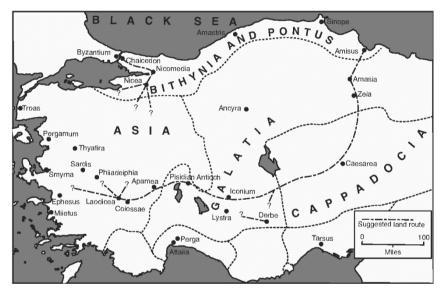
If you have limited time to prepare, this 3-step outline is a helpful tool for leading a small group discussion:

- 1. Read the text from Sunday's message.
- 2. What did you find most helpful/confusing/new/ that you did not understand from the message?
- 3. What were your big takeaways? How will you put these into practice in your life?

Getting Started

The epistle of 1 Peter was written to Jewish and Christian believers living in the northern part of Asia Minor. They faced persecution because of their commitment to Christ. Peter wrote to urge them to show stamina and commitment. Peter also wanted his readers to show a Christian lifestyle that would convert pagan sneers and accusations into appreciation and respect. To accomplish this, he urged all Christians to obey their leaders, servants to be subject to their masters, and husbands and wives to demonstrate honor and submission to one another. The vivid descriptions of Christ's suffering and death (2:21–25; 3:18) could serve as an encouragement for Christians to conquer evil and endure to the end.



The area in which Peter's readers lived, mentioned in 1:1, was far off the beaten path of travel and commerce. The Bible contains no record of how the gospel reached this area. Although the area contained colonies of Jews, Gentiles were numerically predominant. The order in which the provinces are mentioned might suggest the route followed by the letter carrier. He could have landed in Pontus, followed a circuit through the provinces, and left the area at Bithynia.

Peter's references to pre-conversion sins of idolatry (4:3) and evil desires they had when they lived in ignorance (1:14) suggest a way of life more true of Gentiles than Jews. The statement

in 2:10 that they "were not a people" could not be made of Jews. Although the term "strangers" is the Jewish term for those dispersed from the homeland of Palestine (1:1), it is likely that Peter used it to refer to the church. Peter saw believers as a pilgrim people on earth who had been set apart by God to do His will.¹

- Share what you know about Peter based on what we read about him from the four gospels and Acts.
- What qualities of Peter would you like to see in your life and what might you want to see less of?

¹ Lea, T. D. (1998). <u>The General Letters</u>. In D. S. Dockery (Ed.), *Holman concise Bible commentary*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

Discussion

Pastor Lee defined several words/phrases in his introduction to 1 Peter 1:1-2. Take time as group to discuss and better understand these terms.

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ.

To those who are <u>elect exiles of the Dispersion</u> in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, according to the <u>foreknowledge of God the Father</u>, in the <u>sanctification of the Spirit</u>, for <u>obedience to Jesus Christ</u> and for <u>sprinkling with his blood</u>: May <u>grace</u> and <u>peace</u> be multiplied to you.

- How might these major themes from 1 Peter be relevant for each of us and the Church today?
 - Peter elaborated upon the subject of suffering throughout the entire epistle.
 - He offered words of hope to his readers as they faced suffering (1:4–5; 5:4).
 - He pictured suffering as purposeful (3:14; 4:14).
 - o Christians were to endure it patiently (2:21; 3:9), and they were to demonstrate joy despite hardship (4:13).
 - o They could draw encouragement from following the example of Christ in suffering (2:21–25).
 - o God's will often demanded that believers endure suffering (4:19).

Next Step this week: Read all 5 chapters of 1 Peter each day this week. You can do this in about 15-20 minutes. After each reading, close your Bible and write down all that you remember. Do this each day and by the end of the week, you should have the start of an outline with major teaching. Come to next week's group meeting with your outline and highlights.

Prayer

⁷ The end of all things is near. Therefore, be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. ⁸ Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. ⁹ Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. ¹⁰ Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. ¹¹ If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter 4:7-11)

