

Lesson #20 - 1 Peter 2019

Before starting this lesson, **read the 5 chapters.**

As we look at the New Testament we find teaching for local **churches**, for **leaders** of these churches and now teaching for **Jewish believers** from the Jewish perspective. **HEBREWS** is about **SALVATION**. The next books are about the **CHRISTIAN LIFE**. **JAMES** writes about their conduct. **PETER** writes 2 books about their suffering.

		SALVATION	CHRISTIAN LIFE	RETURN OF JESUS
TEACHING FOR	church members teaching reproof of action correction of belief 2 Tim. 3:16	ROMANS 1-2 CORINTHIANS GALATIANS	EPHESIANS PHILIPPIANS COLOSSIANS	1 THESSALONIANS 2 THESSALONIANS
	church leaders		PHILEMON TITUS 1-2 TIMOTHY	
	Jewish believers	HEBREWS	JAMES 1-2 PETER	

THIS LETTER - TO WHOM WRITTEN

Many today are teaching that the Church has replaced the Jews - that the promises and blessings made to them are now for us. They use the book of 1st Peter to prove it. They say Peter is writing to the Church, the Body of Christ. So it is important to see the words Peter uses to describe his readers.

In 1:1, he says they are God's *elect*, *strangers in the world*, *scattered* ...

God's elect - we could also translate it as God's "chosen people." **Jewish** people have used these phrases to describe themselves thruout the Old and New Testament and even today. God's *elect* refers to the **Jewish** people.

Strangers, foreigners, aliens or exiles in the world (depending on your translation)

In this context, the Greek word means *to live alongside of Gentiles*. For the Jews, there were just 2 groups of people in the world - Jews and Gentiles. The Jews used this word to talk about themselves - they were *strangers* or *exiles*, when they lived alongside of that other group - the Gentiles.

Scattered, dispersed is the Greek word *Diaspora*. This is a term to define all Jews living outside the land of Israel. It was used in Peter's day and is still used today.

In the New Testament, Peter is called an apostle to the **Jews**. It says he was given a ministry to the **Jews**. Gal. 2:7-8

In addition, the style of writing in this book is Jewish. There is continual repetition, picture language and circular writing. Peter mentions various topics at the beginning, develops them thruout the chapters and mentions them again in the last chapter. In other words, he ends as he begins - circular writing.

So looking at all these facts, we see Peter, a Jewish man, is writing specifically **TO JEWISH BELIEVERS** who are living among the Gentiles.

THIS LETTER - WHERE SENT

Their location is mentioned in the rest of verse one. *Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia.*

These are provinces in northern and central Asia Minor – present-day Turkey.



THE AUTHOR, PETER - HIS BACKGROUND

To know why Peter is writing Jewish believers in **these** provinces, we need to review Peter's life.

31-42 AD Peter was the leader of the local Jerusalem church for 12 years.

Then he was put in prison, but God miraculously freed him and told him to leave Jerusalem immediately. Peter goes into hiding.



While there, he wonders about what new ministry he will have. He thinks about the thousands of Jewish believers scattered thruout the Roman Empire. For the last 12 years, since the day of Pentecost, there has been no written instruction for these new believers. They need to know more information about Jesus. They need to develop their faith.

42 - 62 AD God uses Peter's concern and sends him to northern Asia Minor.

He will be completely safe because Herod, who had put Peter in prison, only had authority in the land of Israel. While Peter will make occasional trips to Antioch and Jerusalem, he will spend 20 years in these 5 provinces. His ministry will be with these Jewish believers.

47 - 49 AD

During these years, Paul established churches in southern Galatia, working mainly among the Gentiles.

50 AD

Paul and his team revisit these churches.

From the book of Acts we know they planned to go from there, north to **Bithynia**. But the Holy Spirit stopped them. There is no reason given.

Now, as we come to the book of 1 Peter, we have a clue. Peter either had or would have a ministry in that province. Paul was not needed. So the Holy Spirit sent Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, west into Europe.

Peter works thruout the 5 provinces of northern Asia Minor for some 20 years.

62 - 68 AD

Peter moves to Rome and begins a 6 year ministry with Jewish believers there.

64 AD

Two years after starting this ministry, part of Rome was burned and Nero blames the Christians.

This begins tremendous persecution - first in Rome. And then, by the beginning of the following year, it spreads thruout the empire.

Peter thinks of the Jewish believers he taught back in Asia Minor. By now, there is a second generation of Jewish believers who are still new in their faith. They will not understand why they are suffering, which means they will have no idea how to respond.

Some of the men will be tempted to start a rebellion against Roman leaders in their cities.

Others will be discouraged.

All of them will question why God is not protecting them from suffering.

65 AD

From Rome, Peter dictates a letter to encourage these new believers and answer their questions. He uses a Jewish man named Silas to write it down.

Having said that Peter is writing the letter from Rome, we need to look at 5:13. Peter says, *She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings....*

Some people believe Peter is writing from literal Babylon on the Euphrates River. However, we know from history that Peter spent the last years of his life in Rome. With the severity of persecution in Rome, Peter is keeping a low profile or has even gone into hiding within the city so he can continue his ministry. To send out a public letter saying he is **in** Rome would quickly get him arrested.

In the Bible, the Jews connected the name *Babylon* with rebellion against God. It started with the tower of Babel. It was the Babylonian empire that took the Jews into exile and destroyed them as a nation. In history, if Jews needed a code word to talk about opposition to God, they used the name *Babylon*. Most Bible scholars believe the name *Babylon* in this verse is the code name for Rome. *She who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings*, is referring to the Jewish believers in Rome.



OUTLINE

Peter, in 65 AD, writes new Jewish believers in Asia Minor who are suffering for their faith. He explains...

What they should know	1:1-12
How they should live	1:13 - 5:7
How they will survive	5:8-14

DEFINITION of the word “hope”

Thruout the Bible, Jews used words that had specific meaning to them within their thinking and culture. Later, when these words were translated and used by other cultures, the Jewish meaning got lost in translation.

One example is the word **hope**.

Some English definitions of “**hope**” from the Webster unabridged dictionary are...

1. *a desire for some good with a slight expectation*
3. *confidence in a future event with the highest degree of expectation*
5. *trust; reliance* (Archaic meaning)

This old meaning in English is the original meaning of the Greek.

The dictionary also says that synonyms for *hope* are *expectation* or *confidence*.

In the Hebrew and Greek of the Bible, the word **hope**, when used as a noun, means **certainty**.

WHAT THE JEWISH BELIEVERS SHOULD KNOW - When suffering for their faith

Peter is concerned for his readers. They are going thru great suffering because of their faith in Jesus. The Roman government has taken some of their homes and possessions. Some have even died for their faith. These Jewish believers cannot help but think about the hardships they are going thru and all they have lost. To both encourage and help them, Peter tells them what they should know.

They should know what they still have and why they can praise God. Peter starts with the Greek word **eulogy** - *praise*.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be born again... (meaning, they had been born physically, the first time. Now they have been born spiritually).

...born again to a **living certainty** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ... 1:3-4

(**Living certainty** means **certainty about life** because of Jesus' resurrection).

Peter is making a contrast in these verses. Their life here on earth is **uncertain**.

They may lose all their material goods. They may even lose their physical life.

So they need to know what they cannot lose.

The Roman government can never take their **relationship with God in this life**.

The Roman government can never take the **certainty of their life with God in eternity**.

Their spiritual relationship with God is protected by God's power.

But if He is protecting their **spiritual** life, why is He not protecting their **physical** life and **physical** possessions?

Obviously, God **could** stop the Roman government from persecuting them.

They should know why God is allowing the suffering of persecution.

... so that the tested genuineness of your faith... may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 1:7

It is to purify their faith and purify the local churches.

It is also to show the value and genuineness of their faith.

Within the local churches, there had been true believers and those who were only pretending. With the persecution, the pretenders have left. The persecution has revealed those with genuine faith.

They should know about their reward for faithfulness in times of persecution.

They will receive praise, glory and honor at the Reviewing Stand of Jesus in the future.

HOW JEWISH BELIEVERS SHOULD LIVE - When suffering for their faith

Just because their salvation is secure, does not give them freedom to live carelessly.

THEIR PERSONAL LIFE

They are called to be holy 1:15

Peter began this letter saying they were *elect* or *chosen*. The Greek word also means *called*.

Thruout the book he will remind them - they are not chosen or called so they can be exclusive or superior.

They are called for 5 reasons.

Called to be holy 1:15

Called out of darkness into God's light 2:9

Called to suffer persecution 2:21

Called to have godly qualities 3:8-9

Called to have spiritual glory thruout eternity 5:10

They were called for a reason.

They should conduct themselves with fear 1:17

The word *reverent* which is in some of your translations, is not in the Greek. In this verse, Peter is talking about literal fear. When these Jewish believers go thru persecution, they should *be afraid to think they can remain holy or faithful on their own*.

Peter is writing from experience. Years earlier in self-confidence, he had told Jesus, *I will never deny You*.

Then, on that fateful night, Peter learned that under pressure, he was weak. So he reminds the Jews, *live with a healthy fear, depending on God's power to be faithful. Never think you can do it on your own*.

They should make choices to do what is right 1:22

Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart...

As believers, they emotionally care about each other. On that basis, Peter now commands them, *love one another earnestly*. Notice, love is commanded. That means he is not talking about emotion or feelings. Love when commanded means, *do what is right*. The word *earnestly*, *deeply* or *fervently* is from a Greek verb meaning *to stretch out the hand*.

When other believers lose possessions, they should be willing to reach out and help, encourage and be a friend. This may put them in danger, but it is how they should live - *do what is right*.

They should grow spiritually Peter uses picture language.

Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation. 2:2

Human babies are always hungry and crave milk. New believers are hungry to know more about God's Word. The more they learn and study, the more they will spiritual grow.

THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS

DEFINITION of the word "submission"

In our day and culture, this word has one meaning. An English definition from the unabridged dictionary...

submission - noun

domination; inferiority

To give up one's ideas, personality and ability to be or do what someone else demands.

This is destructive. God does not want that for anyone.

When Peter uses this Greek word in the 1st century, (ú it had a different meaning. Peter is talking to believers going thru persecution for their faith. He uses the word *submission* to mean...

accept the situation rather than lash out with words or actions.

To survive persecution, they cannot be having battles and arguments with everyone around them.

Accept your situation with the government – Jewish believers

Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish or ungodly people. 2:13-15

Jewish believers had no way to resist the Roman empire. They had no opportunity to vote or run for office. So Peter says they should accept or co-operate with the Roman government and its laws as long as possible. When it was no longer possible, they would have to go into hiding.

Peter writes this during the persecution of believers under Nero. If all believers had resisted Nero, they would all have been killed. The Gospel message would come to an end. So for the Lord's sake - for the sake of the gospel message, all believers should accept the government as long as they are not required to disobey God's laws.



Accept the situation with your masters – Jewish domestic slaves

Jewish believers are being treated unjustly because of their faith. As they work in the homes of their masters, they are to accept the situation and not retaliate - show respect to their masters. Because they are servants, they have no choice. They cannot leave.

Accept your situation – wives and husbands

Peter tells them to respect each other – accept each other rather than fighting. Chapter 3

1. He writes to believing wives who have unbelieving husbands.

She has been trying to win her unbelieving husband with outward beauty. Peter is not telling her to neglect her appearance. But he is saying her main focus should be on her inner beauty - her attitude. She should have strength of character. But she also should show respect by not trying to fix him, nag him or act superior. He then gives an example from the life of Sarah.

Sarah listened attentively to Abraham and followed his instruction – she depended on him for protection.

She called him *lord* as a title of respect. 3:6

You became her children doing good and not fearing any terror – 3:6 meaning...

You mirrored her action when you remained faithful, not fearing the persecution for your faith.

Peter had spent 20 years teaching these people about the Christian life. So when Peter commands wives to respect their husbands, they know it is within the context of husbands treating their wives appropriately. In our day, we also need to put it in context. Wives are to respect their husbands. But if she or the children are being abused, the wife cannot respect, accept or even stay in the marriage.

2. Peter writes to believing husbands with believing wives.

Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are joint-heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered. 3:7

A husband should respect the physical limitation of his wife in regards to her strength and stamina. As they are going thru persecution, he needs to go the extra mile to protect and provide for her when she cannot endure what he can. If he only thinks and prays for his own protection, his prayers will be hindered.

Physically there is a difference between them. But spiritually they are equals - joint-heirs together of God's grace. She is not under him before God, but alongside him. Husbands and wives will be stronger if they can go thru persecution as a team.

Relationships within their local churches

In 3:8-9, our translations have Peter giving a series of commands. But in the Greek, Peter is describing qualities they already have. So I'm going to change the wording to keep it in good English but also put it as close to the Greek as possible.

Finally, all of you, having unity of mind, having sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind, not repaying evil for evil or insult for insult, but on the contrary, praising. This is why you were called, so that you may obtain praise. 3:8-9

Peter is describing qualities they already have. As they are going thru persecution, they should make sure they are fully using these qualities with each other. Peter ends the thought by saying, *This is why you were called* - to use these qualities to support and encourage one another. The result will be praise from Jesus in eternity. Once again the word translated *blessing* is the Greek word *eulogy* - *praise*.

Relationships to society - In this, there will be limitations.

But in your hearts honor Christ as Lord, (~~as holy~~ - not in the Greek) always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the certainty that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect. 3:15

In the 1st century, Roman Caesars claimed to be god and demanded worship. In special ceremonies in every city, local leaders required people to bow before a statue of the emperor and say, *Caesar is Lord*.

Earlier in the letter Peter said they were to respect the government. However when government requires believers to violate God's laws, they must refuse. Believers can never say *Caesar is Lord*. They can only say *Christ is Lord*. They should be prepared to give an answer when society and leaders ask why they are refusing.

Notice, they are to give an answer when they are **asked**. In times of persecution, believers should not cause needless suffering by giving answers when they have not been asked.

Relationship with God

Jewish believers are to do what God wants even if they are persecuted for not joining in with the crowd.

SUMMARY Chapters 1 - 4

What Jewish believers should know when they are suffering for their faith.

- Know the things they cannot lose
- Know the reasons for their suffering
- Know about their reward for faithfulness

How Jewish believers should live when they are suffering for their faith.

- In their personal life they should be holy, dependent on God, do what is right and spiritually grow.
- In their relationships with others, there is to be acceptance with the government, at work and at home.
- In their local church, they are to be supportive of the other believers.
- In society they are to be discerning - when to participate and when to refuse.
- In relationship with God, they are to be obedient.

Things are going to get worse. In just 5 years - 70 AD - the Romans will destroy Jerusalem, kill one million Jews in Israel and begin killing Jews thruout the empire. Believers need spiritual maturity...

- ...So they can be calm, evaluate the situation and pray effectively
- ...So they will reach out and support each other
- ...So they will develop and use their spiritual gifts to give encouragement

Society and the government under Nero was evil in every way - corruption, every kind of immorality and violence. Yet Peter never commands believers to clean up society and government. Instead he writes,

It is time for judgment to begin at the household of God. 4:17

Before God can work in Roman society, He first has to work in the local churches.
Before He can cleanse lives in the world, He has to first cleanse the lives of His own people.

Spiritual leaders to look at their lives, their motives and their ministry.

Are they feeding and nurturing the people under their care?

Jewish believers, in their anxiety about persecution, should remember how much God cares about them as individuals.

Yes they will suffer and some will even be martyred for their faith.

But God will give each one the grace they need for their situation.

Jewish believers are suffering for their faith. Peter has told them...

What they should know

How they should live...and now...

HOW JEWISH BELIEVERS WILL SURVIVE - When suffering for their faith

They will survive by resisting Satan 5:8

Be sober-minded; be alert/watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith.

Three times Peter has told his readers to “**be alert**” – alert for living, alert for praying and alert for surviving.

This is the same command that Jesus gave Peter in the Garden of Gethsemane - *could you not **watch** with Me one hour?* **Watch, be alert** so you do not enter into temptation. Peter had not been alert; as a result he denied Jesus. Peter now warns *these* believers not to make the same mistake. They are to be alert so they can say *no* to Satan’s lies and temptations.

They will survive by knowing that believers in other parts of the Roman empire **are standing firm** in their suffering.

They will survive by having confidence that God will provide what they need in their suffering. 5:10

*And **after** you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you*

Again Peter is writing from experience. We can never imagine what he suffered emotionally and spiritually those days after denying Jesus. He did not understand about the resurrection. So when Jesus died, Peter thought he could never make things right with Jesus. After the resurrection, Jesus appeared to him in private, probably in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus restored, mended and strengthened him. He made Peter solid in his faith. Now even tho Peter is in constant danger himself, he is able to strengthen and encourage others in their faith.

Like the book of James, this letter is specifically for Jewish believers in the Roman empire. But there is also instruction for us.

There is more persecution of believers thruout the world in *our* day than there was in all of the 1st century. Every day, somewhere in the world, people are being punished for putting their faith in Jesus. They are beheaded, burned alive, beaten, imprisoned for life, deprived of food/water or made to watch their children being tortured and then killed.

In this country, we have never faced persecution for our faith, but things are changing. Persecution and restrictions against believers is coming. Peter has told us how to survive.

Let God bring purity to our lives and to our local churches.

We as believers need to check out our attitudes and actions. Are they holy?

Have we become self-righteous, arrogant, always preaching at everyone?

Our first responsibility is not to clean up society or the world but to let God clean our lives.

Watch or be alert for Satan's attacks.

It is the command that Jesus gave to Peter and Peter then gave to the Jewish believers. The word *watch, be alert*, has several ideas wrapped into the one Greek word. It means...

to wake up your mind and gather the facts that you know so you can be aware and on guard.

Satan will look for every opportunity to attack us with fear, depression, anger, or compromise. The more we know God's Word, the more protection and wisdom we will have –

when to be silent and when to speak up

when to co-operate and when to resist

Believe that God will provide what we need. He will restore us.

Once again, the Greek word is rich in meaning. In the 1st century...

Among fisherman, the word *restore* meant to **mend** *their nets*

Among doctors meant to **put in right adjustment**

In our day, society and government are determined to remove God's standards and boundaries. When we stand firm, it may affect our financial security. It may turn people against us. However our life may be impacted, as we continue to study His Word, God will make us strong, firm and steadfast. He will ground us and make us solid in our faith.

Lay all our anxieties on Him, being assured He knows and cares for each of us as individuals.

Peter says as we do these things, we will have an unlimited supply of God's grace and peace for each situation.

EXTRA INFORMATION FOR THE STUDIOUS AND INQUISITIVE

Explanation of

1:4 *...and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you,...*

Peter is talking about their salvation - not the part we experience now, but salvation in its final form when we will live in God's presence completely free from sin. Once we are right with God thru faith in Jesus, (the beginning of our salvation), then we can be sure - have certainty – we will be with Him for all eternity, because our final form of salvation is being kept in heaven, protected by God.

Explanation Of Problem Passages

3:18-20 Jewish teaching based on Jewish and first-century picture language

He (Jesus) was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. After being made alive, he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits—to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God.

After Jesus died, His spirit was in Paradise (godly side of Hades). While there, Jesus made a proclamation to specific fallen angels on the **evil** side of Hades.

These angels had caused the earth to be completely corrupt and filled with violence during the days of Noah. Because of their actions and influence, God has kept these particular evil angels confined until the time of their final judgment. (Compare Jude 6-7).

Jesus' proclamation to them is that Satan's plan failed. He, Jesus, made payment for sin and it guarantees that future judgment is certain for these angels.

evil (Heb) Sheol/Hades (Gk)		godly
Hell/Gehenna souls of unbelievers	GULF	Paradise Abraham's bosom (Rabbinic name)
Abyss - temporary confinement for evil angels can be released Rev 9, 20		Souls/spirits of Old Testament believers until the Ascension
Tartarus - permanent confinement for evil angels		Their sins were only covered, so they could not enter God's presence before Jesus' payment

It was possible to see & talk across the gulf, but not to cross the gulf.

Since they were active in Noah's day, Peter uses the story of Noah to instruct these 2nd generation, new Jewish believers. Baptism in Peter's day was practiced by all religions. It meant you publically identified with a specific belief or person.

Noah and family were physically saved from the flood (judgment) by entering the ark in faith. They were identifying with and declaring their belief in God.

Jewish believers in Peter's day will be physically saved from God's judgment in 70 AD by faith in Jesus. Public baptism was the way to identify with and declare their belief in Jesus, rather than in Sanhedrin Judaism. It gives them a good conscience because they are not ashamed to be identified with Jesus as their Messiah.

4:1-2

*Therefore, since Christ suffered in His body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is **done** with sin. As a result, they do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.*

The word *done/cease* means to *pause*. As these Jewish believers are suffering for their faith in Jesus, everyone can see they have chosen not to deny Jesus. This devotion and commitment has given them the desire to not engage in the sins of the world around them. They have ceased to be attracted by sin at this particular time.

4:4-6

They are surprised that you do not join them in their reckless, wild living, and they heap abuse on you. But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to human standards in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit.

Peter is talking about judgment for the persecutors and the ones persecuted. (Jewish writing often used double meaning).

For the persecutors –

God will bring judgment on those who are persecuting these believers. In eternity (in the spirit), they will have to admit that in this life (in the body) they heard the Gospel message but chose to refuse it.

For the persecuted –

The Gospel was preached. They accepted the message of Jesus; their persecutors rejected it.

According to evil men (persecutors) - the believers deserved to die.

But according to God - the believers deserve to live with Him.

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.

These Jewish believers can be sure that Satan can be resisted. Earlier Peter had told them,

*Jesus is at God's right hand with **angels, authorities and powers** in submission to Him* 3:22

All 3 words refer to angelic beings – God has authority over them.