

International Bible Lessons Commentary

1 Peter 1:3-16

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Sunday, May 5, 2013

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The **International Bible Lesson** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, May 5, 2013**, is from **1 Peter 1:3-16**; verses 1-3 also included below. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lessons Commentary* (formerly, *Bible Lesson Forum*) below. **Study Hints for Thinking Further** discuss the five questions below to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion; these hints are available on the **International Bible Lessons Commentary** website. For additional **International Bible Lesson Commentaries**, see the complete and comprehensive **International Bible Lessons Commentary Index**. The weekly **International Bible Lesson** is posted each Saturday before the lesson is scheduled to be taught at **<http://InternationalBibleLessons.org>** and in **[The Oklahoman](#)** newspaper.

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1 Peter 1:3-16

(1 Peter 1:1) Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

The Apostle Peter wrote this letter to Jewish Christians (to those Jews dispersed or scattered when the Assyrians dispersed the Northern Kingdom and to those who moved to these areas for business or personal reasons or to escape persecution) and to Gentile Christians (the meaning of “exiles” can also mean those who are away from their heavenly home and await Jesus’ return) in the area of what is modern Turkey between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea.

(1 Peter 1:2) who have been chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled with his blood: May grace and peace be yours in abundance.

God deserves and should receive the glory and praise for the fact that anyone becomes a Christian. Christian faith is a response to learning the truth of the good news as God graciously works through the Holy Spirit to influence the believer. Christian faith is God’s gift and our response to God’s work in Christ on Earth and the Holy Spirit’s work within us. God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit set apart believers to live holy and obedient to Jesus Christ. His blood (Jesus’ sacrificial death on the cross) provides forgiveness for sin and cleansing from sin. God’s grace includes the unearned and unmerited blessing and power of God that

God gives believers so they can live daily as faithful representatives of Jesus Christ. Peace with God and peace within are fruits of the Christian faith and life. Obedience to Jesus Christ is an indication that a believer has been chosen and destined by God to enjoy saving faith in Jesus Christ. Obedience to Jesus Christ is not a means of earning salvation, but is an indication that a believer is saved and sanctified (set apart by God for God's holy purposes).

(1 Peter 1:3) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

The word blessed can mean happy. When Christians walk by faith, they can bring happiness to God. Peter remembered and wrote in his letter that our Lord Jesus Christ talked about and prayed to God as His heavenly Father (since Jesus is the Son of God). By our way of life, we show our love for God and our desire to bring happiness to our Lord Jesus Christ and our heavenly Father. God's love and grace moved God to extend mercy toward us through His Son. True Christians enjoy a new birth; therefore, Christians should live as differently from the darkness of this world as a baby lives differently from the darkness of life in their mother's womb. Because Jesus rose from the dead, we now have hope for a better life and future after we die.

(1 Peter 1:4) and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,

As exiles, our true home is heaven until we return to Earth when Jesus Christ returns as visible Lord. As exiles, our hope is in the future that God has prepared for us. Since Jesus Christ died for us, believers will inherit what Jesus has prepared for them through His death and resurrection. Since Jesus rose from the dead, He guarantees we will receive our inheritance as believers in Him. Our inheritance is not like a worldly inheritance that someone might receive or another person might steal from us. Some receive a worldly inheritance that has been defiled by the sins of their parents, but Jesus did not sin so our inheritance from Him is undefiled. The inheritance God has planned to give us will never be defiled, but is pure and holy, an inheritance that God plans for us to put to a holy use in heaven and someday on Earth.

(1 Peter 1:5) who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Not only does God protect our inheritance, He also protects us so we will receive our inheritance even though we may suffer and die for our faith (as Peter knew he would die for his faith). God's gracious power will help us maintain a strong faith no matter what our earthly circumstances. Our faith in Jesus Christ our Lord will result in our salvation, which will be fully revealed in the last time (when Jesus Christ returns to Earth as visible Lord and King over all creation).

(1 Peter 1:6) In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials,

Peter and Paul both suffered in prison in Rome, and both died for their faith in Jesus Christ and for continuing to declare the truth of the good news about Jesus Christ in all circumstances. Suffering in this life for any reason and in any way will always be for a little while compared to rejoicing for eternity with Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, whose very presence face-to-face with us will be the most wonderful inheritance.

(1 Peter 1:7) so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Testing, trials, and suffering can give Christians the opportunity to show God and others that we genuinely live by faith in Jesus Christ instead of just saying that we believe in Jesus while living by this world's standards and values. Faith in Jesus Christ, trusting in Jesus Christ while we live and even suffer, is more precious than possessing gold, for our faith can bring praise, glory, and honor to Jesus Christ when He returns and everyone sees Him.

(1 Peter 1:8) Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy,

Typically, Christians do not see Jesus until they die or when He returns, though some claim to have seen visions of Jesus Christ (Who is now seated at the right hand of God the Father). The Bible does not encourage us to try to see Jesus in any way before we die or He returns (to try to see Jesus in this life can lead us into deception). Rather, Peter wrote that without seeing Jesus, by God's grace through faith we love Jesus, we believe in Jesus, we rejoice in knowing Jesus, and we can give Jesus praise and glory and honor now and forever. The glorious joy of knowing Jesus without having seen Him is indescribable with our limited human language.

(1 Peter 1:9) for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Our inner spiritual reality, our souls, who we really are spiritually as created in the image of God, indwells our material, physical, fleshly human bodies. As a result of faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, when we die we will go to heaven (our souls will experience salvation). In heaven, we will enjoy our inheritance until Jesus Christ returns to Earth, at which time we will receive our resurrected glorified human bodies and be whole again.

(1 Peter 1:10) Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours made careful search and inquiry,

The prophets and other writers of the Old Testament wrote very little about life after death, though many Old Testament figures talked about going to Sheol after they died. They did not know, in spite of careful, prayerful, inquiry, as much as Jesus would reveal about grace, salvation, eternal life, and the type and quality of life after death that would be given to believers (they believed what God revealed and that they would receive God's promises).

(1 Peter 1:11) inquiring about the person or time that the Spirit of Christ within them indicated when it testified in advance to the sufferings destined for Christ and the subsequent glory.

The Spirit of Christ, before He was born and came to Earth as a human being, worked within the Old Testament prophets and testified (a legal term for telling the truth under a legal oath to tell the truth) to them. No one prophet knew all the details of how Jesus would come and what He would do, but some knew and revealed that Jesus would suffer, die, and rise from the dead, and His body would not decay when it rested in His tomb. They learned these truths in different ways, different times, and in different places. Only Jesus has fulfilled these many and varied prophecies.

(1 Peter 1:12) It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in regard to the things that have now been announced to you through those who brought you good news by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look!

These prophets did learn that there prophecies would not be fulfilled in their lifetime, but would be fulfilled in the lifetime of others. The prophets foretold the good news about Jesus that Peter and the other apostles experienced and proclaimed. The Holy Spirit (sent from heaven where Jesus now sits on His throne) also worked within His disciples and enabled those who witnessed the good news of Jesus to tell others truthfully (to testify) about salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Angels enjoy watching the work of salvation and rejoice when sinners repent and come to saving faith. The angels enjoy watching believers when they live faithful lives according to the Scriptures in the power of the Holy Spirit.

(1 Peter 1:13) Therefore prepare your minds for action; discipline yourselves; set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed.

Some who say they believe in Jesus Christ mistakenly think that because once upon a time they said they believed in Jesus that they can continue to live in their disobedient, sinful, and self-centered ways. Peter and the other apostles declared that true Christian belief leads to a life of faithful action and obedience. Believers

prepare their minds for action as they follow (obey) Jesus Christ daily as their Lord. Believers discipline themselves to serve Jesus and others faithfully, rather than do whatever they desire or practice whatever sins they did before their new birth gave them a living hope.

(1 Peter 1:14) Like obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires that you formerly had in ignorance.

Our heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus our Elder Brother, expect believers in Jesus Christ to live as obedient children. Obedient children of God live differently from those who live in sin. If we once lived immorally to please ourselves supremely and selfishly, we now love and live for God. We now seek to know and do the will of God in the power of God. We need the Bible, the Holy Scriptures, and the light of the Holy Spirit to give us guidance and strength daily to know and do the will of God and avoid the immoral ways of this world.

(1 Peter 1:15) Instead, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct;

God, Who is holy, Who has set himself apart from selfishness and self-centeredness in order to love and serve others, will not set a lower standard of behavior for His children, whom He expects to love God, others, and themselves. God the Father and Jesus Christ live morally pure, and when they give new birth to believers, these believers can trust in God to help them live morally pure too.

(1 Peter 1:16) for it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

Peter referred back to the Hebrew Scriptures that the Spirit of Christ (or the Holy Spirit) had inspired so the Scriptures could serve as another witness that what he wrote was true. The meaning of the word “shall” in this verse includes what a believer should do, should strive to do, and will actually do as the grace and power of God through the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures enable them.

Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. Give one reason God has chosen, destined, and sanctified you as a Christian.
2. How has God given Christians a new birth and a living hope?
3. How does Peter describe the inheritance of Christians? What does that lead you to think about God? How does knowing these truths make you feel?
4. Give one reason Christians suffer various trials on earth.
5. Does someone need to see Jesus in order to become a true believer in Jesus? Why is this truth important for both believers and unbelievers to know?

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