

# HOPE IN A HOSTILE WORLD

1 PETER



Study Guide  
Term 4 2021

**ALL SAINTS**  
ANGELICAN CHURCH  
NORTH EPPING

# Studies in 1 Peter

## All Saints North Epping

### Term 4 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...*

These 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 7 - Marriage in Exile. 1 Peter 3:1-7

Previously in 1 Peter, the apostle has said:

<sup>1</sup>Pet. 2:11 Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. <sup>12</sup> Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

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)

Whilst not everyone in our church is addressed directly in these verses, God will still be at work in our hearts through some general principles and in giving us a view of his own design for marriage.

1. **Read 3:1-7** - what might make this teaching difficult to hear, accept and obey in our current society?

2. **Read again 3:1-6 addressed to wives with pagan husbands**

A. What is the command?

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\*We looked at these ones in the previous study

- B. The Apostle is exhorting wives with unbelieving husbands to seek to relate to their husbands with the imperishable beauty of their behaviour, rather than their looks. What's the goal of this command?
- C. Why is a wife's behaviour more effective than physical beauty towards this goal?
- D. One commentator describes 'a gentle and quiet spirit' as follows:  
'The word "gentle" means humble, as opposed to harsh..."Quiet" has the sense of a quietness of peace, as opposed to the loudness of war. It means being a calming presence...Notice that to be gentle and quiet is not incompatible with being extroverted, talkative, humorous, enthusiastic and so on. And notice, too, that the qualities of gentleness and quietness betray strength, not weakness.'<sup>2</sup>
- How can these qualities bring glory to God in marriage and in other relationships?

### **3. Read again 3:7 addressed to husbands**

- A. What is the command?

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<sup>2</sup> Sanchez, Juan R., *1 Peter for You*, pp. 119-120

- B. Husbands are reminded that their wives are physically weaker and co-heirs of the gracious gift of life. How do these two things impact how husbands relate to wives?
- C. If there is little respect in a marriage, what impact might that have on a couple's prayer life? If you are married, how is your prayer life going with your wife?
- D. What do these verses say against all forms of domestic abuse?
- E. In our context, what might it specifically look like for husbands to 'be considerate' to and 'respect' our wives?

4. In response to God's word today, what would you like God to transform in your relationships?

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

## Study 8 - The Heart of the Chosen. 1 Peter 3:8-12

### READ 3:8

This verse speaks of how we relate to brothers and sisters in Christ.

1. Which of these do you find particularly challenging as you relate to others from church?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. If we follow these commands, how will that help us face a hostile world?

Stop and pray now, asking that the Holy Spirit might transform us in these ways.

### READ 3:9-12

3. Why is it often our natural inclination to repay evil with evil or insult with insult?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. As Christians, we are to operate differently when people insult us. Why are we called to bless those who wrong us?



## **Study 9 - The Christ of God's people. 1 Peter 3:13-4:6**

Whilst there are many forms of suffering we face in this life, this passage focuses on suffering that comes about for no other reason than that we are Christians.

### **Read 3:13-22**

Most of the time we should not expect suffering for doing good (3:13). However, there will be times that as Christians we will suffer for what is right (3:14). This is mostly experienced in our time and place by insults, rejection, or pressure to comply to the secular worldview and its standards. But when this happens, we are blessed!

1. Read Jesus' words in Matthew 5:10-12. In what ways are we blessed if we are persecuted?

At times of suffering for being a Christian we are not to fear, but to revere Christ as Lord and give reason for the hope (1:3-4) we have.

2. What stops you effectively sharing the hope that you have when you are asked to give reason for it?
  
3. What do verses 15-17 have to say about our priorities when sharing about our faith?

4. How does Christ's example encourage us as we suffer for doing good (3:18-22)?

**A note on 3:18-22.** These are some notoriously tricky verses. The preferred understanding is that of Augustine. Christ, through the Spirit speaking through Noah's words (cf. 2 Peter 2:5 & 1 Peter 1:12), preached to the people of Noah's day. These people (now dead) are now 'imprisoned' due to their disobedience. As Noah's salvation was through water as he was in the ark, our salvation is symbolised at baptism (when we were converted) also through water. These verses are an encouragement to those who are persecuted - Jesus makes sure that all have been proclaimed to and so he can rightly judge (or save) all people (4:6).

### **Read 4:1-7**

As Christ suffered when he did good, as we follow his example, it's a demonstration that we are 'done with sin'. While sin is not eliminated in our lives, a true Christian has made a break from living their lives 'for evil human desires'.

5. Do you feel like you've made this break from sin and are willing to do what is right in God's eyes, even if suffering comes from it? Or are you still joining in with how unbelievers live?

6. The prospect of suffering because we are Christians is a daunting and even discouraging prospect for God's people. How would you like God to transform you so that you may revere Christ as Lord in the face of Christian persecution?

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

## **Study 10 - Alert and ready. 1 Peter 4:7-11**

### **Read 4:7-11**

At 'the end of all things' (v. 7), Jesus will return, the unholy will be judged (v. 5), and this world and faithful believers will be transformed into a new creation.

1. With the end at hand, why is prayer so important? (v. 7)

**Why don't you pause the study now and spend some time in prayer in line with what you've discussed?**

2. With the end at hand, why is loving others and showing hospitality so important? (vv. 8-9)

3. With the end at hand, why is using our gifts to serve others so important? (vv. 10-11)

In the Bible, gifts are any ability given by the Father, Son and Spirit for his people to use to build up the body of Christ, the church.

4. What ability, or talent, or passion has God given you which may be used to help others be transformed by the love of Jesus? What would need to happen for you to use your gifts so that 'God may be praised'?

8. With the end at hand, what do you want God to transform you as you pray, love and serve?

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

*Let these responses impact your prayers as you pray for one another.*

## Study 11 - The suffering of God's people. 1 Peter 4:12-19

### Read 4:12-19

1. Peter says we should not be surprised when persecution comes. Why do you think it so often takes us by surprise as Christians today?
2. What has contributed to this misunderstanding of the Christian life?
3. Peter then instructs us to rejoice when we suffer for Christ. What is cause for rejoicing when we suffer for our faith?
4. What would it take for you, when you suffer grief from someone because you're Christian, to thank God for the privilege of displaying the glory of Christ, rejoicing because you're counted worthy to suffer for his name?

In v. 17, it says that Christian persecution is part of God's judgment on his household. This judgement does not result in our condemnation (because we have been saved by Jesus' atoning sacrifice), but it is a testing which results in purification.

5. Read James 1:2-4 & Romans 1-5. What role do Christian suffering and trials play in making us mature Christians? How can we keep this truth in mind when we are facing persecution?

6. With Christian suffering seen as a sign of God's loving testing (vv. 16-17a), and with the reminder of the condemnation that awaits the ungodly (vv. 17b-18), how should we approach future suffering for Jesus (v. 19)?

7. Will you pray for another opportunity to stand for Christ and risk suffering for him?

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

## **Study 12 - The reward of God's people. 1 Peter 5:1-5**

In this passage, Peter refers to himself as a 'fellow elder' (cf. 'apostle' 1:1) as he exhorts the elders. The elders are those who have are responsible to care for and pastor some of God's flock. In our church, this might be seen in our pastors, Bible Study leaders, Kids and Youth leaders or someone who is older and wise and is helping someone grow in the love and knowledge of the Lord. Peter assumes that God's flock need people who care for and watch over them.

### **Read 5:1-5**

1. Why do we find it hard to accept that we are in need of elders/leaders?  
In what way do you personally find this hardest?
  
2. Given what the Christian life is like from 1 Peter, why do we need elders in our walk with Jesus?
  
3. While the elders shepherd the flock, they are to look forward to Chief Shepherd appearing. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20. What is the eternal crown of glory that elders will receive? How does this shape the role of an elder?

4. For those of us who are under elders and shepherds, what might it look like to 'submit yourselves to your elders'. (v. 5)
  
5. For those not in Christian leadership: Should I, in my situation and with the gifts God has given me, consider stepping up to be leader of God's flock and faithfully pursue the crown of glory?
  
6. For those in Christian leadership, how might God transform you to live as a worthy elder and to remember the wonderful privilege of this role?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. How might God transform all of us so that we give due honour to those over us in the Lord?

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



4. Christians are to resist the devil by standing firm in the faith. From what we've seen in 1 Peter, what might that involve?
  
5. Go through vv. 6-14 again and look for God's character or his actions towards us. How does this picture of God help us to stand firm in the faith?

We've come to the end of 1 Peter and God is calling us to stand firm in the faith.

6. Through this series, what is a truth you've learned about the Christian faith that you want to hold on to?

*Dear Father, please keep reminding me that...*

7. What is one way that you'd like God to transform you so that you stand firm in the faith?

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