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**The Assurance of Salvation and New Identity in
I Peter as Grounds for Ethical Exaltation and
Motivation for Enduring Suffering**

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Introduction	1
I. Historical Background of 1 Peter	2
II. Peter’s Perspective on Suffering	4
III. The New Identity and Assurance of Salvation	7
IV. Perseverance through Suffering.....	9
V. Peter Ethics of Exhortation and Motivation.....	10
VI. Contemporary Challenges of Peter’s First Epistle.....	12

Introduction

The book of first Peter presents various themes like separation, suffering, persecution, glory, hope, courage and pilgrimage. All these have bearing with God’s people *laos*, those living in the northern regions of Asia Minor that were mainly of Gentile origin but not necessarily all Gentiles.² Peter wrote to encourage them to remain faithful to the true in the trials and tribulations ahead. He expects

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² D.W. Burdick, NIV Text notes on first and second Peter (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1985, 1887-88). Jobes, H.S. in his work do not necessarily see them as such but the reference designate their preset situation “exiles” who may have intermixed with the audience.

these Christian brothers to face opposition, persecution and even perhaps martyrdom. However, in the face of these sufferings, he encourages them to be holy as faithful witnesses even in the presence of unjust, sufferings³ (1Peter 1:16).

The apostle Peter wrote this epistle shortly before the Neronian persecution outbreak. It is quite certainly written from Rome – designated as Babylon (5:13), a city with pagan populace (4:12), with the possibility that the homeless *paroikoi* might face official persecution because of their Christian identity (4:15ff).⁴ The references to persecution and suffering are based on righteousness and victory as our motivation to remain firm in the faith.⁵ At this time, Christianity was regarded as of itself a crime against the state. Thus, it was suggested in pursuance of these arguments that the main parts of the epistle (1:3-4:11) consists of a sermon to a group of newly baptised converts; incorporated in a letter to meet a crisis of persecution.⁶

Hence, the essence of Peter's writing was to enlighten, comfort and strengthen the readers through their period of suffering and trials.⁷ Travis Williams situates the persecutions among one of the empire wide pogroms carried out during the respective reigns of three notorious Roman emperors: Nero, Domitian and Trajan.⁸

I. Historical Background of 1 Peter

The authorship of 1 Peter has traditionally been attributed to the Apostle Peter because it bears his name and identifies him as its author (1:1). Although the text identifies Peter as its author the language, dating, style, and structure of this letter has led many scholars to conclude that this letter is pseudonymous. Many scholars are convinced that Peter was not the author of this letter because the author had to have a formal education in rhetoric/philosophy and an

³ D. Swartz, Exwgesis of First Peter 3:13-22. Presented at Central conference Western Wisconsin District Pastoral Conference, 1990, 1-4. In <http://wisessays.net/./SwartzPeter.pdf> 12/10/12.

⁴ G.E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company), 594.

⁵ Swartz, 5.

⁶ R. Heard, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (NY: Harper and Brothers, 1950), 531-38.

⁷ H.C.R. Lenski, *Interpretation of First and Second Peter*.

⁸ T.B. Williams, "Suffering from a critical Oversight: The persecution of 1 Peter within Modern scholarship Current" *Biblical Research*, 10(2), 275-79.

advanced knowledge of the Greek language but P. Achtemeier,⁹ argues that this Greek does not seem too advanced for Peter. It is one of the more polished Greek texts in the New Testament with much classical vocabulary and rhetorical Greek. Hence there are arguments against Petrine authorship among scholars who note that this letter could be written under Peter's apostolic authority or it was written by an amanuensis, but shortly after his death (enabling the date to be later, after more formal persecution of believers with the Roman Empire began).

Graham Stanton¹⁰ rejects Petrine authorship because 1 Peter was most likely written during the reign of Domitian in AD 81 that is when he believes widespread Christian persecution began, which is long after the death of Peter. Schreiner debunked this idea, adding that Nero's reign was also difficult for Christian believers, easily providing reason for writing this epistle.¹¹ There is no evidence however, of an empire-wide persecution of believers occurring, only general oppression. Thus, the charges that believers face in this epistle (3:15, 4:14-16) are typical of what any believer could face. Bartlett (1998)¹² supports Achtemeier on Petrine authorship because they are convinced that 1 Peter is dependent on the Pauline epistles and thus was written after Paul's ministry because it shares many of the same motifs espoused in Ephesians, Colossians, and the Pastoral Epistles. One theory used to support Petrine authorship of 1 Peter is the "secretarial hypothesis", which suggests that 1 Peter was dictated by Peter and was written in Greek by his secretary, Silvanus (5:12). It was however, suggested that the notion of Silvanus as secretary or author or drafter of 1 Peter represents little more than a counsel of despair and introduces more problems than it solves because the Greek rendition of 5:12 suggests that Silvanus was not the secretary, but the courier/bearer of 1 Peter.¹³ On the one hand, some modern scholars are convinced that the language, dating, literary style, and

⁹ Achtemeier, P. *Peter I* (Hermeneia: Fortress Press, 1986).

¹⁰ G. Stanton, *Commentary of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003).

¹¹ R. T. Scheriner, *Introduction to 1 Peter. In The Esv Study Bible* (Wheaton: Crossway Bibles, 2007).

¹² D. Bartlett, *New Interpreters Bible Commentary, 1 Peter*. (Abingdon Press, 1998).

¹³ J. Elliot, *1 Peter: Anchor Bible Commentary* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2001).

structure of this text makes it implausible to conclude that 1 Peter was written by Peter; according these scholars, it is more likely that 1 Peter is a pseudonymous letter, written later by one of the disciples of Peter in his honor. On the other hand, some modern scholars argue that there is not enough evidence to conclude that Peter did not write 1 Peter. For instance, there are similarities between 1 Peter and Peter's speeches in the Biblical book of Acts.¹⁴ Ultimately, the authorship of 1 Peter remains contested.

Amidst this controversy, there are strong evidences in general support of Petrine authorship.¹⁵ Internally, this epistle affirms that the author is Peter (1:1) and he claims to be an eyewitness to Christ (5:1); intertextuality favours this epistle as the authorship of Peter based on his speeches recorded in Acts (ch. 2, 4). Besides, the church would not have accepted pseudonymous books hence the early church attestation to Peter's authorship.¹⁶ The epistle is also well spiced with Old Testament ideas and images as found in the Gospels.

II. Peter's Perspective on Suffering

Although the believers were redeemed by Jesus Christ, it does not preclude them from suffering.¹⁷ In Christ, the believers' suffering produces perseverance, character and hope according to Rom.5:3-4. Thus, suffering can be viewed as part of the *koinonia* with Christ's suffering. Peter's perspective on suffering begins in (1:3-9) by pointing out that our hope is fixed on Christ, the essence and substance of our faith in achieving the ultimate end in the future. The present suffering and trials is the furnace for purifying our faith in Him at the *parousia*. On this premise, the believers are free to comport themselves in obedience and holiness; the only key to vindication in the hour of unjust persecution in the hand of their oppressor (2:19).

¹⁴ K. Daniel, *First and Second Peter, Jude* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 18. H. Norman, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude, New International Biblical Commentary*, 9. (Peabody, Ma: Hendrickson, 1992), 1-3.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Elliot, 118.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 119

¹⁷ O.L. Richards, *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Regency Reference Library, 1985), 476-477. This author dwelt extensively on the theme of persecution and suffering that shed real insight on the fundamental underpinnings of Christian suffering. The erroneous believe that believers are called to enjoy, runs contrary to the Biblical understanding of the concept of Christian suffering with Christ being our perfect example in all things.

It is this consciousness that makes the believers seek to obey, become obedient and holy, for Christ has also suffered. However, if their acts of good deeds were not repaid with good deeds, then they are to accept it in simple faith, trusting in the ultimate justice of God (2 Cor. 11:23-33). Paul describes Christians as God's children, who are fellow sufferer Christ and co-heirs of His glory and in suffering.¹⁸ Richards perceives that the heart of Paul's concern as we see it in his first epistle is to assure Christians of their hope, in which case, the believers that: i. they need not to fear, ii. To remember that Jesus is Lord and He is in charge of all events, iii. To, despite suffering, display so much hope that others will ask about and, iv. To always keep a good conscience.¹⁹

The reference to Jesus' suffering is to encourage his readers; using His example that did only good, yet He was crucified. Despite these, God will not forsake our good deeds (3:18). Also, reference was made to Noah as the only man who survived the flood with his family shows that God will not forsake His own. Hence in Christ, we have been carried spiritually from the present suffering into a new realm; we need not therefore lose focus but be motivated. Christians should not be surprised at suffering. When we live by the will of God, we suffer a Christians (4:16), and this is a cause for praise rather than shame because in a little while, they shall see His eternal glory (5:10).

Constable posits that the heart of Peter's concern in writing his first letter is to assure Christians of their hope as they face trials. This passage as an opportunity to reflect on the themes of (2:11-4:6), which show how one should respond to ones enemies and how to face hostility and the prospect of suffering.²⁰ E. Clowney notes that Peter considered suffering for Christ as quite normal. There is nothing special in it. It is not strange or extraordinary. The clear message conveyed in this passage is that suffering is part of the natural experience of Christians; it is not something foreign to them.²¹ It would however be strange and unusual if they did not suffer because

¹⁸ N.M. Adiwardana, Biblical Teaching on Perseverance in www.MissionBooks.org/williamcareylibrary.html, 22/11/2012.

¹⁹ Richards, 476.

²⁰ L.T. Constable, Historical Background of 1 Peter. In www.SonicLight.com/Notes on 1 Peter, 2012 Edition.

²¹ E. Clowney, *The Message of 1 Peter* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1988), 51.

of their faith. Christ suffered and it is an indication of identification with Him when His followers suffered as He did. “*Participation in Christ’s suffering is a reason to rejoice, because those who share in his suffering will participate in his glory*” (v. 3).

Scholars note that this sharing is a two-way sharing.²² We share in his sufferings and he shares in ours. We share in his reproach, to share Christ shame is a glorious privilege, to have his fellowship though it be in midst of flame is to have fullness of joy and to partake of his humiliation in this world is the pledge of participation in his glory in the world to come. Thus, to suffer on behalf of Jesus name is a blessing because it is designed that the spirit of glory is present in this person (Matt.5:10-12). The Christian has to glorify God in suffering. God is glorified by the faithful witness of His people.

The spirit of Christ is in the person who suffers. From the point of view of the world, it is strange and uncommon when man has to suffer as it is painful and human beings seek a comfortable life. But persecution and rejection are to be expected by those who follow Christ’s way of life, which is against the world and the flesh. It is against the characteristic of our age.²³ To the Christians, suffering is part of the process of the daily life for those who obey the full gospel; a means of getting them purified to muster strength. Marshall in his conclusion pops a vital question. He asked if it is God’s intention for his people to undergo suffering. In his affirmative response, acknowledged that it was God’s will that Christ should suffer to redeem His people, and He was obedient to God’s will. To be sure, the need arose only because of the evil in the world, but in a world where evil exists its defeat is possible only through suffering. On this backdrop, it is right to say that God’s will for us is suffering. It is not a sign of God’s weakness or lack of love and concern for his children rather; it clearly reveals his divine care for all those who put their confidence on him divine grace and truth.

Because Christians are expected by God to pass through this experience in order to strengthen their faith, they should therefore commit themselves to God while still doing good works. They should

²² C.E.B. Cranfield, *1 & 2 Peter and Jude* (London: SCM Press,1960), 120. V. Gerhdus, “A Sermon on 1 Peter 1:3-5” *Kerux* 1:2 (September, 1986, 4-8).

²³ J.R Michael, *1 Peter* (Waco: Word Books, 1988), 258.

rely and entrust their lives to their Master and Creator because the worth of their souls to God far outweighs the sufferings they are to go through. He, their maker will be more pleased to have them live to share in Christ suffering. The Christian is to rejoice amidst suffering especially on behalf of Christ's name, which provides the means for participating with Him and in His glory. The Apostle Paul also admonished that the believers should rejoice, not just for the now but forevermore. Stibbs is affirmative with the statements of Paul when he adds that the demand for rejoicing is not a single isolated response, rather it is a continuous attitude and activity.²⁴ They have a privileged share in the outworking of God's age-long purpose, according to which Christ enters His glory, through suffering. As the believers suffer for Christ, they are connected to Him; our suffering having a direct bearing with His, serving as the basis on which we can rejoice as co-sufferer with Him for the sake of the Gospel.

Adiwardana²⁵ posits that we have to continue living victoriously and practicing good works, which is contrary to the acceptable norm of human reaction towards suffering. Our first reaction in suffering is "why me?" and after a prolonged period of suffering "where is God?" Thus Peter had to exhort Christians to persevere and even be joyful in suffering instead of the normal automatic human reaction of aversion and bafflement. Clowney²⁶ affirms that suffering for Christ leads to glory and tastes of glory which also gives glory to God. Apostle Peter mentioned that sufferings are borne by Christian's world over and as such, they should resist the devil by standing firm in faith as become of believers (5:9-10). Christ will restore and make them strong, firm and steadfast to the end in yet a little while when He shall appear.

III. The New Identity and Assurance of Salvation

The word beloved or believer is a recurring theme in 1Peter. It is used as a direct address, designating a person who has responded to the gospel message by trusting Jesus and joining the company of others whose lives have found new focus in relationship with the

²⁴ A.M. Stibbs, *The Teaching of the Epistle of Peter. In The First Epistle General of Peter* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1973),178-193.

²⁵ Ibid., 6.

²⁶ Ibid, 56.

Lord.²⁷ The beloved now have access to enjoy privileges of Israel being sprinkled with the blood of Christ; the final sacrifice for sin. Hence, their sins have been cleansed and now they are no longer imputed to them as sinners but as priests and kings who are joint heirs with Christ.

The basis of the new identity is here established in (1:3 to 2:10), which gave the believers a strong reason to hold on to their faith.

The theme of the first part is the identity of the people of God established on the basis of the great salvation Christ has accomplished on their behalf. Their identity as a ‘chosen’ people is affirmed programatically in the address (1:1-2) and confirmed in the concluding pronouncements of (2:9-10) so as to form an inclusion. More broadly, there is an inclusion between the emphasis on the identity of Christians in the first section (1:1-12) and the last section (2:1-10) of part one. In the first section, they are ‘chosen’ as heirs of divine salvation, while in the last, their election is confirmed by the metaphor of priesthood.²⁸

This transition serves as the basis from which Apostle Peter reminded his readers of their new identity as Christians and not as unbelievers. They are therefore to rejoice amidst suffering because ultimately, it will culminate in their glorification. Hiebert²⁹ notes that reference to the “former ignorance” and “futile ways inherited from your fathers” attest to it

“ As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance,... You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your fathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold,” (1:14 & 18).

The assurance of salvation has been seen as the ‘great ideology’ or ‘the Doxology of New Life.’³⁰ Thompson Claude notes that two ideas dominate these verses (1:3-9). Firstly, a doxology for the risen Saviour and the certainty of new life in Christ. Therefore, writing to freighthen people whom he knows face trials, he gives encouragement through praise to God. On this, the believers can stay through Christ’s resurrection as their hope. His resurrection not only guarantees our resurrection but also keeps hope fresh and alive until we join him in

²⁷ B.S. Ferguson, “The Assurance of Salvation” in www.the_highway.com/assurance_ferguson.html, 17/09/12

²⁸ Constable, 5.

²⁹ D.E. Hiebert, *1 Peter* (Winona Lake, Indiana: BMH Books, 1984), 17.

³⁰ C. Thompson, “The First Letter of Peter” in P. Laymon, *The Interpreter Commentary of the Bible*. McGee, *Thru the Bible with J. Vornon McGee*, (5):687.

the life beyond the reach of death; the centrality of the early church's preaching and teaching.

Secondly, the believers' hope is not perishable, undefiled and unfading in nature. Thus, this inheritance is kept for them, a place beyond the reach of their present oppressor and persecutors. Those to receive this imperishable hope are guarded through faith until its possession. It is on the basis of this that many scholars have argued that Paul, John and Peter are apostles of faith, love and hope.³¹

Paul the apostle of faith indicates the magnitude of his assurance when he affirms that he is persuaded, or assured, that nothing can separate him from God's love for him in Christ (Rom. 8:38-39). It became obvious that Paul reached a pinnacle of emotional elation when he speaks of his assurance. He did not blind himself in the process of the harsh realities of life but on the contrary, it is in the path of tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril and sword ... (2 Cor.11:21-29). Paul had a full taste of the obstacles which this world puts on the way to full assurance and it is doubtful if any sinner has known them more intimately and continually. Amidst this, Paul affirms the possibility of assurance. Thus, Peter could rejoice with joy unspeakable and full glory.³²

IV. Perseverance through Suffering

Richard Lawrence notes that the word perseverance in the Bible usually has an active sense. It connotes overcoming difficulties; it is facing pressures and trials that call for a steadfast commitment to doing right and maintaining a godly life. In this dimension, we are encouraged in the New Testament to value trials as they will enable us to develop perseverance (James 1:3-4; 1Peter 1:7).³³

Peter taught on the theme of perseverance in 1Peter 2:4; 12-16, where he exhorted Christians to rejoice in suffering. In (1:7) we see that trials turn out the same impact as fire to gold. Since this is the impact of fire to gold, our trials in God purify our faith in order to remove all forms of impurities. It produces the genuineness of our faith which only rests on Him and His promises. Peter's ultimate challenge was for his readers to be eager to do good, to answer about

³¹ A.C. Paul, *James, 1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 120.

³² Michaels, 250

³³ Richards, 484.

their hope when their fellow inhabitants ask and to accompany this by witnessing through their lifestyle in Christ. Hence, suffering on the account of right deeds is better than evil deeds.³⁴ The exhortation is for them to make positive use of different circumstances, thereby enduring suffering for doing good produces blessings for which they must witness to as part of their hope in Christ's triumphant resurrection, a message he also expressed in his *haustafeln*.³⁵

Therefore, slaves should be ready to suffer as Christ did and to know that they have been freed from their sins to live righteously. They should be motivated to set good examples in their various serving households and the society regardless of their master's attitude towards them³⁶. The beatitude (Matt.5:10) proclaimed the blessedness of those persecuted for righteousness' sake. The fear of suffering and a defence of their faith go together here; with good behaviour, gentleness and reverence, they are to go through pains because sometimes, this witness brings pains as part of God's will.³⁷

The soteriological significance of the believers' new identity comes with grace on which they anchor their faith which carries them through difficult times. Having traded their old identity for the new; suffering is now perceived as integral part of the call to be partaker in Christ's suffering, a furnace to refine their faith and to pour out the new zeal of life to grapple with the effects of suffering.

V. Peter Ethics of Exhortation and Motivation

Peter's ethics of exhortation is purely soteriological in nature. The experience of the new birth gives rise to the new identity which the believers now share in Christ. According to Brooks,³⁸ one cannot say that there can be a rebirth without moral consciousness or that there can be a complete obedience without a sense of self identity.³⁹

The recipients of this epistle are new being or creature (2Cor 5:17), begotten by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, now they have

³⁴ Constable, 7.

³⁵ Isiorhovoja U. O. (2011) "*Haustafeln*: A Deconstruction Reading of the Household Codes in Ephesians 5:22-25 for Sustainable Development in Nigerian Context." *International Journal of Modern Perspectives of Development and Society*, Vol. 1(2), 195-205. See also D. Swartz, *Exegesis of 1 Peter*.

³⁶ Thompson, 1888.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Brooks (1974), 299

³⁹ Ibid.

become part of God's family. They are now in union with Christ through faith; they have Christ as the reason why they have to live their lives for He has become everything to them. The distinction between their status in the eyes of pagan society and that of God; living betwixt two worlds with vital questions in their minds about their new status and faith.

Peter therefore felt it wise to give his exhortation to his beloved scattered in Asia, just to strengthen their faith and to give them greater sense of belonging/identity as the basis for sustaining their experiences and faith. He played the role of a comrade in this epistle by showing to them that in solidarity; they will not be let alone as they go through the experiences. Hence, J. Elliot described it as a tension generated by the inconsistency between their new status as members of God's family and social pressure.⁴⁰ It caused them to question their identity, integrity and the ideology of Christianity. It was on this basis that Peter felt it was essential to exhort his readers in Asia Minor to strengthen the saints of their unique Christian identity and solidarity as well as to give a sustaining rationale for the experience and faith.

F.J. Matera⁴¹ notes basically that Peter draws attention to Christology in order to exhort his audience, showing them how to behave when they encounter underserved suffering. His appeal cannot be separated from his Christological ideas since the example of the suffering and vindicated Lord shows the path for his readers to walk in hope of final exaltation. Martin (1994)⁴² corroborates Matera⁴³, adding that the time between suffering now and the exaltation then is central to Peter's religious exhortation and theological pattern and is grounded on the exhortation. Scholars contend that the daily lives of the readers should be connected to the Christological motivation which Peter applied as ethical exhortation on the particular situations of those addressed. On this basis, Christ himself is to serve as their

⁴⁰ Elliot, 86.

⁴¹ F.J. Marera, *New Testament Christology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999), 100.

⁴² Martin, R.P. "The Composition of 1 Peter in recent study" in R.P. Martin, ed., *Vos Evangelia: Biblical and Historical Essays*, 1, 29-42. In his work (1994:100) similar work was done on the same theme with greater emphasis.

⁴³ Matera, 175-178.

example; taking part in his suffering will lead to taking part in His exaltation.

The relationship between ethical exhortation and Christology is best described as:

In the first part of (1Peter 1:13-17 and 2:1-3), Peter describes the task and the nature of Christian community. Believer's must be holy because God is holy (1:13-16); they must conduct themselves with reverence (1:17), due to the fact that they were ransomed through the blood of Christ (1:18-21). They must rid themselves of all malice (2:1-3), because they come to the living stone, that is Christ (2:2-8). The next section serves as a powerful exhortation for those suffering on account of their faith, to live in a manner worthy of the redemption they have received and to conduct themselves in accordance with their new status as a people of God. The author of 1 Peter roots this moral exhortation in a Christology that focuses on the suffering of Christ, which the opening blessing has already announced (1:10-11). Peter's immediate task was to make sense of the suffering that believers were enduring in the Roman provinces of Asia Minor. Faced with this challenge of Israel's prophets, they foretold the sufferings Christ was to endure and the glory He now enjoys. Presently they suffer as Christ did, but in the future share in His glory, if they persevere in their suffering. The ethical exhortation in the second part of 1 Peter (2:18-20) and (3:13-17) is more specific, as Peter calls upon believers to endure even unjust treatment so that they will silence their opponents by doing what is good (2:11-12). In the process of this exhortation, Peter employs the third (2:21-25) and fourth (3:13-22) of his Christological passages to support his exhortation.⁴⁴

Thus the essence of their status in society is declared in a series of indicative statement that alternates with imperatives calling them to get rid of their previous way of life and live out their new status. That is why Peter prefers to move from the imperatives (a directive about the believers' behaviour)⁴⁵. It was accepted therefore that the ethical exhortation has the task of making sure that the behaviours of believers are in accordance to the prior activity of God.⁴⁶

VI. Contemporary Challenges of Peter's First Epistle

Worthy of note is the ever abiding presence and the unchanging nature of the Christian experiences in relation to suffering. Peter drew the attention of the believers identified as Jewish audience to the knowledge of Christ and to be of good courage. He notes that in

⁴⁴ Ibid, 77.

⁴⁵ M.E. Boring, *1 Peter* (Abingdon New Testament Commentary).

⁴⁶ C.F. Sleeper, "Political Responsibility According to 1 Peter," in *NTS* 10, 270-286.

ancient times, this epistle was understood to have been written to a Jewish audience because of the use of diaspora⁴⁷. Peter tells us, *But, in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.* We can learn and live through whatever the world brings when our faith is in Him; our humbleness is what we bring. The key is to *prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.* And always remember that, *your faith and hope are in God.* The quintessence of our faith and what we do is summarized in these two verses: *So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good. And, Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.*⁴⁸ (1 Peter 1:3, 13, 21; 3:15; 4:19; 5:6-7).

Considering the present wave of crime especially those perpetuated against Christians, it become so relevant for us the re-examine the epistle of 1 Peter in order to fully acquaint ourselves biblical counsel and how best to adapt to the present situation. This eleventh and last test is painful: “Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you” (1 John 3:13). Cain hated Abel and murdered him. Why did Cain do that? “Because his deeds were evil, and his brother’s were righteous” (v. 12). Have you experienced animosity, hostility, rejection, bitterness, alienation, ostracism, prejudice, or outright persecution from representing and advocating what is right? If so, that is a sign that you belong to the One who suffered the same way for the same reason.

The fact is, to the worldly, you as a Christian “have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things” (1 Cor. 4:13). You’re a threat to their belief that this world is all that’s worth living for.” They are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excesses of dissipation, and they malign you” (1 Peter 4:4). However, Scripture says, “[Be] in no way alarmed by your opponents--which is a sign of

⁴⁷ H.K. Jobes, *1 Peter, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 22-23.

⁴⁸ Krejcir, C.J. *Introduction to Peter*, in <http://www.intothyword.org/apps/articles/default.asp> 23/11/12

destruction for them, but of salvation for you” ([Phil. 1:28](#)). When suffering on account of your faith, do not say, “Can I really be a Christian? Things are going so badly, I wonder if God cares.”⁴⁹

There is no better time to have a critical review of this message than now, the present experiences of Christians will find greater succour and comfort in the message of Peter to the believers in diaspora, who have come to find themselves in some challenging situations that need counsel. It also serves as proof test for the faith of the believers to showcase the make of their salvation. David while before King Saul said that he has evidences to show for his capability in dealing with Goliath. He held the skins of wild animals that he had killed while shepherding flock in the field.



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⁴⁹ www.gty.org/resources/positions/p06/is-it-real.