

THE FIRST LETTER OF PETER

INTRODUCTION

A. Introductory outline of 1 Peter

1. Greeting (1:1-2)
2. The greatness of salvation (1:3-12)
 - a. We are born again to a living hope (3-5)
 - b. Our salvation is joyous (6-9)
 - c. We have witnesses to our salvation (10-12)
3. Characteristics of the Christian life (1:13-25)
 - a. A life of hope (13)
 - b. A life of holiness (14-16)
 - c. A life of reverence (17-21)
 - d. A life of love (22-25)

B. Review of 1 Peter 1:3-12

1. The roles of our triune God are evident in these verses with emphasis on the Father in verses 3-5, the Son in verses 6-9 and the Holy Spirit in verses 10-12.
2. Joel Green, *Throughout, Peter maintains an unwavering focus on the situation of his addressees: their new birth, their distress, their trials, their testing, their love, their faith, their joy, and the grace that had come to them.*
3. Thomas Constable, *It does not matter if we look forward, around us, or backward. We find grounds for rejoicing wherever we look even as we suffer.*

C. Comments on 1 Peter 1:13-25

1. Charles Swindoll, *Still focusing on the believer's life in this fallen world, Peter shifts his emphasis from physical trials to spiritual temptations. If the question in the first section was, "How can I remain joyful in the midst of suffering?" the question in the next is, "How can I stay clean in a corrupt society?"*
2. Scot McKnight, *Theology prompts ethics. That is, beliefs about God and experiences with God undergird beliefs about what is right and wrong.*
3. Thomas Constable, *Peter wanted his readers to live joyfully in the midst of sufferings. Consequently he outlined his readers' major responsibilities to enable them to see their duty clearly so they could carry it out.*
4. David Walls, *Our living hope, our great salvation does not simply impact the future; it is to mark the way we live today, particularly when we experience suffering and pain.*

1 PETER 1:13-25, CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

A. A life of hope (13)

1. Introductory notes
 - a. **Therefore,**
 - 1) Peter declares that truth revealed (verses 3-12) must be lived out in this life.
 - 2) Scot McKnight, *"Therefore"—that is, since you have received the great benefits of salvation, among which are a new birth, a living hope, and an assured inheritance—you ought to be different in how you live.*
 - 3) Edmund Clowney, *The imperatives of Christian living always begin with 'therefore.' Peter does not begin to exhort Christian pilgrims until he has celebrated the wonders of God's salvation in Jesus Christ. The indicative of what God had done for us (and in us) precedes the imperative of what we are called to do for him.*
 - 4) Thomas Constable, *He said in effect, Now that you have focused your thinking positively you need to roll up your sleeves mentally and adopt some attitudes that will affect your activities.*
 - 5) Charles Swindoll, *I can picture Peter stopping in his tracks, closing his eyes, and taking a deep breath. His tone changes from exultation to exhortation as he says, "Therefore, prepare your minds for action" (1:13). In other words, in light of the great salvation that has been lavishly poured upon us, it's time to get serious.*
 - b. William Barclay, *Peter has been talking about the greatness and the glory to which Christians may look forward; but Christians can never be lost in dreams of the future; they must always be strong and powerful in the battle of the present. So Peter sends out three challenges to his people.*

2. Peter's groundwork for spiritual success.

a. **preparing your minds for action,**

1) Meaning of the phrase

- a) In Greek, it literally reads, *gird up the loins of your mind as in pulling up the robe at one's belt to facilitate work or walking.* Note 1 Kings 18:46, *And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah, and he gathered up his garment and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.*
- b) It means *to have your mind ready for action, to "roll you your sleeves for mental action."*

2) Comments

- a) Roger Raymer, *Obedience is a conscious act of the will. Christians in conflict need a tough-minded holiness that is ready for action.*
- b) David Walls, . . . *Peter said, "Pull your thoughts together. Don't let anything hinder your mind as you put it to work for God." In other words, have a disciplined mind.*
- c) William Barclay, *They must never be content with a flabby and unexamined faith; they must set to and think things out and think them through. It may be that they will have to discard some things. It may be that they will make mistakes. But what they are left with will be theirs in such a way that nothing and nobody can ever take it away from them.*
- d) Charles Spurgeon, *Those who regard doctrine simply as a subject for debate, an opportunity for displaying one's argumentative powers, miss the mark altogether, for we are taught the truth in order that it may lead us to holiness of life . . . Therefore, when your mind is instructed concerning some grand truth . . . always say to yourself, "But what are the bearings of this doctrine upon my life? How should it influence me? What would God have me to do as the result of receiving such teaching as this?"*

b. **and being sober-minded,**

1) Word meaning and selected usage

- a) It has a figurative meaning in the New Testament, *to be free from every form of mental and spiritual 'drunkenness.'*
- b) Also, it carries the meaning, 'self-control,' as a characteristic of moral behavior, clear-headed.
- c) 1 Thessalonians 5:6, *So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober.*
- d) 1 Peter 4:7, *The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.*
- e) 1 Peter 5:8, *Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*

2) Comments

- a) William Barclay, *It can mean that they must refrain from drunkenness in the literal sense of the term, and it can also mean that they must be steady in their minds . . . Peter is appealing to them to maintain the essential steadiness of the men and women who know what they believe.*
- b) Thomas Constable, *Sober of spirit describes a Christian who is in full control of his speech and conduct in contrast to one who allows his flesh (i.e., his sinful human nature) to govern him.*
- c) J. Vernon McGee, *It means to be sober minded, to adopt a serious attitude in the study of the Word of God.*
- d) Roger Raymer, *Rather than being controlled by outside circumstances, believers should be directed from within.*
- e) David Walls, *Be realistic about what you face in your life as a Christian. Be alert and ready in your whole spiritual and mental attitude, because it is so easy to slide, especially when you are suffering.*

c. **set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**

1) Look forward to future grace.

- a) Romans 8:18, *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.*
- b) Thomas Constable, *We should remember that what God will give us soon as a reward for our faithful commitment to Him is worth any sacrifice now . . .*
- c) Edmund Clowney, *Since our hope is sure, we can bank on it. It is not so much an attitude to be cultivated as a reality to be recognized. To set our hope is to believe the gospel.*
- d) William Barclay, *It is the great characteristic of Christians that they live in hope, and because they live in hope they can endure the trials of the present.*

- 2) It will be received at the return of Christ.
 - a) Roger Raymer, *Four times Peter has already spoken of the Savior's return and the accompanying ultimate stage of salvation* (vv. 5, 7, 9, 13).
 - b) David Walls, *What we have experienced of grace up to this point in our lives does not begin to compare with the grace that will be ours at the second coming of Christ. We must have the long view in mind...If we really believe in the second coming of Christ, this belief must make a difference in the way we live.*
 - c) Scot McKnight, *Peter urges his readers to see history the way God has planned it. Though now they may suffer unjustly at the hands of evil people, someday Christ will return and justice will be fully established. As a result, Christians are to live in light of that day of manifested grace.*
 - d) Edmund Clowney, *Our joyful hope is expressed, not in mindless ecstasy, but in alert wisdom that seizes opportunities to serve the Lord.*
 - e) Charles Spurgeon, *When He comes there will be perfection for our souls and salvation for our bodies.*

B. A life of holiness (14-16)

1. Christians are not to pursue the passions of their old natures (14), ***As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance,***

a. Scripture references

- 1) 1 Peter 4:1-2, *Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God.*
- 2) Titus 3:3, *For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.*

b. Children must choose to whom or what they will be conformed.

1) *Conformed*

- a) It means to *fashion or shape one thing like another.*
- b) Romans 12:2, *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*
- c) William Barclay, *To be chosen by God is to enter not only into great privilege but also into great responsibility.*

2) *As obedient children*

- a) Obedient children want to be like their parents as will be seen in 1 Peter 1:15-16.
- b) David Walls, *Obedience does not produce a believer in Jesus Christ, but true belief will always produce obedience in a believer in Jesus Christ.*
- c) J. Vernon McGee, *We are to live lives which reveal that we have been transformed from the inside.*

3) A disobedient child imitates his or her former nature.

a. Passion may be defined as *lust, coveting, craving.*

- 1] 1 Peter 4:3, *For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry.*
- 2] Ephesians 2:3, *among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.*

b. Passions control disobedient children.

- 1] Thomas Constable, . . . *we should stop letting our sinful passions dominate and control us (cf. Rom. 12:2).*
- 2] H. D. M. Spence, . . . *men who live in sensual lusts take up the likeness of those lusts into themselves, and are made, not as man was at first, after the likeness of God, but after the likeness of those lusts of the flesh which are not of the Father, but are of the world.*

c. *former ignorance*

- 1] Ephesians 4:17-18, *Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.*
- 2] J. Ramsey Michaels, *Peter has in mind here the more universal ignorance of those who do not know the true God.*
- 3] Don't live the way you did when you did not know better.

- 4] Roger Raymer, *Their lifestyle was to reflect not their former ignorance (agnoia), but the holy (hagioi) nature of their heavenly Father who gave them new birth and called them (cf. "called" in 2 Peter 1:3) to be His own.*
 - 5] Scot McKnight, . . . *Peter urges his readers not to be conformed to their former passions, which dominated their lives prior to their entrance into God's family.*
2. Christians are to pursue holiness (15-16)
- a. Be holy in your behavior (15), ***but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,***
 - 1) 2 Timothy 2:22, *So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.*
 - 2) Charles Swindoll, . . . *holiness starts in the mind. It includes a departure from ignorance and a renewal of your thought life. And it leads to conforming to Christ's holiness rather than to the lusts of the world.*
 - 3) David Walls, *The lives and attitudes of Christians should be qualitatively different because of their relationship to God through Jesus Christ. Holiness produces in our lives a loving conformity to God's commands which ultimately produces the character of God in us.*
 - 4) Roger Raymer, *Though absolute holiness can never be achieved in this life, all areas of life should be in the process of becoming completely conformed to God's perfect and holy will.*
 - 5) Didymus the Blind (313-398), *Since God, who called us to salvation by the gospel, is holy, those who obey his calling must also become holy in all their thoughts and behavior, especially since he who calls us to this also provides the necessary sanctification himself.*
 - b. Imitate your Heavenly Father (16), ***since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."***
 - 1) Scriptural references
 - a) Peter quotes Leviticus 11:44a, *For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy.*
 - b) Note also, Leviticus 20:26, *You shall be holy to me, for I the LORD am holy and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine.*
 - 2) Comments
 - a) Edmund Clowney, *Holiness means that the pattern [of sin] is broken, that the sinner is transformed... God's righteous deeds flow from his holy nature; holiness patterned on his must express transformed hearts.*
 - b) Scot McKnight, *Since they are now children of obedience (1:14a), they are to be holy, just as God is holy.*
 - c) Theophylact (1050-1108), . . . *be conformed to the One who alone is truly holy.*
 - d) Thomas Constable, *We cannot expect to enjoy intimate fellowship with God who is holy unless we are holy too. Intimate fellowship with God is the greatest good human beings can experience, but without holiness it is impossible.*
 - e) Wayne Grudem, *To be holy 'as God is holy' includes a full and pervading holiness that reaches to every aspect of our personalities. It involves not only avoiding outward sin but also maintaining an instinctive delight in God and his holiness as an undercurrent of heart and mind throughout the day.*

TO BE CONTINUED, LORD WILLING

- C. A life of reverence (17-21)
- D. A life of love (22-25)