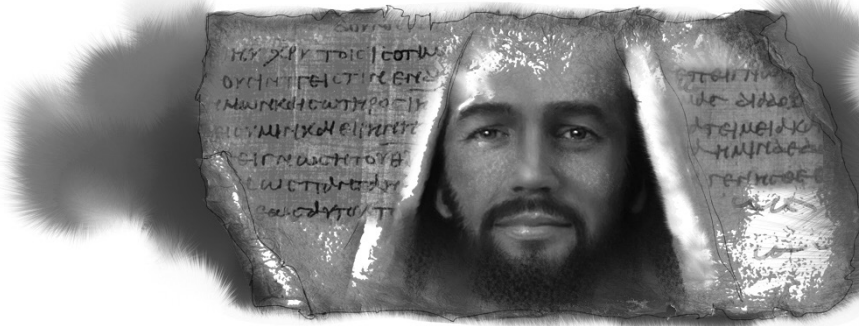


Jesus in the Writings of Peter



SABBATH—MAY 13

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: 1 Peter 1:18, 19; Colossians 1:13, 14; Isaiah 53:1–12; John 11:25; 2 Peter 1:1.

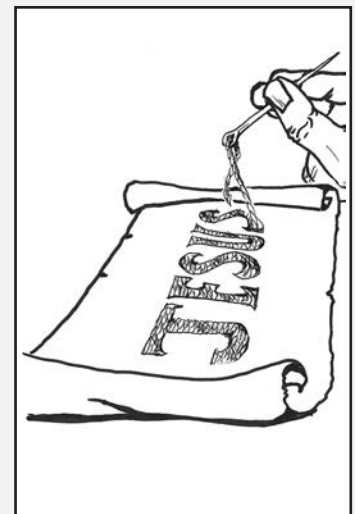
MEMORY VERSE: “‘[Christ] himself carried our sins’ in his body on the cross. (Isaiah 53:5) He did it so that we would die as far as sins are concerned. Then we would lead godly lives. ‘His wounds have healed you’ (Isaiah 53:5)” (1 Peter 2:24, NIV).

IT SHOULD BE CLEAR BY NOW from our study of 1 Peter that Peter’s focus is on Jesus. The theme of Jesus is the golden thread woven through the letter.

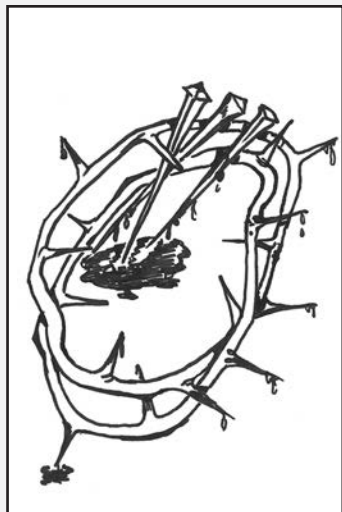
In the first line of the letter, Peter says he is an “apostle [teacher; leader; ‘one who is sent’] of Jesus Christ” (NIV). And in the last line of the letter, Peter writes, “May God give peace to all of you who believe in Christ [Jesus]” (1 Peter 5:14, NIV). So we see that Jesus is Peter’s main theme from the first line until the last.

Peter talks about many things Jesus did for us. He talks about Jesus’ dying as our sacrifice. He talks about the great suffering that Jesus went through. And he points to Jesus’ suffering as an example for us. Peter discusses Jesus’ return to life from the dead. And he discusses Jesus as the Messiah (Savior), the Christos, the “anointed one” (God’s Chosen One). That is, we see in 1 Peter more proof that Jesus is God. He came in human flesh. He lived and died so that we could have the hope of eternal life.

This week we will go back through 1 Peter and look more closely at what it teaches about Jesus.



Jesus is the golden thread woven through Peter’s first letter.

JESUS, OUR SACRIFICE (Colossians 1:13, 14)

The precious blood of Jesus buys us back, or redeems us, from our empty way of life.

There is a big theme that spans from the first book of the Bible to the last book. Perhaps, it is the biggest theme of the Bible. And that theme is God's work of saving sinners. We find this theme in the fall of Adam and Eve in Genesis to the fall of Babylon in Revelation. And what we see from beginning to end is that God works to save the lost (Luke 19:10). This theme is found in Peter's letters, as well.

Read 1 Peter 1:18, 19 and Colossians 1:13, 14. What does it mean to be "set free" (NIRV) from sin? And what does blood have to do with our being saved?

Peter describes the importance and meaning of the death of Jesus in 1 Peter 1:18, 19. There are two important images, or word pictures, found in these verses. The first word picture illustrates the idea of how we are bought with blood that sets us free from sin. The second word picture is animal sacrifice. The word picture of buying something back and setting it free is also known as redemption, or being redeemed. Redemption is used in the Bible in several ways. For example, money is used to buy back, or redeem, items that have been sold by people who became poor (Leviticus 25:25, 26). Most important, a slave can be redeemed and set free (Leviticus 25:47–49). Peter informs his readers that it is the "priceless blood of Christ" that buys them back, or redeems them, from their "empty way of life" (1 Peter 1:18, 19, NIRV).

In this way, Peter says how animal sacrifice in the Hebrew Bible shows Christ's death. In Old Testament times, a sinner brought a perfect lamb to the sanctuary (home of God on earth during Bible times) where God was worshiped. The sinner then laid his hands on the animal (Leviticus 4:32, 33). The animal was killed. Some of its blood was smeared on the altar. The rest of the blood was poured on the bottom of the altar (Leviticus 4:34). The death of the animal was payment for sin (Leviticus 4:35). So when Peter calls Jesus "a perfect lamb" (NIRV), he is saying that Jesus died in our place. He paid the price for our sins. And His death redeemed us, or set us free, from our old lives. He freed us from the future death that would otherwise be ours.

Our hope of salvation rests only in a substitute punished in our place. What does this truth teach us about our complete dependence upon God?

THE PASSION, OR SUFFERING, OF CHRIST (Isaiah 53:1–12)

Christians often talk about “the passion of Christ.” The word *passion* comes from a Greek verb that means “to suffer.” And the words *the passion of Christ* usually are used to describe what Jesus suffered in the final days of His life. This period of time begins when Christ enters Jerusalem as a king. Peter also writes about Christ’s suffering in those final days.

Read 1 Peter 2:21–25 and Isaiah 53:1–12. What do these verses tell us about what Jesus suffered on our behalf?

There is special meaning to the suffering of Jesus. He “‘carried our sins’ in his body on the cross. (Isaiah 53:5) He did it so that we would die as far as sins are concerned. Then we would lead godly lives” (1 Peter 2:24, NIV; read also Acts 5:30). In other words, sin brings death (Romans 5:12). As sinners, we deserve to die. But the perfect Jesus died in our place. Jesus spoke no lies. He took our place on the cross. In His trading places with us, we have the plan of salvation.

Read Isaiah 53:1–12 again. What do these verses say that Jesus suffered as He worked out the plan of salvation in our behalf? What does this fact tell us about the kind of person God is?

“Satan with his fierce temptations wrung the heart of Jesus. The Savior could not see past the tomb. He did not feel hope that He would come forth from the grave a conqueror. He did not know that the Father accepted His sacrifice. Jesus feared that sin was so horrible to God that Their separation was to be forever. Christ felt the terrible and deep sorrow which the sinner will feel when mercy shall no longer plead for guilty humans. The weight of sin made the cup Jesus drank so bitter. The cup was a symbol of what Jesus was asked to go through on the cross. Our sins brought the Father’s fury down on Jesus. Jesus thought that sin might separate Him from the Father forever. This thought broke the heart of the Son of God.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 753.

What should our response be to the things that Christ has gone through on the cross for us? How should we follow His example, as 1 Peter 2:21 says we should?



“The weight of sin made the cup Jesus drank so bitter. The cup was a symbol of what Jesus was asked to go through on the cross.”

JESUS' RETURN TO LIFE FROM THE DEAD (John 11:25)

Read 1 Peter 1:3, 4, 21; 1 Peter 3:21; John 11:25; Philippians 3:10, 11; and Revelation 20:6. What great hope do these verses point to? And what does this hope mean to us?

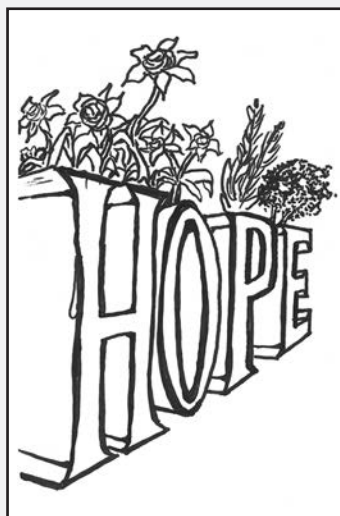
We already have seen that Peter writes his first letter to those who are suffering. They suffer for believing in Jesus. So, right at the start of his letter, Peter directs his readers' minds to the hope that awaits them. Peter says that the hope of a Christian is "a living hope." Why? Because it rests on Jesus' return to life from the dead (1 Peter 1:3). Jesus' return to life also is known as the Resurrection. The Resurrection gives Christians hope. It allows them to look forward to the gift of eternal life in heaven. This gift will not "spoil" or "fade away" (1 Peter 1:4, NIV). Yes, things may get very bad at times. But just think about what waits for us in heaven when our suffering is over.

Indeed, Jesus' resurrection is a promise that we also can be raised from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:20, 21). As Paul says, "And if Christ has not been raised, your faith [does not] mean anything. Your sins have not been forgiven" (1 Corinthians 15:17, NIV). But Jesus has been raised from the dead. And He has shown that He has the power to conquer death itself. So the Christian hope is founded on Christ's resurrection. It is an event that happened in history. His resurrection is the foundation of our resurrection that will be at the end of time.

Everything that Christ did for us reaches a high point in the promise of the Resurrection. Without that promise, what hope do we have?

"To the Christian, death is only a sleep. It is only a moment of silence and darkness. The life of the one who has died is hid with Christ in God. And when 'Christ [who] is your life . . . appears again, you also will appear with him in heaven's glory.' Colossians 3:4, NIV; read also John 8:51, 52. . . . [A]t Jesus' second coming all the precious dead shall hear His voice. They shall come forth to glorious and eternal life."
—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 787.

Think about how final death seems. It is so harsh, so unforgiving, and so real. So why is the promise of the resurrection so important to our faith? And why is it so important to everything we believe in and hope for?



The hope of a Christian is a living hope. It is founded on Christ's resurrection.

JESUS THE MESSIAH (THE CHOSEN ONE OF GOD) (Daniel 9:25)

We studied earlier one of the most important turning points in Jesus' work on earth. This event takes place when Jesus asks His disciples a question: "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:15, 16, NKJV). The words *Messiah* and *Christ* have the same meaning. The word *Christ* comes from the Greek word *Christos*. It means the "anointed [chosen one]" or the "Messiah." In Hebrew, the word *Christ* is *mashiyach*. It comes from a word that means "to anoint [to choose]." And it is used in many ways in the Old Testament. (It is even used to point to a Persian king, Cyrus (read Isaiah 45:1). So with this background in mind, we can understand more fully what Peter means when he calls Jesus the Christ.

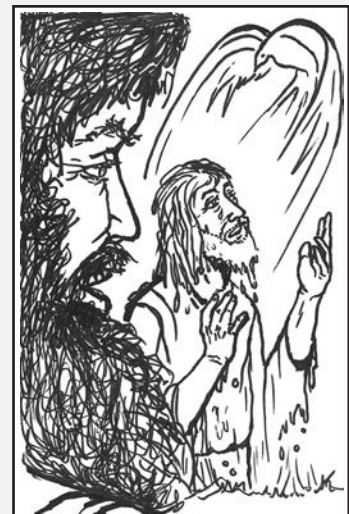
Read the following verses from the Old Testament: Psalm 2:2; Psalm 18:50; Daniel 9:25; 1 Samuel 24:6; and Isaiah 45:1. Each of these verses uses the word *Messiah*, or *anointed*. What do the other words in the verses teach us about what the word *anointed* means? How might Peter have understood what the word *anointed* meant when he called Jesus the Messiah?

God leads Peter to declare that Jesus is the Messiah (Matthew 16:16, 17). But Peter does not understand who the Messiah really is or what He is to do. And, perhaps most important, Peter does not understand how Jesus will do it.

Peter may lack understanding about the Messiah. But Peter is not the only one. There were many different ideas in Israel about the Messiah. The uses of the word *Messiah*, or *anointed*, in the above verses do not give a full picture of who the Messiah is. But they do show in some way what the Messiah would be and what he would do.

John 7:42 says that the Messiah would come from the line of David and the town of Bethlehem (Isaiah 11:1–16; Micah 5:2). But in the minds of most Jews, a Messiah from the line of David would do what David did. He would defeat the enemies of the Jews. What no one expected was a Messiah who would be put to death on a cross by the Romans.

By the time Peter writes his letters, he more clearly understands Jesus as the Messiah. (Jesus is called Jesus *Christ* 15 times in 1 and 2 Peter.) And Peter better understands all that Christ would do for fallen humans.



The word *Christ* comes from a Greek word that means the "anointed [chosen]," or the Messiah.

JESUS, THE DIVINE MESSIAH (John 20:28)

Peter knows that Jesus is the Messiah and that He is the Lord. So by the time Peter writes his letters, he knows that the Messiah is God Himself. The title “Lord” can have a meaning that is not religious. But it also can mean one who is God. In 1 Peter 1:3 and 2 Peter 1:8, 14, 16, Peter talks about Jesus as the Messiah, the Christ, and as the Lord. Peter calls Jesus God.

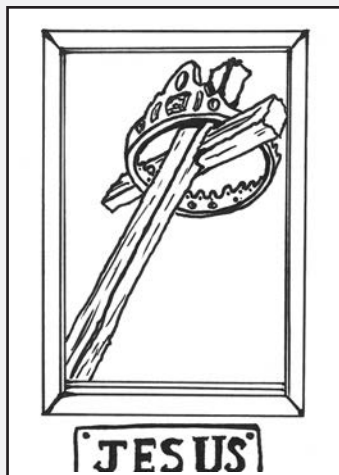
In doing so, Peter does what other writers in the New Testament do. He describes the relationship between Jesus and God with the words *Father* and *Son*. (For example, read 1 Peter 1:3.) Jesus also is described as the beloved Son in 2 Peter 1:17. In other words, some of Jesus’ authority as Lord and some of His rank in heaven come from His special relationship with God the Father.

Read 2 Peter 1:1; John 1:1; and John 20:28. What do these verses tell us about how Jesus is God?

Second Peter 1:1 says, “Our God and Savior Jesus Christ” (NKJV). In the Greek, the word *the* is used before both God and Savior. This word tells us that both “God” and “Savior” mean Jesus. So 2 Peter 1:1 is one of the clearest proofs in the New Testament that Jesus is fully God.

The first Christians struggled to understand Jesus. But little by little they put the truths about Jesus in the New Testament together. Peter makes it clear that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are separate Persons. (For example, the Father and the Son are shown as separate Persons in 1 Peter 1:3 and 2 Peter 1:17. And the Holy Spirit is spoken about in 1 Peter 1:12 and 2 Peter 1:21.) We see this same separation in the rest of the New Testament. At the same time, Jesus is shown in the New Testament as fully divine, or God. And so is the Holy Spirit. Over time, the church developed the teaching of the Three-in-One God to explain the mystery of the Three Persons of the Godhead. This teaching is also known as the Trinity. Seventh-day Adventists include the teaching or doctrine of the Trinity as one of their 28 fundamental, or main, beliefs. So we see from Peter a clear picture of Jesus as both the Messiah and as God Himself.

Think about the life and death of Jesus. Realize that He was God. What does this fact tell you about the kind of God we serve? Why should we love and trust Him?



Peter gives us a clear picture of Jesus as the Messiah and as God Himself.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: “In Greek, the word for Messiah is *Christos*. The word *Christos* means the ‘anointed [or Chosen] One.’ The Hebrew word for Messiah points to the one who would deliver the Jews. This deliverer would be God’s agent [helper] in bringing about a new age for God’s people. Both the Hebrew and the Greek words for Messiah come from roots meaning ‘to anoint’ or to pour oil on or to choose. So by calling Jesus the ‘Christ,’ the New Testament writers showed that they believed Jesus was set aside to do a special work for God.

“Jesus accepted the title ‘Messiah.’ But He did not encourage its use. Why? Because the word was connected to political hopes the Jews held for the Messiah. They wanted Him to destroy their enemies, the Romans. So that hope made the use of the word difficult. Jesus did not encourage others to call Him Messiah in public. Nor did He wish to use the word to describe His work. But He did not scold Peter (Matthew 16:16, 17), or the Samaritan woman (John 4:25, 26), for using the word *Messiah*. He knew Himself to be the Messiah. We see proof of this fact in Mark’s report of Jesus’ words in Mark 9:41. Here, Jesus speaks about giving one of His disciples a cup of water ‘because you belong to the Messiah’ (NIRV).”—Adapted from *The SDA Bible Commentary*, volume 12, page 165.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1 Read Isaiah 53:1–12. What do these verses tell us about the things that Jesus has done for us? Now write down those things. In what ways can we clearly see in these verses the idea of Jesus as our Substitute? Why do we need Him as our Substitute?
- 2 Throughout history, some have used the Bible promise of an afterlife to hold people down or oppress them. For example, they might say, “Well, yes, your life is hard here and now. But do not try to change it or make things better. Instead, just focus on what God has promised for us when Jesus returns.” It is easy to see how this truth has been abused. As a result, so many reject the Christian belief of an afterlife. What would you say to those who do not understand this Bible promise and who use it in the wrong way?
- 3 Christ is God. What does this truth tell us about who God is? Why is this truth such good news?



“Both the Hebrew and Greek words for Messiah come from roots meaning to ‘anoint’ or to pour oil on or to choose.”