

Strangers on the earth

Getting to grips with the message of 1 Peter

This first letter of Peter speaks right into the challenges Christians face in the western world in the 21st century.

Its aim is to encourage you as a believer, and to instruct you in how to live in such a way that you *“declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.”*

You can find the background to this short series [here](#).

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4. 1 Peter 2.4-10 [w/b Sunday 24th February 2019]

“.., a chosen people ..”

One of the most basic premises which the New Testament underlines for believers is that who we are determines what we do. Such a perspective is wholly counter-cultural, in that the world tends to think that what you do determines who you are.

Peter is at pains to impress upon the minds and hearts of his beleaguered readers the glorious truths of who they are in Christ (think of the hymn - *“Glorious things of thee are spoken”*). The verses in this study complete this opening section of his letter in a memorable and climactic way.

[Despite your best intentions, there may not be time for all the questions to be addressed in your Community Group! It may be helpful to try and ensure that in this study you cover questions 2, 3, 6 and 7. As always try to leave good time for shared prayer!]

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1. Read 1 Peter 2.4-10. There's value, as always, in reading through the whole passage and catching a sense of the overall thrust of the message.

Beyond giving them your name, how do you introduce yourself to people you're meeting for the first time?

Why do you think Peter spends so much time at the start of his letter addressing the issue of our *identity* as Christians?

2. Read 1 Peter 2.4. Our true identity is bound up with our having 'come to Him', namely Jesus: understanding, therefore, who we are involves understanding as well who He is.

When and how did you first 'come to Jesus'?

What four descriptions of Jesus are given by Peter here?

Why is it important for those who are Christians to understand these truths about Jesus?

3. Read 1 Peter 2.5. Peter now moves on to paint the first of two pictures which help us understand the better our true identity in Christ.

What is the illustration which Peter is drawing on here?

What do you think are the implications of this comparison for you as a follower of Jesus?

4. **Read 1 Peter 2.6.** The quotation from Isaiah to which Peter refers in this verse (Isaiah 28.16) is his 'proof text' for what he wrote about Jesus in v.4.

Read Isaiah 28: how does this quotation from Isaiah help you better understand the significance of Jesus?

What comfort is there for you as a believer in this great affirmation which Isaiah brings from the Lord?

Have there been times in your life when you feared that you would "*be put to shame*"?

5. **Read 1 Peter 2.7-8.** Peter offers further quotes from the OT (from Psalm 118.22 and Isaiah 8.14), both of which pick up on the idea of Jesus being "*the living Stone*" (v.1).

In what ways is Jesus as this 'stone' '*precious*' to you as a believer?

What do you think was Peter's point in quoting these two further OT texts?

The final part of v.8 might suggest a certain 'fatalism': how are we to understand what Peter says without adopting such a fatalistic view?

6. **Read 1 Peter 2.9.** This verse takes us back to recognize again the truth about ourselves as believers: Peter again deliberately uses OT terminology and pictures to describe believers.

How do each of the four descriptions of Christians here help your understanding of who you are in Christ?

What does Peter specify as our primary purpose, and what will that look like when translated into our lives?

7. **Read 1 Peter 2.10.** The passage culminates in Peter using terms which are a wonderful echo of the startling OT message of the prophet Hosea.

Read **Eph.2.11-22** for a remarkably similar line of thought in the writing of Paul: why is it so important that we ***remember*** what once we were and what we've now become in Christ?

What does it mean for you to be part of 'the people of God'? What practical difference does it make to your life and your experience?