

Hope in Suffering: Studies in 1 and 2 Peter

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Peter wrote these two letters to encourage Christians in their suffering. 1 Peter 5:12 sheds light on the overall purpose of the epistle. Peter sees Christians in danger of persecution (1:6) and not prepared for it (4:12). In the light of this he aimed to do two things: to encourage and to testify to the true grace of God (5:12) in which he urged his readers to stand. These two purposes are intertwined as Peter gives encouragement by declaring God's gracious acts in Christ, made known and mediated by his Spirit.

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Session 1

A Fresh Start—1 Peter 1: 1-12

Have you ever wished you could just start over? Maybe you've said to yourself you would give everything you've got to leave the past behind, with its dismal failures and disappointments, to find a new road to hope and happiness? All of us, if we are perfectly honest, will admit that we've had those moments of doubt and pain. The Apostle Peter knew that many of the original recipients of this letter, scattered all over the place and under intense persecution, were in dire need of cheering up. The hope he inspired in them is still good for us today in our moments...those dark hours when all of our calculations of our own value still total zero.

St. Peter says God gave us a new life when He caused us to be born again by the same power over nature He exerted when He raised Jesus from the dead (v.3). And this is a life worth living! At times our joy is so deep that it leaves us speechless (v. 8 "joy inexpressible"), and it comes from knowing we are **not** worthless. He says God loved us before the foundation of the world, and He hand-picked **us** to be the recipients of this astounding grace (v.2- "the chosen sojourners...according to the foreknowledge of God). He is keeping our inheritance in heaven where it cannot rust or fade, unlike the substitutes we desperately cling to in this life. We can absolutely trust Him to guard this treasure we are to receive after we have been grieved for a little while through various trials (v.4-6).

These temporary tribulations are used by God to show people our faith is genuine and *real* (v.7), resulting in others being attracted to Christ. These tests help us too. After we've gone through them we come out on the other side with a greater confidence in the God who has promised to save us. It's weird; even though we can't see Him - never have seen Him - we love and trust Him deep in the core of our being (v.8). This trust is precious in the sight of God, and that gives us the feeling our lives are valuable and have meaning.

The Holy Spirit showed the Old Testament prophets all this would happen, not to them, but to us. It apparently is causing a real stir in heaven. The angels aren't allowed to know what's up with us who are honored recipients of this amazing grace and glory. They are longing to peek into this drama we are living out in the church age. The world may think we Christians are insignificant, but the holy angels know better. They see things from God's perspective and they view us as objects of intense interest (v.12). We are indeed privileged!

Quotes

"...the deep root of our fear...is the suspicion that our worth, when all is said and done, equals precisely nothing."—Paul F.M. Zahl, *Who Will Deliver Us?*

"Then He appeared and the soul felt its worth."—"O Holy Night" (Christmas carol)
"And I was 'round when Jesus Christ had his moment of doubt and pain."—The Rolling Stones in "Sympathy For The Devil"

“They confessed they were foreigners and aliens on the earth.”—Hebrews 11:13

“No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.”—Hebrews 12:11

Questions

1. When was the last time you felt your value was zero? What/who precipitated it?
2. What are you hoping for now? (Fill in the blank: “I would be happy if _____.”)
3. What does Peter mean when he addresses his audience as “aliens” in v.1?
4. Have you ever felt like an alien, an exile? Describe the feeling as best you can.
5. What does he mean by “regeneration” in v.3? How does it work?

Notes from Wayne Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*

- **alien** suggests a temporary resident, staying for a while in a strange place. It is applied figuratively to Christians, who are not at home in this world, but whose home is in heaven. In some versions of the Bible it is translated exile; sojourner; pilgrim; or stranger.

- **chosen-** from the Greek word *eklektos*; in the New Testament all 22 occurrences of the word refer to persons chosen by God from a group of others who are not chosen, and chosen for inclusion among God’s people, as recipients of great privilege and blessing.

- **according to the foreknowledge** suggests not the knowing of facts, but God’s knowing people with a personal, loving, fatherly knowledge; [see also v.20 and Romans 8:29 and 11:2] The sense is “according to Gods fatherly care for you before the world was made” (verse 3).

- **regenerated** refers to a father’s role in the birth of a child, either literally or figuratively. It suggests “God has caused us to be born again.” Jesus explained this to Nicodemus, the teacher of Israel, in John 3, saying “No one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.”

- **a living hope** is the eager, confident expectation of the life to come; it is living, in that it grows and increases in strength year by year (verse 6).

- **rejoice** in the New Testament always “signifies a deep, spiritual joy, a rejoicing in God or in what he has done.”

- **suffer grief** in various trials- literally “having been grieved.” The sense is: “In this hope of the future you are continually rejoicing, although during this life for a little time, if God deems it necessary, you are grieved in various trials.” See also James 1:2 (verse 7).

- **a faith more precious than gold-** Genuine faith is more valuable to God than gold because He is a God who delights in being trusted. Since God’s evaluation of something is the ultimate

standard of meaning in the universe, Peter's readers have a secure basis for a sense of ultimate meaning and importance for their own lives. See verse 8.

- **believe in him** - to trust; to rest one's confidence in; depend upon - implies not an intellectual agreement with the story told in the Bible, but a strong, personal involvement, in the sense of resting oneself in Christ.

- **inexpressible and glorious joy** can also be translated "unutterable and exalted joy." It carries the idea of a joy so profound as to be beyond the power of words to express. Singing and music often express the deep joy we feel better than spoken words alone.

Session 2

Separation From Sin—1 Peter 1:13-2:3

Have you noticed how much children like to imitate their parents? It's been true in all cultures and in all ages, including our own. It is part of the natural order of things. St. Peter begins at verse 13 to pick up this theme. He encourages those who have been born by the Spirit of God (v.3,23) to be imitators of their *heavenly* Father. God set us apart for this by calling us out and separating us from the world and its program of evil. That's what it means to be holy (v.15-16).

This really is a beautiful way to live, because His behavior is the standard for morality and ethics in the universe. It is the final reason some things are right and others are wrong. He wants this attitude to permeate our entire being—body, mind, emotions, the whole works. So that means making a clean break with that empty way of life we once fashioned for ourselves, blindly following the 'gods' we made and the cravings that ruled us (v.14,18). Christ broke the hereditary chain of sin when he shed his sacred blood for us. He bought our freedom, not with gold and silver coin, but with his perfect sacrifice of himself. He paid dearly! God the Father chose this destiny for his Son before he created the world, but not until the Church Age did he publicly display it (v.18-20).

This blood letting not only removed our court room guilt but also cleansed our consciences. Jesus' blood is so powerful and effective! It began by rescuing us from a way of life doomed to failure. It continues by causing us to be cleansed more and more as we cling to him and trust in his promises. When he laid down his life for us he also gave us access to God. As a result we can pray with confidence in God's favor toward us and without fear of condemnation and eternal torment (v.17).

Since he has poured out these incredible benefits on us, continues Peter, we are ready to swing into action. Alert and self-controlled, let's stay completely focused on the great reward we'll get when Jesus comes back for us (v.13). Out of this new mind set will flow a torrent of deep, fervent love for our brothers and sisters in Christ (v.22). This love is the perfect antidote for the poison of malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander (2:1). (These toxins rise to the surface whenever we think that something other than God will make us really happy.) This kind of love is fueled by 'pure spiritual milk' (2:2) so, like hungry babies, let's drink deeply from God's word.

This is the same word that summoned us into fellowship with Him—to live with Him and to be like Him. By the way, your new life is not like your old life. Your old birth came from mortal sperm; your new birth was conceived by God himself, through his ever-living Word. Unlike the temporary delights of earthly beauty, power and pleasure this new life never ends.

Quotes

“And do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”—
Romans 12:2

“Remember what the door mouse said: ‘Feed your head’”—Jefferson Airplane in *White Rabbit*

“Pursue holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.”—Hebrews 12:14

“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a high and exalted throne. Seraphim stood above him...and kept calling to one another, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts...and the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of their calling, and the house was filled with smoke. Then I said: “Woe is me, for I am ruined; for I am a man of unclean lips and dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.”—Isaiah 6:1-5

“A Christian must act in such a way that he can let everybody see and know what he thinks in his heart...and at heart everyone should be what he appears to be. He should not resort to dissimulation and in this way cause people to gape.”—Martin Luther, *Sermons on First Peter*

“People what have you done? Locked him in his golden cage, made him bend to your religion. Him! Resurrected from the grave.”—Jethro Tull in “My God”

Questions

1. Are you trying to make God “bend to your religion?” How? Hint: Is there something so important to you that the thought of doing without it feels like death? Does the lack of that one thing (or the possibility of losing it if you already have it) cause you to be Angry? Worried? Despondent?
2. Peter says in v. 17 we should “pass in fear the time of our sojourning.” First John says, “The one who fears has not been perfected in love” (1 John 4:18). Who is right?
3. What is the relationship between personal holiness and behavior?
4. How, from verse 22, do we purify our souls? Is this more like a leisure time activity or a war?
5. What, in 2:2, does Peter say we should “intently long for” to help us grow in our salvation?
6. Have you ever tasted the “kindness of the Lord?” Write down a few instances you remember.

Notes from Wayne Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*

• **Called**—used here (verse 15) and four other times in the letter. The One who called us is specifically God the Father. He initiated our salvation when the gospel came to us in power, summoning us out of darkness. (See John 11:43 for a marvelous picture of this in Jesus’ calling Lazarus out of the darkness of his tomb.) God’s calling is inseparable from His choosing us (v.1). See also 2 Peter 1:10 “Make certain about His calling and choosing you.”

• **Fear**—from the Greek word ‘*phobos*’; here (verse 17) it means a holy self-suspicion and fear of offending God. This fear is not cowardice: it does not debase, but elevates the mind. It drowns all lower fears and begets true fortitude and courage to face all dangers. It is not inconsistent with loving God and knowing He loves us. It causes us to approach

God with humble reverence and awe, the way a child shows respect for the father.

- **Redeemed**-to purchase someone's freedom (verse 18) by paying a ransom; used in secular contexts of purchasing freedom for a slave or a hostage held by an enemy. (See also 2 Timothy 2:26.)
- **Malice** (1:2) can also be translated "evil" or "wickedness" and it includes not only ill intent but actions harmful to others.
- **Guile** (1:2) is deceitfulness that harms others through trickery or falsehood.
- **Hypocrisy** (1:2) or insincerity is the masking of inward evil by an outward show of righteousness (see also Matthew 23:28).
- **Envy** (1:2) is the opposite of thankfulness for good that comes to others.
- **Slander** (1:2) refers to evil speech, defamation, or detraction. We are so quick to engage in slander that we are not even aware of it. If you think separation from this sin is easy, try the following exercise: See how long it takes you today to run another person down-even a little bit.

Session 3

A Spiritual Church—1 Peter 2:4-10

The Apostle Peter told us earlier that, when God regenerated us through His word, in essence He *called* us. As you approach Him think of yourself as a stone to be laid in the spiritual house He is building. No, He is not going to turn you into a brick! Unlike the builders of the structure you now call ‘church’, He’s using living building material (v.4).

He laid the corner stone for this ‘living house’ when He raised Jesus from the dead. He is adding to this foundation every time He brings another soul out of death into life. He intends for this building to house a bunch of ‘priests’ who offer up spiritual sacrifices to Himself (v.5).

Since our natural, rational intelligence cannot inform us what these ‘spiritual sacrifices’ are, God has told us in the Holy Scriptures:

- “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart.”—Psalm 51:17
- “Through Him (Jesus) then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. And do not neglect doing good and sharing; for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”—Hebrews 13:15-16

In verse 6 Peter quotes Isaiah the prophet: “All who *trust* in the corner stone (Jesus Christ) by no means will be shamed.” We show we trust him when we believe he will make good on his promises. It makes us want to obey his teaching and to follow where he leads us, even if we risk enduring hardship.

On the other hand, people who find Jesus scandalous, whose moral sensibilities are offended by his demands for repentance, these ignore or disobey his instructions, his statutes, and his commands (found everywhere in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation). They will stumble and fall flat on their faces. In shame they will depart to the howling darkness, the end to which they were *destined* (v.8).

But our heavenly Father has better things for us. We are His “chosen race” whom He “called out of darkness into His marvelous light” to serve Him as a new and royal priesthood (v.9). The prophet Hosea promised this day would come when he preached more than 700 years before the birth of the Messiah (v.10). Now we’re living the dream!

Keep in mind that we are God’s instruments to do His work and to speak out for Him. So tell people what a difference He’s made in your life; how you went from being rejected to being accepted when He poured out on you showers of merciful kindness.

Quotes

“The Church’s one foundation is Jesus Christ, her Lord.”—Samuel J. Stone hymn

“Ye chosen seed of Israel’s race, ye ransomed from the fall, hail Him who saves you by His grace, and crown Him Lord of all.”—Edward Perronet hymn “All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name”

“Christ takes it for granted that men are bad. Until we really feel this assumption of his to be true...we are not part of the audience to whom his words are addressed.”—C.S. Lewis in *The Problem of Pain*

“Holy Scripture speaks of the church in two ways. Sometimes it meansthose who are children of God by grace of adoption and true members of Christ by sanctification of the Holy Spirit...In this church are mingled many hypocrites who have nothing of Christ but the name and outward appearance.”—John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Book 4, chapter 1.7)

“It seems today the Scandalon offends no one at all; the image we present can be stepped over.”—Michael Card in “Scandalon”

“The bloody church of England, in chains of history, Requests Your Earthly Presence at the vicarage for tea.”—Jethro Tull in “My God”

Questions

1. Who are the members of the “visible” church? Are all of them members of the “invisible” church?
2. Do you agree with the quote above from C.S. Lewis? Why or why not?
3. Do you agree with the quote from the Michael Card song above? Do Christians “soft peddle” the message of Jesus Christ to avoid offending people?

Notes from Wayne Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*

• **Appointed-** in the sense of destined by God for punishment (cp. 2 Peter 2:6 and Romans 9:22-24); It indicates that even the rebellion of unbelievers falls within the scope of His sovereign and wise plan for the world. Jesus used this same word in a positive way in John 15:16 when he said, “You did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you...to go and bear fruit.”

• **Offense-** from the Greek word *scandalon*, leading to the English word ‘scandal’. Isaiah 8:14 and 28:16 described the coming Messiah as one who would cause the religious leaders of his day to stumble. They thought they were immunized against God’s judgement on sin by their genealogical descent from Abraham, so they found Jesus’ assessment of human nature and his demands for repentance offensive. They did not understand that grace, not race, is the only solution for the universal human problem of separation from God.

• **Proclaim the excellencies-** God’s purpose in redeeming us is not simply our own enjoyment, but also that we might glorify Him. We do this by speaking of all He is and all He has done for

us. The word translated 'proclaim' (verse 9) is found several times in the Psalms to speak of praising God.

- **Mercy-** the undeserved favor of God. All the privileges described in these passages can be traced only to God's mercy, and never to any merit of our own (verse 10).

Session 4

Approval in Relationships—1 Peter 2:11-20 and 3:1-12

In Studies 2 & 3 Peter explained how God rescued us from our captivity to sin and set us apart to be His particular people—the Church of Jesus Christ. Now he brings us back to earth, into the every day world of human relationships—a world where real people have real problems.

- How can you expect a woman to continue year after year to “love, comfort and honor” a husband who is a chronic workaholic, who comes home after the kids are asleep and reads the newspaper instead of hearing how her day went?
- Do I have to do what my boss tells me to do when he knows less about the business than I do and his idea has no chance of success?
- Is it right for the government to force me as a taxpayer to buy a medication for an elderly man for the rest of his life, when the drug does no good for 199 out of every 200 people who take it, and it costs more than \$1000 a year?

In all of these situations, says the Apostle, we are to “submit ourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human institution” (v. 2:13). By doing this we are imitating the behavior of God. The Father interacts with the other two members of the Trinity—the Son and the Holy Spirit. They established a hierarchy of authority among themselves before they created Man and the Earth we inhabit. God the Son subordinates himself to the Father. The Holy Ghost issues out from the Father and the Son.

In every era government has given its citizens good reasons to despise it. The worst governments murder their people in ethnic and racial “cleansing.” Others turn a blind eye to crimes committed by the well-connected. Martin Luther complained in the sixteenth century about the tendency of rulers to debase the currency. Professor Jeremy Siegel says our own federal government has inflated the money supply so much that \$1.00 in 1802 currency is worth only seven cents today!

Nevertheless, says Peter, God wants us to obey government, so “that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men” (v. 2:15). The same principles apply in the economic realm of life. God wants his people to submit to their employers and not only to the good ones but also to the crooked (v. 2:18).

In the realm of marriage God calls for mutual submission (Ephesians 5:21). This often produces anguish rather than pure joy. When a Christian wife assumes an attitude of submission, says St. Peter, amazing things happen! An unbelieving husband becomes a believer by watching her gentle and quiet spirit (v. 3:4). Men are to love their wives as Christ loved the church—laying down his life for her. Peter says you would do well to assign honor to your wives since they are also heirs of the grace of life. If you treat them harshly it will mess up your relationship with God and your prayers will be hindered (v. 3:7).

In all our relationships, then, let us be filled with the Holy Spirit. He will enable us to restrain our

sinful passions (v. 2:11) so that we show sympathy, compassion, and humility toward our leaders, our spouses, and our bosses. God notices, and he approves, especially when we bear griefs unjustly because our mind is set on him (v. 2:19-20). We will hear more about this sorrow from unjust suffering in Study Five.

Quotes

“I have not come to preach to you but to die. Pray for the King, for he is a good man and has treated me as well as could be. I do not accuse any one of causing my death...for I am condemned by the law of the land and die willingly. Pray for me. God have pity on my soul. God have mercy on my soul.”—Anne Boleyn, the second wife of King Henry VIII, founder of the Church of England, on May 19, 1536, on her way to the execution block where she would be beheaded. Henry pressed the courts for her execution when she failed to deliver a male heir to the throne on the first try. (Future Queen Elizabeth was the result of their union.) Ten days later the King privately married his lover, Jane Seymour, at York Place. Anne Boleyn is perhaps the finest example in our history of submission to the authorities established by God—even the perverse ones.

“We must obey God rather than men!”—the Apostle Peter in Acts 5:27

“The ghost of Belle Starr she hands down her wits / To Jezebel the nun she violently knits / A bald wig for Jack the Ripper who sits / At the head of the chamber of commerce”—Bob Dylan in “Tombstone Blues”

“When a man loves a woman, spend his very last dime trying to hold on to what he needs. He'd give up all his comforts and sleep out in the rain if she said that's the way it ought to be.”—Percy Sledge in “When a Man Loves a Woman”

“The first time ever I saw your face I thought the sun rose in your eyes / And the moon and the stars were gifts you gave to the dark and the endless skies / The first time ever I kissed your mouth I felt the earth move in my hands / Like the trembling heart of a captive bird that was then at my command.”--Roberta Flack in “The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face”

Questions

1. According to St. Peter (2:14), what is the purpose of government?
2. Is it ever proper for Christians to intentionally disobey the government? When?
3. What are the “fleshly lusts” (“sinful desires” in some translations) Peter refers to in 2:11? Galatians 5:19-21 gives a list.
4. When he calls woman ‘the weaker sex’ does Peter most likely mean A) in physical strength B) in marital authority C) in emotional sensitivity or D) All of the above?
5. What does it mean to submit to each other in marriage (Eph 5:21)?
6. Husbands, have you asked God to teach you to love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her? (Ephesians 5:25)

Notes from Wayne Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*

- **Sinful desires**-literally “fleshly lusts” (2:11); though the Holy Spirit’s regenerating work has broken the ruling, dominating force of those desires, they still remain with us and have some power in the hearts of true Christians. When we restrain rather than nurture them, unbelievers will see it and be saved. This is a time-tested strategy for evangelism.

- **Submit**-when this word is used it always implies a relationship of submission to an authority (2:13 and 18, 3:1). Some translators have tried to convey the sense of “being considerate or thoughtful” but the particular verb used does not support that idea. Many places in the Bible, however, affirm that obedience to authority does not mean a person is inferior or less important. Likewise, Christians are not obligated to obey the various authorities if commanded to sin.

- **Slaves** or house servants (2:18) in the first century Roman Empire were usually born into their master’s household. They were generally treated well and were often managers or professionals, such as doctors, nurses, teachers, musicians and artisans. They were paid for their services and could eventually expect to purchase their freedom. Today “employee” probably best describes this relationship in the western world.

- **Bestowing honor on the woman** (3:7) or “the feminine one” suggests that a wife’s “femaleness” should itself elicit honor from her husband. Such honor might include kind and affirming words, publicly and privately, as well as high priority in choosing how to spend one’s time and money.

- **weaker sex**, or vessel, includes any kind of weakness a husband might take advantage of. Most men are physically stronger than women and could overpower them. Men are also stronger in marital authority, by God’s decision after the fall (Genesis 3). A woman’s greater emotional sensitivity, while a wonderfully strong trait in many circumstances, also means she is more likely to be hurt deeply by a husband’s inconsiderate behavior. Peter could have any or all of these ideas in mind. Men should remember that God often chooses to bestow honor on those who are weaker or less honored in the eyes of the world (1 Corinthians 1:26-30).

Session 5

The Purpose of Pain—1 Peter 2:19-25; 3:13-17; 4:12-19

Anyone who has been following Christ for more than a few months will tell you their problems didn't end when their new life began. In some cases they got worse. Just four months after God summoned me into his family I came down with a relapse of the tuberculosis I had contracted while working at a Sioux hospital in the Dakotas years earlier. Many of you have fared much worse—children dead before their parents; businesses belly up; divorces so bitter you doubt the goodness of God.

It begs the question, why does God allow his people to suffer while the wicked go unchecked? St. Peter tackles it head on in this letter to followers of Christ dispersed across modern day Turkey. He probably wrote this letter from Rome between 60-68 A.D., and it is apparent the readers were suffering persecution for their faith.

To get a start on making some sense of the sorrows, griefs, and pain in our lives, let's look at one of the most famous Bible verses ever. Romans 8:28-29 teaches us that God takes our most miserable ordeals and weaves them together to make something beautiful out of our loss. He uses our trials to "conform us to the image of his Son."

Suffering while doing good is every Christian's calling, says Peter, because Christ suffered for us (2:21). He was despised and rejected *by everyone*. Remembering the incredible benefits Jesus' passion has secured for us gives us reason to hang in there.

- The damage we've done (or ever will do) was pardoned and our debt cancelled.
- We gained the power to finally stop doing things that were messing up our lives.
- We found direction and purpose so we don't keep wandering around lost.
- And we got direct access to God the Father when we desperately need help.

So how should we conduct ourselves when life seems unbearable? Jesus, Peter goes on to say, left us an *example*. The word used in 2:21 was used in Greek life to describe the pattern letters a child must trace in order to learn to write. We can see the pattern in Jesus' own response to the unjust suffering dumped on him. When his enemies hurled abusive language at him he didn't respond in kind. When they inflicted pain on him he didn't threaten to retaliate. Instead, he reminded himself that his Father would make everything right one day. (2:23 & 4:19) This same, loving, heavenly Father has set a limit on our suffering and intends it for our good, to purify us and make us like Jesus.

The abuses did not surprise Jesus, and it shouldn't shock us when we suffer trials. When people reject or avoid us because of our faith in Christ we are honored in God's eyes (4:12;13;14;16). One warning though: if you get batted around for doing something dumb and you take it without whining, don't expect God to applaud. Quietly bearing *undeserved* grief because our mind is set on Him...that's a miracle from God.

Quotes

“What flood of eloquence can suffice to detail the miseries of this life?”—Saint Augustine in *The City of God*, 19:4, written about 413 A.D.

“I been run down, I been lied to, I don't know why I let that mean woman make me a fool. She took all my money, wrecked my new car. Now she's with one of my good-time buddies. They're drinkin' in some crosstown bar. Sometimes I feel, sometimes I feel like I been tied to the whipping post. Tied to the whipping post. Tied to the whipping post. Good Lord, I feel like I'm dyin'.”—The Allman Brothers Band in “Whipping Post”

“Do not despise the chastening of the Lord, for whom the Lord loves he disciplines.”—Hebrews 12:5-6

“Brothers, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience... Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, for when he has been approved he will receive the crown of life which the Lord promised to those who love him.”—James 1

“Having been justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...and we boast in afflictions, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance...and hope.”—Romans 5: 1-4

“Paul does not say we rejoice for our sufferings, because that would be masochism. It actually is possible to rejoice for suffering. Some people need to feel punished in order to deal with their sense of unworthiness and guilt. Others actually get a superior attitude toward people who have had an easier life. They see them as superficial or ungrateful. It is possible to use suffering as a ‘work,’ another form of justification by works! Some feel that God owes them his favor and acceptance because we have had such a hard life. People who do not ‘process’ their suffering through the gospel of grace can become proud and superior or deeply cynical. Christians, rather, rejoice in suffering. That means there is no joy in the actual troubles themselves. God hates the pain and troubles of this life and so should we. Rather, a Christian knows that suffering will have beneficial results. A Christian is not a stoic that faces suffering with just gritting of teeth. Christians ‘look through’ the suffering to their certainties and rest in the knowledge that our troubles will only serve to increase our enjoyment and appreciation of them.” –Tim Keller in “The Message of Romans”

Questions

1. How do you usually view suffering, or hardship, when it comes? As correction from a loving father? As retribution from an angry God?
2. Does Peter say we should actively seek suffering? What are some reasons we do it?
3. Should Christians fear God? If yes, in what sense? If no, why not?

Notes from Wayne Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*

- **example** (2:21), or Greek hupogrammos, were the pattern letters that a school child must carefully trace in order to learn to write.

- **follow in his steps** is a beautiful allusion to the way a child walking with his father in deep snow puts his feet in the footprints left by the father walking ahead of him.

- **by his wounds you were healed** (2:24) in a figurative sense only, since some believers have incurable physical diseases. Some of the most devoted Christians in history have suffered intensely in their bodies. It is heresy to suggest that a brother or sister in Christ is sick because they don't have enough faith! The healing spoken of here is a spiritual cure. It happened when we believed that Jesus died for our sins and God raised him from the dead. It freed us from our slavery to sin and the Devil, which the Scriptures teach is the condition of every man, woman, and child born into the human race after the Fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

- **died for sins once for all** (3:18), or one time, in the sense of once for all time. The Greek verb tense demands this translation, and it cannot be inferred that Christ's death is applied to every person in the human race. If that were the case everyone would be saved and Hell would be empty. The next two verses exclude that possibility, as do many other places in the Scriptures.

4 verse 13

- **revelation of his glory** (4:13)—at the end of time when Jesus returns in royal splendor to judge the world and put death, the last enemy, under His feet. He came the first time in humility as a sacrificial lamb. He will come the second time as a conquering hero on a white horse. Those who trusted him in life to save them will be overjoyed when they see him in all his beauty and power. It will make all their suffering seem worthwhile.

- **time for judgement to begin with the household of God-** in 4:17, Peter takes up a theme constantly found in the Old Testament prophets. Martin Luther said, "In Ezekiel 9:6 we read that the prophet saw six armed men whom the Lord commanded to slay everyone (with the words): 'Begin at My sanctuary.' This is what St. Peter means here...He whips the pious with a foxtail, which is primarily a mother's rod. But what will happen to those who do not believe? It is as if he were saying: if God deals so seriously with his dear children, you can figure out what kind of punishment will be inflicted on those who do not believe." We can conclude that judgement means for us who have put our trust in Christ a purifying fire, like that used to refine gold and silver. (See also Malachi 3:1-where He says 'as a refiner of silver he shall purify the sons of Levi.') For unbelievers, the fire will completely destroy them. John Calvin said, "The godly complain that the wicked pass their life in continual pleasures, delight themselves with wine and the harp, and at length descend without pains in an instant into the grave." This seems to us to contrast with his severity towards us. Calvin continues, "In short, God so regulates his judgements in this world that he fattens the wicked for the day of slaughter...while he corrects His own children (to get them back on the right track)."

Excursus

Christ Descended into Hell

Since at least the middle of the first millennium Christians have recited this line found in the Apostle's Creed. The present text of the creed is similar to the baptismal creed used in the church in Rome in the 3rd and 4th centuries. It probably reached its final form in southwestern France in the late 6th or 7th century. Gradually it replaced other baptismal creeds and was acknowledged as the official creed of the entire Catholic Church in the West by the time Pope Innocent III died in 1216. Such a controversial saying does, in fact, have support from the new Testament. In his first letter the apostle Peter made this statement in chapter 3, beginning at verse 18:

For Christ died once concerning sins...in order that He might bring you to God, having been put to death on the one hand in the flesh, having been made alive, on the other hand, in the spirit; in which, going to the spirits in prison, he preached, to those who disobeyed...in the days of Noah.

Not all scholars agree on this interpretation, however, that Christ actually and literally went into Hell after his death on the cross at Calvary. The five theories, according to Professor Wayne Grudem, that have gained the most support over the centuries are these:

1. When Noah was building the ark, the spirit of Christ in Noah preached the need for repentance to unbelievers who were on the earth then but are now "spirits in prison" (people in hell).
2. After Christ died, he went and preached to people in hell, offering them a second chance of salvation.
3. After Christ died, he went and preached to people in hell, proclaiming to them he had triumphed over them and their condemnation was final.
4. After Christ died, he proclaimed release to people who had repented just before they died in the flood, and led them out of their imprisonment (in Purgatory) into heaven.
5. After Christ died, he travelled to hell and proclaimed triumph over the fallen angels who had sinned by marrying human women before the flood.

Some of the giants of the Protestant faith have taken a stab at it, and I will try to summarize what each believed the apostle meant by this cryptic phrase. In his monumental work, *The City of God*, Saint Augustine makes no mention of the verse. He does, however, cite many other passages from the new and old testaments concerning the punishment of unbelievers in Hell. Perhaps his omission reflects a lack of consensus about the meaning and interpretation of the verse as far back as 413 A.D. In other of his writings though, specifically Letter 164, he does attempt an interpretation.

View 1

Augustine was the first to propose that Christ was preaching through Noah while he was building the ark. Martin Luther wrote a series of sermons on First Peter in 1522, and the next year he wrote on Second Peter and Jude. He flatly admits, "I do not know for sure what the apostle means; but if anyone maintains that, after Christ died on the cross, he descended to the souls and

preached to them there, I will not stand in the way...These words could also mean, after he ascended to heaven, He came in the spirit and preached...but I surely cannot believe Christ descended to the souls and preached to them there.”

John Calvin, the great Reformer of Switzerland, puts the time of the visit after the resurrection of Christ. Like Luther he doubts Christ went in person, preferring the idea of Christ preaching through the Holy Spirit instead. Calvin then loses some of us by insisting Christ was speaking to *godly* spirits in prison. (Why would the souls of the devout be in prison? Why does Peter say specifically these spirits disobeyed in the time of Noah?)

Professor Grudem has presented exhaustive research on the verses in the Tyndale New Testament Commentaries published by Inter-Varsity Press in 1988. His work is so thorough and well documented it is hard to disagree with his analysis and logic. He comes down in favor of View 1, that the spirit of Christ in Noah preached to the unbelievers of his generation while he was building the ark. In support of this Peter had already said, in 1:10-11, the (Old Testament) prophets ‘made careful search and inquiry, seeking to know what person or time the spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.’ 2 Peter 2:5 said, ‘God did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly.’ The preaching of Noah is also extensively documented in the extra-Biblical literature of Peter’s time.

To whom then did Christ preach through Noah? The text of 1 Peter 3: 19-20 states He ‘preached to spirits in prison.’ Peter could have meant human or angelic spirits. When did Christ preach to these spirits? ‘When they formerly disobeyed, while the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah.’ So it seems pretty clear the preaching occurred in the time in which Noah lived; when the human race had become so wicked God said He was sorry He ever created man; when He instructed Noah to build an ark in which the righteous remnant of the time would be saved; when He sent a flood over the earth to destroy the whole human race minus eight.

What then of the other four views? Some are spurious on the surface. Let’s take them one at a time.

View 2

After he died, Christ went to hell to give people a second chance. Why would he give only those who disobeyed during the building of the ark this ‘second chance?’ If this possibility was real, why was Peter writing to suffering Christians and exhorting them to stand firm in doing right in the face of persecution? If they could have a second chance, why not say ‘Eat, drink, and be merry?’ or ‘Let’s just go along with the crowd this time.’ Besides, the New Testament makes the clear statement, ‘it is appointed for men to die once then the judgement.’ (Hebrews 9:27) Jesus himself told the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19 ff.) to illustrate the point beautifully.

View 3

If Christ went to tell people in hell their condemnation was final, why did he single out those who ‘disobeyed in the days of Noah?’ Why not tell everybody? And why did Peter use the typical word for preaching, or proclaiming, the need of repentance and faith? Why didn’t he make it

plain in this case Jesus was 'proclaiming condemnation?'

View 4

This position began with Robert Bellarmine in 1586 and has been common among Roman Catholic interpreters. The churches in the Anglican community reject the idea of Purgatory, so I will say nothing more in defense or detraction of this view.

View 5

This view, states Grudem, 'is probably the dominant view today...This view argues that certain Jewish traditions...about Enoch going and proclaiming a message of condemnation to disobedient angels, were well known to Peter's readers.' (Enoch used the word for spirit, *pneuma*, 37 times...twenty times to refer to angelic or demonic beings, seventeen times for human beings.) The recipients of this letter, the theory goes, would immediately have made this connection with angels when Peter wrote, "Christ went and preached to the spirits in prison." They interpret the phrase 'spirits who formerly disobeyed' to refer to the sin of angels who married human wives in Genesis 6.

(Reliable scholars disagree that 'sons of god' in Genesis 6:2 refers to angels.) The word, *pneuma*, in the Bible also refers to both human and angelic beings, so the context must determine which type of spirit the author means. Here, the spirits are 'those who disobeyed in the days of Noah...while God waited patiently during the building of an ark.' It seems we would be hard pressed to say with certainty these were angelic spirits. The fallen angels disobeyed long before the days of Noah. God never said he was sorry he made angels. The context is the impending destruction of the human race for its egregious sin against God.

Peter probably saw similarities in the circumstances of the Christians in Asia Minor to whom he was writing, and of believers in the time of Noah. They were a minority; they were under substantial persecution; and Peter wanted to encourage them to stand firm in their faith knowing God would deliver them just as he delivered Noah. He wrote to them that Christ had preached through Noah to the unbelievers surrounding him, just as Christ was preaching through them to unbelievers in Asia Minor in their day. The former unbelievers ignored Noah, and now they are spirits in hell awaiting the final judgement. The unbelievers persecuting them now will suffer the same fate unless they repent. He encouraged them to keep up their witness by doing what was right, even in the face of sometimes harsh suffering, because their future was absolutely safe in the hands of God, who cares for them.

Session 6

Serving God in His Church—1 Peter 4:1-11 and 5:1-14

Have you ever wondered why you:

- Boss people around the way you do?
- Let people walk all over you?
- Talk so much?
- Strive to make everything you do just a little bit better?

Without getting into a scholarly disputation whether we get our personality from inborn traits or environmental taints, let it suffice to say that God gave us certain temperaments and talents to use when He calls us into His church. Sometimes these “spiritual gifts” match those used in our jobs in the world, but often they do not. Here Peter divides them into two broad categories—speaking and serving. From three of St. Paul’s letters we can fill in more detail. Ministries of speaking include prophecy (proclaiming God’s word); teaching; evangelism; pastoring; and exhorting (making disciples). Service ministries include giving; showing mercy; leading; and ministering to the material needs of fellow Christians. The important thing is to discover what part you play and to do it with gusto for the purpose of making the church function smoothly.

Peter adds a special word to those who have been recognized as leaders—the bishops, the pastors, the overseers: “Shepherd the sheep of God,” he commands. And do it right! Don’t be lazy; don’t be greedy for gain; don’t lust for power. It’s easy for us all to cave in to those temptations, and those put in positions of authority and influence are, perhaps, even more susceptible.

To those being considered for such a position of prominence in the church he gives a stern warning: don’t take the job just because “somebody has to do it.” If you are not eager to “be an example to the flock,” serving in humility born out of love, turn it down. God will provide another solution. The first requirement of this job is to live a life worthy of imitation. That means making a clean break with things “the pagans like to do” (4:3).

For some it means finding a new group of friends, people who are not inclined to “whisky and women.” Yes, they will bad-mouth you if you leave them, but they will have to answer for their behavior one day.

All of us, says Peter, should subject ourselves to our leaders’ authority (5:5). Theirs is a hard lot. When we obey *them* it’s as if we are humbling ourselves under the hand of God and putting our worries into *his* lap. Such humility is a potent antidote to anxiety, “because to Him it matters concerning you” (5:7). The Devil won’t like it though, so be on your guard. He’s out there looking for someone to consume (5:8).

Quotes

“Show me your friends and I’ll show you your future.”—Rick Stanley, step-brother of Elvis

Presley, answering the question why Elvis's life ended up so badly. Though a devout Christian, Elvis surrounded himself with corrupt men.

“Please allow me to introduce myself. I'm a man of wealth and taste. I've been around for a long, long year. Stole many a man's soul and faith... Pleased to meet you, hope you guess my name.”—The Rolling Stones in “Sympathy for the Devil

“He will make the feeblest and filthiest of us into a god or goddess, a dazzling, radiant, immortal creature, pulsating all through with such energy and joy and wisdom and love as we cannot now imagine, a bright stainless mirror which reflects back to God perfectly...His own boundless power and delight and goodness. The process will be long and in parts very painful; but that is what we are in for.” C.S. Lewis in “Mere Christianity”

Questions

1. Do you know what your spiritual gift is? If not, ask your priest or pastor to help you discover it and get plugged into a ministry where you can use it. (Clue: what do you do that brings you real joy while doing it?)
2. Have some of the leaders in your church fallen into the sloth/greed/domination trap? Do you pray for them?
3. Are any of your acquaintances of the sort you need to dump?

Notes from Wayne Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*

- **Flesh** has two distinct meanings in 4:1. The first occurrence refers to Christ's taking our human nature (body, mind, soul, the complete package) on himself and becoming the God-man to suffer and die for us. The second refers to the suffering experienced in the Christian's life of self-denial. Flesh in this sense is the “old sin nature” in which we used to live with fallen instincts that caused us to live a life of self- satisfaction.
- **Ceased from sin** does not mean the Christian lives a life of sinless perfection. It does mean that sin no longer ‘rules’ us the way it did before we received the new birth. The flesh and the spirit are now at war in us, and sometimes we do the very things we do not want to do. Taken together these two terms can be paraphrased in this way: *for a Christian who has suffered for doing right has made a clear break with sin.*
- **The good news was preached to dead men** (4:6). Martin Luther commented, “this is a strange text.” No kidding, Martinus! Wayne Grudem was more helpful. He paraphrases verse 6 in this way: *For the gospel was preached to Christians who have died to save them from eternal judgement.* Some have tried to make the statement mean that the gospel was preached to people after they had died, giving them a “second chance” to repent and believe the gospel. If that is a viable option, why was Peter writing to encourage his readers to persevere in the hard path of obedience to God when facing persecution? Why not “eat, drink, and be merry” if you could be forgiven after you die?

- **Judged in the flesh as men** probably refers to the fact the gospel was not intended to save people from physical death. The “judgement” of death which came with the sin of Adam affects Christians and unbelievers alike. But just as Christ was resurrected from the dead, so also will those who belong to Him “live in the spirit” and be safe in the final judgement of the human race.

- **Love covers a multitude of sins** (4:8). Where love abounds in a fellowship of Christians many small offenses are readily overlooked and forgotten. But where love is lacking, every word is viewed with suspicion and conflicts abound.

- **Fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ** (5:1) seems a strange title for the Apostle to apply to himself. Perhaps he was recalling the fact that his witness of Jesus’ death was one of the most shameful events of his life. He denied three times that he knew the Lord. After the resurrection his relationship with Jesus was made secure again, and he wants to show the elders in the churches no sin, no matter how grievous, is beyond the reach of God’s mercy and forgiveness. In this way he is encouraging the elders to admit it when they’ve wrong doing and to ask for forgiveness rather than hanging on to a hardheaded pride.

Session 7

The Origin of the Bible—2 Peter 1

When I was 15 my dad took me on my first duck hunt. We nearly froze, and when the day was over we had in our bag a grand total of one duck, which I had shot as it swam into our decoys. My excitement at bagging my first duck was diminished, however, by the fact my father could not tell just what kind of duck it was. I worried about it all the way home.

Fortunately, my daddy had “people” he could call on to get information. Louie was the neighborhood butcher at the Big Star, just down Highway 51 from Elvis’s house, Graceland. He was also the local duck god. He greeted us with his huge, Italian smile as we approached the counter with my trophy, which he promptly named “Goldeneye.” He admitted it was rare to see one this far south. Today on my computer I went to Wikipedia and found a lot of information about the goldeneye and a really good photograph to boot. I could have gone to Google or several other competing internet sites and gotten equally good information.

In the realm of religious information there are, likewise, many competing ‘vendors’, each putting their own special spin on spiritual matters. Near the end of his life the apostle Peter noticed some of the teachers in the churches were giving out information that contradicted what Jesus had taught when He was with them. One group was saying, “Come on and party with us. That stuff the apostles told you about Jesus coming back to judge the world didn’t happen and it’s not going to. They said that just to scare you into behaving the way they wanted you to after they’re dead and gone.”

So Peter wrote this second letter to set the record straight for them and for us. The prophecies in the Bible, he says, are not fairy tales hatched in the imaginations of poets smoking opium. No, prophecy came when God the Holy Spirit sent dreams and visions to men, along with explanations and interpretations. The prophets simply wrote down what they heard and saw.

Peter assures his readers of the reliability of the Old Testament prophecies by recalling one he saw with his own eyes. Paraphrasing Matthew’s account of the event, Peter said, “Jesus took James, John and me high up on a mountain top. All of a sudden he was changed; his face and clothes were bright as the sun. Then a voice came out of the clouds saying, ‘This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased; listen to him.’”

What the three apostles saw and heard fulfilled what Israel’s King David had written 1000 years earlier in Psalm 2: *“I have installed My King upon Zion, the hill of My holiness; you are My son, today I have begotten you. Ask of Me and I will give you the nations for your inheritance...you shall break them with a rod of iron; you shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.”*

Peter encourages them (and us) to rely on the Holy Scripture, the only written revelation of God, to grow in the knowledge of Jesus and his work. Build on the faith God gave you, he counsels, by adding good character; spiritual understanding; alert discipline; passionate patience; reverent wonder; warm friendliness; and generous love. If you see these qualities increasing in your life you can be confident God chose you and brought you into his family. Doing these things now

will give you the assurance you will see Jesus face to face in His kingdom when your life on earth is finished.

Quotes

“[The account of the Transfiguration] established that the apostles were assured by God that their Gospel was God’s Word. And here it is also shown that the Gospel is nothing else than a sermon about Christ.”—Martin Luther in his commentary on 2 Peter 1:16-18

“When the ‘truth’ is found to be lies and all the joy within you dies...Don't you want somebody to love? Don't you need somebody to love? Wouldn't you love somebody to love? You better find somebody to love.”—Jefferson Airplane in “Somebody to Love”

“Every scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”—2 Timothy 3:16

“If any man...or an angel from heaven... should preach to you a gospel contrary to that we have preached to you, let him be accursed.”—Galatians 1:8-9

“Now the Bereans... received the word with great eagerness, daily searching the Scriptures to see if what Paul said was true.”—Acts 17:11

Questions

1. Where do you get most of your spiritual information? How can you tell if it’s trustworthy and reliable?
2. If you discover the traditions of your church and its leaders are in conflict with the Bible (the Old and New Testaments) which takes priority in your mind?
3. If modern science states as a fact something that contradicts the Bible, which do you usually believe?

Notes from Richard J. Bauckham in Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 50, 2 Peter, Jude, and the New Geneva Study Bible (1995)

• **partakers of the divine nature** (1:4). Believers are not absorbed into deity, nor do they become divine. Rather, they have received the Holy Spirit and are sons of God (John 1:12 & Romans 8:9-21). As such they are being conformed to the likeness of Christ (Romans 8:29) and the image of God in them is being renewed in true righteousness.

• **make your calling and election sure** (1:10). While God’s choice of the elect is firm and certain in God (2 Timothy 2:19), it is not always obvious to the individual Christian. Assurance of God’s call comes through the evidence of the Holy Spirit’s work in our lives (1 John 3:10, 14) as well as through the internal testimony of the Spirit in our hearts (Galatians 4:6).

• **the power and coming of...Christ** (1:16). The Greek word translated ‘coming’ is *parousia*, the usual New Testament term for Christ’s Second Coming in glory.

• **eyewitnesses of His majesty.** Peter was present at Christ's transfiguration (Matthew 17: 1-8) The apostles understood the Transfiguration to have been a brief anticipation of the divine glory with which Christ will return to earth (Matthew 16:27--17:8).

• **we have the prophetic word confirmed** (1:19). As translated this means the Transfiguration confirms the truth of prophecy, making it certain the future Second Coming will occur.

Session 8

The Certainty of Judgment—2 Peter 2

Some of the teachers in your churches are leading you astray. They are telling you God is a god of love who will not punish anyone forever. I wish you could talk to Noah, or to Abraham's nephew, Lot. They were eyewitnesses to the destruction of people who ignored God's warning to swallow their pride and follow Him. (But you can read it yourself in the Scripture. If you don't believe the sacred writing, talking with the dead won't convince you.)

Think about it: if God destroyed the whole town of Sodom for their sexual misconduct; if he drowned the whole human race (minus eight) because their thoughts were all evil all the time; if he kicked out of heaven the angels who despised His authority; and he put them all together in a miserable dungeon in chains waiting for their trial...then He will certainly do right when He pronounces punishment at the end of Time. These teachers will suffer the same fate as those already in chains, because they are duplicating their behavior: they will not submit to authority, and they party day and night. They are reveling like the Israelites dancing around the golden calf. Remember, God destroyed *them* with the sword.

Do not be deceived. You will find no water for your thirsty souls in these dry wells. They are as disappointing as clouds without rain in a drought. These teachers are so arrogant they even mock the devil. They don't realize they're his slaves! What good is a promise of freedom coming from a slave?

Their knowledge of Jesus Christ is purely intellectual, the sort of stuff you might learn in a college class on Christian ethics. It just goes to show that a religious profession does not change a person's heart. You can put lipstick on a pig, but it's still a pig!

Quotes

"Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."—St. Paul's sermon on Mars Hill in Acts 17: 30-31

"The men of Nineveh shall stand up...at the judgement and condemn this generation, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah...and the Queen of the South shall rise up...at the judgement and condemn this generation, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon."—Jesus rebuking the Pharisees for their insistence on seeing a sign from Him in Matthew 12:41-42

"For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under the law but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be!"—Romans 6: 14-15

"They went out from us, but they were not of us; if they had been of us, they would have continued with us."—1 John 2:19

Questions

1. St. Paul teaches in Romans 6:14 that those of us who confess Christ as Lord are no longer under the law of God. Does that mean we can do anything we feel like doing?
2. Do you believe 'once saved always saved?' How do you reconcile that belief with verses 20-22? (Hint: read John 10: 25-30)
3. Does the return of Jesus as Judge disturb your image of Him as "gentle Jesus meek and mild"?
4. Does God have other attributes than love? What are some of them?

Notes from Richard J. Bauckham in Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 50, 2 Peter, Jude

- **destructive heresies** (2:1). One of the author's favorite words in this letter, Greek *apoleias*, it consistently refers to destruction at the end time judgement.
- **sensuality; dissolute practices; or shameful ways** (2:2). Probably refers to sexual immorality. By flouting Christ's authority as Master of his slaves, who should obey him, the false teachers will bring destruction at the final judgement on themselves and on those who follow their ways.
- **the way of truth**. Christianity not as a body of doctrine but as a way of life; its religious message takes effect in an ethical life style. These teachers were giving Christianity a bad name by their blatant disregard for the moral mandate of their belief system.
- **angels who sinned** (2:4) refers to evil angels who sinned before the Fall of humanity in Genesis 3. Jesus said of them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning out of heaven." A few commentators believe it refers to angels who married human women in Genesis 6, which says, "sons of God saw the daughters of men...were beautiful...and took wives for themselves." Jesus' statement that angels neither marry nor are given in marriage makes this interpretation less likely.
- **keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgement** (2:9). The most natural reading of the Greek suggests a preliminary punishment going on now for the departed spirits of the unjust prior to the final judgement at the end of the world. Some commentators translate it as the punishment meted out at the last judgement, which would more naturally fit Peter's purpose here. He aims to show God has given a foreshadowing of the final judgement in the destruction of the world in Noah's day; and in the fiery destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah; He will just as certainly punish these false teachers and their followers.
- **the Lord knows how to deliver the godly**. God did not destroy the godly along with the ungodly in the examples just given. He rescued Noah and Lot, and He will also rescue us who persist in living and proclaiming righteousness. We will be delivered from this present world where the ungodly flourish and taken into a new world where righteousness dwells.
- **those who barely escape**. This phrase, in 2:18, is reminiscent of Jesus statement in Matthew

24: 24—“For false prophets will rise and...deceive, if possible, even the elect.” Though they try they will not succeed, because God will keep the elect secure in His love. (See Romans 8: 31-39)

Session 9

The End of Time, and the Beginning of Eternity—2 Peter 3

My first pastor-teacher was preaching on this passage during the Cold War and I heard him read the words from 3:10: “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.” Then he added, “sounds like a thermonuclear reaction to me!” It really does, doesn’t it?

A lot of people today discount the doctrine of the Last Day. Eschatology, the study of last things, has always been an important part of historical Christianity, however, and Jesus himself had a lot to say about it. He promised to return, and the promise was confirmed by two angels who appeared as the disciples were gazing intently into heaven at the ascension of the resurrected Jesus (Acts 1:11).

The apostle Peter thought the subject was so important he wrote a second letter to the churches in Asia Minor (modern day Turkey) to clear up some confusion generated by what he called “false teachers.” They were convincing some Christians it was okay to “cut loose” from the sexual restraints imposed by the apostles’ teaching. Life goes on, they were saying, and ideas about morality change with the times.

Peter presses them to remember what the apostles and prophets taught them. It does matter how you live. The world went through this once before, when God sent a flood to destroy the whole human race minus eight. A day is coming when He will destroy everything with fire.

So what do we do with our lives since everything is going to burn up? First, Peter does not advocate the “Pink Floyd” approach of “hanging on in quiet desperation.” That’s out! He counsels us to be patient, knowing the Lord is working out His secret plan of salvation. The new heaven and new earth will thrill and delight us. He gave the apostle John a glimpse of our future, and he wrote it down in the last book of the Bible: “I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband” (Revelation 21: 2). A new bride waits for the walk down the aisle in eager anticipation. We are the Bride of Christ. He will come back for us when He brings the old order to an end.

Quotes

“Then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and much glory; and he will send his angels and they will gather together his elect from the four winds.” –Jesus Christ describing his return at the end of Time in Matthew 24:30-31

“Purple haze all in my eyes. Don't know if it's day or night. You got me blowin', blowin' my mind. Is it tomorrow, or just the end of time? Help me...Oh, no, oh...oh, help me!”—Jimi Hendrix in “Purple Haze”

“The sun is the same in a relative way but you’re older; shorter of breath and one day closer to death. Hanging on in quiet desperation is the English way.”—Pink Floyd in “Time”

“God...will give relief to you who are afflicted...when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, giving full vengeance to those who do not...obey His gospel.”—1 Thessalonians 1:7-8

“Satan directly attacks the throat of the church when he destroys faith in the return of Christ. If this is taken away nothing is left of the Gospel.”—John Calvin in his commentary on 2 Peter

“The number of those who do not believe that the Last Day will come has always been rather large.”—Martin Luther in his 1523 Sermons on 2nd Peter

Questions

1. What are the names of the three Jewish men the King of Babylon (present day Baghdad) put in the furnace? (Daniel 3)
2. Name two Old Testament events that foreshadowed the destruction Peter says will come at the end of Time.
3. True or False: As a member of the human race, I have certain duties toward God.
4. When you are feeling really depressed, does losing sight of “the big picture” contribute to the feeling of hopelessness?

Notes from Richard J. Bauckham in *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 50, *2 Peter, Jude*

• **mockers and jesters will come in the last of the days** (3:3). Risking everything, they will live as they please. They will ridicule anyone who actually expects Jesus to physically come back to earth. Jesus said the same thing happened when Noah was building the ark (Matthew 24:37).

• **since the fathers fell asleep** (3:4). Fathers probably refers to the apostles of Christ. Jesus made several statements, recorded in the Gospels, which people interpreted to mean He would return to judge the world before these first disciples passed away. When they died and He didn’t come back, it led skeptics to scoff. They reasoned that nature was stable, going on the way it always had, and the destruction of the world was just incredible. Their underlying assumption, though, was that God does not intervene in human history. Peter counters their skepticism with historical fact: God destroyed the world in a flood once when things had gotten really bad.

• **a day of judgement and destruction of the impious men** (3:7). Describes what awaits those people who, during their lives on earth, did not show reverential respect to the God that created them by performing the duties mankind owes to Him.

• **one day with the Lord is as a thousand years** (3:8). Because the kingdom of God is eternal everything appears to Him at once. He is not bound and tyrannized by time as we are. The return

of Jesus seems too long to us because we weary ourselves by counting minutes, hours, and days.

- **the Lord is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish** (3:9). Peter is reminding these Christians that some of them need to have second thoughts about flocking around the false teachers and being herded into the immorality they're promoting. Perhaps he was remembering Lot's wife (see note on v. 10 below), who fleeing the burning cities was turned into a pillar of salt when she looked back. It seems she had left her heart there (Genesis 19:26).

- **the earth and its works will be burned up** (3:10). As a foreshadowing of the cataclysm coming at the end of Time, God destroyed the ancient cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Just as He spared Lot and his daughters from that conflagration, so also will those who belong to Jesus be unharmed by the intense heat that will destroy the present heaven and earth. St. Augustine wrote in the fourth century, "When we have become immortal and incorruptible, we shall not greatly dread the blaze...just as the three Israelites were able to live unhurt in the blazing furnace" (of King Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 3).

- **we are looking for new heavens and a new earth** (3:13). The Christian's hope and consolation is God's promise to make all things new, to make everything right, to take us to be with Him where He will wipe away every tear from our eyes. There we will find no death; no mourning; no crying; no pain.

- **be found by Him in peace** (3:14). John Calvin wrote, "This peace is the quietness of a soul at ease which rests on the Word of God." His promise is sure, and we are secure in His love. Though many afflictions trouble and torment us during our time on earth, when He comes back to be with us we will quickly forget them all.

Appendix 1

1 Peter: The Author

Introduction

Before looking at the authorship of 1 Peter, below is a helpful summary on the Apostle Peter. In the four lists of the twelve apostles in the New Testament (Matt. 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:13-16; Acts 1:13), Peter is always mentioned first. "Peter's original name was apparently the Hebrew Simeon (Acts 15:14; 2 Pet. 1:1): perhaps, like many Jews, he adopted also "Simon", usual in the NT, as a Greek name of similar sound. His father's name was Jonah (Mt. 16:17); he himself was married (Mk. 1:30), and in his missionary days his wife accompanied him (1 Cor. 9:5). The fourth Gospel gives Bethsaida, just inside Gaulanitis, and a largely Greek city, as his place of origin (John 1:44), but he had also a home in Capernaum in Galilee (Mark 1:21ff.). Both places were at the lakeside, where he worked as a fisherman, and in both there would be abundant contact with Gentiles. His brother's name is Greek. Simon spoke Aramaic with a strong N-country accent (Mark 14:70), and maintained the piety and outlook of his people (cf. Acts 10:14), though not trained in the law (Acts 4:13; literacy is not in question). It is likely that he was affected by John the Baptist's movement (cf. Acts 1:22): his brother Andrew was a disciple of John (John 1:39f.).

Peter's Call

The Fourth Gospel describes a period of Christ's activity before the commencement of the Galilean ministry, and to this may be referred Peter's first introduction to him, by Andrew's agency (John 1:41). This makes the response to the subsequent call by the lakeside (Mark 1:16f.) more intelligible. The call to the intimate band of the Twelve followed (Mark 3:16ff.). It was as a disciple that Simon received his new title, the Aramaic Kepha ("Cephas"), "rock" or "stone" (1 Cor. 1:12; 15:5; Gal. 2:9), usually appearing in NT in the Gk. form Petros. According to John 1:42, Jesus conferred this title (not known as a personal name previously) at their first encounter. John's usual designation is "Simon Peter". Mark calls him Simon up to 3:16, and Peter almost invariably thereafter. There is nothing in any case to suggest that the solemn words of Matthew 16:18 represented the first bestowal of the name.

Peter in the ministry of Jesus

Peter was one of the first disciples called; he always stands first in the lists of disciples; he was also one of the three who formed an inner circle round the Master (Mk. 5:37; 9:2; 14:33; cf. 13:3). His impulsive devotion is frequently portrayed (cf. Mt. 14:28; Mk. 14:29; Lk. 5:8; Jn. 21:7), and he acts as spokesman of the Twelve (Mt. 15:15; 18:21; Mk. 1:36f.; 8:29; 9:5; 10:28; 11:21; 14:29ff.; Lk. 5:5; 12:41). At the crisis near Caesarea Philippi he is the representative of the whole band: for the question is directed to them all (Mk. 8:27, 29), and all are included in the look that accompanies the subsequent reprimand (8:33).

On any satisfactory interpretation of Mk. 9:1 the transfiguration is intimately related to the apostolic confession which precedes it. The experience made a lasting impression on Peter: 1

Pet. 5:1; 2 Pet. 1:16ff. are most naturally interpreted of the transfiguration, and, for what they are worth, the Apocalypse and Acts of Peter show that their authors associated the preaching of this subject with Peter.

In a measure, the disastrous boast of Mark 14:29ff. is also representative of the disciples; and, as Peter's protestations of loyalty are the loudest, so his rejection of the Lord is the most explicit (Mk. 14:66ff.). He is, however, specially marked out by the message of the resurrection (Mk. 16:7), and personally receives a visitation of the risen Lord (Lk. 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5).

The commission of Peter

Mt. 16:18ff. is one of the most discussed passages of the NT. Rejection of the genuineness of the saying is arbitrary, and generally based on dogmatic assumptions (sometimes the assumption that Jesus never meant to found the church). Others have argued that the saying is genuine but displaced. Stauffer would see it as a resurrection commission, like Jn. 21:15; Cullmann would set it in a passion context, like Lk. 22:31f. Such reconstructions hardly do justice to the distinctiveness of Mt. 16:18ff. It is a benediction and a promise: the other passages are commands. We need not undervalue Mark's vivid account of the Caesarea Philippi incident, which concentrates attention on the disciples' failure to understand the nature of the Messiahship they have just confessed, to acknowledge that the 'rock' saying belongs to the occasion of the confession.

There is still no unanimity in interpreting the passage. The suggestion that 'rock' is simply a misunderstanding of a vocative 'Peter' in the underlying Aramaic (SB, 1, p. 732) is too facile: the passage has obviously something to do with the significance of Peter's name, which various Gospel sources show as having been solemnly bestowed by Jesus. From early times two main interpretations have been held, with many variants.

1. That the rock is substantially what Peter has said: either Peter's faith or the confession of the Messiahship of Jesus. This is a very early interpretation (cf. Origen, in loc., "Rock means every disciple of Christ"). It has the great merit of taking seriously the Matthean context, and emphasizing, as Mk. 8 does in a different way, the immense significance of the Caesarea Philippi confession. In historical perspective we should probably see the rock as, not simply faith in Christ, but the apostolic confession of Christ, spoken of elsewhere as the foundation of the church (cf. Eph. 2:20). The "rock" saying touches the core of the apostolic function, and Peter, first among the apostles, has a name that proclaims it. That his own faith and understanding are as yet anything but exemplary is irrelevant: the church is to be built on the confession of the apostles.

2. That the rock is Peter himself. This is found almost as early as the other, for Tertullian and the bishop, whether Roman or Carthaginian, against whom he thundered in *De Pudicitia*, assume this, though with different inferences. Its strength lies in the fact that Mt. 16:19 is in the singular, and must be addressed directly to Peter even if, like Origen, we go on to say that to have Peter's faith and virtues is to have Peter's keys. Comparison might also be made with the Midrash on Is. 51:1. When God looked on Abraham who was to appear, he said, "Behold, I have found a rock on which I can build and base the world. Therefore he called Abraham a rock" (SB, 1, p. 733).

Many Protestant interpreters, including notably Cullmann, take the latter view; but it is perhaps significant that he cuts the saying from the Matthean setting. To read it where Matthew places it is surer than to treat it as an isolated logion.

It must be stressed, however, that the exegesis of this point has nothing to do with the claims for the primacy of the Roman Church or its bishop with which it has through historical circumstances become involved. Even if it could be shown that Roman bishops are in any meaningful sense the successors of Peter (which it cannot), the passage does not allow for the transfer of its provisions to any successors whatever. It refers to the foundation of the church, which cannot be repeated.

The words that follow about the keys of the kingdom should be contrasted with Mt. 23:13. The Pharisees, for all their missionary propaganda, shut up the kingdom: Peter, recognizing the Son who is over the house and who holds the keys (cf. Rev. 1:18; 3:7; 21:25), finds them delivered to him (cf. Is. 22:22) to open the kingdom. The “binding and loosing,” a phrase for which there are illuminating rabbinic parallels, is here addressed to Peter, but elsewhere is assigned to all the apostles (cf. Mt. 18:18). “The apostle would, in the coming Kingdom, be like a great scribe or Rabbi, who would deliver decisions on the basis, not of the Jewish law, but of the teaching of Jesus which ‘fulfilled’ it”.

But that here and elsewhere a primacy among the apostles is ascribed to Peter is not in doubt. Lk. 22:31ff. shows the strategic position of Peter as seen by both the Lord and the devil and, in full knowledge of the approaching desertion, marks out his future pastoral function. The risen Lord reinforces this commission (Jn. 21:15ff.), and it is the Fourth Gospel, which demonstrates the peculiar relationship of the apostle John to Christ, that records it.

Peter in the apostolic church

The Acts shows the commission in exercise. Before Pentecost it is Peter who takes the lead in the community (Acts 1:15ff.); afterwards, he is the principal preacher (2:14ff.; 3:12ff.) the spokesman before the Jewish authorities (4:8ff.), the president in the administration of discipline (5:3ff.). Though the church as a whole made a deep impression on the community, it was to Peter in particular that supernatural powers were attributed (5:15). In Samaria, the church’s first mission field, the same leadership is exercised (8:14ff.).

Significantly also, he is the first apostle to be associated with the Gentile mission, and that by unmistakably providential means (10:1ff.; cf. 15:7ff.). This immediately brings criticism upon him (11:2ff.); and not for the last time. Gal. 2:11ff. gives us a glimpse of Peter at Antioch, the first church with a significant ex-pagan element, sharing table-fellowship with the Gentile converts, and then meeting a barrage of Jewish-Christian opposition, in the face of which he withdraws. This defection was roundly denounced by Paul; but there is no hint of any theological difference between them, and Paul’s complaint is rather the incompatibility of Peter’s practice with his theory. The old theory, of persistent rivalry between Paul and Peter, has little basis in the documents.

Despite this lapse, the Gentile mission had no truer friend than Peter. Paul’s gospel and his had the same content, though a somewhat different expression: the Petrine speeches in Acts, Mark’s

Gospel and 1 Peter have the same theology of the cross, rooted in the concept of Christ as the suffering Servant. He was ready with the right hand of fellowship, recognizing his mission to Jews and Paul's to Gentiles as part of the same ministry (Gal. 2:7ff.); and at the Jerusalem Council is recorded as the first to urge the full acceptance of the Gentiles on faith alone (Acts 15:7ff.).

Peter's career after the death of Stephen is hard to trace. The references to him in Joppa, Caesarea and elsewhere suggest that he undertook missionary work in Palestine (James no doubt now assuming leadership in Jerusalem). He was imprisoned in Jerusalem, and on his miraculous escape he left for 'another place' (Acts 12:17). Attempts to identify this place are fruitless. We know that he went to Antioch (Gal. 2:11ff.); he may have gone to Corinth, though probably not for long (1 Cor. 1:12). He is closely associated with Christians in N Asia Minor (1 Pet. 1:1), and possibly the prohibition on Paul's entry into Bithynia (Acts 16:7) was due to the fact that Peter was at work there.

Peter's residence in Rome has been disputed, but on insufficient grounds. 1 Peter was almost certainly written from there (1 Pet. 5:13). That book shows signs of being written just before or during the Neronian persecution, and 1 Clement 5 implies that, like Paul, he died in this outburst."¹ Concerning the death of Peter, Jobes writes: "There is virtual unanimity that the apostle Peter died in Rome in the mid-60s during the reign of Emperor Nero."²

Who wrote 1 Peter?

"The writer says he is 'Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ' (1:1), and was a 'witness of Christ's suffering' (5:1). He is writing with the help of Silas (Silvanus) from a place he calls 'Babylon', where his 'son' Mark is with him (5:12–13). As well as this direct evidence that Peter the apostle was the author, the letter frequently alludes to the life and teaching of Jesus. The verdict of F. H. Chase is that 'No Epistle has caught so much of the spirit of Jesus.'

Many early authors referred to the letter and quoted from it, but in recent years five main reasons have been put forward for suggesting that the apostle Peter was not in fact the author. First, Peter is described in Acts 4:13 as 'unschooled', and the style of Greek in which the letter is written is said to be too good for a Galilean fisherman to have used. Also, quotations are taken from the Septuagint (LXX), the Greek rather than the Hebrew version of the OT.

The style is, however, not so 'educated' as some would like to make out and in places it is much more the language of ordinary people. There is evidence that in Peter's time Greek, as well as Aramaic, was spoken in Galilee, and as a fisherman living in Capernaum on one of the great trade routes he would have had to speak Greek regularly. The fact that his own brother's name, Andrew, is a Greek one suggests that from boyhood Peter would have grown up with this language. Some thirty years' work of evangelism and teaching in a church that contained an increasing proportion of Gentiles would have made him more fluent in Greek and prepared to quote the LXX as his 'Authorized Version'. It is not certain, but Silvanus (5:12) may have acted as Peter's amanuensis (i.e. composing the letter from thoughts Peter shared with him). If he did,

¹ D. R. W. Wood, "Peter" in *New Bible Dictionary*. Ed. I. Howard Marshall, 3rd ed. (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 905.

² Karen Jobes, *1 Peter* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 8.

then his background as a Roman citizen (Acts 16:37) of some breeding could well have affected the style and language.

Secondly, from the language of 4:14–16 some have built a case to suggest that the letter was written at a time when the very fact of being a Christian was a crime, and this is known not to have been the case until long after Peter's death.

Peter's argument in chapters 2–4 is, however, that Christians must take care to live an innocent life, so that, if they are falsely accused, such slanders will be without foundation. The book of Acts (e.g. 13:50; 14:5, 19; 16:19–24; 17:5, 13; 18:12–13; 19:23–29) shows that from the earliest days misunderstanding, personal prejudices and rejection of the gospel could lead to persecution 'because of the name of Christ.' 4:14–16 need have no further legal implications than similar phrases in Mt. 10:22 and Acts 5:41. In fact, what Peter says about the role of the state in 2:13–14 suggests that he did not expect persecution from that quarter. The relationship between the church and the authorities indicated in the letter is basically the same as in Acts.

Thirdly, some object because the letter contains ideas found in Paul's writings especially in his letter to the Ephesians.

This argument is only valid if the theory is accepted that the two apostles disagreed and were never finally reconciled. The basic teaching in the early church was fairly standard, and it would have been strange had there been no similarities. If we accept that Peter and Paul may have been together in Rome (see below on where the letter was written) just before the letter was written they would doubtless have talked over many of the issues considered in it (see also Gal. 1:18). Fourthly, according to Gal. 2:9 Peter and Paul agreed to work in different spheres, and yet the destination of 1 Peter is thought to be an area evangelized by Paul.

The arrangement referred to in Galatians was made at least ten years before the letter was written and in the interval the distinction between Jewish and Gentile churches would have become less clear. 1:12 suggests that Peter had not brought the gospel to his readers, but Acts 16:6–7 suggests that Paul had not visited all of them either.

Finally, some say that this letter does not contain the sort of personal references to Jesus one would expect from a writer who knew him as well as Peter did... The majority of the evidence, both external and internal, would appear to support the traditional view that Peter the apostle wrote this letter."³

³ Peter Achtemeier, *1 Peter* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 35-6.

Appendix 2

1 Peter: The Audience

Peter wrote his epistle to Christians scattered throughout the region of Asia Minor, that is, modern-day Turkey (cf. 1 Peter 1:1-2). “The letter of 1 Peter is addressed to Christians residing in Pontus, Cappadocia, Galatia, Asia, and Bithynia, a vast area of approximately 129,000 square miles... (As a comparison, the state of California covers about 159,000 square miles.)”⁴

Jobes writes: “The picture that emerges of the regions to which Peter wrote is one of a vast geographical area with small cities few and far between, of a diversified population of indigenous peoples, Greek settlers, and Roman colonists. The residents practiced many religions, spoke several languages, and were never really assimilated into the Greco-Roman culture... And yet this untamed region became the cradle of Christianity... To this remote and undeveloped region, the apostle Peter writes his letter to Christians whom he addresses as ‘visiting foreigners and resident aliens’ (1:1; 2:11), scattered across the vast reaches of Asia Minor. We may surmise that, in no small part because of this letter and the faithfulness of those who received it, well-established churches flourished in all five of these regions by AD 180. Their bishops attended the great councils of the second through the fourth centuries, where the doctrines were forged that Christians hold dear yet today.”⁵

Where and when was the letter written?

“In 5:13 the writer sends greetings from ‘she who is in Babylon, chosen together with you’. This seems like a reference to the local church in Babylon, but it is unlikely that Peter would have gone to the former capital of Nebuchadnezzar’s empire. By Peter’s time it was a sparsely inhabited ruin (fulfilling Is. 14:23). In Rev. 16:19 and 17:5 ‘Babylon’ is used as a cryptic name for Rome, and Col. 4:10 and Phm. 24 (most likely written in Rome) show that Mark was there with Paul.

In 2 Tim. 4:11, Mark is in Asia Minor, and Paul sends for him to come, most probably to Rome. The fact that neither Peter nor Paul mentions the other in the list of those sending greetings from Rome merely suggests that they were not together at the time of writing their letters. All this points to the theory that Peter was writing from Rome, which is supported by the evidence of Tertullian (*Against Heresies*, 36) and Eusebius (*Ecclesiastical History*, 2.25.8; 2.15.2 and 3.1.2–3).

In view of what was said above about Christians being persecuted, a date in the reign of Nero (AD 54–68) would seem best. Since Peter makes no reference to Paul’s martyrdom, which is thought to have taken place during the out-burst of persecution in Rome in 64, the letter was probably written before then (see also 2:13). Links with other writings are thought to suggest a date after 60. So far as we can draw any conclusions from the evidence, the letter was probably written c. 63–64.

⁴ Karen Jobes, *1 Peter* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 19.

⁵ Karen Jobes, *1 Peter* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 22-3.

To whom was the letter written?

Peter answers the question in 1:1. The region described was in the Roman provinces in Asia Minor (modern Turkey) north of the Taurus mountains. It is difficult to be precise as the place-names can refer to both ancient kingdoms and contemporary Roman provinces, and the two did not always have the same boundaries.

The social status of the recipients probably reflected that of most of the churches of the day, as a cross-section of the community. There were husbands and wives (3:1, 7), slaves (2:18—but no reference to masters as in Eph. 6:5–9; Col. 3:22–4:1), younger men (5:5) and an eldership giving pastoral care (5:1–4). Some of the women appear to have been able to afford a comfortable lifestyle (3:3). The description of the readers' pre-Christian manner of life (4:3–4) suggests that some of them might have been involved in the local pagan trade-guilds. Peter calls them 'strangers in the world' (1:1 cf. 1:17; 2:11) and this technical term has led John H. Elliott in *A Home for the Homeless*, to develop the theory that they were 'resident aliens'. But the case is far from proven and the wording could be being used figuratively to reflect the way in which their Christian life-style had distanced them from their pagan neighbors. It also picks up the OT language of David and Solomon as they saw their life on this earth in the light of eternity (see Ps. 39:12 and 1 Ch. 29:15).

The religious background of the original readers appears to have been both Jewish and Gentile. We know from Acts 2:9 that there were Jewish visitors from Asia Minor in Jerusalem for Pentecost, and those among them who were converted at that time would have taken the gospel message back with them. Converts at Pisidian Antioch and Iconium came from the synagogue (Acts 13:43; 14:1), and Luke specifically mentions in the latter case that the church was formed both of Jews and Gentiles. So Peter's writing reflects such a mixed gathering of believers. He uses the OT to prove his points (1:24–25; 2:6, 7–8, 22–24; 3:10–12; 4:18; 5:5) and makes other allusions that would be meaningful to Jewish readers (e.g. in 1:1 'scattered' [Gk. diaspora] is the technical term for the Jewish community outside Israel; see also 2:4–10 and 3:20). Other comments he makes would be more relevant to Gentile readers (e.g. 1:18, 'the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers'; 2:10, 'Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God'; 4:3, 'you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans[Gentiles] choose to do').

Whether his readers were Jewish or Gentile Christians, Peter is keen to encourage them to believe that they are the 'new Israel'. In the Christian church they inherit all that God promised his chosen people in the OT (see 1:1; 2:5, 9–10)."⁶

Were the majority of the original recipients of 1 Peter of Jewish or Gentile origin?

While the modern consensus is Gentile, "most ancient exegetes except Augustine and Jerome understood the recipients of the letter to be converts from Judaism."⁷ (For an extended treatment on the socio-historical background of the letter's recipients see Jobes, pp. 28–41). In summary, Jobes argues for what she calls the "colonization theory" which can be summarized as follows: "Peter, apostle of Jesus Christ, was addressing Christians who had been converted elsewhere,

⁶ David Wheaton, "1 Peter" in *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*, Ed. D. A. Carson, 4th ed. (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994).

⁷ Karen Jobes, *1 Peter* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 23.

with whom he shares an association with Rome, and he writes to encourage them in their Christian commitment when they find themselves scattered across a desolate and pagan Asia Minor. How should they live in such a place? How should they treat each other? How will their faith survive?... The perception of Christians as foreigners both in Rome and in their new location yields its power to the truth that Christians are foreigners and resident aliens anywhere in a world that is hostile to the gospel of Jesus Christ.”⁸

A Suffering Audience

The original audience of 1 Peter was a suffering audience. What was the nature of this suffering? Jobes writes: “Virtually all commentators understand the persecutions referred to in 1 Peter to be sporadic, personal, and unorganized social ostracism of Christians with varying intensity, probably reinforced at the local level by the increasing suspicions of Roman officials at all levels.”⁹

Achtemeier agrees that the persecution in 1 Peter is “due more to unofficial harassment than to official policy, more local than regional, and more at the initiation of the general populace as the result of a reaction against the lifestyle of the Christians than at the initiation of Roman officials because of some general policy of seeking out and punishing Christians. That does not rule out the possibility that persecutions occurred over large areas of the empire; they surely did, but they were spasmodic and broke out at different times in different places, the result of the flare-up of local hatreds rather than because Roman officials were engaged in the regular discharge of official policy.”¹⁰

D. A. Carson explains exactly what kind of unjust suffering is being referred to in 1 Peter. Carson points to the specific times suffering is referred to in the epistle: “In 1:6, Peter refers simply to ‘all kinds of trials.’ We learn much more from 3:13-17, which mentions suffering in general (vv. 14, 17) but also refers specifically to people who ‘speak maliciously’ against the believers (v. 16; cf. also 4:5). Finally, in 4:12-19, Peter labels the suffering his readers are undergoing a ‘fiery ordeal’ (v. 12), speaks of their sharing in the sufferings of Christ (v. 13), and suggests that they are suffering because they bear the name ‘Christian’ (vv. 14 and 16)... The evidence from 1 Peter itself does not point to an official [Roman] persecution. What is implied, rather, is the hostility Christians were known to have faced from the general Roman population. By refusing to engage in the quasi-religious customs surrounding the official Roman governmental structures, by resolutely setting themselves against some of the immoral practices prevalent at the time, and by meeting so often on their own to celebrate the Lord’s Supper, Christians were regarded with suspicion and hostility. The readers of 1 Peter were probably being criticized, mocked, discriminated against, and perhaps even brought into court on trumped-up charges. This situation fully explains the references to suffering in 1 Peter.”¹¹

⁸ Karen Jobes, *1 Peter* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 41.

⁹ Karen Jobes, *1 Peter* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 9.

¹⁰ Peter Achtemeier, *1 Peter* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 35-6.

¹¹ D.A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2nd Ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 638-9.

Appendix 3

1 Peter: Text and Theology

The Purpose of 1 Peter

1 Peter 5:12 sheds light on the overall purpose of the epistle. Jobes writes: “As with all NT epistles, the purpose for which 1 Peter was written must be inferred from the text itself. Fortunately, the letter states a reason for its existence, at least in general terms. Peter concludes his letter: ‘This is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it!’ (5:12). Peter is concerned to present the nature of God’s true grace as it relates to the experience of his original readers, and is eager to see them standing fast in it. Peter’s stated concern implies that the situation of his readers was causing them doubt or confusion about God’s work and presence in their lives and that the temptation to abandon, or at least waver in, the Christian faith was a real and present possibility.”¹²

Jobes continues: “Therefore, the teaching of 1 Peter continues to be relevant to the church today as presenting the true grace of God, in which believers must stand. Peter’s readers were experiencing various kinds of trials that were causing them varying degrees of grief and suffering. Their Christian faith was being slandered and maligned. Their social status, family relationships, and possibly even their livelihood were threatened. When one’s Christian faith is criticized and even mocked, it is natural that one may begin to doubt the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is, after all, extraordinary to believe that the body of a dead man was raised to some kind of new eternal state of being. Ancient people no less than modern might understandably find that claim outrageous. And yet for Peter, the resurrection is the central point of the Christian faith by which God has extended his mercy and has given new birth into a living hope (1:3). Therefore, assuaging the doubt of his readers concerning their faith in Christ in light of society’s response is one clear purpose of the letter.”¹³

David Wheaton provides a helpful overview of 1 Peter including an analysis of both the text and theology of the epistle:

Is the letter a unity?

“Those who say the letter is not a unity follow three main lines of argument: Some say that 1:1 and 5:12–14 were added after the letter had been written. There is no MS evidence for this, and there is still the reference in 5:1. Others say the letter originally ended at 4:11 and that the remainder was added at a later date. They argue that the possibility of suffering is remote in 3:17 but already being experienced in 4:12. 1:6 points, however, to the same situation as 4:12. It seems more likely that Peter’s mind was moving between the experience of the church as a corporate body and that of its individual members. It is unlikely that 3:17 would apply to each reader. All churches may well suffer persecution in the near future, so that all members will suffer with one another (1 Cor. 12:26), but few individuals are likely to be called on to suffer in each wave of persecution. The doxology of 4:11 is not necessarily a conclusion. Rom. 11:33–36; 15:33 and Eph. 3:20–21 are other examples where the writer was so thrilled by the truths he was

¹² Karen Jobes, *1 Peter* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 42.

¹³ Karen Jobes, *1 Peter* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 42.

expressing that he was carried away into an outpouring of praise. Others see the letter as a liturgy written for baptismal use, a collection of sermons, instructions for new converts or fragments of early hymns. Peter may well have quoted a variety of sources for his purpose (or they may have quoted him!), but there is no reason to dismiss his own statement in 5:12.

The letter reads as a unity written to encourage Christian people, especially those new to the faith, and to declare to them the truth and reality of the grace of God in which they can stand firm with every confidence.

Why was the letter written?

From what has been said in the last section it will be seen that theories abound concerning the purpose of the letter. Fuller details of these can be found in other commentaries on 1 Peter. For our purposes it is sufficient to take Peter's words in 5:12 at face value. Peter sees Christians in danger of persecution (1:6) and not prepared for it (4:12). In the light of this he aimed to do two things: to encourage and to testify to the true grace of God (5:12) in which he urged his readers to stand. These two purposes are intertwined as Peter gives encouragement by declaring God's gracious acts in Christ, made known and mediated by his Spirit.

We can list some of the encouragements as follows: The scope and goal of God's purposes (1:3–9); The excitement of the prophets and eagerness of the angels to grasp this wonderful plan (1:10–12); The costliness of our redemption (1:18–21); The enduring nature of God's promises (1:22–25); The privilege of belonging to God's people (2:4–10); The example of Jesus (2:22–25); What Jesus has done for us (3:18–22); The confidence we can have in our Creator and his faithfulness (4:17–19); The certainty that God will triumph in the end, and that his own will share the victory (5:10–11; cf. 1:7). Such encouragements, and such a statement of the grace of God, offer an equally firm foothold for Christian believers facing whatever the twenty-first century after Christ may bring.

Is 1 Peter like other NT writings?

The author comes across as someone who knew his OT well, and ready to back up his teaching by quoting it, especially Isaiah and the Psalms (see on 1:18–20, 24–25; 2:6–8, 22ff.; 3:10–12; 4:17–18). While he does not quote directly from the gospels, Peter frequently uses words and phrases which remind us of incidents and teachings they contain. We shall draw attention to these in the commentary. There are also similarities with Peter's speeches in the Acts, e.g. Acts 2:23/1 Pet. 1:20; Acts 2:31/1 Pet. 1:11; Acts 2:34–35/1 Pet. 3:22; Acts 4:11/1 Pet. 2:7; Acts 4:12/1 Pet. 3:21; Acts 10:34/1 Pet. 1:17; Acts 10:39/1 Pet. 2:24. These are the main places where ideas overlap, and a detailed study of the passages will show many more words and phrases in common.

What theology does 1 Peter contain?

Peter wrote, as we have seen, with a practical purpose, and would no doubt have been surprised if asked about the letter's theological content. He did not write to set out a theology (as Paul did in Romans or Colossians) but, as a pastor, he based his ethical advice on his knowledge of the character of God. So the doctrines set out in the letter are those which provide a motive for Christian living.

Doctrine of God

In 1:1–2 Peter clearly sets out the practical relationship between the three persons of the Trinity. God is sovereign, and so can be trusted (4:19). He is holy, and so is to be copied (1:15–16). He is a Father, and so his children must live up to the family name (1:17), and the fact that he has redeemed his people is a ground for assurance (1:18–21).

Doctrine of Christ

Christ is sinless, obedient and prepared to suffer to the limit. This is an example for us (2:21–24). He died and rose again, so we must die to sin and live by his risen power (2:24; 4:1). His work is described in terms of redemption (1:18–19), reconciliation and being the sin offering and the substitute (3:18), and he was predestined for this very purpose by the Father's love (1:20–21). He is also the foundation of God's church, providing the ground of faith and hope, and inspiring to holiness and love (2:16; 1:21–22).

Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is seen as the agent of sanctification (1:2), the author of Scripture (1:11), the enabler of Christian ministry (1:12) and the encourager of Christians undergoing persecution (4:14).

Doctrine of Scripture

The authority of Scripture is stressed by the way Peter appeals to the OT to support his teaching (e.g. 1:24–25; 2:6–8; 3:10–12; 4:18). Its source is seen to be in the guiding of the writers by the Holy Spirit (1:11; cf. 2 Pet. 1:21) and its enduring quality is underlined by a quotation from Is. 40:6–8 (1:23–25). Scripture is also pictured as a seed, by which the new birth is effected in human lives as people hear and respond to the preaching of the gospel (cf. 1:23 with 25), and as the means of Christian growth (if 2:2 is translated 'milk of the word').

Doctrine of the church

Peter has a high regard for the corporate nature of the people of God, entered into by the individual believer at his or her new birth (2:2–5; cf. 1:22–23). The church is God's building, on the foundation of Christ himself (2:4–8), and as such it is the inheritor of the blessings promised to Israel (2:9–10). Its twofold function is to offer worship to God and witness before people (2:5, 9). Already in Peter's day the church had a corporate eldership, seen as a responsible and sacred office (5:1–4), but also encouraged the development and use of spiritual gifts by each member (4:10–11).

Doctrine of the last days

Peter writes as one who looks forward to the great unveiling in the last days, and he uses the Greek root *apocalyp*—('revelation') to describe the return of Christ. So he reminds his readers that the unseen Christ is never far away, and points them to the glories they will share when Christ is revealed. Their salvation will be fully realized and they will enter into their full inheritance (1:5). Their faith will be finally honored (1:7; 4:13), and the full extent of God's grace discovered (1:13). Christ's glory will be shared (5:1) and faithful service rewarded (5:4). The expectation of Christ's return is a most compelling argument for holy living and careful stewardship now (4:7–11, 17–18).

What does Peter say to his readers?

Those who originally received this letter were Christians who were in danger of losing their way. Their new-found faith had severed the ties which had bound them to their non-Christian relatives and neighbors and was itself being tested because they were facing suffering. This situation was probably not what they had expected when they had first heard the gospel, and it is an experience faced by every generation since then.

Peter met their needs by reassuring them of the gospel. Father, Son and Holy Spirit work together to bring us a new life (1:3–5; 2:2; 4:1–6) in which the past is forgiven (2:24; 3:18), the present is protected (1:5) and motivated (4:2), and the future assured (1:4, 7). This is a way of life to be lived out in practical terms (1:13–16) and in everyday relationships (2:16; 3:1, 7). It equips the followers of Jesus for living in the real world of the here and now (4:1–4) and for that world of eternal glory for which Jesus is even now preparing us (5:10).

So Peter's response to the question of suffering is that it is a part of the journey of faith. It tests the seriousness of our discipleship (1:7), joins us to our fellow-Christians (5:9), and will be vindicated on the day of judgment (4:16–19). Though believers are 'strangers' and 'scattered' in this world (1:1), they are part of the pilgrim people of God (2:5, 9), journeying to the Father's home (1:4). They look forward to the day when Jesus will return for his own (1:7; 2:12; 5:4). These are truths which can motivate today's Christians to live for God's glory, just as they encouraged Peter's original readers. Peter writes as one whose heart has lost none of the fire of love stirred up by the Master at the Sea of Tiberias (cf. Jn. 21:1, 15–19 with 1 Pet. 1:8). In this letter there is all the vividness of the personal recollections of a follower of Jesus Christ."¹⁴

1 Peter and Biblical Theology¹⁵

"1 Peter is not a systematic treatment of Christian theology; nor does it present a complete picture of Petrine theology. The epistle is a practical document, in which the author expounds those theological themes most relevant to the circumstances of the readers. The first readers/hearers of the book were recently converted Christians (1:3, 18–19, 22–23; 2:2) who lived throughout the Roman provinces of Asia Minor (1:1). They were mostly Gentiles, who had recently abandoned an idol cult with its attendant debauchery (4:3; 1:14). Their rejection of the civic religion practiced by their families and their radical change of lifestyle brought them into acute conflict with their contemporaries, an experience described as a 'painful trial' (4:12, NIV).

While government officials may have been involved in the persecution at some point (2:13–17 may reflect official disapproval of the Christian sect), the hostilities mainly took the form of social pressure against the Christian community, expressed publicly in both verbal and physical abuse. Christians were reviled (3:9), slandered (3:16), maligned (4:4) and denounced as criminals (2:12, 14; 4:15). Particularly where close social ties existed, such as those between masters and believing slaves (2:18–20) or husbands and Christian wives (3:1–7), there was the danger of physical hostility (4:1).

The reaction of the new Christians was grief (1:6; 2:19), fear (3:6, 14), bewilderment (4:12) and anxiety (5:7). The dishonor they suffered in their communities made them ashamed of their new faith (4:16), and they were tempted to retaliate in order to regain their honor (3:9; cf.

¹⁴ David Wheaton, "1 Peter" in *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*, Ed. D. A. Carson, 4th ed. (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1994).

¹⁵ G. L. Green, "1 Peter" in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, Eds. Desmond T. Alexander, Brian S. Rosner (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 346-9.

2:23). Some contemplated returning to their former lifestyle and abandoning their faith in Christ (4:2–3; 1:14); this was the goal of their adversary, the devil (5:8–9).

The Setting in Salvation-History

1 Peter is addressed to Christians who, under pressure from the surrounding society, are tempted to relapse morally or to apostatize. The author shows them the true grace of God and calls them to stand in it (5:12; cf. 1 Thess. 3:8; Eph. 6:11, 13–14). This ‘grace’ reflects the nature of God (5:10), and is expressed in his saving activity predicted by the prophets (1:10; see Prophetic books) and to be realized fully at the future revelation of Christ (1:13). The principal demonstration of this grace is the ‘sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow’ (1:11). Thus Peter emphasizes the transcendent saving activity of God which embraces past, present and future. He lifts his readers beyond their immediate temporal and social concerns and helps them to understand their place within the eternal purposes of God.

This plan, centered in Jesus Christ, was generated before creation (1:20) and includes God’s sovereign choice of his elect (1:2) according to his determinative ‘foreknowledge’ (*cf. 1:20). Issuing from this plan came the promises given by the ‘Spirit of Christ’ through the OT prophets (1:10–12), who predicted both the ‘sufferings’ and the ‘glories’ of Christ, the benefits of whose work are received by Christians in the present through the preaching of the gospel (1:12). The cross, resurrection, ascension and future revealing of Christ are the fundamental saving events in God’s plan (see Death and resurrection, Exaltation). While the incarnation is mentioned briefly (1:20), there are several references to the ‘sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow’ as the fulfillment of God’s salvation (1:2, 3, 11, 18–21; 2:21–25; 3:18–22; 4:1, 13; 5:1; and implied in 2:4–8; 3:15; 4:11; 5:10).

The ‘sufferings of Christ’ include his death on the cross for sins (2:24) as well as the sufferings he endured beforehand (2:21–23). The ‘glories’ are his resurrection (1:21), ascension and authority over all powers (3:18–20, 22), and his reappearance (1:13). The importance of these events is underlined by the author’s eyewitness testimony to Christ’s sufferings (5:1) and by the prophetic and angelic interest in the fulfillment of the prophetic hope (1:11–12). Christians have become participants in this saving plan: salvation is ‘to/for’ them (1:10, 12, 20, 25; 2:7, 9) and is ‘now’ realized in the time of fulfillment (1:12; 2:10; 3:21). The ‘last times’ are upon them (1:20; 4:7).

1 Peter also links the present and the future. Future salvation is one with present salvation (1:5, 9, 10–12; 3:21). Similarly, the judgment of God also is realized in the past, present and future (3:20; 4:5, 17–18). The resurrection of Christ and his glorification are one with the glory of his future revealing (1:21; 4:13), and the grace of God in which Christians now stand (5:5b, 12) will be brought to them in full when Christ is revealed (1:13). The community’s present praise and joy will continue beyond the end (1:3; 2:5; 4:11 and 1:6, 8; 4:13). The eschatology in 1 Peter is both realized and future (cf. 1:20 and 1:5) with the future being proleptically manifested in the present.

God

The sovereignty and transcendence of God dominate the theology of the epistle, and are important for its readers, who have emerged from paganism and are undergoing persecution. God is the faithful creator (4:19), the author of salvation-history (1:2, 20), the eternal one (implied in 1:25; 4:11; 5:10), the Almighty (4:11; 5:6, 11), and the God of glory (4:11, 14; 5:10),

who keeps for believers their final inheritance (1:4), and who is judge of both the living and the dead (4:5; 1:17; 5:5b).

Yet despite this emphasis on God's transcendence, the author is also keenly aware of his presence with his people. He is the source of their life (1:3, 23) and guards them for their final salvation (1:5). His eyes are constantly upon them and his ears are open to their petitions (3:12; Ps. 34:12–16); he is invoked as their Father (1:17; cf. Matt. 6:9), who has chosen them (1:2) and given them new birth according to his great mercy (1:3). He supplies his grace for believers to serve one another (4:10–11). His Spirit rests on those who suffer (4:14), and he gives grace to the humble and the oppressed (5:5, 10). Christians are conscious of his presence (2:19), and Christ, like a shepherd, leads them to God (3:18). In their adversity, believers can be assured of God's care for them (5:7). Yet Peter reminds his readers that the one whom they call Father is also their impartial judge (1:17; 4:17), whom they should honor with reverential fear (1:17; 2:17; 3:2). He is the holy one (1:15–16; Lev. 19:2).

Christ

Christ is the pre-existent one (1:20), who is 'revealed in these last times' and whose Spirit spoke through the prophets (1:11). In describing the activity of Christ, the author focuses on his sufferings and glories (1:11), which include his redemptive suffering (2:24; 3:18), his resurrection from the dead (1:3, 21; 3:18) and the proclamation (at his ascension) of his victory and authority over all demonic forces (3:19–20, 22; cf. 5:8–9; see W. J. Dalton, Christ's Proclamation to the Spirits). At present Christ is not 'absent'; he is 'veiled' from sight until the time of his revealing (1:13; Peter does not speak of his 'coming', *parousia*). The time of this 'unveiling' is not far distant (1:7, 13; 4:7, 13; 5:4); Christ will bring both salvation and reward for the believers (1:4–7; 5:4) and judgment for their oppressors (4:5). Though Christ is not seen, faith and love can penetrate the 'veil' which hides him (1:8). Believers have tasted his kindness (2:3, possibly a reference to the eucharist) and have come to him (2:4); Christ in turn brings them to God (3:18). It is through Christ that the worship of the community is acceptable to God (2:5).

1 Peter includes an extremely high Christology. Jesus is both Christ and Lord (1:3), and in 3:15 Peter applies the reference to YHWH (LXX *kyrios*) in Isaiah 8:13 to Christ: 'But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord.' In 2:6 he interprets the 'stone' in Isaiah 28:16 messianically; people's relationship to it determines their eternal destiny (so also Paul in Rom. 9:33). In verses 7–8 he links this prophecy with Isaiah 8:14 and Psalm 118:22. But the transcendent and authoritative Christ also tenderly shepherds his sheep (2:25; 5:4) and has become their guardian (2:25).

The author's descriptions of Christ's character are full of OT imagery. He is called 'the righteous (one)' (3:18; Is. 53:11); as the suffering servant of Isaiah 53 (Is. 53:9, 7, 4 and 12, and 6a are echoed in 1 Pet. 2:22–25) he 'committed no sin' (2:22). He inaugurates the new covenant through the sprinkling of his blood (1:2; cf. Exod. 24:3–8), and just as the paschal lamb was a ransom paid for the deliverance of Israel from Egypt (1:18–19; Exod. 12:5–7), so his sacrifice redeems believers. He became a sin offering who bears the sins of the people (2:24; Heb. 9:28; Lev. 16:15–16).

The Spirit

Peter seldom refers to the Holy Spirit; yet he ascribes to the Spirit a significant place in salvation history. In 1:11 the Spirit, called here the 'Spirit of Christ' (which implies that Christ is pre-existent), is said to have inspired the OT prophets to foretell the sufferings and glories of

Christ (cf. 2 Sam. 23:2; Acts 1:16; 28:25; 2 Pet. 1:21). These key events of salvation-history were then proclaimed to Peter's readers in the gospel 'by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven' (1:12; cf. Acts 1:8; 1 Cor. 2:4; 1 Thess. 1:5; Heb. 2:3–4). The Spirit's work also includes conversion or 'the sanctifying work' (1:2, perhaps an allusion to his activity in baptism; cf. 3:21). The persecuted believers are assured that the Spirit rests upon them (4:14) and indwells the community (2:5; cf. 1 Cor. 3:16).

The Christian Community

Peter does not use the word 'church' (*ekklēsia*), but he identifies the Christian community with the OT people of God. He sees the Christian community as the true Israel of God and heir to the promises of God. Believers have entered into the new covenant (1:2; cf. Exod. 24:1–8) and await their inheritance (1:4; cf. Deut. 15:4; Dan. 12:13). They are the elect (1:1; cf. Deut. 4:37; Ps. 105:6) and 'strangers' of the Dispersion (1:1; Gen. 23:4; Lev. 25:23), and are properly called by titles previously ascribed to the people of God: 'chosen people, royal household, priesthood, holy nation, people of God's possession' (2:9, author's translation; Exod. 19:6; Is. 43:20–21). Christian women are called 'daughters of Sarah' (3:5–6) and typology connects baptized believers with Noah and others who were saved through the flood (3:20–21). Believers were formerly 'not a people' but now they are 'the people of God' (2:10; Hos. 2:23). They have been chosen by God (1:2) and their new existence as the people of God has given them the social stigma of being non-citizens and resident aliens (2:11; 1:1, 17). Although Elliott (*A Home for the Homeless*) argues that the readers were non-citizens before their conversion, Peter links their alien status with their election (1:1; 2:10–11). They are part of the 'dispersion' (1:1) scattered in this world and separated from their true inheritance, which is kept in heaven for them (1:4). Though rejected by their contemporaries, the Christians have a new social identity which is in continuity with that of the OT people of God and based on their new faith in God.

Peter reminds his readers that although they have no visible temple, they are 'being built into a spiritual house' (temple), and that they constitute a 'holy priesthood' who offer up 'spiritual sacrifices' (2:5 and 9). Christians are also witnesses in the communities in which they live, even in the face of severe opposition. They are called to 'declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light' (2:9). They are not to disengage from society, but are to witness both in word and conduct (2:12; 3:16) in order both to silence their accusers (2:15) and to make them ashamed (3:16). Peter tells the believers that their conduct should in no way justify the ill treatment they receive (4:14–16; 2:18–20); rather it should be such that those who oppose them may be won to the faith (3:1–2; implied in 2:12). The despised Christians are even called to become benefactors in the communities in which they live (2:13–15).

The sufferings believers endure are set within the larger framework of salvation-history. Peter presents Christ as the paradigm of those who suffer unjustly and do not then act unjustly themselves (2:21–23), though some aspects of Christ's suffering are inimitable (2:24–25). Believers are called to suffer (2:20b–21) according to the will of God (3:17; 4:19; 1:6), and in so doing they 'participate in the sufferings of Christ' (4:13). But just as his sufferings gave way to glory (1:11) so in their sufferings 'the Spirit of glory and of God' rests on them, and they are called to God's 'eternal glory in Christ' (5:10, 4). While they experience extreme dishonor in their towns and villages, they receive supreme honor from their God.

The community is exhorted to imitate the holiness of God (1:15–16; Lev. 11:44–45) and this call becomes the controlling imperative of the epistle. They should be ‘holy in all [their] way of life’ (1:15, author’s translation); this is defined as ‘doing good’ (2:12, 15, 20; 3:6, 11, 13, 17), and is God’s will for them (2:15; 4:2). The indicative of God’s character contains within itself the imperative of their conduct. Similarly the indicative of Christ’s innocence and non-retaliatory response to suffering (2:22–24) becomes an imperative for the community (2:21). Peter’s call to those who contemplated a return to their pagan lifestyle is to ‘act as God acts’. But he also exhorts them to live according to their new nature ‘as obedient children’ (1:14) and as those who have been ‘purified’ (1:22). Their lifestyle should reflect their existence as ‘aliens and strangers’ (2:11). Peter urges them, ‘Act in accordance with your new identity!’”

Appendix 4

2 Peter: Author, Audience, Text, and Theology

Not every scholar has a very high view of 2 Peter. For example, Klein writes: “The author does a miserable job presenting his case... In spite of how vigorously he asserts himself he is basically helpless.”¹⁶ Klein goes on to say that it is fortunate the letter was even included in the canon. James D. G. Dunn remarks that some of the writings of Luther and Wesley are equal to, or even better than, what we find in 2 Peter.¹⁷

Who wrote 2 Peter?

Despite some scholarly doubt concerning the authorship of 2 Peter, Leon Morris writes: “The writer leaves us in no doubt on the matter. He says he is ‘Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ’ (1:1). He was on the mount of Transfiguration with Jesus (1:16–18) where only Peter, James and John were with him (Mk. 9:2–12). He had written on a previous occasion to the recipients of this letter (3:1) and is on familiar terms with them (3:1, 8, 14, 17). Furthermore, he calls Paul ‘our dear brother’ (3:15), and at the time of writing he was expecting to die quite soon (1:14).

There is no evidence to suggest that any of these facts were later inserted into the letter to make people accept it. However, there is a popular modern theory that the letter is a ‘pseudepigraph’, i.e. a writing put out after the death of a great man, published under his name as containing the kind of things he would have said in that situation. Thus it would do him honor by being ascribed to him. Arguments to support this view are as follows.

First, it is claimed that the language and style are not similar to 1 Peter. In places we find complicated phrases in an exaggerated style. This is particularly true in ch. 2 where the writer gets carried along by his theme as he did in 1 Pet. 3:18–22. In any case, 1 Peter was written on different matters, and may have had some input from Silvanus (1 Pet. 5:12). In fact, there are strong resemblances between the letters. Some words and phrases occur only in these letters and nowhere else in the NT, e.g. ‘goodness’ used of God (2 Pet. 1:3; 1 Pet. 2:9 [tr. ‘praises’]); ‘putting aside’ (2 Pet. 1:14; 1 Pet. 3:21 [tr. ‘removal’]); ‘never stop sinning’ (2 Pet. 2:14; 1 Pet. 4:1 [tr. ‘is done with sin’]). Other words not common elsewhere are ‘brotherly kindness’ (2 Pet. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:22), the root of ‘eye-witnesses’ (2 Pet. 1:16; 1 Pet. 2:12; 3:2) and ‘add’ (2 Pet. 1:5; 1 Pet. 4:11). There are also similarities in the statements about prophecy (2 Pet. 1:20–21; 1 Pet. 1:10–12), about Christian liberty (2 Pet. 2:19; 1 Pet. 2:16) and about the last things (2 Pet. 3:3, 10; 1 Pet. 1:5).

Comparison of this letter with Peter’s speeches in the Acts shows a similar use of language: ‘godliness’ (2 Pet. 1:6; Acts 3:12); ‘lawless’ (2 Pet. 2:8; Acts 2:23 [tr. ‘wicked’]); ‘received’ (2 Pet. 1:1; Acts 1:17 [tr. ‘shared’]). Identical phrases can be found in 2 Pet. 2:13, 15 (‘paid back

¹⁶ Cited in J. D. Charles, *Virtue amidst Vice: The Catalog of Virtues in 2 Peter 1*, JSNTSup 150 (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1997), 19–20.

¹⁷ James D. G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1990), 386.

with harm for the harm they have done', 'the wages of wickedness') and Acts 1:18 ('the reward he got for his wickedness'). Both 2 Pet. 3:10 and Acts 2:20 draw on OT imagery of the 'day of the Lord' (Joel 2:31). More recent research has shown that objections based on the language have nothing like the evidence to support them that was once supposed.

Secondly, Peter's authorship of the letter is also held to be in doubt by some because the early church seemed hesitant to receive it into the NT canon. The fact remains that they finally did so, and this happened at a time when Gnostic writers were circulating definitely bogus writings claiming Peter's authorship.

Thirdly, because 2 Peter contains most of Jude many have assumed that Jude must have been the earlier writing. Had Peter written first, then there would have been no need for Jude to write. But, they argue, such a leading apostle as Peter would not have used material from a writer who, if he was the Lord's brother, did not believe until after the resurrection (see Mk. 6:3; Jn. 7:5). This argument is far from conclusive. Jude could well have made a digest of Peter's letter to send to churches who had not received it, and there is no reason why Peter should not have used another source. Both he and Jude might have drawn on other material being put out to combat false teachers.

Fourthly, others argue that the teaching of 2 Peter bears the mark of a late date. In fact, the seeds of the false teaching attacked in this letter were present, as far as doctrine is concerned, in Colossae (Col. 2:18) and, as far as morals are concerned, at Corinth (1 Cor. 5; 6:12–20). On the other hand, the teaching in 2 Peter about Christ's return reflects (with 1 Peter) the hope of his coming held in the early days of the church. The godly are looking eagerly for it (3:12) and only the 'scoffers' are trying to dispose of it (3:4). This doctrine provides here the same motive for holy living as it does in the former letter (cf. 3:11–14 with 1 Pet. 1:7, 13, 17; 4:7, 13).

More recently, conservative scholars have drawn attention to the fact that the theory of pseudepigrapha raised a significant moral problem. False teachers in NT times had written under assumed names, and they had been denounced for doing so by Paul (2 Thes. 2:2; 3:17). Later generations in the church also condemned the practice. It is unbelievable that a sincere writer could have included the false personal references of 1:1, 16–18 and 3:1 in a letter which lays such stress on holiness and truth (1:3–4, 12; 3:11, 17). Such a deceit could not have been accepted in a church which called its members to such high standards in every respect.

When and where was the letter written?

According to 3:16 it seems that a number of Paul's letters had already been published by the time Peter came to write. Some conclude from 1:12–17 that the gospels were by this time also in wide circulation and 3:4 is sometimes taken to imply that the first generation of Christians had already died by the time the letter was written. References to 2 Peter in other writings show that, at the latest, it must have been written early in the second century. The heresy attacked in ch. 2 was still at a primitive stage, and this would argue for setting the date in the latter part of the first century. If we are prepared to accept Peter's authorship, then a date shortly before the apostle's death (1:14), somewhere in the sixties, seems most likely. The letter gives us no clues as to where it was written. If we accept that Peter wrote it, and that he wrote his first letter in Rome (see the Introduction to 1 Peter), then this letter could also have well been written there.

To whom was the letter written?

From 3:1 it could be concluded that the letter was written to the same groups of Christians as 1 Peter. Otherwise, 1:1 suggests it was written for a wider readership, which would have included those who received the first letter and to whom 3:1 would then refer. Those addressed are obviously Christian churches beginning to be undermined by the Gnostic heresy, and we know that this spread early in Asia Minor (see Colossians). These churches would have contained both Jewish and Gentile believers (see the Introduction to 1 Peter). Arguments about the recipients based on odd phrases in the letter are as inconclusive here as in the earlier letter, e.g. if 1:1 suggests Gentile readers, 3:2 can be used to argue for Jewish ones.

Is the letter a unity?

Suggestions have recently been made that the letter originally consisted of chs. 1 and 3, with ch. 2 inserted later. Others argue that each chapter circulated separately at first, with ch. 1 being the earlier letter referred to in 3:1, ch. 3 the reminder promised in 1:13, and ch. 2, again, a later addition. Another approach has been to attempt to isolate sections of the letter which are thought to be genuinely by Peter, and claim that other material was added by a later editor.

There are two strong arguments against these theories: no MS evidence supports the idea of any part of the letter at any time circulating on its own and all three chapters display a marked unity of style.

Why was the letter written?

Three main thoughts dominate the letter. First, the writer has not long to live in this world, and has a pastoral concern that his Christian friends should keep on growing in their discipleship; secondly, false teaching is getting abroad which could prevent this growth, and so must be denounced; and thirdly, the return of the Lord Jesus is certain, and his people must be ready for that. Peter touched on the first and last of these themes in his earlier letter. The second seems to be a major reason for writing 2 Peter, but is best placed in the perspective of Christian growth and destiny.

Is 2 Peter like other NT writings?

It takes only a casual reading to discover that 2 Peter contains most of Jude 4–18. This fact has given rise to the following theories.

Some say that Jude was written first. This is because Peter adds so much to Jude. If 2 Peter had been written first, then Jude would have added only a few verses to what was already in circulation. Jude could, however, have shortened Peter's letter to meet the needs of churches to which it had not originally been sent. Others who support the priority of Jude suggest that Peter softened the harsh tones of Jude, tele-scoped his metaphors and cut out his references to the Apocrypha. These arguments could be turned in reverse to say that Jude felt he had to rewrite 2 Peter to make the language more harsh, develop an obscure metaphor, and back the arguments with apocryphal references.

Others say that 2 Peter was written first, and they cite the arguments above which can be turned either way. Some point out that a man of Peter's standing is unlikely to have quoted from an obscure person like Jude. It is also argued that dangers foreseen by Peter as in the future (2:1)

have been present for some time in Jude (4). But Peter is not consistent in his use of tenses, and in 2:10b–19 he speaks of these dangerous teachers as having already begun their work. Others suggest there was a common source behind both 2 Peter and Jude. This alternative has been offered because of the problems with both the above theories. While solving some of them, it still does not explain why Jude bothered to write if he was merely repeating so much of the original source. It is far more likely that he abridged 2 Peter to meet his own needs. In all fairness it must be admitted that there is no final answer to this question of priority.

What does Peter say to his readers?

1 Peter was written to strengthen scattered groups of Christians being called on to face sporadic outbursts of suffering. 2 Peter was written to encourage Christians beset by two dangers: seducers (2:1) who were spreading false teaching, which would lead to immoral behavior (2:2, 13–15; cf. Rev. 2:14–15, 20–24; Col. 2:8–3:17), and scoffers using the fact that Christ had not returned as an excuse for immorality (3:3).

Peter is firm to resist both groups by positive teaching. Just as the first letter emphasized the example of the Lord Jesus, this one underlines the facts of Jesus' life (1:16–18), the Christian faith as the way of truth (2:2) and the certainty of Jesus' return (3:10). In the light of this it is important for Christians to grow (1:5–8; 3:18) and to be preparing for his return (3:11–14). Evil desires are a snare (1:4; 2:10, 18; 3:5); by contrast the Christian is to be zealous for God's purposes (1:5, 10, 15; 3:14 all use variants of the root word for 'zeal'). We look for a new heaven and a new earth in which evil desires will be replaced by God's righteousness (3:13). In 3:1 Peter expresses his aim as being to stimulate wholesome thinking and he does this by summarizing the pattern of Christian growth in 1:5–8. His words in 1:10–11 give us the keynote of the letter. It is Christ-centered thinking, leading to God-directed living, which reassures us of our calling by God, and enables us to maintain an unbroken relationship with him. That spurs us towards the ultimate goal of the welcome into Christ's kingdom at his return. These truths are just as important for the contemporary Christian, facing the pressures of a multi-faith society or the seductive teachings of the so-called New Age, as they were for those to whom Peter originally wrote."¹⁸

2 Peter and Biblical Theology¹⁹

"2 Peter is presented as a farewell letter from the apostle, in which he seeks to combat the teaching of unethical behavior and the denial of the return of Jesus Christ and final judgment. It makes extensive use of Jude (virtually the whole content of Jude appears in the same order and often in the same words in 2 Peter 2) and focuses on the much debated topic of eschatology.

Ethics

According to 2 Peter, human culture is corrupted by desire (*cf. Jas. 1:14; see James). Christian faith makes it possible to escape from these desires and to share in the divine nature. This unique expression is not explained in 2 Peter, although similar ideas are found in the Johannine literature (e.g. 1 John 3:9). It does not imply the divinization of the individual, but a

¹⁸ Leon Morris, "2 Peter" in *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*, Ed. D. A. Carson, 4th ed. (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994).

¹⁹ P. H. Davids, "2 Peter" in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, Eds. Desmond T. Alexander, Brian S. Rosner (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 350-1.

sharing of the divine nature by the believer (perhaps equivalent to Paul's indwelling of God's Spirit or John's 'birth from above'). This participation in the divine nature is not something earned through human rites or effort, but is a gift of God that leads in turn to ethical living.

The teachers condemned in chapter 2 have, through their sexual indulgence, denied Christ (2:1; the denial is ethical rather than theological, as in 1 John), and have been trapped by desire once again (2:19–22). Secondary accusations made against them include greed and the slandering of fallen angels (cf. the same charges in Jude). The readers are exhorted instead to grow in virtue; this growth confirms their 'calling and election' and thus their eternal reward or entry into 'the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ' (1:3–11; 3:11, 14, NIV).

Eschatology

Apocalyptic eschatology is central to 2 Peter, since the false teachers reject the return of Christ and final judgment, instead teaching a steady-state universe (3:4). The argument is in six parts. First, in chapter 1 the expectation of Jesus' glorious return is based upon the apostolic testimony to a proleptic glorification of Jesus in the transfiguration (1:16–18), which confirms previous prophetic announcements. Secondly, the final judgment with fire has already been prefigured by the judgment with water of Noah's time (3:5–7). Thirdly, the parousia (Christ's return) has not been delayed, for God works to his own timetable. He is patient, seeking the repentance and salvation of all people (3:8–10, 15). Fourthly, the Christian life is lived in the light of the transitory nature of the world as we know it and the permanence of the new heavens and new earth. Thus the promise of Isaiah 65:17–25, reflected in Revelation 21–22, is also found here. Fifthly, since Christians do not know God's timetable, 'the day of the Lord' will come as 'a thief', that is, unexpectedly; this echoes the teaching of Jesus (Matt. 24:36–44; cf. 25:1–13). Sixthly, Christian living seems to have an effect upon God's timetable, in that Christians not only wait for but also hasten the coming of the 'day of God' (3:12). This idea may be similar to the later rabbinic view that the purity of Israel would determine whether God brought the Messiah on schedule or delayed his coming. While the meaning of 2 Peter on this point is uncertain, the letter clearly teaches that the Lord will come, that the present world is impermanent, that it will be transformed and that there will be a final judgment. Thus the false teachers will receive their punishment, while the faithful believers will receive their reward.

Scripture

The basis for this eschatology is twofold. First, the prophetic teaching of the OT warns of God's judgment. This teaching is not mere human insight, but divinely inspired (1:19–21). We do not know which scriptures the author regards as prophetic. Interestingly, he tones down or eliminates Jude's references to non-canonical writings, and like Jude his explicit references to the canonical books are all to the Pentateuch, with only allusions to the OT prophets. As a good Jew he takes the Pentateuch as his focal point and Moses as his chief prophet, using the rest of the OT to support their teaching.

Secondly, the apostolic witness to Jesus includes warnings of judgment; of all NT figures it is Jesus who spoke most extensively on the subject. This witness comprises narratives about Jesus and the teachings of Jesus (3:2).

2 Peter is the first work to refer explicitly to part of the NT, namely the letters of Paul. These were probably being used by the teachers to justify their immorality as 'freedom in Christ'; thus Peter notes that these letters, as well as the OT prophets, have been misinterpreted by the teachers he is condemning. Since 1:20 and 3:15 are the only place where 2 Peter uses the Greek term *graphē* (writing, Scripture) he obviously thinks it permissible to group Paul's

writings with those of the OT prophets, just as in 3:2 he groups the OT prophetic writings with the (largely oral) teaching of the apostles. This represents the first stage in the development of a written NT canon. We do not know what is meant by 'all his letters' (3:16), that is, whether the author is aware of a collection of Paul's letters or knows only that Paul has written several; so we cannot tell which letter or letters are being misinterpreted by the teachers."

Appendix 5

A Summary of Petrine Theology

“The two epistles ascribed to Peter in the NT are addressed to special situations and do not supply a systematic Petrine theology. At best it is possible to note the most significant emphases. 1 Peter provides a strong combination of theology and ethics. It is an essentially practical letter and yet it is far from being moralistic. It roots its practical advice in Christian experience. It deals with the way in which a Christian ought to behave in view of what God has done for him. Perhaps nowhere else in the NT is the inextricable connection between theology and ethics more clearly brought out.

Everywhere God is active in the lives of his people. The fact that he chose them and sanctified them (1:1) is stressed in the introductory words. Moreover it is God’s power that keeps them (1:5). They are God’s own people (2:9–10). God is concerned for them in their suffering (2:19–20). It is his will that should govern them (3:17; 4:2). God is a God both of power (5:6) and of grace (5:10, 12). He has prepared a glorious future for his people (1:4; 5:10).

But Jesus Christ is equally active on the part of his people. Their regeneration is through his resurrection (1:3; 3:21); their redemption is through his blood (1:19). They are a holy priesthood acceptable to God through Christ (2:5). They are a spiritual house of which Christ is the cornerstone (2:6). He is an example to them when they suffer (2:21; cf. 4:1; 5:1). He is to be revered as Lord (3:15). He died for their sins once for all (3:18). It is through him that God is glorified (4:11). He is seen as the shepherd and guardian of his people (2:25; 5:4). It is striking that what Peter says about the atonement arises from essentially practical concerns. It is after mentioning that Christ is an example that he introduces the idea that he bore our sins in his body on the tree (2:24). In other words, an ethical need gives rise to a theological statement. A similar occurrence is the introduction of the ransom theme in 1:18. There is no doubt that the atoning work of Christ is seen as essential to man’s deliverance. There is equally no doubt that Christ’s redeeming work was accomplished because of his own sinlessness. The lamb was without blemish (1:19) and the righteous died for the unrighteous (3:18).

The purpose of the epistle is to encourage those who are suffering. The most essential feature is that suffering can be according to God’s will (4:19). In addition to this emphasis, there is concentrated practical advice in chapter 5. In spite of the many assurances of God’s care for his people, the readers are nevertheless called on to do their part. They are to resist the devil; they are to be watchful; they are to humble themselves before God; they are to cast their cares on God (5:6–9). In this way, the divine initiative is linked closely with human responsibility. Some have seen baptism as a key theme of 1 Peter, but there is only one specific reference to it (3:21). One of the peculiarities of the letter is the obscure reference to the preaching to the spirits in prison (3:19) and to the dead (4:6), but the difficulties of interpretation do not affect the over-all thrust of the theology.

Many scholars do not regard 2 Peter as Petrine, but there are good reasons for including this letter in a statement of Peter's theology, since it is attributed to his name. While the main interest of the epistle is to deal with false teachers who are troubling the believers, there are some significant theological statements. God is seen to be just in his judgments (2:4ff.). He nevertheless knows how to deliver the godly (2:9). He is not slow concerning his promise (3:8). His person is glorious (1:17). Moreover believers, as in 1 Peter, have responsibility to work things out (1:5ff., 10), although God will ensure that they receive an entrance into his kingdom (1:11). In the course of this letter, an important statement is made about the Scriptures (1:20, 21), which has exerted a powerful influence on Christian thought."²⁰

²⁰ D. Guthrie, "Petrine Theology" in *New Dictionary of Theology*, Eds. Sinclair Ferguson, and J.I. Packer (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 507.

Appendix 6

Recommended Commentaries

1 Peter

Peter Achtemeier, *1 Peter* (Hermeneia), Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996. D. A. Carson calls Achtemeier's work "the fullest commentary in English at the exegetical level" and "a masterpiece of careful scholarship."²¹

Karen Jobes, *1 Peter* (BECNT), Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005.

Carson considers this book to be "the best general-use commentary on 1 Peter. This work is strong on every front while remaining accessible."²²

Wayne Grudem, *1 Peter*, (TNTC), Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007.

2 Peter

Richard Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter* (WBC). Waco: Word, 1983. 0849902495

Carson calls Bauckham's commentary "exhaustive," and considers it "by far the best work on 2 Peter."²³

Thomas Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude* (NAC), Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003.

Douglas Moo, *2 Peter, Jude* (NIVAC), Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.

²¹ D. A. Carson, *New Testament Commentary Survey* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986/2007), 136.

²² D. A. Carson, *New Testament Commentary Survey* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986/2007), 136.

²³ D. A. Carson, *New Testament Commentary Survey* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986/2007), 139.