

What is an _____?

1. They are not exactly _____.
2. All are _____ literature.
3. All are challenging to apply properly in _____ context.
4. Principles for Studying Epistles
 - a. Identify the _____, if possible.
 - b. Apply the _____ principle.
 - c. Read the whole letter at _____, if possible.
 - d. Listen/watch for changes in _____.
 - e. Ask, what is the author's _____ in each passage?
 - f. After reading the whole letter, consult good study _____.

Review: The Portrait of Jesus in Mark

- Jesus is an awesome **superhero**.
- Jesus **irritates** people with both his actions and his words.
- Jesus is a **revealer of mysteries** about God and his kingdom.
- Jesus is a powerful **miracle worker**.
- Jesus is a great **prophet**.
- Jesus is the **self-sacrificing Savior** of humanity.

The Portrait of Jesus in _____. (Borchert, pp 26-31)

- 1. Author / Audience / Historical Background**
- 2. Images of Jesus**
 - **Jesus is the _____ of the persecuted and displaced.**
 - **Jesus is the _____ Savior revealing the glory of God.**
 - **Jesus is the _____.**
 - **Jesus is the supreme _____.**
 - **Jesus model for _____ life.**
 - **Jesus is the _____ over evil.**

Questions for Reflection (Borchert, p 31)

- **How do you think the message of 1 Peter compares with what is usually taught and preached in our churches today? How would you summarize the differences?**
- **In what ways does Peter's message carry us beyond mere verbal statements of faith?**
- **Have you considered the possibility that you might someday be called to endure a period of intense suffering for Christ? How well would your commitment stand in the face of persecution?**
- **In three sentences, how would you describe Peter's portrait of Jesus and his disciples? How do you think your description compares to one you would do for Mark?**

Homework

- 1. Read Matthew at least once and in one-sitting, if possible.**
- 2. Read Borchert chapter 3, pp 35-43.**
- 3. Think about your response to the *Questions for Reflection* on p 43.**
 - a. How would you summarize the main aspects of the portrait of Jesus in Matthew? What aspects are most in line with the Jewish expectation of the Messiah? Why do you think most Jews have rejected Jesus as their Messiah?**
 - b. What aspects of this portrait do you think might speak most forcefully to a biblically illiterate generation?**
 - c. What do you think is the role of apologetics (using arguments to prove your case) in sharing your faith (witnessing, preaching, and teaching)? Does this presentation of Matthew offer clues for better proclaiming Jesus? What clues can you identify specifically?**

Portraits of Jesus

A Portrait of Jesus in 1 Peter

A. What is an Epistle?

1. **They are not exactly alike.** They differ from each other.
 - a. Romans: This letter is not simply a personal greeting by Paul to the Christians at Rome. The first three chapters are heavy in theology. Contrast this with Philemon—a personal letter from Paul to his friend, exhorting him to be kind to runaway slave who is returning. Romans is more formal; Philemon is more informal.
 - b. Hebrews is another more formal letter, full of theology. Contrast it with Philippians, which is to a specific church and has a more intimate tone.
 - c. In 1 Corinthians, Paul gives his own opinion in some places and clearly notes that those were his opinions and not direct teachings from the Lord.
2. **All are occasional literature.** That means they were written to a particular group, at a specific time, to meet a specific need.
 - a. Philemon is addressed personally to Philemon, Onesimus' master.
 - b. In 1 Corinthians, Paul is answered questions presented to him by the church in Corinth. So, in chapter 7, he is dealing with specific question of whether it is more holy/spiritual not to marry; this is not a complete theological treatise on marriage but deals with specific occasion/question.
3. **All are challenging to apply properly in today's context.**
 - a. How do you apply material addressed for a specific occasion?
 - 1) Does it present a timeless truth setting down a permanent legal requirement?
 - 2) Does it convey a principle, but should some we consider some of the circumstances as cultural issues not intended to be a permanent part of the advice?
 - b. In 1 Peter 3:3, Peter wrote to Christian women saying, “Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes.”
 - 1) Does this mean that Christian women today should not go to the hair-dresser, wear gold jewelry and diamonds, or have nice dresses? Some Christian groups have applied it this way and others have not.
 - 2) Is it possible that this command addressed a particular problem in the church of Peter's day?
 - 3) What is the timeless principle from this verse? Christian women and men should dress with modesty and decorum. They should not attract attention to themselves by how they dress but by how they live.
 - c. There are many challenging issues based on the occasional nature of the epistles.
 - 1) Can women never teach men?
 - 2) Can women never be ordained?
 - 3) Must all pastors be males? (Paul's language is masculine)
 - 4) Must every believer speak in tongues?
 - 5) Are the sick still to be anointed with oil for healing?
 - 6) Must pastors be married men—or can they be single?
 - 7) Can divorced and remarried men not be ministers?
 - 8) Will there be a secret rapture or is it public as in 1 Thessalonians 4?
4. **Principles for Studying Epistles**
 - a. **Identify the author, if possible.**
 - 1) Authorship may give insight about the content.
 - 2) Who wrote the book of James?

- a) Some people think it was the brother of John, but this was not likely, since he was killed early by Herod Agrippa (Acts 12:2).
 - b) Likely it was James the half-brother of Jesus.
 - c) The Jewish historian Josephus and the early church fathers refer to James, the brother of Jesus as the leader who presided over the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15). When Peter was delivered from prison, he told Rhoda to report his presence to James and the brethren (Acts 12:17)—after the death of James the brother of John.
- 3) Who wrote the book of Hebrews? This is unknown and most likely will remain unknowable.
- b. Apply the historical principle.** Learn about the culture of the writer and the recipient(s) to better understand the message and issues of concern.
 - c. Read the whole letter at one time, if possible.** Most of the letters were probably read all at once to their recipients. It helps to feel the flow and to see problematic verses in a bigger context.
 - d. Listen/watch for changes in content/subject.** This is best done while reading the epistle all at once. There are often many changes of subject.
 - e. Ask, what is the author's main point in each passage?**
 - f. After reading the whole letter, consult good study resources.** Consulting study resources first might prejudice one's view of the text.

B. The Portrait of Jesus in 1 Peter (Borchert, pp 26-31)

1. Author/Audience/Historical Background

- a. **Author:** Peter (1:1); Silas (Lt., *Silvanus*) was his amanuensis (5:12); Mark (5:13) was with Peter in Rome (i.e., "Babylon" 5:13).
- b. **Audience:** Those living in "Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" (1:2) – northern Asia Minor (modern Turkey).
- c. **Historical Background** – It was a time of persecution by Rome (i.e., "Babylon") against God's people in Asia Minor. Note their "fiery ordeal" (4:12) may be a sign of their martyrdom.
- d. Read 1 Peter looking for what Peter says in each passage especially describing Jesus.

2. Images of Jesus

- a. **Jesus is the caretaker of the persecuted and displaced.**
 - 1) "Jesus is portrayed as the great caretaker of persecuted and displaced Christians who live and witness in the world" (Borchert, 27).
 - 2) **Read 1 Pe 1:3-9.**
 - 3) Jesus is the resurrected Lord who gives hope and eternal inheritance (1:3-9).
 - 4) He is shepherd and overseer of your souls (2:25).
 - 5) He is the chief shepherd (5:4).
 - 6) "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you" (5:6-7).
- b. **Jesus is the suffering Savior revealing the glory of God.**
 - 1) "[Jesus'] suffering and consequent revelation of glory should not have been unexpected because, as Peter clearly asserts, it was predicted by the prophets and was clearly anticipated in the angelic realm . . ." (Borchert, 27).
 - 2) **Read 1 Pe 1:10-13.**
 - 3) Isaiah was one of the prophets who predicted his coming as the Suffering Servant: **Read 1 Pe 2:23-25** (cf., Isa 53:9,4-6).
 - 4) Jesus is the Savior who is coming again (1:13).
 - 5) Jesus will award the "crown of glory" to the faithful at his coming (5:4).

- c. **Jesus is the rock.**
- 1) “Peter . . . makes it indelibly clear that the foundational rock or ‘living stone’ is not Peter himself but is Jesus” (Borchert, 28).
 - 2) **Read Mt 16:13-18.**
 - a) Simon was renamed Peter (Gk., *petros* = “little rock, Rocky”)
 - b) His confession of faith was in the big stone (Gk., *petra* = Jesus)
 - 3) **Read 1 Pe 2:4-10.**
 - a) Jesus is the “living stone” (Gk., *lithon zonta*) (2:4-5).
 - b) Jesus is the “cornerstone” (Gk., *lithon*) (2:6; cf., Isa 28:16).
 - c) Jesus is the “rejected stone” (Gk., *lithos apedokimasan*) (2:7; cf., Ps 118:22).
 - d) Jesus is the “stumbling stone” (Gk., *petra skandalon*) (2:7-8; cf., Isa 8:14).
 - e) In Christ we are “living stones” (2:4) being built into a spiritual house.
- d. **Jesus is the supreme authority.**
- 1) “The basic concept in 1 Peter is that the supreme authority in all things must be Christ!” (Borchert, 28)
 - 2) **Read 1 Pe 2:13.**
 - 3) Who controls your life?
 - a) Government (2:13-17)
 - b) Master/Boss (2:18-25)
 - c) Spouse (3:1-7)
 - d) These passages point us to right relationships with all these forces in our lives.
 - 4) Jesus is the supreme authority. Others may think they control you, but Jesus is the one in control of it all.
 - 5) This gives a fearlessness in living for Jesus. “Go ahead and threaten me with heaven.”
- e. **Jesus model for authentic life.**
- 1) “. . . Peter inserts a powerful discussion concerning following Christ who, in the pattern of Isaiah 53:4-12, is . . . the model for authentic life” (Borchert, 29).
 - 2) Jesus is our holy model for living: **Read 1 Pe 1:14-16.**
 - 3) Jesus did not retaliate against his persecutors: **Read 1 Pe 2:22-23.**
 - 4) He is our model for dealing with suffering and persecution.
 - 5) “Christians are exhorted to build communities of harmony, empathy, love, tender-heartedness, and humility while they live in a hateful and evil world (3:8-12)” (Borchert, 29).
 - 6) **Read 1 Pe 3:8-12; 4:12-19.**
 - 7) “. . . being a minister or Christian leader must grow out of a commitment to follow in the footsteps of the exemplar, the self-giving Shepherd (5:4)” (Borchert, 30).
 - 8) **Read 1 Pe 5:4.**
- f. **Jesus is the victor over evil.**
- 1) “Peter announces that Christ has proclaimed to the entire spiritual realm that he is the victor over evil” (Borchert, 29)
 - 2) Again, Jesus is the coming Savior (1:13).
 - 3) Baptism is pictured by Peter of our powerful union with Jesus and his transforming resurrection power. **Read 1 Pe 3:21-22.**
 - 4) Jesus is the righteous judge to whom all will give account. **Read 1 Pe 4:5.**
 - 5) Finally, Jesus will award of the “crown of glory” to the faithful ones (5:4).

3. **Questions for Reflection** (Borchert, p 31)

- a. **How do you think the message of 1 Peter compares with what is usually taught and preached in our churches today? How would you summarize the differences?**

Today's message is often one of health, wealth, and easy believerism.

- b. **In what ways does Peter's message carry us beyond mere verbal statements of faith?**

It is a call to action in daily following Jesus even when there are severe, even deadly, consequences.

- c. **Have you considered the possibility that you might someday be called to endure a period of intense suffering for Christ? How well would your commitment stand in the face of persecution?**

Consider the situation in China today where believers are persecuted for their faith. Churches are torn down. Crosses are removed. Pictures of Jesus are replaced with those of Chinese leaders.

- d. **In three sentences, how would you describe Peter's portrait of Jesus and his disciples? How do you think your description compares to one you would do for Mark?**

Jesus is the Suffering Servant, Messiah, and Savior. He has won the victory over evil by his sacrificial death and glorious resurrection. Jesus calls us to follow him to glory by living out his example in our lives daily without regard for the personal cost.

C. Homework

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