

1 Peter

IGNATIUS CATHOLIC STUDY BIBLE QUESTIONS

Welcome

“You are approaching the ‘word of God’. But for thousands of years, . . . the Word of God has been approaching you.”

The following guide is provided to enhance your reading of the First Letter of Saint Peter using the *Ignatius Catholic Study Bible*. If you are new to this resource or to reading the Bible, we recommend you read the general Introduction before you begin. It explains what it means that Scripture is the Word of God as well as how we understand and interpret it as Catholics. It also introduces the special features of the Study Bible and tells how they can enrich your reading and study. Additionally, the *Introduction to the Catholic Epistles* will provide valuable context for your reading.

A simple rhythm of prayer followed by reading and reflection is offered below to guide you through the book one chapter at a time. Questions draw attention to key footnotes and word studies to lead you into a deeper understanding of what you read and then prompt you to consider how to apply what you have learned. For a deeper dive, take advantage of additional features as you go: not just the other footnotes but also cross-references to Scripture and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)* that are provided above the footnotes as well as any maps, charts, or essays that are not touched on in the questions.

Don’t miss these helpful icons as you read! They highlight footnotes that pertain to the Church’s criteria for interpreting Scripture (see CCC 112–14):



Be attentive to the content and unity of Scripture

Notes marked with a Bible icon connect Old Testament passages and New Testament mysteries, fostering appreciation for God’s unified plan.



Read Scripture in light of the Church’s living tradition

This icon marks notes drawn from the Holy Spirit’s guidance of Church teaching and the spiritual senses of scripture. Here you’ll find official teaching as well as interpretations from Fathers, Doctors, and saints of the Church.



Be attentive to the “analogy of faith”

Explore notes marked with an icon of keys to learn how the mysteries of faith, revealed in Scripture and defined by the Church, clarify and connect with one another in a unified, coherent way.

May God bless you as you read his word!

of God,* did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,⁷but emptied himself,[†] taking the form of a servant,[‡] being born in the likeness of men.[§]And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.[¶]Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name,^{||}that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,^{|||}and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

12 Therefore, obeyed, so now much more in salvation with f work in you, bo pleasure.
14 Do all th tioning,¹⁵that y children of God crooked and per

2:9–11: Rom 10:9; 14:9; Eph 1:20–21. 2:13: 1 Cor 15:10. 2

2:7 emptied himself: The Greek verb *kenōō* means “empty out” or “render void”. The idea is, not that Christ divested himself of divinity when he united himself with humanity, but that he restricted his rightful exercise of certain divine abilities during his earthly life and accepted certain limitations of the human condition. In effect, the Son of God made himself poor in order to make us rich with his grace (2 Cor 8:9) (CCC 472). • Christ emptied himself by compressing the glory of his Godhead within our smallness. What he always was remained perfect and incomprehensible, but what he assumed was in proportion to the measure of our nature (St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Apollinarius*).

2:8 death on a cross: The ultimate indignity. Death by crucifixion was the most awful and degrading form of criminal execution in the ancient world. The Romans reserved it for slaves and insurrectionists. See note on Mk 15:24.

2:9 exalted him: By raising him from the dead, enthroning him in heaven, and clothing his humanity with divine glory. A similar destiny awaits all who humble themselves as Jesus did (3:21; Lk 14:11).

2:10 every knee should bow: An allusion to the divine oath in Is 45:23. • Yahweh swore that all peoples, to the very end of the earth, would acknowledge his Lordship and bow before him in homage. Paul moves Christ into the center of this prophecy as the divine Lord destined to be revered by all. **heaven . . . earth . . . under the earth:** The three principal realms in the world view of ancient Israel (Ex 20:4). Homage will come from all creatures great and small—the angels and saints above, the family of man and beasts spread over the earth, and the dead and the demons of the underworld.

2:11 confess: I.e., acknowledge. Included in this open dec

serious that we pur sense of awe at ser the prospect of sinn Encouragement con readers that God’s g desire (intention) at 21; CCC 308) (CC “work”, he address and trembling”, he good deeds were th not boast of your g within you (St. Augu 2:15 pervers • Deuterono poetic lawsuit that and ingratitude du

A Thing to Harpagmos (G in the Greek O Occurrences of “robbery”. Its considerable d the leading vi (1) Some, like “something sel

Prepare

Read the Introduction to 1 Peter, paying particular attention to the *Destination* and *Themes* of the book. What one thing stands out to you, that you would like to remember?

Read the Outline of 1 Peter to get an overview of the book. What are its major divisions?

Pray

Use the following questions to guide your reading of 1 Peter, going at a pace that is comfortable to you. Before you begin each new section, pray simply for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit:

Come, Holy Spirit, open my heart to hear and receive these words as what they truly are, the Word of God. Enlighten my understanding and give me grace to put what I read into practice in my life. Amen.

Read and Reflect

Read and reflect on 1 Peter as follows:

- Pray before you read
- Read a section of biblical text by itself
- Read the text again, referring to the notes that accompany the text
- For deeper understanding and to aid in applying what you read, answer the questions that follow. The references at the top of each numbered question correspond to particular notes.

At the end of each chapter, review what you have written and linger where you feel drawn, asking the Lord to speak to your heart and into your life. What do you hear? Respond in prayer and ask his help to live what you hear in your attitudes and actions this week.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Chapter 1

For understanding

1. **1:2.** What three aspects of redemption does Peter coordinate with the three Persons of the Trinity? What rites of the OT does the expression “sprinkling with . . . blood” recall? What does this OT background anticipate in Peter’s letter?
2. **Word Study: Born Anew (1:3).** For Peter, what does the rebirth of Jesus from the dead give believers? What idea is Peter trying to communicate? What benefits does he have in mind?
3. **1:13.** What is Peter calling his readers to do, here? To what did the expression “gird up” originally refer?
4. **1:19.** What did Ex 12:5 stipulate about the Passover lamb? How does Peter apply this stipulation to Jesus? What Pass-over traditions does Peter seem to have in mind?

For application

1. **1:3–5.** What do you think Peter means by a “living hope”? What is the difference between hope in this sense and wish fulfillment? What is the cause of this hope, according to Peter?
2. **1:13.** Where does Peter want you to focus your hope? In speaking of the “revelation of Jesus Christ”, is Peter speaking of a future event or an ongoing one? If the latter, how do you recognize it?
3. **1:14–17.** What is the model of conduct that Peter proposes here? How can you conduct yourself according to it, given the circumstances of your life? What do you think Peter means by telling you to “conduct” yourself “with fear”? (Hint: Reflect on the biblical meaning of “fear of the Lord”.)
4. **1:20–21.** How does the fact that God raised Jesus from the dead become a source of confidence, faith, and hope for you? Without subscribing to a doctrine of “eternal security” (“once saved, always saved”), how can you still be confident of your salvation?

Chapter 2

For understanding

1. **2:6–8.** What three OT texts does Peter assemble that refer to a messianic “stone”? What point does each make? Who else makes similar use of these passages?
2. **2:10.** To whom was the prophet originally speaking in Hos 2:23? What context did Hosea have in mind? How does this relate to the ingathering of the nations through the proclamation of the gospel?
3. **2:12.** What is the “day of visitation”? How is this expression used in the Bible? How did Jesus use it?
4. **2:17.** Who was ruling Rome at the time of Peter’s writing? What importance does the exhortation to “honor the emperor” have for the dating of Peter’s letter? Explain.

For application

1. **2:1.** How do sins such as envy, insincerity, and slander offend against “obedience to the truth” and a “sincere love of the brethren”, to which Peter refers in 1:22? To which of these three sins do you find yourself most frequently tempted?
2. **2:9–10.** Whether you are a ministerial priest or a member of the laity (exercising the “priesthood of the faithful”), what does the fact of your priesthood mean to you? How do you exercise it? What kinds of “spiritual sacrifice” (see v. 5 above) do you offer?
3. **2:13–17.** What is your involvement in the political process? For example, do you take advantage of your right to vote? What is your attitude toward the police? Do you express disagreement with government policies? If so, in what way? Why should a Christian obey traffic laws?
4. **2:18–25.** What kinds of on-the-job (or in-the-home) suffering do you most frequently face? What responses do you give to colleagues or family members who criticize, manipulate, or impose on you? How do you use that suffering as a way of following in Christ’s steps?

Chapter 3

For understanding

1. **3:1.** What kind of submission does Peter envision for Christian wives? What is the social context within which he gives this counsel? How does Peter's instruction on the subject compare with Paul's?
2. **3:7.** What does Peter recommend to husbands? What point is Peter making in referring to women as the weaker sex? What might cause a husband's prayers to go unanswered?
3. **Topical Essay: Christ and "the Spirits in Prison".** What are some of the different ways 1 Pet 3:18–20 has been interpreted over the centuries? Summarize the interpretation offered in the essay. What modern discovery paved the way for this new understanding of the passage?
4. **3:21.** What does this verse affirm about Baptism? Explain the correspondence between the biblical flood and the Sacrament of Baptism. What makes it certain that Peter is referring to water Baptism? How might he also be alluding to circumcision?

For application

1. **3:1–6.** What is the difference between *manipulating* one's spouse and *influencing* one's spouse? In what ways might one overtly or subtly manipulate one's spouse so as to get what one wants? How might a "gentle and quiet spirit" be more in line with the respect proper to the marriage relationship? What does Peter want one spouse to influence (as opposed to manipulate) the other spouse to do?
2. **3:7.** What are some of the ways one might *dishonor* one's spouse (for example, by criticizing weaknesses)? What are some of the ways one might show honor? What is the relationship between honor and respect for one's spouse and the way one prays?
3. **3:8–12.** What is a tattletale? How do adults behave as tattletales? Have you ever retaliated against others in the way you speak about them? Even if you are "just telling it the way it is", how does that contribute to peace with the person to whom—or about whom—you are talking?
4. **3:21.** What difference does it make to you whether you are baptized or not? What *practical* difference does Baptism make in your life? For example, what effect does your Baptism have on the state of your conscience?

Chapter 4

For understanding

1. **4:3.** What does Peter urge his readers to shun? What might their efforts to live upright and holy lives cause? Why?
2. **4:6.** What is implied by the RSV translation of this verse? How else might this verse be translated? What difference would this make at the level of interpretation?
3. **4:8.** What is the source of the passage Peter quotes? What two effects does it contrast?
4. **4:17.** To what might the expression "household of God" allude? How does St. Bede understand the reference to "judgment" in this verse?

For application

1. **4:3–5.** Has your conversion or your ongoing life in Christ caused or provoked the breakup of personal relationships? What have you done to restore them? If the results have not been successful, what do you think God wants you to do next?
2. **4:8–11.** Of the gifts (charisms) Peter mentions here, which do you think you exercise? What are the reasons Peter gives for exercising charisms?
3. **4:12–14.** The "fiery ordeal" of which Peter speaks may take any number of forms. What form has suffering for the name of Christ taken in your life? If you do not think you have suffered for your faith, how might you support those who have? How might you prepare for the possibility of some form of suffering in the future?
4. **4:17–19.** How might it be a benefit for the Church to have judgment begin with her? What verdict do you think God might pronounce, and with what result? As a member of the Church, do you think God's judgment should apply to you?

Chapter 5

For understanding

1. **5:1.** Who are the "elders" Peter is addressing? What does their pastoral authority include, and from where do they derive it? What does Peter warn them about? Explain how Peter's authority is both like and unlike theirs.

1 Peter

2. **5:5.** What must the flock entrusted to the elders do? About what does the citation from Prov 3:34 speak? How does Peter use it in this context?
3. **5:8.** Who is the unseen perpetrator of Christian persecution? What did the image of a lion mean to people in the ancient world?
4. **5:13.** Who is “she” in this verse? To what does the name “Babylon” refer? Who is the Mark mentioned by Peter?

For application

1. **5:2–3.** What responsibilities do you have for the activities or welfare of others, such as in a family, church group, or social or service organization? To what extent might your exercise of responsibility be characterized by constraint or a desire for gain (financial or otherwise) or for control?
2. **5:5.** What is your understanding of humility? As one under authority, how do you exercise humility in your relationship with those over you?
3. **5:7.** How are anxiety and trust opposed to one another? About what areas of life do you tend to be most anxious (such as your health, your relationships, your career)? What does it mean for you to “cast” your anxieties on God? How do you do that?
4. **5:8–11.** About what kind of attacks by the devil do you think Peter is talking here? Assuming the devil’s attacks take the form of some kind of suffering, how might you be watchful and resist him?