

THE EPISTLES OF PETER – OUTLINE OF TEACHING AND AUTHOR

These Epistles are addressed to exiled Christians scattered throughout the regions of Asia Minor after the dispersion of the early Church. They convey a message of hope to encourage Christians undergoing persecutions in every era of church history, who may be succumbing to discouragement. The message is calculated to strengthen them in the perseverance of their faith in God by whose incorruptible word – the Gospel – they have been saved. Peter exhorts them to stand true to God in their sufferings and set forth the true Grace of God. It is worth noting here too, that there are 18 verses of unfulfilled prophecy contained in the Epistles – 10 in 1 Peter and 8 in 2 Peter.

(CP 1Pe 1:1-25). Firstly, it needs to be said that V2 is not teaching, as some in the contemporary church would have us believe, that God has already determined who will, and who will not be saved. The phrase “*elect, according to the foreknowledge of God*” is simply referring to those who have already been saved through God’s redemptive plan for fallen man which He predestined through the death and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, as the verses that follow – V3 - 21 – and numerous other Scriptures throughout the Bible clearly teach. God did not predestine individual conformity to His plan of redemption, but the Saviour through whom all who choose, will be redeemed (CP V2-12 and 18-21 with Jn 3:14-17; Ro 3:21-26; Eph 1:3-13; 2:4-10; 3:1-12; 2Th 2:13-14; Tit 1:1-3; 2:11-14; He 2:9-14). See also author’s comments on 1Pe 1:1, 1:2, 1:7, 1:10-12 and 1:18-21, and all related cross-reference Scriptures and studies referred to therein, in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**.

In V13-17 there is a change in emphasis. It is a call to Christian dedication. Peter admonishes Christians to order their conduct on earth with a Holy fear of displeasing God. They are to regard themselves merely as pilgrims or sojourners in the earth, not as permanent residents, but as “strangers passing through the land”. Therefore they are not to become too settled into an earthly way of life (CP 1Pe 1:13-17 and 2:11 with He 11:8-10, 13-16). See also author’s comments on 1Pe 1:17 and all related cross-reference Scriptures and studies referred to therein, in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**. In 1Pe 1:22 Peter reminds Christians how they are to love one another to the fullest extent of their love, sincerely expressed (CP V22 with Ro 12:9; 1Jn 2:10 and 3:18). See also author’s comments on 1Jn 2:7 and 3:16-18, and all related cross-reference Scriptures and studies referred to therein, in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**. Next, in V23-25 in 1Pe 1, Peter again reminds Christians that they were born again and saved by the incorruptible Gospel which will never lose its value and endures forever (CP V23-25 with Mt 28:18-20 and Ro 1:16). See also author’s comments on 1Pe 1:23-25, and all related cross-reference Scriptures and studies referred to therein, in his book **A Question and answer Study of the New Testament**. See also author’s studies on *The Gospel – How to Share it with Sinners and be a Soul-winner for Christ* and *The Doctrine of Salvation* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 3)**.

(CP 1Pe 2:1-25). In his opening verses here – V1-3 – which are a continuation of V23-25 in Ch 1, Peter enjoins Christians to stop sinning and speaking evil of one another in view of the fact that they are born again and saved, and made partakers of God’s grace. Their desire should be to know more of God’s word, so that they can grow in the knowledge of him (CP V1-3 with Col 3:1-10). See also author’s comments on Col 3:1-3 and all related cross-reference Scriptures referred to therein, in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**. In 1Pe 2:4-10 we learn that the Church of God is not an external and highly visible structured religious organisation identified by Cathedrals and suchlike made with hands, but a Spiritual building composed of people – Christians – made without hands of which Christ is the foundation, or chief cornerstone, to which the whole building is joined. It is a living organism reproducing itself every time the Gospel is preached (CP 1Pe 2:4-8 with Eph 2:19-22 and 4:14-32). See also author’s comments on 1Pe 2:5, Eph 2:20 (B) and 4:25, and all related cross-reference Scriptures and studies referred to therein, in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**. See also author’s study *the New Testament Church – Its Essential Nature and Composition According to Scripture*, in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 3)**.

Next, in 1Pe 2:9-25, Peter beseeches Christians to live as servants of God. As Christians, they are a chosen people with the high calling of God on their lives to do Priestly works in the earth. They must be submitted to the laws of the land – where they do not conflict with God’s laws – and live exemplary lives in the world, not yielded to worldly desires. This world is not their home, so they should not become too settled into a worldly way of life – the Christian calling is to win as many souls as possible to Christ. If they are in the service of others, Christians have to obey their masters unhesitatingly, regardless of how they are treated. If they are persecuted because of their beliefs, they must accept it like Christ did. He bore not only our sins, but our sicknesses as well, to the cross. This proves there is bodily healing in the atonement (CP V9-25 with Col 3:1-10; He 11:7-15 and Isa 53:4-12). See also author’s comments on 2Pe 2:11, 2:24, Col 3:1-3 and He 11:6, and all related cross-reference Scriptures and studies referred to therein, in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**.

(CP 1Pe 3:1-22). In V 1-7 here Peter shifts the emphasis of his teaching on how husbands and wives should behave toward each other. Firstly, he stresses what the attitude of Christian wives should be towards their husbands who might be indifferent to the things of God. They may be able to be won over to God by the wives’ demonstrating a sweet spiritual inner disposition toward them and Godly behaviour, rather than by any outward appearance. Christian husbands are to honour and love their wives and respect them. They are weaker beings than their husbands, but heirs together with them of God’s saving grace. Husbands who treat their wives badly will not have their prayers answered (CP 1Pe 3:1-7 with Eph 5:22-33). See also author’s comments on 1Pe 3:1-6 and 3:7, and all related cross-reference Scriptures and studies referred

to therein, in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**. In summing up next in 1Pe 3:8-18 Peter again admonishes Christians to hate wickedness and live blameless lives. It is better to suffer as a righteous person like Christ, than as an evildoer. Peter also exhorts Christians to always be prepared to give an account of their beliefs (CP V8-18 with 2Ti 2:24; Col 4:6). See also author's comments on 1Pe 3:15 and Col 4:6, and all related cross-reference Scriptures and studies referred to therein, in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**.

Next we learn in 1Pe 3:19, that while His body was still in the grave, between His death and resurrection, Jesus went to Hell and preached to the fallen Angels – the *Spirits in Prison* (CP 1Pe 3:19-20 with 2Pe 2:4 and Jude 6-7). See also author's comments on 1Pe 3:18-20 (A) and (B) and 2Pe 2:4-6, and all related cross-reference Scriptures and studies referred to therein, in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**. In his closing verses, V20-22, next in 1Pe 3, Peter teaches that the *Spirits in Prison* to whom Jesus preached between his death and resurrection, rebelled against God, precipitating the flood in Noah's day and the building of the Ark, wherein Noah and his family were saved. *The like figure whereunto Baptism now saves us ...* in V21 is not referring to water Baptism, as so many Christians in the contemporary church believe. Peter confirms this in V22 (CP V20-22 with Ga 3:26-27). See also author's comments on 1Pe 3:20-21 and Mt 28:19-20 (B), Mk 16:16, Ro 6:3-5, Eph 4:4-6 and Col 2:12, and all related cross-reference Scriptures and studies referred to therein, in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**. See also his study *Bible Typology* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 1)**.

(CP 1Pe 4:1-19). In V1-4 Peter teaches Christians that seeing that Christ suffered to put away their sin they likewise should be prepared to suffer to cease from sin and do the will of God (CP V1-4 with 3:18 and 2:11). See also author's comments on 1Pe 4:1-4 and all related cross-reference Scriptures and studies referred to therein, in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**. *The dead* in 1Pe 4:6 are Christians who have died since being converted to Christ (CP 1Pe 4:6 with He 11:23). See also author's comments on 1Pe 4:6 and all related cross-reference Scriptures and studies referred to therein, in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**. Peter next in 1Pe 4:7-11, exhorts Christians to view their present lives in light of Christ's imminent return. Christians are to be self-controlled, alert, and able to pray. They are to love one another sincerely and fervently, from the heart. Their love for one another must be blind to each other's sins, and among many other things never be found wanting in their witness to Christ (CP V7-11). See also author's comments on 1Pe 4:7-11, and all related cross-reference Scriptures and studies referred to therein, in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**. The purpose behind the judgement of Christians Peter refers to in closing his teaching in 1Pe 4:12-19, is to refine their faith. Although God does not cause persecutions and trials to beset Christians, He permits them for the ultimate good of Christians for His purpose (CP V12-19 with

1Pe 1:6-9). See also author's comments on 1Pe 4:17, and all related cross-reference Scriptures and studies referred to therein, in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**.

(CP 1Pe 5:1-14). V1-3 here, in this the last chapter of Peter's first Epistle, clearly refutes the claim by many in the contemporary Church that Jesus gave Peter authority over His other disciples and that he was the rock upon which the New Testament Church is built. Peter introduces himself to the Elders of the Churches he is addressing here simply as an Elder also of the Church, on the same level as them (CP 1Pe 5:1-3 with Eph 2:19-22). See also author's comments on 1Pe 5:1-3 and Eph 2:20 (A) and (B), and all related cross-reference Scriptures and studies referred to therein, in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament Church**. See also author's studies *Jesus not Peter the Rock upon which the Church is Built* and all cross-reference Scriptures and studies referred to therein, in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 2)**, and *The New Testament Church – Its Essential Nature and Composition* and all related cross-reference Scriptures and studies referred to therein, in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 3)**.

Peter next admonishes young men in the Church to respect and honour older men. But older men in return must respect and honour the younger men too, Christians must all be submitted to each other (CP 1Pe 5:5-6 with Pr 3:34). See also author's comments on 1Pe 5:5-6 in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**. See also author's study *How Christians are to Love One Another* in his book **Foundational Truths of the Christian Faith**. Finally in 1Pe, Peter warns Christians undergoing trials of their faith not to succumb to the Devil in their trials (CP 1Pe 5:8-11 with 1Pe 1:6-9; 2:20-23; 1Pe 3:14-17). See also author's comments on 1Pe 5:8-11 in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**. This completes the study of Peter's First Epistle. Let us now see what we can learn from his Second Epistle.

(CP 2Pe 1:1-21). *Exceeding great and precious promises* referred to here are the salvation promises of eternal life Christians know is theirs in Christ. When they are born again Christians undergo a moral transformation of their nature – from one that emulated the corruption of the world to one that reflects the character of God (CP 2Pe 1:1-4 with 1Cor 6:19-20; Php 4:21-32; Col 3:1-11). See also author's comments on 2Pe 1:1-4 and 1Cor 6:19-20, and all related cross-reference Scriptures and studies referred to therein, in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**, and his study *Regeneration and Sanctification Defined* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 2)**. Peter teaches next, in 2Pe 1:5-11 that Christians cannot take their faith or their salvation for granted; that they are to grow in grace (CP 2Pe 1:5-11 with 2:20-22; 3:17-18; He 6:1-6; 10:19-27). See also author's comments on 2Pe 1:10, 2:20-22, 3:13-18 and He 6:4-6, and all related cross-reference Scriptures and studies referred to therein, in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**. Next, in 2Pe 1:12-21, Peter stresses the need for Christians to be thoroughly grounded in the truth. He teaches that the testimony

of Scripture is surer confirmation of God's truth than even his own eyewitness account of Christ's transfiguration (CP V12-21 with Psa 119:9, 101-105, 130). See also author's comments on 2Pe 1:16 and 1:20-21 in his book **A Question and answer Study of the New Testament**, and all related cross-reference Scriptures and studies referred to therein.

(CP 2Pe 2:1-22). This whole chapter emphasises the danger to unwary Christians of false prophets and teachers rising up in the professing Church. Many are already operating in the contemporary Church, including Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Christadelphians, Christian Scientists, The Worldwide Church of God, etc, etc. The list goes on. Some lesser known have come and gone but their false teachings linger on. Some are more subtle than others, so are not immediately recognisable; others less subtle are easily detected. The onus is on Christians though to thoroughly test all teachings in the light of Scripture. If it does not line up with Scripture it must be rejected out of hand completely, regardless of who teaches it (CP 2Pe 2:1-11 with 1:16-19; 1Th 5:21 and 1Jn 4:1). See also author's comments on 2Pe 2:4-6, 2:5, 2:6-9, 2:10 and 2:20-22, 1:16-19, 1Th 5:21, 1Jn 4:1 and 2Jn 10-11 and all related cross-reference Scriptures and studies referred to therein, in his book **A Question and answer Study of the New Testament**. See also author's study *The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture*, and all related cross-reference Scriptures and studies referred to therein, in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 3)**. Now to the third, and final chapter of 2Pe.

(CP 2Pe 3:1-18). The emphasis here is on how Christians live in the hope of Christ's Second Coming. In V1-10 Peter teaches that sometime thereafter the Heavens and the earth will be destroyed by fire, they will dissolve and then be renewed. There can be no set time frame though when this will happen. If God appears to be slack in this regard it is because of our time perspective, not His. He is eternal and not dependent on time like humans. V9 teaches that God is patient. He purposely extends the time of Grace so that sinners can repent and be saved. (CP V1-10 with Psa 90:1-4). See also author's comments on 2Pe 3:1-7, 3:8-9 with 3:10, and all related cross-reference Scriptures and studies referred to therein, in his book **A Question and answer Study of the New Testament**. Next, in 1Pe 3:11-18, Peter admonishes Christians to zealously remain morally pure and at peace with God while waiting for God's promise of new Heavens and a new earth (CP V11-18 with He 1:10-12; 12:25-29; Rev 20:11; 21:1). See also author's comments on 2Pe 3:12, 3:13-18, He 12:26-29, Rev 20:11 and 21:1, and all related cross-reference Scriptures and studies referred to therein, in his book **A Question and answer Study of the New Testament**.

Peter the Apostle, who was also called Simon Peter, wrote these two Epistles (CP 1Pe 1:1; 2Pe 1:1). Peter was also called Cephas, meaning a stone, by Jesus (CP Jn 1:40-42). Together with John and his brother James, Peter enjoyed a close relationship with Jesus. They were eyewitnesses to His glory on the Mount of Transfiguration (CP Mt 17:1-9; 2Pe 1:16-19). They accompanied Jesus when He raised up Jairus'

daughter from the dead (CP Mk 5:22-24, 35-43), and they were present with Him in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night He was betrayed (CP Mt 26:36-50). Peter was the first of the Apostles to acknowledge Jesus' Deity (CP Mt 16:13-20), but he is not the rock upon which Jesus is building His church, as so many in the professing church claim (see author's study *Jesus not Peter the Rock upon which the Church is Built* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 2)**).