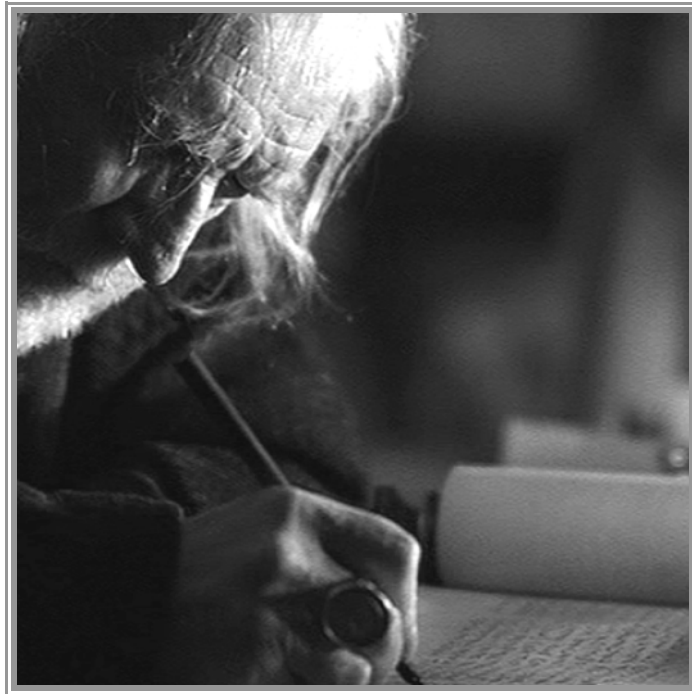


THE WRITINGS OF PETER



STUDY 1

1 PETER 1



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STUDY 1 ~ 1 PETER 1

Introduction – Over the past few weeks we studied the life of Peter and witnessed his interaction with the Messiah, with the other disciples, as well as with the Jewish religious crowd, and even his outreach to non-Jewish people called Gentiles. We saw Peter's human side when he acted on his own without Christ, and we also saw him empowered with the Holy Spirit to preach and minister in boldness and compassion. Peter's life gives all Christians hope as at some point all of us have failed or will fail Christ, and yet if we are willing to return, Christ not only welcomes us back, but has a place of fulfillment for us.

For the next 8 weeks, we will study the two letters, 1st and 2nd Peter, that the Holy Spirit wrote through Peter and preserved for us in the New Testament. Christians today can better understand Peter's relationship with Christ by studying his writings and draw from his life experience to help their own relationship with Christ. **For this series**, we will study about a chapter per week. There are 5 chapters in 1 Peter and 3 in 2 Peter.

While you are turning to 1 Peter, here is some background information concerning Peter's first written work.

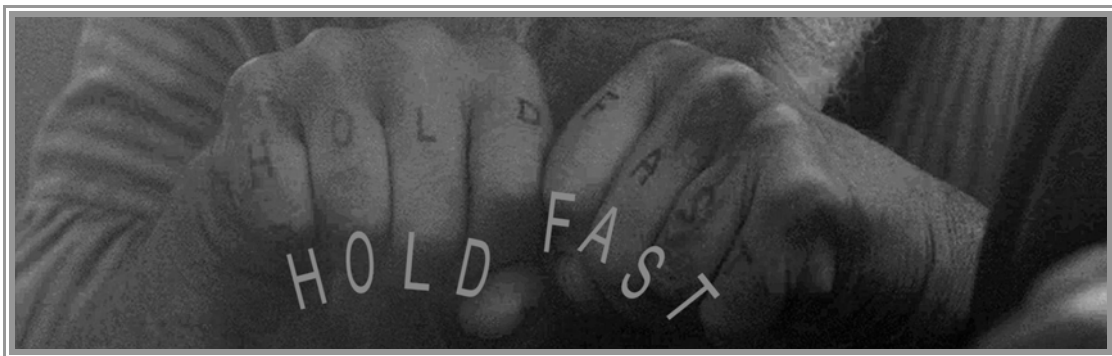
Regarding when 1 Peter was written, most theologians hold the view that Peter wrote this first letter shortly before or near the time of the outbreak of persecution under Nero, which took place in 64 A.D. So 1 Peter was written in 63 or early 64 A.D.

The Time of 1 Peter – In verse 1 of chapter 1, Peter addressed the letter “to the strangers scattered” or more literally “to the exiles of the dispersion” (1:1). The epistle was addressed to Christians who were spread throughout Asia Minor, which is mostly occupied by modern day Turkey and the surrounding countryside today. Peter’s letter to these churches was a response to the increased hostility and suspicion that had been mounting against Christians in the Roman Empire. Christians were being despised and abused for their anti-indulgent lifestyles and subversive talk about “another Kingdom.” While Christianity had not yet been outlawed by Rome, the stage was set for the intense persecution and martyrdom that was about to come.

The QUESTION being asked in 1st Peter is:

What are Christians to do when the whole world is against them?

The ANSWER is: HOLD FAST



HOLD FAST to Who We Are in Christ (remember, and think on, the truth of our identity as Christians and who we really are)

HOLD FAST to a Holy Lifestyle in Christ (give no reasons for accusation based on unholy behavior)

HOLD FAST to What We Have in Common with Christ (Christ told us we would suffer because of Him even as He suffered; yet He ministered to others in spite of fierce opposition and we must also minister in spite of opposition)

Sunday Morning Bible Study

3

1 Peter 1:1-2

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

Scattered Foreigners The Greek word for scattered (*diaspora*) means literally “to sow through,” and was a technical term for Jews who lived outside of Palestine. Here it is applied to Gentile Christians who figuratively were sown throughout the world by God, to be a witness for Him. Although they live in these various Roman provinces, Peter saw these Christians as *strangers*, a word that means something like exiles or refugees and signifies that they are foreigners to the native residents, and that their permanent homeland and citizenship is in heaven.

New Churches Since Acts Peter’s letter addressed Christians throughout Asia Minor, indicating the spread of the gospel in regions not evangelized when Acts was written (Pontus, Cappadocia, Bithynia).

Group Questions

- In what 2 ways are these Christians “foreigners” or “strangers”? Strangers to the countries or lands they’ve run to (physically); and strangers in their behavior, not practicing paganism as the unsaved in those lands were practicing (spiritually).
- Why are these Christians “scattered”? Because of persecution.
- Why is this persecution happening to these believers? Jesus said it would happen. Listen to **John 15:18-19** If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. 19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have

chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. **Matthew 5:11-12** Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. 12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. **John 16:33** These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

- Is the persecution of Christians a good thing? God has permitted persecution at various times throughout the last 2000 years and it has been a catalyst for more rapid spread of the gospel.
- Why do you think the gospel spreads under persecution? One way is that Christians are displaced from one geographic area and people to another exposing a new group of people to the gospel. Another thought is that when Christians suffer loss, they either turn to God or turn on God. Those that seek refuge in Him have their faith strengthened beyond Christians who are “comfortable” in this world. The Christian whose God is their life, shines brightly for Him attracting others to the same phenomena of faith.

 A Commentary Note on Election and Foreknowledge

Elect (Gr *eklektos*) is in verse 1 in the original, and means “chosen.” The implication is that God has purposely placed these Christians in their respective communities to serve Him; they are selected temporary residents who are representatives of God.

Peter now summarizes his theology within his greeting by referring to the Trinity and their cooperative work in accomplishing our great salvation. **According to the foreknowledge** (Gr *prognosis*) which means more than to merely “know about ahead of time.” It is a term emphasizing the biblical idea of foreordination. Compare the use of this word in Acts 2:23 and I Peter 1:20 with reference to Christ, and in Romans 8:29 and Romans 11:2 with reference to God’s people. It is especially significant here that Peter uses this word with reference to Gentiles, although he had been a devout Jew himself. Fore-ordination, with reference to these Christians, was accomplished by God the Father through the agency of the Holy Spirit in **sanctification**. This word (Gr *hagiasmos*) means literally “to set apart” or “make holy.” The purpose toward which this activity of the Father and the Holy Spirit is directed is the **obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ**. In other words, the activity of the Father and the Spirit is directed toward salvation. *KJV Bible commentary*. 1997, c1994 (2600). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

HOLD FAST

1 Peter 1:3-5

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Group Questions

- What does Peter have his readers to focus on? The truth of just how bright the Christian's **future** is and that GOD is preserving it for us. "Our future's so bright, we gotta wear _____...." 🕶️ 😊
- What good will thinking about our **future** do when suffering because of our faith? Our emotions respond to what we are thinking on. Rather than having a pity party – we can feel excited about the party we'll have in heaven as read about and think on the many verses that talk about our **future**!

1 Peter 1:6-9

6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: [or *trials* or *tests*] 7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: 8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: 9 Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

Group Question

- Why is the "refining" process of our faith during our **present** time on earth of more value than gold? The testing of our faith causes it "to be found" or to be seen; if responded to properly, persecution of

our faith causes our faith to show to the outside world. This will attract others to Christ for eternity and is therefore more valuable than temporary gold.

1 Peter 1:10-12

10 Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: 11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. 12 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

Group Question

- Why would Peter bring up the **past** and talk about Old Testament prophecy when trying to offer comfort to those being persecuted? To reassure them the faith they are practicing in Christ (which is the cause of their suffering) is correct and right and is all true and has been promised from the beginning.

A Commentary Note on Angels Desiring to Look Into

The privilege of living in the age of fulfillment should overwhelm us. This privilege is further emphasized by Peter as he refers in verse 12 to the angels; **which things the angels desired to look into**. The last word in the verse, **look into**, means graphically “stooping down close to get a peek at.” The picture is that this is something the angels had always wanted to do (Greek present tense) but have never been able to accomplish. This stresses the point that although prophets and angels have been unable to satisfy themselves as to precisely what salvation is all about, we have the privilege not only of full exposition, but of real possession. *KJV Bible commentary*. 1997, c1994 (2603). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

1 Peter 1:13-21

13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 14 As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your

ignorance: 15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation [literal word is *conduct, behavior*]; 16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. 17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning [literally *dwelling as a stranger*] here in fear: 18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation [*conduct, behavior*] received by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, 21 Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

Group Questions

- Why does Peter move to instruction about these persecuted believers' **behavior**? The purpose of them going through persecution is the refining of their faith in order to draw others to Christ. Their outer behavior must mirror the holiness of the holy souls within them and not revert back to their "before Christ" ways of living nor must they act like the ungodly people around them in the land where they are now staying.
- How many kinds of "holy" are there? One kind: holy like God is holy.
- When the Holy Spirit inspired Peter to challenge believers to be "holy", did He mean we're to live up to God-like holiness? Yes.
- Is that possible? Explain. At any point after salvation, when we are seeking relationship with Christ and responsive and surrendered to His lead in our lives, we are "abiding" or "staying" in Him. When we walk with Him in this kind of unity, our behavior stops being characterized by sin is holy as God is holy. "Whosoever abideth in Him, sinneth not..." (1 John 3:6).

HOLD FAST

Sunday Morning Bible Study

1 Peter 1:22-25

22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: 23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. 24 For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: 25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

Group Questions

- What truth did all Christians obey that resulted in the purification of their souls? The truth that Christ's death pays for our sin and allows us to have a relationship with God.
- When our world comes apart, what can Christians always, always, always, always rely on? God's Word which lasts forever.
- And what are we learning about this morning? God's Word.

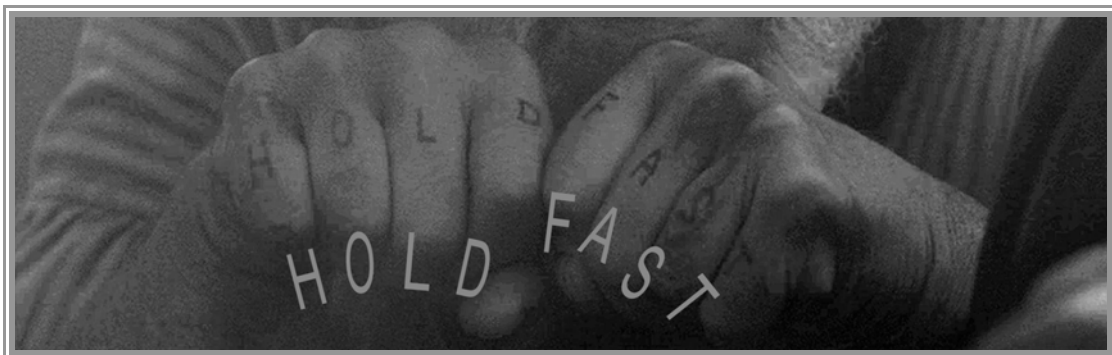
On the Worksheet

1. The Book of 1 Peter teaches Christians to **HOLD FAST** when the whole world is against them because of their faith.
2. When persecuted, Christians must hold fast to **WHO** they are in Christ; their holy **LIFESTYLE** in Christ; and what they have in **COMMON** with Christ.
3. Persecution of Christians over the years has helped **SPREAD** the **GOSPEL**.

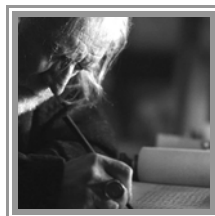
4. Christians' futures are **BRIGHT**; the present can be **JOYFUL**; and their past is built on **TRUTH**.

5. The Christian's **CALL** to holiness can be experienced when we seek **CLOSENESS** with Christ.

Christian remember, you never know when you are going to come under attack, so...



HOLD FAST



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Sunday Morning Bible Study

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