

# HOPE IN A HOSTILE WORLD

1 PETER



**ALL SAINTS**  
ANGELICAN CHURCH  
NORTH EPPING

# Studies in 1 Peter - All Saints North Epping

## Term 3 2021

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## How to use these studies

As always, we study the Bible, not for mere knowledge of the Bible, but to hear God speak to us. In Bible Fellowship Groups we have the opportunity to think through the Bible to see what God is saying, then discuss together how what God says should transform our lives towards maturity in Christ.

To this end, each study has a:

**Big Idea:** (the main thing God is saying in this passage), and something to:

**Be Transformed by:** (a key way we can grow in Christ if we listen to God)

Our ultimate goal is to ***be transformed by the love of Jesus***. This requires that we change - our minds, our views, our desires, our behaviour. In our groups we seek to understand the Big Idea of what God is saying, and then work out how we might be transformed in response to what God has said. At the end, there's an opportunity to write out a prayer to God, beginning with: ***Dear Father, please transform me by...***

The 1 Peter series will run over the rest of Term 3 and conclude in Term 4. These Term 3 studies are **specifically designed for zoom groups**.

They will be shorter than a regular study with an emphasis on group discussion to help grow connection while meeting online. I've also included two **Introduction** pages, which can be read in preparation for the series.

God bless as you lead God's people to be transformed by the love of Jesus.

*Anton Marquez*

## Hope in a Hostile World: An Introduction

In this letter, Peter describes God's people "scattered exiles" (1:1). Christians are refugees; not in the place where they belong. So for us at All Saints, God is telling us that Sydney, Australia, this world, is not our homeland. Instead, we have a future inheritance which is eternal and is kept in heaven for us (1:4-5). But for now, we are where we don't belong. Over the past little while in the West, Christians have had a growing sense of this feeling of exile.

Our culture has moved away from accepting God as our loving Creator with his decrees seen as good for society. Now, our culture is attempting hold on to Christian values, such as justice, equality and freedom, while being hostile to their source and Creator. Our culture has rejected its ultimate authority, the Lord Jesus, and now questions all external authorities. The only authority to be embraced is your personal will. Personal freedom and freedom of expression are now king in our society.

However, Christians confess Jesus Christ as Lord. And Jesus Christ's authority will clash with personal autonomy at various points. So while the Christian way was once seen as the moral and good way, it is now seen in some circles as an evil and oppressive way - particularly when it restricts someone's individual will. As a church, we must recognise that we aren't seen as good for society anymore. We will feel like we aren't invited to the party anymore. We should expect to be treated unfairly, just for being Christian. We will feel like we are exiles, refugees, far from our homeland - just as Peter describes us.

Peter also describes the church as "God's elect" (1:1). We may not belong to this world, but we belong to God. Through the Lord Jesus, we are given new birth into a living hope - an eternal inheritance kept for us (1:3-4). This certain hope enables us to stand firm in the faith when the world opposes us. And we are called to be holy while we live in this hostile world, as "he who called [us] is holy" (1:15).

# 1 Peter: Introduction

## Author

The letter identifies the Peter as its author. He identifies himself as

- 'an apostle of Jesus Christ' (1:1), having been sent by Jesus to deliver the gospel message
- 'a fellow elder' (5:1), identifying himself with the other elders within the churches, and
- 'a witness of Christ's sufferings' (5:1). Peter, as a one of the twelve disciples was an eyewitness to the life of Jesus, and particularly to Christ's suffering on the cross, which plays a large part in Peter's teaching in this letter.

## Recipients and Date

Peter is not writing to a specific church but to all 'God's elect' (1:1) i.e. followers of Jesus northern Asia Minor, what is now central Turkey. These believers are experiencing persecution for their faith; however the great persecution under Emperor Nero was still yet to come (AD 64). 1 Peter was written sometime before that date but no earlier than Paul's letters - somewhere between (AD 60-64)

## Purpose and Main Message

Peter is exhorting these Christians to stand firm in the faith in the face of unjust suffering (5:12). The letter's main message is:

*God's chosen people should live holy lives, patiently bearing unjust suffering, following the example of Christ and assured of the glory to come.*

Jesus was willing to suffer to accomplish the Father's plan of salvation. This obedience to God's will is our example to follow in the face of opposition to our faith (2:18-24; 3:17-18). It is, however, the sufferings of Christ by which we become the redeemed people of God (1:18-21; 2:9-10, 25; 3:18). Jesus' resurrection is the grounds for our future hope despite our present suffering (1:3-9, 21; 3:21-22; 5:4).

# Study 1 - The Chosen in Exile. 1 Peter 1:1-2

1. Can you recall a time when you were specifically chosen by someone or for something? What did it feel like to be the one chosen?

## Read 1 Peter 1:1-2

The people Peter is writing to are described as 'God's elect' or God's chosen ones.

2. What does this have to say about their relationship with God?

However, Peter also describes these people as 'exiles scattered'. They are 'scattered' because Peter is not writing to an individual church (like the church in Corinth), but to Christians all across what is now modern-day Turkey.

Peter describes these believers as 'exiles' - those who are far from their true home.

3. What does that description have to say about their relationship to the society in which they live?



Divide the following verses among the people of your group to look up.

4. What does each verse have to say about how these believers were being treated by those around them?

<b>2:12</b>	<b>3:9</b>	<b>4:4</b>
<b>2:15</b>	<b>3:16</b>	<b>4:14</b>

The people Peter was writing to have turned to Christ and refuse to hold to the beliefs and culture of the people around them. This is the same for us today.

5. What have you seen in how today's culture relates to Christians that might be similar to what Peter's readers might have experienced? What has this been like for you personally?

No one likes to feel out of place, but that is the reality for Christians in this world. However, Peter is reminding them and us of our spiritual identity - why God chose us. It's because God pre-knew us and therefore foreordained us to be his people, the Spirit has made us holy - set apart to be God's people, and we are to be obedient to Jesus who has sprinkled us with his blood<sup>1</sup>.

6. If we remember our true spiritual identity while being an exile in our world, what effect might that have on us?

7. In response to God's word today, what would you like God to transform and change in your heart, mind and behaviour?

*Dear Father, please transform me by...*

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<sup>1</sup> For the OT background of obedience and sprinkling with blood, see Exodus 24:1-8

## Study 2 - The Hope of God's People. 1 Peter 1:3-9

1. What do you hope will happen in life? (Don't talk about covid - that's boring!)

What do you want in the future for your... *(choose the most appropriate option)*

- career/studies?
- key friendship?
- kids as they grow up?
- health as you age?

Hold up your fingers to the screen for a scale of 1 to 10. What's your level of certainty that these things will happen?

### Read 1:1-9

In God's mercy, he has given us new birth.

2. What two things have we been born into?

3. On a scale of 1 to 10, what's your level of certainty that these things will happen? What reasons does Peter give for this?

4. How is biblical hope different to regular hope?

**Read again 1:6-9**

These Christians were currently experiencing 'grief from all kinds of trials'.

However, in this they are rejoicing greatly because trials prove the genuineness of their faith. For the Christian, trials are not a punishment, but serve to refine our faith.

5. How have past (or present) trials shown you the genuineness of your faith? How might that change the way you think about times of hardship?

6. How would you like God to transform you as you go through your current situation?

*Dear Father, please transform me by...*

## **Study 3 - The Life of God's People. 1 Peter 1:10-2:3**

### **Read 1:10-13**

1. How has the Holy Spirit been at work so that we now have access to God's word of salvation?

Pray for your time in God's word today, that the Spirit may be at work in your hearts and transform you in response to what God says.

**Read 1:14-2:3**

2. List all the instructions in this passage and the reason behind them. You could allocate each passage to group members.

Verses	Instruction	Reason
1:13-16		
1:17-21		
1:22-25		
2:1-3		

3. How do the reasons help us obey God's instructions?

4. If you fully set your hope on the grace (i.e. the eternal inheritance, 1:4) to be brought you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming, how would your life look different?

5. What is a personal trait, behaviour or habit that has developed as a result of your identity in Christ? Spend some time praising God for the Spirit's work in you.

6. What is one trait, behaviour or habit that needs to change? What reason for holiness in the table above are you forgetting?

7. Ask God to transform you in this area

*Dear Father, please transform me by...*

## Study 4 - The Identity of God's People. 1 Peter 2:4-10

1. What is one personal trait or habit that is part of who you are that you picked up from your parents?

### Read 2:4-10

2. In this passage Peter begins with Christ, and then shows how *our* status depends upon *his* status. How is Jesus described in v. 4 and v. 6?

3. If someone trusts in Jesus they 'will never be put to shame'. In contrast, there are some who will stumble and fall. What is said about those people?

4. If Jesus is the decisive factor on the eternal destiny of people, how might this change the way we engage with unbelievers?

5. After seeing who Jesus is, we can now focus on who we are if we are united to him. From verses 5-6 and 9-10 complete this table:

Who we are	What we're called to do

6. All these terms are plural/corporate. How will knowing that this is who we are together affect the way we view our gatherings as God's people (when we can gather again!)?

7. Along with the direct Old Testament quotations, the passage is filled with other OT references (Exodus 19:6; Isaiah 43:21, 61:6; Hosea 1:10 & 2:23; references to the temple and priesthood). What point is Peter making regarding

i) Jesus?

ii) the church?

8. When we return to gathering in person as church, what is one thing you're going to do/focus on to reflect our identity as God's people?

*Dear Father, when I return to physical church gatherings, please transform me by...*

## Study 5 - Living as God's People. 1 Peter 2:11-25

1. When you have travelled to a foreign culture, what's one way that you stood out as different?

### Read 2:11-12

2. In verse 11 we are reminded again that we do not belong to this world ("foreigners and exiles"). How does knowing this help us "to abstain from sinful desires" that belong to this world?

3. The apostle Peter expects us to stand out as different in our world through living 'such good lives'. What are the two responses to expect from those in our world who look on?

*They will accuse you of doing wrong.*

*They will see your good deeds and glorify God*

Peter then gives four specific case studies for living such good lives among the pagans.

- Citizens under pagan authorities (2:13-17)
- Slaves with pagan masters (2:18-25)
- Wives with pagan husbands (3:1-6)\*
- Husbands with wives (3:7)\*

4. **Read 2:13-25** and pick one case which is particularly relevant to your group (or split into breakout groups).

<b>Citizens under pagan authorities</b>	<b>Slaves with pagan masters</b>
a) What is the command?	a) What is the command?
b) What role does God have with the authorities? How does that help us keep this command?	b) How does knowing Jesus enable someone to suffer unjustly?
c) In a democracy, the people the vote and the means to influence policy. How might Christians do this while still submitting to authorities?	c) In today's workplace, we are not slaves but have greater rights as workers. What might it look like, in our context, to submit to our bosses?
d) In this case, what will it specifically look like for us to 'live such good lives among the pagans'?	d) In this case, what will it specifically look like for us to 'live such good lives among the pagans'?

5. What do you think prevents some Christians from standing out in our hostile world? What would it take to change those attitudes in you?

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\*We'll look at these ones next study

6. How is knowing that suffering as a Christian is following in Jesus' steps (v. 21) both liberating and challenging? Is there a way you need to stop avoiding his footsteps and being walking in them?

7. Pray that God may transform you as citizens and/or workers.  
*Dear Father, please transform me by...*