

^{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. ⁶In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷These 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.

- Who was Peter and who was he writing to?
- Why were these people “exiles” who were scattered across Asia/Asia Minor?
 - The New Living Translation refers to these exiles as “strangers in a new world.” How do the Christians of this New World relate to the nation of Israel in the Old Testament?
 - Why might it be important to align the story of the new Church with the ancient story of Israel?
- What does Peter mean by Christ as our “living hope” (v.4)
- What phrase does Peter use to describe our new identify through Christ?
- How does verse 9 give us a practical understanding of what God wants for his people?
- Notice how Peter says “you *are* receiving the ends result of your faith.” (v.9) In what ways do you see how “eternity starts now” (as The Message phrases it)?
- What is the purpose of trials and sufferings? How do you see them strengthening your faith?
- If you're honest, does this suffering seem worth the cost to you? How can we pray or encourage one another to lean into suffering when it doesn't seem “worth it”?
- From what you know of the Old Testament, how do the prophets speak of a timeless call to turn to God in the midst of suffering? In contrast, where did people turn (and still turn), when they wanted to avoid suffering?