

A close-up photograph of a red lawnmower on a green lawn. The lawnmower has two large black tires with white plastic hubs. On the side of the red body, there is a white quote in a serif font. The quote reads: "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever. And this word is the good news that was preached to you."

*"All flesh is like grass  
and all its glory like the flower of grass.  
The grass withers,  
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but the word of the Lord remains forever.  
And this word is the good news that  
was preached to you."*

# THE DAILY READING BIBLE

1 PETER    ZECHARIAH    REVELATION 1-3    PRESENT SUFFERING

62 daily readings with full Bible text

# THE DAILY READING BIBLE

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*An all-in-one, take-anywhere package to help you feed regularly from God's word.*

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Time to get back into regular Bible reading? *The Daily Reading Bible* has everything you need to get started, and in one compact, portable package.

This volume contains 60 readings from 1 Peter, Zechariah, Revelation 1-3 and topical passages on 'present suffering'. Each reading is designed to take around 15-20 minutes and contains:

- *the full text of the Bible passage for that reading*
- *some questions to get you thinking*
- *some 'points to ponder'*
- *some ideas to get you started in prayer.*

It's all here in one booklet that you can take with you anywhere—on the train, on the bus, to the park at lunchtime, or to your favourite armchair.



# **THE DAILY READING BIBLE**

## **Volume 7**

**1 PETER    ZECHARIAH    REVELATION 1-3    PRESENT SUFFERING**

*The Daily Reading Bible (Volume 7)*

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# INTRODUCTION

**R**eading our Bibles regularly is getting harder. That, at least, seems to be the common experience of many Christians. We could waste lots of ink speculating on the reasons for this: is it the frenetic pace of life these days? Is it spiritual laziness? Is it the impact of postmodernism on our culture and the lack of certainty when it comes to interpreting the written word?

But a better option than speculating on the reasons, we thought, was to provide a new resource for Christians to help them get back into a more regular habit of reflecting daily on God's Word. So back in June 2001, we decided to start including a section called 'Bible Brief' in our monthly magazine, *The Briefing* (see [www.matthiasmedia.com.au](http://www.matthiasmedia.com.au) for more information about *The Briefing*). The 'Bible Brief' provided 20 short readings each month—acknowledging that there will be days we miss or days when we want to do something a bit different—with questions, thoughts to ponder, and suggestions to get started in prayer.

Now, several years later, we have a good collection of 'Bible Briefs', and it's time to offer them to a wider audience in a format that will, we hope, be even more convenient and useful.

This seventh volume contains 62 readings, all designed to be done in 15-20 minutes. These short daily Bible readings are designed

to help you feed regularly from God's word. They won't cover every issue in each passage, nor even every passage from each Bible book. In other words, *they are no substitute for the in-depth study of the Scriptures* that you may undertake personally, in small groups or through listening to sermons.

With the kind permission of our friends at Crossway Bibles, we've been able to make this a complete package to take with you—we've included the English Standard Version Bible text with each daily study. So you can take this one book with you and have everything you need—on the train, on the bus, or to the park at lunchtime—wherever and whenever you can get 20 minutes to yourself.

## How to use these readings

- *With a penitent heart*, the true prerequisite for all Bible reading. Open with prayer (perhaps using the prayer suggested at the beginning of each set of studies).
- *With 15-20 minutes* of peace and quiet. If you can take longer, and want to read and pray further—great! But we have designed the readings to be done in a fairly short space of time.
- *With an accurate modern translation*. We recommend and have included the new ESV translation. The writers of the studies refer to this translation. Contact us for further details about the ESV or visit [www.matthiasmedia.com.au/ESV](http://www.matthiasmedia.com.au/ESV)

- *With a pen.* Even if you only jot down brief ideas, writing focuses the mind.
- *As a guide and help, not a straitjacket.* Feel free to dig further into the passage, to notice and ponder things that the questions don't point to.
- *As a launch-pad for prayer.* Use the prayer ideas at the end of each reading as a starting point for your daily prayer. Many of the points that will arise from the readings will be things you can pray for yourself, and also for others (family, friends, neighbours, etc.). Why not compile a list of people you want to pray for (you can write them in the blank space below), and use the prayer ideas from each reading to pray for the next person on your list?

This seventh volume includes:

- studies on 1 Peter (written by Nathan Walter, assistant minister at Christ Church St Ives)
- studies on Zechariah (written by Anthony Petterson, Old Testament lecturer at Morling College)
- studies on Revelation 1–3 (written by Greg Clarke, Director for the Centre for Apologetic Scholarship and Education at New College, UNSW)
- studies on the topic of our present suffering (written by Tony Payne).

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*July 2006*

**Please note:** the main section of Scripture for each study is reproduced before the questions. Other Scripture references are reproduced as footnotes at the bottom of the page, or, where the passages are too long to be included as footnotes, in the appendix.

## **PEOPLE TO PRAY FOR:**

# 1 PETER

## INTRODUCTION

Living for the future not the present; fearing God; patiently enduring suffering, even when it is unjust; submission; obedience; humility; repaying evil with blessing; sincerely loving our Christian family ... these are just some of the challenges in the 105 verses of 1 Peter. Written to a group of Christians who, by virtue of their faith in Christ and their ethical distinctiveness, were suffering at the hands of society, 1 Peter is full of rich theology and practical instructions for Christian living. In an age that is becoming increasingly post-Christian, where Christians are marginalized and even despised, 1 Peter is a book with a message we desperately need to be reminded of once again.

You might like to use this prayer (or your own variation on it) before each of the next 20 studies:

*Dear Father,*

*Thank you that you have called me to be one of your chosen people in a world that is opposed to you. I pray that, as I study this letter, you will help me to learn more about what you have done for me in Christ and how you want me to live.*

*In Jesus' name,*

*Amen.*

NB: Tick the box when you've completed each study ✓

## READING 1

## 1 PETER 1:1-2



**P**eter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, <sup>2</sup> according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood:

May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

1. Peter describes his readers as "elect exiles of the dispersion". What does this description say about their standing in the world and before God?

2. How are both Father and Spirit involved in his readers' status as "elect exiles"?

3. What is the goal of Christian salvation?



**PONDER** These verses point to both the security (elected by God) and insecurity (exiles in the world) of being a Christian. Which one of these best describes your current experience? Which one do you need to be reminded of?

**PRAYER IDEAS** Thank God that, although Christians are misfits in our society and subject to opposition, your security rests in the fact that he has chosen you and set you apart to live a life that is obedient to Christ.

## READING 2

## 1 PETER 1:3-12 (FOCUSING ON VERSES 3-5)

**B**lessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup> who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. <sup>6</sup> In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, <sup>7</sup> so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. <sup>8</sup> Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, <sup>9</sup> obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

<sup>10</sup> Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, <sup>11</sup> inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. <sup>12</sup> It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

1. *What has God done "according to his great mercy"? How has this changed Peter's readers from their former life? (See also 1:14 and 17,<sup>1</sup> and 4:3.<sup>2</sup>)*

2. *The word 'inheritance' recalls God's gift of the land to Old Testament Israel. How does Israel's inheritance differ to that of Peter's readers?*

3. *How does Peter expect his readers to make it through their time of suffering?*

**PONDER** We live in a culture where the 'immediate' dominates (mobile phones, internet, microwaves, etc.). How does the futuristic perspective of these verses challenge your cultural mind-set?

**PRAYER IDEAS** Thank God for his great mercy towards you. Pray that you would live with your mind fixed on the imperishable inheritance that awaits you.

1. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance ... <sup>17</sup> And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile ...

2. The time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry.

## READING 3

## 1 PETER 1:3-12 (FOCUSING ON VERSES 6-9)

**B**lessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup> who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. <sup>6</sup> In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, <sup>7</sup> so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. <sup>8</sup> Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, <sup>9</sup> obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

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preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

1. *From the glorious future (vv. 3-5), Peter now moves to the present: his readers' experience of "various trials." What hints are there in these verses that even these trials are under God's sovereign control?*
2. *What is the purpose of these trials?*
3. *What is the dominant emotion that Peter describes here? How is such an emotion possible in the midst of suffering?*

**PONDER** In light of the glorious future that awaits us (vv. 3-5), these verses encourage us to view our present sufferings as "though now for a little while". How does this affect your attitude to suffering?

**PRAYER IDEAS** Thank God that your suffering is not without purpose. Pray that you might persevere in genuine faith for the sake of Christ.

## READING 4

## 1 PETER 1:3-12 (FOCUSING ON VERSES 10-12)

**B**lessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup> who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. <sup>6</sup> In this

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