



# BIBLE IN A YEAR 2020



## Summary

This is a letter written to remind a scattered and suffering people about who God has made them to be in Christ. Their new “born again” identity and spiritual empowerment can bring them hope to live like Jesus, face injustice and respond with blessing and love. Peter describes what to expect and do differently as Christians look for this idea to turn into practical reality.

**Bern Leckie**

# **Wednesday February 12: 1 Peter 1-2**

**Life isn't fair, but God is still working with you**

Every day we're reading or listening to part of the Bible together and sharing thoughts with you. Today it's Bern Leckie:

## **What did I like about today's reading?**

Peter is writing to scattered people who believe in Jesus but aren't living their ideal life. I love that he gets to the heart of this tension between challenge in our circumstances and faith in something far better, even if hope is in something unseen that might feel far away.

While Peter spent time with Jesus, he knew that most of the world did not. I love that he recognises this – “though 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.”

Peter knew why Jesus' followers were scattered because he had seen some of their suffering. Christians were being blamed and punished for lots of things going wrong in Roman society at the time. Some fled if they could, but all felt distant like “exiles” as they had not yet experienced the full coming of the kingdom Jesus had promised.

In response, I love that Peter started by reminding people of who they were since being born again, holy children of God, and stones being built by God into a spiritual house. Only from this base of knowing their identity could Christians live godly lives and choose to love and honour even the people who were causing their suffering. But because God gave them the strength to do this, God could be recognised and glorified.

## **What did it show me about Father God, Jesus or the Holy Spirit?**

God is a loving father and a great builder. Just as he built a society which would point the way to him in the Old Testament, he builds the church out of a people (us!) that he has called his own so that the rest of the world can recognise him today.

Everything God builds rests on Jesus. We would not be holy if we had not been purified by his sacrifice for us. We would not know that it was possible to love in response to suffering if we had not known Jesus' example or been filled and empowered by his Spirit. Where hope was previously hidden, Jesus has revealed it, making the unseen God knowable.

## **What am I going to do differently as a result?**

There are times when I push back against things I think are unfair with rudeness and a lack of love. I'm doing this in my own strength rather than with God's blessing, and I need to follow Peter's advice to “show proper respect to everyone” instead.

## **Who am I going to share this with?**

Let's see how this goes in practice! I'll let you know...

# **Saturday February 15: 1 Peter 3-5**

## **Expect suffering and glory**

Every day we're reading or listening to part of the Bible together and sharing thoughts with you. Today it's Bern Leckie:

### **What did I like about today's reading?**

Peter's ask seems like a big one – “repay evil with blessing.” Is that even possible? It's harder than just ignoring evil or pretending it doesn't affect us. But I love Peter's encouragement that, based on who we are in Jesus, we can do incredible things like this.

And then people will love us, right? No, that's not what Peter tells Christians to expect necessarily. We might even suffer for doing good, just as Jesus did.

I'm not liking the idea of suffering, but I am loving that God calls, blesses, strengthens and enables us to live a life like Jesus, being part of his ultimate victory over sin and death. God does not allow suffering in our lives to make us more perfect through misery. We are already holy in Christ. But he does make the power of Christ visible through our lives if we let him shape our responses to unfairness and suffering.

This is glory: the recognition of God. I love that God makes himself recognisable in us without us having to turn into megaphone-wielding proclaimers of the coming kingdom. That might be someone's job, but I feel that mine is more like being “prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.”

### **What did it show me about Father God, Jesus or the Holy Spirit?**

God brings us the power, ability and responsibility to live well, glorifying him. He cares for us, so while we may suffer for doing good, it is not God's intention for us to suffer unbearably. He offers the immediate benefits of spiritual gifts, strength, blessing, power, wisdom, supportive community, the ability to learn and change, and an incredible purpose in life. On top of that, we have eternity with him to look forward to.

### **What am I going to do differently as a result?**

I feel that there may be more situations coming up when I'll need to be prepared to share about my hope. What should that preparation be? I don't think God needs me to script a response – with the Spirit's help, I'm usually OK with words! But I do need to reflect with God on where I have needed and seen hope from him making a difference in my life. And I need to ask myself and God: is hope something I am expressing with my actions as well as words? No-one will ask me about a hope they can't see! How can I make it more visible?

### **Who am I going to share this with?**

In our multicultural school community, I have felt blessed with opportunities to try and make good things happen despite challenging circumstances. I'm hoping and working for many more. I'm also waiting for people to ask about hope before I share about my source!