

# Trust

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## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO TRUST GOD?

### PSALM 33:21

1. **It means recognizing that God is trustworthy and then trusting him above all else.**

**Theme:** Because God is Creator, Lord, Savior, and Deliverer, he is worthy of our trust and praise. Because he is faithful and his word is dependable, we can rejoice and sing, giving thanks and praise.

**Author:** Anonymous

### PSALM 33

- 1 Let the godly sing with joy to the LORD,  
for it is fitting to praise him.
- 2 Praise the LORD with melodies on the lyre;  
make music for him on the ten-stringed harp.
- 3 Sing new songs of praise to him;  
play skillfully on the harp and sing with joy.
- 4 For the word of the LORD holds true,  
and everything he does is worthy of our trust.
- 5 He loves whatever is just and good,  
and his unfailing love fills the earth.
- 6 The LORD merely spoke,  
and the heavens were created.  
He breathed the word,  
and all the stars were born.
- 7 He gave the sea its boundaries  
and locked the oceans in vast reservoirs.
- 8 Let everyone in the world fear the LORD,  
and let everyone stand in awe of him.
- 9 For when he spoke, the world began!  
It appeared at his command.
- 10 The LORD shatters the plans of the nations  
and thwarts all their schemes.
- 11 But the LORD's plans stand firm forever;  
his intentions can never be shaken.
- 12 What joy for the nation whose God is the LORD,  
whose people he has chosen for his own.
- 13 The LORD looks down from heaven  
and sees the whole human race.
- 14 From his throne he observes  
all who live on the earth.

- 15 He made their hearts,  
so he understands everything they do.
- 16 The best-equipped army cannot save a king,  
nor is great strength enough to save a warrior.
- 17 Don't count on your warhorse to give you victory—  
for all its strength, it cannot save you.
- 18 But the LORD watches over those who fear him,  
those who rely on his unfailing love.
- 19 He rescues them from death  
and keeps them alive in times of famine.
- 20 We depend on the LORD alone to save us.  
Only he can help us, protecting us like a shield.
- 21 **In him our hearts rejoice,**  
**for we are trusting in his holy name.**
- 22 Let your unfailing love surround us, LORD,  
for our hope is in you alone.

## GENESIS 6:5-22

2. **Trusting God means obeying his commands even when we don't fully understand.**

### C. THE STORY OF NOAH (6:1–11:32)

Earth was no longer the perfect paradise that God had intended. It is frightening to see how quickly all of humanity forgot about God. Incredibly, in all the world, only one man and his family still worshiped God. That man was Noah. Because of his faithfulness and obedience, God saved him and his family from a vast flood that destroyed every other human being on earth. This section shows us how God hates sin and judges those who enjoy it.

## 1. The Flood

### GENESIS 6

 Personality Profile: Noah

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## Noah

The story of Noah's life involves not one, but two great and tragic floods. The world in Noah's day was flooded with evil. The number of those who remembered the God of creation, perfection, and love had dwindled to one. Of God's people, only Noah was left. God's response to the severe situation was a 120-year-long last chance, during which he had Noah build a graphic illustration of the message of his life. Nothing like a huge boat on dry land to make a point! For Noah, obedience meant a long-term commitment to a project.

Many of us have trouble sticking to any project, whether or not it is directed by God. It is interesting that the length of Noah's obedience was greater than the lifespan of people today. The only comparable long-term project is our very lives. But perhaps this is one great challenge Noah's life gives us—to live, in acceptance of God's grace, an entire lifetime of obedience and gratitude.

## STRENGTHS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ◆ Only follower of God left in his generation
- ◆ Second father of the human race
- ◆ Man of patience, consistency, and obedience
- ◆ First major shipbuilder

## WEAKNESS AND MISTAKE

- ◆ Got drunk and embarrassed himself in front of his sons

## LESSONS FROM HIS LIFE

- ◆ God is faithful to those who obey him
- ◆ God does not always protect us from trouble, but cares for us in spite of trouble
- ◆ Obedience is a long-term commitment
- ◆ A man may be faithful, but his sinful nature always travels with him

## VITAL STATISTICS

- ◆ Where: We're not told how far from the Garden of Eden people had settled
- ◆ Occupation: Farmer, shipbuilder, preacher
- ◆ Relatives: Grandfather: Methuselah. Father: Lamech. Sons: Ham, Shem, and Japheth

## KEY VERSE

"So Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded him" (Genesis 6:22).

*Noah's story is told in Genesis 5:28—10:32. He is also mentioned in 1 Chronicles 1:3, 4; Isaiah 54:9; Ezekiel 14:14, 20; Matthew 24:37, 38; Luke 3:36; 17:26, 27; Hebrews 11:7; 1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:5.*

<sup>1</sup>When the human population began to grow rapidly on the earth, <sup>2</sup>the sons of God saw the beautiful women of the human race and took any they wanted as their wives. <sup>3</sup>Then the LORD said, "My Spirit will not put up with humans for such a long time, for they are only mortal flesh. In the future, they will live no more than 120 years."

<sup>4</sup>In those days, and even afterward, giants<sup>o</sup> lived on the earth, for whenever the sons of God had intercourse with human women, they gave birth to children who became the heroes mentioned in legends of old.

**<sup>5</sup>Now the LORD observed the extent of the people's wickedness, and he saw that all their thoughts were consistently and totally evil. <sup>6</sup>So the LORD was sorry he had ever made them. It broke his heart. <sup>7</sup>And the LORD said, "I will completely wipe out this human race that I have created. Yes, and I will destroy all the animals and birds, too. I am sorry I ever made them." <sup>8</sup>But Noah found favor with the LORD.**

**<sup>9</sup>This is the history of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, the only blameless man living on earth at the time. He consistently followed God's will and enjoyed a close relationship with him. <sup>10</sup>Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.**

**<sup>11</sup>Now the earth had become corrupt in God's sight, and it was filled with violence. <sup>12</sup>God observed all this corruption in the world, and he saw violence and depravity everywhere. <sup>13</sup>So God said to Noah, "I have decided to destroy all living creatures, for**

*the earth is filled with violence because of them. Yes, I will wipe them all from the face of the earth!*

*<sup>14</sup>“Make a boat<sup>o</sup> from resinous wood and seal it with tar, inside and out. Then construct decks and stalls throughout its interior. <sup>15</sup>Make it 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. <sup>16</sup>Construct an opening all the way around the boat, 18 inches<sup>o</sup> below the roof. Then put three decks inside the boat—bottom, middle, and upper—and put a door in the side.*

*<sup>17</sup>“Look! I am about to cover the earth with a flood that will destroy every living thing. Everything on earth will die! <sup>18</sup>But I solemnly swear to keep you safe in the boat, with your wife and your sons and their wives. <sup>19</sup>Bring a pair of every kind of animal—a male and a female—into the boat with you to keep them alive during the flood. <sup>20</sup>Pairs of each kind of bird and each kind of animal, large and small alike, will come to you to be kept alive. <sup>21</sup>And remember, take enough food for your family and for all the animals.”*

*<sup>22</sup>So Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded him.*

PSALM 112:1

3. We can trust God enough to obey because his Word is true and will bring happiness.

**Theme:** The advantages of having faith in God. God guards the minds and actions of those who follow his commands.

**Author:** Anonymous

PSALM 112

*<sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD!*

*Happy are those who fear the LORD.*

*Yes, happy are those who delight in doing what he commands.*

- <sup>2</sup> Their children will be successful everywhere;  
an entire generation of godly people will be blessed.
- <sup>3</sup> They themselves will be wealthy,  
and their good deeds will never be forgotten.
- <sup>4</sup> When darkness overtakes the godly, light will come bursting in.  
They are<sup>o</sup> generous, compassionate, and righteous.
- <sup>5</sup> All goes well for those who are generous,  
who lend freely and conduct their business fairly.
- <sup>6</sup> Such people will not be overcome by evil circumstances.  
Those who are righteous will be long remembered.
- <sup>7</sup> They do not fear bad news;  
they confidently trust the LORD to care for them.
- <sup>8</sup> They are confident and fearless  
and can face their foes triumphantly.
- <sup>9</sup> They give generously to those in need.  
Their good deeds will never be forgotten.  
They will have influence and honor.

- <sup>10</sup> The wicked will be infuriated when they see this.  
They will grind their teeth in anger;  
they will slink away, their hopes thwarted.

JOHN 3:36

**4. Trusting God means depending on Christ alone for salvation.**

*Nicodemus Visits Jesus at Night* (📖)

JOHN 3

👤 Personality Profile: Nicodemus

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## Nicodemus

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God specializes in finding and changing people we consider out of reach. It took a while for Nicodemus to come out of the dark, but God was patient with this “undercover” believer.

Afraid of being discovered, Nicodemus made an appointment to see Jesus at night. Daylight conversations between Pharisees and Jesus tended to be antagonistic, but Nicodemus really wanted to learn. He probably got a lot more than he expected—a challenge to a new life! We know very little about Nicodemus, but we know that he left that evening’s encounter a changed man. He came away with a whole new understanding of both God and himself.

Nicodemus next appears as part of the Jewish high council (7:50). As the group discussed ways to eliminate Jesus, Nicodemus raised the question of justice. Although his objection was overruled, he had spoken up. He had begun to change.

Our last picture of Nicodemus shows him joining Joseph of Arimathea in asking for Jesus’ body in order to provide for its burial (19:39). Realizing what he was risking, Nicodemus was making a bold move. He was continuing to grow.

God looks for steady growth, not instant perfection. How well does your present level of spiritual growth match up with how long you have known Jesus?

### STRENGTHS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ◆ One of the few religious leaders who believed in Jesus
- ◆ A member of the powerful Jewish high council
- ◆ A Pharisee who was attracted by Jesus’ character and miracles
- ◆ Joined with Joseph of Arimathea in burying Jesus

### WEAKNESS AND MISTAKE

- ◆ Limited by his fear of being publicly exposed as Jesus’ follower

### LESSONS FROM HIS LIFE

- ◆ Unless we are born again, we can never be part of the Kingdom of God
- ◆ God is able to change those we might consider unreachable
- ◆ God is patient, but persistent
- ◆ If we are available, God can use us

### VITAL STATISTICS

- ◆ Where: Jerusalem

- ◆ Occupation: Religious leader
- ◆ Contemporaries: Jesus, Annas, Caiaphas, Pilate, Joseph of Arimathea

### KEY VERSE

“What do you mean?” exclaimed Nicodemus. “How can an old man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?” (John 3:4).

*Nicodemus’s story is told in John 3:1–21; 7:50–52; and 19:39, 40.*

<sup>1</sup>After dark one evening, a Jewish religious leader named Nicodemus, a Pharisee, <sup>2</sup>came to speak with Jesus. “Teacher,” he said, “we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are proof enough that God is with you.”

<sup>3</sup>Jesus replied, “I assure you, unless you are born again, <sup>◦</sup> you can never see the Kingdom of God.”

<sup>4</sup>“What do you mean?” exclaimed Nicodemus. “How can an old man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?”

<sup>5</sup>Jesus replied, “The truth is, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. <sup>◦</sup> <sup>6</sup>Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives new life from heaven. <sup>7</sup>So don’t be surprised at my statement that you <sup>◦</sup> must be born again. <sup>8</sup>Just as you can hear the wind but can’t tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can’t explain how people are born of the Spirit.”

<sup>9</sup>“What do you mean?” Nicodemus asked.

<sup>10</sup>Jesus replied, “You are a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you don’t understand these things? <sup>11</sup>I assure you, I am telling you what we know and have seen, and yet you won’t believe us. <sup>12</sup>But if you don’t even believe me when I tell you about things that happen here on earth, how can you possibly believe if I tell you what is going on in heaven? <sup>13</sup>For only I, the Son of Man, <sup>◦</sup> have come to earth and will return to heaven again. <sup>14</sup>And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so I, the Son of Man, must be lifted up on a pole, <sup>◦</sup> <sup>15</sup>so that everyone who believes in me will have eternal life.

<sup>16</sup>“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup>God did not send his Son into the world to condemn it, but to save it.

<sup>18</sup>“There is no judgment awaiting those who trust him. But those who do not trust him have already been judged for not believing in the only Son of God. <sup>19</sup>Their judgment is based on this fact: The light from heaven came into the world, but they loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. <sup>20</sup>They hate the light because they want to sin in the darkness. They stay away from the light for fear their sins will be exposed and they will be punished. <sup>21</sup>But those who do what is right come to the light gladly, so everyone can see that they are doing what God wants.”

### *John the Baptist Tells More about Jesus (1)*

<sup>22</sup>Afterward Jesus and his disciples left Jerusalem, but they stayed in Judea for a while and baptized there.

<sup>23</sup>At this time John the Baptist was baptizing at Aenon, near Salim, because there was plenty of water there and people kept coming to him for baptism. <sup>24</sup>This was before John

was put into prison. <sup>25</sup>At that time a certain Jew began an argument with John’s disciples over ceremonial cleansing. <sup>26</sup>John’s disciples came to him and said, “Teacher, the man you met on the other side of the Jordan River, the one you said was the Messiah, is also baptizing people. And everybody is going over there instead of coming here to us.”

<sup>27</sup>John replied, “God in heaven appoints each person’s work. <sup>28</sup>You yourselves know how plainly I told you that I am not the Messiah. I am here to prepare the way for him—that is all. <sup>29</sup>The bride will go where the bridegroom is. A bridegroom’s friend rejoices with him. I am the bridegroom’s friend, and I am filled with joy at his success. <sup>30</sup>He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less.

<sup>31</sup>“He has come from above and is greater than anyone else. I am of the earth, and my understanding is limited to the things of earth, but he has come from heaven. <sup>32</sup>He tells what he has seen and heard, but how few believe what he tells them! <sup>33</sup>Those who believe him discover that God is true. <sup>34</sup>For he is sent by God. He speaks God’s words, for God’s Spirit is upon him without measure or limit. <sup>35</sup>The Father loves his Son, and he has given him authority over everything. ***And all who believe in God’s Son have eternal life. Those who don’t obey the Son will never experience eternal life, but the wrath of God remains upon them.***”

## GALATIANS 2:16

5. **Trusting Christ for salvation means ceasing to trust in our own efforts to be righteous.**

*The Apostles Accept Paul*

## GALATIANS 2

 Chart: Judaizers Versus Paul

<b>Judaizers Versus Paul</b>	
<b>What the Judaizers said about Paul</b>	<b>Paul's defense</b>
They said he was perverting the truth.	He received his message from Christ himself (1:11, 12).
They said he was a traitor to the Jewish faith.	Paul was one of the most dedicated Jews of his time. Yet, in the midst of one of his most zealous acts, God transformed him through a revelation of the Good News about Jesus (1:13-16; Acts 9:1-30).
They said he compromised and watered down his message for the Gentiles.	The other apostles declared that the message Paul preached was the true gospel (2:1-10).

They said he was disregarding the law of Moses.	Far from degrading the law, Paul puts the law in its proper place. He says it shows people where they have sinned, and it points them to Christ (3:19-29).
As the debate raged between the Gentile Christians and the Judaizers, Paul found it necessary to write to the churches in Galatia. The Judaizers were trying to undermine Paul's authority, and they taught a false gospel. In reply, Paul defended his authority as an apostle and the truth of his message. The debate over Jewish laws and Gentile Christians was officially resolved at the Jerusalem council (Acts 15), yet it continued to be a point of contention after that time.	

<sup>1</sup>Then fourteen years later I went back to Jerusalem again, this time with Barnabas; and Titus came along, too. <sup>2</sup>I went there because God revealed to me that I should go. While I was there I talked privately with the leaders of the church. I wanted them to understand what I had been preaching to the Gentiles. I wanted to make sure they did not disagree, or my ministry would have been useless. <sup>3</sup>And they did agree. They did not even demand that my companion Titus be circumcised, though he was a Gentile. <sup>4</sup>

Even that question wouldn't have come up except for some so-called Christians there—false ones, really—who came to spy on us and see our freedom in Christ Jesus. They wanted to force us, like slaves, to follow their Jewish regulations. <sup>5</sup>But we refused to listen to them for a single moment. We wanted to preserve the truth of the Good News for you.

<sup>6</sup>And the leaders of the church who were there had nothing to add to what I was preaching. (By the way, their reputation as great leaders made no difference to me, for God has no favorites.) <sup>7</sup>They saw that God had given me the responsibility of preaching the Good News to the Gentiles, just as he had given Peter the responsibility of preaching to the Jews. <sup>8</sup>For the same God who worked through Peter for the benefit of the Jews worked through me for the benefit of the Gentiles. <sup>9</sup>In fact, James, Peter, and John, who were known as pillars of the church, recognized the gift God had given me, and they accepted Barnabas and me as their co-workers. They encouraged us to keep preaching to the Gentiles, while they continued their work with the Jews. <sup>10</sup>The only thing they suggested was that we remember to help the poor, and I have certainly been eager to do that.

### *Paul Confronts Peter*

<sup>11</sup>But when Peter came to Antioch, I had to oppose him publicly, speaking strongly against what he was doing, for it was very wrong. <sup>12</sup>When he first arrived, he ate with the Gentile Christians, who don't bother with circumcision. But afterward, when some Jewish friends of James came, Peter wouldn't eat with the Gentiles anymore because he was afraid of what these legalists would say. <sup>13</sup>Then the other Jewish Christians followed Peter's hypocrisy, and even Barnabas was influenced to join them in their hypocrisy.

<sup>14</sup>When I saw that they were not following the truth of the Good News, I said to Peter in front of all the others, "Since you, a Jew by birth, have discarded the Jewish laws and are living like a Gentile, why are you trying to make these Gentiles obey the Jewish laws you abandoned?" <sup>15</sup>You and I are Jews by birth, not 'sinners' like the Gentiles. **<sup>16</sup>And yet**



**we Jewish Christians know that we become right with God, not by doing what the law commands, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be accepted by God because of our faith in Christ—and not because we have obeyed the law. For no one will ever be saved by obeying the law.”**<sup>o</sup>

<sup>17</sup>But what if we seek to be made right with God through faith in Christ and then find out that we are still sinners? Has Christ led us into sin? Of course not! <sup>18</sup>Rather, I make myself guilty if I rebuild the old system I already tore down. <sup>19</sup>For when I tried to keep the law, I realized I could never earn God’s approval. So I died to the law so that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ. <sup>20</sup>I myself no longer live, but Christ lives in me. So I live my life in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. <sup>21</sup>I am not one of those who treats the grace of God as meaningless. For if we could be saved by keeping the law, then there was no need for Christ to die.

1 PETER 1:8

6. Trusting God produces joy.

## 1 Peter

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### 1. God’s great blessings to his people

*Greetings from Peter*

1 PETER 1

 Book Overview: 1 Peter

## 1 Peter Book Overview

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### VITAL STATISTICS

<b>Purpose:</b>	To offer encouragement to suffering Christians
<b>Author:</b>	Peter
<b>To Whom Written:</b>	Jewish Christians driven out of Jerusalem and scattered throughout Asia Minor, and all believers everywhere
<b>Date Written:</b>	Approximately A.D. 62-64, possibly from Rome
<b>Setting:</b>	Peter was probably in Rome when the great persecution under Emperor Nero began. (Eventually Peter was executed during this persecution.) Throughout the Roman Empire, Christians were being tortured and killed for their faith, and the church in Jerusalem was being scattered.
<b>Key Verse:</b>	“These trials are only to test your faith.... So if your faith remains strong after being tried by fiery trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world” (1:7).
<b>Key People:</b>	Peter, Silas, Mark
<b>Key Places:</b>	Jerusalem, Rome, and the regions of Pontus, Galatia,

Cappadocia, Asia Minor, and Bithynia

**Special Features:** Peter used several images that were very special to him because Jesus had used them when he revealed certain truths to Peter. Peter's name (which means "rock") had been given to him by Jesus. Peter's conception of the church—a spiritual house composed of living stones built upon Christ as the foundation—came from Christ. Jesus encouraged Peter to care for the church as a shepherd tending the flock. Thus, it is not surprising to see Peter using living stones (2:5-9) and shepherds and sheep (2:25; 5:2, 4) to describe the church.

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

Many first-century followers of Christ were suffering and being abused and persecuted for believing in and obeying Jesus. Beginning in Jerusalem at the hands of their Jewish brothers, the persecution spread to the rest of the world—wherever Christians gathered. It climaxed when Rome determined to rid the empire of the "Christ-ones"—those who would not bow to Caesar.

Peter knew persecution firsthand. Beaten and jailed, Peter had been threatened often. He had seen fellow Christians die and the church scattered. But he knew Christ, and nothing could shake his confidence in his risen Lord. So Peter wrote to the church scattered and suffering for the faith, giving comfort and hope, and urging continued loyalty to Christ.

Peter begins by thanking God for salvation (1:2-6). He explains to his readers that trials will refine their faith (1:7-9). They should believe in spite of their circumstances; for many in past ages believed in God's plan of salvation, even the prophets of old who wrote about it but didn't understand it. But now salvation has been revealed in Christ (1:10-13).

In response to such a great salvation, Peter commands them to live holy lives (1:14-16), to reverently fear and trust God (1:17-21), to be honest and loving (2:1-3), and to become like Christ (2:1-3).

Jesus Christ, as "the living cornerstone" upon whom the church is to be built (2:4, 6), is also the stone that was rejected, causing those who are disobedient to stumble and fall (2:7, 8). But the church, built upon this stone, is to be God's holy priesthood (2:9, 10).

Next, Peter explains how believers should live during difficult times (2:11–4:11). Christians should be above reproach (2:12-17), imitating Christ in all their social roles—masters and servants, husbands and wives, church members and neighbors (2:18–3:17). Christ should be our model for obedience to God in the midst of great suffering (3:18–4:11).

Peter then outlines the right attitude to have about persecution: Expect it (4:12), be thankful for the privilege of suffering for Christ (4:13-18), and trust God for deliverance (4:19).

Next, Peter gives some special instructions: Elders should care for God's flock (5:1-4), younger men should be submissive to those who are older (5:5, 6), and everyone should trust God and resist Satan (5:7-11).

Peter concludes by introducing Silas and by sending personal greetings, possibly from the church in Rome, and from Mark (5:12-14).

When you suffer for doing what is right, remember that following Christ is a costly commitment. When persecuted for your faith, rejoice that you have been counted worthy to suffer for Christ. He suffered for us; as his followers, we should expect nothing less. As you read 1 Peter, remember that trials will come to refine your faith. When they come, remain faithful to God.

## THE BLUEPRINT

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<p>1. God's great blessings to his people (1:1–2:10)</p> <p>2. The conduct of God's people in the midst of suffering (2:11–4:19)</p> <p>3. The shepherding of God's people in the midst of suffering (5:1-14)</p>	<p>Peter wrote to Jewish Christians who were experiencing persecution for their faith. He wrote to comfort them with the hope of eternal life and to challenge them to continue living holy lives. Those who suffer for being Christians become partners with Christ in his suffering. As we suffer, we must remember that Christ is both our hope in the midst of suffering and our example of how to endure suffering faithfully.</p>
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## MEGATHEMES

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THEME	EXPLANATION	IMPORTANCE
Salvation	Our salvation is a gracious gift from God. God chose us out of his love for us, Jesus died to pay the penalty for our sin, and the Holy Spirit cleansed us from sin when we believed. Eternal life is a wonderful gift for those who trust in Christ.	Our safety and security are in God. If we experience joy in relationship with Christ now, how much greater will our joy be when he returns and we see him face to face. Such a hope should motivate us to serve Christ with greater commitment.
Persecution	Peter offers faithful believers comfort and hope. We should expect ridicule, rejection, and suffering because we are Christians. Persecution makes us stronger because it refines our faith. We can face persecution victoriously, as Christ did, if we rely on him.	Christians still suffer for what they believe. We should expect persecution, but we don't have to be terrified by it. The fact that we will live eternally with Christ should give us the confidence, patience, and hope to stand firm even when we are persecuted.
God's Family	We are privileged to belong to God's family, a community with Christ as the founder and foundation. Everyone in this community is related—we are all brothers and sisters, loved equally by God.	Because Christ is the foundation of our family, we must be devoted, loyal, and faithful to him. By obeying him, we show that we are his children. We must accept the challenge to live differently from the society around us.
Family Life	Peter encouraged the wives of unbelievers to submit to their husbands' authority as a means of winning them to Christ. He urged all family members to treat others with sympathy, love, compassion, and humility.	We must treat our families lovingly. Though it's never easy, willing service is the best way to influence loved ones. To gain the strength we need for self-discipline and submission, we need to pray for God's help.
Judgment	God will judge everyone with perfect justice. We all will face God. He will punish evildoers and those who persecute God's	Because all are accountable to God, we can leave judgment of others to him. We must not hate or resent those who persecute

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people. Those who love him will be rewarded with life forever in his presence.

us. We should realize that we will be held responsible for how we live each day.

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<sup>1</sup>This letter is from Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ.

I am writing to God's chosen people who are living as foreigners in the lands of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, the province of Asia, and Bithynia. <sup>2</sup>God the Father chose you long ago, and the Spirit has made you holy. As a result, you have obeyed Jesus Christ and are cleansed by his blood.

May you have more and more of God's special favor and wonderful peace.

### *The Hope of Eternal Life*

<sup>3</sup>All honor to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for it is by his boundless mercy that God has given us the privilege of being born again. Now we live with a wonderful expectation because Jesus Christ rose again from the dead. <sup>4</sup>For God has reserved a priceless inheritance for his children. It is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay. <sup>5</sup>And God, in his mighty power, will protect you until you receive this salvation, because you are trusting him. It will be revealed on the last day for all to see. <sup>6</sup>So be truly glad! <sup>7</sup>There is wonderful joy ahead, even though it is necessary for you to endure many trials for a while.

<sup>7</sup>These trials are only to test your faith, to show that it is strong and pure. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—and your faith is far more precious to God than mere gold. So if your faith remains strong after being tried by fiery trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.

**<sup>8</sup>You love him even though you have never seen him. Though you do not see him, you trust him; and even now you are happy with a glorious, inexpressible joy.** <sup>9</sup>Your reward for trusting him will be the salvation of your souls.

<sup>10</sup>This salvation was something the prophets wanted to know more about. They prophesied about this gracious salvation prepared for you, even though they had many questions as to what it all could mean. <sup>11</sup>They wondered what the Spirit of Christ within them was talking about when he told them in advance about Christ's suffering and his great glory afterward. They wondered when and to whom all this would happen.

<sup>12</sup>They were told that these things would not happen during their lifetime, but many years later, during yours. And now this Good News has been announced by those who preached to you in the power of the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. It is all so wonderful that even the angels are eagerly watching these things happen.

### *A Call to Holy Living*

<sup>13</sup>So think clearly and exercise self-control. Look forward to the special blessings that will come to you at the return of Jesus Christ. <sup>14</sup>Obey God because you are his children. Don't slip back into your old ways of doing evil; you didn't know any better then. <sup>15</sup>But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God—who chose you to be his children—is holy. <sup>16</sup>For he himself has said, "You must be holy because I am holy."<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup>And remember that the heavenly Father to whom you pray has no favorites when he judges. He will judge or reward you according to what you do. So you must live in reverent fear of him during your time as foreigners here on earth. <sup>18</sup>For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And the ransom he paid was not mere gold or silver. <sup>19</sup>He paid for you with the precious lifeblood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God. <sup>20</sup>God chose him for this purpose long before the world began, but now in these final days, he was sent to the earth for all to see. And he did this for you.

<sup>21</sup>Through Christ you have come to trust in God. And because God raised Christ from the dead and gave him great glory, your faith and hope can be placed confidently in God. <sup>22</sup>Now you can have sincere love for each other as brothers and sisters<sup>o</sup> because you were cleansed from your sins when you accepted the truth of the Good News. So see to it that you really do love each other intensely with all your hearts.<sup>o</sup>

<sup>23</sup>For you have been born again. Your new life did not come from your earthly parents because the life they gave you will end in death. But this new life will last forever because it comes from the eternal, living word of God. <sup>24</sup>As the prophet says,

“People are like grass that dies away;  
their beauty fades as quickly as the beauty of wildflowers.  
The grass withers,  
and the flowers fall away.  
<sup>25</sup>But the word of the Lord will last forever.”<sup>o</sup>

And that word is the Good News that was preached to you.

## **7. Promise from God: Isaiah 26:3**

*A Song of Praise to the LORD*

ISAIAH 26

- <sup>1</sup>In that day, everyone in the land of Judah will sing this song:  
Our city is now strong!  
We are surrounded by the walls of God’s salvation.
- <sup>2</sup>Open the gates to all who are righteous;  
allow the faithful to enter.
- <sup>3</sup>**You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you,  
whose thoughts are fixed on you!**
- <sup>4</sup>Trust in the LORD always,  
for the LORD GOD is the eternal Rock.
- <sup>5</sup>He humbles the proud  
and brings the arrogant city to the dust.  
Its walls come crashing down!
- <sup>6</sup>The poor and oppressed trample it underfoot.
- <sup>7</sup>But for those who are righteous,  
the path is not steep and rough.  
You are a God of justice,  
and you smooth out the road ahead of them.
- <sup>8</sup>LORD, we love to obey your laws;  
our heart’s desire is to glorify your name.
- <sup>9</sup>All night long I search for you;

earnestly I seek for God.  
For only when you come to judge the earth  
will people turn from wickedness and do what is right.  
10 Your kindness to the wicked does not make them do good.  
They keep doing wrong and take no notice of the LORD's majesty.  
11 O LORD, they do not listen when you threaten.  
They do not see your upraised fist.  
Show them your eagerness to defend your people.  
Perhaps then they will be ashamed.  
Let your fire consume your enemies.

12 LORD, you will grant us peace,  
for all we have accomplished is really from you.  
13 O LORD our God, others have ruled us,  
but we worship you alone.  
14 Those we served before are dead and gone.  
Never again will they return!  
You attacked them and destroyed them,  
and they are long forgotten.

15 We praise you, LORD!  
You have made our nation great;  
you have extended our borders!

16 LORD, in distress we searched for you.  
We were bowed beneath the burden of your discipline.  
17 We were like a woman about to give birth,  
writhing and crying out in pain.  
When we are in your presence, LORD,  
18 we, too, writhe in agony,  
but nothing comes of our suffering.  
We have done nothing to rescue the world;  
no one has been born to populate the earth.

19 Yet we have this assurance:  
Those who belong to God will live;  
their bodies will rise again!  
Those who sleep in the earth  
will rise up and sing for joy!  
For God's light of life will fall like dew  
on his people in the place of the dead!

#### *Restoration for Israel*

<sup>20</sup>Go home, my people, and lock your doors! Hide until the LORD's anger against your enemies has passed. <sup>21</sup>Look! The LORD is coming from heaven to punish the people of the earth for their sins. The earth will no longer hide those who have been murdered. They will be brought out for all to see.