
HOPE IN A WORLD THAT IS NOT OUR HOME



1 PETER 1:1-6

First Peter is considered a Wilderness Epistle. It pictures believers journeying from the time of salvation to their inheritance in heaven or from the Cross to Glory.

In this letter, Peter is writing to encourage his brethren, (*that is, Hebrew-Christians who were scattered through-out Asia Minor*) to keep on trusting the Lord even in the midst of suffering.

1 Peter 5:12 states this purpose when he says,

“I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand.”

In other words, he is not so much writing about the grace that saves (as Paul did in Romans 5:1-2), which gave them and all true believers a perfect standing before the throne of God. Instead he is writing about the grace that God ministers to us day by day. It enables us to endure the trials of life and stand against all the wiles of the enemy.

Peter reminds us that we are not exempt from difficulties, even suffering. They are part of life. He explains how God's enabling grace is sufficient amidst the storms of life.

STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. To whom is Peter writing (1 Peter 1:1) and what is their plight? - Acts 8:1-1 Peter 1:6; 3:4, 16; 4:12, 19; 5:9.

a. Peter is writing to his Jewish brethren who placed their trust in Jesus as their Messiah. They were called strangers (pilgrims or foreigners) because they were persecuted for their faith and scattered throughout the world. Some had been afflicted by their own brethren; being cast out of their synagogues, and shunned in their communities. Many lost their businesses or their jobs when the community boycotted their services.

b. The beginning of the persecution is recorded in Acts 8:1-4.

“And Saul was consenting unto his (*Stephen's*) death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.”

As the persecution continued, many were forced to leave their homeland. They move to parts of Syria, Asia Minor and the southern regions of the Black Sea, known as Pontus.

c. The intensity of their persecution often depended upon the rulers in the various provinces. Every region was different. Some faced ridicule and unemployment, while others faced the risk of beatings, imprisonment and even death.

d. Note these passages regarding their suffering:

1) 1 Peter 1:6 “... though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.”

2) 1 Peter 3:14 – “But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled”

- 3) 1 Peter 3:16 – "... Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ."
- 4) 1 Peter 4:12 – "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you."
- 5) 1 Peter 4:19 – "Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator."
- 6) 1 Peter 5:9 – "knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."

2. How does Peter encourage these 1st Century Christians in their faith? - 1 Peter 1:2a. Does this also apply to Gentile believers?

- a. Peter reminds them of their standing before God.

1 Peter 1:2a – "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father"

- b. He calls them "**Elect** according to the foreknowledge of God..." Peter is writing to a Jewish remnant who placed their trust in Christ. We must remember that these Hebrew Christians were familiar with God calling their race "the chosen people" (or the elect). They knew God had chosen the Jewish race to make Him known to the world. Through them the world received the Word of God and through them came the Messiah.

But now, these Hebrew-Christians were being rejected by their Jewish brethren, scattered throughout the world and wondering how they fit into God's plan. As Jews, they were God's chosen people, but did something change after they placed their trust in Christ? What are they now? What kind of standing did they have before God?

Peter explains their Jewish heritage did not change, but their relationship with God did. In Christ, they (*and all Christians whether Jew or Gentile*) are "elect according to the foreknowledge of God." They may be living like exiles in this broken world but they were none the less chosen of God, "according to the foreknowledge of God." They were His children, planned before the foundations of the world.

Like their Jewish forefathers who wandered in the wilderness, they too are called "strangers" – pilgrims (1 Peter 1:1). Just as their forefathers were

chosen, they (as well as all genuine Christians) were also chosen by God for His high and holy purpose.

3. “Precious” was a favorite term used by Peter to describe different aspects of the faith. How was each use an encouragement to his readers? - 1 Peter 1:7; 2:4, 7; 2 Peter 1:1, 4

- a. 1 Peter 1:7 — precious trials
- b. 1 Peter 2:4, 7 — precious living Stone
- c. 2 Peter 1:1 —like precious faith
- d. 2 Peter 1:4 — precious promises.

4. Peter uses two other phrases to remind his audience of their divine calling. What thoughts should these sayings stir in the minds of us and his readers? 1 Peter 1:2; Leviticus 14:1-7; Exodus 29:20-21; Exodus 24:1-8

- a. “Through the sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience” – 1 Peter 1:2b
- b. “. . . and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.”- 1 Peter 1:2c

These are biblical terms that should stir thoughts of:

- i. **Cleansing** – Lev. 14:1-7 – the cleansing of a leper. We are cleansed from our sins.
- ii. **Setting apart** – Exodus 29:20-21 – the setting a part of the priesthood for service. Today, we are set apart for God’s service. Peter calls us “a chosen generation, a **royal priesthood**, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” - 1 Peter 2:9.
- iii. **Dedication to obedience.** – Exodus 24:1-8

Though Christians may experience trouble, they are precious in God’s sight, and set apart for His service.

5. What does Peter repeatedly tell his audience to look ahead to? How does this help us when going through various trials? - 1 Peter 1:5, 7, 13; 2:12; 4:7, 13; 5:1, 5

They are encouraged to look ahead to the second coming of Christ.

- a. 1 Peter 1:5 – “Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation **ready to be revealed in the last time.**

- b. 1 Peter 1:7 – “. . . might be found unto praise and honour **and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:**
 - c. 1 Peter 1:13 – “. . . hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you **at the revelation of Jesus Christ**”
 - d. 1 Peter 2:12 – “which they shall behold, glorify God **in the day of visitation.**”
 - e. 1 Peter 4:7 – “**But the end of all things is at hand:** be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.”
 - f. 1 Peter 4:13 – “But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, **when his glory shall be revealed,** ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.”
 - g. 1 Peter 5:1 – “and also a partaker **of the glory that shall be revealed**”
 - h. 1 Peter 5:5 – “And **when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.**”
6. **Peter uses several other phrases to remind his readers of their standing before God. What are they and how do they encourage us to stand firm in God’s grace when going through trials? - 1 Peter 1:3a; John 1:12-13; James 1:18; Titus 3:5-6; 1 Peter 1:3b, 4, 5; Philippians 4:13; John 15:5.**
- a. This passage begins with the idea of rebirth.

“Hath begotten us again unto a lively hope” – 1 Peter 1:3a

The Christian is one who is born from above. He is begotten again by to a new kind of life. It means that when a man becomes a Christian, there comes into his life a change so radical that the only thing that can be said is that life has begun all over again for him.
 - b. Scripture tells reminds us that this new life happens by the will and the act of God.
 - i. John 1:12-13 “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: ¹³ Which

were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

- ii. James 1:18 – “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.”
- c. This new life in Christ is the work of the Holy Spirit-
Titus 3:5-6 “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; ⁶ Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour”
- d. It is to a lively hope (or living hope).

“... begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” – 1 Peter 1:3

Romans 6:4-5 – “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection”

- e. To an inheritance – 1 Peter 1:4
“To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you”
- ii. It will not perish.
- f. We are kept – 1 Peter 1:5

“Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

The word “kept” is a military word. It means that our life is garrisoned by God and that he stands sentinel over us all our days. The man who has faith never doubts, even when he cannot see Him, that

God is standing within the shadows keeping watch upon his own.

God does not always remove us from the troubles and sorrows of life, but He enables us to conquer them on our march to glory.

Phil. 4:13 - "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

John 15:5 - Jesus said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

INSIGHT:

Peter closes his letter by restating his purpose:

"... I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand" 1 Peter 5:12b.

How does this lesson encourage you to stand firm in the grace of God?