

1 Peter 1:1-12 ~ Praise to God ~ Discussion Questions

1. To what do people often turn in times of sorrow or suffering?
2. To whom did Peter address the letter? (1 Peter 1:1-2)
3. Peter refers to his readers as aliens or strangers. What does he mean by this? (1 Chronicles 29:15, Psalm 39:12, Hebrews 13:14) Do you ever feel like a stranger in the world? When? What are the circumstances?
4. How and for what reason had Peter's readers been chosen? (1 Pet 1:2, Genesis 25:23, Romans 9:10-13, Psalm 115:3, Romans 8:29)
5. So it's good if God chooses you. What if he doesn't? Are you forever lost because God did not choose you? (Ephesians 2:10, John 1:12, Romans 10:13)
6. Which persons of the trinity are involved in redemption of the elect? What is the "sanctifying work" Peter speaks of? (1 Pet 1:2)
7. What did Peter say God had given his people? (1 Pet 1:3-4, Hebrews 9:15)
8. By what are believers shielded? For how long? (1 Pet 1:5)
9. What exactly is salvation? When does it happen?
10. What did Peter tell his readers they may have to suffer or endure? What benefit, if any, is there in trials and suffering? (1 Pet 1:6-7, James 1:2-4, Romans 5:3-5)
11. What did Peter say the result of having faith would be? (1 Pet 1:7)
12. What did Peter hope his readers had done even though they had not seen Christ? (1 Pet 1:8) Did Peter himself hear Christ speak similar words after the resurrection? (John 20:29)
13. What did Peter say was the goal of their and your faith? (1 Pet 1:9)
14. About what did the prophets speak and for what did they search? Whom did Peter say these prophets were serving? (1 Pet 1:10-12)
15. When was the last time that God used you to serve someone else? How could he use you to serve others in the near future?

1 Peter 1:1-12 ~ Praise to God ~ Leader's Guide

1. To what do people often turn in times of sorrow or suffering?

Many people turn to God or prayer. The saying, “there are no atheists in a fox hole is only too true. I can’t count the number of thriller novels that have a line like this when someone is in a bad situation, “He didn’t know whether he believed in God or not, but he whispered a prayer and hoped for the best.”

More to the point, when people turn to God in times of trial, do they continue to believe, pray, and walk with God when the suffering has gone? Do they keep God in the forefront when times are good?

2. To whom did Peter address the letter? (1 Peter 1:1-2)

Verse 1 refers to Jewish and Gentile believers in Christ, who are living as aliens or strangers in Roman provinces in what is now Turkey. Some of these people were in Jerusalem on Pentecost (Acts 2:9-11) and others came to believe through the teaching of Paul in these provinces. However, various versions of the Bible translate verse 2 differently. They all say people “chosen by God” but some add that these chosen people have been sanctified or made holy by the Holy Spirit.

[NIV] To God’s elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, ² 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.

[Amplified] ² Who were chosen and foreknown by God the Father and consecrated (sanctified, made holy) by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ (the Messiah) and to be sprinkled with [His] blood

[NLT] ² God the Father knew you and chose you long ago.

[Good News, TEV] ² You were chosen according to the purpose of God the Father

3. Peter refers to his readers as aliens or strangers. What does he mean by this?

1 Chronicles 29:15 – We are aliens and strangers in your sight, as were all our forefathers. Our days on earth are like a shadow, without hope.

Psalms 39:12 – “Hear my prayer, O Lord, listen to my cry for help; be not deaf to my weeping. For I dwell with you as an alien, a stranger, as all my fathers were.

Hebrews 13:14 – For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.

4. How and for what reason had Peter's readers been chosen? (1 Pet 1:2, Genesis 25:23, Romans 9:10-13, Psalm 115:3, Romans 8:29)

It was God's choice for his reasons and his reasons alone. Let's talk about God's choices.

Genesis 25:23 – The Lord said to her [Rebekah], “Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger.”

It seems that God's choice of Jacob over Esau isn't at all logical. God says, “And the older shall serve the younger,” which totally goes against the normal way. But God is God and he has his plan. So his choice between Jacob and Esau, as to the one who would be the heir of His covenant, is His to make even though it doesn't seem to make sense to us.

In Romans 9:10-13, Paul uses this choice of Jacob over Esau *before their birth* as an illustration of God's sovereign choice. Paul points out the God's choice was *not* based on the performance of Jacob or Esau. The choice was made with no regard to the works he would do in the future. It wasn't based on God's foreknowledge of what would happen. It was determined solely by his will alone, not by man's works or anything else. It's an example of God's sovereign right to do whatever he wishes; in Psalm 115:3 it says, “Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him.”

But we've got to remember that it was *not* made for some arbitrary reason. Nor was it an “eeny-meeny-miny-moe” type of choice. We don't understand God's reasons for choosing one over the other. They are reasons that he alone knows and answers to, but we have to believe that God's choices are not capricious. So we see that God makes choices that don't always seem logical, that are not based on works or deeds, for reasons that only he knows. They are not capricious; they are God's to make.

Romans 8:29 – For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

5. So it's good if God chooses you. What if he doesn't? Are you forever lost because God did not choose you? (Ephesians 2:10, John 1:12, Romans 10:13)

Absolutely not! God has given you free will to choose Path A or Path B. The overall message of Bible and the Word of God is *not* that men go to Hell because God did not choose them, but that men go to Hell because they have not chosen God.

That truth is precisely what Moses stressed in Genesis chapter 25. Yes, God's election (of Isaac and Jacob) is evident. But at the conclusion of the account Moses did not say that Esau sold his birthright because God had predetermined this to happen, but because Esau what? Because Esau “despised his birthright.”

Ephesians 2:10 – we are created to do good works, but it is *not* because of our

good works that we are chosen. Jacob was chosen before his birth without regard to future deeds.

Theologically speaking, God elects men and women unconditionally without regard for what they will do. That is pure grace.

John lays it out right at the beginning of his gospel in 1:12, “Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.” Heirs of God. The birthright. Paul reiterated this in Romans 10:13: “For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

6. Which persons of the trinity are involved in redemption of the elect? What is the “sanctifying work” Peter speaks of? (1 Pet 1:2)

All three: Father, Spirit, Jesus Christ are involved in the sanctification process.

“Sanctification” means consecrated or made holy. Here Peter suggests that the influence of the Spirit draws one away from sin and toward holiness, which leads to being obedient to Jesus and ultimately a saving faith.

7. What did Peter say God had given his people? (1 Pet 1:3-4, Hebrews 9:15)

Two things: a new birth (born again) into a living hope and an inheritance that can never perish.

A new birth or being born again is spelled out in Jesus explanation to Nicodemus in John 3:1-8. In spite of the frequent suffering and persecution mentioned in this letter (1:6, 2:12, 18-25, 3:13-18, 4:1, 4, 12-19, 5:1, 7-10) *hope* is such a key thought that this is actually a letter of hope in the midst of suffering. In the Bible, hope is not wishful thinking but a firm conviction, much like our faith which is directed toward the future. Hope is the absolute assurance of eternal life guaranteed by the present possession of the Holy Spirit.

Secondly, believers are born again not only to a hope of being resurrected just as Jesus was, but also to the inheritance that is the substance of hope. The inheritance is eternal—in its essence (it is not subject to decay) and in its preservation (it is divinely kept for us).

Hebrews 9:15 – For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance —now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.

8. By what are believers shielded? For how long? (1 Pet 1:5)

Believers are shielded through faith by God’s power until the end times. There are two sides to the perseverance of Christians. They are shielded by 1) God’s power and 2) their own faith. The Amplified Bible spells it out: Who are being guarded by God’s power through [your] faith [till you fully inherit that final] salvation that is ready to be revealed [for you] in the last time.

9. What exactly is salvation? When does it happen?

The Bible speaks of salvation as 1) past—when a person first believes, 2) present—the continuing process of salvation or sanctification, and 3) future—when Christ returns and salvation or sanctification is completed through glorification.

10. What did Peter tell his readers they may have to suffer or endure? What benefit, if any, is there in trials and suffering? (1 Pet 1:6-7, James 1:2-4, Romans 5:3)

Peter's readers in the Roman provinces were already being persecuted just for being Christians, foreshadowing the greater persecutions that would come in the future. When Peter says his readers are rejoicing (vs 6) he probably suspects the reverse (thus the letter); but by asserting that they are already doing so, he encourages them to accept his view. He introduces his first reference to suffering with great tact ("though now for a little while you may...") and makes them appear insignificant compared with the promises of God.

Back in those days, "all kinds of trials" were generally expected to beset the faithful at the end time so their occurrence can be a cause for rejoicing as a sign that the end time is near. That belief generally lost favor as time marched on and trials became more affiliated with testing one's faith and developing perseverance, character, maturity, and hope. Even Peter said "[Trials] have come so that your faith...may be proved genuine."

James 1:2-4 – Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

Romans 5:3-5 – Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

11. What did Peter say the result of having faith would be? (1 Pet 1:7)

Peter says that faith proved by trials will result in the suffering faithful person receiving from God the very things that their unbelieving neighbors are denying them: praise, glory, and honor. This will occur when Jesus Christ is revealed .

12. What did Peter hope his readers had done even though they had not seen Christ? (1 Pet 1:8) Did Peter himself hear Christ speak similar words after the resurrection? (John 20:29)

Peter expresses hope that "though you do not see him now, you believe in him..."

Speaking to Thomas at a meal after the resurrection, Jesus said, "blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

13. What did Peter say was the goal of their and your faith? (1 Pet 1:9)

The salvation of your soul. The word “soul” implies the whole person including your body. In other words, the whole person, body and soul, will go to heaven if you have faith. In other words, Peter wants his readers to love Jesus, to believe in him, and take joy in your salvation, which is being realized even now.

14. About what did the prophets speak and for what did they search? Whom did Peter say these prophets were serving? (1 Pet 1:10-12)

The prophets spoke of the grace that was to come to you. The Amplified Bible spells it out: “The prophets, who prophesied of the grace (divine blessing) which was intended for you, searched and inquired earnestly about this salvation.” These verses emphasize just how privileged the addressees (and you) are. It is they (and you) who are the recipients of the great promises that the prophets inquired into and who have received the good news of things into which even angels long to look at.

Yet what the prophets testified in advance bears directly on Peter’s theme; for they foresaw that Christ would first suffer and then receive glory—the same pattern that the addressees and us are also expected to follow (as Peter will expand upon in the rest of the letter).