

THE BOOKS OF  
**1 & 2 PETER**





# INTRODUCTION TO 1 PETER

1 Peter is the first letter written by **Apostle Peter** to multiple church communities in the Roman province of Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey). Peter learned that these mostly non-Jewish (Gentile) Christians were being persecuted and faced hostility and harassment from their Greek and Roman neighbours (1 Peter 2:12; 3:16; 4:16). **Peter wrote this letter to encourage believers in their suffering, offering them hope and guidance.** Understanding this context sheds light on the letter's design and main themes.

Peter opens the letter by greeting these churches as the “*chosen*” people of God who are “*exiled*” around the world (1 Peter 1:1). While he makes it clear that these Christians are Gentiles (1 Peter 1:14, 18; 4:3-4), Peter goes on to describe them using Old Testament references about God “*choosing*” Israel (Genesis. 18:19; Isaiah. 41:8), the family stemming from Abraham, who was himself an “*exile, a wanderer and a Gentile*” (Genesis 23:4). This is the key message of hope that Peter repeats throughout the letter.

He wants these suffering Gentile Christians to see that, through Jesus, they now belong to the family of Abraham and are wandering exiles just as Abraham was. Similar to their spiritual ancestors, they are likely to be misunderstood and mistreated, but their future hope was to be in the One who called them and their identity based on His Kingdom.

# THE BIG IDEAS FROM 1 PETER

## ■ Live in the ‘Living Hope’

Through this letter, a born-again believer is **renewed on the inside** by a living hope that came through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Peter describes the living hope as **an inheritance** that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for us. So, Peter calls these scattered Christians to live as God’s **chosen exiles/strangers/foreigners/sojourners** on this earth with unshakable hope because of the great salvation through Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:3-4).

## ■ Encouragement to live a God-honouring life in a hostile world

As Christians, we might feel like outsiders in today’s world, living in places that sometimes don’t understand or accept us. It’s important that we stay away from wrong choices, live good lives, and be ready for tough times, all while acting in a way that shows God’s glory. This idea of **who we are as Christians and how important it is to live a godly life, affects how we behave with people** in charge, the government, at work, and at home. Our good deeds should be like a lighthouse, guiding others toward the life-transforming power of God.

1 Peter 2:11—12, *“Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. <sup>12</sup>Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day He visits us.”*

## ■ Suffering that leads to Blessing

Have you thought about this: if there is a God who is all good and all-powerful, how can suffering exist? This is not a trivial thought, and the Bible does not give an easy answer to this. However, it has a lot to say about **how our God has actually suffered on our behalf**. Hard times will come. We will



inevitably suffer. But Apostle Peter shows us that even as we walk through the furnace of trials, God provides us with resources that transform the heat into a refiner's fire—so we can emerge as pure gold. With the right perspective, suffering can refine us rather than destroy us because God Himself walks with us through the fire.

*1 Peter 4:12-13, "Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. <sup>13</sup>But rejoice in as much as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when His glory is revealed."*

The Lord Jesus becomes the focal point for guiding one's life in the midst of trials and tribulations. **By rooting their perseverance in the person and work of Christ, believers can always cling to hope in the midst of suffering.** For people with this hope, suffering and persecution can be considered a strange gift. Suffering burns away false hopes and distractions like a purifying fire and shows us our true identity. So, paradoxically, life's hardships can actually deepen our faith and make it more genuine.

# CHAPTER SUMMARY

## 1 Peter 1:1 – 2:10

### New Identity in Jesus Christ

#### 1 Peter 2:9

*"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light."*

## 1 Peter 2:11 – 4:19

### Suffering for God's Glory

#### 1 Peter 4:13

*"But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when His glory is revealed."*

## 1 Peter 5

### Stand Firm in God's Grace

#### 1 Peter 5:8-9

*"Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith..."*

# 1 PETER 1:1 – 2:10

## NEW IDENTITY IN JESUS CHRIST

Peter draws upon Old Testament imagery from the family of Israel and applies it to these Gentile Christians. Like the Israelites who left Egypt and their former life behind on the way to a new future, these Christians are the “*holy people*” of God journeying through the wilderness. They are a **people of the ‘new Exodus’**, redeemed and sanctified by the precious blood of the ‘*Passover Lamb*’ (Jesus Christ). Peter presents them as a **‘new covenant’ people** with God’s word in their heart and mind. Finally, they are the ‘*new temple*’ built on the foundation of Jesus Himself and they are the ‘*new kingdom of priests*’ who serve God as His representatives to the nations.

One needs frequent and thorough reminders of who we really are – this is one of the foundational questions of our lives. Unless we do that, the misleading messages we get from the world (*that we are who we are because of who our parents were, or where we live or how much we earn*) will eat away us like rust. So, at the beginning of his letter to these scattered Gentile Christians, Peter doesn’t address them based on their ancestry, moral background, social status, wealth, or poverty. While all those things were part of their old identity, **he is sketching something new—a fresh identity in Christ.**

Our **New Identity** flows out of the **precious relationship** we have with Christ.

- We are a chosen people, royal priesthood, a holy nation and God's special possession (1 Peter 2:9).
- We were once in darkness and away from God and had no identity. But now, we have been shown mercy through Jesus Christ, and we have a new identity as God's people (1 Peter 2:9-10)
- This identity is of eternal value because of God's eternal Word in us. (1 Peter 1:23)
- We are called to live according to this new identity, calling and purpose. Our heart, emotions, thinking, hope and goals must align with our new identity. (1 Peter 1:13-16).
- We did not earn this new identity, but it is Christ who redeemed us from vanity, purchased us by His precious blood and adopted us by giving us His Spirit into this new family (1 Peter 1:18-19).





# 1 PETER 2:11 – 4:19

## SUFFERING FOR GOD'S GLORY

Suffering is not a popular topic, and we all have a natural tendency to avoid it. In the entirety of 1 Peter, the theme of suffering is clearly dominant and pervasive. However, about half the references deal with the *suffering endured by the followers of Christ*.

- They suffer trials and the testing of their faith (1:6).
- They are falsely accused as evildoers (2:12).
- Some are treated harshly and unjustly by their masters (2:18–20).
- Some wives have unbelieving husbands (3:1).
- Believers experience evil or abuse from others (3:9).
- Former friends insult them because of the changed lifestyle (4:4).
- They simply suffer as Christians (4:16).

### Biblical Theology of Suffering

Suffering is not what God ultimately desires for Christ, Christians, or anyone else, though God may allow and even include it in God's sovereign or permissive will. Instead, suffering happens, often with causes not fully understood, and Christ and His followers are to respond discerningly, seeking God's support, grace, and glory. *God's ultimate desire is healing and life, including righteousness, justice, and peace*

Suffering is not to be sought by Christians. It is to be avoided unless it is truly a participation in the sufferings of Christ.

Suffering by the innocent or the righteous is virtually inevitable in a sinful world, as seen supremely in the suffering of the innocent Jesus.

So, when you are tempted to think that your suffering proves God does not love you, remember two things: a) Jesus suffered more than any human who has ever lived, and b) the Father, according to Jesus, loves you just as much as He does Jesus. After all, God loved His Son more than anything, and yet His Son suffered.

- Moreover, they face the attack of the devil, sharing in the suffering of many sisters and brothers *in all the world* (5:9).

Peter encourages us to look to Christ and His sufferings. **1 Peter 2:21**, *"To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps."* Peter implies that if Christ, being the perfect man, suffered blamelessly, then how much more should we expect and endure suffering, and follow His example in suffering. **The suffering of Jesus Christ is central for a Christian in confronting life's painful experiences and anticipating God's ultimate righteous judgment.**

On the one hand, God is absolutely sovereign over suffering. It's never out of His control. It's always part of His plan. On the other hand, God came into the world and actually suffered with us. No other religion says



God is both a sovereign and a suffering God. This theological foundation explains why Christians can be both realistic and yet hopeful about suffering.

### What should you do when you suffer?

Peter recommends to all believers in **1 Peter 4:19**, *"So then,*

*those who suffer because they follow God's will should commit their lives to a trustworthy Creator by doing what is right."*

The response a believer must have to a trial or while enduring pain and suffering is to **commit to God**. Here, the word "commit" is equivalent to "entrust," which is a banking term. It means "to deposit for safekeeping." Putting one's life in God's hands is never a bad investment. We can always trust that not only will He keep us safe, but He will give us a life that accrues the most "interest." Also, believers can rejoice during suffering because the Spirit of God rests on those who suffer (4:14).

However, Peter is also a realist. He knows that these Christians will continue to be persecuted, so he reminds them of their hope of future justification (1 Peter 3:18 – 4:11). Peter goes on to show how baptism (1 Peter 3:20-21) points to a similar future justification for Jesus' persecuted followers.

(Note: Karma says if you're suffering, you personally deserve it—it's because of something you did in another life. And so, if you aren't suffering, it must be because you lived well in the past and earned your current pleasant life. Biblically, you cannot assume your good circumstances mean God is pleased with you. And biblically, you cannot assume that if you're suffering, it's a direct chastisement for some wrongdoing. See John 9 and the whole book of Job.)

# 1 PETER 5

## STAND FIRM IN GOD'S GRACE

As Peter comes to the close of his first letter, he encourages them to resist the temptation to blend into the culture around them or compromise their faith. He urged them to **stand firm in the truth of the gospel**.

In the face of the threat of being “devoured” by suffering, imprisonment, or even torture and execution, the believers are urged to stand firm and be faithful, thus resisting the devil and his chosen instruments of persecution.

**1 Peter 5:8-9**, *“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.”*

One resists the devil by immersing oneself in God’s word and faith in God’s grace. God’s word promises to all who suffer that their suffering is *for a little while* (vs.10), and during the season of suffering, He will care for us (vs.8) and will provide grace to *restore, strengthen, establish, and perfect us* (vs.10).

God Himself will write the final, unending chapter of your life! And so, Peter concludes with a doxology: *“To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen”* (vs.11). It’s an encouraging reminder that God’s strength and sovereignty are supreme over the empire of Rome, and the rule of Satan or any persecution which

they have suffered. God will have the final word, and so His children are eternally secure regardless of how this world treats them.



## CONCLUSION

Peter's first letter is a powerful reminder of Christian hope in the midst of suffering. 1 Peter is written to push us to press on through the troubles, recognizing that their presence in our lives is temporary. One's encouragement comes from a God who fully empowers us to stand firm for Him by walking in faith in Christ and hoping for glorious days ahead. Grace and peace are promised in abundance to all who belong to Christ!

# INTRODUCTION TO 2 PETER

Apostle Peter knows he is about to die, so he carefully drafts this letter to the network of churches in Asia Minor (2 Peter 1:12-15). It is a short letter, with three power-packed chapters, reminding his readers of the truth of the gospel in an effort to inoculate them against false teachings. The truth of the gospel is that God's grace will lead His followers into godliness because His divine nature is flowing into the lives of His people.

## THE BIG IDEAS FROM 2 PETER

### ■ **Grow in the Grace and Knowledge of God**

He begins by challenging Jesus' followers to never stop growing (2 Peter 1). All growth is by grace; it's God's gift. We must constantly ask Him in prayer to empower our growth. We need God's grace, not only when we first believe in Christ, but we need it again and again to become the people God wants us to be.

The reason to grow and mature is to recognize and stay away from the increasing number of corrupt teachers who lead Christians astray with their twisted way of life



and distorted theology (2 Peter 2-3). Peter urges them to be **firmly rooted in the truth of God** and to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as their Lord.

He knows that if they are grounded in the basics of faith, and they remain active in those basics, he will never need to fear them being led astray.

### ■ **Beware of False Teachers**

If 1 Peter taught us about external trials like persecution and suffering, 2 Peter teaches us to recognize and address internal trials like false teachers and immaturity, that had crept into the church during Peter's time and continues to do so today. More often than not, it is the internal trials that are more painful and dangerous than external trials.

False teachers claim to teach God's word but twist and distort its truth. They rise up as those who are one with us in Christ. As Jesus warned, they come as *"wolves in sheep's clothing"* (Matthew 7:15). False teachers deny the words and teachings of Jesus. The ultimate test of any teaching is the godliness that it produces. Teaching not based on Scripture will result in an unholy life. Instead of godliness, the words and actions of false teachers will be characterized by sin and their own lust for power (2 Peter 2:10-22).

# CHAPTER SUMMARY

## 2 Peter 1

### Grow and Mature in Jesus

**2 Peter 1:3**  
*"His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness."*

## 2 Peter 2

### Avoid False Teachers

**2 Peter 2:1,**  
*"But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them..."*

## 2 Peter 3

### Keep Trusting Jesus

**2 Peter 3:9**  
*"The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. Instead, he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."*



## 2 PETER 1

### GROW AND MATURE IN JESUS

Peter begins by reminding these churches that, through Jesus, God has invited people to become “*participants of His divine nature*” (2 Peter 1:3), that is, to share in God’s own eternal life and love. This is an incredible gift that comes with lifelong responsibility. To receive this gift entails a commitment to develop the same character traits that mark God’s own divine nature: **moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, patient endurance, godliness, and family affection.** The final trait, **love**, encompasses and crowns all the others (2 Peter 1:5-7).

In Galatians 5:22-23, Paul lists the “*fruit of the Spirit.*” 1 Timothy 6:11 has yet another list of godly qualities a Christian should pursue. None of the New Testament lists are exactly alike, which suggests that Peter has given us a selected list and that there are other character qualities to pursue. **Peter chose his list of qualities mostly to overcome false teachers who would seek to distort the truth of the Scriptures and seduce people to follow them.**

Peter emphasizes the *Word of God*. He speaks of our salvation and sanctification as the result of knowing God through His revealed Word. This is



the thrust of his entire first chapter. **Heeding Peter's words keep us from being unfruitful in our relationship with Jesus Christ** (verse 8) and enables us to live presently in light of our past conversion and hope for the future (verse 9). **Doing as Peter instructs can keep us from stumbling** and assure us a triumphant entry into the kingdom of our Lord. Conversely, neglecting Peter's instruction diminishes our perception and confidence in the salvation God has provided and sets us up for a fall.

## **2 PETER 2**

### **AVOID FALSE TEACHERS**

In Chapter 2, Peter addresses the false teachers that have gained access to the church. The false teachers are identified by several attributes mentioned in 2 Peter 2:

1. **Destructive Heresies.** They introduce wrong teachings that lead people astray and even deny
2. **Deceptive Practices.** They exploit their followers with deceptive words and confuse them with the intent to gain their money (2 Peter 2:3).
3. **Immorality.** They indulge in sensuality, enticing unstable souls to sexual immorality. Their desire for sin is never satisfied (2 Peter 2:14).
4. **Greed/Covetousness.** They are motivated by greed and have a heart to gain from others through covetous practices (2 Peter 2:3, 14-15).
5. **Arrogance.** They are arrogant and self-willed, not afraid to speak evil of glorious ones (2 Peter 2:10-11).

Peter reminds the readers how God dealt with the wicked in the past by recalling three stories from the Old Testament. If God did not spare the *fallen angels, the ancient civilization in Noah's day, or Sodom and Gomorrah* (2 Peter 2:4-8), then how much more will He bring certain judgment on false teachers who claim to be Christians but reject the truth (2 Peter 2:9-10).

**The pathology of false teachers is very clear. They deny the truth, and their teaching does not produce godly living.** They are arrogant and distort spiritual truth. They spend their time in foolish speculations that lead only to chaos and division. Having forsaken the truth, they face eternal destruction. They serve money, not God. The church must take extreme care to grow and mature in the truth of God's word and not be carried away by these false teachers.

## Again, Entangled in it?!!

We are responsible and accountable for our own spiritual welfare, and if we allow ourselves to be led astray, we will pay a tremendous price for our sin. We cannot blame the circumstances, or false teachings, people etc.

2 Peter 2:20, *"If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and are overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning."*

Peter is helping us understand Christianity in simple terms:

God does not offer us an eternal life insurance policy which allows us to "accept" Christ and then not follow Him; nor to be "born again" of the Spirit and then to lust after the flesh as our lifestyle; nor to "commit" our lives to Christ and then live for the devil. That is not Christianity; it is pure hypocrisy! And Peter will have no part of that kind of false teaching. It is an example of the vicious kind of false teaching that deceives us.

To walk in the Spirit, whom we receive through faith in Christ, is to walk in the opposite direction from the lusts of the flesh. This is the only way to escape the pollution of the world and the ultimate death and destruction to which it always leads.

## 2 PETER 3

### KEEP TRUSTING JESUS

The question initially raised by the corrupt leaders would have become inescapable in the minds of these persecuted Christians: *Why did Jesus delay when such intense evil was ruling their day? Also, when is this promised return of Jesus?"*

Peter begins by reminding his readers how the Scriptures warned that there would be scoffers in the last days who depart from the truth and follow sinful desires. They would question the promise of God's return, citing that ever since the patriarchs died, all things have continued just as they were from the beginning. **They purposefully overlook the fact that God had intervened before, both in the account of creation and the flood. God would surely intervene again on a final day of reckoning for the unrighteous and rescue for the righteous (2 Peter 3:1-7).**

But here's the real question: *Why is God taking so long for His coming?*

#### 1. **God's timetable is different from ours (verse 8)**

Peter reminds us that our human conception of time is extremely limited. The long expanses of time through which God works doesn't fit neatly within the framework of our very short lives. Thus, what seems so long to us might not be as significant when viewed from the perspective of the eternal God who surveys and rules over all of human history. But, remember that God is always on time!

## 2. God is patient, wanting all to come to repentance

God delays not because He is slow, but because He is patient toward sinners, giving everyone time for repentance. We see this in God's description of Himself from Exodus 34:6-7, *"...The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty..."*

This is as true as ever when it comes to the second coming of the Lord. Though we may long for Jesus' return and the defeat of all evil, God has allowed these **last days to continue so that more people can turn toward Him in faith**. The delay isn't a hiccup in His plan; it's a part of His plan, which makes Him kind, not cruel. This truth should actually fuel our patience and passion as we await our Lord's return.

*2 Peter 3:8-9, "But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. <sup>9</sup>The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead, he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."*

*So how do we live right now? It's with **Patience and Purpose!** We wait patiently, knowing that God is orchestrating all of human history toward His glorious end. And we wait purposely, joining in God's redemptive mission to make disciples of all people. (2 Peter 3:11-12).*

## CONCLUSION

The tone of 2 Peter is pretty intense, but his passion comes from the firm conviction that God loves this world and is determined to rescue it through Jesus. This means that God's love must confront and deal with the sin and injustice that ruin His beloved creation. In God's own time, He will do everything right, and one has to live with patience and purpose, awaiting a new future for humanity and for all of creation.







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