

By Charles Willis

Living Stones



A Study of 1st and 2nd Peter

“You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house
for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices
acceptable to God through Jesus Christ”
(1 Peter 2:5)

Table Of Contents

Lesson 1: 1 Peter 1:1-12	Page 2
Lesson 2: 1 Peter 1:13-25	Page 3
Lesson 3: 1 Peter 2:1-12	Page 4
Lesson 4: 1 Peter 2:13-25	Page 5
Lesson 5: 1 Peter 3:1-12	Page 6
Lesson 6: 1 Peter 3:13-22	Page 7
Lesson 7: 1 Peter 4:1-11	Page 8
Lesson 8: 1 Peter 4:12-5:4	Page 9
Lesson 9: 1 Peter 5:5-14	Page 10
Lesson 10: 2 Peter 1:1-11	Page 12
Lesson 11: 2 Peter 1:12-21	Page 13
Lesson 12: 2 Peter 2:1-16	Page 14
Lesson 13: 2 Peter 2:17-3:18	Page 15

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Foreword

Simon was a fisherman who lived and worked around the waters of the Sea of Galilee (Mark 1:16-17). We know he was an uneducated man, Acts 4:13 states he was “unlearned”. He was never recognized nor called a teacher or Rabbi. This same reference in Acts tells us he was “ignorant” which means literally one without professional knowledge – he was a layman, an ordinary person.

As a fisherman Simon seems to have been somewhat successful. We know he lived at two different places (possible at the same time), both Bethsaida (John 1:44) and Capernaum (Mark 1:21, 29). These two locations were about 3 miles apart on the coast of the Sea of Galilee. He owned his own boat and nets.

In John 1:42 Jesus changes his name to Cephas, which is translated Peter. His name is “petros” in the Greek which meant “a piece of rock” or “a pebble”. Many have confused this meaning with the feminine Greek word “petras” which means “a mass of rock”. The mixed up understanding usually occurs in reference to Matthew 16:18 where Jesus says “you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church”. He is not building His church on Peter (a piece of rock) but on the fact Jesus is the Son of God (“rock” meaning a mass of rock). The context of the reading bears this out.

We know a lot about Peter from the gospel records which helps our understanding of his writings in 1st and 2nd Peter. He was given the keys to the kingdom (Matthew 16:16-19). He opened the doors of salvation to the Jews first (Acts 2) and also to the Greeks (Acts 10). Peter walked on the water with Christ (Matthew 14:25-33). He denied the Lord three times (John 18:15-27). He was the first apostle to enter the empty tomb (John 20:1-8). He was restored by Christ (John 21:15-17). Peter and John

performed the first miracles in the church (Acts 3:1-4:23). He was the one to reveal the lie and pass judgment upon Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11). Angels released him from prison (Acts 5:14-40 and 12:2-17). He was reprimanded by Paul when “he stood condemned” (Galatians 2:11-14). Many, many other events are recorded about the life of Peter.

The Bible reveals several character traits including:
Boldness (Acts 4:13; 5:29).
Impulsiveness (Matt. 14:29; John 18:10).
Penitence (Luke 22:61-62; Gal 2:11-14).
Leadership (Acts 1:15; Acts 4:8; Acts 15:7).
Courageousness (Acts 2; 5:18, 28, 29).

His preaching was done primarily in Jerusalem (Gal. 1:8) and he was an Elder of the church (1 Pet. 5:1). His life reveals much about how we are to live our life. Many feel we can relate to Peter because scripture shows us his good qualities alongside his faults. He was a man like us.

John 21:18 tells us some of how Peter died. Jesus told him he would “stretch forth hands” which likely refers to his helplessness as he grew older, though some want to see it as stretching his hands on a cross. Peter was told he would go “wither thou wouldest not”, most likely meaning his death. He would die as a martyr for Christ.

The theme of the first letter is suffering and is threaded throughout the letter. The second letter seems to not have as central a theme, but appears to be more of a potpourri of ideas. There is no debate about the authenticity of Peter as the author. Where it was written from is debated and ranges from Babylon to Rome. It was probably written shortly before the persecution of Nero in A.D.64.

1 Peter 1:1-12

1. What is meant in verse 2 “elect according to the foreknowledge of God”?
2. Compare the statement in verse 2 “sprinkled with His blood” with Exodus 24:8.
3. From the end of verse 2 what was Peter wishing for these people? (Don’t just write a quotation, try to explain it)
4. How does Peter describe our inheritance? Beside each description write one synonym that best restates the word and a supporting passage for Peter’s statement.
 - A.
 - B.
 - C.
 - D.
5. Verse 6 says “in this you greatly rejoice”. What are we rejoicing in?
6. What is significant about the “proof of your faith” in verse 7 when the theme of the book is considered?
7. Explain the analogy in verse 7 between the testing of gold and the proving of our faith.
8. In what way(s) does verse 8 describe faith?
9. What is the outcome of our faith (v.9)?
10. According to verse 10 the prophets prophesied of the grace that should come to us. What is this grace we have received?

1 Peter 1:13-25

1. What is meant in verse 13 by the phrase “prepare your minds for action”?
2. What will Jesus bring us at the revelation?
3. What phrases and words are used by Peter to portray us as God’s children?
4. What does verse 17 teach us about the judgment?
5. Verse 19 speaks of Christ as the lamb of God. Compare the following passages.
 - A. Exodus 12:1-7, 12-13
 - B. John 1:29
 - C. Acts 8:32-35
 - D. Revelation 5:6, 13
 - E. Revelation 7:14
6. From verse 20 explain what was foreknown.
7. According to verse 21 why did God raise Jesus from the dead?
8. Explain the comparison of “purified your souls” and “fervently love one another from the heart” in verse 22.
9. What is the imperishable seed with which we have been born again?
 - A. How does this verse support the concept “once saved, always saved”?
 - B. What will live forever?
10. Of what significance is the statement in verse 25 about the gospel preached and the Word of God?

1 Peter 2:1-12

1. Define some terms:
 - A. Malice
 - B. Deceit
 - C. Hypocrisy
 - D. Envy
 - E. Slander
2. In verse 2 Peter calls a person young in the faith a “newborn babe”. What other scriptures effectively use the same analogy?
3. Who are the “living stones” (v.4)?
4. How does Jesus meet the description of: (try for a supporting verse)
 - A. A Corner Stone (v.6, 7)
 - B. Precious (v.6)
 - C. A Stone Of Stumbling (v.8)
5. After each of the following descriptions of a Christian (v.9), give a reference that supports it.
 - A. A Chosen Race
 - B. A Royal Priesthood
 - C. A Holy Nation
 - D. A People’s For God’s Own Possession
6. Describe a Christian’s “priesthood”.
7. What are some of the spiritual sacrifices we can offer to God that are acceptable?
8. Who does verse 10 refer to?
9. Why are we to abstain from fleshly lust as pilgrims?
10. What kind of reputation are we to have in the world (v.12)?

1 Peter 2:13-25

1. What type of American citizens are we to be?
2. Name a few of the things which we are to submit ourselves.
3. Which verses in this lesson speak to the theme of the book?
4. Peter tells us to suffer as Christ suffered (v.21-25). In what ways? Explain.
5. We often hear of the “Christian attitude”. In your opinion, which one verse best describes the attitudes we should have?
6. What is meant by “freedom as a covering for evil” (v.16)?
7. Does verse 18 apply to an employee/boss relationship? If yes, in what ways?
8. According to verse 20, what is to be our attitude in suffering? Please explain.
9. Who is the Shepherd and Guardian of our souls (v.25)? (please explain and give other references for the symbolism)
 - A. Shepherd
 - B. Guardian
10. Unto what are we called? (get the answer directly from the reading)

1 Peter 3:1-12

1. Why does Peter say women are to be in subjection to their husband?
 - A. Does this concept of winning the husband apply to a husband trying to win his wife?
 - B. What attributed will convince the unbelieving spouse to believe?
2. What is “chaste...behavior” (v.2)?
3. How is that coupled with respectful behavior (King James has “fear”)? What does this mean?
4. Verse 3 forbids women to physically adorn themselves. True or false?
5. What examples other than Sara could women look to in the Old Testament to learn of subjection to the husband?
6. How are husbands to dwell with their wives?
7. How can a couples prayers be hindered (v.7)?
8. How do we remain harmonious (v.8)?
9. What does “brotherly” mean (v.8)? (King James has to “love as brethren”)
10. According to verse 9, what is our attitude to be when a brother does us wrong?
11. Rewrite verses 10-12 stating the opposite truth not listed. (For example: “The one who desires life, to love and see good days” becomes: For he that will hate life and see evil days...)
12. What do we learn about prayer in verse 12?

1 Peter 3:13-22

1. What should our attitude be about suffering for righteousness' sake?
2. How do we sanctify the Lord in our hearts (v.15)?
3. In what way do we answer people who question our religious beliefs?
4. Why did Christ suffer (v.18)?
5. Is the being made "alive in the Spirit" (v.18) referring to Jesus or us? Explain.
6. Explain the symbolism between baptism and the flood (20-21).
7. How is baptism an appeal to God for a good conscience (v.21)?
8. Where is Jesus now and what authority does He have (v.22)? (list some other references about the authority Christ now has)
9. Generally, to what is our suffering compared (v.18)?
10. Give answer for the reason in you about (v.15):
 - A. Baptism for the remission of sins
 - B. Partaking of Lord's Supper every first day of the week
 - C. There is only one Church.
 - D. Not dancing.
 - E. No alcoholic drinking (T-totaler)
 - F. Gaining authority only from the New Testament

1 Peter 4:1-11

1. “Arm yourselves also with the same purpose” (v.1). Same as what? Please explain.
2. How can we cease to sin (v.1-2)?
3. Please define (from v.3):
 - A. “A course of sensuality” (NAS); Lasciviousness (KJ)
 - B. Carousings (NAS); Revellings (KJ)
 - C. Drinking parties (NAS); Banquetings (KJ)
4. What things does Peter say about how the new man will be different (v.4)?
5. Why was the gospel preached unto them that were dead (v.6)?
6. Explain from verse 7:
 - A. The end of all things is near.
 - B. Sober spirit.
 - C. The purpose of prayer.
7. How does love cover a multitude of sins(8)?
8. How would you practice hospitality grudgingly (v.9)?
9. What is meant by the phrase “whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God” (v.11)?
10. Verse 10 uses the term “steward”.
 - A. Definition:
 - B. What are we stewards of?
 - C. Site other places where the concept of the Christian steward is used.

1 Peter 4:12-5:4

1. How does Peter describe the trial we are to undergo? (List other examples of our trial from 1 Peter).
2. How do we share in Christ's sufferings (v.13)?
3. In what ways are we instructed not to suffer (v.15)?
4. Verse 16 talks about not being ashamed. List a few ways which we can demonstrate shame in regard to Christ.
5. Where will judgment begin (v.17)?
6. What is meant by "with difficulty the righteous is saved" (v.18)?
7. How do we entrust our souls to God (v.19)?
8. In 5:1 what three things does Peter tell us about himself?
9. How does an elder "shepherd" the flock (v.2)?
10. Describe the manner in which an elder is to take the oversight (v.2) (do's and don'ts).
11. Who is told they will receive a crown of glory?

1 Peter 5:5-14

1. Is the first sentence in verse 5 speaking about a leader in the church, or an older person?
2. How can we all “clothe ourselves with humility toward one another” (5)?
3. Explain verse 6, or restate it into your own words.
4. Prepare an outline of verse 8 which could be used as major points of a sermon (try to write one application for each major point).
5. How do we resist the devil?
6. After we have suffered a while what will God do (v.10)?
7. Verse 12 says “Through Silvanus...I have written to you briefly...that this is the true grace of God...” What is the true grace of God?
8. What is meant by Babylon (v.13)? Was this literal or figurative?
9. Is verse 14 a command?
10. “Peace be with you all” – what is Peter hoping for them?

End Of Letter Review

Try to pick a portion of the book that you think helps you the most. It could be one verse, or several from the same opening. Be prepared to tell us why that passage stands out in your mind. (It's O.K. to have two or three passages)

List all the references from 1 Peter that compare our suffering to Christ's suffering.

2 Peter 1:1-11

1. Name some things that God's power has given us in regards to (v.3):
 - A. Life
 - B. Godliness
 - C. Who is the "us" in this verse?
2. Who was called to glory and excellence (v.3)? Are we to live unto glory and excellence? What does this mean?
3. What great and precious promises are being referred to in verse 4?
4. Verse 5-7 begins with faith already established. How do we get faith?
 - A. Define each of the 8 terms used in this passage.
 1. Faith
 2. Moral excellence
 3. Knowledge
 4. Self control
 5. Perseverance
 6. Godliness
 7. Brotherly Kindness
 8. Love
 - B. Can we work on each of these attributes simultaneously or do we have to progress from one to the next till we finally achieve charity toward the end of our life?
5. What is the stated benefit of possessing those qualities (v.8-9)? What of those who do not possess them?
6. Define the word "diligent" used in verse 10. How do we demonstrate diligence in making our calling and election sure?
7. Verse 10 says if you do these things you will never fall. Some would twist this to mean if I did it once I would never fall. How would you defend a belief that it is a continuous adding of these virtues to our life? What other references help?

2 Peter 1:12-21

1. Verse 12 talks about reminding us of these things. What things?
2. We are established in the “truth which is present with you” (v.12), does that mean there will be a “future truth” revealed?
3. To what is verse 14 referring?
4. How does verse 16 speak to the authenticity of the scriptures?
5. What other verses from this lesson speak to the authenticity of the writer as being “informed”?
6. What passage(s) in the New Testament are quoted in verse 17?
7. Peter shifts to the topic of prophecy in verse 19. What is his point?
8. What is meant by an “act of human will” or “private interpretation” (KJ) (v.20)? I thought we could all read and understand?
9. Analyze verse 21.
 - A. To whom did the word of God come?
 - B. Could someone become a prophet if they desired to?
 - C. “Men moved”?
 - D. “By the Holy Spirit”.
 1. What was the work of the Holy Spirit in salvation?
 2. What other verse speak to the work of the Holy Spirit?

2 Peter 2:1-16

1. The first three verses of chapter 2 speak about false prophets. Describe how today's religious culture in America has fulfilled the teaching of Peter.
2. Where do the false teachers come from (2:1)?
3. What examples are listed as to the fact of God's punishment for the false teacher?
4. If God knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation (v.9) why doesn't He? Why are we allowed to be tempted?
5. What is meant by those that "despise authority" (v.10)?
6. Verse 10 speaks of those who do "not tremble when they revile angelic majesties".
 - A. Who are the "majesties"?
 - B. Does this passage teach we should fear the "majesties"?
7. Verse 12 speaks of "these" as natural brutes. Who is being referred to?
8. As a false prophet "carouse(s)" with us, in what sort of things does he engage (v.13)?
9. What is the story of Balaam the son of Bosor? (Look in Numbers 22)
10. How did he love the wages of unrighteousness (v.15)?

2 Peter 2:17-3:18

1. According to verse 19 who is the slave of corruption? (You may need to scan backward toward the first of the chapter)
2. How do false prophets speak (v.18)?
3. Why does verse 20 describe the latter condition as worse?
 - A. What other verses explain the meaning?
 - B. What example is used?
4. If our minds are “pure” (KJ) or “sincere” (NAS), why do they need to be stirred up (v.1)?
5. When are the “last days” (v.3)? Please list references.
6. The scoffer made what remark (v.4)? How did Peter answer it?
7. What does Peter teach about the nature of God (v.8-9)?
8. How does Peter describe the Day of the Lord (v.10-13)?
9. So, there will be a day of the Lord. What is Peter’s answer to the unwritten “so what” (v.14)?
10. How does Peter describe some of Paul’s letters (v.16)? What does he say people do with them?
11. Verse 18 says to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus. What other New Testament passages express the desire for a Christian to grow in their grace and knowledge?