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1 Peter 1 - 2

*"How To Live Until Jesus Comes" Part 1*

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It is believed that Peter wrote 1 Peter from "Babylon,"<sup>1</sup> circa 64AD. Babylon was probably a euphemism for Rome, a city steeped in immorality. The recipients of the letter were Christians who were struggling in the midst of persecution.

Earlier in the same year this letter was written, there was an incredible fire that destroyed three-fourths of Rome over a period of six days. Nero was Emperor at the time and he really did nothing to put out the fire. The fact is that he had initiated a citywide renovation project before the fire, but was denied the funds by the Roman Senate. As a result of having his request denied, it's believed that Nero started the fire himself. As a way to deflect the accusation, Nero blamed Christians for starting the fire. Roman historians Tacitus and Suetonius both wrote the famous saying, "Nero fiddled while Rome burned." As a result of the fire, the next three years (64AD-67AD) were some of the bloodiest years of martyring Christians, so Peter writes to encourage Believers to stand firm in their faith. He tells them to be constantly reminded of two things: 1) Heaven is their reward. 2) Jesus is coming again! He also writes to challenge them about how to live until Jesus comes, which is an ongoing theme found in 2 Peter, written about one year later.

Basically, Peter is saying that salvation is a gift, and that by believing in Jesus Christ one will experience a "new birth"<sup>2</sup> and receive "an inheritance"<sup>3</sup> that can never perish, spoil or fade, kept in heaven, which is the ultimate reward. He also reminds them that Jesus is coming again.<sup>4</sup> And with the knowledge that the Lord will return, Peter challenges them to live with certain convictions.

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Peter 5:13

<sup>2</sup> 1 Peter 5:3

<sup>3</sup> 1 Peter 5:4

<sup>4</sup> "[W]hen Jesus Christ is revealed." 1 Peter 5:7, 13

Since we are living in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and Jesus has not yet returned, how much more should we take to heart what he is going to say in these letters since we are significantly close to the Second Coming of Christ? But the question is, when will the Lord return?

There are and have been individuals and groups who've made predictions about the Lord's return. One man, Harold Camping, 89, is a religious broadcaster and co-founder of Family Stations, Inc. (commonly referred to as Family Radio), which reaches millions of people around the world. In fact, his broadcasts are translated in 30 languages! Mr. Camping has predicted the Return of Christ will take place on Saturday, May 21, 2011.<sup>5</sup> His Web site even has an announcement on the home page that says, "the Bible guarantees it."<sup>6</sup> It's important to note that he made a similar prediction in 1994.<sup>7</sup> A recent article in *The Washington Post* shares the story of one of Camping's followers, Allison Warden, whose car has been professionally lettered with the exhortation to "Save the Date!"<sup>8</sup>

In [Matthew 24:36](#), Jesus said, "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." However, we can know the seasons and the signs that let us know the Second Coming is on the horizon, but we will never know the exact date. Why? One major reason we don't the exact date is because it raises the level of serious living for us when we live like Jesus could return at any moment. It's fairly obvious that if God gave us the exact date, in advance, most people would be living in compromise right up until the day Jesus returned.

In this study we'll look at the two ways we're supposed to live until Jesus returns: in holiness and as a stranger in this world.

## Holiness

1. What is holiness?
  - a. Simply put, it's a devout and pure life before God.
  - b. The 1828 edition of *Webster's American Dictionary of the English Language* defines holiness as: "The state of being holy; purity or integrity of moral character; freedom from sin; sanctity. Applied to the Supreme Being, holiness denotes perfect purity or integrity of moral character, one of his essential attributes. Applied to human beings, holiness is purity of

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/01/03/AR2011010300453.html>

<sup>6</sup> See photo at the end of the study guide.

<sup>7</sup> To read more about Camping's prediction, use this link to access an article from the Christian Research Institute. <http://www.equip.org/articles/harold-camping-1994->

<sup>8</sup> See photo at the end of the study guide. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/01/03/AR2011010300453.html>

heart or dispositions; sanctified affections; piety; moral goodness, but not perfect.”<sup>9</sup>

2. Holiness is both a position and a practice.
  - a. **Hebrews 10:8-14** - *“First he said, ‘Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them’ – though they were offered in accordance with the law. Then he said, ‘Here I am, I have come to do your will.’ He sets aside the first to establish the second. And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool. For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.”*
  - b. Position - Vs. 10 - *“have been made holy”*
  - c. Practice - Vs. 14 - *“are being made holy”*
3. Holiness is not just who we are; it’s how we live.
4. Holiness is a prominent theme in the New Testament, especially considering the fact that the word *“holy”* is used more than 80 times!
5. **2 Peter 3:10-12** - *“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming...”*
6. Christians have no business being involved in sexual sin, “clubbing” and getting drunk, swearing, lying, viewing pornography, getting an abortion, opting for no-fault divorces, etc.
7. We are to be holy, not because it’s prudish, but because God says, *“Be holy because I am holy.”* (**1 Peter 1:16**)
8. **1 Thessalonians 4:7** - *“For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.”*

### Strangers

9. **1 Peter 1:17** is not the only time Peter refers to Christians as *“strangers.”*

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<sup>9</sup> <http://1828.mshaffer.com/d/search/word/holiness>

a. **1 Peter 2:11-12** - *“Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.”*

10. If you've ever visited a foreign country and you don't speak the language, understand the culture, aren't familiar with the etiquette and don't know your way around, you know exactly what it's like to be a stranger!
11. When you feel a little out of place; like it's a nice place to visit, but you don't feel quite at home, that's what God wants us to feel like, because we're just passing through!
12. If you don't have times when you feel like you're out of place that would be a good time to question if you belong to God or you're too cozy with this world.
13. In the meantime, we're to *“[I]ive such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.”* (**1 Peter 2:12**)
14. God not only wants us to abstain from certain things, he wants us to maintain certain things, like being an example so that others are drawn to God because of us.
15. It's okay to make a mark in life and to be an influence, just don't get too comfortable in this foreign land.
16. **Philippians 3:20** - *“Our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ...”*
17. **Hebrews 11:13** - *“All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were **aliens and strangers** on earth.”* (Emphasis added)

#### Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read **1 Peter 1:1-16** to provide an overview for this study.

3. Spend time talking about the latest prediction from Harold Camping.
  - a. Read and discuss [Matthew 24:36](#).
4. Read and discuss [Hebrews 10:8-14](#), focusing on holiness being both position and practice.
5. Allow the people in your group to talk about what holiness means to them and what it looks like for Christians to live a holy life.
  - a. Read and discuss [1 Thessalonians 4:7](#).
6. Read and discuss [2 Peter 3:10-12](#).
  - a. Allow the people in your group to share examples of the ways the Lord has helped them mature in their faith.
7. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's statement: Holiness is not just who we are; it's how we live.
  - a. Discuss Pastor Gary's observation about the difference between a mother and a woman who has a child, and a father versus a man who is just a DNA donor.
    - i. Being a mother doesn't just mean a woman bears children. A mother is one who is loving, nurturing, caring, and attentive to her child(ren).
    - ii. Being a father doesn't just mean that he is the DNA donor. A father is one who is loving, guiding, providing, and involved in the life of his child(ren).
    - iii. Being a Christian is not just because you believe in Christ; it's because you emulate his life.
  - b. Spend time discussing this illustration.
    - i. If you knew that there were no policemen within 1,000 miles, would you drive differently?
8. Read and discuss [1 Peter 2:11-12](#).
  - a. Allow the people in your group to share experiences they've had while traveling in foreign countries.
  - b. Share examples about times when your purposeful life made an impact on someone so that they saw *"saw your good deeds and [glorified] God."*
9. Read and discuss [Philippians 3:20](#).
  - a. How often do you think about heaven?
  - b. Are you consciously aware that life is short and eternity is long?
  - c. How has a proper understanding of the brevity of life changed the way you live?

10. Close your time in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to help each person: purpose in their heart to live a life of holiness before the Lord; recognize that holiness is how they are supposed to live; examine themselves to determine whether or not they are living as a stranger in this world; to rejoice in the knowledge of the promise of heaven as their ultimate reward.

Note: Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV).

“...blow the trumpet...warn the people”  
Ezekiel 33:3

# Judgment Day

**May 21, 2011**

THE BIBLE GUARANTEES IT



~~2012~~

