

[PDF version of the lesson notes.](#)

I. Introduction

- **Authorship.** I Peter presents itself as written by Peter, an apostle (I Peter 1:1). The letter was accepted as authentic in the 2nd century AD. The first probable citation is from Polycarp's letter to the Phillipians which was written around 130 CE.[1] "It is first cited explicitly as a Petrine writing by Irenaeus (in the late second century), and therefore after its use became widespread." [2]
- Many scholars believe it is unlikely that Peter wrote the epistle. "The cultured Greek of the epistle makes it the perhaps the most literary composition in the NT." [3] It is likely the Peter knew some Greek but many scholars believe it is unlikely that he could produce a letter of such literary sophistication. On the other hand, Peter may have employed a scribe or secretary (we know Paul did).
- **Date Written.** Dates range widely based on assumptions or beliefs about authorship (genuine or pseudepigraphic). If Peter, the apostle, wrote it then the letter must have been written before his death. If the letter was not written by Peter then the letter was probably written around 80 CE.[4]
- **Audience.** The letter is addressed to Christians congregations in the northern half of Asia Minor (modern Turkey).[5]
- *What do you think about I Peter? Is it an epistle that you read a lot? Why or why not?*
- *How is the epistle different than the epistles of Paul and James? How is it similar? Did you notice similar or different points of emphasis?*
- *What are the main themes of the epistle? Is the most famous or well known scripture in I Peter, I Peter 2:9, part of a larger theme in the epistle?*

(9) But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:

II. Salutation

- Read I Peter 1:1–2:

(1) Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout

Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, (2) Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

- *Why does Peter call his audience "strangers?" Is it because he doesn't know them personally or is there other possible reasons?*
- *Does it strike you as strange that he calls them strangers and refers to them as the elect?*
- *The NRSV translates the underlying Greek as "exiles" as opposed to "strangers." Does that make more sense here in this context? In what sense is the addressed audience "exiles?"*
- *What is meant by the phrase "elect according to the foreknowledge of God?" Could the phrase mean, "chosen and destined by God the Father?" Could some notion of predestination be compatible with LDS doctrine and thought in this specific situation?*
- *Do you think this verse is making an allusion to Genesis 23:2–4?*
- *What images does the phrase, "sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" conjure up?*

III. The Situation

- Read 1 Peter 1:3–9:

(3) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (4) To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, (5) Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (6) Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: (7) That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: (8) Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: (9) Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.
- *Peter uses a series of metaphors: rebirth, gold, and fire. What do these metaphors have in common? How are they connected together?*
- *How would you describe the overriding point of this pericope? Would you agree with the following or does it not capture the essence of the message?*

Here is the paradox of the Christian existence: joy in the face of suffering; assurance and deliverance in the midst of persecution; complete reliance not on what is visible, but on the unseen God.[6]

- What is verse 5 about? What is the "last time" referred to in this verse?
- *Why can the recipients of the letter rejoice (verse 6)? Does the need for joy in the midst of trials remind you of the epistle of James and some of the Pauline letters? Why do you think this is such a consistent theme or point of emphasis across the different letters and writers?*
- *Why does it mention that the recipients are begotten through the resurrection? Why emphasize the resurrection and not other aspects of what Christ accomplished?*

IV. Promises

- Read 1 Peter 1:10–12:

(10) Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: (11) Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. (12) Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

- *How would you summarize Peter's point? What is he trying to emphasize?*
- *How are these verses related to the first 9 verses of the chapter?*
- *Is it fair to say that Peter is trying to emphasize the special place and the unique position they are in?*

V. Redemption

- Read I Peter 1:13–21:

(13) Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; (14) As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: (15) But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; (16) Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. (17) And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass

the time of your sojourning here in fear: (18) Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; (19) But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: (20) Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, (21) Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

- *What do you think it means to "gird up the loins of your mind?" What does the imagery of girding up the loins imply in this context imply?*
- *How are verses 14 and 15 related to each other? What does it mean to be holy in this context?*
- *Scholars point out that the word "holy" has connotations of "separated" or "dedicated"[7]. Does being holy in some sense imply being separate or apart? Is it more closely related to be dedicated? Are both required in some sense?*
- *Does judgment according to works (mentioned in verse 17) contradict justification by faith? How are the two concepts reconciled?*
- *What does it mean to "pass the time of your sojourning here in fear?" What is the audience supposed to fear? How does it fit into the rest of the discussion?*
- *How is Peter using the phrase "last times?" How can the audience be in the "last times?"*
- *What does Peter mention the foreordination of Christ? Is he trying to teach his audience about the doctrine of foreordination or is that really secondary here?*

VI. Rebirth

- Read I Peter 1:22–2:3:

(22) Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: (23) Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. (24) For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: (25) But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. (2) Rid yourselves, therefore, of all malice, and all guile, insincerity, envy, and all slander. (2) Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation. (3) if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

- *Purification gets linked to love. Why? How does it purify?*
- *I love the imagery of verse 3. What does the phrase "tasted that the Lord is good" bring to your mind? What is Peter trying to emphasize with that metaphor?*

Endnotes

1. Barton, John, and John Muddiman (Editors), 2001, *Oxford Bible Commentary*, Oxford University Press, 1263.
2. Barton, John, and John Muddiman (Editors), 2001, *Oxford Bible Commentary*, Oxford University Press, 1263.
3. Barton, John, and John Muddiman (Editors), 2001, *Oxford Bible Commentary*, Oxford University Press, 1263.
4. Metzger, Bruce M. (Editor) and Michael David Coogan (Editor), 1993, *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, Oxford University Press, 585.
5. Mays, James L. (editor), 2000, *The HarperCollins Bible Commentary*, HarperCollins, 1168.
6. Mays, James L. (editor), 2000, *The HarperCollins Bible Commentary*, HarperCollins, 1169.