

^{NIV} **1 Peter 1:1** Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God's elect exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, ²who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

³Praise 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, ⁴and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, ⁵who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

The readers were exiles from Rome living in what is now northern Turkey. Peter would use their exile status to illustrate that all Christians are exiles on Earth, Heavenly citizens temporarily in a foreign culture. This helps explain why we sometimes suffer.

All believers, like the readers, are chosen by God for salvation, and consecrated by the Holy Spirit for salvation, for entry into the New Covenant with God through Christ's blood, and for representing God by obedience. So no matter what we are going through, we can know God values us and loves us!

Every person is born with a corrupted human nature and guilt before God, and then commits sins [thoughts or actions against God's character or will]. Everyone is spiritually dead, but God offers spiritual life, a new birth, when we put our faith in Christ as the unique "divine man" and deliverer who died to pay the penalty for our sin. This show of grace and mercy is further evidence of God's love for us, even if we are suffering.

Christ's resurrection assures us that our salvation is real and that Christ will resurrect us from the dead when he returns, two reasons we can have hope and joy even when we struggle in this life: ultimately, we will be delivered into God's presence, to enjoy an eternal life free from pain and sorrow; the inheritance that is waiting for us is guaranteed and good! And if we come to faith in Christ, then our salvation is protected by God.

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⁶In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.⁷ These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith-- of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire-- may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

¹⁰Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, ¹¹trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow. ¹²It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

Because we are exiles in a corrupted world, we will continue to suffer and struggle. Knowing this should lead us to accept it as a part of Christian life, and prevent us from doubting God's love or goodness when we struggle. God will use these trials to strengthen and prove the genuineness of our faith, which will result in rewards when Christ returns. The assurance that suffering does not indicate God's displeasure and that God will use it to good purpose are two reasons we can experience hope and joy even when times are hard.

We have the writings of the Old Testament prophets and the New Testament authors to enlighten us about Christ and his gospel. The prophets and other Old Testament believers could only hope to see the day that Christ came and to experience the promises of the New Covenant, including assurance of salvation and the purifying work of the Holy Spirit. Angels wish they could understand what we have. We are extra blessed to live in this time between when Christ first came and when he will return, as we get to experience these blessings and know that Christ's work on the cross provided for them, so they are guaranteed. These are more reasons to realize how blessed we are, even when suffering.

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