

1 Peter

September 2, 2007

Verses 1:1-5

I. Introduction to Class

The Life Application Bible introduces the book with the following:

“Crushed, overwhelmed, devastated, torn—these waves of feelings wash over those who suffer, blinding all vision of hope and threatening to destroy them. Suffering has many forms—debilitating disease, physical abuse, social ostracism, substance addiction, persecution. The pain and anguish tempt a person to turn back, to surrender, to give in.”

Suffering is a part of life. The book of 1 Peter is about living the Christian life in a fallen world. Unfortunately, many Christians lead their lives becoming a part of the world...not the way in which Peter will exhort us to live.

II. Some Data

Peter probably wrote this book slightly before 64 A.D from Rome. In many ways, the book sounds like Paul could have written it, perhaps as explained by Paul’s associate Silas helping Peter to write this book (5:12)

III. Key Passage

1 Peter 2:11-12

11 Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. 12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. (NIV)

IV. Suffering as a Part of Living

1 Peter 1:6-7

6 In 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 your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. (NIV)

Next week, we will dig deeply into this verse and will look at other parts of the Bible that support it. What do you see when you read and study this verse?

For today, we want to concentrate on the reference to this part of the passage: “In this you greatly rejoice.” What is the “in this”? As we go through the first

five verses, we will get the answer to this. Peter tells us how we should live in this world.

V. Opening Salutations

1 Peter 1:1-2

To God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, 2 who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance. (NIV)

The five place locations are all regions in what is today Asia Minor (i.e. Turkey). Therefore, the book is written to Christians in this part of the world.

SUB-ANSWER #1: "Strangers in the world"

While obviously not the entire answer, Peter begins by noting that Christians are not part of this world. The implication is that we are citizens of a different world as Abraham was a stranger in Canaan and Moses when he left Egypt the first time. Also note Phil 3:20.

SUB-ANSWER #2" "Scattered throughout"

Actually the phrase means Diaspora, a term usually used for Jews dispersed or scattered throughout the Gentile world. Obviously, this goes with strangers. In this world, we are strangers in a strange land.

SUB-ANSWER #3: "Who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God"
God has chosen the Christian from before the creation of the world (Eph 1:4). God's foreknowledge is the beginning of God's redemptive work in us (Rom. 8:29-30). Of course, the Jews were the "chosen people."

SUB-ANSWER #4: "Sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ"

The Spirit separates the Christian from the world to become more like Christ. This is also a Jewish concept, as can be seen as being the reason for some sacrifices: **Lev 22:15-16:**

15 They shall not profane the holy gifts of the sons of Israel which they offer to the LORD, 16 and so cause them to bear punishment for guilt by eating their holy gifts; for I am the LORD who sanctifies them.'" (NASU)

SUB-ANSWER #5: "Sprinkling by his blood"

Of course, the NT sprinkling of blood refers to Jesus' blood shed on the cross. The sense is that the blood cleanses us from guilt of our sins. This is also another obvious reference to the OT.

Heb 10:22

2 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. (NIV)

SUB-ANSWER #6: “Grace and peace be yours in abundance”

Paul begins all thirteen of his books with this salutation, interspersed with mercy (see next verse) in 1 Timothy. Peter also starts 2 Peter with it. What does it mean?

VI. God’s Mercy, Our New Birth

1 Peter 1:3

3 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, (NIV)

SUB-ANSWER #7: “God’s Mercy”

All that God has given us is through His mercy, not because of the righteous things that we have done. (Titus 3:5)

SUB-ANSWER #8: “New birth in to a living hope through...Jesus Christ”

The new birth is important to Peter, and we will see him reference it again in this book. John 3:16 is obviously the most famous reference to it. What does “living hope” mean? Why is the resurrection of Jesus Christ?

VII. Unlimited Benefits

1 Peter 1:3-4

4 and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade-kept in heaven for you (NIV)

SUB-ANSWER #9: Unlimited “inheritance”

Unable to describe it in positive terms, Peter describes the unlimited nature of the great inheritance that the Christian will receive, by pointing that common kinds of decay will never affect it. The inheritance is acceptance in the kingdom of light (Col. 1:12). Often, the NT use of inheritance refers to Abraham’s inheritance (Heb. 11:8).

VIII. A Shield for Today

1 Peter 1:5

5 who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. (NIV)

SUB-ANSWER #10: “Shielded by God’s power until the coming...”

While the Christian waits for Christ’s second coming, they know that they have God’s power to shield them today. Paul speaks of this as putting on the armor of God!

IX. Attitude for Living While Suffering

So what is the attitude that the Christian should demonstrate when faced with difficulties in this life?