

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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6. 1 Peter 3.8-22 [w/b Sunday 10th March 2019]

“.. the reason for the hope that you have ..”

In the previous passage Peter had exhorted his readers to live ‘submitted’ lives, explaining why that was important and what that might look like. Here in this passage he recognizes that for believers **suffering** will also likely be part of our experience.

Because we are now inherently ‘submitted’ people, living lives ‘arranged under’ the Lordship of Jesus, he’s able to base his exhortations on both the teaching of Scripture and the example of Jesus: at the same time, though, he is careful to underline that Jesus is more than merely a good example.

[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 4, 5 and 6. As always try to leave good time for shared prayer!]

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1. **Read 1 Peter 3.8-22.** There’s a coherence to this whole passage which a reading of it in its entirety will help you grasp.

In summary, what is the thrust of Peter’s message here?

What do think is the connection between this passage and the passage in our previous study (2.11-3.7)?

2. **Read 1 Peter 3.8-9.** Peter exhorts his readers carefully to cultivate certain important attitudes in the way they engage with others and respond to different situations.

How can we help cultivate in one another the attitudes which Peter exhorts on us in v.8?

Read Rom.12.14 for a similar exhortation to v.9: what will the call to 'bless' others look like?

3. **Read 1 Peter 3.9-12.** The words of Psalm 34.12-16 are applied here to the experience of Christians as they potentially face 'evil' and 'insult'.

This sounds like 'salvation by works' - do this and live (v.9 also suggests that our inheriting a blessing is related in some way to our bestowing a blessing): how are these verses gospel truth rather than legalism?

What encouragement are you able to take from v.12?

4. **Read 1 Peter 3.13-14.** Peter spells out the implications of the Scripture he has just quoted which points to and underlines the sovereignty of God.

What are the two implications he draws in these verses?

Read Matt.5.10-12: in what ways are we 'blessed' when we 'suffer for what is right'?

5. Read 1 Peter 3.15-17. Our glad embracing of the Lordship of Jesus will issue in a manner of living so markedly different that people will start asking questions of us.

What does Peter mean by the exhortation "*in your hearts revere Christ as Lord*", and what have you found helps you to do that?

How can you prepare yourself to be able to give an answer to those who question us about our hope?

In today's culture the *way* we communicate the gospel is more important than ever: how does what Peter says in these verses both help and challenge you in this regard?

6. Read 1 Peter 3.18. Jesus gave us far more than merely an example. This verse has been well described as "one of the most succinct statements of the doctrine of the atonement."

What are the three important truths to which Peter points in the first part of the verse, and how do they provide comfort and encouragement to believers?

What does Peter mean by Jesus being “*put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit*”?

7. Read 1 Peter 3.18-22. The closing verses of the chapter (from v.19) are not easy! What’s clear, though, is that Noah’s experience of God’s salvation is strikingly parallel to ours.

Why do you think Peter highlights the fact that “*only a few people, eight in all*” were saved in the days of Noah?

What is the comfort Peter means us to take from the truth he sets out in v.22?