

# Why study 1 Peter?

*As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

**1 Peter 2 v 4-5**

Life can be tough. Christians are nowhere promised that they will escape the struggles and difficulties which are common to all humanity: poverty, disease, broken relationships and death. In fact, Christ promises us more suffering, as we try to live God-pleasing lives in a culture that is going the other way. This is the world we all live in, and the key question that Peter addresses in his first letter is this: how should we respond to the suffering we experience? He tells us how we can live with hope in and through the experience of suffering.

Christians in the west have had an easy ride for the last couple of centuries, with freedom to practice their faith, meet together, read and teach the Bible and spread the good news of the gospel. This is unusual compared with the experience of most Bible-believing Christians throughout history and worldwide today. But things could be changing. For how much longer can these freedoms be guaranteed?

Wise Christians understand that opposition and suffering are normal for the church and are prepared for anything. That's why Christians today need the message of 1 Peter—a letter to first-century believers surrounded by trials and hostility.

Why does God let this happen? How can my faith survive? How should I treat those who cause me suffering? These questions and more are covered in five sessions, full of practical application. Whatever happens, let's be prepared, so that our faith 'may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed.'





1 Peter 1 v 1-21

# LIVING WITH HOPE

## ↔ talkabout

1. Share with the group something that you have looked forward to with great excitement.

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## ↓ investigate

### ▶ Read verses 1-6

This letter was written by the apostle Peter to a group of churches in modern-day Turkey. These Christians were facing trials and misunderstandings because of their faith (v 6). Peter urges them to accept this suffering as part of being a Christian and to look forward with hope to the glory of heaven. Suffering and hope are the two great themes of the letter.

2. How does Peter describe his readers in verses 1-2?

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3. What encouraging facts does Peter remind his readers of in verses 3-6?

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4. How does he say we can we sure of our hope in heaven?

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▶ **Read verses 6-9**

5. Why does Peter remind his readers of their heavenly inheritance?

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6. According to these verses, how does God use suffering in the lives of ordinary Christians?

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7. Peter's readers cannot see Jesus. Instead their experience is dominated by their suffering. So what encouragement does Peter offer them?

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➔ **apply**

8. How should we encourage Christians who are suffering trials and griefs?
- What promises can we offer such people?
  - What promises should we **not** offer?
  - How should the teaching of these verses affect our evangelism?

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## getting personal

Could you use the teaching and promises of God's Word to comfort others? How can you make sure that your words of comfort are not just well-meaning platitudes, but full of God's truth and hope for His suffering children? Take time to reflect on the truths that would comfort you in similar circumstances.



## investigate

▶ **Read verses 10-12**

9. What exactly does Peter say is the message of the Old Testament?

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10. How is the suffering of Christians like the experience of Christ (v 11)?

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## explore more

What do verses 10-12 teach us about the scriptures? What does this mean for how we view the Bible and how we understand it as a whole?



## investigate

▶ **Read verses 13-21**

In verse 7 Peter talks about 'when Jesus Christ is revealed'. We can rejoice in suffering because of our hope in Christ's return. In verse 13 Peter uses the same phrase: 'when Jesus Christ is revealed'. And verse 13 starts 'therefore'. Peter is telling us how we should live in the light of Christ's future return.



11. How does Peter describe our past lives, from which we have been rescued?

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12. How does Peter describe the new way of life that Christians should lead?

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### explore more

In verse 19 Peter uses the language of Passover. Passover was when God delivered the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. The Israelites had to kill a lamb and paint its blood round their doors. That night the angel of death 'passed over' their houses, killing all the firstborn people and animals in Egypt, but not those in the houses marked with blood. In the morning the Egyptians let God's people go free. What are the parallels to our salvation?



### apply

13. If someone was not living in the light of Christ's return, how would they live?
- How would unbelief in future glory affect a person's attitude to suffering now?
  - How would unbelief in Christ's judgment affect a person's way of life now?
  - What is the connection between understanding and living?

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## getting personal

To what extent are you living in the light of Christ's return:

- Have you realised that you need to have the right understanding to live the right way?
- What should you do to make sure that you have this right understanding of the Christian life?
- Write down one specific change that you will make this week as a result of what you have studied.



## pray

- What can you find in these verses to thank God for? Spend some time in prayers of thanksgiving for these things.
- Use the words of verses 3-5 to pray for Christians going through difficult times. Ask God to give them a strong sense of their heavenly inheritance.

