

# 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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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## 7. 1 Peter 4.1-11 [w/b Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2019]

*“.. with the same attitude ..”*

It's a *relationship* that lies at the heart of the Bible's message: and as we trust in (entrust ourselves to) Jesus we are made one with Him - so that everything which is true of Him becomes true of us as well. Our lives, therefore, will become a reflection of the life of the 'suffering servant'.

Christ's suffering in the body culminated in His death on the cross: and our lives assume that cross-shaped character whereby we have died to self and live unto God. What that life looks like is viewed here first negatively and then positively.

*[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, 6 and 7. As always try to leave good time for shared prayer!]*

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1. **Read 1 Peter 4.1-11.** The passage divides into two parts (vv.1-6 and vv.7-11), both of which tease out something of what a life lived 'in Christ' will look like.

What is it about you which you'd say provides the clearest evidence of your being a new creation in Christ Jesus?

Do you think we are as conscious as Peter was that "*the end of all things is near*"?

How has that perspective shaped the way you live?

**2. Read 1 Peter 4.1-3.** Peter has earlier reminded his readers that they have been "*called .. out of darkness into His wonderful light*" (2.9): here he bids them put that darkness behind them.

In what sense have we "*finished with sin*"?

According to what Peter says here how is this break with sin bound up with the suffering of Christ?

**3. Read 1 Peter 4.4.** The change effected in us by the Lord at conversion is met with surprise, suspicion and scorn by the world around us.

What has been your experience of what Peter describes in this verse?

Why do you think there is such animosity directed against a person whose living is no longer 'reckless' and 'wild'?

**4. Read 1 Peter 4.5-6.** 'Reckless, wild living' makes sense if the present is all we have and 'tomorrow we die': Peter underlines the very different perspective which the gospel affords.

What two events does Peter remind his readers await us?

In Peter's mind how does this perspective help believers cope with the 'abuse' which as followers of Jesus they will experience?

**5. Read 1 Peter 4.7.** The fact that 'the end of all things is near' lends an urgency as well as an expectancy to our living.

To what is Peter referring when he speaks of "*the end of all things*"?

Why do you think Peter stresses the activity of prayer in this connection?

**6. Read 1 Peter 4.8-10.** The imperative to love runs all the way through the Bible: love is the life of the world to come, and as the end draws near it's that life of love we're urged to be living.

In what three specific ways does Peter want such love to find expression?

What's involved in love 'covering over a multitude of sins'?

**7. Read 1 Peter 4.11.** After the exhortations of the previous verses Peter now illustrates what he means by our being "*faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms*" (v.10).

What are the practical implications of what Peter says for a person who, in the exercise of God's grace, 'speaks'?

What important lessons does Peter underline in relation to the way we 'serve'?

What actions (if any!) have you been prompted to take as a result of this study?