



Blessed be the God
and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!
According to his great mercy,
he has caused us to be
born again to a

LIVING HOPE

through the resurrection of
Jesus Christ from the dead ...

1 Peter 1:3

Living Hope For Difficult Days

1 Peter 1:1-12

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OPENING THOUGHTS

The Roman Empire of the first century looked a lot like our world today. The Caesar (government) desired to be worshiped as god. Immorality and sin were rampant among the people. There was great desire for pleasure and self-indulgence. Truth was whatever one declared it to be. As in the day of the Judges “Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” ([Judges 17:6](#))

Peter’s first letter was written around 64 AD. This would have been some 30 years after the death and resurrection of Christ. Peter is in Rome at the time of the writing of this letter. Peter was the apostle to the Jews and ministered predominantly in churches that were Jewish in nature. The church was experiencing intense persecution. Some scholars believe the recipients of this epistle were Jewish Christians who fled Jerusalem after the initial persecution that followed the explosive growth of the church ([Acts 2:41](#); [4:1-4](#); [8:1](#)). Many have lost their homes, jobs, and families because of their faith in Jesus Christ. Some were being killed in the most cruel of ways because they refused to worship Cesar as a god. Peter is writing to encourage them in their faith. One of the central themes of this letter is “*Believers are secure in Christ*”

Peter’s letter continues to be a source of encouragement to believers today. Some two-thirds of believers around the world live under governments more repressive than the Roman Empire of the first century. Even in our own country Christians are facing more and more conflict as our culture becomes more secular.

As American culture becomes more secular, the environment grows increasingly hostile to Christian beliefs. The workplace no longer can be called religion friendly, or even spiritually neutral. Godly adults have lost jobs or failed to receive promotions because they do not endorse unbiblical behavior celebrated by a pagan culture. Christian teens and children encounter ridicule from their peers if they do not embrace immoral standards.

As we study Peter’s letter to the early church, we will discover encouragement and hope as we learn to live as strangers in a hostile secular culture. In the opening twelve verses, Peter encouraged believers to have hope through Christ. In the one who overcame death, we can find security for life.

HOPE: HEAVEN'S INHERITANCE

[1 Peter 1:1-4](#) (ESV)

¹ Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, ² according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you. ³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,

As Peter opens this letter, we see that he no longer calls himself a fisherman. His life no longer revolves around his former occupation. He is now an Apostle of Jesus Christ serving the church in Rome. Peter no longer lives to catch fish. He lives to serve Christ by proclaiming the good news of the Gospel. As a fisherman he relied on himself to provide for his needs but now as an apostle he depends solely on Christ.

Peter’s letter was intended to be copied and shared with churches throughout Asia Minor. The churches would read the letter and then pass it along. This letter was directed at the churches that were made up of exiles of the dispersion. These Jewish congregations were made up of believers that were forced to flee

Jerusalem due to persecution. Many of these believers had lost their jobs, homes, and families because of their faith in Jesus. Many would lose their lives because they maintained the Jesus and not Caesar was Lord. It is in this hostile culture that Peter writes words of encouragement reminding them of their heavenly inheritance.

In the opening verses of Peter's letter we find two truths that encouraged the early believers and can give us courage today.

First, we can have hope for the future because of God's faithfulness in the past. We were chosen according to the foreknowledge of God. The concept of being chosen by God refers to His omniscience. God knows everything eternally. He is not limited to time and space. His is not a linear existence. Thus He knew before He created the world that man would sin. He knew before the creation of man that He would have to have a plan to redeem man. That plan was Jesus Christ. Thus in His foreknowledge God knew that on an August night in 1969 during a revival service I would respond to the drawing of the Holy Spirit and come to faith in Christ. I was not saved because of my worthiness but by His grace. In the same way, we can place our hope in our salvation not according to our abilities, but in God's grace.

Secondly, it involves the believers' purpose. God has set us apart from the world and unto Himself. Being set apart involves sanctification. Sanctification is a process that begins at salvation and is completed when we enter heaven. We may endure much grief from a secular culture, but our purpose for living cannot be bound by that culture. Christians are set apart for a greater purpose in Christ. He lives in us so we might live for Him. Peter wanted the endangered believers of Asia Minor to have hope because of who they were in Christ. So too, Christ wants us to understand who we are as we seek live in a culture that is becoming more secular every day. We are a chosen people, called to obedience, who have been given grace and peace.

Peter urges us to praise the Lord even when we are discouraged because of what He has done for us. We might not feel thankful for our circumstances, but we can exalt God with praise and worship as we gain a new perspective about God and the blessings that He gives us in Christ.

The word *blessed*, which is used here ([1:3](#)), is a different word from the *blessed* that is used in the Sermon on the Mount. The word used here is the Greek word from which we derive our word *eulogy*. It means "to praise." In the New Testament this word is never used in reference to man. God does not praise man, but man is to praise God, and He is the Father.

We are blessed with a *Living Hope*. The unsaved person has no hope. This is the cause of so much discouragement and unrest in our culture. A hopeless man will try anything to find happiness and fulfillment. They will spend enormous amounts of time, money, and energy to find some sense of hope and fulfillment. The Christian does not work for this hope; it is a part of our spiritual birthright. We are born again into this living hope. "*Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.'*" - [John 3:5](#).

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead provided the means for new life. Because the wages of sin is death, the penalty of death had to be paid for salvation to be possible ([Rom. 6:23](#)). Jesus not only died for our sins, but He was "raised for our justification" ([Rom 4:25](#)). Without Jesus' resurrection, we would still be in our sins ([1 Cor. 15:17](#)). However, because Jesus rose from the grave, believers not only can

receive salvation, but we also can know God's resurrection power even if we suffer for Christ's sake ([Phil. 3:10](#)).

Our hope is not only a living hope; it is a lasting inheritance ([1:4-5](#)). Being born again into the family of God means that we share in the inheritance of Christ. It is reserved in heaven, where it cannot decay, be defiled, or lose its beauty and delight. Our security lies not in bank accounts and powerful positions, or even in good health. Our security rests in what God has done for us in Christ. He has deposited our inheritance in heaven's bank and sent His Holy Spirit as the down payment of the wondrous joy we shall experience in His presence ([2 Cor. 1:21-22](#))

Just as Peter wanted the endangered believers of Asia Minor to have hope because of who they were in Christ. So too, Christ wants us to understand we have an eternal hope that will give us the strength to stand against a culture that is increasingly becoming secular and anti-God. We must always remember that we are a chosen people, called to obedience and who have a great inheritance awaiting us in heaven.

In a world full of uncertainties and trials, remember that as a believer, you are chosen by God and set apart for His purposes ([1 Peter 1:1-2](#)). Instead of seeking validation and acceptance from the world, find your identity in Christ. Spend time in prayer and studying the Word to remind yourself of who you are in Him.

HARDSHIPS: FAITH'S REFINERY

[1 Peter 1:5-9](#) (ESV)

⁵ *who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.* ⁶ *In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.* ⁸ *Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹ obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.*

Peter wants believers to recognize we are being protected even though our circumstances may be severe. Sometimes God's protection keeps us physically safe in the midst of fiery furnaces, as it did for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego ([Dan. 3:19-26](#)). In other situations, God has allowed His saints to suffer greatly. The catalog of champions in [Hebrews 11](#) includes not only people who triumphed, but also godly martyrs. Like the diaspora of Peter's day, the faithful heroes of [Hebrews 11](#) wandered as homeless pilgrims and experienced persecution, torture, and death. Regardless of the trial God's faithfulness is always consistent.

Peter wants us to understand that the various trials that we go through will help to refine our faith. Peter says that our faith is like gold. Gold has to be put to the fire in order to clean out all the impurities and dross to make it pure and clean. Now, note that these verses say that we are much more precious than gold. Gold perishes, but believers will live forever.

We can rejoice in our trials because it is a testing to see if our faith is genuine. We need to understand that our trials will be varied and not easy but are controlled by God. We are able to rejoice in trials because of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, who brings comfort and strength. The suffering we endure here on earth is a "light affliction" that can be compared with glory that will be revealed in Christ upon our arrival in heaven.

Remain steadfast in your faith, even in the midst of trials and challenges, knowing that your faith is being tested and refined like gold. Stay connected to a community of believers for mutual encouragement and support, standing firm in the hope of Christ's return.

Warren Wiersbe reminds us, *"The trials of life test our faith to prove its sincerity. A faith that cannot be tested cannot be trusted. A person who abandons his/her faith when the going gets tough is only proving that he/she really had no faith at all"* (Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Hopeful* [Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1982], p. 25.)

HERITAGE: PROPHETS AND PROMISES

[1 Peter 1:10–12](#) (ESV)

¹⁰ Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, ¹¹ inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

Our joyous salvation has been the focus of attention by both prophets and angels. Throughout the Old Testament, prophetic voices declared the grace that God would bestow through His Messiah. They searched and carefully investigated the matter of the time and circumstances of the Messianic sufferings. Some prophets were able to search the sacred writings of Moses and other prophets who preceded them. Jesus also used these Scriptures to teach how the prophecies of the Messiah were fulfilled in Him ([Luke 24:27](#)). Jesus urged people to search the Scriptures because the sacred writings testified about Him ([John 5:39](#)).

The angels of heaven rejoiced at the incarnation of the Messiah, filling the sky above Bethlehem with songs of praise at His birth ([Luke 2:13-14](#)). We are told that joy breaks forth in heaven when someone repents and turns to God ([Luke 15:7](#)). Our salvation was the purpose behind Christ's advent and His agony. His suffering made our salvation possible, causing the angels to offer great joy and praise to the Father.

From the beginning of time God has had a plan for our redemption. When we struggle with finding purpose in our daily lives as we struggle with just going through the motions, take time to meditate on [1 Peter 1:10-12](#) and see the privilege that we have as believers to be a part of God's redemptive plan. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal how to live each day with purpose and passion for His kingdom.

APPLICATION

You may struggle with living out your faith in a world that often opposes your Christian values. Apply the truths of the imperishable inheritance and the salvation ready to be revealed in [1 Peter 1:1-12](#) to your daily interactions. Let the hope of your ultimate salvation empower you to boldly live out your faith, standing firm in the face of opposition. Create a spiritual routine that includes prayer and the study of scripture. By anchoring yourself in the eternal truths of God's Word, you will find clarity and purpose amidst life's busyness and trials. You will find nourishment for your soul as you develop a consistent and vibrant walk with Christ.

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