

1 PETER – AN INTRODUCTION

WHO

“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,” (1:1) wrote this letter. He was “a witness of Christ's sufferings.” (5:1) There are many similarities between this letter and Peter’s sermons in Acts.

TO WHOM

“To God’s **elect**, **strangers** in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, who have been **chosen** according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for **obedience** to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood:” (1:1 – 2) [notice the framework of the Trinity: Father, Son & Holy Spirit all at work]

Along with Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, John’s letters and Jude, 1 Peter is classed as a **General Letter** – no directed to one city or church but for the church as a whole. The areas mentioned in verse 1 encompass much of modern day Turkey. Peter has a pastoral heart for his audience. He encourages them by instructing them to know what God has done for us in Christ (e.g. 1:3) and what God will do for us through Christ (e.g. 1:4).

WHEN

The date generally given for the writing of 1 Peter is after 60AD because the letter shows familiarity with Paul’s prison letters (Colossians & Ephesians) but before 68AD (the death of Emperor Nero) because Peter died during the persecution under Nero.

Some important dates in New Testament Chronology:

The Ministry of Jesus	26 – 30 AD
Resurrection and ascension of Jesus:	30
Stoning of Stephen and Saul’s conversion:	35
Paul’s First Missionary Journey	46 - 48
Paul’s Second Missionary Journey	50 - 52
Paul’s Third Missionary Journey	53 – 57
Nero Becomes Emperor of Rome	54
Paul’s First Imprisonment in Rome	59 – 62
Fire in Rome (set by Nero?) followed by persecution	64
Death of Peter	64 or 67/68
Paul’s second Imprisonment in Rome and death	67/68
Nero’s suicide	68

WHAT

What is Scripture? The Bible is God’s special revelation to us. It is an account of God’s divine activity and God’s divine word.

What is Scripture’s view of Scripture?

“Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Peter 1: 20–21)

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16 – 17).

What is Jesus’ view of Scripture: “The scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35) and, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished” (Matthew 5:17 – 18).

The value of Scripture for us today, “The holy scriptures ... are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:15).

WHY

First Peter is a letter of **encouragement** in the face of **suffering** and **persecution** to hold firm while resting on the **Grace** that God has provided in Christ. Peter begins his letter stressing God's grace: "Grace and peace be yours in abundance" (1:2). Peter summarises the purpose of his letter in 5:12, "With the help of Silas, whom I regard as a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it."

HOW

From 1:13 "prepare your minds for action" to 5:11 "To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen", Peter uses imperatives or exhortations to underline the importance of his message.

THEMES & THEOLOGY OF 1 PETER

Hope (1:3, 13, 21, 3:5,15) in the midst of **Suffering** (1:6, 3:16, 4:12 – 16, 5:10) and doing **Good** while facing **persecution** (2:12,15,20 – 21, 3:13 – 17, 4:19)

The Christian Life: in general (1:13–2:3), among the pagans (2:11 - 12), in the workplace (2:13 - 25) & in the home (3:1 - 7)

Jesus Christ: His Lordship (1:3, 3:15), **His Work** (2:21, 24, 3:18), & **His Example** (3:18 – 4:6)

The End Times (4:7, 17- 18)

SOME KEY VERSES

Living Hope through the living Saviour:

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,"(1:3)

Holy Living based on the reality of the resurrection:

"Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. 1:13

The Unity & Dignity of the People of God:

"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. (2:9 – 10)

The Work of Jesus on the Cross:

"He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed." (2:24)

The Witness of God's people (content & character):

"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, (3:15)

The Power of Christ's love:

"For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God." (3:18)

The Power of Christian Love:

"Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins." (4:8)

The Leaders of Christ's people:

"Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve (5:2)

Comfort for the anxious:

"Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. 5:6 - 7

Grace & Glory:

"And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast." 5:10