

Equip: Resources on the Book of 1 Peter

May 27, 2025

The epistle of 1 Peter has stood throughout church history as one of the most significant works—although always within the shadow of the Pauline corpus.

Peter—Jesus' chosen leader of the apostles, the spokesperson on Pentecost and always a leading figure in the early church, including in the “Gentile Pentecost” of Acts 10 with Cornelius' conversion—stands at the forefront of the Christian movement, and his first letter is an ideal text for pastors and churches to study.

The overall theme of 1 Peter is most relevant in our culture, because it touches on the idea of how to live within a non-Christian environment—even one in opposition to Christianity itself.

Peter gives timeless insight into how Christians should live in such times. He does this by focusing on the core message of the gospel—how Jesus' resurrection gives us eternal hope and assured inheritance—but also how Jesus wants us to live as a purified people.

Since Jesus suffered well, he serves as an example for Christians who live under unjust opposition, and he models the appropriate behavior for us today—especially how to walk this Christian life while being (or feeling) marginalized and without a platform of influence.

Resources by me

I wrote the [premium commentary](#) on 1 Peter for BaptistWay Press, now

GC2 Press.

I also have preached a [series](#) on 1 Peter at First Baptist Church in Waxahachie titled “Thrive.”

Additionally, I have taught a seminary course on the New Testament that includes 1 Peter—both at B.H. Carroll Theological Seminary and in the [Graduate School of Ministry](#) at Dallas Baptist University.

Along the way, I have found the following resources to be helpful.

The IVP Bible Background Commentary by Craig Keener

My “go to” commentary is always this volume by Craig Keener. It covers the entire New Testament, which is extremely helpful. It also is brief, while alerting the reader to the most important interpretive questions and helpful suggestions on how to handle them.

Keener’s knowledge of the Greco-Roman background of the New Testament is virtually without equal, and his insights are consistently helpful.

The IVP New Testament Commentary: 1 Peter by Howard Marshall

Howard Marshall was a tremendous scholar who had the ability to make complicated topics readable. He does precisely that in this slim but helpful volume in an important commentary series.

While you may not always agree with every conclusion Marshall provides, he does a great job of explaining the most important alternative interpretations of the passage in a way that is accessible and extremely

helpful.

While Craig Keener's background commentary is a volume I typically pick up first, my next step would be to pick up a smaller but accessible volume like this one.

The NIV Application Commentary: 1 Peter by Scot McKnight

The entire *NIV Application Commentary* series is excellent, and I would recommend all the volumes, which is not necessarily something I could say about every biblical commentary series.

Scot McKnight is a gifted writer, a major New Testament scholar whose works are well-known and highly regarded, and this volume does not disappoint.

In typical McKnight fashion, he takes on the various tough interpretative passages and shows a clear path to explain their original meaning. Then, he goes beyond that.

One of the unique things about this series is its three-level structure—where the original meaning is explained, the hermeneutical bridge between the ancient text and the modern reader is traversed, and then various examples of modern application are given.

This commentary is extremely helpful, not only in understanding 1 Peter, but applying it in modern life.

Honorable mentions

There are a number of excellent commentaries on 1 Peter that tend to be

more technical in nature but are deserving of an “honorable mention.”

1 Peter: A Commentary by Craig Keener

Although more technical than the ones above, a person who takes the time to work through Craig Keener’s *1 Peter: A Commentary* will discover hidden gems throughout.

For example, Keener explains the passage that says, “Cast your cares on him because he cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7), in the light of the modern epidemic of anxiety in our culture today by suggesting Peter was not prescribing prayer over-and-against taking anxiety medication—a point I think could benefit a number of people who struggle on whether to listen to their doctor’s or their pastor’s recommendation.

***Baker Exegetical Commentary: 1 Peter* by Karen H. Jobes**

A second volume I have tremendous appreciation for is Karen H. Jobes’ *1 Peter* in the *Baker Exegetical Commentary* series. Although written for a more advanced reader, this volume is truly one of the best on 1 Peter. Jobes is a skilled expert on the Greek New Testament, and a pastor or scholar truly can benefit from her brilliant exegetical insights, which are unsurpassed.

***1 Peter: A Handbook on the Greek Text* by Mark Dubis**

One final volume I would mention only for the person who has a technical knowledge of the Greek New Testament is Mark Dubis’s in the excellent series *Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament*.

I got to know Dubis when I was a student at Baylor University’s Truett Theological Seminary. I greatly value his robust knowledge of the technical matters of Greek syntax and grammar. If you are dealing with a thorny issue in 1 Peter, I would suggest you look at what Dubis says.

David Ritsema is the senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Waxahachie. He has a Bachelor of Arts in Christian ministry from [East Texas Baptist University](#), a Master of Divinity from Baylor University's [Truett Theological Seminary](#) and a Ph.D. in New Testament from [B.H. Carroll Theological Seminary](#). The views expressed in this resource article are those of the author.