

THE BOOK OF FIRST PETER

AN OVERVIEW

I woke this morning with this happy prayer pouring out,

"Father, because I am in Christ, I have been born again to a living hope, one that provides an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and reserved in heaven for me. Lord, thank You that it is not only reserved in heaven, but it is protected by Your power until that day."

Those words may mean little to you this morning, but they come straight out of 1 Peter 1, and my prayer is that before you are finished with this study you, too, will know the depth of their meaning, finding them just as happy. May you understand why the Writer calls them "precious," and have a deeper understanding from them, of how precious you are to God.

If you have accepted Christ Jesus as your Savior, you have been born again to a living hope. In the coming days we will look into the reason for this letter, but I'll give you a sneak peek to let you know that 1 Peter teaches us how to live with a mind set on hope, how to stand firm in God's grace, and how to rejoice in every facet of our salvation, even when it includes that terrible word - suffering.

Please know, that before you even picked this study up, you have been prayed for. Our God is acquainted with every need you may have, and will meet you in His word as you open the pages. We're told in 1 Corinthians 3, there are two things we need in order to understand

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things He wants to teach us: We need the Spirit of God, "because they are spiritually appraised." And we need, "the mind of Christ," which is the Bible.

Since the things of God are spiritually appraised, as we come to our study each time, it's important to clear out any un-confessed sin to God. 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sin He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." He wants to have abiding "fellowship" with us, as its termed in 1 John. That can only happen when there is nothing separating us from hearing His Spirit, and sin is like a good set of earplugs when it comes to hearing Him speak. God just asks us to repent, to confess, which simply means to agree with Him that we missed His mark of perfection, a mark that only Christ met, He paid the debt for our sin so we could have eternity with God, and gave His Spirit to abide in us until then. That's where being "born again to a living hope" comes in.

All that to say, before you begin each lesson, take time in prayer. Make it not only a time of confession, but of praise, for there is no other like God. Ask the Spirit to teach you, as only He can do. Take a moment now, and then come back to begin today's lesson.

Whenever we are looking at a new book of the Bible, it's always a good practice to read through the book in its entirety so that you can gain an overview of what has been written. Remember that when this was written there were no chapters, or verse numbers, assigned to it, it was a letter to be read as a letter would be read. I don't know about you, but when I get a personal letter in the mail (which is rare these days), I can't wait to read every word to see what they have to say. I don't begin it and then, after a paragraph, set it down until another time. I read the whole letter. That's what we want to do today. This letter has been broken up into just five short chapters. As you read, you don't have to look for too many details, just

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get an overview of who is writing, to whom, and why. After you've read, come back and let's begin answering some questions.

We find out who the writer is in the very first verse. **Who wrote this letter, and how does he introduce himself (1:1)?**

The letter was written to a group of people, who are they, and where were they (1:1)?

If you were to receive this letter from someone, what might your first thoughts be about it?

Did you find the purpose of the writing?

Was there a particular verse that spoke to you as you read through, if so, write it here:

And so, we begin this book of "exhorting and testifying of the true grace of God," as it's described in Chapter 5. And although it was written over 2000 years ago, it's still so timely today to teach us how to "stand firm" in the grace God has given, learning how to live as sojourners in the full hope of what our future brings.

May God bless and redeem every moment that you spend in His word so that you, too, will find yourself waking to praise Him for the assurance of joy we have in Him, for we have been born again to a *living hope*.

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Review

- Text: 1 Peter 1-5
- Prepare your heart for studying
- An overview of the Book
- Peter's exhorting and testifying of the true grace of God. Stand firm in it. (1 Peter 5:12)