

## **READ The BIBLE Together**



### **I PETER**

**1<sup>st</sup> May - 25<sup>th</sup> June 2016**

**SHALOM CHURCH, SINGAPORE  
(Upholding the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith)**

Day 1 & 2 Read **Introductory Notes – I PETER** below.

### Map of Asia Minor



#### Author

**I PETER 1:1** states clearly that the apostle *Peter* was the author of this epistle. In **5:1**, he claimed to be a witness of the sufferings of Christ. If we accept that *Peter* wrote **II PETER**, then **II PETER 3:1** is a further confirmation that *Peter* wrote **I PETER**.

In the last 150 years, there have been many ‘scholars’ who raised questions about this simple fact, choosing to speculate that **I PETER** was written by someone using *Peter’s* name. Two main reasons were cited as to why they doubted the authorship of *Peter*:

[1] The Greek of **I PETER** was too good for an uneducated Galilean fisherman.

It is true that *Peter* was a fisherman, as a quick survey of the four Gospels will tell us. It is also true that in **ACTS 4:13**, *Peter* was called an uneducated and untrained man. However, this does not have to mean that *Peter* had received no education at all. Paying attention to the context of **ACTS 4**, we discover that the issue was rather this: *Peter* was not trained in the rabbinic school of the day! To put it in modern context, this would be equivalent to saying that someone did not go to the seminary. It does not mean that the person did not receive any education at all.

The fact that Peter was a Galilean may actually strengthen the argument for his good command of Greek. Galilee is near to the Decapolis (the ten Greek-speaking cities across the Jordan). Galilee had been under Greek influence for many years by the 1<sup>st</sup> century, and it has been noted that most Galileans were bilingual, speaking Aramaic/Hebrew and Greek.

[2] The epistle made reference to persecution, and we know from church history that empire-wide persecution of Christians only happened in AD 95 under *Domitian* or AD 112 under *Trajan*. *Peter* died during the reign of *Nero*, probably around AD 65-66. So how could *Peter* have written **I PETER**?

It is true that **I PETER** made reference to persecutions of Christians, but it did not actually say that it was an empire-wide persecution. Moreover, the persecutions mentioned in the epistle were not about dying for the faith but suffering for the faith! Believers were facing, or will face, mockeries, mistreatments and harassments. It could very well be that different believers in different locations within the empire faced different forms of persecutions. In simple words, the persecutions mentioned in **I PETER** were more localized than empire-wide. We recall that *Peter* himself had already experienced some of these persecutions in the early chapters of **ACTS**!

In short, the objections to the Petrine authorship of **I PETER** are not strong. Moreover, we need to face the situation that if *Peter* wasn't the real human author of **I PETER**, then the author is actually telling us an untruth in **I PETER 1:1**! If he was already lying to us right at the beginning of the epistle, what assurance do we have that he will be telling us the truth in the rest of the epistle?

So we are back to our simple observation: **1:1** says that *Peter* wrote **I PETER**!

### Recipients

**Verse 1** informs us that the recipients were believers living in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (see map on page 2). Are these believers Jews or Gentiles?

From **ACTS 2:9**, we know that there were Jews from Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia present on the Day of Pentecost. Assuming that some of them were among the 3000 converted that day, and some of them returned to Asia Minor subsequently, it is very possible that these believers were included in the recipients of **I PETER**. But from **I PETER 1:18, 2:11-12, 4:3-4**, it appears that many of the recipients were Gentiles. Hence, it is likely that the churches in Asia Minor then were made up of Jews and Gentiles. What binds them together is their faith in the Savior, and now their suffering for their Lord!

### Place and Date of Writing

**5:13** tells us that *Peter* wrote from Babylon. It is generally held that Babylon in the New Testament does not refer to physical Babylon – the place where *Daniel* went into exile

and which have been in ruins by the 1<sup>st</sup> century. Rather, Babylon refers to Rome! So *Peter* was writing **I PETER** from Rome.

It is generally accepted that **I PETER** was written near the end of *Peter's* life. In **I PETER**, *Peter* made no mention of *Paul*, leading us to assume that he did not meet *Paul* while he was in Rome. Yet we know that *Paul* was likely to be in Rome from AD 60-62. This means **I PETER** was written after AD 62.

It is also generally believed that *Peter* was martyred during the reign of Nero around AD 65-66. This leaves us with just AD 62-64 as the likely date of writing. In short, *Peter* was writing **I PETER** to the believers in Asia Minor just before the start of the persecutions under Nero.

### Purpose

The apostle *Peter* sought to encourage and reassure Christian churches in Asia Minor during the onset of the stormy seasons of persecution.

*According to Edmund Clowney, "Peter proclaims Jesus Christ, our sure hope now and forever. Throughout his letter, he grounds our hope in the reality of what God has done and will yet do for us through Christ. The apostle is a witness, not just to what Jesus did and said while he was in his fishing-boat or in his house, but to the meaning of Christ's life, death, resurrection and ascension. Peter's testimony about the life of Jesus is reflected in Mark's gospel. In this letter, he shows us what that story meant for us as Jesus calls us to take up our cross and follow him."*

*According to Wayne Grudem, "Since many of the exhortations in 1 Peter concern faith and obedience, it may be suggested that the purpose of 1 Peter is to encourage the readers to grow in their trust in God and their obedience to him throughout their lives, but especially when they suffer. Peter accomplishes his purpose by pointing to what God has done for them in Christ, then applying that to the readers' lives. These themes will be seen in much detail throughout the exposition of the text, but it is sufficient here to note one verse which, perhaps better than all others in the letter, summarizes these concerns: 'Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will do right and entrust their souls to a faithful Creator' (1 Peter 4:19). Here are found the themes of suffering ('those who suffer') and trust in God (the suffering is 'according to God's will' and should result in continual entrusting of the readers' souls [or lives] 'to a faithful Creator'); moreover, such trust in God should also be accompanied by obedience, for they should continue to 'do right'."*

After reading the **Introductory Notes – I PETER** above, write down . . .

(a) What struck you?

(b) What questions do you want to ask?

(c) Since the epistle was written to 1<sup>st</sup> century Christians in Asia Minor, how is this epistle applicable to us? Explain.

Day 3 - 4 Read **I PETER 1:1-2**

1. **Verse 1a** ~ *Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ . . .*

It is clear that the author is none other than Simon son of Jonah, from the village of Bethsaida in the northwest corner of the Sea of Galilee (**JOHN 1:44**). Early in His ministry, Jesus called him to be one of His disciples (**MARK 1:16-18**) and later named him an apostle (**MARK 3:13-19**). Later in **MATTHEW 16:17-18**, Jesus called him *Cephas* (*Peter*, meaning rock).

Here, he calls himself an apostle of Jesus Christ, meaning he represents Christ and carries the authority of Christ as he speaks. In simple words, the words of *Peter* in this epistle are the words of Christ. To reject them is to reject Christ as well as God the Father who sent Christ!

2. From **verse 1b-2**, the recipients of this epistle were described using four words/phrases:

(a) *They are pilgrims* (**verse 1b**)

In what sense are they pilgrims?

(b) *They are elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father* (**verse 2a**)

➤ What does 'elect' mean?

- What does 'foreknowledge' mean?

(c) *They are sanctified by the Spirit (verse 2b)*

The word '*sanctified*' means '*set apart*'. This word is used in two ways in the New Testament. It could mean God separating us from the world and calling us to Himself at the time of our conversion, or it could mean God working in us to make us holy and hence different from the world.

Here in **verses 2b**, it is likely that *Peter* had the first meaning in view. The Gospel was preached, and the Holy Spirit did a marvelous work in separating these people from the world, enabling them to understand and believe the Gospel.

Can the same things be said of you today? Elaborate.

(d) *They are people who obeyed and were sprinkled by Christ's blood (verse 2c)*

While it is tempting to understand **verse 2c** as depicting the Christian Life – we obey God's commands, and when we sin, we are washed by Christ's blood, the context points us to the *start* and not the *continuation* of the Christian Life.

- The word "*obey*" refers to obeying the Gospel like in **I PETER 1:22** when believers are said to have "*obeyed the truth*". The Gospel commands us to repent of our sins and believe in Jesus. When we repent and believe, we obey the Gospel.

So these people are described as those who have obeyed the Gospel. Can the same things be said of you today? Elaborate.

- The background context for the "*sprinkling of the blood*" is likely to be **EXODUS 24:3-8**. There, *Israel* pledged to obey God and *Moses* sprinkled the blood of the animal sacrifices on the people. As he did so, he said in **EXODUS 24:8** ~ *This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words.*" This blood of the covenant signifies the forgiveness and the cleansing *Israel* needed to stand in right relation with God.

Here in **I PETER**, the people are sprinkled by the blood of Christ, and hence they are forgiven and cleansed. Can the same things be said of you today? Elaborate.

(e) The answers in (a)-(d) above can be used to answer this question: *What is a Christian?*

How will you answer this question, using **I PETER 1:1b-2**?

3. In his salutation, *Peter* wished his recipients grace and peace multiplied.

(a) What is '*grace*'?

(b) What is '*peace*'?

(c) Recalling the situation of the recipients, how relevant is this salutation?

Day 5 - 7 Read **I PETER 1:3-12**

These 10 verses belong together, and they can be sub-divided into three sections:

- **Verses 3-5**
- **Verses 6-9**
- **Verses 10-12**

### **Verses 3-5**

1. *Peter* begins by calling upon his readers to praise God – *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . .*

Recalling the situation of his readers then, what is the significance of this?

2. According to **verse 3**, the reason why they should praise God is that He has begotten them! The focus is on the Father's initiative in producing new life in them. The result of God's begetting is that believers are born anew and enjoy new life.

(a) Two causes for their new birth were stated in **verse 3**. What were they?

(c) As a result of being born again, believers have a living hope (**verse 3**). This living hope is also called '*inheritance*' (**verse 4**).

*Peter* used three words to describe the inheritance. What are they and what do they mean?

3. What assurance do believers have that we will obtain this inheritance?

**Verse 4b:**

**Verse 5:**



### **Verses 6-9**

4. In these 4 verses, *Peter* painted a strange phenomenon of Christians rejoicing and grieving at the same time. How is it possible for someone to experience joy and grief simultaneous? Discuss with your RTBT group.
  
5. What is the significance of “*if need be*” in **verse 6**?
  
6. What is the purpose of believers experiencing various trials?
  
7. According to **verses 8-9**, what is the relationship between Christ and the Christian?

### **Verses 10-12**

8. What do you think is the message of these 3 verses?

### **Review verses 3-12**

9. After reading/studying these 10 verses, how has your Christian Life changed? Name one specific area:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. Use these 10 verses, and turn them into a prayer to God. Write out your prayer in the space below:

Day 1 - 3      Read **I PETER 1:13-21**

The **indicative** (*what God has done for us in Christ – verses 3-12*) is always the basis for the **imperative** (*how we should live our lives – verses 13-21*).

*“The imperatives of Christian living always begin with ‘therefore.’ Peter does not begin to exhort Christian pilgrims until he has celebrated the wonders of God’s salvation in Jesus Christ.*

*The indicative of what God had done for us (and in us) precedes the imperative of what we are called to do for him. Without the indicative of what God does, the imperative is addressed to a helpless sinner, the victim of his illusions; it becomes a commandment that crushes or that drives to vain and presumptuous efforts. Our hope is God’s gift, an inheritance created for us by Christ’s resurrection (1:3). Because we have been given hope, we are called to live in it. Peter’s exhortations continue through his letter. Yet he also continues to remind us of the reality of redemption that underlies his call to obedience. In the rest of this chapter he summons us to the obedience of hope, hope that is marked by readiness and holiness.”*

Edmund Clowney

In these 8 verses, Peter gave **Three Main Imperatives** (commands):

- *Rest your hope (verse 13)*
- *Be holy (verse 15)*
- *Conduct yourselves in fear (verse 17)*

### *Rest your hope (verse 13)*

A casual reading of **verse 13** may give you the impression that here we have three parallel commands:

- (1) *Gird up the loins of your mind*
- (2) *Be sober*
- (3) *Rest your hope*

However, that impression is wrong. Rather, we have one main directive and two supporting directives. Let me explain this with an illustration:

*It is now 6 a.m. on a normal weekday morning. The child is sleeping but he needs to be in school by 7.00 a.m. The father comes along, wakes him up and says to him, “Brush your teeth, change into your school uniform, and be at the table for breakfast by six-thirty.”*

Now, the father's words could be viewed as consisting of three parallel commands: (1) *brush your teeth*, (2) *change into your school uniform*, and (3) *be at the table for breakfast by 6.30*. Each command stands on equal footing and equal importance with each other. However, the father could say the same thing in a slightly different way, "*Having brushed your teeth and changed into your school uniform, be at the table for breakfast by six-thirty*"

The boy is still told to brush his teeth. He is still told to change into his school uniform. But he now understands that he is to carry out these two instructions, in order to fulfill the third. And it is the third that is the most important for it is the main focus: *Be at the table for breakfast by six-thirty*.

We have the same situation here in **I PETER 1:13**. The main directive is *to rest our hope*. To carry out this main directive, here are the two supporting directives:

*Gird up the loins of your mind.*  
*Be sober.*

1. The first supporting directive is "*gird up the loins of your mind*".

(a) Look up these verses:

**I KINGS 18:46; LUKE 12:35-36; EPHESIANS 6:14 (NKJV)**  
**JEREMIAH 1:17; II KINGS 4:29, 9:1; JOB 40:7; NAHUM 2:1 (NASB)**  
**EXODUS 12:11** -- for a pictorial usage of this phrase

Now explain in your own words what "*gird up our loins*" means:

(b) What does it mean to "*gird up the loins of your mind*"?

2. The second supporting directive is "*be sober*".

(a) What does "*be sober*" mean literally?

(b) Figuratively, what does "*be sober*" mean?

(c) Do you think we are meant to understand “*be sober*” literally, figuratively, or both? Discuss your answer with your RTBT group.

3. The main directive is “*rest our hope*’ (NKJV). Some other modern English translations render the phrase in this way:

- *Set your hope fully . . .* (ESV)
- *Fix your hope completely . . .* (NASB)
- *Set your hope on . . .* (NIV)

If you can, read it in your Chinese/Tamil/Tagalog Bible and see how this phrase is being translated.

(a) After consulting the various translations, what do you think is the meaning of this main directive?

(b) Wayne Grudem, in his commentary on **I PETER**, said this concerning this phrase:

*“Set your hope fully uses the common New Testament term for ‘hope’, elpizo. This term refers to an expectation which is much stronger than the vague sense of ‘wish for’ or ‘dream about’. Although ‘hope’ in the New Testament does not imply a sense of absolute certainty (see Rom. 8:24-25; 1 Tim. 3:14), it does convey a sense of confident expectation, an expectation strong enough for one to act on the basis of it (see Luke 6:34; 23:8; Phil 2:19, 23). The word fully implies a very confident and eager expectation, a very strong hope.”*

How has Wayne Grudem’s commentary help to enhance your answer in (a)?

(c) Edmund Clowney, in his commentary on **I PETER**, said this concerning this phrase:

*“Set your hope fully, he says. The form of this imperative suggests a clear-cut, decisive action. The force of the command is heightened by the adverb fully or firmly. Since our hope is sure, we can bank on it. It is not so much an attitude to*

*be cultivated as a reality to be recognized.*

*To set our hope is to believe the gospel. Our faith and hope are in God (1:21). We cannot first improve our skill in hoping and then direct our more hopeful attitude toward God. Hope moves the other way. It is our response to God's work. We look to God, hear his word of promise, see his salvation in Christ, and fix our hope on him.*

*Peter makes this clear by defining again the object of our hope. It is the grace that is being brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ. To fix our hope is to fix our gaze on the coming glory of Christ's appearing (4:13). The blessing (grace) of that day is future, but it is already arriving, for we already have a foretaste of what God will give us when Christ appears."*

How has Edmund Clowney's commentary help to enhance your answer in (a)?

4. How would the two supporting directives help us carry out the main directive?

Day 4 - 5      Read **I PETER 1:13-21**

Recall that in these 8 verses, *Peter* gave **Three Main Imperatives** (commands):

- *Rest your hope (verse 13)*
- *Be holy (verse 15)*
- *Conduct yourselves in fear (verse 17)*

**Be holy (verse 15)**

1. Who is the 'you' in **verse 15**?

**Verse 14** calls them 'obedient children'. In the original, it actually reads as 'children of obedience'. What does 'children of obedience' mean?

The prophet *Isaiah* in **ISAIAH 57:4** speaks of the people of Israel in his days as 'children of transgression'. It is as if these people have 'transgression' as their father. And because 'transgression' is their father, they behaved like their father, and so their lives are marked and characterized by 'transgression'.

The prophet *Hosea* in **HOSEA 10:9** speaks of a group of people as '*children of iniquity*'. '*Iniquity*' is here being referred to as a person and '*iniquity*' has given birth to these people. As a result, these people lived their lives in accordance with their nature, which is '*iniquity*'.

The apostle *Paul* in **EPHESIANS 2:2** describes unbelievers as '*sons of disobedience*'. '*Disobedience*' is their father. Their whole life can be summed up by the word '*disobedience*'. This is their character and their hallmark! This is what they are and what they do --- in thoughts, words and deeds.

Hence, when *Peter* calls these people '*children of obedience*', he is saying that '*obedience*' is their parent and '*obedience*' is the one who gave birth to them. Hence their entire lives are characterized by '*obedience*'.

Can this description be aptly applied to you today? Why or why not?

2. The directive here is '*be holy*'.

(a) It has a negative aspect – *NOT*.

What must the children of obedience *NOT* do?

(b) It has a positive aspect – *BUT*.

Who is the model for '*be holy*'?

What is the scope for '*be holy*'?

(c) What is the motivation for obeying this directive? (**Verses 15-16**)

3. Write down your understanding of what it means to 'be holy':

4. Edmund Clowney, in his commentary on this passage, says this:

*"God himself becomes the model for the re-patterning of our lives. We are to be imitators of God as beloved children; holy as he is holy, perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect. Be holy in all you do (1:15).*

*The pattern of holy living cannot be reduced to a limited number of 'holy' actions. God's righteous deeds flow from his holy nature; holiness patterned on his must express transformed hearts. On the one hand, this seems to set an impossible standard: how can we be like the holy God? On the other hand, there is a marvelous simplicity in a holiness patterned on God himself; it does not require encyclopedic grasp of endless directives and prohibitions. It flows from the heart; its key is love.*

*To be holy is to love the Lord our God with heart, soul, strength and mind, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. We imitate the love of grace that saved us, the love of God's compassion poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit."*

How has Edmund Clowney's commentary help you to understand the main directive here?

Day 6 - 7      Read **I PETER 1:13-21**

Recall that in these 8 verses, Peter gave **Three Main Imperatives** (commands):

- *Rest your hope (verse 13)*
- *Be holy (verse 15)*
- *Conduct yourselves in fear (verse 17)*

*Conduct yourselves in fear (verse 17)*

1. Who should conduct themselves in fear?

*"And if you who call on the Father . . ." (verse 17). This phrase "call on God/Father/Lord" is repeated at least three times in the New Testament:*

**ROMANS 10:13** ~ *For whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.*

**I CORINTHIANS 1:2** ~ *To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:*

**2 TIMOTHY 2:22** ~ *Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.*

A Christian is therefore “*the one who calls on God*”.

At a very basic level, this means that the person realizes his/her utter helplessness, and that he/she is totally bankrupt and without strength. Arising out of this humbling realization, he/she looks out of himself/herself and calls upon the Almighty God to save and help him/her.

Since the word is “*call*”, not “*called*” or “*shall call*”, it implies that the Christian regularly knows his/her bankruptcy and habitually calls out to God for strength and salvation.

Can this term “*habitually calls on God*” be applied to you? Why or why not?

2. Those who call on God are to conduct themselves in fear.

(a) What do you think this “fear” refers to? (Read the verses and the quotation cited below to help you arrive at the answer)

**PROVERBS 9:10** ~ *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.*

**REVELATION 15:3,4** ~ *They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: “Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints! Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, for Your judgments have been manifested.”*

*“The more a Christian believes and loves and rejoices in the love of God, the more unwillingly surely he is to displease Him. If I am in real danger of displeasing God, then I will be very afraid of that very thing that will turn the danger into reality. If I am not afraid of sin, then my assurance of salvation is a*



*false assurance. This fear is not the opposite of faith, but of high-mindedness and presumption.*"

Robert Leighton

(b) "... *conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear . . .*" (**Verse 17**).

- "*conduct yourself*" in Greek is "*anastrafeete*", which can be translated as "*lifestyle*". In other words, *Peter* here is calling the Christians to let this "*fear*" mark every aspect and every moment of their lives: *at work, at play, in public, in private, in church, at the office, at home, in school*. The entirety of our lives is in view here! That's how comprehensive it is meant to be!
- For how long are Christians to have such a lifestyle?

(c) Can you honestly say that "*conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear*" is true of you today, by God's enabling? Elaborate.

3. Why should we "*conduct ourselves throughout the time of our stay here in fear*"? The first reason, given in **verse 17**, is this: *God our Heavenly Father is an impartial Judge!*

In what sense would the Heavenly Father judge the Christian?

4. Why should we "*conduct ourselves throughout the time of our stay here in fear*"? The second reason, given in **verses 18-21**, is this: *you were redeemed from your aimless conduct.*

(a) With what were we redeemed? (**Verses 18-19**)

(b) What things were said about Christ in **verses 20-21**?

(c) What did God do to Jesus so that our faith and hope are in God? (**Verse 21**)

(d) Explain how “*redeemed from aimless conduct*” is a motivation to “*conduct ourselves in fear*”. Discuss your answer with your RTBT group.

Week 3

[15<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> May 2016]

Day 1 Review **I PETER 1:13-21**

1. What truths about God have you learnt from these 9 verses?
2. What truths about Christ have you learnt from these 9 verses?
3. After reading/studying these 9 verses, how has your Christian Life changed? Name one specific area:
4. Use these 9 verses, and turn them into a prayer to God. Write out your prayer in the space below:

Day 2 -3 Read **I PETER 1:22-24**

Besides reading these 4 verses in NKJV, look them up in the NASB and ESV. If you can, read it in your Chinese/Tamil/Tagalog Bible and see how these four verses are being translated.

1. In these 4 verses, Peter used two different ways to describe how his readers became Christians.
  - (a) The first description is found in **verse 22**. What is it? Use your own words.
  
  - (b) The second description is found in **verse 23**. What is it? Use your own words.
  
  - (c) Can both descriptions be applied to you? Why or why not? Elaborate.
  
2. **Verse 22** states an end-goal in conversion. What is it? (Hint: The NASB and ESV will convey this in a much clearer way.)
  
3. What command did Peter give to these Christians?
  
4. What do you think is the purpose of including the Old Testament quotation (**Isaiah 40:6-8**) in **verse 24**?
  
5. In **verse 25**, how is the Word of God described?
  
6. Review your answers to Questions 1-5 above. Write down what you think is the main point of this passage (using your own words):

7. Having learnt the message of these 4 verses, explain one way in which your life must change:

Day 4 – 5      Read **I PETER 2:1-3**

1. The passage begins with "therefore". What is the significance of this?
2. (a) What does Peter want these Christians to do (negatively)?  
  
(b) What does Peter want these Christians to do (positively)?  
  
(c) Do you think there is any link between what they are to do negatively and what they are to do positively? If yes, what is the link?
3. Why do you think Peter said, "*if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious*"?
4. After you have reviewed your answers to Questions 1-4 above . . .
  - (a) Write down what you think is the main point of this passage (using your own words):

(b) Write down what you think is the connection between this passage and the previous passage in **1:22-25**:

5. Having learnt the message of these 3 verses, explain one way in which your life must change:

Day 6 – 7      Read **I PETER 2:4-10**

Besides reading these 7 verses in NKJV, look them up in the NASB and ESV. If you can, read it in your Chinese/Tamil/Tagalog Bible and see how these 7 verses are being translated.

1. In these 7 verses, Peter used many words and phrases to talk about Jesus Christ.

The term

The meaning

The meaning to you

Use them to praise the Lord Jesus Christ in your prayer.

2. In these 7 verses, Peter used many words and phrases to talk about the Christian.

(a) What are they?

(b) How would they change the way you view and treat fellow Christians?

3. In these 7 verses, Peter also outlined the duties and responsibilities of the Christian.
  - (a) What are they?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - (b) How would they change your priorities and conduct as a Christian?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. In **verses 6-8**, Peter quoted three Old Testament passages.
  - (a) Where are they taken from?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - (b) What do you think is *Peter's* purpose in quoting these passages?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. After you have reviewed your answers to Questions 1-3 above . . .
  - (a) Write down what you think is the main point of this passage (using your own words):
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - (b) What do you think is the connection between this passage and the passage **1:3-2:3**?

Day 1 - 2 Read **I PETER 2:11-12**

1. What do you think is the message of these 2 verses?

(In order to know the message of these 2 verses, you may need to first ask and then answer some basic questions like those in ...)

Week 2 Day 2-3 Q1-5

Week 2 Day 4-5 Q1-3

Week 2 Day 6-7 Q1-4

In order to get the main message of this passage, what basic questions will you ask regarding these 2 verses?)

2. Having learnt the message of these 2 verses, explain one way in which your life must change:

Day 3 - 4 Read **I PETER 2:13-17**

1. What do you think is the message of these 5 verses?

(In order to know the message of these 5 verses, you may need to first ask and then answer some basic questions like those in Week 2 Day 2-3 Q1-5, Week 2 Day 4-5 Q1-3, and Week 2 Day 6-7 Q1-4. In order to get the main message of this passage, what basic questions will you ask regarding these 5 verses?)

2. Having learnt the message of these 5 verses, explain one way in which your life must change:

Day 5 - 7 Read **I PETER 2:18-25**

1. Who was being addressed in these 8 verses?
2. What did *Peter* want these people to do?
3. They were to do what is commanded "*with all fear*". What do you think this means?
4. In **verses 19-20**, the harsh master is in view.  
If you have a harsh master, what are you supposed to do, and why?
5. In **verses 21-25**, *Peter* talked about Jesus Christ.
  - (a) How was Jesus addressed? (**Verse 25**)
  - (b) What was done to Jesus and what was His response?



6. What was *Peter's* purpose in talking about Jesus Christ in **verses 21-25**?
  
7. Review your answers to Questions 1-6 above. Write down what you think is the main point of this passage (using your own words):
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. Having learnt the message of these 8 verses, explain one way in which your life must change:

Week 5

**[29<sup>th</sup> May – 4<sup>th</sup> June 2016]**

Day 1 - 2 Read **I PETER 3:1-6**

1. What do you think is the message of these 6 verses?

(In order to know the message of these 6 verses, you may need to first ask and then answer some basic questions like those in Week 2 Day 2-3 Q1-5, Week 2 Day 4-5 Q1-3, Week 2 Day 6-7 Q1-4 and Week 3 Day 5-7 Q1-6. In order to get the main message of this passage, what basic questions will you ask regarding these 6 verses?)

2. Having learnt the message of these 6 verses, explain one way in which your life must change:

Day 3 Read **I PETER 3:7**

What do you think is the message of **I Peter 3:7**, and explain one way your life must change as a result of **I Peter 3:7**:

Day 4 Review **I PETER 2:13-3:7**

1. What do you think is the overall theme of **I PETER 2:13-3:7**?
2. What do you think is the link between **I PETER 2:13-3:7** and **I PETER 2:11-12**?
3. Why do you think *Peter* emphasized this theme to his readers? (Recall their situation then.)
4. What is God saying to you in these verses?

Day 5-7 Read **I PETER 3:8-12**

Besides reading these 5 verses in NKJV, look them up in the NASB and ESV. If you can, read it in your Chinese/Tamil/Tagalog Bible and see how these 5 verses are being translated.

1. In **verse 8**, *Peter* wanted all believers to be “*of one mind*”. What does this mean?

(Consult **ROMANS 12:16**, **ROMANS 15:5-6**, **I CORINTHIANS 1:10**, **II CORINTHIANS 13:11**, **PHILIPPIANS 1:27**, **PHILIPPIANS 2:2** to help you arrive at an answer.)

2. In **verse 8**, *Peter* wanted all believers to “*have compassion for one another*”.

(a) What does this mean?

(Consult **ROMANS 12:15**, **I CORINTHIANS 12:26** to help you arrive at an answer.)

(b) What challenges will you face as you seek to have compassion on other believers?

3. In **verse 8**, *Peter* wanted all believers to “*love as brothers*”.

In commenting on this phrase, John Brown said, “*The affection which Christians should bear to Christians should be a strong affection, capable of producing much forbearance, much exertion, much sacrifice, much suffering; a love which many waters cannot quench, which the floods cannot drown.*”

(a) Is there anyone in Shalom Church that you find difficult to “*love as brothers*”?

(b) What will you do to overcome this difficulty?

4. In **verse 8**, *Peter* wanted all believers to be “*tenderhearted*”.

(a) What does this mean?

(Consult **EPHESIANS 4:32**, **ROMANS 12:10**, **LUKE 6:36** to help you arrive at an answer.)

(b) Why do you think Christians must be tenderhearted?

(c) How can we become more tenderhearted?

5. In **verse 8**, *Peter* wanted all believers to be “*courteous*” (NKJV). In the NASB, it is “*humble*”.

If one is truly courteous, it is because he/she is really humble. Conversely, if one is truly humble, he/she will be really courteous! The word can also mean “*friendly-minded*”, “*modest*”, “*obliging*”, “*easily entreated*”.

(a) Can any of these words be used to describe you?

(b) Would your family members and close friends agree with you?

(c) Why do you think Christians have to be “*courteous/humble*”?

6. Are the five “be” in **verse 8** mandatory or optional? Can we choose some, or must we aim for all? Explain your answer.

Week 6

[5<sup>th</sup> -11<sup>th</sup> June 2016]

Day 1 Read **I PETER 3:8-12**

1. What does “*revile*” mean?

2. In the context of **verses 9-12**, who is reviling the Christian? Explain your answer.
  
3. (a) When reviled, what must the Christian NOT do?  
  
(b) What must the Christian do instead?
  
4. Why do you think *Peter* quoted **PSALM 34:12-16** to support his call in **verse 9**?
  
5. When we behave in the way outlined in **verse 9**, we shall inherit a blessing. What is the blessing? (**Verse 12**)
  
6. (a) What challenges do you face in obeying the call of **verse 9**?  
  
(b) What will you do to overcome this challenge?

Day 2-3 Read **I PETER 3:13-4:19**

The overall theme of these 29 verses is *suffering*. Specifically, *sufferings* that come upon Christians because they are Christians!

Take some time to read them in the NASB and ESV, as well as the Chinese/Tamil/Tagalog Bible.

1. Do you think *suffering* is common or rare for the Christian? Elaborate.
  
2. Have you ever experienced suffering because you are a Christian? Elaborate.

Day 4-5 Read **I PETER 3:13-17**

1. **Verse 13** is a rhetorical question<sup>1</sup>. You do not expect to suffer when you eagerly do what is good. However, the unexpected can happen – **verse 14a**.
  - (a) What should you KNOW when the unexpected happens? (**Verse 14b**)
  
  - (b) What should you NOT DO when the unexpected happens? (**Verse 15**)
  
  - (c) What should you DO INSTEAD when the unexpected happens? (**Verse 15**)
    - (i) “*Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.*” What does this mean?
  
    - (ii) “*Always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.*” What does “*with meekness and fear*” mean?
  
  - (d) What is a “*good conscience*” and what does it have to do with (ii) above?

---

<sup>1</sup> A rhetorical question is a question that you ask without expecting an answer. The question might be one that does not have an answer. It might also be one that has an obvious answer but you have asked the question to make a point, to persuade or for literary effect.

2. According to **verse 17**, what is better?
  
3. Have these 5 verses changed the way you view *suffering*? Elaborate.

Day 6-7 Read **I PETER 3:18-22**

To understand these five verses, we need to be clear of the structure of this passage. **Verses 19-21** can be viewed as a parenthesis, as something that Peter wants to tell us which can be placed within brackets. In other words, the main message here in this paragraph is found in **verses 18 & 22**. Hence, we can reformat these five verses in this way:

*<sup>18</sup>For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit*

*(by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ)*

*<sup>22</sup>who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.*

1. It is clear that *Peter's* main focus in these five verses is Jesus Christ, especially His sufferings.

(a) What did *Peter* say concerning the sufferings of Christ?

*(Consider questions like what did Christ suffer, why did Christ suffer, was it deserved or undeserved suffering, what was the result of His suffering, what happened to Him after He had suffered?)*

(b) Why do you think *Peter* is talks about Christ's suffering here?

(In other words, *what is the connection between this passage here and the previous passage?*)

2. **Verses 19-21** are generally viewed as challenging, in the sense that it is not easy to understand and good Christians can differ in their understanding. This is Edmund Clowney's summary of the situation:

*“Three major interpretations have been given to Peter's words, each with various modifications.*

*According to the first, Jesus descended into hell and preached to the spirits of those who perished in the flood in the time of Noah. Some who hold this view also think that what Jesus proclaimed to the dead was the gospel, offering them a further opportunity to repent. Others would have Christ preaching to the righteous dead, proclaiming their release from the prison where they awaited his coming. Still others would understand his preaching to be the heralding of the doom of the wicked dead.*

*The second major interpretation was presented by Augustine, who objected to the first view as presented by Origen and others. Augustine held that Christ's preaching was done in the Spirit through Noah. Peter says that it was the Spirit of Christ who preached through the Old Testament prophets (1:11); Christ's preaching through Noah would be a case in point. Those to whom Noah preached were not in prison literally, but they could be described as in prison spiritually. (Or, it might be said that those to whom Noah once preached are now spirits in prison.)*

*A third interpretation would understand spirits in prison to refer to fallen angels rather than to human beings. Jesus proclaims to them his victory and their doom. This is seen by some as taking place after his resurrection. As he ascends into heaven, Jesus confronts the principalities and powers, showing his victory and power over them.”*

For a more detailed study, you can consult **Tyndale New Testament Commentary – 1 Peter** by *Wayne Grudem* where he gave a detailed study in the Appendix. The same article can be downloaded from:

<http://www.waynegrudem.com/christ-preaching-through-noah-1-peter-319-20-in-the-light-of-dominant-themes-in-jewish-literature/>



Day 1-2 Read **I PETER 4:1-6**

1. There is only one command in these six verses: *arm yourselves also with the same mind*.
  - (a) What is the significance of the word “*also*”?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - (b) What does “*the same mind*” refer to?
  
2. To encourage the believers to obey the command in **verse 1**, *Peter* gave three motivations.
  - (a) The first motivation is found in **verse 3**. What is it?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - (b) The second motivation is found in **verse 4**. What is it?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - (c) The third motivation is found in **verse 5**. What is it?
  
3. Review your answers to Question 1 & 2 above. Summarize the message of these 6 verses in no more than 3 lines:

Note #1: “*Therefore whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin means ‘whoever has suffered for doing right, and has still gone on obeying God in spite of the suffering it involved, has made a clear break with sin’.*”

*The phrase has ceased from sin cannot mean 'no longer sins at all', for certainly that is not true of everyone who has been willing to suffer for doing right, and several passages in Scripture rule out the idea that anyone can be absolutely free from sin in this life (1 Kings 8:46; Proverbs 20:9; Ecclesiastes 7:20; James 3:2; 1 John 1:8). It rather means 'has made a clear break with sin', 'has most definitely acted in a way which shows that obeying God, not avoiding hardship, is the most important motivation for his or her action'.*

*Thus, following through with a decision to obey God even when it will mean physical suffering has a morally strengthening effect on our lives: it commits us more firmly than ever before to a pattern of action where obedience is even more important than our desire to avoid pain."*

Wayne Grudem

Note #2: *"He says, 'For this is why the gospel was preached even to the dead.' The word this refers back to the subject of the previous sentence, the final judgment. In other words, 'It was because of the coming final judgment that the gospel was preached, even to those who believed in Christ and then later died.'*

*In this way the dead means 'those who are now dead' (when Peter was writing), though when the gospel was preached to them they were still living on the earth. (See discussion above on the similar expression 'the spirits in prison' at 3:19). The NIV has 'those who are now dead'."*

Wayne Grudem

### Day 3-5 Read **I Peter 4:7-11**

Peter was writing these 5 verses to Christians under suffering -- suffering unjustly and suffering for Christ. It is important to remember that Peter was NOT writing to Christians living in good and easy times, living in luxury. No, rather they were facing pressures, experiencing pains and sufferings.

Our text (**I Peter 4:7-11**) is flanked, top and bottom, or left and right, by passages on suffering:

**3:13-4:6** is on suffering, suffering unjustly, suffering for Christ.

**4:12** onwards is on the same subject.

Yet right smack between them we find these five verses that tell us about our duties and relations to God and one another.

*This is highly significant!* It tells us that even in such stressful times, *Peter* will exhort and *Peter* still expects believers to pay attention to their basic duty to God and their fellow believers!

These 5 verses divide themselves very naturally into three main points:

- [1] Our duty and relation to God (**verse 7**)
- [2] Our duty and relation to one another (**verses 8-11a**)
- [3] The ultimate purpose for doing these duties (**Verse 11b**)

### **Our Duty And Relation To God (Verse 7)**

1. **Verse 7a** says, "*The end of all things is at hand*". What does this mean?
  
2. In view of **verse 7a**, *Peter* called the believers to be serious and watchful in prayers.
  - (a) The word "*serious*" means "*to be in the right mind*". What does this mean?
  
  - (b) What does "*watchful in prayers*" mean?

### **Our Duty And Relation To One Another (Verses 8-11a)**

1. (a) What do you think *Peter* was referring to when he said, "*above all things*"?  
(**Verse 8**)
  - (b) What did *Peter* want the Christians to do?

(c) “*Love will cover a multitude of sins*” – what does this mean? (Read **PROVERBS 10:12 & 17:9** to help you with your answer)

(d) What obstacles would you face when you seek to obey the command of **verse 8**, and how can you overcome them?

2. The second area that we are to pay attention to, in our relations and duties to one another, is: *Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.*

(a) Why do you think the believers needed to be hospitable to one another during *Peter’s* days?

(b) How can we be hospitable to one another today?

(c) Why do you think *Peter* adds “*without grumbling*” in his call?

(d) What are some of your reasons for not showing hospitality to other believers? Share your answers with your RTBT group.

(e) What do you think would be *Peter’s* response to your reasons given in (d)? Discuss your answer with your RTBT group.

3. The third area that we are to pay attention to, in our relations and duties to one another, is found in **verses 9-11a**.

(a) *Peter* made an assumption here. What was it?

(b) What should believers be doing? (**Verse 10-11a**)

(c) Have you been doing what *Peter* is urging here? If yes, how can you strengthen what you have been doing? If no, how can you start doing as the apostle has commanded?

### **The Ultimate Purpose For Doing These Duties (Verse 11b)**

1. According to **verse 11b**, what is the ultimate purpose for doing what *Peter* has commanded?

2. How is this ultimate purpose consistent with the gospel?

### Day 6-7 Read **I Peter 4:12-19**

1. The overall theme of these 8 verses is suffering once more.

(a) You can suffer because of your sin. Where in these 8 verses did it say so?

(b) You can suffer because of your silliness. Where in these 8 verses does it say so?

(c) You can suffer because of your Savior. Where in these 8 verses did it say so?

2. *Peter* says that the suffering of these Christians is a fiery trial.

(a) What does this mean?

(b) How would this change your perspective concerning suffering?

3. *Peter* also calls the suffering of these Christians “*judgment*” (**verses 17-18**). What exactly does this mean?

4. In these 8 verses, *Peter* calls believers to have three right responses when suffering.

(a) The first response is found in **verses 12-13**. What is it?

(b) The second response is found in **verse 14** and **verse 16**. What is it?

(c) The third response is found in **verse 19**. What is it?

(d) How is it possible to have the responses as stated in (a) – (c) above?

5. Review your answers to Questions 1-4 above. Write down what you think is the main point of this passage (using your own words):
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. Having learnt the message of these 8 verses, explain one way in which your life must change:

Week 8

[19<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> June 2016]

Day 1 Read **I PETER 5:1-4**

1. Who was Peter addressing?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What did Peter want them to do?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What motivation did Peter give to encourage them to accomplish their task?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What is the theme of these 4 verses?

5. What is the link between this passage and **3:13-4:19**?

Day 2-3 Read **I PETER 5:5-7**

1. "*Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders.*" (**Verse 5a**)

(a) Who are the "*younger people*" being addressed by *Peter* here?

2. The "*younger people*" are called to submit to their elders.

(a) What does this mean?

(b) What kind of challenge(s) would confront you if you have to obey this call?

3. Do you think there are any persons who would not belong to the "*younger people*" or the "*elders*" categories? Who would they be? Would they still be required to submit to "elders"? Elaborate.

4. Re-read **verses 5b-7**.

(a) What do you think is the theme of these 2½ verses?

(b) What are we called to be/do?



(c) What are the motivations given to encourage us to obey?

(d) What challenges have you previously faced when you sought to obey the call here?

(e) What steps can you take / have you taken to overcome those challenges?

Day 4-5 Read **I PETER 5:8-11**

1. Why must we be sober and vigilant?

2. What is said about the devil in these verses?

3. What must we do concerning the devil?

4. How can we be assured that we will not be defeated by the devil?

5. What do you think is the link between these verses and the theme of suffering?

Day 6 Read **I PETER 5:12-14**

What lessons can we learn from these 3 verses concerning . . .

(a) Christian fellowship?

(b) Christian service?

Day 7 Review **I PETER**

1. Write down the most important truth you have learnt about God from **1 PETER**:
2. Write down the most important truth you have learnt about the Lord Jesus Christ from **1 PETER**:
3. Write down the most important lesson you have learnt concerning the Christian Life from **1 PETER**:
4. Write down the name of someone with whom you will share (1) – (3) above.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Now, make an appointment to meet this person and share what you have learnt.



### **Acknowledgement**

Whatever the weaknesses of this Read-The-Bible-Together guide, they would have been far greater without the kind help of brother CHEW Theng Sang, sisters Felicia LEOW, Debbie LEOW, Sarah SOH and Sara LEOW. They gave their time and energy to review the entire guide, asking questions all the way and giving many valuable suggestions.

Thank you, sisters!

*Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another!* (Proverbs 27:17, ESV)

=====

Questions or comments concerning this RTBT guide?  
Please contact WEI En Yi (HP: 98340509, email: [weienyi@shalomrb.org](mailto:weienyi@shalomrb.org))