

THE FIRST LETTER OF PETER ^a*Greeting*

1 From Peter, an apostle^b of Jesus Christ. To the chosen ones, refugees scattered^c in Pontus, Galatia,^d Cappadocia,^e Asia, and Bithynia.^f ²You've been chosen in line with God the Father's foreknowledge. By the Spirit's work of making you holy,^g you've come into obedience to Jesus Christ, and into cleansing^h by his blood. May grace and peace multiply for you!

New Birth into a Living Hope

³Blessⁱ the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! Out of his great mercy, he's given us new birth into a living hope. Through^j the resurrection of Jesus Christ from among the dead, ⁴we've come into an inheritance that's permanent^k and pure,^l and never fades. It's kept safe in heaven for you. ⁵By God's power, through faith, you're being protected for a salvation that's ready to be revealed in this last moment of history.^m ⁶Really celebrate about this—even though now, for a little while, you've had to face the pain of various kinds of testing.ⁿ ⁷The testing is so that the quality of your faith will be shown to be far more precious than gold—which is perishable, even though it's tested by putting it through fire.^o The proven quality of your faith is going to result in praise, glory, and honor at the

^a Many—but not all—Bible scholars think that this letter is pseudonymous—that is, they think it shows signs of having been written by someone else using Peter's name. Pseudonymous writings were common in the ancient world.

^b See “Bible Words.”

^c Or “exiles of the Diaspora.”

^d Prn. ga-lay-sha.

^e Prn. kap-pa-doe-sha.

^f Prn. bi-thim-ee-a.

^g Traditionally: “by sanctification [see “Bible Words’] of the Spirit.”

^h Lit. “sprinkling.” For this idea, see e.g. Lev. 8:11, 30; Heb. 9:19-22.

ⁱ Lit. “Blessed be.”

^j Or “...hope, through.” Verses 3 and 4 are one long sentence in Greek.

^k Or “that's invulnerable to breaking down.”

^l Or “undefiled.”

^m Lit. “in the last season/time.”

ⁿ Lit. “it's necessary for you to suffer pain in various kinds of testings.”

^o If you put gold that's mixed with some less-valuable metal in a furnace, the metals will melt and separate, the other (lighter) metals rising to the top. If nothing separates out, the gold is totally pure, and its quality has been proven.

revelation of Jesus Christ. ⁸Though you haven't seen him, you love him. You believe in him now without seeing him, and you really celebrate him, with a joy that's inexpressible and full of glory.^a ⁹As a result of your faith, you're getting your lives saved.^b

¹⁰The prophets searched out and tried to understand^c this salvation. And they prophesied about the grace that was to come to you. ¹¹They were trying to understand^d what time the Spirit might be referring to. Because the Spirit within them was testifying ahead of time about the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that would come afterwards.^e ¹²It was revealed to them that they weren't serving themselves in this, but you. These are the things that have now been announced to you by those who brought you the good news. They were empowered by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Angels yearn to peek into these things.

Be Holy

¹³So get your minds ready for action.^f Be sober.^g Put all your hope in the grace that Jesus Christ is going to bring you when he's revealed.^h ¹⁴Be like obedient children. Don't let yourselves be shaped by the old obsessionsⁱ you had when you were ignorant. ¹⁵No, in line with the fact that the One who called you is holy, you be holy in all your behavior. ¹⁶Because scripture says,^j

You're to be holy, because I'm holy.^k

¹⁷And do you call God Father—who judges everyone, without favoritism, on the basis of their actions? If so, spend your temporary stay here on earth reverently. ¹⁸Because as you know, it wasn't perishable silver or gold that bought your freedom from the empty way of life that you inherited from your ancestors. ¹⁹No! Your freedom was bought with the costly blood of Christ, who's like a spotless, perfect lamb. ²⁰He was foreknown before the creation^l of the world, but he's been revealed at the end of history^m because of you! ²¹Through him, you believe in God—who raised him from among the dead, and gave him glory. That way, your faith and hope are in God.

^a Lit. "and glorified."

^b Lit. "You're getting the result of your faith: salvation of souls/lives."

^c Lit. "and researched."

^d Lit. "they were researching."

^e Or "and the glory that he'd receive afterwards"; lit. "and the glories after these things."

^f Lit. "Therefore, the waist of your [pl.] mind being belted."

^g Or "self-controlled."

^h Lit. "Hope completely upon the grace being brought to you in the revelation of Jesus Christ."

ⁱ Or "lusts."

^j Lit. "Because it's written."

^k Lev. 11:44, 45; 19:2; 20:7.

^l Lit. "foundation."

^m Lit. "upon the end of the times/ages."

By obeying the truth, you've purified your souls, so that you have genuine love for one another. Now love each other tenaciously, from a clean heart.^a Because you've been reborn—not through mortal human conception, but through what's immortal: God's living, enduring word.^b Because

All flesh is like grass, and all its glory is like a wildflower:^c
The grass dries up, and the flower^d falls off,
But the word of the Lord endures forever.^e

And that word is the good news that's been preached to you.

Come to Christ, the Living Stone

2 So get rid of every kind of nastiness and dishonesty. And get rid of pretending that you're something you're not, and envying people, and every kind of trash talking.^f Like newborn babies, be hungry for the milk of honest teaching.^g That way, it'll make you grow up^h into salvation. After all,ⁱ "You've tasted that the Lord is good."^j Come to him, the living stone. He was rejected by human beings, but is chosen and valued by God. And as living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, into a holy priesthood. Then you'll be able to bring acceptable^k spiritual offerings to God through Jesus Christ. Because it says in scripture,

Look, I'm placing a stone in Zion:
I've selected a valuable cornerstone,
And the person that puts faith in him will never be put to shame.^l

His value is for you believers. But for the unbelievers,

A stone that the builders rejected,
That one was used as the number one cornerstone.^m

And it says,

^a Lit. "Your souls having been purified by the obedience of the truth into unfaked brotherly love, love one another persistently/constantly from a clean heart." Many mss have "from the heart."

^b Lit. "...from the heart, being born not from perishable seed, but from imperishable, through the living and lasting word of God."

^c Lit. "a flower of grass."

^d Or "its flower."

^e Isa. 40:6-8.

^f Lit. "...dishonesty, and hypocrisies and envies and all slanders."

^g Lit. "be hungry for intellectual/metaphorical sincere milk."

^h Lit. "...teaching, so that by it you may grow up."

ⁱ Lit. "...salvation, if" (some mss have "...salvation, if indeed").

^j Ps. 34:8.

^k Or "delightful."

^l Isa. 28:16.

^m Lit. "This became for the head of the corner." Ps. 118:22.

A stone that's easy to trip over,
And a rock that offends.^a

They're tripping over him by refusing to listen to the message—which was also their destiny. ⁹But you're

A chosen race, a royal priesthood,
A holy nation, a people appointed as God's own,^b
So that you can proclaim his virtues.^c

God has called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. ¹⁰You're the ones who didn't used to be a people, but now you're God's people. You were the ones who hadn't received mercy, but now you've received mercy.^d

Live as God's Servants in the World

¹¹Dear friends,^e like foreigners and temporary residents here, avoid the body's lusts,^f which fight against your soul. ¹²Maintain a virtuous lifestyle among your fellow non-Jews.^g That way, though they slander you as criminals, they'll learn from your good behavior. And they'll glorify God on the day that he comes to judge.^h

¹³Because of the Lord, submit to all the human institutions. For example, submit to the emperorⁱ as a person in authority. ¹⁴And submit to governors, who are sent by him to punish criminals and honor people who do good. ¹⁵Because it's God's will for you to do that. By doing good, you'll put a stop to^j the ignorant talk of thoughtless people. ¹⁶Conduct yourselves as free people—but not as though you have your freedom as a cover for bad behavior. Just the opposite: live as slaves of God. ¹⁷Honor everyone: love the family of faith,^k revere God, and honor the emperor.^l

Christ's Suffering is Our Example

¹⁸Slaves should be obedient to their masters, with total respect. And not only the good and easygoing ones, but also the unfair^m ones. ¹⁹After all, it's a credit to a person if they endure unfair sufferingⁿ because of their awareness of God.

^a Lit. "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense." Isa. 8:14.

^b Lit. "a people for ownership."

^c Isa. 43:20; Deut. 7:6; 10:15.

^d See Hos. 2:23 (see also Hos. 1:6, 9; 2:1).

^e Traditionally: "Beloved."

^f Lit. "fleshly/carnal lusts."

^g Or "among the nations," or "among the Gentiles."

^h I.e. the day of judgment; lit. "on the day of visitation."

ⁱ Lit. "the king."

^j Or "you'll silence."

^k Lit. "Love the brotherhood."

^l Lit. "the king."

^m Lit. "twisted" or "perverse."

ⁿ Lit. "the pains of unfair suffering."

²⁰Because how heroic is it, if you do wrong, and you endure it when you get a beating? But if you're doing something good, and you endure suffering for it, that gets credit with God. ²¹After all, that's what you're called to. Because Christ also suffered for you. He was leaving you an example, for you to follow in his footsteps.

²²He did nothing wrong,
And no lie was found in his mouth.^a

²³When he was insulted, he didn't insult anybody back. When he was suffering, he didn't make threats. But he entrusted himself to the One who judges justly. ²⁴He himself carried our sins with his own body^b on the wood of the cross. He did it so that we could die to our sins and live in integrity.^c It was by his wounds^d that you were healed.^e ²⁵Because you used to be going astray like sheep,^f but now you've turned back to the shepherd and guardian^g of your souls.

Advice for Wives and Husbands

3 Similarly, wives should be obedient to their husbands. That way, even if some of them don't listen to our message, they'll be won over by their wives' behavior—without a word. ²They'll have witnessed the purity and reverence^h of your lives. ³Make yourselves beautiful not with externals, such as fancy braided hair and gold jewelry, or clothes you wear. ⁴No, it's about the hidden person of the heart, in the unfading qualitiesⁱ of gentleness and a peaceful^j spirit. That's what is of great value in God's eyes. ⁵After all, the holy women who hoped in God used to make themselves beautiful in that way. They were obedient to their husbands. ⁶For example, Sarah was obedient to Abraham. She'd call him "my lord." You've become her daughters^k when you do what's good, and without being afraid of any kind of bullying.^l

⁷Similarly, husbands should live together with their wives in consideration of the fact that their bodies are weaker. Give due honor to their femininity.^m Relate to them as fellow inheritors of the grace of life, so that your prayers won't be blocked.

^a Isa. 53:9.

^b Isa. 53:4.

^c Traditionally: "righteousness."

^d Or "welt/bruise." The word refers to the wounds from being beaten or whipped.

^e Lit. "by whose bruise/welt you were healed." Isa. 53:4.

^f Isa. 53:9.

^g This is the same word that I have elsewhere translated as "pastor."

^h Or "respectfulness."

ⁱ Lit. "in the unfadingness." He's talking about qualities of beauty that do not disappear with age.

^j Or "quiet," or "restful."

^k Lit. "children." He's talking to the wives.

^l Lit. "intimidation." He's talking about bullying by husbands.

^m Lit. "Husbands, likewise, should live together with their wives in line with knowledge, as with a weaker vessel, granting due honor to femininity."

Show Kindness and Love—Even When You’re Mistreated

8To summarize:^a you all should be harmonious, sympathetic, loving to one another, tender-hearted, humble. 9Don’t pay back nastiness with nastiness, or insults with insults. Instead, you should be blessing people. Because that’s what you’re called to, so that you’ll inherit a blessing. 10Because

If a person wants to love life

And to see good times,^b

Let their tongue stop being nasty

And let their lips not tell lies.

11Instead, they should stay away from what’s bad and do what’s good.

They should search for peace, and strive for it.

12Because the eyes of the Lord are on those who live right,

And his ears listen for their prayer.

But the Lord^c is against those who do what’s bad.^d

13And who is there to harm you, if you’re passionate about doing good? 14But even if you might end up suffering because of your integrity, you’re going to be blessed.

So don’t be afraid of their bullying,^e

And don’t get upset.^f

15But revere^g Christ the Lord in your hearts. Always be ready with an answer for anyone who asks you the reason for the hope that’s in you.^h 16But answer with gentleness and respect. Keep a clear conscience. That way, when your abusers insult your good Christian life,ⁱ they’ll be put to shame about it. 17Because it’s better for you to suffer for doing right^j—if that’s God’s will—than for doing wrong. 18Because Christ suffered^k too. He suffered once, as an offering for sins^l—the just on behalf of the unjust. That way he could bring you^m to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but he was brought to life by the Spirit. 19By the Spirit,ⁿ he also went and preached to the spirits in prison. 20They’d been disobedient, back in Noah’s

^a Or “And finally.”

^b Lit. “days.”

^c Lit. “the Lord’s face”

^d Ps. 34:12-16.

^e Or “intimidation”; lit. “don’t fear their fear,” i.e. don’t fear what they want you to be afraid of.

^f Isa. 8:12.

^g Lit. “sanctify.” This verse continues the allusion to Isa. 8:13.

^h Or “the hope that you share.”

ⁱ Lit. “say bad things about your good way of life in Christ.”

^j Lit. “good.”

^k Some mss have “died.”

^l Some mss have “for our sins.”

^m Some mss have “us.”

ⁿ Or “in the spirit, in which.”

day.^a That was when God's patience was stretched thin, and the ark^b was being built. A very few people (eight lives) were saved in the flood.^c ²¹This corresponds to baptism, which now saves you, too. It's not about removing dirt from your skin—it's about asking God for a clean^d conscience. You ask for this through Jesus Christ, ²²who is at God's right side. He has gone into heaven, and angels and authorities and powers have been brought under his authority.

Living for God

4 So, since Christ has physically suffered,^e you should be mentally prepared for the same thing.^f Because the person who's physically suffering^g is done with sin. ²They're going to live the rest of the time in their body^h for God's will, not for human obsessions. ³After all, the time already past is enough to have done what the Gentiles like to do.^j You've already lived in promiscuity,^k lust, and drunkenness, going to parties and drinking matches, and worshiping disgusting idols. ⁴They're surprised you don't run off with them into the same flood of self-destructiveness,^l and they insult you. ⁵They're going to have to give an account of themselves to the One who's just about^m to judge the living and the dead. ⁶After all, that's why even the dead have had the good news preached to them: even though they've been judged the human way as physical people,ⁿ they can live God's way in the spirit.^o

⁷Well, the end of everything is near. So be self-controlled and sober so you can pray.^p ⁸Above everything else, really hold onto love for each other. Because love covers a massive number of sins. ⁹Welcome each other into your homes, without grumbling. ¹⁰Serve one another, according to the gifts you've each received. Use them,^q as good managers of the variety of God's grace. ¹¹If somebody speaks, it should be like revelations from God.^r If somebody serves, it should be like they're serving out of the strength that God supplies. That way, in all circumstances God

^a Gen. 6–8.

^b See "Bible Words."

^c Lit. "through the water."

^d Lit. "good/virtuous."

^e Lit. "suffered in flesh."

^f Lit. "you also arm yourselves with the same mentality."

^g Lit. "who's suffering in flesh."

^h Lit. "in flesh."

ⁱ Or "human lusts."

^j Lit. "to have done the will of the Gentiles."

^k Or "lack of self-control," or "licentiousness." The words here are plural, indicating habitual behavior.

^l Lit. "dissipation." Dissipation is wasting your life, "trashing" yourself.

^m Lit. "who holds ready."

ⁿ Lit. "judged according to human beings in the flesh."

^o Lit. "live in the spirit/Spirit according to God."

^p Lit. "for prayers."

^q More literally: "Distribute it."

^r Lit. "like the oracles of God."

will be glorified though Jesus Christ. Jesus deserves^a the glory and the power, forever and ever! Amen.

Suffering as a Christian

¹²Dear friends, don't be surprised by the trial by fire^b that's happening to you. It's not as though something strange was happening to you—¹³far from it. As you join in Christ's sufferings, celebrate. That way, you'll also be able to celebrate and be overjoyed at his glorious appearance.^c ¹⁴If you're insulted for^d the name of Christ, you're blessed. Because the glorious Spirit of God^e is resting on you. ¹⁵After all, none of you should suffer for being a murderer, or a thief, or a criminal, or even a busybody. ¹⁶But if somebody suffers as a Christian, they shouldn't be ashamed. They should glorify God with that name.^f ¹⁷Because it's time for the judgment to start with God's own family.^g And if it starts first with us, what will the end be—when it comes to those who don't listen to God's good news?

¹⁸And if people of integrity are hardly saved,
Where are the ungodly and the sinners going to be?^h

¹⁹The conclusion, then,ⁱ for people who are suffering according to God's will, is this: they should entrust themselves to God, their faithful Creator, and keep on doing good.^j

Tending God's Flock

5 Finally,^k I have a challenge for the elders among you. I speak as your fellow elder, as a witness to the sufferings of Christ, and as your partner in the glory that's about to be revealed. ²Tend God's flock that's with you. Watch over them^l—not because you have to, but by choice, as God would want you to.^m And don't be greedy for money, but do it willingly. ³And it shouldn't be as though you're lording it over the people you're responsible for.ⁿ No, be examples to the flock. ⁴Then, when the Chief Shepherd appears, you'll get the unfading crown^o of glory.

^a Lit. "...Jesus Christ, to whom is."

^b This is a metaphor. He's talking about the process of testing the purity of a precious metal by melting it at high heat in a furnace.

^c Lit. "in the appearance of his glory."

^d Lit. "in."

^e Lit. "the Spirit of glory and of God."

^f Or "They should praise God that they have that name."

^g Lit. "...to start from the household of God."

^h Lit. "And if the righteous is hardly saved, the ungodly and the sinner, where will he be found?" (Prov. 11:31, LXX).

ⁱ Lit. "As a result." But he's wrapping up the whole train of thought of ch. 4.

^j Lit. "by doing good."

^k Lit. "So."

^l Some mss lack these last three words, but the sense remains the same.

^m Lit. "willingly, according to God."

ⁿ Lit. "And not as lording it over your charges."

^o This is a crown of reward or recognition, rather like a medal, not a royal crown.

¶ Likewise, younger people should be obedient to the elders. And everyone should put on the apron of humility with each other. Because

God opposes the arrogant,
But gives grace to the humble.^a

¶ So humble yourselves under God's mighty hand. That way, he will^b lift you up at the right moment. ¶ Throw all your anxiety on him, because he cares about you.

¶ Be sober. Keep watch. Your enemy,^c the devil, is like a lion that walks around roaring, looking for somebody to eat.^d ¶ Stand up against him: be firm in your faith. Because you know your brothers and sisters throughout the world^e are going through the exact same sufferings. ¶ The God of all grace has called you to everlasting divine glory^f in Christ Jesus.^g After you've suffered a little bit, God himself is going to^h make you whole, strengthen you, make you healthy, and make you rock solid.ⁱ ¶ He deserves^j the power forever!^k Amen.

Final Greetings

¶ I've written these few things to you by dictating them through Silvanus.^l I regard him as a faithful Christian brother. I'm challenging you and testifying to you that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it!

¶ Your sister community in Babylon, also chosen by God, says hello to you.^m And so does my son Mark.ⁿ ¶ Give each other a loving kiss.^o

Peace to all of you who are in Christ!

^a Prov. 3:34 LXX.

^b Or "can."

^c This word means an opponent or adversary in a lawsuit.

^d Lit. "devour." The mss have slight variations, such as "looking for who he can devour," and "looking to devour something."

^e Or "in this world."

^f Lit. "to his eternal glory."

^g Some important mss lack the name "Jesus."

^h Lit. "God himself is going to."

ⁱ Lit. "found you." Some mss lack this word.

^j Lit. "To him be."

^k Some mss have "the glory" in place of "the power," and some have "forever and ever."

^l Prn. *sil-vain-us*. That is, Silas (see Acts 15:22–18:5; 2 Cor. 1:19; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1).

^m Lit. "The co-elect one [fem.] in Babylon greets you."

ⁿ He may mean that Mark is his younger friend and protégé.

^o Lit. "Greet one another with a kiss of love."