

Adult Quarterly

SUNDAY SCHOOL

SUMMER QUARTER, 2009

Joyful Christian Living in a Pagan World

Studies in 1 and 2 Peter

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Vol. 96, No. 3

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QUARTERLY AIM: *The student will understand how to live a joyful life for Christ despite opposition and will be dedicated to living fully for Christ.*

JUNE

7—Origin of New Life in Christ	3
14—Effects of New Life in Christ.	10
21—Pictures of New Life in Christ.	17
28—Living for Christ Before the World	24

JULY

5—Living for Christ in the Home	32
12—Living for Christ in Persecution.	39
19—Living for Christ in Service	46
26—Living for Christ in Faith	53

AUGUST

2—Living for Christ in Humility	60
9—Living for Christ by His Power	68
16—Living for Christ by the Book	76
23—Living for Christ in Purity	83
30—Living for Christ Until He Returns	90

American Baptist Association Through-the-Bible Series Sunday School Lessons

	Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall
2009	John 13—21	Ezra; Nehemiah Habakkuk; Haggai Malachi; Esther	1 Peter 2 Peter	1, 2, 3 John Jude
2010	Daniel Ezekiel Zechariah	Revelation 1—7	Revelation 8—22	Genesis 1—11 Job
2011	Genesis 12—50	Matthew 1—13	Matthew 14—28	Exodus
2012	Romans	Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	Hebrews	Joshua Judges Ruth
2013	Acts 1—14	Acts 15—28	1 Samuel 2 Samuel 1—4 1 Chronicles 1—10	Mark 1—8
2014	Mark 9—16	2 Samuel 5—24 1 Chronicles 11—29 1 Kings 1; 2	James 1 Thessalonians 2 Thessalonians	Psalms 1—72
2015	Psalms 73—150	Galatians	1 Kings 3—22 2 Chronicles 1—24 2 Kings 1—13 Joel; Obadiah	1 Corinthians
2016	Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon	Luke 1—13:21	Luke 13:22—24	Hosea; Amos; Micah; Jonah; 2 Kings 14—16; 2 Chronicles 25—28
2017	2 Corinthians	Isaiah 1—39 2 Chronicles 29—32 2 Kings 17—20 Nahum	Isaiah 40—66 2 Kings 21—23 2 Chronicles 33—35 Zephaniah	Philemon Philippians Colossians
2018	Ephesians	1 Timothy 2 Timothy Titus	Jeremiah Lamentations 2 Kings 24; 25 2 Chronicles 36	John 1—12

1

Origin of New Life in Christ

Text: I Peter 1:1-12

Focus: I Peter 1:1-12

Key Verse:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

I Peter 1:3

Sunday Devotional: Strangers Here—Citizens There, Philippians 3:20, 21.

Application: I will relish and rejoice in the blessings of new life in Christ, realizing there is no joy like the joy of knowing Jesus.

A FIRST LOOK

We begin a study today in the writings of Peter. Peter identified himself in the opening of this letter with the surname Jesus gave him. His birth name was Simon, Bar-Jona, or Simon, son of Jonas. Jesus named him Peter, which in Latin is Cephas.

Peter was one of an inner circle of apostles, along with James and John. He is recognized as the apostle to the Jews while Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles. Peter was instrumental in conveying the truth about Jesus to the people of the first century and in giving to mankind the New Covenant, or New Testament. He was a man of action as well as a man of ideas.

Peter was inspired by God to write these letters. These epistles offer us hope through our faith in Jesus. In the latter part of the first century, churches were under severe attack. Paganism was rampant in

Daily Devotionals

- M. — Continually Cleansed by the Blood, I John 1:7-9.
- T. — The Necessity of the New Birth, John 3:1-7.
- W. — Trials: Count It All Joy! James 1:2, 3.
- T. — Salvation Is Death to Life, John 5:24.
- F. — No Separation from the Love of Christ, Romans 8:31-39.
- S. — No Man Is Able, John 10:28-30.

the Roman empire and Christians were beginning to be persecuted for their beliefs. The message of Peter has offered us a way to stay sane in an insane world and it has offered us hope in darkening circumstances.

This is not the hope born of unreasoning optimism. This is not the hope based on chance happening. This is the hope grounded in our faith in Jesus. That hope, like faith and love, is a gift from God. When we receive Jesus as our Savior, our very being changes, and we have a basis for hope even in the darkest moments of our lives.

Peter had been through many valleys and on many mountaintops in his ministry, and God used him to give us this enduring message about the hope that is in us through our faith in Jesus.

A CLOSER LOOK

I. The Beginning of Faith

I Peter 1:1-5

1. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

2. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

4. To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

5. Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Peter began by identifying himself and those to whom he immediately spoke. Peter had preached to multitudes in his ministry, but, by means of this letter, he was reaching out to those he did not know personally, but who were also believers in Jesus Christ.

He began with one of the most comforting thoughts in the Word of God. The people of God are elect, or chosen, by the

knowledge of God and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. A child of God is not an accident. A child of God does not live according to random or chance happenings. God has a plan for every one of His children (Eph. 2:10). You will be freed from many worries and cares if you will simply accept the plan God has for you and do your best to live according to it.

Peter then stressed that the intention of God is for grace and peace to be multiplied to all of His children. Jesus taught us that as men know how to give good things to their children, so our Heavenly Father knows how to bless us (Matt. 7:7-11). The blessings we get from our earthly fathers are mostly physical things and they perish over time. But the blessings of our Heavenly Father are spiritual and eternal. The grace of God will never go away or wear out. The peace of God passes all understanding and is the constant provision for everyone born into the family of God.

Peter did not suggest that these blessings will be added to us, he suggested that they will be multiplied for us. There is a quantitative difference in multiplication and addition. All this is intended to get us to see that God's desire is for His children to walk in hope. The one thing every child of God can do for his Heavenly Father is to live a changed life after he or she is saved.

Peter was careful to spell out exactly how this new hope comes into our lives. It is by the new birth. We are begotten, or born, into the relationship we have with God. This is what Jesus meant when He told Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again" (John 3:7). Our new birth is made possible by the resurrection power demonstrated when Jesus rose from the grave. Peter knew that the resurrection of Jesus changed the world forever.

If Jesus was who He said He was, and, if Jesus did what He said He did, then everything about life is different. If Jesus were a fraud and a failure, then life is an empty mess. But if He actually was the Son of God and if He actually did conquer death, then everything about life on earth is eternally changed.

Through the resurrection of Jesus we have a living, or lively hope. We have hope that we, too, will be resurrected. We have hope that life is not over when we die. We have hope that truth and justice will eventually prevail for everyone.

But there is more than resurrection in our future; there is eternal reward. We not only have the promise that we will live

again, we have the promise that our new life will be filled with all the blessings of eternity. We have an inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled and will never fade away or be used up. As Jesus taught in John 14:1-3, that inheritance is literally waiting for the children of God in Heaven.

These blessings will be ours, not in this life, but in the ages to come when Jesus is revealed when He returns to the earth. This is not an empty promise or a last ditch attempt to give hope to the hopeless. The promise of the second coming is the history of the world written in advance. As surely as Jesus came the first time, He will come again. He came into the world as a man by the power of God, and He will come again as King with power and authority.

II. The Trial of Faith

I Peter 1:6-8

6. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

7. That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

8. Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see *him* not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Our great rejoicing at the wonderful promises of God does not mean that we will not suffer many things while we wait for our eternal rewards. Peter recognized that many of these strangers to whom he wrote were having a difficult time in their Christian experiences. He described this as heaviness and manifold temptations.

These terms do not describe the everyday burdens and problems of living. Everyone, saved or lost, has various difficulties in life. Man born of woman is promised a short life that is full of trouble (Job 14:1). This includes everyone. Everyone gets sick. Everyone has worries and problems in life. But, for the child of God who dedicates himself to the service of the Lord, there is an altogether different set of troubles. These are the problems that come simply because we are trying to live according to God's plan.

Often this is like the heaviness Peter described, a burden that has to be born in addition to all the other problems of life. Often these are many-sided temptations. These can be temptations to sin or temptations to stop serving the Lord. Temptations can come in many forms, but even our temptations can work together for our good.

Peter told us that these times of trouble are like the refiner's fire that purifies the gold. Precious metals often contain impurities that weaken and devalue them. To remove these impurities, the refiner heats the metal to a liquid state and then removes the impurities that are separated by the process. The metal that is left is then pure. The trial of a child of God is a way God has of removing all those things from our lives including all those things that are really not important and concentrating our attention on the things that truly matter for time and eternity.

The precious metals of earth will perish, but the trial of our faith, the refining process, will reveal eternal truths that will never fade away. The wonderful thing about truth is that it is always true. Truth never goes away or becomes obsolete. Truth is eternal, and, when truth is revealed and believed, we have a treasure that will never perish.

This does not suggest that our trials are not severe or painful at the moment, but it does teach us that the eventual result of our trials is to reveal the purpose and plan of God fully. This will result in the praise and honor of Jesus when He comes again.

Peter had seen the resurrected Jesus, but he knew that those to whom he wrote had not. Peter challenged them to have faith in what they had not seen with their eyes. That kind of faith will produce real rejoicing, even in the middle of trouble. The joy God gives the hearts of those who trust Him cannot be put into words. It is a glorious and wonderful experience that will come to the heart of anyone who will truly believe in the promises Jesus has given.

III. The End of Faith

I Peter 1:9-12

- 9. Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.**
- 10. Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:**

11. Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

12. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

A child of God is to love Jesus, trust Jesus, rejoice in Jesus and above all actually receive all the precious promises God has given to him in His Word. The way God blesses us is through our receiving and acting on the promises He has given us. When we do, salvation is the result.

The ultimate climax of history that will happen when Jesus comes again to the earth is the subject of the prophets of the Old Testament. These men searched diligently for clues to the timing of these wonderful events. They had the testimony of the Holy Spirit as He revealed the truth to them and through them, and they sought to put the pieces of this great puzzle together.

The eternal plan of God was revealed more and more as time went by, and now it is coming to its fruition rapidly. Whatever else we can say about prophecies concerning the second coming, it is safe to say that we are nearer right now to the second coming of Jesus than we have ever been in history.

The fulfillment of the eternal plan of God is not only the subject of prophets on earth, it was of interest to the angels in Heaven. Heaven, as well as earth, has a great interest in the things that are happening all around us. The Christians of the early Roman empire were a part of a vast plan that has taken shape through the ages and is still unfolding in the world today.

Realizing this will help us in time of trouble. The things that happen all around us are not accidents, they are all a part of the wonderful plan of God that will come together when Jesus comes again, establishes His earthly kingdom and rules in righteousness and justice for a thousand years.

A FINAL WORD

One key to enduring trials is to realize exactly what happened when we were born again. Many people have never been

saved and for them, this world is all the blessing they will ever know. But for those who have trusted Jesus as their personal Savior, the future is always as bright as the promises of God.

Every saved person, small or great, is a part of a great eternal plan that has been spoken of by prophets through the ages and is being observed by the angels in Heaven as it unfolds on earth. God has called us to glory. There is glory now as we understand and appropriate His Word and there is glory in our future as we walk forward to our glad reunion with Jesus.

Every child of God can look up in times of trial to the moment when his earthly life ends and eternal blessings begin or to the soon coming of Jesus Christ. These inevitable and sure promises will bring hope to the heart of any child of God.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Discuss what it means to be saved and secure in Christ forever.
2. Why should Christians be positive and glowing with hope?
3. Discuss the four characteristics of our inheritance in Christ (1 Peter 1:4) and what it means to you.
4. Why do you think Christians are called to endure trials of their faith? To what are trials compared?