



Peter & Easter

1 Peter 4:12-19¹

“Easter” may be defined as the “annual Christian festival in commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” Many Christians prefer to call it “Resurrection Day” or “Resurrection Sunday.”

Peter Before the Resurrection

Peter was part of Jesus’ inner circle of disciples (*Mark 5:37; 9:2; 14:33*). He was a *believer*. When Jesus asked his disciples, “Who do you say I am?” Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ Jesus replied, ‘Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven’ (*Matthew 16:15b-17*).

However, Peter had his failures in belief and trust. He could not accept Jesus’ prediction of his death (*Matthew 16:21-22*) because he did “not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns” (*16:23b*). Peter was often misdirected in response to Jesus’ words and actions (*e.g., John 13:6-9; 18:10-11*). He pronounced his loyalty to Jesus (*Matthew 26:33, 35*), but when trouble came, he denied Jesus three times (*26:69-75*) just as Jesus had predicted (*26:34*).



However, after his resurrection Jesus “appeared to [Peter]” (*1 Corinthians 15:5; Luke 24:34*).

Peter After the Resurrection

After Jesus appeared to him, Peter boldly proclaimed Jesus’ death and resurrection and the way of salvation (*Acts 2:14-41, 3:11-26; 4:8-12*). When Jewish leaders commanded Peter and John to stop speaking about Jesus, they refused to stop. They said, “...we are unable to stop speaking about what we have seen and heard” (*Acts 4:19-20*). The man who once denied association with Jesus due to fear became a courageous Christ-follower.² According to tradition, Peter suffered and died *because* of his faith. He wrote 1 Peter to encourage others who were facing opposition.

1 Peter & the Resurrection

In our study of 1 Peter, we have seen the importance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

- *Christ’s vindication and victory.* “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit.” (*3:18, NIV*). “Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.” (*1:21, NIV*)
- *Our salvation and hope.* We are saved “by the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (*3:21*). We are given “new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (*1:3, NIV*).

The resurrection is not only important, it is essential! Without the resurrection of Jesus Christ, our faith is useless; we are still in our sins.³

¹ 1 Peter 4:12-19 does not refer directly to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, so it’s not an obvious ‘Easter passage.’ However, since today is ‘Easter,’ we will view it in light of the resurrection.

² Peter’s life was greatly changed after the risen Christ appeared to him. *Question:* Is it necessary to physically see the risen Christ to believe in his resurrection and have a strong faith? No! (*1 Peter 1:8*) The Bible provides reliable eye-witness testimony (see *John 20:29-31; Luke 1:1-4*) and the Holy Spirit continues to testify about Jesus Christ (see *Acts 5:32; John 15:26*). There is very good reason to believe! See *The Resurrection of Christ* on the ICF website.

³ Paul wrote, ‘And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith... And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins’ (*1 Corinthians 15:14, 17, NIV*).

Christian Suffering & the Resurrection

- ❑ Jesus Christ suffered for doing good (*1 Peter 2:21-23; 3:18*). Christians are called to follow in his steps, which includes suffering (*2:21; 3:17; 4:1*).
- ❑ Read 1 Peter 4:12-19. Peter says, “do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you⁴... But rejoice... as you participate in the sufferings of Christ.” (*4:12-13*) Peter also says, “if you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed” (*4:14*).

1. How can Peter say these things? Why should suffering Christians “rejoice”? Why are mistreated Christians “blessed?” (*1:3-6, 4:13-14*)⁵

📖 *Jesus said, “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven.” (Matthew 5:11-12, NIV)*



- ❑ Though Christ “was put to death in the body” he was “made alive in the Spirit” (*3:18*). He “has gone into heaven and is at God’s right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him” (*3:22*). The path of Jesus is the path of suffering, but it’s also the path to victory, honor and glory! Christians should consider the path of Jesus and be encouraged.
 - 📖 “...let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (*Hebrews 12:1b-2, NIV*)
 - ❑ We suffer for different reasons. Some suffering and shame are deserved, but following Christ and suffering for him are nothing to be ashamed of, despite what society thinks! (*4:15-16*)⁶ So those who suffer for doing good should entrust themselves to God, as Jesus did (*4:19; 2:23*).
2. The Bible teaches that Christians can rejoice through suffering because Jesus was raised from the dead. What do you think? What do *you* believe about the resurrection? Why?
 3. What difference should the resurrection make in the daily lives of Christians? How does it make a difference in *your* life? (e.g., *1 Peter 1:3-6; Ephesians 1:18-21*)

Reflection/Application

- Do you believe that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead? If not, seek to know why so many people *do* believe (ask Jay for resources). Seek answers to the question: Who is Jesus?
- The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a fundamental belief in *becoming* a Christian. However, the significance of the resurrection should be realized in the Christian’s daily life. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is at work in the Christian’s life (*Ephesians 1:18-21*). Reflect on 1 Peter 1:3-6, 2 Corinthians 4:14-18, and Romans 6:1-14, and be encouraged.

⁴ ‘fiery ordeal’ – not necessarily severe persecution, but reflects 1:6-7 where Peter says various trials have come to test and prove the genuineness of their faith, like refining fire. Since Christ was opposed and mistreated, Christ-followers should not be surprised when they are opposed and mistreated. Such is life in a world opposed to God.

⁵ The full realization of joy lies beyond our present suffering. It’s described as ‘a living hope,’ eternal inheritance, and complete salvation (*1:3-5*). This ‘living hope’ brings joy into our present lives. We are ‘blessed’ not only because we inherit the blessings of the kingdom of heaven (*Matthew 5:10-12*), but because ‘the Spirit of glory and of God’ rests on us (*1 Peter 3:14*). Joy is a ‘fruit’ of the indwelling Holy Spirit (*Galatians 5:22*).

⁶ Verses 17-18: ‘judgment...God’s household’ (v. 17) refers to God’s purification of the church through suffering. ‘hard for the righteous to be saved’ (v. 18) refers to the difficulties in living the Christian life due to suffering.