



# KING'S CHAPEL

## Daily Devotional - 1 Peter Study

Week 1 - Day 1

### Approaching God

#### Read Psalm 3:1-5

*LORD, how many are my foes! How many rise up against me! Many are saying of me, "God will not deliver him." But you, LORD, are a shield around me, my glory, the One who lifts my head high. I call out to the LORD, and he answers me from his holy mountain. I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the LORD sustains me.*

We may not be able to point to obvious people who are out to get us the way David does in this Psalm, but we are not without deadly foes. In fact, as believers, our chief enemies are spiritual and every bit as potent as someone in the flesh who wanted to destroy you. As you consider your thought life, what's causing anxiety or suffering, wayward desires, or areas of pain right now, what would you consider your chief enemies or "foes"? Pray Psalm 3 and bring these to the Lord.

### Introduction to 1 Peter: [Click Here to Watch The Bible Project Overview Video](#)

As we start a new study today on 1 Peter, take a few mins to watch the overview video of 1 Peter by *The Bible Project* to get a "big picture" look at this letter.

### Bible Reading, Study & Meditation - 1 Peter 1:1-2

**Passage Intro: Life is Difficult.** But this harsh truth has not always been understood by those following Jesus. Many Christians have trouble sorting out the complexity of their identity and calling in Christ. They were reared to believe that a Christian should only experience the joys of being one of God's elect. They have been taught nothing of our status as exiles. With three simple words in the opening of this letter, Peter gives us a biblical corrective - a profound clue for finding life's true horizon. We are the **"elect exiles of the dispersion."**

*"apostle" in the New Testament referred to the 12 disciples who had been designated by Jesus for a special office in which they were given authority at least equal to OT prophets to speak and write God's very words. (Acts 5:3-4, Rom. 2:16, 2 Peter 3:2)*

**1 Peter 1:1-2** - 1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, **2** according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

**Start with Engaging the Text:** Take a few minutes to highlight, circle, or underline key words.

## Daily Study Questions

You may find it helpful to read through the background information and commentary in “Resources for Further Study” at the end of today’s study to answer these questions.

- There is a lot packed into the first couple of verses of Peter’s letter? As you slowly read through it again, what are the key words and phrases that stand out to you? What do you think they mean in the context of this introduction? Why are they important?
- How do you see the entire Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) in this passage? What can you learn about their role in the believer’s calling, growth, and sanctification?

## Meditation & Reflection Questions

1 Peter is a letter we desperately need to read, and wrestle with, and believe today. In these hardening times, some of us will be tempted to compromise what we believe in order to “fit in” or to avoid suffering, while others of us will be tempted to bemoan all that is wrong with our world and long nostalgically for a better time, long-forgotten (and that likely never actually existed). Peter will equip us to stand firm against both temptations as we look forward to a better future. Peter will repeatedly remind us that in spite of our status as exiles in this world, we have a secure standing before a sovereign and faithful God who will vindicate his covenant people on the last day.

- Are you more naturally a “compromiser” or a “bemoaner”? How might you need to challenge yourself?
- Did the description of Christians as “elect exiles” comfort you, discomfort you, or both? How?
- What particularly thrilled you as you considered how the triune God has saved you?

## Close in Prayer:

Thank God for his saving work of you through the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Talk to Jesus about places where its hard to embrace your status as an “exile” here in this world. Ask for him to give you strength through this study to live out your calling as one his holy saints.

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## Resources for Further Study

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### 1 Peter Background Information

#### Introduction to 1 Peter

Here is a letter written to churches like ours, about a time such as ours. Peter's first letter is one we need to read, treasure and believe in our day, because the post-Christian societies many of us live in now are very much like the pre-Christian society in which Peter's first-century readers lived then. Here is a letter for today.

Like the Christians in Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey) to whom Peter was writing, most of us don't face universal, state-sponsored persecution at this time—but we are encountering the reality of increasing hostility toward anything Christian. While we may live under the rule of governments that offer some legal protections for Christians, Christianity is no longer generally accepted, nor deemed acceptable. In such a context, believers may not necessarily face imprisonments, torture or executions; however, we do face a progressively intolerant culture in which we are likely to be discriminated against simply because we identify with Christ.

For many of us who are accustomed to living in “Christian nations,” this is a new reality that we need to get used to, as churches and as individuals. But suffering for being a Christian was not new for Peter's readers — it was normal. We need Peter to teach us how to face the reality that following Christ and obeying what he commands makes us different—we are aliens and strangers in a foreign land. We need to learn how to endure unjust suffering in a society where Christianity is unwelcome. We need to learn how to live with joy and hope and love when we are mocked and maligned and misunderstood because of what we believe and how we live. And in order to do that, we need to be reminded of the true grace of God in which we can stand firm.

The truth is that around the world today, many do face death for their beliefs: Jonathan Merrit explained in the Religion News Service in early 2015 that...

*“Christian persecution reached historic levels in 2014, with approximately 100 million Christians around the world facing possible dire consequences for merely practicing their religion, according to the [Open Doors ‘World Watch List’ report] ... From imprisonment to torture to beheadings, more Christians worldwide live in fear for their lives than at any [other] time in the modern era.”*

We may not be suffering in this way (yet)—but living publicly for and speaking publicly of Christ will nevertheless bring lower-level, less life-threatening, but no less unwelcome, trials and griefs.

We may not be suffering in this way (yet)—but living publicly for and speaking publicly of Christ will nevertheless bring lower-level, less life-threatening, but no less unwelcome, trials and griefs. The truth is that simply by virtue of our identity with Christ, Christians will suffer. Jesus reminded his disciples, “If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you” (John 15:19). After having been stoned and left for dead at Lystra, the apostle Paul and Barnabas “returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:21-22). Paul told Timothy that “indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted”

Peter is not saying anything different than the rest of Scripture when he tells us in this letter that we should “not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you” (1 Peter 4:12). Today, perhaps we do see painful trials as a surprise—perhaps we have grown used to an era when it has been possible to be simultaneously comfortable, and culturally acceptable, and Christian. If that time ever truly existed, it is now certainly passing. Peter will help us to prepare our “minds for action”—literally, to gird up the loins of our minds—to endure discomfort and hostility with joy, understanding and even rejoicing that “to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps” (2:21).

## Author: The Apostle Peter

That this letter was written by the apostle Peter is explicitly affirmed by 1:1 and by the author's claim to be an "eyewitness of the sufferings of Christ" (5:1). The title of the letter, The First Letter of Peter, functions as early external evidence for the view that the letter was written by Peter. Indeed, in the early church there was no dispute over the authenticity of the letter, for it was regularly ascribed to Peter by the early church fathers. Peter was a middle-class fisherman from Galilee specifically, Peter is one of a dozen men, chosen to be apostles, (Matt. 10:1–7; Acts 1:24–26; Gal. 1:1) who walked with Jesus and witnessed his life, ministry, miracles, death, and resurrection. (Acts 1:22; 1 Cor. 9:1; 15:7–9). The apostles established and governed the whole church, under Jesus Christ, and they had authority to speak and write the words of God, equal in authority to the OT Scriptures (1 Cor. 14:37; 2 Cor. 13:3; Gal. 1:8–9; 1 Thess. 2:13; 4:15; 2 Pet. 3:2, 15–16). Peter probably had the aid of a secretary, namely Silvanus, to assist him in composing the letter.

## Audience: The "Elect Exiles of the Dispersion"

The *Dispersion* (diaspora) was a term used by Greek-speaking Jews to refer to Jewish people 'scattered' throughout the nations, 'dispersed' from their homeland, Israel. Here (and in James 1:1) 'Dispersion' refers to Christians, but this does not imply that Peter was writing only to Jewish Christians. Rather, the term here has a new spiritual sense, referring to Christians 'dispersed' throughout the world and living away from their heavenly homeland (yet hoping someday to reach it). The word thus reinforces the meaning of 'exiles' or 'sojourners' and adds the idea that they are part of a 'world-wide' scattering of Christians. The readers lived in *Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia*, five names describing four Roman provinces south of the Black Sea, in what today is called Asia Minor, mostly in modern Turkey. These provinces were ethnically (and at times linguistically) diverse, yet all these territories had been impacted by Greco-Roman culture and were firmly under Roman control from the mid-first century B.C. The order in which the areas are listed probably designates the order in which the courier would carry the letter to its intended readership.



## Date: 62-63 AD

The date of 1 Peter is linked with the issue of authorship. Those who reject Peter as the author typically date the letter in the reign of Domitian (A.D. 81–96) or Trajan (98–117). Since there are good grounds for holding to Peter's authorship, the letter probably should be dated during the reign of Nero (A.D. 54–68). The reference to Babylon in 5:13 is almost certainly a reference to Rome, leading one to conclude that Peter wrote the letter from Rome. He probably wrote before the Neronian persecution in Rome, and thus the date of composition is likely A.D. 62–63.

## Commentary Notes on 1 Peter 1:1-2

The apostle Peter's first epistle is a treasure trove of gospel richness, and his greeting is no exception. What appears at one glance to be a customary "hello," upon second glance reveals theological depth. In verse 2 we see the Trinitarian shape of the gospel. We are reminded that all three persons of the triune Godhead are active in the salvation of sinners: the Father purposes the saving work for those whom he foreknows (see Rom. 8:29), the Son accomplishes the work by his blood, and the Spirit applies the work to the sinner. Here is how "practical" the doctrine of the Trinity can be: it is the Trinity that saves sinners, uniting them to Christ so that they will walk in obedience to him. It is no wonder that Peter then says, "Grace and peace be multiplied" to us. The wonder of redemption worked out for us by the triune God does not grant tepid or mild grace and peace; grace and peace are multiplied, proliferated, abundantly provided.

The people receiving his letter are "**elect exiles of the dispersion.**" Peter is not speaking of a literal exile (cf. 1 Pet. 1:17; 2:11). Believers long for their true home in the new world that is coming and for their end-time inheritance, for they do not conform to the values and worldviews of this present evil age. Believers are not only exiles but God's "elect exiles." They are his chosen people, just as Israel is designated as God's chosen people in the OT (Deut. 4:37; 7:6–8; Ps. 106:5; Isa. 43:20; 45:4). Since the recipients of his letter were primarily Gentiles, Peter explicitly teaches that the church of Jesus Christ is the new Israel—God's new chosen people. "Dispersion" (Gk. *diaspora*) points to the same truth. It is typically used to describe the scattering of the Jews throughout the world (Deut. 28:25; 30:4; Neh. 1:9; Ps. 147:2; Isa. 49:6; Jer. 15:7; 41:17; cf. also John 7:35; James 1:1; note on Acts 2:9–11), but Peter sees a parallel in the church being dispersed throughout the world.

1 Pet. 1:2 Peter celebrates the work of the triune God in saving his people; the descriptive phrases in v. 2 modify "elect exiles" in v. 1 (the Gk. has no verb in v. 1; the ESV supplies "are" to make the sense more clear). They are God's people because of his "**foreknowledge.**" This does not merely refer to God's foreknowing that they would belong to him but also means that he set his covenantal affection upon them in advance, foreordaining that they would belong to him (cf. Rom. 8:29).

"**In the sanctification of the Spirit**" may refer here either to conversion or to gradual progress in the Christian life, or possibly to both. The Spirit sets apart God's people into the sphere of the holy, so that believers are now holy and righteous in their standing before God, and they grow in actual holiness in their lives. For obedience to Jesus Christ may also refer either to conversion, when Christians confessed Jesus as Lord (Rom. 10:9; cf. 1 Pet. 1:22), or to God's purpose for their lives, that they obey Christ.

**sprinkling with his blood** refers to Christ's atoning work on the cross, where all the believers' sins were washed away, just as the old covenant was inaugurated with the shedding of blood (cf. Ex. 24:3–8). Peter sees believers "sprinkled" with the blood of Christ, referring either to their initial entrance into a covenant with God (similar to Ex. 24:3–8) or to their subsequent cleansings by the blood of Christ (i.e., growth in holiness) or possibly to both (similar to Lev. 14:6–7; cf. Ps. 51:7; 1 John 1:7).