

1 PETER: SUBMISSION IN THE AGE OF FEAR

Living Hope Series #4, 1 Peter 3:1-22

June 28, 2020

*Buy even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed.
"Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened."
But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord.
1 Peter 3:14-15*

Dear friends

Note #1: Peter is an OT preacher, still applying 1:10-12 and exegeting Isaiah 53 for his Gentile audience

Note #2: Peter transitions here from our relationship with the world to our relationship with each other

Note #3: Peter points to the connections between suffering, relationships and worship, especially prayer



Wives and husbands

Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands

⁷ Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives

1 Peter 3:1,7

1) In the same way as _____ → Trinitarian implications

2) Wives, this is the _____

3) Husbands, this is the _____

Note #1: Peter continues the theme of how our submission forms the center of our apologetic

Note #2: This begins Peter's emphasis on prayer (see 3:12; 4:7) through the end of the epistle

Finally, all of you

⁸ Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. ⁹ Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.

1 Peter 3:8-9 (this blessing is explained by the quote which follows from Psalm 34)

1) This is what submission inside the body _____

2) Submission to _____ will be more difficult

3) Love for one another is Jesus' _____ and our _____

4) No submission, no _____

Submission can be terrifying

¹² For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer,
but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

¹³ Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened.”

¹⁵ 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, ¹⁶ keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. ¹⁷ It is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. ¹⁸ For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.

1 Peter 3:15-18 (quoting from Psalm 34 and Isaiah 8:12)

1) _____ thrives in the atmosphere of mutual submission → suffering

2) Fear gives way to _____ and _____ (please read Isaiah 8:11-18)

3) Hope opens doors for _____

When it’s good to be “the unrighteous”

¹⁷ It is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. ¹⁸ For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit

1 Peter 3:17-18

Note #1: The ESV makes three important changes in the translation of 3:18

Note #2: The passage that follows is very difficult (“spirits in prison”) and will be addressed on Wednesday

1) Christ’s suffering is _____ (my suffering is only _____)

2) Only the unrighteous can truly appreciate the *huper* → the depths of my sin

3) Only the unrighteous can truly appreciate belonging to God

Resources for further studies of 1 Peter

The BBC's article is available at <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20190111-seven-reasons-why-the-world-is-improving>. See also this 2019 *Time* article: <https://time.com/5754155/global-advances-2019/>

I found Kenneth Wuest's "First Peter in the Greek New Testament" very helpful (Eerdmans, 1942).

Bob Deffinbaugh's sermons on 1 Peter at <https://bible.org/series/glory-suffering-studies-1-peter>. Below is his wrap up of submission at <https://bible.org/seriespage/17-summing-submission-1-peter-38-12>

Spurgeon's series of messages on 1 Peter at <https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/by-scripture/1-peter>

ThirdMill has a collection of sermons on 1 Peter at <https://thirdmill.org/sermons/series.asp/srs/1%20Peter>

John Piper has a wonderful series of 1 Peter sermons at desiringgod.org

Reformation21's "resident aliens" blog on suffering at <https://www.reformation21.org/blog/suffering-and-redemption>

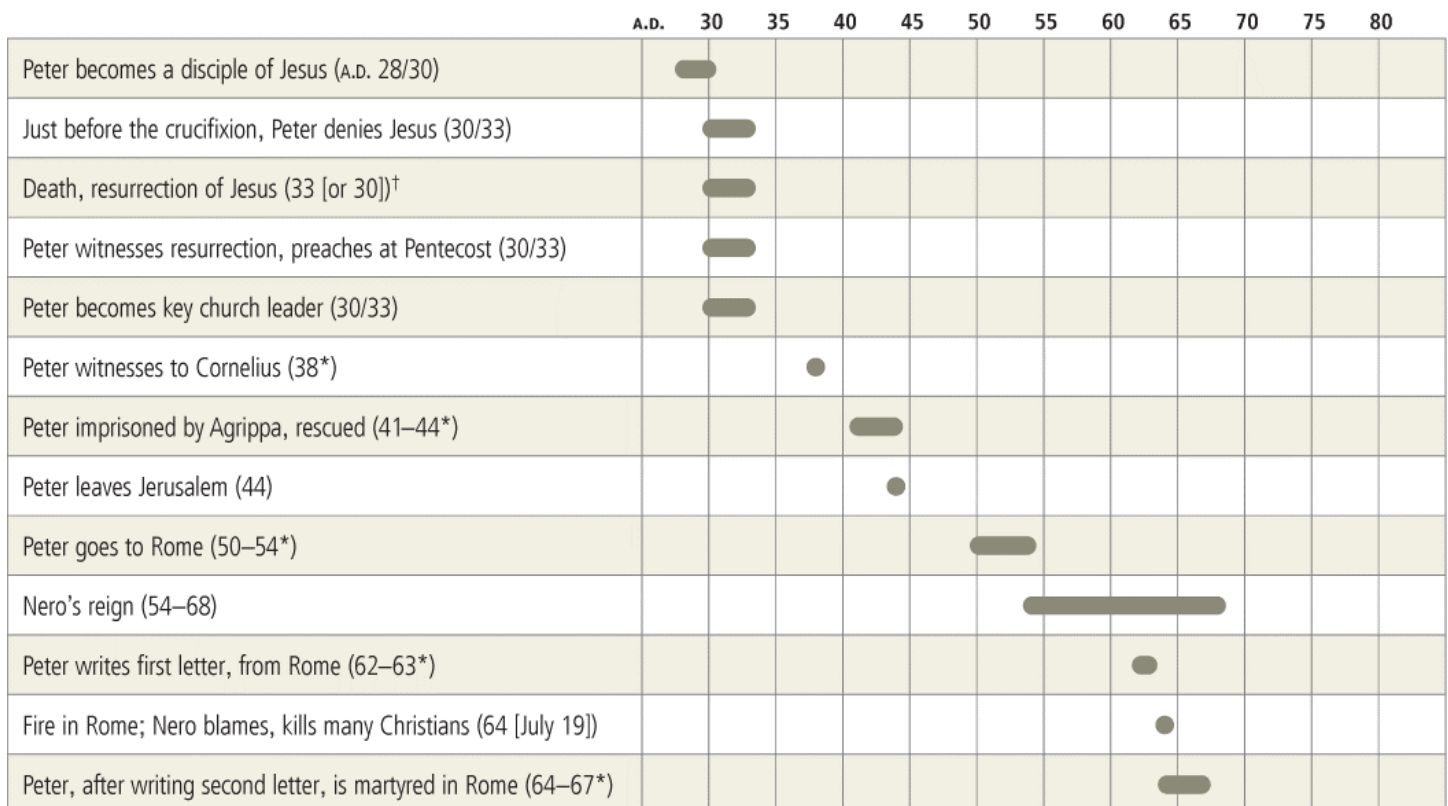
Ligon Duncan, and other First Presbyterian, Jackson, preachers has a wonderful series of messages at <https://www.fpcjackson.org/resource-library/sermons/scripture/1-peter>

Karen H. Jobes' commentary of 1 Peter in the Baker Exegetical Commentary series (Baker Academic, 2005). She is also excellent on 1 Peter 3, but I agree with Grudem's analysis of the "spirits in prison" problem at <https://www.monergism.com/topics/sermon-manuscripts-mp3s-scripture/1-peter/chapter-1-peter/chapter-03>

The Gospel Coalition produced this animated introduction (on which this week's coloring page is based) and study taken from the ESVSB at <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/course/1-peter-introduction/#overview>

Jonathan Edwards' wonderful 1 Peter 2:9-10 sermon at <https://www.biblebb.com/files/edwards/chosen.htm>

The Gospel Coalition offers a introductory lecture series on 1 Peter at <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/course/study-1-peter/#course-introduction>



(MATTIAS 1:14-15)
YOU ARE A **ROCK!**

(ARABIC, KENYAS) GREEK:
SIMON PETER

ONE OF JESUS' FIRST DISCIPLES
JERUSALEM CHURCH (44:13-14)

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1 PETER

HOPE IN THE MIST OF SUFFERING

• GOD'S PEOPLE ARE A MISUNDERSTOOD MINORITY, LIVING UNDER THE RULE OF A DIFFERENT KING.

• PERSECUTION OFFERS A CHANCE TO SHOW OTHERS THE GENEROUS LOVE OF JESUS.

1:13-2:10 A NEW FAMILY IDENTITY

OLD TESTAMENT IMAGES APPLIED TO GENTILE CHRISTIANS
SEE EXODUS 12:11

1:13-2:10 THE NEW PEOPLE IN THE COVENANT
SEE EXODUS 12:11

1:17-2:1 THE NEW EXODUS & PASSOVER
SEE EXODUS 12:11

1:21-2:10 THE NEW COVENANT PEOPLE
ISAIAH 40, JEREMIAH 31

2:1-10 THE NEW TEMPLE
ISAIAH 20:16, PSALM 110:1-2

2:17-10 A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS
EXODUS 19:1-6

2:11-4:11 SUFFERING AS A WITNESS TO JESUS

2:11-4:11 SUFFERING AS A WITNESS TO JESUS

2:11-4:11 THE PROBLEM:
CHRISTIANS ARE EXPECTED TO SUFFER & WITNESS THE KINGDOM'S GODS

2:11-4:11 THE RESPONSE:
CHRISTIANS ARE EXPECTED TO LOVE THEIR ENEMIES

2:11-4:11 THE REALITY:
CHRISTIANS ARE EXPECTED TO LOVE THEIR ENEMIES

2:11-4:11 THE REALITY:
CHRISTIANS ARE EXPECTED TO LOVE THEIR ENEMIES

2:11-4:11 THE REALITY:
CHRISTIANS ARE EXPECTED TO LOVE THEIR ENEMIES

4:12-5:9 SUFFERING & FUTURE HOPE

4:12-5:9 SUFFERING & FUTURE HOPE

4:12-5:9 THE REALITY:
CHRISTIANS ARE EXPECTED TO LOVE THEIR ENEMIES

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1:1-2 GREETING

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HELLO, GOD'S PEOPLE AND ARE CHOSEN & EXILED
(SEE EXODUS 12:11, 12:12)

OLD TESTAMENT DESCRIPTIONS OF ABRAHAM & ISRAEL
(SEE EXODUS 12:11, 12:12)

1:1-2 GREETING

HELLO, GOD'S PEOPLE AND ARE CHOSEN & EXILED
(SEE EXODUS 12:11, 12:12)

OLD TESTAMENT DESCRIPTIONS OF ABRAHAM & ISRAEL
(SEE EXODUS 12:11, 12:12)

1:3-12 SONG OF PRAISE

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1:3-12 SONG OF PRAISE

1:3-12 SONG OF PRAISE

5:10-14 CLOSING

5:10-14 CLOSING

5:10-14 CLOSING

5:10-14 CLOSING

5:10-14 CLOSING

5:10-14 CLOSING

created by the Bible Project

Summing up Submission (1 Peter 3:8-12)

<https://bible.org/seriespage/17-summing-submission-1-peter-38-12>

8 To sum up, let all be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; 9 not returning evil for evil, or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose [because unto this you were called] that you might inherit a blessing. 10 For, “Let him who means to love life and see good days Refrain his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking guile. 11 “And let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it. 12 “For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, And His ears attend to their prayer, But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

Introduction

Years ago as I walked across my college campus to my next class, a fellow student happened to be walking with me. As usual in Seattle it had been raining, and the ground was wet. There was a vast array of sidewalks, but also muddy paths in the lawn where students cut corners. As we approached one muddy spot, an obviously-hurried coed attempted to pass us on our right. Moving too quickly for her footing, she began to fall, with books flying into the air as she desperately reached out to catch her balance. It might have worked had not the fellow beside me, who could have been the hero of the day, jumped back just as she reached out to catch hold of him, allowing her to sprawl headlong into the mud!

It was a pathetic scene as the girl attempted to salvage some scrap of human dignity by snatching up her books and running off out of public view. Since there was now nothing we could do, the other fellow and I began to make our way to class again. Sensing the need to explain his actions, the student exclaimed: “I thought she was trying to attack me!” Now here was an amazing thought. This young girl was trying to attack a young man. And the young man could think of nothing to do other than jump back and allow her to fall. Here was a man who desperately needed help.

Yet we find a parable in this story. All too many Christians shrink back as fellow-believers and others fall right before their very eyes. We are a nation so caught up in ourselves, so introspective and self-seeking, that many times we do not even recognize what is taking place until it is too late. And when we do see others in need of help, like the priest and the Levite in the story of the Good Samaritan, we avoid becoming involved.

In the verses preceding this lesson (2:11–3:7), Peter gave instructions on submission and suffering as it relates to specific relationships. Now, in [1 Peter 3:8-12](#), Peter sets down the general principles which should govern all our relationships.^{[118](#)}

Attitudes That Revolutionize Relationships^{[119](#)} (3:8-9a)

Let All Be Harmonious

The Christian should have an attitude and outlook at harmony with others. One can easily see how this can be true of a believer as he or she relates to fellow believers. As Paul writes:

16 Be of the same mind toward one another ... ([Romans 12:16a](#)).

3 Being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 [There is] one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all ([Ephesians 4:3-6](#)).

1 If therefore there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, 2 make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose ([Philippians 2:1-2](#)).

The Christian should seek to be “harmonious” in his relationships with all men. Surely this is required in seeking to maintain peaceful relationships:

18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men ([Romans 12:18](#)).

I think Peter would have us go further than this however. True submission involves more than mere obedience; it involves discerning the mind of the one to whom we are to submit and seeking to embrace it to the degree possible. For example, a submissive employee should endeavor to determine how his employer wants things done and then seek to do it that way. A child should seek not only “to mind” a parent but to learn “the mind” of his parent and act accordingly. If such were the case, far fewer rules would be required. Rules are required when we are not of one mind.

Being harmonious does not mean becoming a clone. This does happen in cults, but it is not so in Christianity. In a cult, everyone thinks the same thing—whatever the cult leader teaches. Conformity is the operative principle in cults. Harmony is the operative principle in Christianity. Perhaps the best illustration would be orchestra made up of many different musicians, with a wide variety of instruments, but many different parts to be played even by the same kind of instrument. In a good orchestra, every member plays the same song, and all follow the leadership of one conductor. So it should be in the church. We all have different stations in life, different gifts, different ministries; but we have all embraced the same gospel, trusting in the same Savior, and following His leadership through His Word and His Spirit.

Let All Be Sympathetic

The term rendered “sympathetic” in the New American Standard Bible and the New International Version is a compound word made up from the root word “suffer” and the prefix “with.” The word originally meant “to suffer with.” A number of Bible scholars think we should take the term more generally, thus referring to a sensitivity to where others are in their experience. We are to identify or empathize with others, whether in their sorrow or their joy:

15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep ([Romans 12:15](#)).

What it means to be “sympathetic” might be illustrated by the way people drive in the Third World. The highway may have three traffic lanes, but there are five or six lanes of cars. While traffic signs and lights are not always obeyed, one thing is quite noticeable in all the apparent chaos: every driver is very aware of what the other drivers are doing. When one car veers to miss a bicycle, the other cars adjust accordingly. This is the way Christians should be—sensitive to what is going on around them.

We dare not lose sight of the more specific meaning of the term, “to suffer with.” Peter’s epistle has much to say on the subject of suffering. The writer to the Hebrews also specifically instructs believers to “suffer with” one another:

3 Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them, and those who are ill-treated, since you yourselves also are in the body ([Hebrews 13:3](#)).

Later in this epistle, Peter likewise reminds his readers to bear in mind the sufferings of other saints:

9 But resist him, firm in [your] faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world ([1 Peter 5:9](#)).

Let All Be Brotherly

Brotherly love is the next requirement for the Christian's relationship with others. This word is transliterated Philadelphia, brotherly love. It surely refers to the love believers should have one to another ([Romans 12:9-10](#); [1 Thessalonians 4:9](#); [Hebrews 13:1](#); [1 Peter 1:22](#); [2 Peter 1:7](#)). This is the love Jesus required of His disciples ([John 13:34-35](#); [15:11-14](#)). I believe Peter's instruction is broader in that he is instructing us to "love our neighbor," our fellow-man (see [Romans 13:8-10](#)).

Let All Be Kindhearted

This word was originally used to refer to the intestines ("bowels") or the hidden vital organs of the body as it was believed that deep and intense emotions come from deep within a person. Peter uses the term to refer to the depth of concern or compassion we should have toward others. If "sympathetic" refers to our commitment to know how others are doing, "kindhearted" refers to our emotional response to the state of others. This characteristic is prominent in the life and ministry of our Lord (see [Matthew 9:36](#); [14:14](#); [15:32](#); [20:34](#), etc.).

Let All Be Humble in Spirit

The vitally important quality of humility is the recognition of our weaknesses and limitations. It recognizes strengths too, but it knows these have come from God ([1 Peter 4:10](#); [1 Corinthians 4:7](#); [Romans 12:3](#)). Humility is closely related to submission, and it is essential for true Christian unity (see [Philippians 2:1-8](#)). Humility is not just required of those who are younger ([1 Peter 5:5](#)), but of all ([1 Peter 3:8](#)). Paul's instructions to believers contain the same challenge to manifest humility:

16 Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation ([Romans 12:16](#)).

12 And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you ([Colossians 3:12-13](#)).

Our Lord Himself was characterized by humility ([Matthew 11:29](#)). Not Returning Evil for Evil:

9a Not returning evil for evil, or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead ([1 Peter 3:9a](#)).

From the time of the giving of the Old Testament law, the saint has been forbidden to take revenge:

18 "You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD" ([Leviticus 19:18](#)).

22 Do not say, "I will repay evil"; Wait for the LORD, and He will save you ([Proverbs 20:22](#); see [29:29](#)).

Jesus taught the same thing during His earthly ministry. Men were not to take revenge; instead, they were to forgive and seek the blessing of those who have wronged us:

12 "And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.] 14 "For if you

forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions” ([Matthew 6:12-15](#); see also [Luke 6:27-36](#)).

Both Peter and Paul call upon Christians to forgive those who have harmed them, encouraging them to seek to be a blessing to them ([Romans 12:16-21](#); [Ephesians 4:2](#); [Philippians 2:3](#); [Colossians 3:12-14](#); [1 Peter 5:5](#); see [2 Peter 2](#)).

The qualities Peter has called for are those qualities of God Himself, the qualities called for by the Law, by our Lord, and by His apostles. These are qualities our culture used to highly regard in women but which are now regarded as “weak” in both men and women. These qualities are antithetical to the characteristics of the “flesh” and virtually identical to those produced by the Spirit (see [Galatians 5:16-26](#)).

The Relationship Between Getting a Blessing and Giving a Blessing (3:9)

9 not returning evil for evil, or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose [because unto this you were called] that you might inherit a blessing.

The Scriptures offer several reasons why we should be characterized by grace rather than by a grudge toward those who have wronged us.

(1) Because it is consistent with the character of God ([Matthew 5:43-48](#); [Luke 6:35-36](#)).

(2) Because it is consistent with our praise of God ([James 3:8-12](#)).

In our text, Peter supplies yet another reason:

(3) Because it is consistent with our destiny ([1 Peter 3:9](#)).

The logic is very simple. We have been called to inherit a blessing. If we are to live consistently with our calling, then we should be characterized by the fact that we bless others. James put it this way:

8 But no one can tame the tongue; [it is] a restless evil [and] full of deadly poison. 9 With it we bless [our] Lord and Father; and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; 10 from the same mouth come [both] blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way. 11 Does a fountain send out from the same opening [both] fresh and bitter [water]? 12 Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Neither [can] salt water produce fresh. ([James 3:8-12](#)).

Not only does God bless us, but we are called to bless God. James argues that it is most inconsistent to bless God (the Creator of men) and then to curse men. Blessing and cursing should not both flow from our lips. Cursing must therefore be put away.

Peter’s instruction rests on this same principle. Our future destiny determines our present conduct. Because our future hope is that of blessing (God will bless us), our present relationships should be characterized by being a blessing to others.

This teaching is not new. From the very beginning, God’s covenant with Abraham spelled out the two-fold dimension of blessing:

2 And I will make you a great nation, and *I will bless you*, and make your name great; and so *you shall be a blessing* ([Genesis 12:2](#), emphasis mine).

From very early times, men chose to forget this truth about God's blessings. The Jews began to presume that God was obligated to bless them, not because of what they did but because of who they were ("the seed of Abraham," see [Matthew 3:7-10](#); [John 8:33](#)). They believed God's blessings were to be theirs alone and the handful of proselytes who would convert to Judaism. Jonah portrayed this attitude in his response to God's command to preach to the Ninevites. It was the prevalent attitude among self-righteous Jews in Jesus' day also. And it is all too often evident in our own times. We too begin to think "sinners" rightly deserve to be punished, while we deserve to be blessed. We feel little or no obligation to be a blessing to the ungodly.

Peter teaches that we should do otherwise. To show that what he is teaching is not new, he turns us to the words of David in [Psalm 34](#).

10 "Let him who means to love life and see good days Refrain his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking guile. 11 And let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it. 12 For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, And His ears attend to their prayer, But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil" ([Psalm 34:10-12](#)).

Several things need to be said before we seek to interpret these words.

(1) Many students of Scripture seem to think Peter is somehow changing the meaning of David's words, that while David spoke of temporal blessings, Peter "converts" his words to refer to "spiritual" blessings. J. Ramsey Michaels writes,

"How is the psalm being interpreted? In much the same way that the phrase, 'inherit blessing,' was interpreted in v 9. 'Life,' which to the psalmist meant a long and happy life on earth, is to Peter the same as 'the grace of life' in v 7—the eternal salvation that is the believer's hope. To 'love' that life is equivalent to loving the still invisible Christ who will come revealing that salvation. To 'see good days' is to see what is now unseen, the glory in store for Christians at that revelation (see *Comment* on 1:8). The language of the psalm is the language of this world, but Peter has made it metaphorical of the world to come...."¹²⁰

(2) This psalm has much in common with the teaching of 1 Peter. It would seem that Peter's thinking has been shaped to one degree or another by this psalm he has alluded to already in 2:3. The themes of this psalm and Peter's epistle are remarkably similar.

(3) If [Psalm 34](#) speaks of "earthly blessings," it also speaks of "earthly trials" as a part of life which we should expect (see verses 17-19). God will deliver the righteous from all his troubles, but it may not be immediately.

(4) This psalm speaks not only of earthly matters but of eternal ones. When he speaks of future deliverance (see verses 7, 19, 22), it may include both present and future deliverance. And when he refers to judgment (see verses 16, 21-22), it may be temporal, but if not, it will certainly be eternal. Asaph's psalm should serve as a commentary on [Psalm 34](#). Only when Asaph came to view life from an eternal and spiritual perspective did the (present) suffering of the righteous and the prosperity of the wicked make sense (see [Psalm 73:15-28](#)).

(5) We should not fail to notice that [Psalm 34](#) contains a messianic prophecy:

19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous; But the LORD delivers him out of them all. 20 He keeps all his bones; Not one of them is broken ([Psalm 34:19](#)).

This prophecy is said to have been fulfilled at the crucifixion of our Lord. While the legs of the other two men beside Him were broken, none of our Lord's bones were broken ([John 20:36](#)).

(6) The circumstances of this psalm are given to us at the beginning. They provide us with the key to understanding the relevance of this text to our lives and also provide us with a key to the psalm's interpretation.

We shall therefore find that Peter's interpretation and application of this text are not a modification of the psalm but a model of biblical exegesis and application. We who might be inclined to think Peter "spiritualized" this psalm had better take another look. And when we do, we will learn much from Peter's handling of this great Old Testament text.

The Interpretation and Application of [Psalm 34](#)

[Psalm 34](#) was written by David. Apart from the superscription, one might think he wrote it after a great battle and a triumphant victory. Such was not the case. David wrote the psalm after he had pretended to be insane and thus was spared from the hand of a heathen king. Consider the background to this psalm as recorded in the Book of 1 Samuel:

1 Then David came to Nob to Ahimelech the priest; and Ahimelech came trembling to meet David, and said to him, "Why are you alone and no one with you?" 2 And David said to Ahimelech the priest, "The king has commissioned me with a matter, and has said to me, 'Let no one know anything about the matter on which I am sending you and with which I have commissioned you; and I have directed the young men to a certain place.' 3 "Now therefore, what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever can be found." 4 And the priest answered David and said, "There is no ordinary bread on hand, but there is consecrated bread; if only the young men have kept themselves from women." 5 And David answered the priest and said to him, "Surely women have been kept from us as previously when I set out and the vessels of the young men were holy, though it was an ordinary journey; how much more then today will their vessels [be holy]?" 6 So the priest gave him consecrated [bread]; for there was no bread there but the bread of the Presence which was removed from before the LORD, in order to put hot bread [in its place] when it was taken away. 7 Now one of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the LORD; and his name was Doeg the Edomite, the chief of Saul's shepherds. 8 And David said to Ahimelech, "Now is there not a spear or a sword on hand? For I brought neither my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's matter was urgent." 9 Then the priest said, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the valley of Elah, behold, it is wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod; if you would take it for yourself, take [it.] For there is no other except it here." And David said, "There is none like it; give it to me." 10 Then David arose and fled that day from Saul, and went to Achish king of Gath. 11 But the servants of Achish said to him, "Is this not David the king of the land? Did they not sing of this one as they danced, saying, 'Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands'?" 12 And David took these words to heart, and greatly feared Achish king of Gath. 13 So he disguised his sanity before them, and acted insanely in their hands, and scribbled on the doors of the gate, and let his saliva run down into his beard. 14 Then Achish said to his servants, "Behold, you see the man behaving as a madman. Why do you bring him to me? 15 Do I lack madmen, that you have brought this one to act the madman in my presence? Shall this one come into my house?" ([1 Samuel 21](#) NAS)

Saul was told he would lose his kingdom. David was the one who would be king in his place. David's victories in battle were a source of bitter jealousy for Saul. Sadly, even David's close friend Jonathan, Saul's son, had to admit to David his father intended to kill him (see [1 Samuel 20](#)). Along with some of his men, David fled for his life to Nob, where David lied to Ahimelech the priest about the reason for his arrival and received some provisions for his escape. As a result, Ahimelech and all of his family (save one) were put to death by Saul (see [1 Samuel 22:6-23](#)). David knew he was to blame ([1 Samuel 6:22](#)).

After this, David fled to Gath where he sought safety and sanctuary in a foreign land from a heathen king. When some of the king's servants reminded the king of David's military might, he was viewed as a serious threat to the kingdom. Upon learning this, David became afraid of the king and saved himself by acting like a lunatic. He went about acting the fool, a disguise which proved successful, for he was allowed to live.

A significant clue to the meaning of these events and their relationship to [Psalm 34](#) can be found in a later chapter of 1 Samuel in the story of Nabal and Abigail. Great wisdom is displayed by Abigail, while great folly

is displayed by her husband Nabal. Both Abigail's wisdom and Nabal's foolishness are seen in light of their response to David's identity as Israel's future king.

5 So David sent ten young men, and David said to the young men, "Go up to Carmel, visit Nabal and greet him in my name; 6 and thus you shall say, 'Have a long life, peace be to you, and peace be to your house, and peace be to all that you have. 7 And now I have heard that you have shearers; now your shepherds have been with us and we have not insulted them, nor have they missed anything all the days they were in Carmel. 8 Ask your young men and they will tell you. Therefore let [my] young men find favor in your eyes, for we have come on a festive day. Please give whatever you find at hand to your servants and to your son David.' " 9 When David's young men came, they spoke to Nabal according to all these words in David's name; then they waited. 10 But Nabal answered David's servants, and said, "Who is David? And who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants today who are each breaking away from his master. 11 Shall I then take my bread and my water and my meat that I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give it to men whose origin I do not know?" 12 So David's young men retraced their way and went back; and they came and told him according to all these words. 13 And David said to his men, "Each [of you] gird on his sword." So each man girded on his sword. And David also girded on his sword, and about four hundred men went up behind David while two hundred stayed with the baggage. 14 But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, "Behold, David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master, and he scorned them. 15 Yet the men were very good to us, and we were not insulted, nor did we miss anything as long as we went about with them, while we were in the fields. 16 They were a wall to us both by night and by day, all the time we were with them tending the sheep. 17 Now therefore, know and consider what you should do, for evil is plotted against our master and against all his household; and he is such a worthless man that no one can speak to him." 18 Then Abigail hurried and took two hundred [loaves] of bread and two jugs of wine and five sheep already prepared and five measures of roasted grain and a hundred clusters of raisins and two hundred cakes of figs, and loaded [them] on donkeys. 19 And she said to her young men, "Go on before me; behold, I am coming after you." But she did not tell her husband Nabal. 20 And it came about as she was riding on her donkey and coming down by the hidden part of the mountain, that behold, David and his men were coming down toward her; so she met them. 21 Now David had said, "Surely in vain I have guarded all that this[man] has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that belonged to him; and he has returned me evil for good. 22 May God do so to the enemies of David, and more also, if by morning I leave [as much as] one male of any who belong to him." 23 When Abigail saw David, she hurried and dismounted from her donkey, and fell on her face before David, and bowed herself to the ground. 24 And she fell at his feet and said, "On me alone, my lord, be the blame. And please let your maidservant speak to you, and listen to the words of your maidservant. 25 Please do not let my lord pay attention to this worthless man, Nabal, for as his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name and folly is with him; but I your maidservant did not see the young men of my lord whom you sent. 26 "Now therefore, my lord, as the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, since the LORD has restrained you from shedding blood, and from avenging yourself by your own hand, now then let your enemies, and those who seek evil against my lord, be as Nabal. 27 And now let this gift which your maidservant has brought to my lord be given to the young men who accompany my lord. 28 Please forgive the transgression of your maidservant; for the LORD will certainly make for my lord an enduring house, because my lord is fighting the battles of the LORD, and evil shall not be found in you all your days. 29 And should anyone rise up to pursue you and to seek your life, then the life of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of the living with the LORD your God; but the lives of your enemies He will sling out as from the hollow of a sling. 30 And it shall come about when the LORD shall do for my lord according to all the good that He has spoken concerning you, and shall appoint you ruler over Israel, 31 that this will not cause grief or a troubled heart to my lord, both by having shed blood without cause and by my lord having avenged himself. When the LORD shall deal well with my lord, then remember your maidservant" ([1 Samuel 25:5-31](#), emphasis mine).

Nabal did not recognize David as the future king of Israel. To him, David was a nobody, and he was not about to be generous to a nobody. To Abigail, however, David was the future king. On that basis, she sought to persuade him not to shed innocent blood in order to get revenge. She appealed to David to act like the king he was destined to be and to allow God to deal with his enemies. Abigail appealed to David to do exactly what Peter appeals to us to do: *live now in the light of what God has promised we will be.*

There were times when David took the “high road” of Christian conduct. Especially prominent are the two times he refused to take Saul’s life, even though it appeared God had providentially provided the opportunities to do so ([1 Samuel 24](#), 26). At other times, David failed to live up to his calling. On this occasion, apart from Abigail’s intervention, David would have acted foolishly in seeking vengeance on Nabal and his household.

The two events described in [1 Samuel 21](#) are not noble acts David would want as his epitaph. I believe [Psalm 34](#) was written by David after he reflected on his own folly. God did deliver him from Achish of Gath, but it was due to God’s grace and not to David’s piety. God did deliver Abraham from Egypt ([Genesis 12:10-20](#)) and from Abimelech ([Genesis 20](#)), but not in a way that commended his actions. Abraham was deceitful and sought to save his own skin at the risk of sacrificing his wife’s purity rather than trusting God.

David describes the “fear of the Lord,” hoping to instruct and encourage others by the lessons he learned from his folly. God is always righteous and faithful. He will deliver the righteous and judge the wicked (compare [Psalm 34](#) with [2 Peter 2](#)). Those who trust in Him need never fear men. Rather, we should turn from evil and do what is right. We should demonstrate Christ’s righteousness with our tongues by keeping our tongues from evil and our lips from deceit (34:13). When we are in danger, we should trust God to deliver us and not resort to a lie or deceit to save ourselves. This demonstrates faith and righteousness and manifests the character of God to men. Doing so also makes His divine intervention all the more evident and glorious.

What can David say to us who live as “aliens and strangers” in a hostile world? What can he say to us about our conduct when persecution and even death might result from persisting in righteousness? He can say this:

“I know what it is like to live as a stranger and alien. I lived this way during the days king Saul sought to kill me. I know what it is like to have God’s promise of blessings to come, and to go about day by day fearing for my very life. I know what it is like to live in a world hostile to me and my destiny when the promise of a future day of blessing seems remote and dubious. But I can say from sad experience that these are the times when righteous living are most apparent. These are the times when our speech and our conduct manifest the character of our Lord. These are the times when we can identify with the rejection and suffering of the Savior.”

And this is precisely why Peter can turn to [Psalm 34](#) for support. Like David of old, we are living as “aliens and strangers” in a hostile world, knowing that in God’s time we shall enter into the blessings He has promised. Like David, we should live in a manner consistent with our future hope. Specifically, rather than seeking to retaliate for the evils men commit against us, we should actively seek to be a blessing to them, trusting God to be faithful to His promises for us.

[Psalm 34](#) is not entirely about future blessings, however, and neither is 1 Peter. Up to this point in time, Peter has emphasized our future hope and the conduct it requires of us in the present. David’s psalm promises not only future blessings but present blessing. Peter begins at the point in the psalm where David promises blessings in the present:

10 “Let him who means to love life and see good days Refrain his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking guile. 11 “And let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it. 12 “For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, And His ears attend to their prayer, But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil” ([Psalm 34:10-12](#)).

David and Peter both want us to understand that the “good life” is not just a future hope. The “good life” is not what the popular beer or other commercials offer us. The “good life” is the fullest enjoyment of the days God gives us in this life and in the next. Only a Christian is free to enjoy the “good life.” Those who are enslaved to the flesh (see 1:14; 2:11) are not free to say “no” to it; they are compelled to obey its desires (see [Romans 6:15-18](#)). The one who can do without earth’s delights is the one who can most enjoy them.

Peter's use of [Psalm 34](#) allows him to make a transition at this point in his epistle. Having contrasted the minimal price we have of suffering in this life for the blessings of the next (like Paul in [2 Corinthians 4](#) and 5), Peter now begins to change his emphasis. He shows us those things we may have considered to be a "pain" are really a privilege. Many of the burdens we think we are bearing are really blessings.

This truth is powerfully taught in [Psalm 73](#) where Asaph begins by confessing his self-pity and self-absorption in verses 1-14. How could God be "good to Israel" (verse 1) when the wicked were prospering and the righteous were suffering? By verses 15-18, Asaph sees things from God's perspective (verses 15-28) and recognizes the depth of his sin in his response thus far (verses 21-22). He realizes that his suffering has drawn him closer to God but prosperity has done the opposite for the wicked. He sees that the pleasures of the wicked are momentary, but their torment is eternal. He comes to understand that God is his portion now and for all eternity (verses 24-27). Most of all, Asaph comes to understand "good" in a biblical sense. Good is not measured by pleasure in life; good is measured by the "nearness of God" (verse 28). The psalmist's suffering drew him to God, and thus his suffering was "good."

Peter is about to say the same thing. Suffering is not "evil;" ungodliness is evil. The good in life is not only to know God but to make Him known to others. Suffering for Christ's sake is a high calling, a privilege, for Peter and for Paul—and for us:

14 But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, [you are] blessed. AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED ([1 Peter 3:14](#)).

12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; 13 but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation. 14 If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you ([1 Peter 4:12-14](#)).

For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain ([Philippians 1:21](#)).

For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake ([Philippians 1:29](#)).

7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from [the] Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which [comes] from God on the basis of faith, 10 that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; 11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead ([Philippians 3:7-11](#)).

When we suffer for Christ's sake, we should respond with blessing, not only because we will be blessed eternally, but because we are being blessed in time as well. How great God's blessings are for the saint. How great our blessings should be for the world. And all the glorious blessings we now experience are but a foretaste of what will follow.

Conclusion

When Jesus was given the opportunity to judge and to condemn men and women during the time of His first coming to the earth, He declined. He had not come to judge, He said, but to save. Jesus came to the earth to bring God's blessings to men. The sad reality is that those who reject God's blessings, provided in Christ at His

first coming, will experience the judgment of God to be meted out by our Lord at His second coming. I am therefore compelled to ask you this question: “Have you entered into the blessings God has provided in Christ?” If not, I urge you to do so today. The present promise of blessing for those who believe is accompanied by a word of warning for those who do not. It was none other than Peter who sounded this word of hope, along with a warning, on the day of Pentecost:

33 “Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. 34 For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: ‘THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, “SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, 35 UNTIL I MAKE THINE ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR THY FEET.” ‘ 36 “Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified.” 37 Now when they heard [this], they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” 38 And Peter [said] to them, “Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself.” 40 And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation!” ([Acts 2:33-40](#)).

For those of us who are saved, we see that God has set a very high standard of conduct for His saints. It is indeed an impossible standard, apart from His grace. We are to manifest the mind of Christ and seek to bless those who harm us rather than seek revenge. We are to be a blessing to those in this world, even our enemies, knowing that we are destined to receive God’s blessings in the future and experience them now in the present. May God give us the grace to understand and apply the words of this precious text in 1 Peter.

Attitudes Which Revolutionize Relationships

Word Concept	Definition	New Testament Parallel	Divine Attribute	Antonym (contrast)
Harmonious	Having one mind	Rom. 12:16; 15:5-7 John 17:20-23 Acts 4:32, 41-47 1 Cor. 1:10 ; chapter 12 2 Cor. 13:11 Eph. 4:3 Phil. 1:27; 2:2; 3:15; 4:2	Phil. 2:5 Matthew 4:1-11 John 5:30-32	Factious Titus 3:9-11 3 John 9-10 1 Cor. 1:10-12 Contentious 1 Cor. 6:1-11
Sympathetic (literally, “suffer together”)	Sensitivity to what others are going through	Rom. 12:15 1 Cor. 12:26 Heb. 13:3	Heb. 4:15; 10:34 John 11:35	Detached 1 Cor. 12:14-18 Self-centered and thus insensitive to impact on another – Romans 14-15 1 Cor. 8-10
Brotherly (Philadelphia)	Brotherly love	Rom. 12:9-10 1 Thess. 4:9 Heb. 13:1 1 Pet. 1:22 2 Pet. 1:7	John 11:35-36 ; 13:1; 15:12-15	Hate your brother 1 John 3:14-15; 4:20

Kind-hearted	Compassionate Deep feeling Merciful “Affectionately sensitive —quick to feel and show affection” (Stibbs, p. 129)	Good Samaritan, Luke 10:30-37 Eph. 4:32 2 Cor. 7:15 Phil. 1:8; 2:1 Col. 3:12 Philemon 12 1 John 3:17	Jesus — Matt. 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 20:34; Mark 1:41; 8:2; Luke 6:36; 7:13	Aloof, Uncaring Luke 13:10-17
Humble in spirit	Humility Prov. 29:29 Acts 20:19 Romans 12:16	Eph. 4:2 Phil. 2:3 Col. 2:18, 23; 3:12 1 Pet. 5:5	Matt. 11:29 Phil. 2:5-8	Proud, Arrogant
Not Vindictive	Forgiving Gracious Lev. 19:18 Prov. 20:22; 24:29	Matt. 6:12-15 Luke 6:27-36 Rom. 12:14-21 1 Cor. 4:12-13 1 Thess. 5:15	Matt. 5:44-45 Luke 6:27-38	Vengeful, Retaliatory

This chart gives parallel passages which refer to the particular attitude either as a characteristic of the Christian or as an attribute of God. It is my contention that each of these characteristics is an attribute of God which should be evidenced in the Christian as well.

118 Two Pauline texts closely parallel the words of Peter in our text: [Romans 12:9-21](#) and [Colossians 3:12](#)--4:6. In the Colossians text, Paul begins with the general principles and then gives specific instructions afterward. In 1 Peter, the order is the reverse. Peter starts with specific relationships and then concludes with general principles. Peter's teaching is more oriented toward the ungodly to whom we are to submit and to the suffering which often results. See also [1 Corinthians 13](#); [2 Corinthians 6:1-10](#); [Galatians 5:13-24](#); [Ephesians 4:1-3, 25--5:2](#); [Philippians 2:1-8](#); [1 Thessalonians 5:13-22](#).

119 At the end of this lesson, a chart has been provided for further study and meditation. It gives parallel passages which refer to the particular attitude either as a characteristic of the Christian or as an attribute of God. It is my contention that each of these characteristics is an attribute of God which should be evidenced in the Christian as well.

120 J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter* (Waco, Texas: Word Books, Publisher), 1988. *Word Biblical Commentary Series*, p. 180.

By Julius Probst 10th January 2019

Read more from The Conversation

<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20190111-seven-reasons-why-the-world-is-improving>

THE CONVERSATION

You'd be forgiven for thinking the world is all doom and gloom – and getting worse. But these seven charts show that's not actually the case.

The late Swedish academic [Hans Rosling has identified a worrying trend](#): not only do many people across advanced economies have no idea that the world is becoming a much better place, but they actually even think the opposite. This is no wonder, when the news focuses on reporting catastrophes, terrorist attacks, wars and famines.

Who wants to hear about the fact that every day some 200,000 people around the world are lifted [above the \\$2-a-day poverty line](#)? Or that more than 300,000 people a day [get access to electricity and clean water for the first time](#) every day? These stories of people in low-income countries simply doesn't make for exciting news coverage. But, as Rosling pointed out in his book [Factfulness](#), it's important to put all the bad news in perspective.

While it is true that [globalisation has put some downward pressure on middle-class wages](#) in advanced economies in recent decades, it has also helped lift hundreds of millions of people above the global poverty line – a development that has mostly occurred in South-East Asia.

The recent rise of populism that has swept across Western countries with Trump, Brexit, and the election of populists in Hungary and Italy, among various other factors, is thus of great concern if we care about global welfare. [Globalisation is the only way forward to ensure that economic prosperity is shared among all countries](#) and not only a select few advanced economies.

While some people glorify the past, one of the big facts of economic history is that until quite recently a significant part of the world population has lived under quite miserable conditions – and this has been true throughout most of human history.

The following seven charts show how the world has become a much better place compared to just a few decades ago. *(Click on the images to expand the charts in your browser).*

1: Life expectancy continues to rise

Even during the Industrial Revolution, average life expectancy across European countries did not exceed around 35 years. This does not imply that most people died in their late 30s or even 40s, since it was mostly very high levels of child mortality rates that pulled down the average. Women dying in childbirth was obviously a big problem too. So were some common diseases such as smallpox and the plague, for example, which now have been completely eradicated in high-income countries. *(Read more about [what life expectancy really means and how it has changed](#) in our recent BBC Future story).*

2: Child mortality continues to fall

More than a century ago, child mortality rates were still exceeding 10% – even in high-income countries such as the US and the UK. But thanks to modern medicine, and better public safety in general, this number has been reduced to almost zero in rich countries.

Plus, developing economies like India and Brazil now have much lower child mortality rates today than advanced economies had at similar income levels about one century ago.

3. Fertility rates are falling

Even though many are concerned about the global population explosion, the fact is that fertility rates have fallen significantly across the globe. [UN population estimates largely expect the global population to stabilise at about 11 billion](#) by the end of this century.

Moreover, as can be seen from these charts, [many developing countries such as Brazil, China and a number of African nations have already switched to a low-fertility regime](#). While this transition took many advanced economies almost 100 years, starting with the Industrial Revolution, many others have since achieved this over just two to three decades.

4. GDP growth has accelerated in developed countries

[Technological leaders, the US and Western Europe, have been growing at about 2% per year](#), on average, for the past 150 years. This means that real income levels roughly double every 36 years.

While there were many long-lasting ups and downs, like the Great Depression or the recent Great Recession, the constancy of the long-run growth rate is actually quite miraculous. Low-income countries, including China and India, have been growing at a significantly faster pace in recent decades and are quickly catching up to the West. A 10% growth rate over a prolonged period means that income levels double roughly every seven years. It is obviously good news if prosperity is more shared across the globe.

5. Global income inequality has gone down

Global income distribution in 1800, 1975, and 2010

Our World
in Data

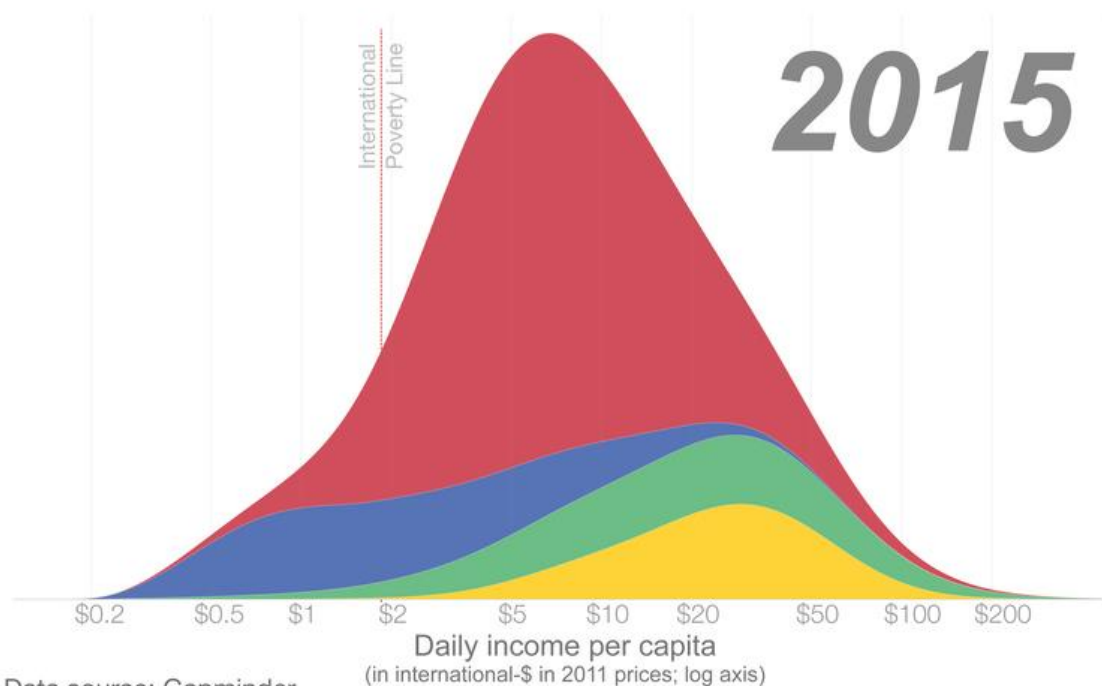
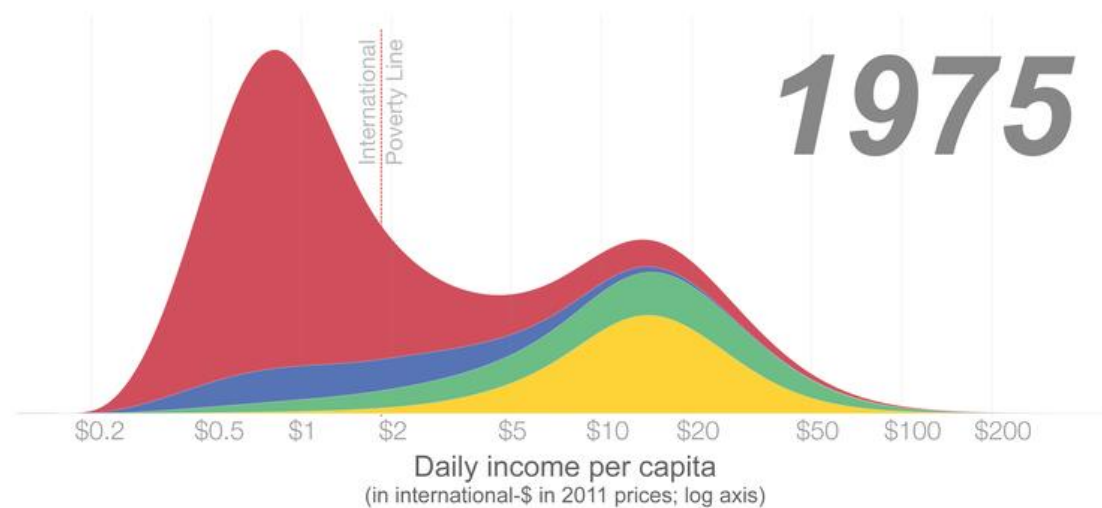
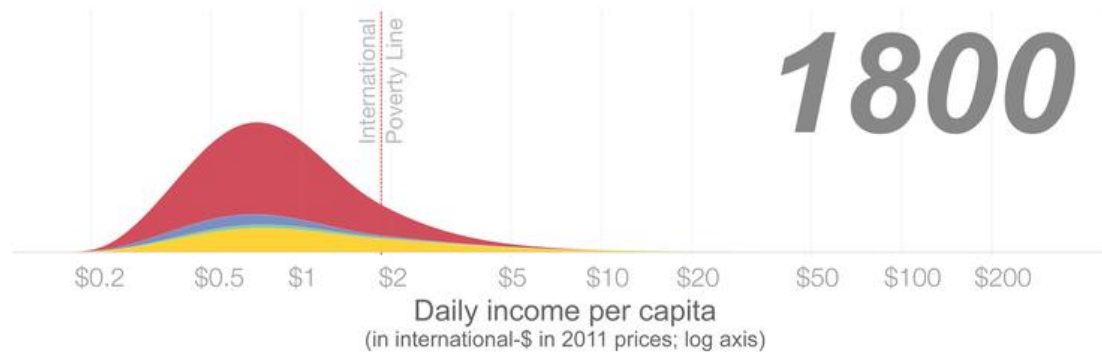
Income is measured by adjusting for price changes over time and for price differences

between countries (purchasing power parity (PPP) adjustment).

These estimates are based on reconstructed National Accounts and within-country inequality measures.

Non-market income (e.g. through home production such as subsistence farming) is taken into account.

Europe Asia and Pacific Africa North- and South America



Data source: Gapminder

The visualization is available at OurWorldinData.org where you find more visualizations and research on global development.

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[Max Roser](https://www.ourworldindata.org), [CC BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

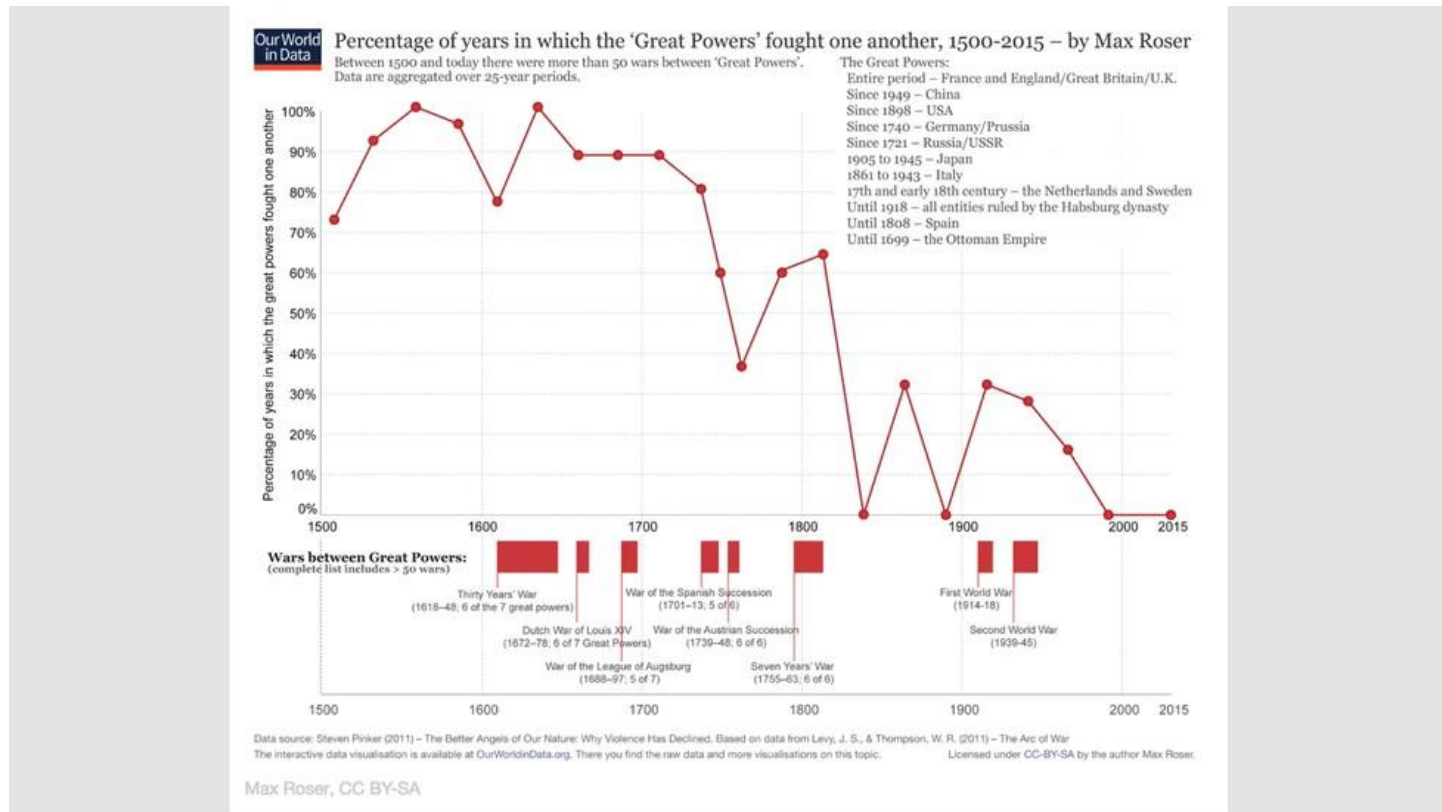
While [inequality within countries](#) has gone up as a result of globalisation, global inequality has been on a steady downward trend for several decades. This is mostly a result of developing countries such as China and India where hundreds of millions of people have seen their living standards improve. In fact, for the first time ever since the Industrial Revolution, about half of the global population can be considered global middle class.

Throughout most of human history people lived under oppressive non-democratic regimes. As of today, about half of the human population is living in a democracy. Out of those still living in autocracies, 90% are in China. While the country has recently moved in the other direction, there is reason to believe that continued economic development might eventually lead to democratisation (according to [modernisation theory](#)).

6. More people are living in democracies

Throughout most of human history people lived under oppressive non-democratic regimes. As of today, about half of the human population is living in a democracy. Out of those still living in autocracies, 90% are in China. While the country has recently moved in the other direction, there is reason to believe that continued economic development might eventually lead to democratisation (according to [modernisation theory](#)).

7. Conflicts are on the decline



Throughout history, the world has been riven by conflict. In fact, at least two of the world's largest powers have been at war with each other more than 50% of the time [since about 1500](#).

While the early 20th Century was especially brutal with two world wars in rapid succession, the post-war period has been very peaceful. For the first time ever, there has been no war or conflict in Western Europe in about three generations. And international organisations including the EU and the UN have led to a more stable world.

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