

## LESSON 1

### 1 Peter 1:1-2

As we begin our studies in 1 Peter, most of us can identify in some ways with the former fisherman from Galilee whom God matured and used to write this portion of His Word. From the first, Peter's heart was to follow Jesus. Still Peter kept getting it wrong. Through humiliations and failure he learned to rely on God's way rather than his own way. Peter also learned to deeply value God's grace, mercy and love. Peter's life and message became that of loving a living God who through the death and resurrection of Jesus secures for His children a living hope! This message — good news — makes all the difference.

The folks who received this letter from Peter lived in communities scattered throughout what is now Turkey. Since there was no postal service, email or Facebook, this letter would have been carried by messenger to first one and then another of these cities, probably in order, since that would have been the trade route at that time. In each city, copies of the letter would have been made and then the letter sent on to the believers living in the next town.

These were the various places the believers called home for now. Peter is explaining to them that something new has happened and they will now have a new Homeland and a new identity. In fact, they are living between two worlds: and while there will be suffering involved in this world (which is often inhospitable and hostile) believers have many reasons to endure and to rejoice.

Peter also sets forth for them the new way to live out the values of their new Homeland, values that will often be counter to the culture of the day – values that will bring Heaven down to earth, which is what the will of God does. All of this Peter sets forth in the context of calling them *beloved* (2:11 and 4:12), which they are to him and to God. Peter's goal is not to lay heavy burdens on them (or on us) but to assist believers in knowing how to live as they journey toward Home. Let's ask God our Father to make these truths in this letter come joyously alive in our own hearts, for our good and for His glory. He desires to help us because He loves us.

<p>Please use an accurate, readable translation for your Bible study. The New American Standard Bible (NASB) and the English Standard Version (ESV) are the most accurate word-for-word English translations. A reference edition or a study Bible is especially helpful if you take advantage of the marginal notes and cross references. The New International Version (NIV) is also a good translation and a bit more readable. The Living Bible, The Message, the Good News for Modern Man and Letters to Young Churches by J.B. Phillips are paraphrases (thought-for-thought) rather than translations. If you want to read a paraphrase, please do so after you have studied.</p>
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Pray before you begin.

Read the letter of 1 Peter in one sitting. Read slowly and with reflection. (It takes about 15 minutes.) Do this at least two times. 1 \_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_

1. What words or main ideas did you see to be important? (Look for repeated words, ideas or phrases.) Note the verses containing the key words and main ideas.

*Examples:*

- *Their new identity – 1 Peter 1:1, 3, 4, etc.; aliens, chosen, born again into a new family, new inheritance*
- *Things that pass away vs. things that endure*
- *Living – 1 Peter 1:3, etc.*

2. Which one of these ideas do you need to let God impress more deeply on *your* life? (Now come on, think.)

3. Peter who? It is often easier for us to get the full impact of a person's teaching by knowing something of his/her life. Read the following passages and as you do, jot down what you observe about the author: John 1:29-42; Matthew 16:13-18; Luke 22:1-62; John 21:1-23; Acts 1; Acts 2:14-4:21; Acts 10, 11.

Read 1 Peter 1:1-2.

4. Why does Peter identify himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ? (Sometimes we have only a hazy understanding of familiar terms like *apostle*. A dictionary is an excellent tool to set terms like this in concrete.)

5. Peter says that his readers “reside as aliens” (NASB). Define *alien* from a dictionary. A more contemporary word might be *expatriate*. Look it up if you need to.

This one word (*expatriate* or *alien*) not only sets forth their new identity but also sets the stage for the remainder of the topics addressed by Peter in this letter to the scattered believers living in their various towns.

6. If you remember and embrace the fact that you are an expatriate right where you live, how will this affect your thoughts and actions? (You might want to look ahead at least through 1 Peter 1:1-9.)

We might call verse 2 very *theological*. The word translated *foreknowledge* means that God actually knew in an experiential, personal way each person He chose. He already had a love relationship with you from eternity. To *sanctify* means to set something apart for its intended purpose.

One further word – Scripture teaches both of the following truths: 1) We are chosen by God (John 15:16, 1 Peter 1:2) and, 2) Whosoever will may come (John 3:16, Revelation 22:17). This is a paradox that we cannot unravel or fathom. However, when we realize that the writers of Scripture accepted both truths, and when we understand that God is infinite and we are merely finite, a paradox of this nature shouldn't throw us or sidetrack us. Acknowledge it, accept it, and go on!



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