

Lesson #20

PREPARATION FOR LESSON: Read the book of 1 Peter

BACKGROUND

Paul was an apostle to the Gentiles. His ministry in southern Asia Minor was mainly with the Gentiles. Peter was an apostle to the Jews. After he went into hiding in the early '40s, God sent him to live and teach Jewish believers in northern Asia Minor. This explains why the Holy Spirit kept Paul from going into Bithynia. Peter was already working there. This letter is sent to Jews living in the northern provinces. Sometime c. 62 AD, Peter moved to Rome and began a ministry there.

In 64 AD when part of Rome burned, Nero blamed the Christians and began to persecute them severely. Most scholars believe this book is written about 65 AD by Peter as he lives in hiding in Rome. He knows the persecution has spread eastward. Babylon is a Jewish name for any person or place that is in violent opposition to God. So to keep his location secret, he uses the code word Babylon. *She who sends her greetings* is referring to the Jewish believers in Rome.

Peter thinks of the people he taught over the last 20 years. By now there is a 2nd generation of Jewish believers. Being new in the faith, they will question why God does not protect them. Already they are being insulted and ridiculed. Since the situation will get worse, Peter writes to strengthen and encourage them. He tells them how to respond to suffering from government and society. He uses Silas, a Jewish man to write it down.

THEME Suffering of Jewish believers: suffering from outside sources of government and society

there are approximately 20 references to suffering in this book.

OUTLINE Suffering for Faith in Jesus

I. What they should know 1:1-12

Things they cannot lose: their relationship with God in **this** life

their certainty of life with God in **eternity**

Reason for their suffering: to purify their faith; to purify their local churches

to show the world the value and genuineness of their faith

Reward for their faith: praise, glory and honor at the Reviewing Stand of Jesus

II. How they should live 1:13 - 5:7

Instruction to prevent them from careless living

III. How they will survive 5:8-14

EXPLANATION Evidence this book is written to *Jewish* believers 1:1

God's Elect: a Jewish term for Jews

Strangers: a Greek word meaning to live alongside of non-Jews, meaning Gentiles

Scattered: Diaspora; a name for Jews living outside the land of Israel

Peter: an apostle to the Jews with a ministry to the Jews (Gal. 2:7-8); written in a Jewish style

DEFINITIONS *Hope* Certainty

Submission Acceptance by not lashing out with words or actions.

Agape love Love that is commanded is a choice of the will to *do what it is right*.

APPLICATION What to do when we face persecution for remaining true to God's standards

1. Let God bring purity to our lives and the life of our local churches 4:17

2. Watch and be **alert** for Satan's attacks 5:8 The word "alert" means,

Wake up your mind and bring together the facts that you know so you can be aware and on guard. cf. Eph. 5:14

3. Believe He will provide what we need

Society and government want to remove all of God's standards and boundaries and force us to accept their standards. Refusing may turn people against us. It may affect our financial security. However, our life may be impacted, God says He will mend us, put us in right adjustment and restore us. Instead of anxiety and fear, He will make us strong, firm and steadfast as we continue to study His Word. He will ground us and make us solid in our faith. 5:10

4. Lay all our anxieties on Him, being assured that He cares about each of us as individuals 5:7

Following these instructions, we will have His unlimited grace and peace for every situation that comes our way. 1:2



DEVELOPED OUTLINE *In suffering for their faith...***How Believers Should Live**• ***In their personal life...***

They should be holy, dependent on God, do what is right and spiritually grow.

• ***In relationships with others...***

There should be acceptance with government, at work and at home. In society, they need discernment to not cause needless suffering by giving answers before they are asked. They need to obey God in spite of persecution.

• ***In their local church...***

Members need spiritual maturity so they can be calm, evaluate situations and pray effectively.

They need to reach out and support each other with empathy, compassion and humility.

They need to develop and use their spiritual gifts to encourage each other.

They need to let God cleanse their lives and the life of their local church.

Older spiritual leaders need to: look at their life, their motives and their ministry.

Are they guiding and nurturing those who are under their care?

Younger spiritual leaders need to accept training and counsel from the godly, older leaders.

In their anxiety they should all remember how much God cares about each of them as individuals.

How Believers Will Survive

• **Resist Satan** - They need to be alert to Satan's temptations and lies.

• **Know that believers in other parts of the Roman empire are standing firm.**

• **Believe God will provide what they need.**

He will mend them, put them in right adjustment and restore them. He will make them strong, firm and steadfast.

As God's elect/called - they were called to be holy 1:15; called out of darkness into God's light 2:9; called to suffer persecution 2:21; to demonstrate godly qualities 3:8-9; to have spiritual glory thruout eternity 5:10

EXPLANATION OF PROBLEM PASSAGES**3:18-20** Jewish teaching based on Jewish and 1st century picture language

After Jesus died, His spirit was in Paradise (the *good* side of Hades). While there, He made a proclamation to specific fallen angels on the *bad* 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 their future judgment is certain.

Since those evil spirits were from 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

The word *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. They have chosen not to engage in the sins of the world around them. They have ceased to be attracted by sin at this particular time.

4:4-6 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.

