pharaoh of Egypt. *True or False?*

QUESTION 7

One possible interpretation of the promise in 1 Peter 5:6, “God will exalt you in due time,” is that younger men who are humble and submissive to elders can expect to be exalted and rewarded at the time of Christ’s return. *True or False?*

QUESTION 8

The Christian who heeds Peter’s exhortation to be “sober and alert” is one who lives in spiritual readiness for the Lord’s return, while failure to do so puts one in greater danger of becoming the prey of the devil. *True or False?*

QUESTION 9

James 4:7 promises us that it is possible to resist the devil whenever two or three Christians agree in prayer to bind him. *True or False?*

QUESTION 10

In 1 Peter 5:10, Peter gives four consolations for the Christian who is suffering? Circle the ones that he mentions.

- A. Believers are assured that they will share in future glory with Christ.
- B. Believers are assured that Christ will defeat Satan at His return in glory.
- C. Believers are assured that God’s amazing grace will be available to help them.
- D. Believers are reminded that their sufferings are for “a little while” in contrast to eternity.

Lesson 11 Answers to Questions

QUESTION 1: True

QUESTION 2

- D. Peter was reflecting on the experience he had in seeing Jesus momentarily transformed in glory, a “preview” of how Christ will appear when He comes again.

QUESTION 3

<i>Verse Reference</i>	<i>Biblical Verse</i>
Genesis 48:15	God ... has been my shepherd all my life long to this day.
Psalms 95:7	We are the people of his pasture, the sheep he owns.
Isaiah 53:6	All of us had wandered off like sheep; each of us had strayed off on his own path.
John 21:16	Jesus told him, “Shepherd my sheep.”
1 Peter 2:25	You were going astray like sheep but now you have turned back to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

QUESTION 4: False

QUESTION 5: Answers “B” and “D” are correct.

- B. Elders should not be pressured into serving but do so willingly.
D. Elders were not to serve for the purpose of any financial gain they might derive from doing so.

QUESTION 6

- D. Faithful elders could expect to be rewarded at the time of Christ’s return, since the word translated “appear” refers elsewhere to the second coming of Christ.

QUESTION 7: False

QUESTION 8: *Your answer.*

QUESTION 9

- B. The temptation of thinking they knew better than the elders and wanting to challenge their authority.

QUESTION 10: False

QUESTION 11: *Your answer.*

QUESTION 12

- D. God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

QUESTION 13: False

QUESTION 14

- B. Younger men should be patient, submissive, and humble; God will exalt them to a position of greater authority in His own timing.
C. Younger men who are humble and submissive to elders can expect to be exalted and rewarded at the time of Christ’s return.

QUESTION 15: *Your answer.*

QUESTION 16

- C. Adversary

QUESTION 17: True

QUESTION 18: “flee”

- The devil will flee from you.

QUESTION 19: *Your answer.*

QUESTION 20: *Your answer.*

QUESTION 21: Answers “A,” “C,” and “D” are all correct.

- A. Believers are assured that they will share in future glory with Christ.
C. Believers are assured God’s amazing grace will be available to help them.
D. Believers are reminded that their sufferings are for “a little while” in contrast to eternity.

Lesson 11 Self Check Answers

QUESTION 1

- B. Peter was recalling his experience at the Mount of Transfiguration when he had the privilege of seeing Christ in His kingdom glory.

QUESTION 2: True

QUESTION 3: Both D and E are correct.

- D. Elders were not to serve for the purpose of any financial gain they might derive from doing so.
- E. Elders should be men who are not motivated by a desire to have power and control over others.

QUESTION 4

- D. Faithful elders could expect to be rewarded at the time of Christ's return, since the word translated "appear" refers elsewhere to the second coming of Christ.

QUESTION 5

- B. The temptation of thinking they knew better than the elders and wanting to challenge their authority.

QUESTION 6: True

QUESTION 7: True

QUESTION 8: True

QUESTION 9: False

QUESTION 10: Answers A, C, and D are all correct.

- A. Believers are assured that they will share in future glory with Christ.
- C. Believers are assured God's amazing grace will be available to help them.
- D. Believers are reminded that their sufferings are for "a little while" in contrast to eternity.

Lesson Twelve: Summary, and Final Reflections (1 Peter 5:12-14)

Lesson Introduction

In this, the final lesson of the course, we will begin by studying the final paragraph of the epistle, which is Peter's closing remarks and his farewell to the readers. Then, we will do a few additional exercises designed to help us get the most out of our study. This will include looking back over the epistle to identify and summarize some of the key lessons we have learned from our study of 1 Peter. Finally, we will have you develop a teaching outline of a designated paragraph of the epistle after first observing a model of how this should be done.

Lesson Outline

- Topic 1: Closing Words and Farewell (1 Pet 5:12-14)
- Topic 2: Summarizing the Key Lessons of 1 Peter
- Topic 3: A Model of a Teaching Outline from 1 Peter
- Topic 4: Developing Your Own Teaching Outline from 1 Peter

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- Explain the meaning of several comments made by Peter in the final paragraph of the epistle, including the identification of his references to Silvanus, Babylon and Mark.
- Understand Silvanus's role in getting Peter's epistle to the readers for whom he wrote and why he would be delegated with this task.
- Identify eight of the primary lessons from our study of 1 Peter and apply one of the key lessons to your own life in how to encourage and strengthen the believers in your own community.
- Grow in your ability to develop a *teaching outline* of a paragraph of 1 Peter.

Topic 1: Closing Words and Farewell (1 Pet 5:12-14)

In Peter's closing words, he paid tribute to Silvanus for his part in helping get this epistle into the hands of the readers. Then he sent greetings on behalf of others, before his final words wishing them "peace" and encouraging them in how they should greet one another.



READING: Open your Bible and read 1 Peter 5:12-14.

Peter began his farewell by mentioning the name of Silvanus as the one through whom he had written the epistle. The name in this form appears three other times in the New Testament (2 Cor 1:19; 1 Thess 1:1; and 2 Thess 1:1), always in association with Paul and Timothy. Most scholars acknowledge, however, that this is the same person known elsewhere in the New Testament as Silas (Silas being a shortened form for Silvanus). The shortened form occurs some twelve times in the New Testament, all in the book of Acts, starting with Acts 15:22 and with a final mention in Acts 18:5. Following the Jerusalem Council in A.D. 49, Silas and another brother named Judas were sent along with Paul and Barnabas to deliver a letter from the apostles and elders in Jerusalem to explain the

important decisions that had been made at the Council. Primarily, this was the ruling that all people, Jews and Gentiles, were saved by the grace of God, not by keeping the Mosaic Law. Also, Gentiles were not required to be circumcised or to live by the Law. The record in Acts 15 indicates that Silas and Judas were regarded as “leading men among the brethren” (Acts 15:22). In the same chapter (Acts 15:32), we are also told that Silas was a prophet and able to preach (he “encouraged and strengthened the brethren with a lengthy message”). Silas and the others went to Antioch and delivered the letter, and afterwards Silas chose to remain there (Acts 15:34). He evidently felt a need to stay on and help with the ministry among the Gentiles. When Paul felt led to embark on his second missionary journey, Paul chose Silas to accompany him (Acts 15:40). It was on this journey, that Paul and Silas were severely beaten at Philippi and thrown into prison where their feet were fastened in stocks (Acts 16:23-24). Yet they prayed and sang hymns of praise to God. Silas, like Paul, knew what it was like to suffer for Christ’s sake. All these things speak highly of Silas as a key Christian servant of the Lord in the early church. Not surprisingly, Peter referred to Silas as a “faithful brother.” The fact that Peter also said, “whom I know to be,” indicates that not only had Silas worked with Paul, but Peter himself had personal contact and experience in serving with him in ministry.

QUESTION 1

The name Silas is a shortened form of Silvanus and refers to the brother who helped deliver the letter from the Jerusalem Council and later accompanied Paul on his second missionary journey. *True or False?*

The question is raised as to what role Silvanus (= Silas) had regarding Peter’s epistle. Some believe that Silas served as Peter’s amanuensis (a person who wrote the letter at another’s dictation). The Apostle Paul is known to have written Romans in this way by the hand of Tertius (Rom 16:22). Paul probably wrote other epistles this way, considering the references to the personal greeting by his own hand at the end of some of these (for example, 1 Cor 16:21; Gal 6:11; 2 Thess 3:17). Yet there is nothing in Peter’s closing remarks that indicates Silas had been an amanuensis for the epistle. Other scholars, therefore, believe that Silas’s role was that of being the messenger to deliver the epistle. Several observations support this view: (1) Silas had served in a similar role following the Jerusalem Council (see Acts 15:22-23); (2) the fact that Peter would refer to him as a “faithful brother” implied that he was a trusted person to carry this important letter to the churches of Asia mentioned in 1 Peter 1:1; and (3) in other instances where a messenger carried a New Testament epistle for an apostle, the messenger’s name was mentioned and usually with a word of commendation for that person (Eph 6:21-22; Col 4:7-9; and Titus 3:12-13).

QUESTION 2

Which of the following statements correctly support the idea that Silvanus (Silas) served to carry Peter’s epistle to the Christians mentioned in 1 Peter 1:1? [Circle all that are correct]

- A. Peter referred to him as a “faithful brother,” which implies he was someone that could be entrusted with delivering this precious apostolic epistle.
- B. Silas had experience in delivering some of Paul’s epistles to the churches in Macedonia and Achaia.
- C. In other cases in the New Testament where a messenger was used to deliver an epistle, the mention of their name along with a word of commendation was given.
- D. Since Silas had travelled to parts of Asia, he knew the best roads to travel by.

Peter was rather modest in saying “I have written to you briefly” (compare Heb 13:22). A lot of theology was packed into this epistle of five chapters. Yet Peter indicated that he had written “in order to encourage you and testify that this is the true grace of God” (1 Pet 5:1-2). The word “encourage” is the

same word translated “urge” or “exhort” in 1 Peter 2:11-12 and 5:1. The exhortation was certainly ethical: “I urge you as foreigners and exiles to keep away from fleshly desires that do battle against the soul, and maintain good conduct among the non-Christians” (1 Pet 2:11). Yet it was also a call to faithfulness and service as they awaited the appearing of Christ: “I urge the elders among you: Give a shepherd’s care to God’s flock among you” (1 Pet 5:1-2). At the same time, the epistle was a testimony of “the true grace of God.” Peter had spoken repeatedly in the epistle of “grace” (1 Pet 1:2; 3:7; 4:10; 5:5) and how this grace was available to them during their trial-filled days on earth (1 Pet 5:10) as well as in the glorious future day when their Lord would return (1 Pet 1:10, 13). Knowing all this, the exhortations and how God’s grace permeated their lives both now and in the future, Peter exhorted them, “Stand fast in it.” They were not to let the trials, temptations and sufferings of the present time divert them from remaining faithful to the Lord.

QUESTION 3

Peter refers twice to the topic of grace in his epistle, once in chapter one and again in 1 Peter 5:12. *True or False?*

In verse thirteen, Peter extended greetings to his readers on behalf of “she who is in Babylon” and “Mark my son.” The consensus of scholarly opinion is that “she who is in Babylon” is a reference to the church that was in Rome. Since the word “church” (Gk *ekklesiā*) is in the feminine gender, this would explain the use of the feminine article translated “she.” Several different suggestions have been made as to what Peter meant by “Babylon”: (1) literal Babylon on the Euphrates River; (2) a city in Egypt known as Babylon; and (3) as a code-name for Rome. Conservative evangelical scholars are almost unanimous in taking the third view, and there is good reason for that. First, there is no record that Peter ever went to literal Babylon. Second, by the time of the first-century A.D., literal Babylon had sunk into oblivion. By A.D. 115 Trajan found it a virtual ghost town (reported in Dio Cassius, *History*, 68.30). Third, there is evidence in other literature where Rome is referred to as Babylon (2 Baruch 67:7; and Sibylline Oracles 5: 143, 159). For instance, 2 Baruch 67:7 states, “But the king of Babylon will arise, the one who now has destroyed Zion” (an obvious reference to the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70). Fourth, it is understandable that Babylon would be used as a code-name for Rome. Just as Babylon destroyed Jerusalem in 586 B.C., Rome destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Also, it is the place of exile for those whose natural home is Jerusalem, and this fits well with the *exile motif* of the epistle. Peter began his epistle (see 1 Pet 1:1) by acknowledging that his readers were “aliens” and scattered (literally, “sojourners in the diaspora”), and he made a similar reference in 1 Peter 2:11. So, to refer to Rome as Babylon (the city known as the place of exile) at the end of the epistle would be very fitting to this motif of being exiles in a foreign land.

QUESTION 4

When Peter extended greetings from “she who is in Babylon,” he was probably referring to the wife of the pastor of the church in ancient Babylon. *True or False?*

QUESTION 5

Which of the following arguments favor the view that “Babylon” was really a code-name used by Peter for Rome, the capital of the empire? [Circle all that are correct]

- A. Rome, like ancient Babylon, was famous for its massive walls protecting the city.
- B. There is no record in the Bible or in early Christian tradition that Peter ever went to Babylon.
- C. We have references in extra-biblical literature such as 2 Baruch 67:7 where Rome is referred to as “Babylon.”
- D. Nero’s admiration for King Nebuchadnezzar caused Christians to speak of Rome as “Babylon.”

Fifth, while there is no evidence of Peter having visited literal Babylon, there is strong evidence of Peter's association with Rome, especially at the end of his life. We have record of that in Eusebius (the famous church historian of the fourth-century A.D.). According to Eusebius, both Paul and Peter were martyred in Rome during the reign of Emperor Nero (*Church History*, 2.25.5-8). Eusebius also preserved a testimony of Clement of Rome (ca. A.D. 35-99), stating that Peter preached the word publicly in Rome and announced the gospel by the Spirit (*Church History*, 6.14.6-7). Lastly, Eusebius claimed to preserve the opinion of the early church fathers that Peter wrote his epistle at Rome:

And Peter makes mention of Mark in his first epistle which they say that he wrote in Rome itself, as is indicated by him, when he calls the city, by a figure, Babylon, as he does in the following words: "The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son." (Eusebius, *Church History*, 2.15.2)

QUESTION 6

What was the name of the early church historian who recorded testimonies that Peter not only was in Rome at the latter part of his life but that he was closely associated with Mark? _____

In sending greetings, then, from the church at Rome, Peter also indicated that the Christians at Rome were "elect (chosen) together with you" (1 Pet 5:13). In 1 Peter 1:1-12 (see also 2:4, 6), Peter had told his readers that they were part of God's chosen people ... even a "chosen race" like Israel of old (1 Pet 2:9). They should see themselves as part of the same chosen people as the Christians at Rome. To be linked with the Christians at Rome was significant, because it was well-known that the Christians at Rome had indeed suffered for their faith in Christ. Nero had severely persecuted Christians at Rome, even using their bodies as human torches to light the streets at night.

QUESTION 7

The Christians to whom Peter wrote had much in common with the Christians at Rome. Despite having suffered for their faith in Christ, they had the consolation in knowing that they had been "chosen" by God and were now part of *God's chosen people*. *True or False?*

In addition to sending greetings from the church at Rome, Peter also extended greetings from "Mark my son." Most scholars agree that this is a reference to John Mark, the same one that had accompanied Paul on the first missionary journey. In the New Testament, there is evidence that Peter would have known Mark (see Acts 12:12). There is also evidence that Mark likely went to Rome where Paul was (2 Tim 4:11; cf. Col 4:10). It is not surprising that Peter would refer to Mark as "my son," just as Paul referred to Timothy as "my son" (1 Tim 1:18; 2 Tim 2:1) and "my true child in the faith" (1 Tim 1:2). There is also solid evidence from early church history of Mark's close association with Peter. Irenaeus (a second-century A.D. church father) testified that Mark was not only associated with Peter but that Mark relied upon Peter for information as he wrote the gospel bearing his name: "After their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what *had been preached by Peter*" (*Against Heresies*, 3.1.2).

QUESTION 8

Since Mark had been a co-worker with Paul earlier in his life, Mark and Peter did not meet each other until their time in Rome. *True or False?*

Later, Eusebius preserved the testimony of Papias (bishop of Hierapolis in Asia Minor who wrote about A.D. 110) that Mark was a close associate of Peter and wrote his gospel account based on this association:

This also the presbyter said: Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately, though not indeed in order, whatsoever he remembered of the things said or done by Christ. For he neither heard the Lord nor followed him, but afterward, as I said, he followed Peter, who adapted his teaching to the needs of his hearers, but with no intention of giving a connected account of the Lord's discourses, so that Mark committed no error while he thus wrote some things as he remembered them. For he was careful of one thing, not to omit any of the things which he had heard, and not to state any of them falsely. These things are related by Papias concerning Mark. (Eusebius, *Church History*, 3.39.15).

QUESTION 9

Eusebius, the early church historian of the fourth-century A.D., preserved a tradition handed down from Papias that Mark wrote his gospel account with reliance upon Peter. *True or False?*

In the final verse (1 Pet 5:14), Peter admonished his readers to “Greet one another with a kiss of love.” This was probably the way in which they greeted one another when they came together for worship. This was done by a brief kiss on the cheek in accordance with Jewish custom (Lk 7:45; 22:48), also mentioned by the Apostle Paul as “a holy kiss” (Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; and 1 Thess 5:26). The point was to greet one another in a *loving manner*, the kiss on the cheek being an expression of agape love and Christian unity. Such a custom, though rarely found in western churches today, is still commonly practiced in Arab culture today. W. Grudem remarks (202), “Although we may dismiss this as simply a custom belonging to first-century culture, we would do well to recognize the benefits in interpersonal relationships which come from such close physical expressions of friendship and fellowship in Christ” (202).

QUESTION 10

What Peter referred to as a “holy kiss” when Christians greeted one another was called “a kiss of love” by the Apostle Paul. *True or False?*

Lastly, Peter declared, “Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus.” Such a statement reflects the “in Christ” theology of the New Testament. When a person puts his or her faith in the Lord Jesus, that person is joined to Christ by the Holy Spirit and is said to be “in Christ.” That expression is used 76 times in the New Testament. For example, in 1 Corinthians 1:30 we read, “But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.” It is those who are “in Christ” that Peter gives this benediction, “Peace to you.” The word “peace” reflects the Hebrew word *shalōm*, a word that conveys a concern for the total well-being of another. How fitting it was that Peter would wish God’s *shalōm* on his readers, being that so many of them had experienced trials, suffering and persecution for their faith in Christ. Despite these things, there was an inner peace they could have because of their relationship with Jesus Christ. They were “in Christ” and would be totally vindicated at the time of His appearing in glory! In the meantime, the *peace of God* would guard their hearts:

And the peace of God that surpasses all understanding
will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus (Phil 4:7).

QUESTION 11



Reflect for a moment upon Peter's final comment ("Peace to all of you who are in Christ"). Is it possible to have trials and suffering while at the same time experiencing *peace*? Describe how you are able to experience *God's peace* in the midst of your circumstances and with all the challenges you face in regard to your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Write your answer in your Life Notebook.

Topic 2: Summarizing the Key Lessons of 1 Peter

The epistle of 1 Peter is very applicational for all Christians who are serious about living out their faith in a world hostile to Christianity. In this topic, our goal is to try to distill the most important lessons from our study of 1 Peter. We will do this in two steps. The first step will be to reflect once more on each paragraph of the epistle and formulate the main principle to be learned from that paragraph. The second step will be to study over this list of principles and identify those lessons that tend to get repeated or receive special emphasis.

STEP ONE: Identify the Main Principles of Each Paragraph

Paragraph	Primary Lesson of the Paragraph
1:3-5	As born-again believers awaiting our future salvation at Christ's return, we have the hope of resurrection and the promise of an imperishable inheritance.
1:6-9	In the interim as we await Christ's return, our faith is being tested, so that we might grow in our love for Him and that our faith, once proven, will be praised and rewarded by Christ at His return.
1:10-12	Since the Old Testament prophets predicted both the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow, we can be even more assured of the grace that will be ours at the second coming.
1:13-16	As we await the grace that we will receive at the time of Christ's return, we must gear our minds for spiritual action and for living holy lives.
1:17-21	Our motivation to live a holy life is based on the high price that Jesus paid for our redemption and the conviction that God is an impartial judge of His children (in discipline and at the judgment seat of Christ).
1:22-25	In obedience to God's enduring Word, we are to fervently love our fellow Christians from the heart.
2:1-3	We are to grow spiritually as Christians by turning away from evil and passionately pursuing God's Word.
2:4-8	Now that Jesus has made us priests as part of the new spiritual temple of God, we are to be faithful in offering up spiritual sacrifices to God.
2:9-10	Since God has privileged us by making us part of "the people of God," our purpose in life is one of proclaiming how excellent He is.

2:11-12	Our responsibility as God's people is to abstain from fleshly lusts, so that our excellent behavior will be a testimony to unsaved Gentiles.
2:13-17	Our responsibility of keeping our behavior excellent includes submitting ourselves to those in authority in civil government.
2:18-20	Our responsibility of keeping our behavior excellent includes (patiently) submitting ourselves to those under whom we work, even when they are unjust or harsh.
2:21-25	We are to follow the example of our Lord Jesus Christ who suffered innocently while procuring our salvation from sin.
3:1-7	Our responsibility of keeping our behavior excellent includes wives submitting to husbands and husbands treating their wives with understanding and honor.
3:8-12	Our responsibility of keeping our behavior excellent is to bless those who are against us rather than retaliating with evil.
3:13-17	When we as Christians suffer for doing what is right, we are to fear God more than man, be ready to give an account of our hope in Christ and silence our critics by our good behavior.
3:18-22	In suffering for doing what is right, we must remember our Lord's example: as the "just One," He died for our sins but was vindicated by His resurrection and triumph over His enemies.
4:1-6	As we face a society hostile to our beliefs, we are to turn from the lusts of men to do the will of God and be willing to suffer as Christ Himself did.
4:7-11	We should be a support for one another in prayer and by loving and ministering to one another.
4:12-19	When we suffer for His sake and for doing what is right, we should rejoice in expectation of what awaits us upon Christ's return.
5:1-4	Christians who provide oversight to the church as elders must do so with pure motives, knowing they will be appropriately rewarded by Christ at His return.
5:5-7	Younger Christian men are to strive to be humble, in order to be subject to the elders of the church.
5:8-11	We must remain spiritually alert and stand firm when suffering because of the devil's attacks.

QUESTION 12

After reading over the preceding list of principles, which of the following is NOT one of the primary issues reflected in these principles?

- A. Christian responsibility for keeping our behavior excellent.
- B. Christian responsibility to give generously from our finances.
- C. Following the example of the Lord Jesus by suffering unjustly.
- D. Supporting fellow Christians with love and upholding them in prayer.

STEP TWO: Identify the Primary Overall Lessons of the Epistle

The following are some of the most important overall lessons found in 1 Peter. Almost all of these receive repeated mention or emphasis in the epistle. [This list was made by carefully reflecting on the list of principles identified in Step One above].

1. As Christians, we are to follow our Lord's example of suffering unjustly, knowing that we will ultimately be vindicated and stand triumphant with Christ.
2. Jesus Christ is going to return one day for us to experience a future salvation, and we are to remain spiritually sober and alert in anticipation of this.
3. The hope of Christians is the expectation of being resurrected at the time of Christ's return, just as Christ Himself was resurrected from the dead.
4. Although our faith is presently being tested through trials and suffering, by faithfully persevering we will be honored by Christ at His return.
5. Our present responsibility as Christians is to abstain from fleshly lusts and live a holy life, while seeking to continue growing spiritually.
6. We must do our part in strengthening the Christian community by fervently loving our fellow Christians, praying for them, and ministering to them with our spiritual gifts.
7. We are to maintain a good testimony before non-Christians by our excellent behavior and by submission to the authorities that God has put us under.
8. Since good leadership is needed in all churches, elders must lead with pure motives and younger men must be submissive, but all will need to practice humility.

QUESTION 13

Christians have a responsibility to abstain from _____ and make a diligent effort to live a holy life.

QUESTION 14



All of us as Christians struggle at one time or another, and all of us are in need of the help, love and encouragement of fellow believers. Reflect on Key Principle 6 above: "We must do our part in strengthening the Christian community by fervently loving our fellow Christians, praying for them, and ministering to them with our spiritual gifts." Ask God how you might *fervently love* one of your fellow Christians this week. Then write down what you plan to do in your Life Notebook. When you have completed this action step, also record what happened.

Topic 3: A Model of a Teaching Outline from 1 Peter

Being able to study the Bible for ourselves is one of the fundamental life skills that we as Christians are to pursue and acquire. Yet we do not study the Bible just for the sake of gaining more information. We are to learn how to interpret the Bible accurately and then to apply it to our lives. This is one of the most basic essentials to our sanctification (growth in Christ likeness). In addition, as we grow spiritually, we need to learn how to communicate the truths of God's Word to others. Whether we are involved in preaching or teaching the Bible, this must flow from our own personal study of the Bible. In the BEE course on *Studying the Bible*, you will learn how to develop what is called a "teaching outline" of a biblical passage (see Lesson 10, Topic 1 of that course). Although we do not have time to instruct you fully in how to develop a teaching outline in this course, we can get you started in learning the fundamentals. Here are a few of the basic steps in the process that you can use at this time:

1. **Read** the passage carefully at least three times.
2. Make **observations** using the fundamental probing questions, Who? What? Where? When? and Why?
3. If appropriate, use a **Bible Dictionary or Bible Atlas** to help you understand places, things and people that you may not be familiar with.
4. Identify the crucial **issues that need to be interpreted**. Then make tentative conclusions based on (1) what makes the most sense considering the context in which the verse occurs, and (2) correlation with other related passages of Scripture.
5. Study **the structure of the passage** for purposes of making a *structural outline*. Try to determine the main points and the subordinate points within the passage. It will help you to observe the *connectives* within each sentence and between sentences. Connectives are words such as “and,” “but,” “so that,” “because,” “like,” “in order to,” “for example,” “therefore,” etc. Connectives help us understand the relationships between various parts of the passage.
6. Based on your understanding of the structure, write out **a complete sentence description** of each verse, and of each grouping of verses within the outline.
7. Looking at the passage as a whole, write down **the “theme”** of the passage. The theme is the subject or main issue that the passage deals with.
8. Looking at the passage as a whole, write down **the “purpose”** of the passage. The purpose answers the question of *why* the author is writing about this theme.
9. **Finalize your study** by writing out your teaching outline in accordance with the structural outline of the passage, but put the theme and purpose at the top of the page.

The following example of a teaching outline is taken from 1 Peter 3:1-7:

Teaching Outline of 1 Peter 3:1-7

Theme: The behavior of husbands and wives should show love and honor.
Purpose: To show how husbands and wives are to follow and thereby honor Christ in their marriages.

I. Peter's Instruction for Wives (vv. 1-6)

- A. Be submissive to, and supportive of, your husbands through quiet, respectful behavior (vv. 1-2).
- B. Do not seek beauty in external things, such as clothes and jewelry (v. 3).
- C. Let your beauty be the internal quality of a gentle, non-rebellious, non-contentious spirit (vv. 4-6).
 - 1. Holy women of the past adorned themselves in this way (vv.4-5).
 - 2. Follow Sarah's example (v. 6).
 - a. She submitted by calling Abraham lord.
 - b. You become just like her by doing the same without fear.

II. Peter's Instruction for Husbands (v. 7)

- A. Live with your wife in a way that does not offend or injure her nature as
 a woman.
- B. Treat her as an equal in Christ.

QUESTION 15

Which of the following are regarded as basic steps in the process of developing a teaching outline?
 [Check all that are correct].

- A. Identifying the theme of the passage.
- B. Discerning the structural outline of the passage, taking note of the connectives in the text.
- C. Preparing a colorful PowerPoint presentation for the audience.
- D. Making initial observations of the text using the fundamental probing questions.
- E. Begin by consulting a technical commentary that explains the meaning of every verse in the original language.
- F. Checking the Internet to see if someone has already posted a teaching outline of the passage.

QUESTION 16

The "theme" of a passage answers the question of *why* the author is writing about the subject he discusses. *True or False?*

Topic 4: Developing Your Own Teaching Outline from 1 Peter

Based on what you learned in Topic 3 above, you are now ready to prepare a *teaching outline* of your own. Here is your assignment:

Imagine that you have been asked to teach a Bible study next week to a group of Christians, many of whom have been suffering in various ways because of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. After consulting your pastor, he suggested that you prepare a study on 1 Peter 4:12-19. Your assignment, then, is to prepare a teaching outline of this passage following the steps outlined in Topic 3. Be sure to include a Theme and Purpose statement for the passage.

When you have finished developing your own teaching outline, you are encouraged to compare your work with the model provided in the answer section of this lesson. You will find it on the page following the answer to Question 16 of the “Answers to Questions” for Lesson 12.

Lesson 12 Self Check

QUESTION 1

Which of the following statements correctly support the idea that Silvanus (Silas) served to carry Peter's epistle to the Christians mentioned in 1 Peter 1:1? [Circle all that are correct]

- A. Silas was a cousin of Peter's and therefore someone he felt he could trust.
- B. Peter referred to him as a "faithful brother," which implies he was someone that could be entrusted with delivering this precious apostolic epistle.
- C. In other cases in the New Testament where a messenger was used to deliver an epistle, the mention of their name along with a word of commendation was given.
- D. Silas had experience in delivering some of Paul's epistles to the churches in Macedonia and Achaia.

QUESTION 2

Which of the following arguments favor the view that "Babylon" was really a code-name used by Peter for Rome, the capital of the empire? [Circle all that are correct]

- A. There is no record in the Bible or in early Christian tradition that Peter ever went to Babylon.
- B. Rome, like ancient Babylon, was famous for its armies that conquered foreign territories.
- C. Nero's admiration for King Nebuchadnezzar caused Christians to speak of Rome as "Babylon."
- D. We have references in extra-biblical literature such as 2 Baruch 67:7 where Rome is referred to as "Babylon."

QUESTION 3

Eusebius was the early church historian who recorded testimonies that Peter not only was in Rome at the latter part of his life but that he was closely associated with Mark. *True or False?*

QUESTION 4

When Peter referred to "my son Mark" at the end of his epistle, this was *not* the same Mark that had gone with Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey. *True or False?*

QUESTION 5

Eusebius, the early church historian of the fourth-century A.D., preserved a tradition handed down from Papias that Mark wrote his gospel account with reliance upon Peter. *True or False?*

QUESTION 6

Based on the list of principles found in 1 Peter, which of the following is NOT one of the primary issues reflected in these principles?

- A. Supporting fellow Christians with love and upholding them in prayer.
- B. Christian responsibility for keeping our behavior excellent.
- C. The responsibility of children to obey their parents.
- D. Following the example of the Lord Jesus by suffering unjustly.

QUESTION 7

One of the principles that comes from a study of 1 Peter is that Christians have a responsibility to abstain from fleshly lusts and to make a diligent effort to live a holy life. *True or False?*

QUESTION 8

One of the illustrations from the teaching outline for 1 Peter 3:1-7 concerned Sarah's submission to her husband, Abraham. *True or False?*

QUESTION 9

Which of the following are regarded as basic steps in the process of developing a teaching outline? [*Check all that are correct*].

- A. Checking the Internet to see if someone has already posted a teaching outline of the passage.
- B. Making initial observations of the text using the fundamental probing questions.
- C. Begin by consulting a technical commentary that explains the meaning of every verse in the original language.
- D. Discerning the structural outline of the passage, taking note of the connectives in the text.
- E. Identifying the theme of the passage.
- F. Identifying the purpose of the passage's theme.

QUESTION 10

The "purpose" of a passage answers the question of *why* the author has written about the theme of a passage. *True or False?*

Teaching Outline of 1 Peter 4:12-19

Theme: Consoling believers who suffer for Christ in how blessed they are, both presently and at the return of Christ.

Purpose: So that they will face their sufferings unashamedly while trusting God.

I. CONSOLATION OF SUFFERING FOR CHRIST:

Ultimately, we will rejoice at His return,
while presently we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit (vv. 12-14)

- A. Christians should not be astonished in having to endure fiery trials but can rejoice in knowing that ultimately Christ will return for us (v. 12-13).
- B. Though ridiculed by the world, Christians are blessed by the indwelling Spirit (v. 14).

II. ADMONITION FOR CHRISTIANS WHO SUFFER:

When suffering righteously, do so unashamedly!

- A. Christians are not to suffer in unrighteous ways (v. 15).
- B. When Christians suffer, they need feel no shame (v. 16).

III. CONSOLATION OF SUFFERING FOR CHRIST:

Opponents of the gospel will suffer more later than Christians who suffer now (vv. 17-18).

- A. The time of Christian suffering is in the present age (v. 17a).
- B. The time of suffering for opponents of the gospel will be for eternity (vv. 17b-18).

IV. CONCLUDING ADMONITION FOR CHRISTIANS WHO SUFFER:

When suffering in God's will, trust Him! (v. 19)

- A. Living in the will of God may result in suffering.
- B. As Christians do what is right, they can trust that God will be faithful to them.

Lesson 12 Answers to Questions

QUESTION 1: True

QUESTION 2: Both “A” and “C” are correct.

- A. Peter referred to him as a “faithful brother,” which implies he was someone that could be entrusted with delivering this precious apostolic epistle.
- C. In other cases in the New Testament where a messenger was used to deliver an epistle, the mention of their name along with a word of commendation was given.

QUESTION 3: False

QUESTION 4: False

QUESTION 5: Both “B” and “C” are correct.

- B. There is no record in the Bible or in early Christian tradition that Peter ever went to Babylon.
- C. We have references in extra-biblical literature such as 2 Baruch 67:7 where Rome is referred to as “Babylon.”

QUESTION 6

Eusebius

QUESTION 7: True

QUESTION 8: False

QUESTION 9: True

QUESTION 10: False

QUESTION 11: *Your answer.*

QUESTION 12

- B. Christian responsibility to give generously from our finances.

QUESTION 13:

fleshly lusts (or lusts of the flesh)

QUESTION 14: *Your answer.*

QUESTION 15: “A,” “B” and “D” are correct.

- A. Identifying the theme of the passage.
- B. Discerning the structural outline of the passage, taking note of the connectives in the text.
- D. Making initial observations of the text using the fundamental probing questions.

QUESTION 16: False

Lesson 12 Self Check Answers

QUESTION 1

- B. Peter referred to him as a “faithful brother,” which implies he was someone that could be entrusted with delivering this precious apostolic epistle.
- C. In other cases in the New Testament where a messenger was used to deliver an epistle, the mention of their name along with a word of commendation was given.

QUESTION 2

- A. There is no record in the Bible or in early Christian tradition that Peter ever went to Babylon.
- D. We have references in extra-biblical literature such as 2 Baruch 67:7 where Rome is referred to as “Babylon.”

QUESTION 3: True

QUESTION 4: False

QUESTION 5: True

QUESTION 6

- C. The responsibility of children to obey their parents.

QUESTION 7: True

QUESTION 8: True

QUESTION 9

- B. Making initial observations of the text using the fundamental probing questions.
- D. Discerning the structural outline of the passage, taking note of the connectives in the text.
- E. Identifying the theme of the passage.
- F. Identifying the purpose of the passage’s theme.

QUESTION 10: True

Unit 4 Exam: 1 Peter

QUESTION 1

According to the notes, what is meant by the statement, “the culmination of all things is near”?

- A. Peter thought that Christ was going to return in the first-century A.D., but he was mistaken.
- B. Peter was referring to the end of the Roman Empire which he expected to happen soon.
- C. Peter was referring to the culmination of judgment that was to come upon Jerusalem (A.D. 70) on account of the Jews having rejected Christ as Messiah.
- D. Peter meant that his readers were already living in the last stage of God’s program that would conclude with Christ’s return to formally inaugurate the kingdom.

QUESTION 2

Given that “the culmination of all things is near,” Peter instructed his readers to be “self-controlled and sober-minded for the purpose of prayer.” *True or False?*

QUESTION 3

Which of the following would be considered examples of hospitality without grumbling? [Check all that you consider correct].

- A. Inviting the pastor and other leaders of your church to your home for a special meal after the church service.
- B. Promising to fast and pray at least twice each month.
- C. Allowing the members of your church to meet in your home for a weekly Bible study.
- D. Volunteering to help paint a building for elderly citizens.

QUESTION 4

A spiritual gift is a God-given ability—given to a believer at the moment of regeneration—for doing something special that serves and ministers to others in the body of Christ and which is intended to bring glory to God. *True or False?*

QUESTION 5

When Peter spoke of the fiery trial that came upon them for their testing, what kind of testing did he have in mind?

- A. They were being tested to see if they really were Christians.
- B. They were being tested with trials to find out if they would abandon their faith in Christ and thus lose their salvation.
- C. Their Christian faith was being tested to refine it and make it stronger.
- D. Their faith was being tested to see if they were worthy of entering the kingdom of God.

QUESTION 6

When Peter spoke of believers rejoicing when Christ’s “glory is revealed” (1 Pet 4:13), Peter was thinking of the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit would be given to all believers. *True or False?*

QUESTION 7

In 1 Peter 4:14, Peter told his readers that if they were insulted for the name of Christ, they were blessed, because ...

- A. It is better to be insulted than to be killed.
- B. They would be able to take this person to a Roman court and sue them for slander.
- C. They would get extra rewards in eternity for every insult they received.
- D. As believers in Jesus Christ, they had the Holy Spirit resting on them.

QUESTION 8

Peter said that it was time for judgment to begin with the house of God (1 Pet 4:17). What did he mean by “the house of God”?

- A. Peter was referring to the temple in Jerusalem where God will begin His judgment.
- B. Peter was referring to “heaven” (the heavenly house of God) and God’s judgment of evil angels.
- C. Peter was referring to those churches mentioned in 1 Peter 1:1 whom God was bringing judgment upon for their disobedience.
- D. Peter was referring to the universal church in general using the imagery found in 1 Peter 2:4-5.

QUESTION 9

One way of understanding the judgment upon “the house of God” (as suggested in the notes) is to see it in view of 1 Peter 1:6-7 and the various trials that God allows to come into the life of a Christian to purify and strengthen his faith. *True or False?*

QUESTION 10

Peter raised the question, “What will be the fate of those who are disobedient to the gospel of God?” What *fate* did he have in mind for them?

- A. Peter was thinking of the discipline that God might render them in this life, such as sickness or poverty.
- B. Peter was thinking of their eternal destiny in hell.
- C. Peter was thinking of what God might need to do in their life to convince them to believe in Christ.
- D. Peter was thinking that such people will be made to go through the Great Tribulation.

QUESTION 11

The practice of having elders in the church who were responsible for shepherding God’s people stems from the ancient Jewish role of having elders. *True or False?*

QUESTION 12

What is the correct way to understand Peter’s claim of being a partaker of the glory that will be revealed?

- A. Peter was anticipating that God would reveal Peter’s glory to the churches, since he was an apostle.
- B. Peter was reflecting on the experience he had in seeing Jesus momentarily transformed in glory, a “preview” of how Christ will appear when He comes again.
- C. Peter was thinking of the glorified body that he would receive at the second coming.
- D. Peter was looking forward to the glories of the kingdom when there will be peace and righteousness throughout the world.

QUESTION 13

Based on the data from the Bible itself, we can conclude that during the time of the early church in the first century A.D., the terms “elders,” “bishops” (or overseers), and “pastors” were regarded as being the same office. *True or False?*

QUESTION 14

Which of the following were principles that Peter laid out for elders to obey? [Check all that are correct].

- A. Elders should be at least sixty years of age.
- B. Elders should not be pressured into serving but should do so willingly.
- C. Elders should serve in the church for a maximum of four years.
- D. Elders were not to serve for the purpose of any financial gain they might derive from doing so.
- E. Elders should be men who wanted to have power and control over others.

QUESTION 15

Peter promised that faithful elders would be rewarded at the time of their death, since Philippians 1:23 promises that to die and be with Christ is “better by far.” *True or False?*

QUESTION 16

In 1 Peter 5:4, faithful elders are promised a “crown of glory” when Christ appears. The word translated “crown” (Gk *stephanos*) was commonly used of a wreath of leaves placed upon the head of a winner in the athletic competitions as opposed to a crown worn by royalty. *True or False?*

QUESTION 17

In view of Peter’s exhortation to the younger men in 1 Peter 5:5 (“be subject to the elders”), what kind of temptation might they have been facing?

- A. The temptation to be lazy rather than to take care of cleaning the church building.
- B. The temptation of wanting to become an elder with the intention of gaining more riches.
- C. The temptation of thinking they knew better than the elders and wanting to challenge their authority.
- D. The temptation of wanting the rewards that were promised to faithful elders.

QUESTION 18

The key thing that younger men can do to be submissive to the elders of the church is to clothe themselves with humility. *True or False?*

QUESTION 19

In 1 Peter 5:9, what are the two things that Peter advised Christians to do when attacked by the devil?

- A. Report this to the elders of the church, so they can pray.
- B. Resist the devil.
- C. Get several Christians together in one place, so that Jesus will be among them.
- D. Be mindful that you are not the only believer facing such assault from the devil.

QUESTION 20

The Christian who heeds Peter’s exhortation to be “sober and alert” is one who lives in spiritual readiness for the Lord’s return, while failure to do so puts one in greater danger of becoming the prey of the devil. *True or False?*

QUESTION 21

The name Silas is a shortened form of Silvanus and refers to the brother who helped deliver the letter from the Jerusalem Council and later accompanied Paul on his second missionary journey. *True or False?*

QUESTION 22

Which of the following statements correctly support the idea that Silvanus (Silas) served to carry Peter's epistle to the Christians mentioned in 1 Peter 1:1? [Circle all that are correct]

- A. Peter referred to him as a "faithful brother," which implies he was someone that could be entrusted with delivering this precious apostolic epistle.
- B. The name Silas means "messenger" in the Greek language.
- C. In other cases in the New Testament where a messenger was used to deliver an epistle, the mention of their name along with a word of commendation was given.
- D. Since Silas had travelled to parts of Asia, he knew the best roads to travel by.

QUESTION 23

Which of the following arguments favor the view that "Babylon" was really a code-name used by Peter for Rome, the capital of the empire? [Circle all that are correct]

- A. Rome, like ancient Babylon, was famous for its massive walls protecting the city.
- B. There is no record in the Bible or in early Christian tradition that Peter ever went to Babylon.
- C. We have references in extra-biblical literature such as 2 Baruch 67:7 where Rome is referred to as "Babylon."
- D. Nero's admiration for King Nebuchadnezzar caused Christians to speak of Rome as "Babylon."

QUESTION 24

The name of the early church historian who recorded testimonies that Peter not only was in Rome at the latter part of his life but was also closely associated with Mark was Irenaeus. *True or False?*

QUESTION 25

Which of the following is NOT one of the primary issues reflected in the many principles found in the epistle of 1 Peter?

- A. Christian responsibility for keeping our behavior excellent.
- B. Christian responsibility to give generously from our finances.
- C. Following the example of the Lord Jesus by suffering unjustly.
- D. Supporting fellow Christians with love and upholding them in prayer.

Appendix 1: Answers to the Unit Exams

Unit 1 Exam Answers

QUESTION 1: Answers A and D are both correct.

- A. Because there is evil and people are sinners, this will allow God to show His incredible love for mankind when Jesus (the Creator) dies for their sins on the cross.
- D. By allowing evil to exist throughout history and to witness how terrible it is, mankind will come to understand that Satan and evil must ultimately be banished from God's creative realm.

QUESTION 2: False

QUESTION 3: True

QUESTION 4:

- D. The Antichrist

QUESTION 5:

- B. Without exceptions, man either obeys God and is blessed, or he disobeys and is punished.

QUESTION 6: True

QUESTION 7: Answers A, B and C are all correct.

- A. Job had no right to demand that God give him an answer.
- B. God would never do anything that was wrong or sinful.
- C. Since God was beyond Job's understanding, he should not think he could debate God.

QUESTION 8: Answers A, B and D are all correct.

- A. They would need to deny themselves (give up their own agenda for God's).
- B. They would need to take up their cross (prepared to suffer and possibly be martyred).
- D. They would need to follow Jesus.

QUESTION 9:

- A. The Greek of 1 Peter seems to be a high-quality Greek that one would not expect of a Galilean fisherman.
- D. The places mentioned in 1 Peter 1:1 supposedly did not have Christian communities until after Peter's death.

QUESTION 10: False

QUESTION 11:

- D. He was the apostle that first brought the gospel to the Gentiles at Antioch (Acts 11).

QUESTION 12: False

QUESTION 13: False

QUESTION 14:

- B. This is what is known as "the obedience of faith, that is, to obey the gospel message by believing upon Jesus Christ for their spiritual salvation.

QUESTION 15: True

QUESTION 16:

- B. An historical account of the spread of the gospel throughout Bithynia, Galatia, and Cappadocia

QUESTION 17:

- B. To challenge and motivate Christians to live faithfully for Christ as they face trials, opposition and sufferings in the present life.

QUESTION 18:

- D. Because of Christ's own resurrection, they were assured that they, too, would be resurrected.

QUESTION 19: True

QUESTION 20:

- C. A salvation/deliverance of the world that takes place at the second coming of Christ and that will include the believer's glorification.

QUESTION 21: A, B and D are all correct.

- A. By mentioning “various trials,” Peter is not limiting his teaching to persecution.
- B. Trials are not forever but will come to an end, in contrast to a proven faith that is eternally rewarded.
- D. Trials are not purposeless but necessary for the development of our Christian character.

QUESTION 22: True

QUESTION 23: True

QUESTION 24

- B. Satan will be released from his imprisonment.

QUESTION 25: True.

Unit 2 Exam Answers

QUESTION 1: True

QUESTION 2:

B. Peter was referring to their previous life before knowing Christ when they were spiritually ignorant.

QUESTION 3: True

QUESTION 4:

D. Hebrews 12

QUESTION 5: False

QUESTION 6: False

QUESTION 7: True

QUESTION 8:

B. Redeem

QUESTION 9:

B. The disciples were commanded to love one another, because Jesus had first loved them.

D. When other people saw the disciples practicing love for one another, this would lead them to believe that they were one of Jesus' disciples.

QUESTION 10:

B. The word of the Lord that endures forever.

QUESTION 11: False

QUESTION 12: True

QUESTION 13:

D. The promised Messiah as a choice but rejected cornerstone.

QUESTION 14: False

QUESTION 15: False

QUESTION 16: True

QUESTION 17:

C. Under the new covenant in this age, the temple of God is *spiritual*, meaning that it is not made of physical stones but rather of the Christians who are "living stones."

QUESTION 18: True

QUESTION 19: Answers B, C, and D are all correct.

B. The verse is a messianic prediction that finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ as the cornerstone of the new spiritual temple.

C. The verse predicts a blessing for the one who believes in this "stone," namely, that he will not be put to shame.

D. The Greek Septuagint translation added the words "in him" to clarify that one's faith was to be placed in this special stone of God

QUESTION 20: True

QUESTION 21:

B. This refers to the religious leaders of the nation who were responsible for recognizing and submitting to Jesus as the true Messiah.

QUESTION 22: False

QUESTION 23: True

QUESTION 24: True

QUESTION 25: True

Unit 3 Exam Answers

QUESTION 1: True

QUESTION 2

- A. Impure sexual desires
- B. Jealousy
- D. Strife between fellow Christians

QUESTION 3

- B. They considered Christians to be naïve, followers of a “mischievous superstition.”
- D. They resented Christians who did not participate in the worship of Greco-Roman gods and idols.

QUESTION 4: False

QUESTION 5: False

QUESTION 6:

- B. Most well-to-do Roman families had slaves.
- C. Many of those to whom Peter wrote would probably have been slaves.
- D. About one-fourth of the population of the Roman Empire consisted of slaves.

QUESTION 7: False

QUESTION 8: True

QUESTION 9: True

QUESTION 10

- B. Prior to His crucifixion, Jesus was denounced by the Jerusalem crowd.
- D. Prior to His crucifixion, Jesus was repeatedly slandered during His trial before the Jewish Sanhedrin.

QUESTION 11: True

QUESTION 12

- D. He was referring to non-Christian husbands, because the word translated “disobedient” is consistently used in the New Testament of those who reject the gospel.

QUESTION 13: False

QUESTION 14

- B. A Christian husband is responsible to love his wife as Christ loved the Church, meaning he should be “giving” of himself and “sacrificing” for her sake.
- D. A Christian husband is to live with his wife in “an understanding way,” meaning that he seeks to *understand her* and respects her point of view, even if he does not always agree with her.

QUESTION 15: True

QUESTION 16: False

QUESTION 17: True

QUESTION 18:

C. He has the consolation of knowing that great reward in heaven awaits him.

QUESTION 19:

D. The hope of being resurrected with Christ in glory.

QUESTION 20: True

QUESTION 21:

C. The Great White Throne View of a Final Offer of the Gospel

QUESTION 22:

A. Genesis 6:1-4 contains a prophecy that Christ would come in the future to proclaim His victory over the angelic rebellion.

QUESTION 23:

B. Baptism is not part of the gospel message considering Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 1:17 that Christ did not send him to baptize but to preach the gospel.

D. Although some verses regarding baptism might be debated, verses like Ephesians 2:8-9 and Acts 16:31 give us clear examples demonstrating that faith alone is the requirement for salvation from sin.

QUESTION 24: True

QUESTION 25:

D. The translation "pledge" is a very rare meaning of this word (it normally means something else).

QUESTION 26:

B. The Greek word for "suffered" is *paschō*, and this same word was used in 1 Peter 3:18 to indicate that Jesus was put to death.

C. The phrase "in the flesh" (Gk *sarki*) in 1 Peter 4:1 was used earlier in 1 Peter 3:18 where Christ's suffering "in the flesh" meant that He was bodily (physically) put to death.

QUESTION 27: False

QUESTION 28: False

QUESTION 29: True

QUESTION 30: True

QUESTION 31: False

QUESTION 32:

A. One would have to assume that "spirits" in 1 Peter 3:19 is a reference to "human spirits," but this is very unlikely.

C. The Greek word for "proclaiming" in 1 Peter 3:19 is a different word than "preaching" in 1 Peter 4:6, the former more likely meaning a general proclamation rather than preaching of the gospel.

QUESTION 33:

B. This refers to Christians who were judged (persecuted) at the hands of non-Christians during the time they were physically on earth.

Unit 4 Exam Answers

QUESTION 1:

- D. Peter meant that his readers were already living in the last stage of God's program that would conclude with Christ's return to formally inaugurate the kingdom.

QUESTION 2: True

QUESTION 3: "A" and "C" are correct

- A. Inviting the pastor and other leaders of your church to your home for a special meal after the church service.
- C. Allowing the members of your church to meet in your home for a weekly Bible study.

QUESTION 4: True

QUESTION 5:

- C. Their Christian faith was being tested to refine it and make it stronger.

QUESTION 6: False (Peter was thinking of the second coming of Christ)

QUESTION 7:

- D. As believers in Jesus Christ, they had the Holy Spirit resting on them.

QUESTION 8:

- D. Peter was referring to the universal church in general using the imagery found in 1 Peter 2:4-5.

QUESTION 9: True

QUESTION 10:

- B. Peter was thinking of their eternal destiny in hell.

QUESTION 11: True

QUESTION 12:

- B. Peter was reflecting on the experience he had in seeing Jesus momentarily transformed in glory, a "preview" of how Christ will appear when He comes again.

QUESTION 13: True

QUESTION 14:

- B. Elders should not be pressured into serving but should do so willingly.
- D. Elders were not to serve for the purpose of any financial gain they might derive from doing so.

QUESTION 15: False

QUESTION 16: True

QUESTION 17:

- C. The temptation of thinking they knew better than the elders and wanting to challenge their authority.

QUESTION 18: True

QUESTION 19:

- B. Resist the devil.
- D. Be mindful that you are not the only believer facing such assault from the devil.

QUESTION 20: True

QUESTION 21: True

QUESTION 22:

- A. Peter referred to him as a "faithful brother," which implies he was someone that could be entrusted with delivering this precious apostolic epistle.
- C. In other cases in the New Testament where a messenger was used to deliver an epistle, the mention of their name along with a word of commendation was given.

QUESTION 23:

- B. There is no record in the Bible or in early Christian tradition that Peter ever went to Babylon.
- C. We have references in extra-biblical literature such as 2 Baruch 67:7 where Rome is referred to as "Babylon."

QUESTION 24: False

QUESTION 25:

- A. Christian responsibility for keeping our behavior excellent.
- C. Following the example of the Lord Jesus by suffering unjustly.
- D. Supporting fellow Christians with love and upholding them in prayer.

Appendix 2: Book Chart of First Peter

1:3-12	1:1-2		The Opening Salutation		
	1:3-5	Future: Our Hope of a Heavenly Inheritance As We Await Christ's Future Salvation	Christ's Return and Future Salvation: Three Perspectives to Guide Our Life on Earth	Words of Encouragement	
	1:6-9	Present: Our Rejoicing in Christ's Return Despite the Present Testing of Our Faith			
	1:10-12	Past: Our Recollection of God's Prophetic Word Regarding Christ's Suffering and Future Glory			
1:13-2:3	1:13-16	The Call to Holy Conduct Based on a Steadfast Hope in Christ's Return	Our Present Calling to a Holy Life as We Await Christ's Return and Future Salvation	A Challenge to Live Faithfully for God	
	1:17-21	Motivations for Holy Conduct in View of Christ's Redemption of Us by His Blood			
	1:22-25	The Call to Fervently Love Fellow Christians			
	2:1-3	The Call to Turn from Evil and Long for God's Word that Brings Spiritual Growth			
2:4-10	2:4-8	Our Inclusion as "Living Stones" for Priestly Ministry in the Present Spiritual Temple	Our Identity, Privilege and Service as the New "People of God"	Words of Encouragement	
	2:9-10	Our Privilege in Becoming "The People of God" For Proclaiming His Excellence			
2:11-3:12	2:11-12	The Charge to Keep our Behavior Excellent Before the Gentile World	Christian Responsibilities That May Incur Conflict and Suffering	A Challenge to Live Faithfully for God	
	2:13-17	Our Responsibility for Submission to Civil Government			
	2:18-20	The Responsibility for Submission by Slaves, Even to Masters who are Unjust and Harsh			
	2:21-25	The Example of Christ who Suffered Unjustly In Procuring our Salvation			
	3:1-7	The Responsibility of Wives and Husbands in Their Marital Relations			
	3:8-12	The Responsibilities of Christians for Righteous Behavior Summed Up			
3:13-4:19	3:13-17	Counsel for Christians who Suffer in Doing What is Right	Guidance and Consolations for Christians Who Face Suffering	Words of Encouragement	
	3:18-22	The Vindication of Christ in Resurrection After Having Suffered Innocently			
	4:1-6	The Call to Follow Christ in Suffering—even Martyrdom—in a World Hostile to Christians			
	4:7-11	The Call for Prayer and to Love and Minister to Fellow Christians			
	4:12-19	Consolations for Those Who Trust God While Suffering for His Sake			
5:1-11	5:1-4	A Charge to the Elders To Faithfully Shepherd the Flock of God	Final Exhortations to Encourage a United Stance by the Christian Community	A Challenge to Live Faithfully for God	
	5:5-7	A Charge to Younger Men To Be Humble and Patient			
	5:8-11	A Charge to All To Resist the Devil and Stand Firm in Suffering			
	5:12-14	Closing Words and Farewell			