

A Course

*In*

**I & II PETER,  
STUDIES IN**

Prepared by the  
Committee on Religious Education  
of the  
**American Bible College**

Pineland, Florida 33945

A COURSE

*IN*

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The compiler of this course is seeking to introduce a broad range of fundamental/evangelical commentators on the books of I and II Peter. It is our intention to present to our readers a variety of early biblical scholars from John Gill (1697-1771), and Peter Pett (1610-1672) to present day biblical scholars David Sorenson and Thomas Constable. In each case, we have chosen only those authors from a fundamental perspective who believe in the verbal, plenary and infallible inspiration of the Word of God. Instead of analyzing the comments of these authors and summarizing their thoughts, we choose to direct quote them. However, in so doing, these authors will quote various translations, Hebrew renderings and often use their own translations. Although the American Bible College believes the King James Version is the preserved Word of God, this method of study allows the writer to occasionally condense a passage in his own paraphrase. This should not be construed to imply that the A. B. C. is correcting God's Word.

During this course the student is required to read through the entire Book of I and II Peter ten times.

It is our desire that this study will be spiritually enlightening and rewarding as you understand Peter's history and doctrines as relevant to the Church. All references will be footnoted and bracketed.

Respectfully your servant in Christ Jesus,

Dr. Marvin W. Royse

# FOREWORD

## APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF THIS BOOK

I and II Peter are two of the most alarming New Testament books written to Hebrew Christians. A lifetime of study would be too short to master them. The thoughts are deep, and the student who is not willing to do prolonged and patient thinking ought not to undertake the books. Each phrase and each verse is of value, and to get at the meat of these books they must be carefully broken down and analyzed into their component parts. Each phrase must be studied for itself and then in its relation to the other parts. Analysis is not enough. We must synthesize each phrase to see I and II Peter as a whole.

### *Suggestions for Study*

As we undertake these studies in I and II Peter, our primary effort should be to familiarize ourselves with the text itself. This we may do through careful reading and rereading. Following Dr. James M. Gray in his book, *How to Master the English Bible*, we suggest the following five rules for these readings:

- (1) Read the whole book at one time, ignoring chapter and verse divisions.
- (2) Read it continuously, right through at a single sitting, without break or interruption.
- (3) Read it repeatedly, over and over again; not twice, but ten or fifteen times.
- (4) Read it independently, without consulting other people's interpretations until you have direct contact and immediate acquaintance with the book itself.
- (5) Read it prayerfully, seeking your interpretation from the Holy Spirit who is present in the subject matter and also in the heart of the devout reader.

Reading is our First step, but mere reading is not study. Having read each book, we should study it carefully and purposefully, closing the books from time to time to summarize our study. We will use as our guide in this study the comments of various recognized Bible scholars. Additional books should be consulted where available, and a comparative study made of the different interpretations.

### *Some Values to Be Sought*

Closely connected with our purpose in reading and with the problems that we face are the values that we seek. First, we want a working knowledge of the *content* of the books of Peter. Then, we want to know their *aims* and *purport*. Finally, we want to lay hold of the message of the books both for their original writing and their present century readers. The final test of value will be not how much of the text we have mastered, but how much Christ has mastered our lives through these *Studies in I and II Peter*.

# ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK OF I PETER

## *Design, Contents, and Characteristics.*

The objects of the epistle, as deduced from its contents, coincide with the above assumptions. They were:

1. To comfort and strengthen the Christians in a season of severe trial.
2. To enforce the practical and spiritual duties involved in their calling.
3. To warn them against special temptations attached to their position.
4. To remove all doubt as to the soundness and completeness of the religious system which they had actually received.

Such an attestation was especially needed by the Hebrew Christians, who were wont to appeal from Paul's authority to that of the elder apostles, and above all to that of Peter. The last, which is perhaps the very principal object, is kept in view throughout the epistle, and is distinctly stated (<600512><sup>1</sup> 1 Peter 5:12).

These objects may come out more clearly in a brief analysis. The epistle begins with salutations and a general description of Christians (<600101>1 Peter 1:1, 2), followed by a statement of their present privileges and future inheritance (verses 3-5); the bearings of that statement upon their conduct under persecution (verses 6-9); reference, according to the apostle's wont, to prophecies concerning both the sufferings of Christ and the salvation of his people (verses 10-12); and exhortations based upon those promises to earnestness, sobriety, hope, obedience, and holiness, as results of knowledge of redemption, of atonement by the blood of Jesus, and of the resurrection, and as proofs of spiritual regeneration by the Word of God. Peculiar stress is laid upon the cardinal graces of faith, hope, and brotherly love, each connected with and resting upon the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel (verses 13-25). Abstinence from the spiritual sins most directly opposed to those graces is then enforced (<600201>1 Peter 2:1); spiritual growth is represented as dependent upon the nourishment supplied by the same Word which was the instrument of regeneration (verses 2, 3); and then, by a change of metaphor, Christians are

represented as a spiritual house, collectively and individually as living stones, and royal priests, elect, and brought out of darkness into light (verses 4-10). This portion of the epistle is singularly rich in thought and expression, and bears the peculiar impress of the apostle's mind, in which Judaism is spiritualized, and finds its full development in Christ. From this condition of Christians, and more directly from the fact that they are thus separated from the world, pilgrims and sojourners, Peter deduces an entire system of practical and relative duties, self-control, care of reputation, especially for the sake of Gentiles; submission to all constituted authorities; obligations of slaves, urged with remarkable earnestness, and founded upon the example of Christ and His atoning death (verses 11-25); and duties of wives and husbands (<600301>1 Peter 3:1-7). Then generally all Christian graces are commended, those which pertain to Christian brotherhood, and those which are especially needed in times of persecution, gentleness, forbearance, and submission to injury (verses 8-17): all the precepts being based on imitation of Christ, with warnings from the history of the deluge, and with special reference to the baptismal covenant. In the following chapter (<600401>1 Peter 4:1, 2) the analogy between the death of Christ and spiritual mortification, a topic much dwelt upon by Paul, is urged with special reference to the sins committed by Christians before conversion, and habitual to the Gentiles. The doctrine of a future judgment is inculcated, both with reference to their heathen persecutors as a motive for endurance, mind to their own conduct as an incentive to sobriety, watchfulness, fervent charity, liberality in all external acts of kindness, and diligent discharge of all spiritual duties, with a view to the glory of God through Jesus Christ (verses 3-11). This epistle appears at the first draught to have terminated here with the doxology, but the thought of the fiery trial to which the Christians were exposed stirs the apostle's heart, and suggests additional exhortations. Christians are taught to rejoice in partaking of Christ's sufferings, being thereby assured of sharing His glory, which even in this life rests upon them, and is especially manifested in their innocence and endurance of persecution: judgment must come first to cleanse the house of God, then to reach the disobedient: suffering according to the will of


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<sup>1</sup> These reference numbers have been left in and are in accordance with Strong's Bible verse referencing: "60" is the fifty-second Bible book—I Peter, and "0512" is the verse reference—chapter 5, verse 12.

God, they may commit their souls to Him in well-doing as unto a faithful Creator. Faith and hope are equally conspicuous in these exhortations. The apostle then (<600501>1 Peter 5:1-4) addresses the presbyters of the churches, warning them as one of their own body, as a witness (*parve*) of Christ's sufferings, and partaker of future glory, against negligence, covetousness, and love of power; the younger members he exhorts to submission and humility, and concludes this part with a warning against their spiritual enemy, and a solemn and most beautiful prayer to the God of all grace. Lastly, he mentions Silvanus with special commendation, and states very distinctly what we have seen reason to believe was a principal object of the epistle, viz. that the principles inculcated by their former teachers were sound, the true grace of God, to which they are exhorted to adhere. A salutation from the Church in Babylon and from Mark, with a parting benediction, closes the epistle.

A few characteristic features may be more distinctly looked at. The churches addressed were in trials, such trials as the spirit of that age must necessarily have brought upon them (<600317>1 Peter 3:17; 4:12-19). Those trials originated to some extent in their separation from the heathen amusements and dissoluteness in which they had mingled prior to their conversion (<600404>1 Peter 4:4, 5). They are exhorted to bear suffering patiently, and ever to remember the example, and endure in the spirit, of the Suffering One — the Righteous One who had suffered for them. While affliction would come upon them in the present time, they are ever encouraged to look with joyous anticipation to the future. Peter indeed might be called the apostle of hope. Doctrine and consolation alike assume this form. The "inheritance" is future, but its heirs are begotten to a "living hope" (<600103>1 Peter 1:3, 4). Their tried faith is found unto glory "at the appearance of Jesus Christ" (<600107>1 Peter 1:7). The "end" of their faith is "salvation" (<600109>1 Peter 1:9), and they are to "hope to the end for the grace to be brought at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (<600113>1 Peter 1:13). Their ruling emotion is therefore "the hope that is in them" (<600315>1 Peter 3:15); so much lying over in reserve for them in the future, their time here is only a "sojourning" (<600117>1 Peter 1:17); they were merely "strangers and pilgrims" (<600211>1 Peter 2:11); nay, "the end of all things is at hand" (<600407>1 Peter 4:7). Suffering was now, but joy was to come when His "glory shall be revealed" (<600501>1 Peter 5:1). In Christ's own experience as Prototype suffering led to glory (<600111>1 Peter 1:11; 4:13); the same connection the apostle applies to himself, and to faithful ministers (<600501>1 Peter 5:1-4). There are also allusions to Christ's words, or, rather, reminiscences of them

mingle with the apostle's thoughts. Comp. 1 Peter 1: 4 with <402534>Matthew 25:34; 1:8 with <432029>John 20:29; 1:10 with <421024>Luke 10:24; 1:13 with <421235>Luke 12:35; 2:12 with <400516>Matthew 5:16; 3:13-15 with <400516>Matthew 5:16, 10:28; 5:6 with Matthew 33:12, etc.

There were apparently some tendencies in those churches that required reproof — some temptations against which they needed to be warned, as "former lusts," "fleshly lusts" (<600114>1 Peter 1:14, 11); dark and envious feelings (<600201>1 Peter 2:1; 3:8, 9); love of adornment on the part of women (<600303>1 Peter 3:3); and ambition and worldliness on the part of Christian teachers (<600501>1 Peter 5:1-4). God's gracious and tender relationship to His people was a special feature of the old covenant, and Peter reproduces it under the new in its closer and more spiritual aspects (<600209>1 Peter 2:9, 10; 4:17; 5:2). The old economy is neither eulogized nor disparaged, and no remark is made on its abolition, the reasons of it, or the good to the world springing out of it. The disturbing question of its relation to Gentile believers is not even glanced at. In the apostle's view it had passed away by its development into another and grander system, one with it in spirit, and at the same time the realization of its oracles and types. His mind is saturated with O.T. imagery and allusions, but they are freely applied to the spiritual Israel, which, having always existed within the theocracy, had now burst the national barriers, and was to be found in all the believing communities, whatever their lineage or country. To him the Jewish economy was neither supplanted by a rival faith nor superseded by a sudden revolution; Israel had only put off its ceremonial, the badge of its immaturity and servitude, and now rejoiced in freedom and predicted blessing. What was said of the typical Israel may now be asserted with deeper truth of the spiritual Israel. But the change is neither argued from premises laid down nor vindicated against Jews or Judaizers, and the results of the new condition are not held up as matter of formal congratulation; they are only seized and put forward as recognized grounds of joy, patience, and hope. The Redeemer stood out to Jewish hope as the Messiah; so Peter rejoices in that appellation, calling Him usually Jesus Christ, and often simply Christ (<600111>1 Peter 1:11; 2:21; 3:16-18; 4:1, 13, 14); and it is remarkable that in nearly all those places the simple name Christ is used in connection with His sufferings, to the idea of which the Jewish mind had been so hostile. The centre of the apostle's theology is the Redeemer, the medium of all spiritual blessing. The relation of His expiatory work to sinners is described by  (<600212>1 Peter 2:12; 3:18); or it is said he bore our sins





# Introduction

by Harry A. Ironside

The epistles of Peter were written primarily—in accord with his special ministry to the circumcision (Gal. 2: 8)—to Christian Jews of the dispersion, who dwelt in various provinces in western Asia, where most of the Apostle's labors had been. They have to do with the believer's relation to the Kingdom of God rather than to the Church as the Body of Christ; though, of course, those to whom he wrote were, as are all Christians, members of the Church and subjects of the Kingdom. Both are wilderness Epistles; they contemplate the children of God, not in their heavenly aspect, as in Ephesians (1:3; 2: 6), but rather as strangers and pilgrims journeying on through the wilderness of this world from the cross to the Glory. Peter tells us that he wrote the first Letter to testify that "this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand" (1 Peter 5: 12). It is not so much the grace that saves (as in Romans 5:1, 2), which gives us a perfect standing before the throne of God; it is rather the grace ministered to us day by day, which enables us to stand against all the wiles of the enemy and despite all the trials of the way. Suffering has a large place in the Epistle of I Peter. It is looked upon as the normal thing for the believer while pressing on to the inheritance laid up for him in heaven. In this we are reminded of Savonarola's words, "A Christian's life consists in doing good and suffering evil." He is to rejoice for the privilege of suffering for Him who has redeemed us with His own blood.

The mystery of suffering has perplexed many all down through the ages. It is part of man's sad inheritance because of sin having come into the world, and in this life the child of God is not exempt from pain, sorrow, and anguish. But the suffering of believers is all ordained of God to work out for blessing. Through this ministry of suffering we are enabled to understand better what our Lord went through for us, when in this scene. He was "a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Isa. 53:3). God uses suffering to keep us from sin (I Pet. 4:1; 2 Cor. 12:7), and as a means of chastening and discipline (Heb. 12: 6-11) whereby we are made more like our blessed Lord. As we suffer because of faithfulness to His name and devotion to His cause, we enjoy a very real sense of fellowship with Him, who is still hated by the world that rejects His testimony. The reward is sure and will make us forget all our light affliction in the enjoyment of the eternal weight of glory (2 Cor. 4:17).

*Christians are not exempt from suffering.* When one trusts in Christ, it does not mean that he is at once freed from all the consequences of sin. So far as divine judgment is concerned, he is forever delivered from that (John 3:18); but he is still in the body from which the Adamic curse has not yet been lifted. Consequently, he suffers with the groaning creation, of which that body is still a part. Then, in addition to this, he now finds that the world to which he once belonged, has now become a scene of hostility because of the place he has taken in association with a rejected Christ. All this involves suffering, but with every trial and affliction there will come needed grace to endure, "as seeing Him who is invisible" (Heb. 11:27).

There is a difference between suffering with Christ (Rom. 8:17) and suffering for Him (Acts 5:41). All Christians suffer with Him because of the very fact that they are partakers of the divine nature, and therefore are quick to feel the adverse conditions through which they are called to pass. But to suffer for Him is to bear shame and reproach—even unto persecution and death—for Christ's Name's sake (Acts 9:16).

The Apostle Paul tells us in Galatians 2 that after consultation with the leaders at Jerusalem, some time subsequent to his conversion, it was arranged among them that Peter should go especially to the Jews and he to the Gentiles. It was not that either confined himself to one particular class, but He that wrought mightily in Peter to the conversion of the Jews wrought in the same way in Paul to bringing the men of the nations to Christ. In his letters Peter still has particularly in view his brethren after the flesh—the dispersed of Israel—scattered among the nations and living in the countries mentioned in the opening verse of our lesson. These were Jews generally known as *the Diaspora*, who, while away from the land of Palestine, yet looked upon it as their native country, until they gave up their earthly standing to become members of a new and redeemed nation, whose inheritance was laid up in heaven. To them Peter wrote, encouraging them to trust in the Lord and go on in patience even in the midst of suffering. Of this he had much to say in his letter. It is an Epistle for afflicted believers, for, while addressed primarily to Hebrew Christians, it was no more confined to them than Paul's letters addressed to churches among the Gentiles are to be considered as only for those who, by nature, were strangers to the

covenant of promise. In Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile, so what is written to one is intended for the help and instruction of all those who are born again.

First Peter is characteristically a Wilderness Epistle. It pictures believers as journeying on from the place of the blood-sprinkling to the inheritance, or from the cross to the Glory. Many illustrations are drawn from Israel's journey from Egypt to Canaan. In Ephesians, believers are viewed as already over the Jordan and in the Land, enjoying their inheritance in Christ in the heavenlies; in First Peter, they are seen as a pilgrim people, strangers passing through an unfriendly world, moving on to the Land of Promise.

We are not able to decide exactly when First Peter was written, but it was evidently well on to the close of Peter's life; and, as he himself connects the two letters so intimately (2 Pet. 3:1), they were probably not written very far apart. The date given by Ussher is A. D. 60, but there is no proof that it was as early as that. The best authorities suggest that the first Epistle was written somewhere about A. D. 66 or 67, and the second somewhat later. It is evident from 2 Peter 3:15, 16 that all of Paul's Epistles were in circulation already and recognized as Scripture before Peter wrote this second Letter, and we may conclude that the first one was not penned very much earlier.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> H. A. Ironside, JAMES AND PETER, (Loizeaux Brothers, New York, 1947), I PETER pp. 7-11. Hereafter referred to as [IRONSIDE].

# COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF I PETER

## CHAPTER ONE

**Vss. 1-2.** The inspired writer of this letter, whose original name was Simon, received the Aramaic name of Cephas as a descriptive title of what he would some day be like (John 1:42). The A. V. translates, "Thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a stone." The word "stone" is from the Greek word *petras* which means "a detached but large fragment of rock," and, is used here metaphorically to describe Peter as a man like a rock by reason of his firmness and strength of soul. The name "Peter" is the English spelling of the Greek *petras* which is the word chosen by the Holy Spirit that would adequately translate the meaning of the Aramaic "Cephas." In answering Peter's great confession of His deity, the Lord Jesus says, "Thou art Peter (*petras*), and upon this rock (*Petra*) I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18). Thayer quotes Schmidt as treating *petras* and *petra* as synonyms, *petras* meaning "a detached but large fragment of rock," *petra* "the massive living rock." The foundation of the Church of Jesus Christ is that massive living rock, the Son of God seen in His deity, acknowledged as such by Peter. Peter is but a fragment of that massive rock in the sense in which he speaks of believers as "lively stones," deriving their eternal life from the great Living Stone Himself (2:4, 5). It was the fulness of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost that transformed Simon into Peter, the Rock-Man.

He designates himself as an apostle, the word "apostle" coming from *apostas* made up of *apa*, "off," and *stella*, "to send." a technical word used of one sent from someone else with credentials on a mission. Peter was an ambassador of Jesus Christ sent by Him with credentials in the form of miracles, and on a mission, that of proclaiming the good news of salvation. Those to whom he writes, he designates as strangers. The English word "strangers" refers to anyone with whom we are not acquainted. But the Greek word means far more than that. It is *parepidemois*, made up of *para*, "alongside of," *epi*, "upon," and *demos*, used in Biblical Greek of the people of a heathen city. The word here describes the recipients of this letter as Christians who have settled down alongside of the unsaved. Peter uses the same word in 2:11. He will not let us forget that we are living among the unsaved who are always carefully observing us.

The word "scattered" is from *diasporas*. This word is found in the LXX [The Greek Translation of the Old Testament.] where Moses says of Israel, "Thou shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth" (Deut. 28:25), and is probably the earliest example of its use as a technical designation of the Jews who for whatever reason lived outside of Palestine. The word is used in John 7:35 and James 1:1, in both places referring to those Jews who were living outside of Palestine. Peter uses it in the same way. We thus see that the recipients of this letter were Christian Jews. These Jews were living among the Gentiles in the various provinces named by Peter, all of which were in Asia Minor.

The word *diaspora* is the noun form of *diaspeiro*, which verb is made up of *dia*, "through" and *speiro*, "to sow, to scatter seed," which latter is the derivative from which *sperma* the Greek word for "seed" comes. This scattering of these Jews referred to in First Peter took place previous to the world-wide dispersion, A.D. 70, which latter was the judgment of God upon the apostasy of Israel. [The Northern ten tribes were first dispersed to Assyria in 722 B.C. by Sargon II; in 609 B.C. the Southern Kingdom of Judah and Benjamin was deported to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar II]., The great majority of the Jews living outside of Palestine in the first century and before A.D. 70, were living where they were by their own choice, the chief reason being the opportunity for business activity which the Gentile centers of population afforded. There they were when the Christian missionaries contacted them. There they had been providentially sown by the great Sower, to become themselves disseminators of the gospel story. The application can be made to all Christians. We who are saved, are providentially placed by God in the midst of the unsaved, living in Satan's territory, for he is the god of the world system, to win those among whom we have been placed, to the Lord Jesus.

**END OF SAMPLE**