

1 Peter 1

Introduction

"The two short letters we have from the Apostle Peter are treasures. Though containing about 3 percent of the New Testament, they survey the major doctrines of the early Church: the Atonement, repentance and baptism, priesthood power, the threatening apostasy, and Christ's second coming. These doctrines come from no less than the person given the keys to lead Christ's church anciently—keys bestowed in the presence of the transfigured Christ and the translated prophets Moses and Elijah.

"When in his ministry did Peter write the letters? The first half of the book of Acts narrates Peter's Palestinian ministry in the two decades after the Resurrection, ending with the Jerusalem Council at mid-century, as explained in Acts 15. This meeting was held right after the first Gentile converts in Asia Minor joined the Church and the Apostles had to decide the relevance of the law of Moses for them. It took about another decade to evangelize the whole of Asia Minor. So it was probably in the early sixties when Peter wrote his first letter, addressing Christians of five major provinces in that area. (See 1 Pet. 1:1.) Consistent with this date is the fact that within fifty years, 1 Peter was being quoted as authoritative by two early Christian bishops in the region." (Richard L. Anderson, "Peter's Letters: Progression for the Living and the Dead," *Ensign*, Oct. 1991, 7)

"His addressing a letter to church members in several provinces of Asia Minor implies a personal relationship in missionary work there (1 Pet. 1:1), and this letter was written from 'Babylon,' the early Christian code name for Rome, indicating Peter's final ministry in the center of the empire so frequently referred to in early sources. (See 1 Pet. 5:13.)... Origen said that Peter came 'to Rome and was crucified head downwards, for so he had asked to suffer.' (Commentary on Genesis, cit. Eusebius, History 3:1.) So the Lord's prophecy to Peter was at last fulfilled: '... when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.' (John 21:18.) (Richard Lloyd Anderson, "Simon Peter," *Ensign*, Feb. 1975, 49)

Joseph Smith

Peter penned the most sublime language of any of the apostles. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 301.)

Harold B. Lee

[Often] when I want to pick up something that would give me some inspiring thoughts, I have gone back to the Epistles of Peter. (Jeffrey R. Holland, *However Long and Hard the Road* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1985], 95-98.)

1 Peter 1:1 to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus...

The context of these epistles make it clear that Peter is writing to members of the church. He is not writing an evangelical tract. The term "strangers" usually meant "Gentiles," but Peter is addressing the Gentile converts throughout the world. Spiritually speaking, he does not consider them Gentiles or strangers. By virtue of their adoption into the House of Israel at baptism, they were neither strangers to the gospel nor to the House of Israel. By physical birth they were Gentiles. By spiritual rebirth, they were "born again, not of corruptible seed (Gentile forefathers), but of incorruptible (the Spirit of God), by the word of God," "begotten... again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (1 Pet. 1:23, 3)

Joseph Smith

The effect of the Holy Ghost upon a Gentile is to purge out the old blood, and make him actually of the seed of Abraham. That man that has none of the blood of Abraham (naturally) must have a new creation by the Holy Ghost. In such a case, there may be more of a powerful effect upon the body, and visible to the eye, than upon an Israelite, while the Israelite at first might be far before the Gentile in pure intelligence. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 150)

1 Peter 1:2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father

Who is elect? Peter is calling the baptized Gentiles scattered throughout the Roman Empire the *elect*. Collectively, the House of Israel is considered elect. On an individual basis, the Lord knows who will believe and come unto him (John 6:64). Calvin may have taken the implications of the doctrine of election too far, but he did hit the mark when he wrote, "Paul says, 'The Lord knoweth them that are his,' (2 Tim. 2:19). In short, by that term he designates two classes of people, the one consisting of the whole race of Abraham, the other a people separated from that race, and though hidden from human view, yet open to the eye of God." (John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, chap. 22)

Brigham Young and Willard Richards

In this, election is made manifest, for God elected or chose the children of Israel to be His peculiar people, and to them belong the covenants and promises, and the blessings received by the Gentiles come through the covenants to Abraham and his seed; for through the unbelief of the Jews (Rom. 11:17) they were broken off, and the Gentiles were grafted in; but they stand by faith (Rom. 11:20), and not by the oath of election (see Gen. 22:16, 17, 18); therefore it becometh them to fear lest they cease quickly to bear fruit and be broken off (Rom. 11:21) that the Jews may be grafted in again; for they shall be grafted in again (Rom. 11:23), if they abide not in unbelief.

The Gentiles became partakers of the blessings of election and promises, through faith and obedience, as Peter says, writing to the strangers scattered abroad (1 Peter, 1st chap.), who were the Gentiles, the "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the spirit unto obedience;" (1 Peter, 2:9). (*History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 4: 261.)

1 Peter 1:3 a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead

Elaine L. Jack

How can we obtain hope? In all our circumstances, we can benefit from answering this question.

First and foremost, we look to Christ with joyous expectation. As Paul began his first epistle to Timothy, he identified himself as "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope." (1 Tim. 1:1.) Truly, the Lord Jesus Christ is our hope. And what type of hope should we have? "A lively hope." (1 Pet. 1:3.)

I know faith and hope are not a placebo meant to placate the questions and desires of our hearts. They are realities. My hope and my joy in life are based upon the atonement of our Savior and the restoration of the gospel in these days. I base my life on it; therefore, I have reason for my hope. ("A Perfect Brightness of Hope," *Ensign*, Mar. 1992, 14)

1 Peter 1:4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled... reserved in heaven for you

Chieko N. Okazaki

I keep struggling toward the Father's perspective of mortality. Every now and then I catch a glimpse of things from his perspective. Such glimpses give me strength; they fill me with courage; they replenish my gratitude to overflowing. See yourself as the Father sees you-glorious, eternal, capable of infinite love, worthy of *his* infinite love.

The Apostle Peter, in his first epistle to the Saints in the northern part of Asia Minor, opens his letter with this same vision of courage, comfort, and strength: (quotes 1 Peter 1:3-7.)

Isn't that a wonderful idea? The Father has given us an inheritance in heaven that will never perish, spoil, or fade. It's there for us right now! We can rejoice in it right now! Yes, we have problems and trials. Yes, we may suffer grief. But these trials will prove that our faith is genuine. Notice that Peter doesn't threaten the Saints ("you'd better pass this test!") or sound anxious ("oh, dear, I hope you can pass this test!"). Instead he assures them that their faith will be proved genuine and will increase the "praise, glory, and honor" that will greet our Savior when Jesus returns a second time to the earth. (*Lighten Up!* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1993], 100 - 101.)

1 Peter 1:5 kept by the power of God through faith

The elect are kept by the power of God. Speaking of his sheep, the Savior declared, "they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." (John 10:28-29) We often underestimate God's power to preserve the elect from the powers of Satan.

Ours is not the first earth that God ever created. This is not the first time a plan of salvation was designed for his children. He has been at this for more time than we can comprehend. His power to successfully exalt and glorify his children is not fully realized. There are only two forces which oppose him-Satan and our agency. To him, Satan poses little risk, for he certainly has power over evil in all its forms. The other opposing force is agency. He will not violate the principles of agency to bring about our salvation. However, he has a lot of experience to know how to work upon the minds and hearts of men (D&C 19:7). This principle has been taught by the prophets-especially in regards to the sealing powers.

Joseph Smith

Though some of the sheep may wander, the eye of the Shepherd is upon them, and sooner or later they will feel the tentacles of Divine Providence reaching out after them and drawing them back to the fold. Either in this life or the life to come, they will return. They will have to pay their debt to justice; they will suffer for their sins; and may tread a thorny path; but if it leads them at last, like the penitent Prodigal, to a loving and forgiving father's heart and home, the painful experience will not have been in vain. Pray for your careless and disobedient children; hold on to them with [our] faith. Hope on, trust on, till you see the salvation of God. (Orson F. Whitney, in *Conference Report*, Apr. 1929, 110)

1 Peter 1:7 the trial of your faith... more precious than of gold that perisheth

"Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what He is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on: you knew that those jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised. But presently he starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make sense. What on earth is He up to? The explanation is that He is building quite a different house from the one you thought of-throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought you were going to be made into a decent little cottage: but He is building a palace. ..." (C. S. Lewis, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1952, p. 160.)

James E. Faust

Into every life there come the painful, despairing days of adversity and buffeting. There seems to be a full measure of anguish, sorrow, and often heartbreak for everyone, including those who earnestly seek to do right and be faithful. The thorns that prick, that stick in the flesh, that hurt, often change lives which seem robbed of significance and

hope. This change comes about through a refining process which often seems cruel and hard. In this way the soul can become like soft clay in the hands of the Master in building lives of faith, usefulness, beauty, and strength. For some, the refiner's fire causes a loss of belief and faith in God, but those with eternal perspective understand that such refining is part of the perfection process. ("The Refiner's Fire," *Ensign*, May 1979, 53)

John Taylor

I do not desire trials. I do not desire affliction. I would pray to God to "lead me not in temptation, and deliver me from evil; for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory." But if the earthquake bellows, the lightnings flash, the thunders roll, and the powers of darkness are let loose, and the spirit of evil is permitted to rage, and an evil influence is brought to bear on the Saints, and my life with theirs is put to the test, let it come, for we are the Saints of the most High God, and all is well, all is peace, all is right, and will be, both in time and in eternity.

But I do not want trials... I used to think, if I were the Lord, I would not suffer people to be tried as they are. But I have changed my mind on that subject. Now I think I would, if I were the Lord, because it purges out the meanness and corruption that stick around the Saints, like flies around molasses. (*The Gospel Kingdom: Selections from the Writings and Discourses of John Taylor*, selected, arranged, and edited, with an introduction by G. Homer Durham [Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1941], 333.)

Joseph Smith

The days of tribulation are fast approaching, and the time to test the fidelity of the Saints has come. Rumor with her ten thousand tongues is diffusing her uncertain sounds in almost every ear; but in these times of sore trial, let the Saints be patient and see the salvation of God. Those who cannot endure persecution, and stand in the day of affliction, cannot stand in the day when the Son of God shall burst the veil, and appear in all the glory of His Father, with all the holy angels. (*History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 7 Vols. 1:468)

1 Peter 1:11 the Spirit of Christ which was in them... testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ

John Taylor

Not only Moses, but all the Prophets, testified concerning the coming Redeemer. As elsewhere stated, this must have been the case, for we are told that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy;" and this being admitted, how, could they have the spirit of prophecy, or be Prophets without having the testimony of Jesus? And we are told further that the Prophets sought "what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."-1 Peter, i, 11.

These scriptures evidently show that the testimony of Jesus was the very principle, essence and power of the spirit of prophecy whereby they were inspired.

We find a great many statements corroborative of these facts in those portions of the writings and prophecies of the ancient servants of God, that have been handed down to us in the Old Testament, and from these testimonies we select a few to show how various and how detailed have been the inspired utterances regarding the life and death of the Messiah.

The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me, [Moses,] unto him ye shall hearken...
And the Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him. (Deut. 18:15, 17-19.)

For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:
And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me. (Job 19:25-27.)

Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?
The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying,
Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.
He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.
Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.
Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.
I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.
Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.
Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.
Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.
Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.
Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him. (Psalms 2:1-12)
(*Mediation and Atonement* [Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1882], 12-13.)

1 Peter 1:13 gird up the loins of your mind

Ezra Taft Benson

Think clean thoughts. Those who think clean thoughts do not do filthy deeds. You are responsible before God not only for your acts but also for controlling your thoughts. So live that you would not blush with shame if your thoughts and acts should be flashed on a screen in your chapel. The old adage is still true that you sow thoughts and you reap acts, you sow acts and you reap habits, you sow habits and you reap a character, and your character determines your eternal destiny. "As [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988], 445 - 446.)

Howard W. Hunter

A man's mind might be likened to a flower garden. It may be a thing of beauty or it may be filled with weeds and the potential beauty hidden.

As a plant springs from a seed, so every act of man springs from the hidden seed of thought. This applies equally to those acts that are described as spontaneous and unpremeditated as well as to those which are deliberately conceived. It has been said that our actions are the blossoms of thought, and joy and suffering are its fruits. Therefore, a man reaps the fruit of his own husbandry.

A noble character is not a thing of chance, but is the result of continued effort in right thinking. Man is made or unmade by himself. He fashions the tools with which he builds mansions of joy and happiness for himself, or he forges the weapons by which he destroys himself.

As a being of power, intelligence, and the master of his own thoughts, a man holds the key to every situation, to make his life what he chooses it to be. (*The Teachings of Howard W. Hunter*, edited by Clyde J. Williams [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997], 74.)

1 Peter 1:15 be ye holy in all manner of conversation

Robert S. Wood

When we speak and act, we should ask whether our words and expressions are calculated to invite the powers of heaven into our lives and to invite all to come unto Christ. We must treat sacred things with reverence. We need to eliminate from our conversations the immodest and the lewd, the violent and the threatening, the demeaning and the false. As the Apostle Peter wrote, "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation" (1 Pet. 1:15). The expression conversation refers here not only to speech but also to our entire comportment. As Nephi, he is inviting us to so live that we may speak with the "tongue of angels." ("The Tongue of Angels," *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 84)

George Q. Cannon

Do angels take the Lord's name in vain? The idea is so ridiculous that we scarcely like to ask the question. . . . How dare we do that which angels dare not do? (Gordon B.

Hinckley, *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1997], 496.)

Gordon B. Hinckley

In our dialogues with others we must be an example of the believer. Conversation is the substance of friendly social activity. It can be happy. It can be light. It can be earnest. It can be funny. But it must not be salty, or uncouth, or foul if one is in sincerity a believer in Christ. . . .

It is a tragic and unnecessary thing that boys and girls use foul language. It is inexcusable for a girl so to speak. It is likewise serious for the boy who holds the priesthood. This practice is totally unacceptable for one authorized to speak in the name of God. To blaspheme His holy name or to speak in language that is debauched is offensive to God and man.

The man or the boy who must resort to such language immediately says that he is poverty-ridden in his vocabulary. He does not enjoy sufficient richness of expression to be able to speak effectively without swearing or using foul words. ("Take Not the Name of God in Vain," *Ensign*, November 1987, pp. 45, 47-48.)

1 Peter 1:16 Be ye holy; for I am holy

Russell M. Nelson

Our climb up the path to perfection is aided by encouragement from the scriptures. They hold the promise that we shall, if faithful in all things, become like Deity. John the beloved Apostle wrote:

We should be called the sons [and daughters] of God.

... When he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (1 Jn. 3:1-3)

Continuing encouragement comes as we follow the example of Jesus, who taught, "Be ye holy; for I am holy." His hope for us is crystal clear! He declared: "What manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am." (3 Ne. 27:27) Thus, adoration of Jesus is best expressed by our emulation of Jesus.

People have never failed to follow Jesus because his standards were imprecise or insufficiently high. Quite to the contrary. Some have disregarded his teachings because they were viewed as being too precise or impractically high! Yet such lofty standards, when earnestly pursued, produce great inner peace and incomparable joy.

There is no other individual to compare with Jesus Christ, nor is there any other exhortation equal to his sublime expression of hope: "I would that ye should be perfect

even as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect." (3 Ne. 12:48) ("Perfection Pending," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 87-88)

1 Peter 1:18-19 redeemed with... the precious blood of Christ

"This purchase by Jesus was spoken of by Paul in 1 Cor. 6:19-20: 'Ye are not your own.' 'For ye are bought with a price'; and also by Peter, who when speaking of false teachers said, they even deny 'the Lord that bought them' (2 Pe. 2:1). Inasmuch as 'redeemed' means to 'be recovered for a price,' Peter was teaching the same doctrine when he said, 'Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ' (1 Pe. 1:18-19).

"The ransom, or redemption, has to do with the just payment of a debt incurred by the transgression against divine law. The debt was incurred [and]...the atonement, the payment of the blood, was made... Anything less than this would rob the gospel of its power and legitimacy. To deny that Jesus made the payment is to deny the legal basis for salvation, and chaos would reign in the universe!" (Robert J. Matthews, *Studies in Scripture, Vol. 2: The Pearl of Great Price*, ed. by Robert L. Millet and Kent P. Jackson, [Salt Lake City: Randall Book, 1985], 127.)

Bruce R. McConkie

Christ has purchased his saints, that is, those who are his have been "bought with a price" (1 Cor. 6:20), the price being his own "precious blood." (1 Pet. 1:19.) (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-1973], 2: 495.)

Joseph Fielding Smith

That price was the blood of Jesus Christ, and we are not our own. Oh, if we could only understand that by the shedding of his blood, he bought us. We belong to him. He has a right to tell us what to do and what not to do, and to command us to keep his commandments. (*Conference Report, October 1947, Afternoon Meeting 147.*)

1 Peter 1:19 a lamb without blemish and without spot

"The nature of the sacrificial offerings required by the law of Moses suggests parallels to the gospel. For example, the unblemished condition of the sacrificial animals anticipated Christ's fitness as a worthy sacrifice, for he redeemed us with his 'precious blood ... as of a lamb without blemish and without spot' (1 Pet. 1:18-19)." (Stephen D. Ricks, "The Law of Sacrifice," *Ensign*, June 1998, 27)

1 Peter 1:20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world

Bruce R. McConkie

Our revelations, ancient and modern, abound in pronouncements relative to the law of foreordination, both as it applies to specific individuals called according to the foreknowledge of God to special labors in mortality and as it applies to the blessings promised that host of valiant souls who are born in the lineage of Israel and who hear the voice of the Good Shepherd and come into his sheepfold on earth.

Christ himself is the great prototype of all foreordained prophets. He was chosen in the councils of eternity to be the Savior and Redeemer. Of him Peter said he was "a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world" (1 Pet. 1:19-20), as the one who should come in the meridian of time to work out the infinite and eternal atonement. For 4,000 years all the prophets testified of his coming and proclaimed his goodness and grace. ("God Foreordains His Prophets and His People," *Ensign*, May 1974, 73)

1 Peter 1:22 unfeigned love of the brethren

Neal A. Maxwell

Growing out of our faith in the Lord is our sustaining of His anointed leaders, as we have done at this April conference. Faithful Church members have what Peter called an "unfeigned love of the brethren." (1 Pet. 1:22.) Collectively but not perfectly, those sustained do the work to which God has called them. As with Joseph Smith, so it is for his succeeding Brethren. The operative promise persists: namely, the people of the Church will never be turned away "by the testimony of traitors." (D&C 122:3.) ("Lest Ye Be Wearied and Faint in Your Minds," *Ensign*, May 1991, 91)

1 Peter 1:24 all flesh is as grass

"Because this life is fleeting, the apostles unite in their urgent message that we be anxiously engaged in transforming written commandments into living acts of righteousness. John insists in his second epistle that 'we love one another'; and then he defines love: 'And this is love, that we walk after his commandments.' (2 Jn. 1:6) James further qualifies his admonition when he insists that 'Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.' (James 1:27.) This is timely advice, to which he adds, after his remarkable treatise on faith and works, 'For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.' (James 2:26.)" (Richard H. Cracroft and Neal E. Lambert, "Thoughts on the Book of Acts and the Epistles: Voices of Admonition and Warning," *New Era*, Apr. 1973, 41-42)