

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church – Monongahela Pa.
Adult Bible Study
The Apostles' Teaching - The Epistles of St. Peter
Session 1

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship,
to the breaking of bread and the prayers. (Acts 2:42)*

I. INTRODUCTION

A. What were the priorities of the earliest Christians? (Acts 2:22)

B. How can you tell what a person's priorities are?

1. What is meant by "*the breaking of bread*" ?

2. What is meant by "*the prayers*" and not simply "*prayers*"?

C. The 1st and 2nd epistles of St. Peter have been called "*general*" or "*catholic*" epistles since they are not addressed to any particular church or person. Included in this grouping are: Jude, James, and 1,2,3 John.

D. read **1 Peter 1:1** (p. 1683) In fact, St. Peter does address his letter to specific churches.



- E. read **1 Peter 1:6** and **4:12** What might be the reason for St. Peter to write this letter to these churches?

The Christian faith seems to have been tolerated by the Romans as simply a sect of Judaism, which the Romans recognized as a legitimate religion. This changed in 64 A.D. with the great fire of Rome. Looking for a scapegoat, the emperor Nero blamed the fire on the Christians. This is what a Roman historian, Tacitus recorded:

But all human efforts, all the lavish gifts of the emperor, and the propitiations of the gods, did not banish the sinister belief that the conflagration was the result of an order. (given by Nero) Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called "Chrestians" by the populace.

Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilate, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judaea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their center and become popular.

Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty; then, upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred against mankind.

Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired.

II. CHAPTER 1

A. St. Peter identifies himself simply as “*an apostle*”. What were the requirements in order to be an apostle? see **Acts 1:21-22** (p. 1470)

B. What is the meaning of “*pilgrims of the dispersion*”? see **Acts 8:1-3** and **Acts 8:4** (p. 1482)

C. Read **1 Peter 1:3-5** To these suffering Christians, St. Peter reminds them of a “*living hope*”. What does he say is this living hope?

1. How might this reminder help me when I am in difficulties?

D. According to St. Peter, how does God use our sufferings for good? see also Romans 8:28 (p. 1536)

E. According to v. 8-12, how does this salvation become ours?

F. In v. 15, St. Peter quotes Leviticus 11:44. From the 5 commands he gives in v. 13-15, what does it mean to be holy?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Another translation says it like this:

So then, have your minds ready for action. Keep alert and set your hope completely on the blessing which will be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. Be obedient to God, and do not allow your lives to be shaped by those desires you had when you were still ignorant.

G. Verse 14 speaks about the readers' "former lusts". What exactly would these former lusts include?
see 1 Peter 4:3-4 and Colossians 3:5-9 (p. 1621)

What do these "former lusts" say about the type of life that Peter's audience used to lead?

H. What reasons does St. Peter give for this command (v. 17-21)?

I. According to v. 18-19, with what and from what were you redeemed? What does it mean to be "redeemed"?

J. Verses 24-25 are incorporated into the Orthodox Funeral Service. Read the portion from the funeral service book.

For reflection: Of the five commands that appear in verses 13-16, which of these do you need to most put in practice?

In terms of time, effort, and money spent, which comes first for me: perishables or forever items? How can I change this, if necessary?