

# 1 & 2 PETER



*Christ also suffered for you,  
leaving you an example, so that  
you might follow in his steps*

## A LIVING HOPE

(10 BIBLE STUDIES)

**EXAMINATION**

**BIBLE STUDIES**



# CONTENTS

Contents	page 03
Getting the most out of these studies	page 04
Introducing 1&2 Peter	page 05
Study 1: 1 Peter 1:1-12 – A living hope	pages 06-07
Study 2: 1 Peter 1:12-2:3 – Called to be different	pages 08-09
Study 3: 1 Peter 2:4-12 – Building and being built up	pages 10-11
Study 4: 1 Peter 2:13-3:7 – Following in Jesus' steps	pages 12-13
Study 5: 1 Peter 3:8-4:2 – Suffering and Fear	pages 14-15
Study 6: 1 Peter 4 – Reality of Judgement	pages 16-17
Study 7: 1 Peter 5 – Standing Firm	pages 18-19
Study 8: 2 Peter 1 – A fruitful life	pages 20-21
Study 9: 2 Peter 2 – False teachers	pages 22-23
Study 10: 2 Peter 3 – God is in control	pages 24-25
Memory Verses	page 28

## THE SMALL PRINT

THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV® Co

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## GETTING THE MOST OUT OF THESE STUDIES

### Your Commitment

I would encourage you to make a commitment to attending your group regularly. I realise that sometimes there are things that get in the way, but do prioritise studying the Bible with other. This will involve sacrifice, and effective use of your time, but I really believe that in doing so you will get the most out of studying the Bible and praying together in your small group.

### Your Contribution

What you put into the group is going to determine what you get out of the group. I encourage you to contribute honestly to the discussion and workings of the group. I understand people come from different backgrounds with unique personalities & life experiences. But, we all have a big part to play, so I encourage you to be fully present and take ownership of your group.

### Your Preparation

These materials are primarily for use in preparing and/or leading group discussions, but they will also be useful in keeping your thoughts together in one place. The materials provide you with the passage so that you can identify and highlight recurring themes and note down your own thoughts and questions. Also, the materials include questions designed to provoke thought, and help you reflect on what the passage meant, both at the time it was written, and also what it means for us now.

I would encourage you to make good use of these materials, as doing so will help you contribute and get the most out of the group discussions. The materials are, however, only “tools” – they are there to help you, and not to restrict you, or force you to think in a certain manner. I want to see God speaking to you through these passages, and if the questions or notes don't help you, simply don't use them!

I have also included within these materials an introduction to the book. Make of this what you will, but I hope that it is helpful in getting you started with these studies!

### Your Leadership

Here are some useful pointers in how to lead your Bible study group. Be aware that included in this study guide are more questions than you can possibly ask and/or answer in one session. They are not designed to be used rigidly, and there will rarely be a need to ask every question! Make sure that you spend some time praying at the start and ensure you read & re-read the passages as much as possible. In relation to the passages, then consider the suggested questions with an open mind. There is rarely “a single right answer” and I would encourage you to share your thoughts with your group.

I have also included a number of quotations from relevant Christian literature, most of which are readily available online if you want to do further thinking or study. My prayer is that as you study together you would grow to love Jesus and experience Him more deeply.

I would appreciate your feedback and suggestions on how to make these materials even better!

*Steve McClure  
Spring 2019*

## INTRODUCING 1&2 PETER

The apostle Peter most likely writes both these letters from Rome although the reference to greetings from Babylon in 1 Peter 5:13 confuses things somewhat! Rome is called *Babylon* in the book of Revelation (16:19, 17:5 & 18:2) we could understand why Peter might refer to it in this way. In 1 Peter he is assisted by Silas (5:12) but there is no mention of Silas in the second letter. In 1 Peter he addresses Christians *scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia* (1:1). This is an area north of the Taurus Mountains in Asia Minor (Turkey). The recipients of his second letter are not specifically identified but in 2 Peter 3:1 Peter says that this was his second letter to those people. 1 Peter was probably written around 62-63AD while 2 Peter was probably written at some point between 54-67AD. Both were written during the reign of Nero which ended in 68AD. Peter was probably in prison when he wrote his second letter and in the letter we read that he was nearing his death (2 Peter 1:12-15).

The story of Peter is an inspiring story of how God turned this ordinary fisherman into a key leader of the movement that went on to change the world. You can read and study more about the Life of Peter in the Life of Peter studies. Here we note the journey that Peter has been on with Jesus and how He had totally turned his life upside down. In 1&2 Peter we see a Peter who is filled with the Spirit and authoritatively continuing the ministry of his Lord.

The major theme of these letters is suffering and persecution (e.g. 1:6-7; 2:18-20; 3:9, 13-17; 4:1-4, 12-19; 5:9). Indeed there are many references to this as Peter encourages them to *set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming* (1:13). Despite all that they were facing Peter's first letter encourages them about the Salvation that awaits them when Jesus returns as well as enjoying the first fruits of that now. Above all Peter wants them to persevere in their faith which is of *greater worth than gold* (1:7). In this respect Jesus is a great example for them as one who had suffered and then entered glory.

Peter's second letter encourages them about the transforming grace of God. He says that God's *divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness* (1:3). Peter thus encourages them to live lives that were godly and pleasing to God despite all that stood in their way. Peter also writes to tackle false teaching (see the strong language Peter uses in 2 Peter 2) and evildoers (2 Peter 2:1, 3:3-4) who had come into the church. Both these groups were putting pressure on these believers to depart from the knowledge and promises of God. Moreover 2 Peter 2:13-22 address matters of a sexual nature that these teachers were apparently promoting amongst them. This second letter is not at all easy to get our heads around and yet it is still filled with encouragement.

Jesus' instruction to Peter (John 21:15-17) was to feed His sheep and we see this pastoral heart coming through in both letters. Peter wants these believers to grow in their faith, to stand firm and not be moved by all manner of pressures to move away from their faith in Christ. Instead he wants them to live such good lives that even the pagans will glorify God on the day that He returns (2:12). He wants them to be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for their hope (1 Peter 3:15). There is much here for us also to learn from and be encouraged by.

Steve McClure, Spring 2019

**STUDY 1 – 1 PETER 1:1-12 – A LIVING HOPE**

**INTRODUCTION:** By the time of this letter the gospel had reached Rome and far beyond. Believers had been scattered due to opposition and violent persecution. Peter was probably aware that his own time was short. Peter's letters have become a beacon of hope to all going through hard times.

**IDENTITY IN CHRIST (v1-2):** In your experience what does it feel like to be strangers/exiles (v1) somewhere you do not belong? How do you imagine that the early Christians experienced isolation, rejection and suffering (v6)? What do we learn from v1-2 about our identity in Christ?

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**LIVING HOPE (v3-5):** What does Peter praise God for in v3-5? How do you understand the concepts of 'new birth' (see also John 1:12-13, 3:3-6, Gal 4:4-7) and 'living hope' (see also Rom 8:22-25, 1 Cor 15:19-26, 1 John 3:1-3)? How does a living hope grow out of new birth?

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In what sense is our hope and our inheritance something that can never perish, spoil or fade (v4) and why is this so encouraging? How would you understand the implication in v5 that salvation is a future event? In what ways does or should our hope for the future change the way that we live each day?

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**JOY AMID TRIALS (v6-9):** What do you think it looks like to 'rejoice in our salvation' (v6), a salvation which the 'prophets searched intently and with the greatest care' and which 'angels long to look into'?

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How do you respond to Peter's comments about the purpose of trials and sufferings (v7)? How have (or haven't) you experienced this inexpressible and glorious joy (v8) in response to your trials and sufferings (see also James 1:2-4)? Why do we sometimes fail to respond to God's generosity in this way? Why is the 'salvation of our souls' the end result of our faith (v9)?

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**PROPHETS AND ANGELS (v10-12):** In what sense were Peter's readers the generation to whom God had made known that which the prophets had searched intently for? How do these verses encourage us to rejoice in our suffering...as we tread the same road as our Lord and Saviour?

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**APPLYING IT TO OURSELVES:** How do you think these verses brought encouragement and hope to Peter's readers? How do they help you amidst the things that you are facing at the current time?

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**DRAWING IT TOGETHER:** How certain are you about the inheritance Peter says is 'kept in heaven for you'? How mindful are you of this hope for eternity? To what extent could you say that though you have not seen Christ that you love Him and even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and are filled with joy?

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**IDEAS FOR PRAYER:** Share with one another how important to you this 'living hope' is at the present time; pray for one another in the struggles, trials and sufferings that life is throwing at you. Praise God for the gift of salvation that He has freely given us.

**MEMORY VERSES: 1 PETER 1:3-4**

**STUDY 2 – 1 PETER 1:13-2:3 – CALLED TO BE DIFFERENT**

**INTRODUCTION:** Peter presents here a markedly different way of living from what we see around us; he presents both the content and the basis for such Christian living. In the Greek there are 5 basic commands which are 1. Set your hope (1:13), 2. Be holy (1:15), 3. Live your lives in fear (1:17), 4. Love one another (1:22) and 5. Crave pure spiritual milk (2:2).

**SET YOUR HOPE (1:13-14):** What is the connection between the 'therefore' in v13 and the previous section? In what exactly does Peter command us to 'set our hope' on and what does it look like to have minds that are alert and fully sober (literally gird up the loins of your mind)? What prevents you or distracts you from setting your hope fully on the coming salvation?

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**BE HOLY (1:14-16):** What do Leviticus 11:44-45, 19:1-2 & 20:6-8 teach us about holiness? In what sense is the call to be holy based on our relationship with God (15-16) and our former way of life (v17)? In what areas have you experienced the call to be holy to be at odds with society around us?

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Where do we start in seeking to live as obedient children and not conforming to the evil desires of ignorance (see also Romans 12:1-2, Eph 4:22-24, John 14:26)?

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**LIVE YOUR LIVES IN FEAR (1:17-21):** To what extent can you identify with the descriptions Peter uses here of God as Father and as Judge? How is it possible to both fear God (v17) and yet to have both faith and hope in Him (v21)?

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In thinking about what it means to fear God what is your view of (1) God's holiness and judgement and (2) the preciousness of Christ's sacrifice? How should the fact that we are to 'live our time as foreigners here in reverent fear' affect our attitudes and way of life?

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**LOVE ANOTHER (1:22-25):** From what have we purified ourselves? For what have we purified ourselves? How then does Peter say we should treat each other? What do v23-25 say is the basis for why we should love one another self-sacrificially (agape love), sincerely, deeply (or constantly/unfailingly) and from the heart?

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**CRAVE PURE SPIRITUAL MILK (2:1-3):** What is the opposite of pure spiritual milk? What's Peter's basis for why we should crave pure spiritual milk? What is this pure spiritual milk and what is the result of drinking it (see Heb 5:12-6:3)? What sustenance do you take in order to grow up in your salvation?

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**DRAWING IT TOGETHER:** The basis for all of these commands looks either forward to what awaits us in heaven or back to our redemption and new birth by Christ. How can we respond to what God has done and will do?

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**IDEAS FOR PRAYER:** Share some of the battles you are or have been facing in the area of holiness. Encourage, urge and exhort one another to live holy lives. Pray for one another that God would transform us and help us live holy lives through the power of His Spirit. Try to keep one another accountable in these things as the weeks go by.

**MEMORY VERSES: 1 PETER 1:15-16**

**STUDY 3 – 1 PETER 2:4-12 – BUILDING AND BEING BUILT UP**

**INTRODUCTION:** The purpose of the cornerstone was to establish the lines. Thus the rock had to be square and plumb because the rest of the building took its cues from the first block. Jesus may be a stumbling block for those who don't believe but for us He serves as the solid base for our lives.

**SETTING THE SCENE:** How do the following passages help set the background for this section; Exodus 19:5-6, Isaiah 8:11-15, 28:14-19 & Psalm 118:19-25? Jesus comes onto the scene with all these hopes and expectations in the air; how did these promises see fulfilment (see Luke 20:17-19)?

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**LIVING STONES (v4-8):** Why do you think that Peter describes Jesus as the living Stone (nb: stones are not normally described in this manner)? What can we learn from the metaphor about the function of the cornerstone, the part of the building it is from and the sort of building it is part of? In what sense are those who trust in Him 'will never be put to shame' (v6)?

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Who is building this spiritual house (v5)? How does He build? What materials does He use? How do you feel about being one of God's building blocks? What is our responsibility in this? (See also Eph 2:19-22, 1 Cor 3:9-16) What is Peter saying that the true spiritual house should look like?

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**RESPONSIVE STONES (v5, 9-10):** What do you understand Peter to mean when he says repeatedly that we are a chosen people (v5,10)? What does Peter mean by 'spiritual sacrifices' (v5, see also Rom 12:1, 15:16-16, Psalm 51:17, Hebrews 13:15-16)?

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What does having an identity as being a 'royal priesthood' and a 'holy nation' imply about our relationship with God, our purpose in life and our relationship with others? What do you think it means to have become 'the people of God' (see also Eph 2:11-16, John 1:12-13)?

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What do you think it looks like to declare the praise of Him who called us out of darkness into His wonderful light? How in practice do we declare the praises of God?

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**LIVING DISTINCTIVE LIVES (v11-12):** What contrast/tension do you see between how people are described in v9-10 and in v11-12? How is this tension/contrast lived out here and now and resolved in the future? How do you understand the motivation given in v12 for why we should live good lives?

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These images are collective, i.e. we are not just individual stones, priests or people. How can we reflect that in our group? How can we be built together? What spiritual sacrifices might we offer together? How can we treat one another as royal and holy? Is Jesus Christ still your cornerstone?

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**IDEAS FOR PRAYER:** Share how God has challenged you about our identity and mission and think practically about how this might look in practice during the coming week. Pray for one another that we would know Christ, understand more about who we are in Christ and declare His praises.

**MEMORY VERSES: 1 PETER 2:9-10**

<sup>13</sup>Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, <sup>14</sup>or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. <sup>15</sup>For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. <sup>16</sup>Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God's slaves. <sup>17</sup>Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honour the emperor.

<sup>18</sup>Slaves, in reverent fear of God submit yourselves to your masters, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. <sup>19</sup>For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God. <sup>20</sup>But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. <sup>21</sup>To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

<sup>22</sup>"He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."<sup>[a]</sup>

<sup>23</sup>When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. <sup>24</sup>"He himself bore our sins" in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; "by his wounds you have been healed."<sup>25</sup>For "you were like sheep going astray,"<sup>[b]</sup> but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

**3** <sup>1</sup>Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behaviour of their wives, <sup>2</sup>when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. <sup>3</sup>Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewellery or fine clothes. <sup>4</sup>Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. <sup>5</sup>For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. They submitted themselves to their own husbands, <sup>6</sup>like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.

<sup>7</sup>Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

**Footnotes:**

- a. [1 Peter 2:22](#) Isaiah 53:9
- b. [1 Peter 2:25](#) Isaiah 53:4,5,6 (see Septuagint)

**STUDY 4 – QUESTIONS FOR PREPARATION / DISCUSSION**

**INTRODUCTION:** Submission is a Greek military term meaning to arrange in military fashion under the command of a leader or in non-military fashion it was “a voluntary attitude of giving in, co-operating, assuming responsibility and carrying a burden.

**SETTING THE SCENE:** How would you rate your natural inclination for ‘submission’ on a scale from 1-10 (one being a mud covered doormat and ten being a banner waving protestor)? Why? What do you value about following in the steps of Jesus? What do you find most difficult about doing so?

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How might our natural response to the concept of submission be different to that of Peter’s original readers living during the Roman empire at a time when slavery was part of the social fabric?

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**AUTHORITIES (2:13-17):** Why according to Peter should we treat our authorities with respect? What do you think it looks like to submit to them ‘for the Lord’s sake’ (see also Rom 13:1-14)? How should being ‘free people’ (v16) and ‘God’s slaves’ (v17) affect the way that we submit to people? How are these identities (free people and God’s slaves) able to exist together?

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What does Peter say is the purpose of human Government and authority? How do we get the balance Peter demonstrated in Acts 4:18-20, 5:27-29 between fearing God and honouring our leaders? How as Christians should we or shouldn’t we look to go about respectfully challenging human authorities?

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**SLAVES AND MASTERS (2:18-25):** How does Peter describe a slaves submission to their master? When is it or isn’t it commendable to endure suffering? When Peter says ‘because they are conscious of God’, what exactly is it about God that the slave should be conscious of?

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How do you respond to the idea that we have been called to suffer for 'doing good' (v21)? How is the example of Christ similar to the situation of the slave with respect to innocence, submission and suffering? What might it mean to entrust ourselves to him who judges justly (v23, Heb 12:2)?

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**WIVES (3:1-6):** In a society where wives were rated barely above slaves, how do you think these marriage principles would have been received? What is the 'same way' that wives are to submit to their husbands (3:1)? What exactly is the kind of beauty that Peter commends (see 1 Tim 2:9-10)?

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**HUSBANDS (3:7):** How can husbands be considerate and treat their wives with respect? How do you respond to the descriptions Peter makes about women in this section (v7); i.e. weaker partner and heir of the gracious gift of life? How might failure to respect his wife hinder a man's prayers?

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**DRAWING IT TOGETHER:** Peter's teaching on submission in all of these relationships is very counter-culture; what difference do you think it would make to our various relationships/responsibilities if we truly took this seriously?

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**IDEAS FOR PRAYER:** Share with one another what you have found difficult about submission in the past and what God has been teaching you about submission. Pray for one another that in all your relationships you would imitate Christ in word, thought and deed.

**MEMORY VERSE: 1 PETER 2:21**

**STUDY 5 – 1 PETER 3:8-4:2 – SUFFERING AND FEAR**

**INTRODUCTION:** Many of the lifestyle choices we have talked about previously have tended to create curiosity in people's minds. People don't submit or cooperate in difficult situations unless they have hope. When people ask us about hope Peter says we should be ready to explain it clearly.

**SETTING THE SCENE:** Why is being united and living in harmony such a big deal for us as Christians? How do you think that the 5 instructions in v8 could help us do that (being like-minded, sympathetic, loving, compassionate and humble)? Which of these do you find most challenging and which is most attractive?

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**BLESSING FOR EVIL (3:9-12):** What do you think Peter means when he commands us to repay evil with a blessing (see also Luke 6:27-38)? What do you understand by the reasons that Peter gives for why we should respond in this way? How does the quotation from Psalm 4 relate to what Peter is saying here?

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**REVERE CHRIST AS LORD (3:13-16):** On what basis does Peter encourage us not to fear mistreatment or persecution? How does the quotation from Isaiah 8:11-15 (where Judah is fearful of Assyria) relate to the situation of Peter's readers?

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In the context of being fearful, what does it mean to revere Christ as Lord in our hearts (v15)? How should this spill over into our conversations? Why do you think we're encouraged to be prepared to give the "reason for the hope that we have" rather than the reason why we believe what we do"? What in practice does it look like to be prepared to do this?

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**MOTIVATION: CHRIST'S VICTORY (3:17-22):** Ignoring for the moment some of the controversies in this section, what is the big picture of what Peter is actually trying to say in this section? Why is it better to suffer for doing good than evil?

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What similarities and differences are there between our suffering and the sufferings of Christ? What was achieved by Christ's sufferings? What happened after His sufferings?

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In lieu of what these verses are saying to us, how do you understand what Peter is saying about Noah as a further example of salvation occurring in the midst of judgment and difficulty?

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**ARM YOURSELVES WITH THE SAME ATTITUDE (4:1-2):** What sort of conflicts are we engaged in that would require us to need to arm ourselves? Why is it so important to keep our eyes on Jesus' example?

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**IDEAS FOR PRAYER:** Share your experiences of how doing good, has led to suffering. Pray for one another that you would respond to evil with blessing, that you would revere Christ as Lord and be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.

**MEMORY VERSE: 1 PETER 3:15**



**STUDY 6 – 1 PETER 4 – REALITY OF JUDGEMENT**

**INTRODUCTION:** The reality of judgement is a theme that runs right through 1 Peter 4. The end is coming and is not far away. In light of this reality there are a number of implications for all of us; it comforts us in our struggles and helps us understand what is happening in our lives and the world.

**LIVING FOR THE WILL OF GOD (v1-6):** In what sense have you suffered and so finished with sin (v1)? What effect should that suffering have on how you approach the rest of your earthly life (v1-2)? How do you understand the contrast Peter presents between believers and non-believers?

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In what areas of life do you or have you experienced pressure to conform to both the attitudes and actions of those around you? Why would v5-6 encourage these believers who were enduring suffering from unbelievers (see also Matthew 10:26-33)? What does it look like in practice to live according to God in regard to the Spirit (v6)?

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**THE END IS NEAR (v7-11):** How do you understand Peter's statement 'the end of all things is near' (v7) and how should this truth impact both our mind and our behaviour here and now? Why does being alert and of sober mind (consider also how the opposite hinders your prayers) help us pray (v7)?

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Why is loving one another (v8) the top priority as we wait for the end? How are v9-11 related to this command to love? What is the purpose of the gifts we receive from God and how should we exercise them? What might being 'faithful stewards of God's grace in all its forms' look like? How can we rely more on God's strength in order to serve rather than relying on our own strength?

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**SUFFERING FOR THE NAME (v12-19):** Why might Peter's readers (or indeed us ourselves) be surprised (v12) at persecution for our faith? Why does Peter say we should not be surprised (see also John 15:18-25, James 1:2-4)? Why does Peter say we should rejoice over such suffering (v13)?  
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What do you think it means to suffer because of the name of Christ (v14)? In what sense are we blessed through suffering because the 'Spirit of glory and of God' rests on us (v14)?  
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In what sense does judgement begin with God's household (v17, see also Jeremiah 25:15-31 & Ezekiel 9)? If Christian suffering is indeed the first stirrings of God's coming judgement, how should those same sufferings be a cause to rejoice, commit ourselves to God and continue to do good?  
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**IDEAS FOR PRAYER:** Share your own experiences of suffering for Christ and how you have responded to it. Talk about each other's gifts and how you might love each other more deeply and serve one another more effectively. Pray for one another in these things and for others who are being persecuted.

**MEMORY VERSES: 1 PETER 4:7-8**

**STUDY 7 – 1 PETER 5 – STANDING FIRM**

**INTRODUCTION:** Peter closed his letter with a special challenge to the leaders and the young people. He was thinking about present and current leadership. He knew that though we have a fearsome (though defeated) enemy who seeks to destroy there is an overwhelming reason for hope in Christ.

**SETTING THE SCENE:** How are these verses a continuation of the previous section and how do they fit with the overall aim of the letter? What do you notice about the way that Peter describes himself? How would this have been an encouragement to the elders to whom Peter was writing?

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**ELDERS (v1-4):** What responsibilities or character traits would be part of Peter's job description for potential elders? Shepherds were tasked with watching, defending, guiding, nursing, finding/saving and loving their sheep; what can we draw from this about the qualities of a leader and how they are to shepherd God's flock?

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What do you think 'could', 'should' or 'shouldn't' motivate us as leaders? What contrasts are there between leading from willingness vs. obligation, pursuing gain vs. eagerness to serve, lording it over people vs. being examples to the flock? How could we make it easier for our leaders to do their jobs?

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**HUMILITY (v5-7):** Why should we be humble towards our leaders and towards one another (v5)? How would you define **genuine humility** (think about how Jesus showed and taught about humility in Luke 6:41-42, 17:7-10, 18:10-14, John 13:3-16, James 4:1-6)? Why is casting all our anxiety on God an action of humility (v7)? What practically can we do to clothe ourselves in humility?

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**RESIST THE DEVIL (v8-11):** How aware are we of the spiritual battle going on amongst us and around us? How in practice can we resist the devil's attempts to devour us (v8-9)? What does it look like to be 'alert and of sober mind'? How much does it encourage you that others are struggling too?

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What is your experience of God as the 'God of all grace'? What future has this 'God of all grace' planned for us? In the meantime how should we trust God to restore us and to make us strong, firm and steadfast (v10)? What does this teach us about the devil's power and God's Sovereign control?

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**FINAL EXHORTATIONS (v12-14):** What do we learn about the early church from the greetings at the end of this letter? What do you understand Peter to mean by 'she who is in Babylon' and 'greet one another with a kiss of love'? How can these things and the book as a whole help us to stand fast?

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**DRAWING IT TOGETHER:** What are the lessons that God has been teaching you through the letter of 1 Peter? In what ways has this letter been an encouragement to you during struggles and hard times this term?

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**IDEAS FOR PRAYER:** Share from your experiences of these things in your own relationships (i.e. leadership, humility, spiritual warfare). Share some current struggles (things which are a threat to your standing firm) and pray for one another that you would all continue to 'stand fast in God's grace'.

**MEMORY VERSES: 1 PETER 5:8-9**

**STUDY 8 – 2 PETER 1 – A FRUITFUL LIFE**

**INTRODUCTION:** Spiritual disciplines are chosen pathways of spiritual growth...actions we take to train the soul...decisions we take to develop our sensitivity to God. Since God is unchanging, "closeness" to Him requires movement on our part, not His. What are we doing to imitate Christ?

**GOD'S NATURE & PROMISES (1-4):** What does Peter say that his recipients have been given? Peter tells his readers they will receive the gifts of faith, grace and peace through Christ's righteousness and knowledge of God (v1-2); to what extent does our own spiritual growth depend on these things?

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Peter says that God has given us 'everything we need for a godly life' (v3); what does a 'godly life' look like according to these verses? How do we 'participate in the divine nature' and how is this linked to the ideas of being given 'everything we need for a godly life' and 'God's great and precious promises'?

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**AN ALL OUT EFFORT (v5-11):** How do you understand Peter's expectations for how we might nurture a godly life? How exactly will possessing the qualities in v5-7 increasingly (note the 'if') help keep us from stagnation and unfruitfulness in our knowledge of Jesus Christ (v8-9)?

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What do you think it means for a person to be called and elected by God (v10-11)? In what sense do we confirm our calling and election; what does that look like in practice and why will doing that mean that we will never stumble and ensure we have a rich welcome into God's eternal Kingdom?

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**A REMINDER OF TRUTH (v12-15):** What responsibilities does Peter demonstrate towards his readers here (v12-15)? Peter is clearly not expecting to live much longer; how do you respond to what he says about death (attitude, certainty, imminence, temperance of this life)?

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**A CONFIDENT HOPE IN CHRIST (v16-18):** How can you and do you tell the difference between truth and error? What are some of the objective criteria Peter gives us here for discerning these things? In describing himself as an eye-witness of Christ's majesty, why do you think Peter mentions the transfiguration specifically?

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**A FIRM BASIS FOR FAITH (v19-21):** In what sense are the words of the prophets like a light shining in a dark place (v19)? How did the prophets know what to prophecy? What do these verses teach us about the origin of Scripture? How reliable do you think that Scripture is on a scale of 1-10 and why?

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**DRAWING IT TOGETHER:** What surprises you about what Peter says or doesn't say in this chapter bearing in mind that he was expecting his imminent death? To what degree would this letter have encouraged its readers to seek to grow spiritually and keep on growing in faith even after Peter was gone? How does it encourage you?

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**IDEAS FOR PRAYER:** Thank God together for all the rich blessings that God has given you. Share how you are doing in the process of becoming more like Christ in your own lives and pray for one another as you seek to grow in dependency on Christ and His word.

**MEMORY VERSE: 2 PETER 1:3**

## STUDY 9 – 2 PETER 2 – FALSE TEACHERS

**INTRODUCTION:** Peter ended chapter 1 with a brief description of Scripture and how God provided it for us. He starts this next section with a warning. There were false prophets and even now they are still at it, and this should not surprise us. Here Peter writes a profile of these false teachers and their fate.

**FALSE PROPHETS...FALSE TEACHERS:** These could include (1) those who worshipped false God's or idols, (2) those who claimed to receive special revelations from God but did not & (3) those who wandered away from the truth into an immoral life and led others astray.

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**THE DANGERS OF HERESY (v1-3):** How can we identify false prophets and false teachers today? What is heresy (give modern day examples)? Why are false teachers and their teachings so dangerous? How do you respond to Peter's comment on how things will turn out in the end for the false teachers?

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**DIVINE MERCY (v4-9):** What do you think Peter wants us to learn from the stories of the angels (v4, Gen 6:1-4, Is 14, Ez 28), the flood (v5, Gen 6-8) and Sodom & Gomorrah (v6, Gen 19)? On what basis do you think God condemns some and rescues others? How do you respond to these challenging ideas about the certainty of judgement and the hope of God's salvation (v7-9)? (see also Jude 5-7)

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**HOW TO SPOT A FALSE PROPHET (v10-16):** What evidence is there that might help us distinguish a false prophet from a true one? What does it look like to 'blaspheme in matters that they do not understand' (v12)? Why might some people be attracted to teachers with these characteristics?

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What are the dangers of embracing the following criteria; rhetorical devices (slick presentation), what they look like ('brute beast' or a 'mule'), how they look at us ('with eyes full of adultery'), their financial appeals (arm twisting, emotional appeals), the company they keep ('at love feasts'), their spiritual impact (manipulation of the unstable) and their correlation to familiar doctrine (whatever I believe).

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**SPRINGS WITHOUT WATER (v17-19):** How are these people like springs without water and mists driven by a storm (also 'wandering stars' in Jude 12-13)? What does Peter say about how they try to deceive people? What is their fate and do you see any hope for them?

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**CAUGHT IN THE END (v20-22):** What do we learn about these people in v20-22 (i.e. were they victims of heresy, good people who were never really saved, people just claiming to believe)? In what sense would it be better for a false teacher if they had never known the truth?

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**DRAWING IT TOGETHER:** How do we apply these teachings to our own lives? Do you have any prior experience of people or teaching like this? How can we make sure that we don't end up as or believing false teachers ourselves? What do you think might be the first steps along this dangerous road?

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**IDEAS FOR PRAYER:** Share with one another your reactions to what is a very difficult passage. Pray for one another that you would all stay close to Jesus and to His word and not be enticed by any number of the false teachings that circulate around Christian circles.

**MEMORY VERSE: 2 TIMOTHY 4:3**



**INTRODUCTION:** Peter's closing words affirm the hope we have as believers: Christ will return. With Him will come a fierce time of judgement. Peter urges people to accept Paul's writings as Scripture, to remember the words of the prophets and the commands of Christ and most of all to remember that God is calling people to repentance and is in complete control.

**NO END OF SCOFFING (v1-7):** What do you understand Peter's reason to be for writing a second letter? Who are these scoffers (v3) and at what are they scoffing? Can you empathise with their assertion that nothing ever changes (v4, see also John 14:1-3, Acts 1:6-11)? Why 2000 years later should we take note of Peter's preaching about righteousness and judgement?

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**AN END TO SCOFFERS (v5-7):** How does Peter refute the problem created by the apparent delay in Jesus' return? What does the flood story have in common with the second coming (v6-7)? Why do you think that people would 'deliberately forget' (v5)?

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**MERCY FOR BELIEVERS (v8-10):** How does Peter refute this same claim posed by the believers who he urges not to forget (v8)? How do you understand Peter's assertion that with God a day is like a thousand years (see also Psalm 90:4)? How does the Lord's patience differ from slowness (v9,15)? What will the 'day of the Lord' (v10) be like? How literally should we take Peter's prophecy in v10?

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Would you or would you not describe the day of the Lord as inevitable or avoidable, happening at a specific or open-ended timetable, a one off or periodic/repeated event, universal or selective, imminent or far off, forgone conclusion or open to negotiation?

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**A DAY THAT TRANSFORMS (v11-13):** How does Peter describe this 'day of the lord' in these verses? What does Peter say is holding up the Lord's return? What if anything can we do to speed its coming (v12, Acts 3:19-22)? What do you think the new heaven and the new earth will be like? In what sense do you think it will be new (see also Isaiah 65:17, 66:22, Rev 21:1)?

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**STANDING FIRM IN THE LAST DAYS (v14-16):** How does Peter say we should live during these 'last days'? What impact does God's patience have upon these end times? What and why does Peter testify about Paul's writings (e.g. Rom 9:22-23, 13:11-14, Eph 4:30-32, 1 Thess 5:4-11)?

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**CLOSING WORDS (v17-18):** What does Peter say to his readers that they have been forewarned of (v17)? Why if they have already been forewarned might some still be carried away by the 'error of the lawless'(v17)? What do you think we can do to grow in the 'grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ' (v18)?

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**IDEAS FOR PRAYER:** Share with one another your attitude towards and awareness to Jesus' return and the consequences of the resulting Judgement. Pray for one another that you would be living out godly lives, ready and waiting for Jesus' return. Pray especially for friends who don't know Jesus that they too would come to repentance.

**MEMORY VERSES: 2 PETER 3:8-9**



# MEMORY VERSES

## **STUDY 1: 1 PETER 1:1-12 – A LIVING HOPE**

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade... **1 Peter 1:3-4**

## **STUDY 2: 1 PETER 1:12-2:3 – CALLED TO BE DIFFERENT**

But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." **1 Peter 1:15-16**

## **STUDY 3: 1 PETER 2:4-12 – BUILDING AND BEING BUILT UP**

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. **1 Peter 2:9-10**

## **STUDY 4: 1 PETER 2:13-3:7 – FOLLOWING IN JESUS' STEPS**

To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. **1 Peter 2:21**

## **STUDY 5: 1 PETER 3:8-4:2 – SUFFERING AND FEAR**

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect. **1 Peter 3:15**

## **STUDY 6: 1 PETER 4 – REALITY OF JUDGEMENT**

The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. **1 Peter 4:7-8**

## **STUDY 7: 1 PETER 5 – STANDING FIRM**

Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. **1 Peter 5:8-9**

## **STUDY 8: 2 PETER 1 – A FRUITFUL LIFE**

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. **2 Peter 1:3**

## **STUDY 9: 2 PETER 2 – FALSE TEACHERS**

For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. **2 Timothy 4:3**

## **STUDY 10: 2 PETER 3 – GOD IS IN CONTROL**

But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. **2 Peter 3:8-9**