



*Go for God!*

## THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER

### Introduction & 1 Peter 1:1-2

### “Peter, An Apostle of Jesus Christ”

#### I) INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER

~ AUTHOR: Is Peter, but who is he?

Simon (or Simeon) was the original name of Peter, the son of Jonas (or John), and brother of Andrew, a disciple of John the Baptist, as Peter also may have been. A fisherman by occupation, he was an inhabitant of *Bethsaida* (“the house of fish”) on the Sea of Galilee, though subsequently he dwelt with his family at Capernaum (Matt 4:18; 8:14; 10:2; 16:16-17; 17:25; Mark 1:16,29-30,36; Luke 5:3-4,5,8,10; 22:31; 24:34; John 1:40-44). His first appearance in Gospel history is in John 1:35-42, when Andrew, having discovered Jesus to be the Messiah, “*first finds his own brother Simon,*” and “*brought him unto Jesus*”; on which occasion Jesus beholding him, said, “*You shall be called Cephas,*” an Aramaic surname whose Greek synonym is *Petros* , or Peter, meaning “a rock” or “stone.”

~ DATE OF WRITING: A.D. 65

~ THEME: *The First Epistle of Peter* is a letter of great “HOPE!”

~ INSIGHTS ON:

Christian SALVATION

Christian SUBMISSION

Christian SANCTIFICATION

Christian SUFFERING

Christian SHEPHERDING

~ VARIOUS TOPICS:

- *Victory in Trials*
- *The New Birth*
- *The Will of God*
- *Governments*
- *Business*
- *Marriage & Family*
- *Gifts & Ministry*
- *Last Days*
- *Church Leadership*
- *Spiritual Warfare.*

~ **CHAPTER BY CHAPTER:**

Chapter 1 – *A LIVING HOPE*

Chapter 2 – *YOU ARE A CHOSEN GENERATION*

Chapter 3 – *ALWAYS BE READY*

Chapter 4 – *KNOWING THE WILL OF GOD*

Chapter 5 – *SPIRITUAL WARFARE*

- **KEY VERSES:** 1 Peter 1:3-5; 2:9-10; 3:15; 4:10-11; 5:8-9.

**II) PETER'S INTRODUCTION TO 1 PETER 1:1-2**

(v1a) **What is an apostle?** In summary an *apostle* ("one sent forth") - The official name of the twelve whom Jesus sent forth to preach, and who also were with Him throughout His earthly ministry. Peter states the qualifications before the election of Judas' successor (Acts 1:21), namely, that he should have companied with the followers of Jesus "*all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them, beginning from the baptism of John unto the day that He was taken up, to be a witness with the others of His resurrection.*"

(v1b) **Why the Dispersion?**

One commentary reads, "Peter called them "*pilgrims*;" these people were citizens of heaven through faith in Christ (Phil 3:20), and therefore were not permanent residents on earth. Because Christians are "*strangers*" in the world, they are considered to be "strange" in the eyes of the world (1 Peter 4:4). **Christians have standards and values different from those of the world, and this gives opportunity both for witness and for warfare.**

We will discover in this epistle that some of the readers were experiencing suffering because of their different lifestyle. These believers were "*scattered*" people. The word translated "*Dispersion*" or "scattered" (diaspora) was a technical term for the Jews who lived outside of Palestine. However, Peter's use of this word does not imply that he was writing only to Jewish Christians, because some statements in his letter suggest that some of his readers were converted out of Gentile paganism (1 Peter 1:14,18; 2:9-10; 4:1-4). These Christians were scattered in five different parts of the Roman Empire, all of them in northern Asia Minor (modern Turkey).

People were "on the move" in those days, **and dedicated believers shared the Word wherever they went** (Acts 8:4). The important thing for us to know about these "scattered strangers" is that they were going through a time of suffering and persecution. **At least fifteen times in this letter, Peter referred to suffering; and he used eight different Greek words to do so.**

Some of these Christians were suffering because they were living godly lives and doing what was good and right (1 Peter 2:19-23; 3:14-18; 4:1-4,15-19). Others were suffering reproach for the name of Christ (1 Peter 4:14) and being railed at by unsaved people (1 Peter 3:9-10). Peter wrote to encourage them to be good witnesses to their persecutors, and to remember that their suffering would lead to glory (1 Peter 1:6-7; 4:13-14; 5:10).”

(v2) Understanding God’s “Foreknowledge” for salvation: Foreknowledge does not suggest that God merely knew ahead of time that we would believe, and therefore He chose us. This would raise the question, “Who or what made us decide for Christ?” and would take our salvation completely out of God's hands. In the Bible, to foreknow means “to set one's love on a person or persons in a personal way.” It is used this way in Amos 3:2: “You only have I known of all the families of the earth.”

God set His electing love on the nation of Israel. But the plan of salvation includes more than the Father's electing love; it also includes the work of the Spirit in convicting the sinner and bringing him to faith in Christ. Also, the Son of God had to die on the cross for our sins, or there could be no salvation. We have been chosen by the Father, purchased by the Son, and set apart by the Spirit. It takes all three if there is to be a true experience of salvation. (From The Bible Exposition Commentary)

(v3) Grace and peace be multiplied – GRACE - Favor or kindness shown without regard to the worth or merit of the one who receives it and in spite of what that same person deserves.

Grace is one of the key attributes of God. The Lord God is “merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abounding in goodness and truth” (Ex 34:6). Therefore, grace is almost always associated with mercy, love, compassion, and patience as the source of help and with deliverance from distress.

- PEACE - In the New Testament, peace often refers to the inner tranquility and poise of the Christian whose trust is in God through Christ. The peace that Jesus Christ spoke of was a combination of hope, trust, and quiet in the mind and soul, brought about by a reconciliation with God.

Such peace was proclaimed by the host of angels at Christ's birth - Luke 2:14 - “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”

Jesus said in His *Sermon on the Mount* - Matthew 5:9 - Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Jesus also taught about this kind of peace at the Lord's Supper, shortly before His death - John 14:27 - Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

- Be MULTIPLIED (Gk. – *Plethuno*) – Always increasing!

> Herbert Lockyer in his classic book *All the Men of the Bible* writes, “Peter was a man with many facets of character. His life can be approached from many angles. He was naturally impulsive; tenderhearted and affectionate; gifted with spiritual insight, yet sometimes slow to apprehend deeper truths; courageous in his confession of faith in Christ, yet guilty of a most cowardly denial; self-sacrificing yet inclined towards self-seeking, and presumption; immovable in his convictions.”

### III) PETER'S GREAT ADVENTURE!

- Peter meets the SAVIOR! – Luke 5:1-11
- Peter sees the POWER of Christ, mother-in-law healed (Peter was married) – Matthew 8:14-15
- Peter called to be an APOSTLE (not Pope) - Matthew 10:2-4 (see notes)
- Peter experiences the meaning of FAITH – Matthew 14:28-33
- Peter confesses Christ DEITY – Matthew 16:12-19
- Peter vs. the Devil, Christ WINS! – Matthew 16:21-23
- Peter witnesses the Christ GLORY! – Matthew 17:1-8
- Peter learns FORGIVENESS – Matthew 18:21
- Peter's lesson on being a SERVANT – John 13:1-17
- Strike-force Peter (NOT) – John 18:10-11
- Peter DENIES Christ – Matthew 26:69-75
- Peter lost the race – John 20:1-8
- Peter's call to be a fisher of MEN – John 21:1-14
- Peter's ministry in the POWER of the Holy Spirit – Acts chapters 2:14-40
- Peter, from coward to COURAGEOUS! – Acts 4:1-22

~ Peter always points to JESUS and JESUS now points to us, let's GO FOR GOD!

### ~ "Was Saint Peter the first Pope?"

Answer: The Roman Catholic Church sees Peter as the first pope upon whom God had chosen to build His church (Matthew 16:18). It holds that he had authority (primacy) over the other apostles. The Roman Catholic Church maintains that sometime after the recorded events of the book of Acts, the Apostle Peter became the first bishop of Rome, and that the Roman bishop was accepted by the early church as the central authority among all of the churches. It teaches that God passed Peter's apostolic authority to those who later filled his seat as bishop of Rome. This teaching that God passed on Peter's apostolic authority to the subsequent bishops is referred to as “apostolic succession.”

The Roman Catholic Church also holds that Peter and the subsequent popes were and are infallible when addressing issues “ex cathedra,” from their

**position and authority as pope. It teaches that this infallibility gives the pope the ability to guide the church without error. The Roman Catholic Church claims that it can trace an unbroken line of popes back to St. Peter, citing this as evidence that it is the true church, since, according to their interpretation of Matthew 16:18, Christ built His church upon Peter.**

**But while Peter was central in the early spread of the gospel (part of the meaning behind Matthew 16:18-19), the teaching of Scripture, taken in context, nowhere declares that he was in authority over the other apostles, or over the church (having primacy). See Acts 15:1-23; Galatians 2:1-14; and 1 Peter 5:1-5. Nor is it ever taught in Scripture that the bishop of Rome, or any other bishop, was to have primacy over the church. Scripture does not even explicitly record Peter even being in Rome. Rather there is only one reference in Scripture of Peter writing from “Babylon,” a name sometimes applied to Rome (1 Peter 5:13). Primarily upon this and the historical rise of the influence of the Bishop of Rome come the Roman Catholic Church’s teaching of the primacy of the bishop of Rome. However, Scripture shows that Peter’s authority was shared by the other apostles (Ephesians 2:19-20), and the “loosing and binding” authority attributed to him was likewise shared by the local churches, not just their church leaders (see Matthew 18:15-19; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Corinthians 13:10; Titus 2:15; 3:10-11).**

**Also, nowhere does Scripture state that, in order to keep the church from error, the authority of the apostles was passed on to those they ordained (the idea behind apostolic succession). Apostolic succession is “read into” those verses that the Roman Catholic Church uses to support this doctrine (2 Timothy 2:2; 4:2-5; Titus 1:5; 2:1; 2:15; 1 Timothy 5:19-22). Paul does NOT call on believers in various churches to receive Titus, Timothy, and other church leaders based on their authority as bishops or their having apostolic authority, but rather based upon their being fellow laborers with him (1 Corinthians 16:10; 16:16; 2 Corinthians 8:23).**

**What Scripture DOES teach is that false teachings would arise even from among church leaders, and that Christians were to compare the teachings of these later church leaders with Scripture, which alone is infallible (Matthew 5:18; Psalm 19:7-8; 119:160; Proverbs 30:5; John 17:17; 2 Peter 1:19-21). The Bible does not teach that the apostles were infallible, apart from what was written by them and incorporated into Scripture. Paul, in talking to the church leaders in the large city of Ephesus, makes note of coming false teachers. To fight against their error does NOT commend them to “the apostles and those who would carry on their authority”; rather, Paul commends them to “God and to the word of His grace” (Acts 20:28-32). It is Scripture that was to be the**

infallible measuring stick for teaching and practice (2 Timothy 3:16-17), not apostolic successors. It is by examining the Scriptures that teachings are shown to be true or false (Acts 17:10-12).

Was Peter the first pope? The answer, according to Scripture, is a clear and emphatic “no.” Peter nowhere claims supremacy over the other apostles. Nowhere in his writings (1 and 2 Peter) did the Apostle Peter claim any special role, authority, or power over the church. Nowhere in Scripture does Peter, or any other apostle, state that their apostolic authority would be passed on to successors. Yes, the Apostle Peter had a leadership role among the disciples. Yes, Peter played a crucial role in the early spread of the gospel (Acts chapters 1-10). Yes, Peter was the “rock” that Christ predicted he would be (Matthew 16:18). However, these truths about Peter in no way give support to the concept that Peter was the first pope, or that he was the “supreme leader” over the apostles, or that his authority would be passed on to the bishops of Rome. Peter himself points us all to the true Shepherd and Overseer of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:25).

Recommended Resource: [The Gospel According to Rome: Comparing Catholic Tradition and The Word of God by James McCarthy.](#)

### ~ Mormon Latter Day Saint movement’s false teaching on Peter



Bronze statue on the LDS Church's Temple Square (Salt Lake City, Utah, USA) depicting Peter, James, and John conferring the Melchizedek priesthood in 1829 on Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church or "Mormons") along with other sects of the Latter-Day Saint movement believe that Peter was the first leader of the early Christian church but reject papal succession. In interpreting Matthew 16:13–19 the LDS Church has stated, "The words then addressed to him, 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church,' have been made the foundation of the papal claims. But it is the Godhead of Christ, which Peter had just confessed, that is the true keystone of the Church."<sup>[80]</sup> Latter-day saints believe that Peter, James, and John came from heaven and conferred the keys of the Melchizedek Priesthood upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in 1829, near Harmony Township, Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania as part of the restoration of priesthood authority.<sup>[81]</sup>