

Living with
Discernment
in the
End Times

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HOW TO GET STARTED...



FIRST

As you study the books of 1 and 2 Peter and Jude, you will need four things in addition to this book:

1. A Bible that you are willing to mark in. Marking is essential because it is an integral part of the learning process and will help you remember and retain what you learned. An ideal Bible for this purpose is *The New Inductive Study Bible (NISB)*. The *NISB*, available in the New American Standard Version, comes in a single-column text format with larger, easy-to-read type, and is ideal for marking. The page margins are wide and blank for note-taking.

The *NISB* is unique among all study Bibles in that it has instructions for studying each book of the Bible, but it does not contain any commentary on the text. The *NISB* isn't compiled from any particular theological stance because its purpose is to teach you how to discern truth for yourself through the inductive method of study. Inductive Bible study simply means that the Bible itself is the primary source for study. (The various charts and maps that you will find in this study guide are taken from the *NISB*.) Whatever Bible you use, just know you will need to mark in it, which brings us to the second item you will need.

2. A fine-point, four-color ballpoint pen or various colored fine-point pens (such as Micron pens) for writing in

your Bible. The Micron pens are best for this purpose. Office supply stores should have these.

3. Colored pencils or an eight-color Pentel pencil.

4. A composition notebook or loose-leaf notebook for working on your assignments and recording your insights.

SECOND

1. As you study this book, you'll find specific instructions for each day's study. The study should take you between 15 and 25 minutes a day. However, just know that the more time you can give to this study, the greater the spiritual dividends and the greater your intimacy with the Word of God and the God of the Word. If you are doing this study within the framework of a class and you find the lessons too heavy, simply do what you can. To do a little is better than to do nothing. Don't be an all-or-nothing person when it comes to Bible study.


As a word of warning, you need to be aware that any time you get into the Word of God, you enter into more intensive warfare with the devil (our enemy). Why? Every piece of the Christian's armor is related to the Word of God. And the enemy doesn't want you prepared for battle. Thus, the warfare! Remember that our one and only offensive weapon is the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, and it is enough to fell the enemy.

To study or not to study is a matter of choice first, discipline second. It's a matter of the heart. On what or whom are you setting your heart? Get armed for war! And remember, victory is certain.

2. As you read each chapter, train yourself to think through the content of the text by asking the "5 W's and an H": who, what, when, where, why, and how. Posing questions like these and searching out the answers help you see

exactly what the Word of God is saying. When you interrogate the text with the 5 W's and an H, you ask questions like these:

- a. **Who** are the main characters?
- b. **What** is the chapter about?
- c. **When** does this event or teaching take place?
- d. **Where** does this occur?
- e. **Why** is this being done or said?
- f. **How** did this happen?

3. The “when” of events or teachings is very important and should be marked in an easily recognizable way in your Bible. We do this by putting a clock (like the one shown here)  in the margin of our Bibles beside the verse where the time phrase occurs. Or you may want to underline references to time in one specific color. As a reminder, note on your key-word bookmark (which is explained next in this section) how you are going to mark time references in each chapter.



4. You will be told about certain key words that you should mark throughout this study. This is the purpose of the colored pencils and the colored pen. While this may seem a little time-consuming, you will discover that it is a valuable learning tool. If you will develop the habit of marking your Bible, you will find it will make a significant difference in the effectiveness of your study and in how much you retain as a result of your study.

A **key word** is an important word that is used by the author repeatedly in order to convey his message to his reader. Certain key words will show up throughout the

book, while other key words will be concentrated in specific chapters or segments of the book. When you mark a key word, you should also mark its synonyms (words that have the same meaning in a particular context) and any pronouns (*he, his, she, her, it, we, they, us, our, you, their, them*) in the same way you have marked the key word. Because some people have requested them, we will give you various ideas and suggestions in your daily assignments for how you can mark different key words.

Marking words for easy identification can be done by colors, symbols, or a combination of colors and symbols. However, colors are easier to distinguish than symbols. If you use symbols, we suggest you keep them very simple. For example, one of the key words in 1 Peter is *suffering*. You could draw a squiggle like flames of fire like this over **suffering** and color it orange. If a symbol is used in marking a key word, it is best for the symbol to somehow convey the meaning of the word.

As you begin this new venture, we recommend that you devise a color-coding system for marking key words that you decide to mark throughout your Bible. Then, when you glance at the pages of your Bible, you will have instant recognition of the words.

In marking the members of the Godhead (which we do not always mark), we use a triangle to represent the Father. We then color it yellow. Then, playing off the triangle, we mark the Son this way: **Jesus** , and the Holy Spirit this way: **Spirit** . We find that when you mark every reference to God and Jesus, your Bible becomes cluttered. However, since the Spirit is mentioned less and because many people do not have a thorough biblical understanding of the Holy Spirit, it is good to mark all the references to the Spirit of God.

When you start marking key words, it is easy to forget how you are marking them. Therefore, we recommend that you tear out the perforated card in the back of this book and write the key words and their symbols on it. Mark the words in the way you plan to mark each in the Bible text, and then use the card as a bookmark. Make one bookmark for words you are marking throughout your Bible, and a different one for any specific book of the Bible you are studying. Or record your marking system for the words you plan to mark throughout your Bible on a blank page in your Bible.

5. Because locations are important in Epistles and they tell you “where,” you will find it helpful to mark geographical locations in a distinguishable way in your study. Try double underlining every reference to a location in green (grass and trees are green!). We suggest that you make a note on your key-word bookmark to mark locations.

6. Charts called 1 PETER AT A GLANCE, 2 PETER AT A GLANCE, and JUDE AT A GLANCE are located at the end of each section. When you complete your study of each chapter of these books, record the main theme of that chapter on the appropriate chart. A chapter theme is a brief description or summary of the main theme or predominant subject, teaching, or event covered in that chapter.

When stating chapter themes, it is best to use words found within the text itself and to be as brief as possible. Make sure that you do them in such a way as to distinguish one chapter from another. Doing this will help you to remember what each chapter is about. In addition, it will provide you with a ready reference if you desire to find something in the book rather quickly and without a lot of page-turning.

If you develop the habit of filling out the AT A GLANCE charts as you progress through the study, you will have a complete synopsis of the book when you finish. If you have a *New Inductive Study Bible*, you will find the same charts in your Bible. If you record your chapter themes on the charts in your Bible and on the designated line at the head of each chapter in the text, you'll always have a quick synopsis of the chapter and the book.

7. Begin your study with prayer. Don't start without it. Why? Well, although you are doing your part to handle the Word of God accurately, remember that the Bible is a divinely inspired book. The words you are reading are absolute truth, given to you by God so that you can know Him and His ways more intimately. These truths are divinely understood.

For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 2:10,11).

This is why you need to pray. Simply tell God you want to understand His Word so you can live accordingly. Nothing pleases Him more than obedience—honoring Him as God—as you are about to see.

8. Each day, when you finish your lesson, take some time to think about what you read, what you saw with your own eyes. Ask your heavenly Father how you can apply these insights, principles, precepts, and commands to your own life. At times, depending on how God speaks to you through His Word, you might want to record these "Lessons for Life" in the margin of your Bible next to the text you have studied. Simply put "LFL" in the margin of

your Bible, then, as briefly as possible, record the lesson for life that you want to remember. You can also make the note “LFL” on your key word bookmark as a reminder to look for these when you study. You will find them encouraging (and sometimes convicting) when you come across them again. They will be a reminder of what God has shown you from His Word.

THIRD

This study is designed so that you have an assignment for every day of the week. This puts you where you should be—in the Word of God on a daily basis, grasping, systematizing, and utilizing truth. It’s revolutionary!

If you will do your study daily, you will find it more profitable than doing a week’s study in one sitting. Pacing yourself this way allows time for thinking through what you learn on a daily basis. However, whatever it takes to get it done, do it!

The seventh day of each week has several features that differ from the other six days. These features are designed to aid in one-on-one discipleship, group discussions, and Sunday school classes. However, they are also profitable even if you are studying this book by yourself.

The “seventh” day is whatever day in the week you choose to think about and/or discuss your week’s study. On this day, you will find a verse or two to memorize and thus STORE IN YOUR HEART. This will help you focus on a major truth or truths covered in your study that week.

To assist those using the material for discipleship, family devotions, or in a Sunday school class or a group Bible study, there are QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION OR INDIVIDUAL STUDY. Whatever your situation, seeking to answer these questions will help you reason through some key issues in the study.

If you are using the study in a group setting, make sure the answers given are supported from the Bible text itself. This practice will help ensure that you are handling the Word of God accurately. As you learn to see what the text says, you will find that the Bible explains itself.

Always examine your insights by carefully observing the text to see what it *says*. Then, before you decide what the passage of Scripture *means*, make sure you interpret it in the light of its context. Context is what goes with the text...the Scriptures preceding and following what is written. Scripture will never contradict Scripture. If a Scripture passage ever seems to contradict the rest of the Word of God, you can be certain that something is being taken out of context. If you come to a passage that is difficult to understand, reserve your interpretations for a time when you can study the passage in greater depth.

Your discussion time should cause you to see how to apply these truths to your own life. What are you now going to embrace as truth? How are you going to order your life? Are you going to not only know these truths but also live accordingly?

The purpose of a THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK is to help you apply what you've learned. We've done this for your edification. In this, a little of our theology will inevitably come to the surface; however, we don't ask that you always agree with us. Rather, think through what is said in light of the context of the Word of God. You can determine how valuable it is.

Remember, books in the New Inductive Study Series are survey courses. If you want to do a more in-depth study of a particular book of the Bible, we suggest you do a Precept Upon Precept Bible Study Course on that book. The Precept studies are awesome but require five hours of personal study a week.

1 PETER

STANDING FIRM IN DIFFICULT TIMES



These are difficult times. Christians are being restricted more and more in how they can express their beliefs. Morality has plummeted to new lows. Divorce is rampant. Love and commitment have all been given new definitions. Crime is more violent than ever. Sensuality is the predominant selling tool in advertising. Pornography is prevalent on television and in the movies. Sexual promiscuity is the norm among the youth. We live in a world of materialism. We spend all our energies on achieving and all our resources on obtaining. Temptations to yield to the former lusts are at times overwhelming.

How can believers resist all these influences that tend to woo us away from following the example of Christ? How can we stand when so many are falling?

Peter gives us the answers.

In 1 Peter we have recorded what Peter, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote to the believers who had been scattered abroad due to the intense persecution of their day. These were difficult days for them, and it looked as if it was going to get worse. Peter writes to encourage the believers to stand firm during these difficult times.

His message is relevant for us today. We too are facing some difficult situations in our own lives. We need to be encouraged. In 1 Peter we will receive that exhortation as well as some practical instructions on standing firm during difficult times. You may be surprised to discover what Peter uses to motivate believers to “hang in there.”

Once you understand and apply the principles given in this book, beloved of God, you will be able to stand firm in difficult times.

WHAT HAPPENED?



When you believed in Jesus Christ and were “born again,” you received eternal life! Should that salvation experience have any effect on your everyday life? How should that event affect your responses, your relationships, your resolve?

Let’s see what Peter had to say about it.



DAY ONE

When you study a book of the Bible, it is advantageous to read through the book as many times as possible. The more you read it, the easier it will be to understand what the book is about. Begin today to familiarize yourself with the content of 1 Peter by reading the entire book in one sitting. As you read, mark every reference to the author in a distinctive way or color. *The New Inductive Study Bible* suggests, when studying an epistle, mark the author in blue. This gives consistency to your marking system. When you mark the author, don’t forget to mark personal pronouns.

As you do this, watch for any statement as to the author’s purpose in writing. When you see this, record the

author's name and his purpose in the appropriate place on the 1 PETER AT A GLANCE chart on page 56.

When you finish, record what you learn about the author in your notebook.

DAY TWO

Read chapter 1 of 1 Peter. This time, mark every reference to the recipients, including the personal pronouns (*you, your*), in a distinctive way or color. *The New Inductive Study Bible* suggests you use the color orange.

What is your first impression of the recipients? Record your thoughts in your notebook.

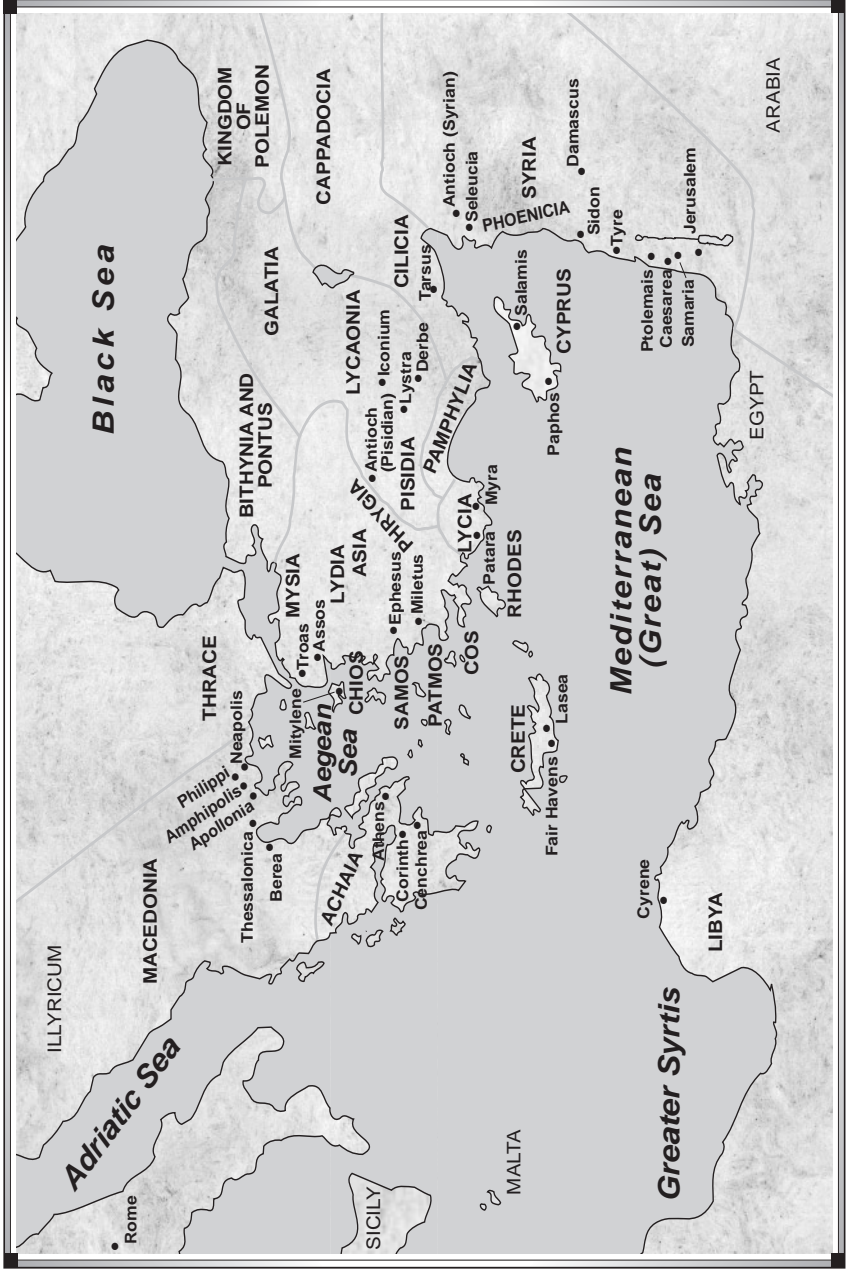
Now, look at the map on page 17 to get a better visual understanding of the exact territories where “those who reside as aliens” were scattered.

DAY THREE

Now read chapter 1 again. This time analyze every reference to the recipients. If the reference answers any of the “5 W’s and an H” questions—who, what, when, where, why, and how—record in your notebook what you learn about the recipients. At this point, don’t record any of the instructions from the author. We’ll deal with those later. Just record those things that are specific about the recipients. Your lists would begin something like this:

THE RECIPIENTS

1. reside as aliens (1:1)
2. are chosen (1:1)
- 3.



Put the chapter and verse next to each observation for future reference. Also, leave room in your notebook for other insights you'll discover about the recipients as you observe the remaining chapters of 1 Peter.

DAY FOUR

Read chapter 2 today, marking in your Bible and listing in your notebook your observations regarding the recipients. Don't forget to put the chapter and verse with each observation.

DAY FIVE

You guessed it! Chapter 3 is your assignment for today. Follow the same procedure as for yesterday.

DAY SIX

Finish the book of 1 Peter today by dealing with chapters 4 and 5 in the same way you did the previous chapters.

If you have time when you finish your assignment for today, prayerfully read down through your observations on the recipients and record in your notebook the major subjects Peter discusses in this letter.

DAY SEVEN



Store in your heart: 1 Peter 1:3-5.

Read and discuss: 1 Peter 1:1-16; 5:10-12.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION OR INDIVIDUAL STUDY

- ☞ Who is the author of this epistle? How does he describe himself?
- ☞ To whom is this letter written? What did you learn about them? Where are they? Why are they there? How are they described?
- ☞ What were the recipients going through at this time? How were they responding? What would they obtain as an outcome of their faith?
- ☞ How did the prophets serve the recipients? What did the prophets bring to them?
- ☞ Why did the author write to the recipients? Where is this purpose stated? How does what you learned about the recipients in 1 Peter relate to the purpose of the book?
- ☞ What subjects did Peter discuss? How do they relate to the purpose of the book? Were any of these subjects of special interest to you? Why?
- ☞ Are you going through any trials at this time? Are you standing firm?
- ☞ Does your life in any way parallel the recipients in 1 Peter? How?
- ☞ What did you learn as a result of your study this week? Did any insight you recorded speak to you in a personal way?

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

Our focus this week has been on the recipients of 1 Peter. They did not live in an ideal situation or in perfect

circumstances. To the contrary, they were going through various trials that resulted in much suffering. It almost sounds like a current report on the Christian life today— anxious situations, false accusations, slanderous remarks, intimidation, unfair treatment, and harsh bosses. Because believers live “in” the world but are not part “of” the world, they are like aliens and strangers. They are in constant conflict with those who reside on planet Earth but have not yet experienced “the true grace of God.” Because this is true, there will always be tension between believers and unbelievers.

Peter encouraged them to stand firm regardless of the circumstances. They could only do this by His grace and their obedience. Although those who had been scattered abroad had experienced the grace of God, they needed to be reminded of exactly what that grace was and how it affected their everyday lives. They also needed to be reminded of what they were to *do* and *not do* in response to all the abrasive situations they were in so they could maintain their testimony in the community and bring glory to God in all their relationships.

God showed them where they were spiritually, who they were in Christ, what was going on in their lives, what was going to come their way, and how they were to respond. Everything they needed for whatever they were told to do, He had already provided for them by His grace! And the same is true for you. What a life! In need of everything but lacking nothing! His provision—grace and peace—is always in the fullest measure! May you experience the same, beloved.