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## LESSON NOTES (EXPLORE THE BIBLE)

LEARNING FROM PETER & JUDE — A HOPE THAT’S ALIVE!  
(1 Peter 1) Lord’s Day, September 4 & 11, 2016

### OVERVIEW

“Session 1&2” for this week in the *Explore the Bible Series*

Lord Jesus the Christ came to save all who would draw nigh, all who would “call on the name of the Lord.” We did not like that idea then, nor do we like it much now.

**A QUESTION TO GET YOU THINKING:**  
**WHICH IS MORE IMPORTANT—GOD-INSPIRED DOCTRINE OR GOD-INSPIRED BEHAVIOR?**

Many of us want to add to this declaration. Sure, you must call upon the authority of the Lord God and He will save you, but you must understand several key doctrines before you can truly call upon the Lord to be saved. And, you must stop your sinning before you can truly call upon the Lord to be saved. Oh, and don’t forget, you must worship in a way that doesn’t distract others before you can truly call upon the Lord to be saved. And another thing, your lifestyle as an alcoholic, adulterer, homosexual, glutton, etc. must stop before you can truly call upon the Lord to be saved. And, we forgot also, your ancestry must be traceable to Abraham before you can truly call upon the Lord to be saved. Finally, all that cultural baggage you brought with you (e.g., America’s is God’s country or Democrats can’t be trusted or science is the ultimate test of truth) must be left at the depot before you can truly call upon the Lord to be saved.



Ironically, there is some truth, and Truth, to all these “but’s...” But, when those but’s are used to exacerbate an understanding and acceptance of what we need to know (orthodoxy) as believers and what we need to do as believers (orthopraxy), we do indeed need to be very careful about which luggage we take with us.

Peter was trying to teach orthodoxy and orthopraxy to a diverse group of passengers, many of whom didn’t understand the ticket being punched, to say nothing of His destination.

Today, we easily break out believers into three groups—Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Jews. Of course, we know that Protestant Church A is rarely equivalent to Protestant Church B. And for Southern Baptists, we clearly know that Southern Baptist Church A is not Southern Baptist Church B.

And, there are the new religions of North America, with accouterments of Christianity (e.g., Jehovah Witnesses or the church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints), but which fail legitimacy tests for being protestant, much less Christian.

And then there are Muslims who revere Jesus (Isa in Arabic), not as Deity, but as a great prophet; e.g., Mohammed even called Isa the greatest prophet ever. While they worship God (Allah is the Arabic word for God), most believers—Christian and Jewish alike, consider Muslims outside the boundaries of tolerable orthodoxy.

Contrary to the monolithic perceptions of outsiders, Roman Catholic Parish A can be dramatically different than Parish B (e.g., an invitation to participate in communion during mass). And many Roman Catholic parishes are enjoying a new renaissance of Biblical focus; Bible study at the church during the week is no longer an oddity.

Neither can a believer with a Jewish heritage assumed to be homogenously predictable. The differences between Reformed, Conservative, and Orthodox believers are striking.<sup>1</sup>

In the first century, believers were a similarly complicated demographic puzzle. We too often think early Christians were a relatively homogenous group, differentiated only by their Jewish heritage or their pagan heritage. But, reality was quite different. This reality is key to understanding the intertwined, inextricably linked orthodoxy and orthopraxy Peter presents in his two epistles.

Beyond the innumerable theologies of Greek and Roman deities, most slaves, citizens and commoners held to the general cultural standard of religious freedom—provided the religion in question had been approved by the State. For example, Judaism was a tolerated and approved religion by Rome;<sup>2</sup> toleration of “the Way” (Christianity), however, varied from emperor to emperor and cultural whim to cultural whim.

There is, for example, substantive support for the notion that Luke wrote his gospel and the acts of Holy Spirit to Theophilus as a friend of the court. In other words, the Way should be tolerated/approved because it was a natural extension, and fulfillment of another approved religion—Judaism. Christianity was a real threat for it was atheistic (teaching there was only one God—Jupiter was not even acknowledged). Christianity was cannibalistic (they eat their prophet on a

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<sup>1</sup>Learn more at *Judaism 101* at <http://www.jewfaq.org/movement.htm> which summarizes some of these differences; they are often historical in cause. Differences center around the role of the Torah (Scripture) and what the purpose of keeping the precepts of the Law should be. Sounds similar, does it not regarding the role of Scripture as inerrant evidence?

<sup>2</sup>Until Christians came to power and began to persecute believers because they had yet to accept Yeshua of Nazareth as the Messiah. One of the best ways to persuade people to your point of view is ignore the similarities between you and them, ignore your heritage as an heir to Abraham’s promise (see Galatians 3:27-29) and punish them for their practices and beliefs.

regular basis). Christians were unpatriotic (they said Yeshua was the Lord of all). Christianity was homosexual (their love feasts were well known). Believers then, as now, brought their culture to their understanding of Christ.

Then there were Jewish believers. Many had the security of bloodline—they could trace their ancestry to either the tribe of Levi, Judah, or Benjamin. All the other tribes of Israel had been dispersed throughout the world. These believers, the *diaspora*, had no way to trace their legitimacy as believers to Abraham—except they could follow the Law. They could demonstrate their legitimacy by being Jews by knowledge and obedience of the Law. Paul, who nonetheless made sure everyone knew he was from the tribe of Benjamin, fought this battle continuously. He settled the argument for all believers, regardless of their background, by declaring...

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

—Galatians 3:27-29

But, the people who needed to hear Peter's letters read in their assemblies had yet to accept, much less appreciate being "heirs to the promise." For those with a landed-gentry Jewish heritage (Levites, Judahites, & Benjamites), the promise was often viewed as belonging only to them. For dispersed Jewish believers, the Law was particularly important—knowing and obeying it was their shema, their *raison d'être* as believers.

For those from a myriad of pagan backgrounds, the notion that Jesus the Christ was actually human was bordering on sacrilege. For other pagans, the notion of a resurrection was magic and knowing the magic would *entitle* them to a resurrection. Being "heirs to a promise" had little, if any, meaning. And where was the image which they could venerate, imagine and worship this Yeshua of Nazareth?

Peter had his work cut out, but he was not alone. As you read 1 Peter and 2 Peter, listen. If you really listen, you'll see Holy Spirit's influence. Many were reading these epistles and there was much to learn. But, like us, many brought nonsense to Peter's classroom. Watch and see how Holy Spirit taught them, and us, to leave our culture behind. We need to lean on Him. We need to learn from Him. We need to love Him. That's what 1 and 2 Peter is all about. Leaning. Learning. Loving.

1 Peter 1:1-12. *We serve a mighty God who even in suffering refines us for His glory.*

Peter, apostle of Jesus the Christ:

To all of God's called out,

- ✠ strangers to the world dispersed throughout Asia Minor,
- ✠ chosen according to the wisdom and foresight of Father God,
- ✠ by means of the sanctifying work of Holy Spirit, and
- ✠ those who obey Jesus the Christ and by the sprinkling of His blood...

May the gift and the reconciliation be yours abundantly.

Let there be praise to the Father of our Lord, Jesus the Christ! In His great mercy, He has given us a birth from above—a new birth into a living hope by means of the resurrection of Jesus the Christ from the dead.

We have been given an inheritance that never fades, never perishes, never spoils—it is kept in heaven. You are shielded by faith by God's power<sup>3</sup> until the fullness of salvation is shown in the end of time. So, in this you can rejoice mightily, even though you suffer anguish in all kinds of trials. Your suffering has been for a reason—so your faith can be enriched, refined, empowered. This suffering and its resultant refinement will allow your faith to be shown genuine so praise, glory and honor may result when the fullness of Christ Jesus is shown.

## 1 PETER 1:1-12

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, <sup>2</sup>who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood:

Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

<sup>3</sup>Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup>and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup>who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. <sup>6</sup>In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. <sup>7</sup>These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. <sup>8</sup>Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, <sup>9</sup>for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

<sup>10</sup>Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, <sup>11</sup>trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. <sup>12</sup>It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

<sup>3</sup>Note here that even faith is a gift, and only empowering by the Lord God Himself. Be wary of bragging on one's faith—it too was a charis (χαρις), a gift which only has value because of the power accredited to it by Him.

Of course you have not seen Him, you nonetheless love Him, believe in Him, and are consequently filled with a glorious joy, inexpressible in words. You are receiving the teleological objective of your faith—the soteriological security of your soul.

Now regarding this soteriological security—prophets of the past spoke of this gift which was to come to you. They searched diligently, earnestly for cues and circumstances which would proclaim the glories of a Messiah who suffered [see Isaiah 53], and all the glories that would follow. The spirit of Christ revealed all this to them, not to serve themselves, but us, when they spoke of things that are just now being revealed in the good news shared by Holy Spirit from heaven itself. By the way, even angels stoop low and look into these matters.

- Q Why would the Lord God choose in advance those who He will use to do His work? For the record, just what is the work, the objective, the purpose of the Lord God?
- Q What is the significance of Peter reminding believers of their “inheritance?” What are its attributes? So what?
- Q Why is our hope “living” as opposed to mere wishful thinking?
- Q What refines our faith? What is the source of our faith’s power?
- Q What was revealed to us in these latter days which the prophets were curious, but ignorant, and angels even stoop down to inquire?

1 Peter 1:13-25. *Summary*. So, gird up your loins—take up your outer garments and be ready to achieve it! Be ready by being disciplined, not for the approval of others, but *self-disciplined*. Set your hope completely on this gift given to you when Jesus the Christ is revealed.

Be like obedient children, ignoring the desires you had when you were ignorant of what was evil. Be as He called you to be—set apart, holy. The Lord God has already said it—*Be holy for I am holy*. [Leviticus 11:44]

Now listen up—you answer to a Father who judges all impartially—live your lives as strangers in this alien place; live here in reverent fear. You're not spiritually stupid—it's not silver or gold which redeemed you from an empty life given to you by your ancestors! You were redeemed by the blood, the precious blood, of Christ Himself, a perfect sacrificial lamb, with no blemish, no defect.

Christ was chosen to be this sacrifice before the world even was, but this plan for His glorification has been revealed in these latter days, for your sake. Through Him, you believe in Father God who raised Him from the dead, glorified Him. So what? Your faith, your hope is in God!

Now that you've purified yourself by obeying the Truth, so that you have a sincere love for your fellow human beings, love deeply, make it *your* raison d'être. Why? You have been born again—not because of a perishable ancestry—but because of the imperishable, living, enduring word (λογου; i.e., Christ) of God Himself! Remember Isaiah's wise counsel (Isaiah 40:6-8)...

*All of us are like grass, and our glory like wild flowers.  
But, the grass withers, and flowers droop to their death.  
But the word of Elohim is always green, and always beautiful.*

This is the word (ρημα) that was proclaimed (ευαγγελισθεν) to you!

- Q Why is *self* discipline so important manifestation of our calling? [Hint: consider the first sin in the garden.]
- Q We once lived in ignorance; what are the sins which beset us most from our ignorance?
- Q Just what does it mean to be "holy in *all* we do?" Is this not over-reaching, if not impossible?

## 1 PETER 1:13-25

Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. <sup>14</sup>As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. <sup>15</sup>But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; <sup>16</sup>for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

<sup>17</sup>Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear. <sup>18</sup>For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, <sup>19</sup>but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. <sup>20</sup>He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. <sup>21</sup>Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

<sup>22</sup>Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. <sup>23</sup>For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. <sup>24</sup>For,

*"All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, <sup>25</sup>but the word of the Lord stands forever."*

And this is the word that was preached to you



- Q What are some signs, some evidence, some indications that we are strangers, aliens who need to live in “reverent fear?”
- Q We were redeemed neither by silver nor gold but by the “precious blood of the Christ.” So what?
- Q What is it that we’ve now learned about Him in these last days? [Hint: this is the most important point Peter/Holy Spirit is making in this passage. Lean. Listen. Learn.]
- Q What are signs that we have obeyed the Truth? How can this be evidence of our purification, our redemption? What are the three attributes of this evidence? So?
- Q How can we be redeemed by the word of God [verse 23] and by the word of God [verse 25]?

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#### ADVANCED BIBLE COMMENTARY FOR 1 PETER<sup>4</sup>

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**1:1** *strangers in the world.* People temporarily residing on earth but whose home is in heaven (cf. 1Ch 29:15; Ps 39:12; Heb 13:14).

*scattered throughout Pontus . . . Bithynia.* Jewish and Gentile Christians scattered throughout much of Asia Minor. People from this area were in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (see Ac 2:9-11). Paul preached and taught in some of these provinces (see, e.g., Ac 16:6; 18:23; 19:10,26).

**1:2** *Father. . . Spirit . . . Jesus Christ.* All three persons of Deity are involved in the redemption of the elect.

*sanctifying work.* The order of the terms employed suggests that the sanctifying work of Holy Spirit referred to here is His influence that draws one from sin toward holiness. Peter says it is "for" (or "to") obedience and sprinkling of Christ's blood, i.e., Holy Spirit's sanctifying leads to a faith which is obedient and saving; i.e., cleansing from sin.

*sprinkling by his blood.* The benefits of Christ's redemption are applied to his people (cf. Ex 24:4-8; Isa 52:15; Heb 9:11-14,18-28).

**1:3** *living hope.* In spite of the frequent suffering and persecution mentioned in this letter (v. 6; 2:12,18-25; 3:13-18; 4:1,4,12-19; 5:1,7-10), hope is such a key thought in it (the word itself is used here and in vv. 13,21; 3:5,15) that it may be called a letter of hope in the midst of suffering. In the Bible, hope is not merely wishful thinking but a firm conviction, much like faith that is directed toward the future.

*resurrection of Jesus Christ.* Secures for his people their new birth and the hope that they will be resurrected just as he was.

**1:4** *into an inheritance.* Believers are born again not only to a hope but also to the inheritance that is the substance of the hope. The inheritance is eternal—in its essence (it is not subject to decay) and in its preservation (it is divinely kept for us).

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<sup>4</sup>Adapted, corrected, and revised by D. Thomas Porter from Compton’s Interactive NIV © 1996.

**1:5** *through faith . . . by God's power.* There are two sides to the perseverance of the Christian. He is shielded (1) by God's power and (2) by his own faith.

*salvation.* See 2Ti 1:9. The Bible speaks of salvation as

- (1) past--when a person first believes (see, e.g., Tit 3:5),
- (2) present--the continuing process of salvation, or sanctification (see v. 9; 1Co 1:18), and
- (3) future--when Christ returns and salvation, or sanctification, is completed through glorification (here; see also Ro 8:23,30; 13:11).

**1:7** *that your faith . . . may be proved genuine.* See Ro 5:3; Jas 1:2-4. Not only is the faith itself precious, but Peter's words indicate that the trial of faith is also valuable.

**1:8** *though you do not see him now, you believe.* Similar to Jesus' saying in John 20:29, on an occasion when Peter was present.

**1:10** *prophets . . . searched intently.* Inspiration (see 2Pe 1:21) did not bestow omniscience. The prophets probably did not always understand the full significance of all the words they spoke.

**1:11** *Spirit of Christ.* Holy Spirit is sometimes called this because Christ sent Him (see Jn 16:7) and ministered through Him (see Lk 4:14,18).

*the sufferings of Christ and the glories.* A theme running through the Bible (see, e.g., Ps 22; Isa 52:13-53:12; Zec 9:9-10; 13:7; Mt 16:21-23; 17:22; 20:19; Lk 24:26,46; Jn 2:19; Ac 3:17-21), and a basic concept in this letter (vv. 18-21; 3:17-22; 4:12-16; 5:1,4,9-10). Those who are united to Christ will also, after suffering, enter into glory. And they will benefit in the midst of their present sufferings from his having already entered into glory (vv. 3,8,21; 3:21-22).

**1:12** *Holy Spirit sent from heaven.* By Christ, on the day of Pentecost (see Acts 2:33), at which Peter was present. Father God also sent Holy Spirit (see Jn 14:16,26).

*angels long to look into.* Their intense desire is highlighted by the Greek word rendered "to look into." It means "to stoop and look intently" (see John 20:5,11).

**1:13** *prepare . . . for action.* The first of a long series of exhortations (actually imperatives) that end at 5:11. This one is a graphic call for action. In the language of the first century it meant that the reader should literally gather up his long, flowing garments and be ready for physical action. Note the first 45 seconds this clip from *The Devil Wears Prada* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2PjZAeiU7uM>)

*grace to be given you.* The final state of complete blessedness and deliverance from sin. Peter later indicates that a major purpose of this letter is to encourage and testify regarding the true grace of God (5:12).

**1:14** *children.* Christians, born into the family of God (see v. 23), are children of their heavenly Father (v. 17) and can pray, "Our Father in heaven" (Mt 6:9). Believers are also described as being adopted into God's family (see Ro 8:15).

**1:16** *Be holy, because I am holy.* To be holy is to be set apart—set apart from sin and impurity, and set apart to God. The complete moral perfection of God, whose eyes are too pure to look on evil with favor (Habakkuk 1:13), should move his people to strive for moral purity. Interestingly, the Lord God nonethe-



less looks on evil, and mercifully, provides a way (ὁδός; see John 14:6) from its consequences, or justice. 1 Peter is a letter of practical earnestness, filled with exhortations and encouragements.

**1:17** *impartially*. See Ro 2:11; Jas 2:1. *strangers*. See the note above on verse 1.

*reverent fear*. Not terror, but wholesome reverence and respect for the Lord God, which is the basis for all godly living (cf. Pr 1:7; 8:13; 16:6).

**1:18** *redeemed*. In the Bible, to redeem means to free someone from something bad by paying a penalty, or a ransom (see e.g., Ex 21:30; see also Ex 13:13). Likewise, in the Greek world slaves could be redeemed by the payment of a price, either by someone else or by the slave himself. Similarly, Jesus redeems believers from the "curse of the law" (Gal 3:13) and "all wickedness" (Tit 2:14). The ransom price is not silver or gold, but Christ's blood (Eph 1:7; 1Pe 1:19; Rev 5:9), i.e., his death (Mt 20:28; Mk 10:45; Heb 9:15) or Christ himself (Gal 3:13). The result is the "forgiveness of sins" (Col 1:14) and "justification" (Ro 3:24).

*empty way of life . . . from your forefathers*. Some maintain that the recipients must have been pagans because the NT stresses the emptiness of pagan life (Ro 1:21; Eph 4:17). Others think they were Jews since Jews were traditionalists who stressed the influence of the father as teacher in the home. In the light of the context of the whole letter, many types of Jews and and pagan Gentiles are addressed. See *Context Issues: 1 Peter*, page 2.

**1:19** *lamb*. In the Hebrew Scriptures sacrifices were types (foreshadowings) of Christ, depicting the ultimate and only effective sacrifice. Thus Christ is the Passover lamb (1Co 5:7), who takes away the sin of the world (Jn 1:29).

**1:22** *sincere love*. See Ro 12:9. *love one another*. A command no doubt based on Jn 13:34-35. See also 1Th 4:9-10, where, like Peter, Paul commends his readers for their love of fellow believers and then urges them to love still more.

**1:23** *born again . . . through the . . . word of God*. The new birth comes about through the direct action of Holy Spirit (Tit 3:5), but the word of God also plays an important role (see James 1:18), for it presents the gospel to the sinner and calls on him to repent and believe in Christ (see v. 25).