



CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

1 PETER &
1, 2, 3 JOHN

Week 1

Before You Begin Your Journey...

Peter and John, two of the leading disciples and apostles, are linked together as we explore their five letters in this volume of the *CWR Bible Survey*. From the book of Numbers, we fast-forward over a thousand years—through the Old Testament, past the birth, life, death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior to the early New Testament church. We focus on issues that confronted Christians at the close of the first century A.D.—issues of timeless relevance to your life.

Peter's two letters reflect his eyewitness of Jesus' life and ministry, and carry the unmistakable ring of authentic history. These letters are remarkably similar to Peter's sermons in the book of Acts in their uncompromising commitment to be centered in Christ. The three letters of John occur a little later. Here we read letters written by the disciple who was known as "the Son of Thunder" by Jesus—also known to students of the Bible as the "apostle of love."

Both Peter and John write during a time of persecution and conflict for Christians.—and a time when the body of Christ was threatened by false teachings—even denying that Jesus Christ had been a human being (1 Jn 4:2; 2 Jn 7). The three letters of John will help to ground you in the love and grace of God—fully manifested and expressed in the Person of Jesus Christ.

These five letters give us cause to pause and consider our life and thinking. They serve as a standard by which to take another look at our lives and actions. We pray that God will lead you to new and fresh insights as you reflect and ponder his timeless words that you will study in this volume of the *CWR Bible Survey*.



Greg Albrecht
Executive Director, Plain Truth Ministries

How to Use the CWR Bible Survey...

1—Read and study at your own pace. This is a devotional. It is designed to help you consider and ponder the great truths of God's written revelation. It is designed to help you worship and come to know God. If you get behind, you can always catch up.

2—We suggest you set aside a special time for the *CWR Bible Survey* every day. We recommend allowing 30-45 minutes, but even if you can only spare 15 minutes, try to make it part of your regular schedule.

3—You will need a good Bible. This might be an excellent time for you to consider purchasing a new Bible. Plain Truth Ministries recommends the *New King James Study Bible* published by Thomas Nelson and the *New International Version Study Bible* published by Zondervan.

4—Always read the assigned passage of the daily lesson in your Bible first. Each daily lesson builds upon the portion of the Bible being covered that day. You may want to begin by praying about what God has in store for you as you read, and then look at the questions and background information.

5—Consider the format of each daily lesson. Almost every daily lesson will include:

• **Opening Up to the Word** —a section designed to help you open your mind to the teaching God has inspired.

• **Digging Into the Word**—this section will encourage you to get your nose into the Bible and think deeply about what it says.

• **Living Out the Word**—here you will be challenged to consider the practical implications for your life. How does this passage help you live?

• **Window On the Word**—will offer key insights to help you more clearly understand the daily Bible passage.

6—After you finish the daily lesson, take some quiet time. You may simply think, look out the window, take a walk, or even get down on your knees. But use this time to let this daily lesson sink in. Ask God to show you what he wants you to understand from your reading and study.

7—Consider the *CWR Bible Survey* for small groups in which you may be involved. Tell your friends about it. If you are involved in a small group that meets for prayer and Bible study, introduce your group to it. Many are seeking an easy-to-read guide to help them understand the Bible and to help them know God. the *CWR Bible Survey* can do that!

8—Remember that while we may refer to the Bible as the word of God—the Eternal Word of God is noneother than Jesus, who inspired the Scriptures to be written by human instruments. Words on paper may tell us about him—but it is not the words that we worship—it is Jesus Christ, the Eternal Word.

•Abbreviations Used in the *CWR Bible Survey*—

Genesis	Ge	Nahum	Na
Exodus	Ex	Habakkuk	Hab
Leviticus	Lev	Zephaniah	Zep
Numbers	Nu	Haggai	Hag
Deuteronomy	Dt	Zechariah	Zec
Joshua	Jos	Malachi	Mal
Judges	Jdg	Matthew	Mt
Ruth	Ru	Mark	Mk
1 Samuel	1Sa	Luke	Lk
2 Samuel	2Sa	John	Jn
1 Kings	1Ki	Acts	Ac
2 Kings	2Ki	Romans	Ro
1 Chronicles	1Ch	1 Corinthians	1Co
2 Chronicles	2Ch	2 Corinthians	2Co
Ezra	Ezr	Galatians	Gal
Nehemiah	Ne	Ephesians	Eph
Esther	Est	Philippians	Php
Job	Job	Colossians	Col
Psalms	Ps	1 Thessalonians	1Th
Proverbs	Pr	2 Thessalonians	2Th
Ecclesiastes	Ecc	1 Timothy	1Ti
Song of Songs	SS	2 Timothy	2Ti
Isaiah	Isa	Titus	Tit
Jeremiah	Jer	Philemon	Phm
Lamentations	La	Hebrews	Heb
Ezekiel	Eze	James	Jas
Daniel	Da	1 Peter	1Pe
Hosea	Hos	2 Peter	2Pe
Joel	Joel	1 John	1Jn
Amos	Am	2 John	2Jn
Obadiah	Ob	3 John	3Jn
Jonah	Jnh	Jude	Jude
Micah	Mic	Revelation	Rev

1 PETER 1, 2, 3 JOHN

Truth, Love
and
Encouragement

Copyright © 2013 by Plain Truth Ministries Worldwide

All rights reserved. Written permission must be secured from the publisher to use or reproduce any part of this book, except for brief quotations in critical reviews or articles.

Unless noted otherwise, scriptures are quoted from the *Holy Bible, New International Version*. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

Printed in the United States of America.

Introduction to 1 Peter

Authorship: Traditionally it has been understood that the apostle Peter authored this letter that bears his name. The content and character of the letter appears to draw from Peter's experiences and sermons. Silas, a frequent traveling companion of Paul, must be credited with helping to write the letter, which is composed in a polished Greek style (see 5:12).

Date: The oppressive situation described in 1 Peter 4:14-16 and 5:8-9 fittingly describes Rome under Emperor Nero (A.D. 54-68). Most likely the letter was written after the Great Fire of A.D. 64, for which the Christians were being blamed and persecuted, and before Peter's death by crucifixion, said to be around A.D. 68.

Setting and purpose: Written from "Babylon" (5:13), perhaps a code name for Rome, Peter sent this letter to Christians scattered throughout the Roman provinces (1:1) in what is now modern Turkey. First Peter is one of the *General Epistles*, so called because their intended audience was general in scope, as opposed to a particular church or person. Yet there are exceptions to this "general" rule (see the introductions to 2 and 3 John).

Waves of persecution were beginning to sweep the land, emanating from Rome. Not only were the Christians being blamed for Rome's Great Fire but Christianity was just coming into its own as a sect prohibited by Rome. Christianity had become distinct from Judaism, which was a legally recognized religion.

It was a criminal act to profess the Christian faith. Many Christians died while remaining loyal to Christ as Lord, rather than swear undivided loyalty to the Roman Emperor. Still other Christians ran for cover, hid their true colors or denied their Lord. In this context, Peter addresses how to live with joy and grace under fire—hope in Christ for people who suffer.

Distinctive features: This book weaves many primary and secondary themes into a short letter. Under different circumstances, readers of 1 Peter throughout the centuries have

found encouragement to do many things: to separate from the world... to endure suffering and persecution... to embark on a pilgrimage to the promised land and future glory... to embrace hope in the midst of fiery trials... and to take courage in the face of setbacks. But above all, readers of 1 Peter find grace from the sovereign hand of God.

Outline: Following is a topical outline of 1 Peter. Where practical, this corresponds to the subjects of the daily lessons.

I. GREETINGS TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD, 1:1-2

II. HOPE FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD, 1:3–2:12

A. Our Salvation with God—Past, Present, Future, 1:3-12

B. Our Goal in Life—“100% Pure,” 1:13–2:3

C. Our House of Worship—Built by Christ, 2:4-12

III. SUBMISSION AND SUFFERING FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD, 2:13–4:19

A. Submitting and Suffering at Work, 2:13-25

B. Submitting and Witnessing in Marriage, 3:1-7

C. Suffering for Doing Good, 3:8-17

D. Saved Through Water, Submitted to Christ, 3:18-22

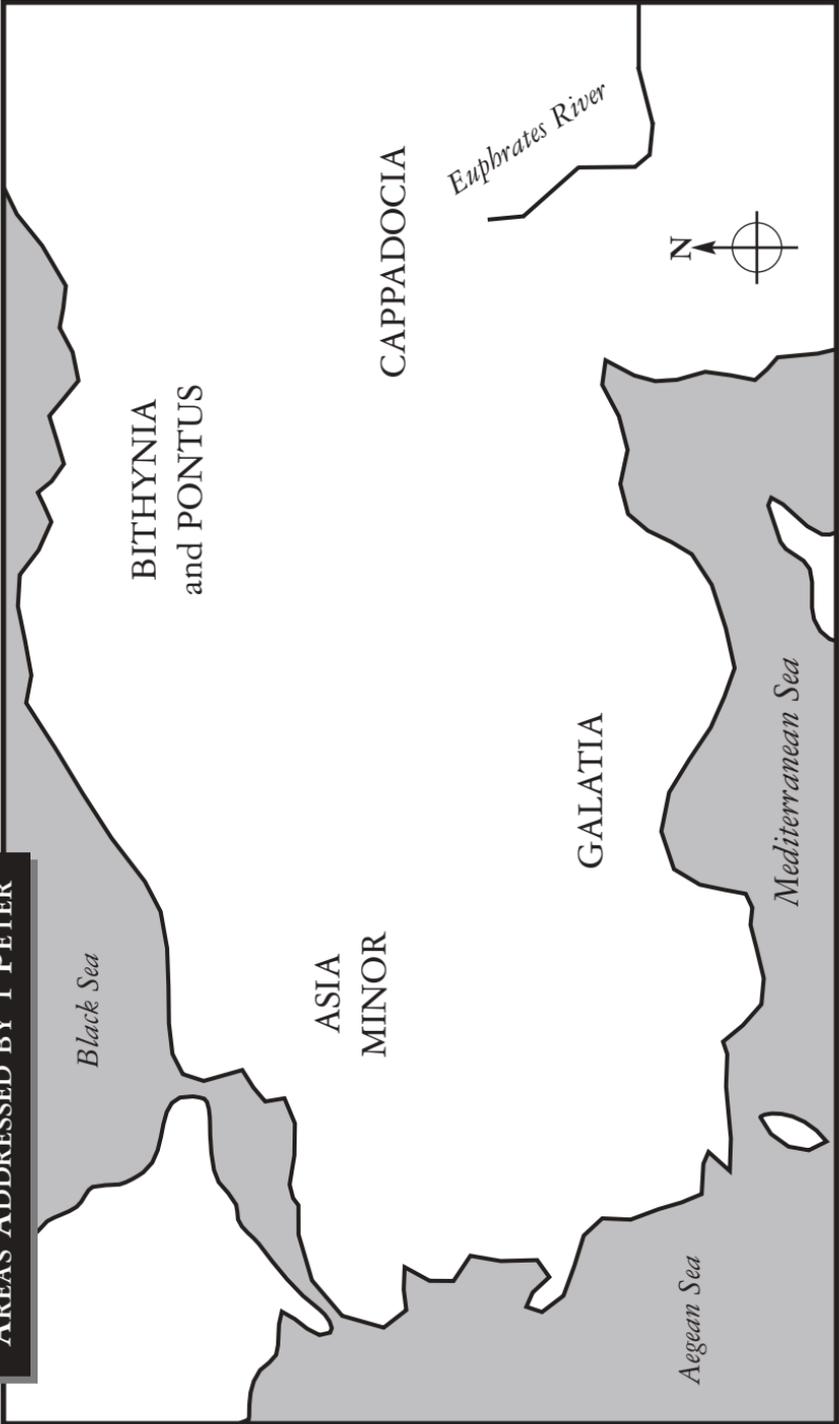
E. Submitting to the Will of God, 4:1-11

F. Suffering as a Christian, 4:12-19

IV. CARING FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD, 5:1-11

V. GRACE FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD, 5:12-14

AREAS ADDRESSED BY 1 PETER



Bookends: Greetings and Salutations

DAY 1

1 Peter 1:1-2; 5:12-14

What is your characteristic opening to a “dear everyone” letter? Your characteristic closing?

1. From a first reading, what tone or mood do you pick up in this letter? (a) terse and business-like, (b) diplomatic and tactful, (c) lofty and theological, (d) warm and fuzzy, (e) cold and cautionary, (f) lawyerly and argumentative.

2. What major topic was Peter trying to address with his readers? (a) suffering, (b) persecution, (c) holiness, (d) citizenship issues, (e) God’s love and grace expressed in Christ, (f) spiritual leadership.

3. As book-ends to the letter, what do you learn from the salutation (1:1-2) and final greetings (5:12-14) about its authors, recipients and purpose?

4. Locate the named recipients on a Bible map. How big an area is this?

5. What key words qualify these recipients to withstand pressure from the Empire?

1. As a 21st century recipient of this letter, are you dealing with any of the issues it discusses?

2. In Peter’s opening and closing remarks, where do you see yourself? (a) as one of God’s elect, (b) as a stranger in the world, (c) showered with God’s grace, (d) at peace in troubled times, (e) chosen for a purpose, (f) committed to Jesus living his life in you.

An apostle (v. 1) is “one who is sent,” an eyewitness of the resurrected Lord and one who had been given authority over others. **God’s elect** (v. 1) are chosen for salvation and God’s kingdom work. This term once applied exclusively to the nation Israel but came to be applied to the church. **Strangers** (v. 1; Greek, *parepidemoi*) commonly refers to people far from home. In this case, it is a metaphor for Christians whose true citizenship is in heaven. The **scattered** ones (v. 1; Greek, *diaspora*) once applied to Israel in exile, but here it applies to the early church. The work of **sanctifying** and **sprinkling** (v. 2) refers to the way of holiness and the death of Christ (the “blood”), by which God brings to pass his covenant purposes for his chosen people. **Babylon** (5:13) may have been code language for Rome, the city from which Peter was probably writing.

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

Rejoicing in Hope, Receiving Salvation

1 Peter 1:3-12

OPENING
up to the Word

Is there a particular item you would like to inherit from your parents? Why? If money, what would you do with it?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. What does the believer inherit from God? How does one receive this inheritance? In this context, does it depend more on the believer persevering in faith, or on what God preserves by his power?
2. How can a trial or other sad circumstance be a source of *joy*? Is joy a matter of perspective, of good fortune, enough physical stuff or a gift from God?
3. For what reasons do you think God allows bad things to happen to good people?
4. What do Peter and his followers know that the OT prophets—and even the angels—did not fully understand (1:8-12)?

LIVING
out the Word

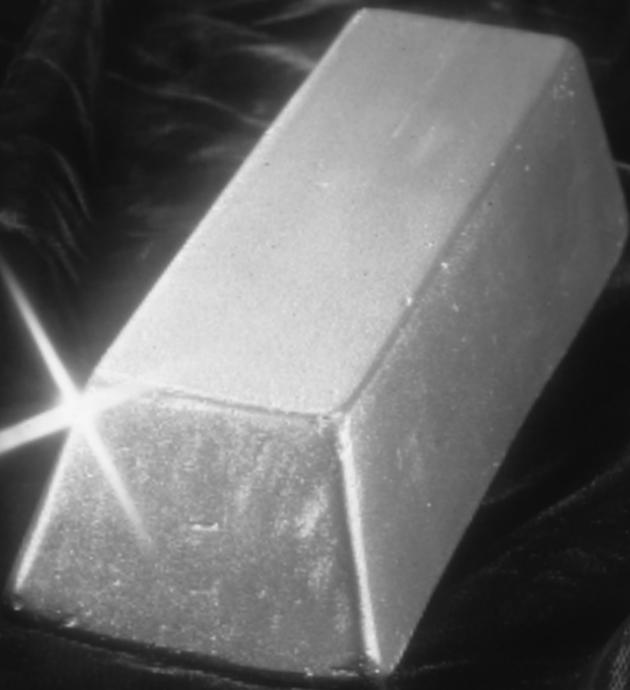
1. Has your faith been tested by a “fiery” situation? Did you ever experience joy over what happened?
2. Is there something you are going through right now that is testing or strengthening your faith—or that is a source of joy and praise?
3. Are there any trying circumstances in your life that you still wonder about, as to why they happened, their meaning or outcome?

WINDOW
on the Word

The new birth (v. 3) is no mere ritual, but a metaphor of a spiritual reality in which even adults are transformed in their relationship with God. **Hope** looks forward to what can't be seen, but is nonetheless **living** (active, vibrant but is nonetheless real, certain and imperishable), which in this case (v. 3) comes about through the **resurrection of Jesus** from death to life. For Israel, **inheritance** (v. 4) referred to the Promised Land (Dt 15:4), which was theirs for the taking. Likewise for Christians, their promised inheritance both present and future but is nonetheless real, certain and imperishable. The Christian inheritance is not a physical place, but a spiritual reality or **salvation** (1Pe 1:5) consisting of both a present relationship and future glory with Christ. The **last times** (1:5, 20) or “last days” was, in Jewish theology, the dark transition period between a present, evil age and a future, glorious age.

*“These have come
so that your
faith—of greater
worth than gold,
which perishes even
though refined by
fire—may be
proved genuine....”*

I Peter 1:7



1 Peter 1:13–2:3

OPENING
up to the Word

What steps do you think are involved in becoming *spiritually pure*? Who is the moving party?

DIGGING
into the Word

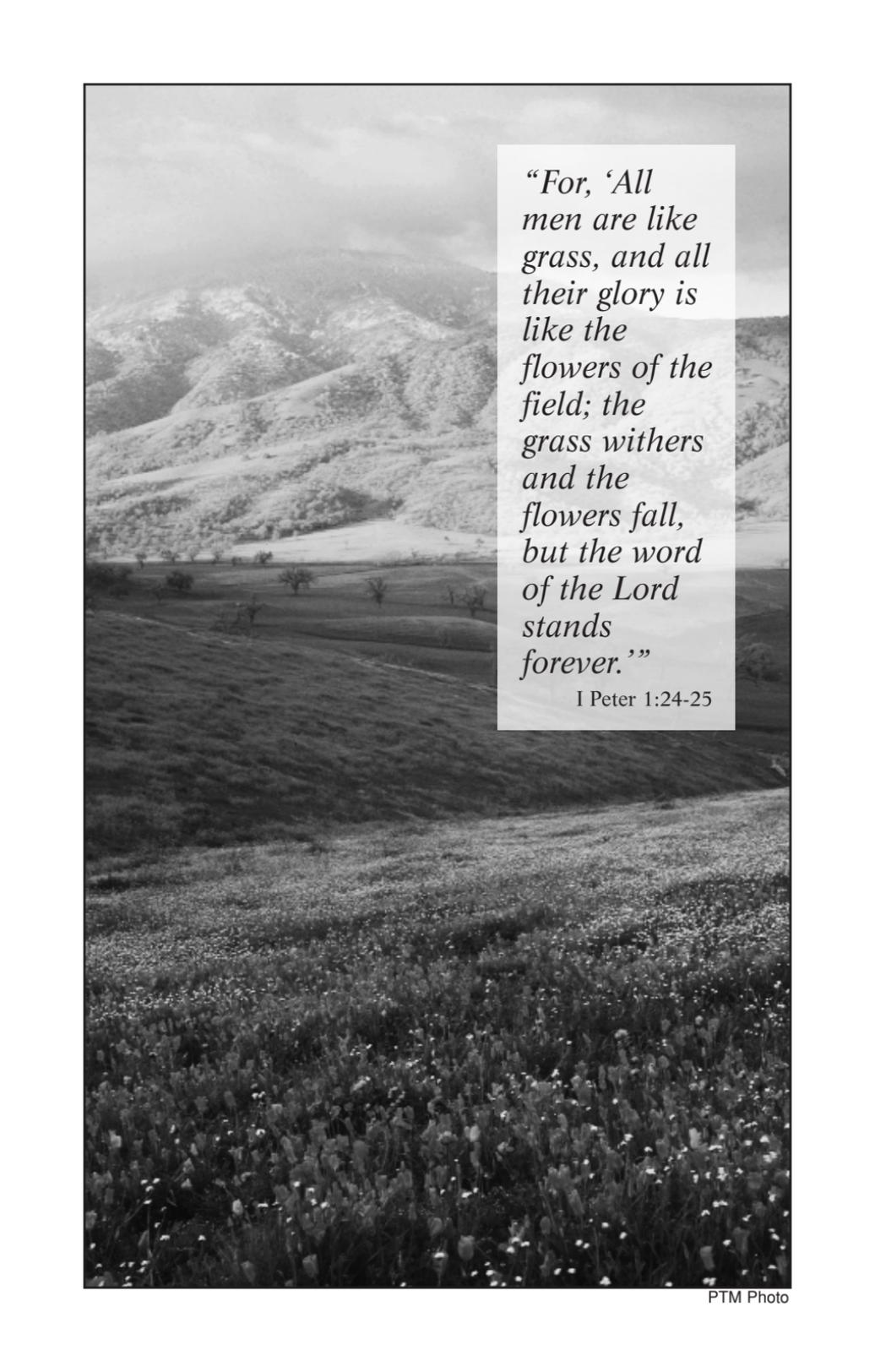
1. What five commands, enclosed by the two hinge words “therefore” and “for,” define *holiness* (1:13-16)?
2. Given the pressure of persecution and paganism, what is Peter’s secret to living a holy life (1:13-15, 22-23)? (a) obey God, (b) exercise self-discipline, (c) don’t yield to evil desires, (d) renounce your citizenship, (e) set your hope in God’s grace.
3. Why do believers live holy lives—since they are saved anyway? (a) God will judge, (b) eternal things will last, (c) Jesus is the example of holiness, (d) Jesus is the source of holiness, living his risen life in us.
4. What has the Word of God (Christ) got to do with the new birth and right living (1:23-25)?
5. What “add-ons” and “take-offs” are keys to holiness (2:1-3)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Do the reasons cited here motivate you to desire Jesus’ pure life in yours?
2. Does purity come from God’s grace, as you believe Jesus, or by your own efforts?

WINDOW
on the Word

Prepare... for action (1:13; literally “gird up the loins of your mind”) refers to having to pull up a long robe, tucking the ends in the belt, to take action or run. Conversely, **be self-controlled** (1:13) refers to discipline of will and thought to avoid ill-conceived or hasty action. Being **holy** (1:15-16) is not a matter of rules, ritual or religion, but of relationship. In the OT, holy things and places were “set apart” for God’s special use; so also in the NT, “holy” people were enabled by grace to live exclusively for God. Anything or anyone **redeemed** (v. 18) was bought with a price, from the bondage of slavery or enemies (OT) or from sin and death (NT). **Pure spiritual** (Greek, *logikos*) **milk** (2:2) probably refers to God’s Word (logos, as in 1:22-25). In another context (1Co 3:2; Heb 5:12-14), milk was to be disdained in favor of “solid food.”



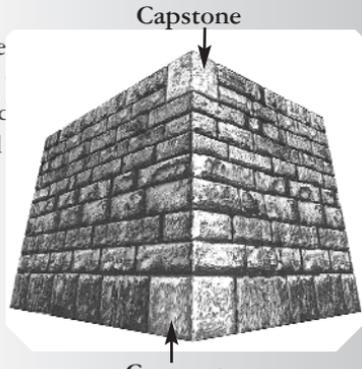
“For, ‘All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever.’”

I Peter 1:24-25

CORNERSTONES AND CAPSTONES

The words *capstone* and *cornerstone*, used here and elsewhere in the Bible, are rich with meaning.

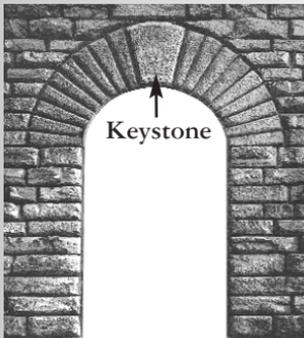
In many ancient middle eastern te construction began with the laying of cornerstone or pivot stone. Animals and humans were sometimes sacrificed and buried beneath the stone, along with other symbolic artifacts. During construction, the cornerstone or pivot stone was used as a point of reference for measurements.



To a Christian living in the first-century Roman world, the Greek terms *akrogoniaios* (“cornerstone” or “chief cornerstone”) or *kephale gonias* (“capstone” or “head of the corner”) may have held several meanings.

Cornerstones were laid to support and join two walls. In the same way, Christ unites Jew and Gentile (Eph 2:20). A cornerstone at the juncture of two walls might project beyond the walls in such a way that it could be stumbled over by someone who was turning the corner carelessly. Christ proved to be such a “stumblingblock” to the Jews (1Pe 2:6).

A *capstone* was the crowning stone at the summit of a wall, turret, tower or other structure. At the top or middle of an arch or vault, the *keystone* was inserted like a wedge to bear the weight of the structure and to hold it together. The last stone to be placed in a Roman arch was always the keystone, and the arch could not function without it.



Psalms 118:22 anticipates the Messiah as the capstone originally rejected by the builders.

In 1 Peter, Jesus is referred to as both the cornerstone and the capstone of the structure of the Church—both the *first and the last* stones to be laid (Rev 22:13).

The House that Christ Built

DAY 4

1 Peter 2:4-12

If you worship in a building, what does it look like? (a) stone cathedral, (b) warehouse, (c) school gym, (d) theater, (e) living room.

1. How is Jesus like a “stone” (2:4-8)? (a) he’s strong as a rock, (b) he’s precious as a diamond, (c) he’s our sure foundation, (d) he’s the capstone of the house, (e) he’s the stumbling block sinners trip over.

2. How many metaphors for the church can you find in 2:4-12? How many originally applied to Israel (see Ex 19:5-6; Is 43:20-21)?

3. What does each metaphor say about the church, especially its ability to serve God and withstand pressure?

4. How is the world’s treatment of Christ like the treatment received by these Christians?

1. What elements of God’s master plan for his spiritual house do you embrace?

2. Is Jesus more cornerstone, capstone or stumbling block in your life?

3. Is Jesus a building—or more than that? Hint: We *are* the church—the church is not simply a building or a meeting we *go to*.

Living stone, cornerstone and capstone (2:4-8) are OT metaphors (see Is 28:16; Ps 118:22) that apply to Christ (Mt 21:42; Mk 12:10; Lk 20:17; Ac 4:11). The integrity and structure of Christianity hangs or falls on Jesus. Christ is a “living” stone in that he is personal and life-giving. So also, the “church” is **living stones** (1Pe 2:5); in the NT, “church” never refers to a physical edifice, but to a spiritual house (2:5).

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

Submission and Suffering

1 Peter 2:13-25

OPENING
up to the Word

How did your parents rule your household? By what means? (a) a big stick or an iron fist, (b) with money, (c) playing favorites (d) with love. Did they have your respect?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. To whom are believers to submit and honor? Why?
2. Are any exceptions to be made in cases where the boss is a jerk or abusive? Is it wrong in such cases to remove yourself from the situation?
3. Do verses 18-21 apply differently to an employee-employer (contractual) relationship than it would to to a slave-master relationship?
4. What does “doing good” versus “doing wrong” have to do with submission or suffering (see also 2:11-12)?
5. How and why does fearing God help one to honor and submit to authority?
6. How does Jesus’ example help in this regard? What Christ-like behavior receives a commendation here?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Have you suffered for doing good or being innocent? Are you aware of any good that eventually came from your submission to unjust suffering?
2. The obedience of Christ led to the cross, not just for a moral example (vs. 21-23), but for our redemption (vs. 24-25). How has Christ’s exemplary and redemptive death affected you?

WINDOW
on the Word

*“Show proper respect” and “honor” (v. 17) are translated from the same word. This is a command to perform an essentially voluntary action. Likewise, Christians are commanded to voluntarily **submit** to those in authority over them (vs. 13, 18). Jesus **bore our sins... on a tree** (v. 24), meaning, on the cross he died a representative death, taking upon himself the penalty for our sins. Those who were hung on a tree were said to be “under God’s curse” (Dt 21:22-23).*

Beautiful Wives, Considerate Husbands

DAY 6

1 Peter 3:1-7

Did, or do, your mom and dad truly love each other? How do you know?

1. Verse 1 says, “In the same way.” Whose pattern of life were women to follow? (a) Jesus, (b) Sarah, (c) Golden Rule—do unto others.
2. Should a Christian woman’s conduct be different toward a husband who is worthy of her respect versus a husband who treats his wife as property? Or does it all depend?
3. What good—or bad—could come of a wife’s conduct toward an unbelieving husband?
4. Where does a wife’s true beauty lie? How many attributes of beauty can you find here?
5. How does one become a spiritual “daughter of Sarah”?
6. What good comes of a husband treating his wife “considerately”?

1. Are these beauty attributes hard to maintain in today’s society?
2. Would you change your wedding vows in light of this passage? Share them with your spouse.

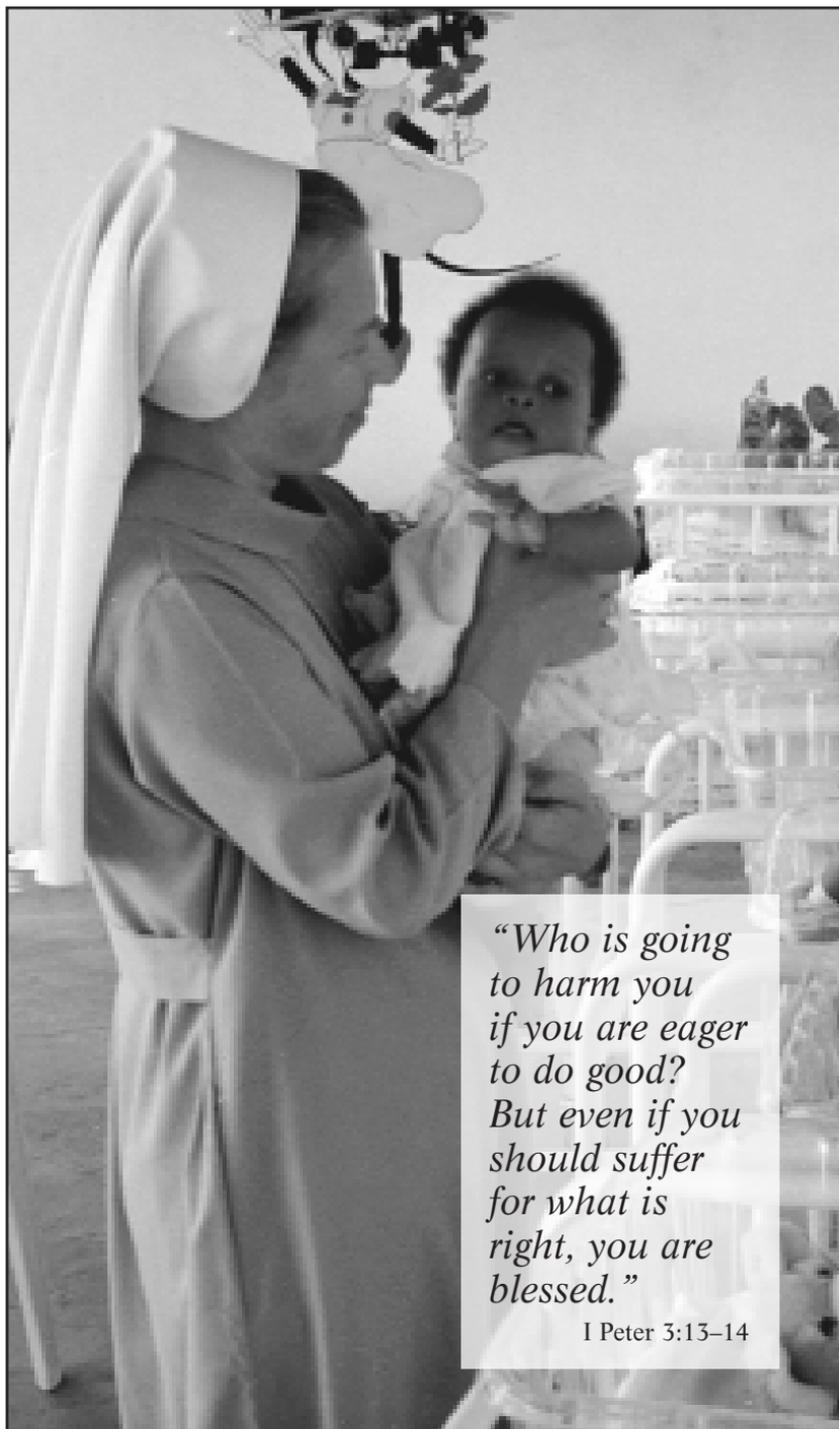
*Christian husbands and wives of this culture embraced the concept of **mutual submission** (Eph 5:21-29), as **joint heirs** of grace (1Pe 3:7). A pagan husband would have regarded his wife as property, passed to him from the father of the bride. Ideally, a pagan husband would see his wife’s Christian conduct (3:1, 5), her purity and reverence (3:2), and come to Christ. This “purity” was not just sexual, but also referred to thought, action and motive. The “reverence” was not for the husband, but for God, and was evidenced in good deeds (also in 2:12, 15, 20). “**In the same way**” (3:1, 7; meaning both wives and husbands following Christ’s example, 2:21-25), a Christian husband was to be **considerate** (of God’s will and her needs) and treat her with **respect** (treasure or honor) as the physically weaker partner. That is, she had less physical strength, but was to be respected, honored and served in love as an equal joint heir of Christ—responsible for her own choices.*

OPENING
up to the Word

DIGGING
into the Word

LIVING
out the Word

WINDOW
on the Word



*“Who is going
to harm you
if you are eager
to do good?
But even if you
should suffer
for what is
right, you are
blessed.”*

I Peter 3:13–14

Suffering for Doing Good

DAY 7

1 Peter 3:8-17

If you were arrested tomorrow and charged with being a Christian, what would be the grounds? Would there be enough evidence to convict you?

1. The word “finally” (v. 8) refers to what series of admonitions or events—to which this paragraph is now the conclusion?

2. What were Peter’s final instructions to this all-inclusive group of people (vs. 8-12)?

3. What reasons or incentives did Peter give for following these instructions? (Hint: Look for connective words such as “for,” “if” and “so that”—which introduce key ideas.)

4. From the rhetorical question in verse 13, the OT quotations in verse 10-14 and the repeated use of the contrasting word “but” in verses 9, 12, 14 and 15, imagine what must have been happening to these Christians. What must they have been thinking, that Peter had to remind them about these do’s and don’ts?

5. What does it mean to “set apart Christ as Lord” (v. 15)? Is this a doctrinal or a practical exercise? Lord of what? And if Christ is *already* Lord of all, how can you *make* him Lord?

1. Are there any relationships in your life that are out of harmony right now? How can you and God bring these relationships back into tune?

2. What makes for peace in your house? (a) hugs, (b) everyone doing what they’re told, (c) kind words, (d) biting your tongue, (e) thought, consideration and compassion before speaking.

3. As a member of God’s royal priesthood (2:5, 9), could you “bless” someone (3:9), or is it better to ask God to bless someone?

4. What are the first three reasons that come to mind when you choose to hope in Christ?

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word