

1 Peter

AUTHOR: Peter

TIME WRITTEN: Shortly before A.D. 64

POSITION IN THE BIBLE:

- 60th Book in the Bible
- 21st book in the New Testament
- 16th of 21 epistle books
- 59 have preceded it. 6 to follow it.

CHAPTERS: 5

VERSES: 105

WORDS: 2,482

KEY WORD: Faith that Works

TWO KEY PASSAGES:

1. **1 Peter 1:10-12** - "Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, 11 searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.
12 To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven-- things which angels desire to look into."
2. **1 Peter 4:12-13** - "Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;
13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy."

KEY CHAPTER: 1 Peter 4

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT 1 PETER

1. In writing to Jewish Christians struggling in the midst of persecution, Peter encourages them to conduct themselves courageously for the person and program of Christ.
 - a. Both their character and their conduct must be above approach.
 - b. Having been born of again to a living hope, they are to imitate the Holy One who has called them.
 - c. The fruit of that character will be conduct rooted in submission.
 1. Citizens to government.
 2. Servants to masters.
 3. Wives to husbands.
 4. Husbands to wives.

5. Christians to one another.
- d. Only after submission is fully understood does Peter deal with the difficult area of suffering.
 1. The Christians are not to think it “strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you” (4:12), but to rejoice as partakers of the sufferings of Christ.
 2. That response to life is truly the climax of one’s submission to the good hand of God.
2. The basic theme of 1 Peter is the proper response to Christian suffering.
 - a. Persecution can cause either growth or bitterness in the Christian life.
 - b. Response determines the result.
 - c. Knowing that his readers will be facing more persecution than ever before, Peter writes this letter to give them a divine perspective on these trials so that they will be able to endure them without wavering in their faith.
 - d. They should not be surprised at their ordeal because the One they follow also suffered and died. 2:2; 3:18; 4:1, 12-14
 - e. Rather, they should count it a privilege to share the sufferings of Christ.
 - f. Peter therefore exhorts them to be sure that their hardships are not being caused by their own wrongdoings, but for their Christian testimony.
 - g. They are not the only Christians who are suffering (5:9) , and they must recognize that God brings these things into the lives, not as a punishment, but as a stimulus to “perfect them in Christ. 5:10
 - h. Peter wants to overcome the attitudes of bitterness and anxiety, replacing them with dependence on and confidence in God.
3. Another theme is stated in 5:12 - “I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God.”
 - a. In this epistle Peter frequently speaks of the Christian’s position in Christ and future hope, and he does so to remind his readers that they are merely sojourners on this planet: their true destiny is eternal glory when His glory is revealed” (4:13).
 - b. The grace of God in their salvation (1:1 - 2:10) shall give them an attitude of submission (2:11 - 4:12 in the context of suffering for the name of Christ (3:13 - 5:14).
4. 1 Peter is addressed to Christians throughout Asia Minor, indicating the spread of the gospel in regions not evangelized when Acts was written (Pontus, Cappadocia, Bithynia: 1:1).
5. Hostility and suspicion were mounting against Christians in the empire, and they were being reviled and abused for their life-styles and subversive talk about another kingdom.
 - a. Christianity had not yet received the official Roman ban, but the stage was being set for the persecution and martyrdom of the near-future.
 - b. Difficult days were on the horizon of first century Christianity.

6. Peter

- a. Peter's life was dramatically changed after the resurrection of Christ.
- b. He occupied a central role in the early church and in the spread of the gospel to the Samaritans and Gentiles Acts 2-10
- c. After the Jerusalem council in Acts 15, little is recorded of Peter's activities.
- d. He evidently traveled extensively with his wife (1 Corinthians 9:5) and ministered in various provinces.
- e. According to tradition, Peter was crucified upside down in Rome prior to Nero's death in A.D. 68.

7. The epistle was written from Babylon (5:13).

- a. Probably not from the Babylon in Mesopotamia but rather from Rome.
- b. Tradition tells us that Peter spent his last years in Rome.
- c. As a center of idolatry, the term "Babylon" was an appropriate figurative designation for Rome
- d. Later in Revelation 17:18, "Babylon" would be used to refer to Rome. The same is probably true here in the case of Peter.
- e. Peter used other figurative expressions in this epistle, and it is not surprising that he would do the same with Rome.
- f. His mention of Mark in 5:13 also fits this view because Mark was in Rome during Paul's first imprisonment. Colossians 4:10
- g. This epistle was probably written shortly before the outbreak of persecution under Nero in A.D. 64

SUMMARY OF 1 PETER

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Peter addresses this epistle to "pilgrims" in a world that is growing increasingly hostile to Christians.
 1. Christians were beginning to suffer because of their stand for Christ, and Peter uses this letter to give them counsel and comfort by stressing the reality of their living hope in the Lord.
 2. By standing firm in the grace of God (5:12) they will be able to endure their "fiery trial" 4:12).
- B. There are three major divisions in the book:
 1. The Salvation of the Believer. (1:1 - 2:12)
 2. The Submission of the Christian. (2:13 - 3:12)
 3. The Suffering of the Christian. (3:13 - 5:14)

THE SALVATION OF THE BELIEVER. (1:1 - 2:12)

- A. Addressing this letter to Christians in several Roman provinces, Peter boldly describes the saving work of the triune Godhead in his salutation. 1:1-2
1. He then extols God for the riches of this salvation by looking in three temporal directions. 1:3-12
 - a. First, Peter anticipates the future realization of Christian's manifold inheritance. 1:3-5
 - b. Second, he looks at the present joy that this living hope produces in spite of various trials. 1:6-9
 - c. Third, he reflects upon the prophets of the past who predicted the gospel of God's grace in Christ. 1:10-12
 2. The proper response to this salvation is the pursuit of sanctification or holiness. 1:13-2:1
 - a. This involves a purifying departure from conformity with the world to godliness in behavior and love.
 - b. With this in mind, Peter exhorts his readers to "desire the pure milk of the word, that (they) may grow" (2:2) by applying "the word of God which lives and abides forever" (1:23) and acting as a holy priesthood of believers.

THE SUBMISSION OF THE BELIEVER. (2:13 - 3:12)

- A. Peter turns to the Christian's relationships in the world and appeals for an attitude of submission as the Christ-like way to harmony and true freedom.
1. Submission to the government. 2:13-17
 2. Submission in business. 2:18-25
 3. Submission in marriage and in all of life. 3:1-12
 4. Doing the Lord's will in all areas of life will render a good example to others.
 5. Christ is the supreme example and model of suffering.
 - a. Christ suffered sinlessly.
 - b. Christ suffered silently.
 - c. Christ suffered as a substitute for the salvation of others.

THE SUFFERING OF THE BELIEVER. (3:13 - 5:14)

- A. Anticipating that growing opposition to Christianity will require a number of his readers to defend their faith and conduct, Peter encourages them to be ready to do so in an intelligent and gracious way. 3:13-16
1. Three times he tells them that if they must suffer, it should be for righteousness' sake and not as a result of sinful behavior. 3:17 (2:20; 4:15-16)
 2. The importance of baptism is related in 3:21

3. As Christians, the readers are no longer to pursue the lusts of the flesh as they did formerly, but rather they are to pursue the will of God. 4:1-6
 4. In view of the hardships they will suffer, Peter exhorts them to be strong in their love. 4:7-11
 5. They should not be surprised when they are slandered and reviled because of their faith because God has a purpose in all things, and the time of judgment will come when His name and all who are obedient to Him will be vindicated.
- B. In a special word to the elders of the churches in these Roman provinces, Peter urges them to be diligent but gentle shepherds over the flocks they are leading. 5:1-4
- C. The readers as a whole are told to clothe themselves with humility toward one another and toward God who will exhort them at the proper time. 5:5-7
1. They are to resist the adversary in the sure knowledge that their calling to God's eternal glory in Christ will be realized. 5:8-11
 2. Peter ends his epistle by: 5:12-14
 - a. Stating his theme ("the true grace of God").
 - b. Conveying greetings.
 - c. Benediction.