

First Peter

1 ¹ This letter comes from Peter, apostle of Jesus Christ, and is sent to God's chosen people: exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. ² You were chosen by God the Father in his wisdom, made holy by the Spirit, so that you might obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with his blood. May you have grace and peace more and more!

³ Praise God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! Through his great mercy we have been born again and given a living hope^a through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. ⁴ This inheritance is eternal, it never spoils or fades, and it is kept safe in heaven for you. ⁵ Through your trust in him, God will protect you by his power until salvation arrives—the salvation that is ready to be revealed at the last day.

⁶ So be happy about this, even though you may be sad for a short while as you endure various trials. ⁷ These prove that your trust in God is genuine, just as fire is used to prove if gold is genuine—even though that too can be destroyed—and your faith is more valuable than gold! In this way your trust in God will be recognized and you will receive praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ appears.

⁸ You love him even though you have never seen him. Though you cannot see him now, you trust in him and you're filled with wonderful, indescribable happiness. ⁹ Your reward for trusting in him is that you will be saved! ¹⁰ It was this salvation that the prophets searched for and investigated when they spoke of the grace that was prepared for you. ¹¹ They tried to find out when and how this would take place, for the Spirit of Christ inside them spoke clearly about Christ's sufferings and glory to come. ¹² It was explained to them that they were not doing this for themselves, but for you—since what they spoke about you've now learned from those who shared the good news with you by the Holy Spirit that heaven sent. Even the angels are eager to find out about all this!

¹³ Make sure your minds are in gear. Be clear-headed. Fix your hope exclusively on the grace you'll be given when Jesus is revealed.

^a1:3. Or “a hope that brings us life.”

¹⁴ Live like children that do what they're told. Don't allow yourselves to be shaped by your former sinful desires when you didn't know any better. ¹⁵ Now you need to be holy in everything you do, just as the one who called you is holy. ¹⁶ As Scripture says, “You are to be holy, for I am holy.”^b

¹⁷ Since you call him Father, and recognize he judges everyone impartially based on what they do, take your time here on earth seriously, respecting him.

¹⁸ You already know that you were not set free from your pointless way of living that you inherited from your forefathers by things that don't have lasting value, like silver or gold. ¹⁹ You were set free by the costly blood of Christ, who was like a lamb with no flaw or defect.

²⁰ He was chosen before the world was created, but he was revealed in these last days^c for your benefit. ²¹ Through him you trust in God who raised him from the dead, and glorified him, so that you could have confidence and hope in God. ²² Now that you've dedicated yourselves by following the truth, love each other sincerely like a true family.^d ²³ You've been born again, not the product of a mortal “seed,”^e but immortal, through the living, eternal word of God. ²⁴ For: “All people are like grass, and all their glory like wildflowers. The grass withers and the flowers fall. ²⁵ But the word of the Lord remains forever.”^f This word is the good news that was explained to you.

2¹ So give up all the evil things that you do: all your dishonesty, hypocrisy, and jealousy, all the ways you speak badly about others. ² You should become like newborn babies who only want pure spiritual milk, so you can grow in salvation ³ now you've tasted how good the Lord really is. ⁴ As you come to him—the living stone that people rejected as useless, but is chosen by God and precious to him— ⁵ you also become like living stones, being built into a spiritual house. You are a holy priesthood that offers spiritual

^b**1:16.** Quoting Leviticus 11:44-45 or Leviticus 19:2

^c**1:20.** Or “at the end of time.”

^d**1:22.** Or “with brotherly love.”

^e**1:23.** The emphasis here is that different “seeds” produce different kinds of “life.”

^f**1:25.** Quoting Isaiah 40:6-8.

sacrifices that God welcomes through Jesus Christ. ⁶ As Scripture^g says, “See! I’m setting in Zion its main cornerstone, specially-chosen and valuable. Whoever trusts in him will not be disappointed.”^h

⁷ He is very valuable to you who do trust. But for those who don’t, “The stone the builders rejected that became the main cornerstone”ⁱ ⁸ is “The stone that trips you up and the rock that makes you fall.”^j People stumble over this message because they refuse to accept it—which for them is entirely predictable.

⁹ In complete contrast, you are a specially-chosen family, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God. Consequently you can reveal the wonderful things he’s done, calling you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰ In the past you were nobodies, but now you are God’s people. In the past you hadn’t received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

¹¹ My friends, I’m pleading with you as foreigners and strangers^k in this world not to give in to physical desires that are in conflict with what is spiritual. ¹² Be sure to act appropriately when you’re with non-Christians, so even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see the good things you do and glorify God when he comes.^l

¹³ Obey human authority for the Lord’s sake, whether it is the king as the highest authority, ¹⁴ or governors that God appoints to punish those who do evil and to commend those who do good. ¹⁵ By doing what is good and right God wants you to silence the ignorant accusations of foolish people. ¹⁶ Yes, you are free people! So don’t use your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but live as God’s servants. ¹⁷ Respect everyone. Show your love to the community of believers. Have reverence for God. Respect the king. ¹⁸ If you are a servant then submit to your master—not just those who are good and kind, but those who are harsh masters as well. ¹⁹ For this is what grace is: to endure life’s pain and unfair suffering, keeping your focus on God. ²⁰ However, there’s no credit when you’re punished for doing

^g2:6. Quoting Isaiah 28:16.

^h2:6. Or “ashamed.”

ⁱ2:7. Quoting Psalms 118:22.

^j2:8. Quoting Isaiah 8:14.

^k2:11. “Foreigners and strangers”—not seeing this world as home.

^l2:12. Literally, “day of visitation.”

something wrong. But if you suffer for doing what is good and right, and you put up with it, then God's grace is with you.

²¹ In fact this is what you were called to do, because Christ suffered for you and gave you an example, so you should follow in his footsteps. ²² He never sinned, he never lied;^m ²³ and when he was badly treated, he didn't retaliate. When he suffered, he didn't threaten to take revenge. He simply placed himself in the hands of the one who always judges rightly. ²⁴ He took the consequences of our sins on himself in his body on the cross, so that we could die to sin and live rightly.ⁿ “By his wounds you are healed.”^o ²⁵ At one time you were like sheep who had lost their way,^p but now you've returned to the Shepherd—the one who watches over you.

3 ¹ Wives, accept your husbands' authority in the same way, so that if some husbands refuse to accept the word, they may still be won over without words by the way you behave, ² recognizing your pure and reverent behavior. ³ Don't focus on outward attractiveness—hairstyles, gold jewelry, or fashionable clothes—⁴ instead let it come from within, the lasting attractiveness of a gentle and peaceful spirit on the inside. That's what God values. ⁵ This is how holy women of the past who put their confidence in God made themselves beautiful, yielding to their husbands, ⁶ like Sarah who obeyed Abraham, and called him “lord.”^q You are her daughters if you do what's good and right and are not intimidated.

⁷ Husbands, in just the same way, be considerate to your wives as you live together with them. Though she may not be as strong as you are, you should honor her since she will inherit equally with you

^m2:22. Quoting Isaiah 53:9.

ⁿ2:24. “The consequences of our sins”: it is the results of sin that are demonstrated in Jesus' death. Sins are innately non-transferable—they are committed by the sinner and cannot be passed to anyone or anything else, since sins are the specific actions of the individual sinner.

^o2:24. Quoting Isaiah 53:5, explaining that salvation is to do with the healing of our fatal sin-sickness, not some legal readjustment with God, or payment to him.

^p2:25. Referencing Isaiah 53:6.

^q3:6. Or “master.” Today such formality in a marriage relationship would be unusual.

God's gift of life. Make sure to do this so nothing will get in the way of your prayers.

⁸ Finally, you should all have the same attitude. Be sympathetic and love each other. Be compassionate, and humble. ⁹ Don't pay back evil for evil, or retaliate when you're abused, instead you should give a blessing—because that's what you were called to do, so you could gain a blessing yourself. ¹⁰ Remember: “Those who want to love life, and to see good days, must refrain from speaking evil, and not tell lies. ¹¹ Turn away from evil and do good; search for peace—run after it! ¹² For God sees those who do right, and he hears their prayers, but he opposes those who do evil.”^r

¹³ Who will harm you if you're keen to do good? ¹⁴ For even if you suffer for doing what's right, you're still better off. Don't be scared over what people threaten, don't worry about it; ¹⁵ just keep your mind focused on Christ as Lord. Always be ready to explain to anyone who asks you the reason for the hope that you have. Do this in a gentle and respectful way. ¹⁶ Make sure your conscience is clear, so that if anyone makes accusations against you, they will be embarrassed for speaking badly about the good way you live your life in Christ. ¹⁷ It's certainly better to suffer for doing good, (if that's what God wants), than to suffer for doing wrong! ¹⁸ Jesus died because of sins, once and for all, the one who is completely true and good and right died for those who are bad,^s so that he could bring you to God. He was put to death in the body, but he came to life in the spirit.

¹⁹ He went to speak to those “imprisoned”^t ²⁰ that refused to believe, when God patiently waited in the time of Noah while the ark was being built. Only a few—in fact eight people—were saved “through water.” ²¹ This water symbolizes baptism that now saves you, not by washing off dirt from your body, but as a

^r3:12. Quoting Psalms 34:12-16.

^s3:18. Literally, “the right for the unright.” In this verse the inevitable results of sin are made clear through the death of Jesus. He experienced the consequences of sin in the most dramatic and conclusive way possible, and also proved it was not God who kills, but that sin itself brings its inevitable fatal result (see Romans 6:23).

^t3:19. Or “imprisoned souls.” There has been much debate over this phrase. The same word used for “souls” should note the same word is used for the eight people in verse 20. Some understand those “imprisoned” as those people at the time of the Flood who were “held captive” by their sinfulness (see Genesis 6:5).

positive response to God that comes from a clear conscience. It is the resurrection of Jesus Christ that makes your salvation possible. ²² Having ascended to heaven, he stands at God's right hand, with angels, authorities, and powers placed under his control.

4 ¹ Since Christ suffered physically, you must prepare yourselves with the same attitude he had—for those who suffer physically have turned away from sin.^u ² You will not live the rest of your lives following human desires, but doing what God wants. ³ In the past you've spent enough time following the ways of the world: immorality, sexual indulgence, drunken orgies, partying, binge drinking, and revolting idol-worship. ⁴ People think it's strange that you don't join them anymore in this wild and excessive lifestyle, so they curse at you. But they will have to explain what they've done to the one who is ready to judge the living and the dead. ⁵ That's why the good news was shared with those who've already died— ⁶ so that although they were rightly judged as far as being sinful human beings is concerned, they could live in the spirit as far as God is concerned.

⁷ Everything is coming to an end! So think clearly and stay alert when you pray. ⁸ Most of all, you should love one another very deeply, for love covers many of the wrong things people do. ⁹ Show hospitality to each other, and don't complain. ¹⁰ Whatever gift you've been given, share it with others among you, as people who wisely demonstrate God's grace in all its different forms. ¹¹ Anyone who speaks should do so as though God is speaking through them. Anyone who wants to help others should do so through the strength that God gives, so that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. May glory and power be his forever and ever. Amen.

¹² My friends, don't be alarmed at the “ordeals of fire”^v you're having, as if these were unexpected. ¹³ Be happy to the extent that you share in Christ's suffering, because when he appears in his glory, you will be incredibly happy! ¹⁴ If you are cursed in Christ's name, you're blessed, for God's glorious spirit rests on you. ¹⁵ If you

^u4:1. This is a difficult verse, since clearly suffering does not mean sinlessness. The implication is that just as Christ suffered unjustly, when Christians suffer unjustly they take part in the experience of Christ.

^v4:12. Literally, “a burning to test you.”

suffer, it should not be as a murderer, or a thief, or a criminal, or as a gossip—¹⁶ but if it's as a Christian, then you don't need to be ashamed. Instead praise God that you're called by that name!

¹⁷ For the time of judgment has come—and it begins with the house of God. If it begins with us, what will be the end of those who reject God's good news? ¹⁸ “If it's hard for those who live right to be saved, what will happen to sinners, those who oppose God?”^w ¹⁹ So then those who suffer according to the will of God, the trustworthy Creator, should make sure they are doing good.

5 ¹ I want to encourage the elders among you. I'm also an elder, a witness to Christ's sufferings, and I will share in the glory that is to come. ² Look after God's flock you have been given to care for, watching over it not because you're forced to, but gladly, as God wants you to. Do this willingly, not looking to make a profit from it. ³ Don't be arrogant, lording it over those who have been put in your care, but be an example to the flock. ⁴ When the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive a glorious crown that will never fade.

⁵ Young people, do what the elders tell you. Indeed all of you should serve one another in humility, because “God is against the proud, but favors the humble.”^x ⁶ Humble yourself before God's powerful hand so that he will lift you up at the appropriate time. ⁷ Surrender all your worries to him, because he cares for you. ⁸ Be responsible, and stay alert. The devil, your enemy, is prowling around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹ Stand firm against him, trusting in God. Remember that your fellow-believers around the world are going through similar troubles. ¹⁰ After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace who called you into his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore you, support you, strengthen you, and give you a solid foundation. ¹¹ To him be power forever and ever! Amen.

¹² With the help of Silvanus, whom I consider a trustworthy brother, I send this letter to you. In these few words I've written I want to encourage you and testify that this is the true grace of God.

^w4:18. Quoting Proverbs 11:31.

^x5:5. Quoting Proverbs 3:34.

Stand firm in God's grace! ¹³ The believers here in “Babylon,”^y chosen together with you, send their greetings to you, as does Mark, my son. ¹⁴ Greet each other with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

^y**5:13.** Literally, “those in Babylon.” Babylon in the New Testament is frequently a symbol for Rome.