

Study Questions

FIRST LETTER OF PETER

by William Barclay

1 Peter:

Lesson 1

Introduction to the First Letter of Peter (page 159)
up to but not including

The Doubts (page 175)

1. We refer to our religious belief as "Catholic", short for Roman Catholic. What is the meaning of the word "Catholic"?
2. Peter's Letters are part of a group of scripture known as the Catholic or General Letters. Why? What does this name come from?
3. Who does our commentary's author think was most likely the author of 1 Peter? Who does Barclay believe wrote (pen to papyrus) the letter?
4. The letter 1 Peter is addressed to a handful of cities and regions. Where geographically are these located?
5. Why was the Letter written? What issue is causing this letter of encouragement to be sent?

Lesson 2

The Doubts (page 175)
up to but not including

The Great Inheritance (page 191)

1. Barclay lists several reasons that Biblical Scholars have doubts that the Apostle Peter authored this letter. What are some of the reasons causing doubts?
2. The commentary also lists several reasons that support Peter's authorship. Name a few.
3. It is thought that Nero's persecutions were the sufferings mentioned in this Letter. When approximately was Nero Emperor?
4. Even though the Roman Empire is bringing suffering to the Christian Communities, what does the letter say about the Christian obligation toward the Emperor?

Lesson 3

The Great Inheritance (page 191)
up to but not including

1 Peter 1:1 – 1:7

Unseen but not Unknown (page 206)

1. To whom was this letter written, Jewish Christians or Gentile Christians?
2. The Section that begins on page 195 talks about "Three Great Facts of Christian Life." What are those Three Great Facts?
3. Evangelical Christians frequently talk about being "Born Again." Does this Epistle contain anything that would support this concept? What does it say?
4. One thrust of this Letter is that the Christians can endure these sufferings because of the rewards they can look forward to. When does the Letter suppose these rewards are coming? What is coming?
5. Barclay doesn't mention it here but elsewhere he tells us the Greek word used for "test" in these Epistles comes from the Greek word for metal refining... so; fire, purify, refine, increased value. How does this help your understanding?

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- Lesson 4** **Unseen but not Unknown** (page 206) 1 Peter 1:8 – 1:25
up to but not including
- What to Loose and what to Yearn For** (page 219)
1. What are the four stages of understanding and knowledge of The Christ?
 2. Peter's Letter talks about three aspects of a preacher's message. What are they (pg 210)?
 3. Finally we get to the verse mentioned in Barclay's introduction – 1 Peter 1:18, "you were rescued (released) from the futile way of life which you learned from your fathers. Is it clear to you now that the letter was directed to Gentile Christians?"
 4. What are the three things this letter has to say about Jesus the **Redeemer**?
 5. Review what our commentary has to say about the CHRISTLESS LIFE and the CHRIST-FILLED LIFE. What in this discussion do you find most useful to you today?
- Lesson 5** **What to Loose and what to Yearn For** (page 219) 1 Peter 2:1 – 2:12
up to but not including
- The Duty of Christians** (page 236)
1. The beginning of Chapter 2 of Peter's First Letter mentions things the Gentile Christian needs to strip off. Barclay goes to some length to explain the meaning of the Greek words Peter says need to be *apotithēmi* – stripped off from oneself? We today can work on getting rid of some of these. Which strikes home with you?
 2. *Logos* is a Greek word that has been adopted into English. You'll see it used particularly when discussing Scripture Study. There is no other comparable normal English word because it is multifaceted. What will you use in your mind as its meaning if you see *Logos* written or spoken somewhere?
 3. Barclay goes into a detailed discussion of "Church", using that word in several of the next few section titles. Yet the translation of 1 Peter 2:4-10 on page 223 does not mention the word "Church." What is going on here? The translation does specifically mention:
 - chosen race,
 - a royal priesthood,
 - a people dedicated to God,
 - a nation for him speciallyIs this the "Church" Barclay is discussing? Explain?
 4. Why does Peter call us "strangers and sojourners"?
 5. Peter doesn't say what he means by "fleshly desires" that he advised need to be abstained from. But Paul has a list in Galatians. What does Paul say "fleshly desires" are?
 6. There is another Greek word here with no comparable single English word or even short phrase, *anastrophe*. A comparison of 15 English translations yields six meanings; conversation, honorable conduct, live properly, good lives, excellent behavior, manner of life. What is Peter telling us to do?

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Lesson 6

The Duty of Christians (page 236) *up to but not including*

1 Peter 2:13 – 2:25

The Silent Preaching of a Lovely Life (page 251)

1. 1 Peter 2:13-16 are summarized in the next verse 1 Peter 2:17. In your own words what are our Christian Duties?
2. What is particularly interesting about Callistus an early Bishop of the city of Rome?
3. Christianity introduced a new attitude toward manual work. What was this new attitude/ How did it differ from the norm at that time?
4. Does this new Christian attitude toward work, mentioned in #3 above, surprise you? Why or why not?

Lesson 7

The Silent Preaching of a Lovely Life (page 251) *up to but not including*

1 Peter 3:1 – 3:16

The Saving Work of Christ (page 267)

1. Chapter 3 of this Epistle starts with advice for wives. What is your reaction? Discuss – can we pick and choose from how the Epistles tell us to behave? If so why? Or why not?
2. The other side of the equation (see #1 above) is the obligations of a husband. List the four mentioned. Does this change your answer to #1 above?
3. The commentary spends several pages elaborating on the qualities of Christian Life. List the six. Which one was most impactful for you?
4. On the bottom of page 264 and top of 265 there is a discussion of the Christian attitude to suffering. The commentary discusses the differences between physical and non-physical suffering but never says what the Christian attitude to suffering is. What is it?
5. When asked to give reasons for Christian beliefs what three things has Peter to say about the way the answer should be given?

Lesson 8

The Saving Work of Christ (page 267) *up to but not including*

1 Peter 3:17 → 4:6

Christian Baptism (page 281)

1. Peter lays out six teachings about Jesus undertaking (work.) The first four are thoughts about Jesus as a sacrificial offering. What are those six teachings?
2. Why was Jesus sacrifice on the cross a permanent (one time sacrifice) while Jewish Temple sacrifices were impermanent?
3. Our text devotes several pages to the discussion to what Peter wrote about; 1) preaching to spirits in prison, 2) disobedient in the time before Noah, 3) preaching the good news to the dead and 4) live in the spirit like God. Discuss. Do we really understand what Peter was trying to say?

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Lesson 9 Christian Baptism (page 281) *up to but not including*

1 Peter 3:17 - 4:11

The Inevitability of Persecution (page 297)

1. Baptism is a contract with God similar to a soldier's oath of loyalty. Explain.
2. The next section discusses how suffering is good. Human nature avoids suffering and naturally considers suffering a bad event. How can suffering be good?
3. "The end of all things is near." Was Peter wrong, mistaken?
4. Peter next writes about keeping your mind safe so you'll be able to pray. What is Peter saying to us.?
5. How does love hide sins?
6. King James translates the verse "And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins." Charity/Love are the Greek *agape*. The Greek word for "cover" can also mean hide or veil. And don't forget that the Jewish concept associated with "sin" at this historical time was "miss the mark." Is any of this helpful or does it just add confusion?

Lesson 10 The Inevitability of Persecution (page 297) *up to but not including*

1 Peter 4:12 - 5:4

The Garment of Humility (page 312)

1. Peter advises that the Gentile Christians not to regard the "regard the fiery ordeal" and "test" as something strange. What is he trying to communicate to these people?
2. In 1 Peter 4:15 he writes about four great evils; 1) murder, 2) stealing, 3) doing evil and 4) being a busybody. What the heck is item 4 doing in this list of heinous crimes?
3. In modern times the term "elder" can even have negative connotations. What did the term signify to these people? Can we see some reflection of this culture in the role of tribal elders in Afghanistan today?
4. Were elders forced into this role because of their agedness and assumed wisdom? Or rather was it an honor bestowed on trusted and revered men? Why did these first century cultures think and act this way?
5. Now days a person with similar political power can be and sometimes is viewed suspiciously. These cultures viewed elders with similar political power as performing a sacred holy trust. In our times men and women seek out and claw toward these positions. But then the eldership was bestowed and not sought. Compare and comment.

Lesson 11 The Garment of Humility (page 312) *up to but not including*

1 Peter 5:5 - 5:14

-END- (page 325)

1. In the cultures of the first century someone with financial success or other advantage bragged about it (think Jesus parable about the Pharisee and the tax collector praying or what we learned in Job.) But Peter says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Just how tremendous was this change? Is this the norm in our culture today?
2. Peter advises, "Cast all your anxiety upon him because he cares for you." How good at doing this are we today?
3. What are the five laws of Christian Life that Peter lays down?
4. Focus on the fifth law, Christian suffering. What is that doing in with humility, serenity, vigilance and resistance to evil?
5. Who is the Mark, whom Peter calls his son?