

1 Peter – Book Outline

Title: The First Epistle of Peter

Author: The early church universally acknowledged Peter as the author. The internal evidence supports this consistent with external testimony in several ways. The Apostle Peter's name is given in 1:1, and there are similarities between certain phrases in this letter and Peter's sermons as recorded in the Book of Acts (1 Peter 1:20 and Acts 2:23; 1 Peter 4:4 and Acts 10:42).

Date: This epistle was probably written shortly before the outbreak of persecution under Nero in A.D. 64 it was probably written between A.D. 64 – 66

Provenance: This epistle was written from Babylon (5:13), however, most scholars believe this was symbolic for Rome rather than Babylon in Mesopotamia. Further evidence that Babylon means Rome is indicated as Peter spent his last days in Rome.

Audience: This letter is addressed "*to the pilgrims of the Dispersion*" (1:1). It appears that the bulk of the believers are Hebrew Christians. This epistle was addressed to Christians throughout Asia Minor, so it could include Gentiles.

Occasion Purpose: Peter is writing to encourage the Jewish believer who are struggling in the midst of persecution to conduct themselves courageously for the cause of Christ. The letter also encourages holy living, especially during the coming last Days.

Canonicity: The early church universally acknowledged Peter as the author.

Genre: Epistle

Outline:

- I. **Salutations / Greetings (1:1-2)**
- II. **Salvation of the Believers (1:3-12)**
 - A. Hope for the future (1:3,4)
 - B. Trials for the present (1:5-9)
- III. **Sanctification of the Believers (1:13 – 2:12)**
 - A. Be Holy (1:13-21)
 - B. Love one another (1:22 – 25)
 - C. Offer up spiritual sacrifices (2:4-10)
 - D. Abstain from fleshly lusts (2:11,12)
- IV. **Submission of The Believers (2:13 – 3:12)**
 - A. Submission to the Government (2:13-17)
 - B. Submission in business (2:18-25)
 - C. Submission in marriage (3:1-8)
 - D. Submission in all of life (3:9-12)

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- V. **The Suffering of the Believers (3:13 – 5:14)**
 - A. Conduct in suffering (3:13-17)
 - B. Christ’s example of suffering (3:18 – 4:4)
 - C. Commands in suffering (4:17-19)
 - D. Minister in suffering (5:1-9)
 - 1. Minister to elders, shepherds of the flock during suffering (5:1-4)
 - 2. Saints should humble themselves (5:5-9)
- VI. **Final Exhortations and Greetings (5:10-14)**

Summary:

In writing to Jewish believers struggling in the midst of persecution, Peter encourages them to conduct themselves courageously for the person and cause of Christ. The basic theme of First Peter is the proper response to Christian suffering. Peter emphasizes that these sufferings of the believer will not last long (1:6; 5:10) because the present world order to which these suffering belong is quickly passing away.

The foundation of the teaching in 1 Peter is Jesus’ death and glorification as the risen Lord. Peter assures those suffering that they share in Christ’s suffering and will also share in His glory (4:13). Another theme is stated in 5:12, “*I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God.*” In this epistle Peter frequently speaks of the believer’s position in Christ and the future hope. This letter brings home to its readers what real “grace” is that led them into salvation.

Peter emphasizes two other themes. First, that steadfastness in suffering, which is to be presumed must be resolutely borne. Second, good conduct and good works are the signs of a true believer and expected behaviors (2:11; 4:19).

¹ *Biblical Cyclopedia*, Thomas Nelson, pg. 1267.

² *Encountering The New Testament*, Walter A. Elwell, pg. 363

³ *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*; et-al. Abingdon Press, pgs. 763-765

⁴ *Understanding The New Testament*, Prentice-Hall Press, pgs. 280-288

⁵ *Biblical Backgrounds*, pg. 150, 167, 214 Broadman Press

⁶ *All The Men of The Bible*; Herbert Lockyer; Zondervan Publishing House

1 Peter 1:1

1 Peter 5:12, “I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it.” Peter is saying, you are people redeemed by grace; you belong to a gracious God; and I’ve written you, so that in the midst of your changing world, you won’t lose sight of His grace or stop living out the gospel of grace.

Acts 2:36, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

The basic confession that we hold to today, it is becoming more and more offensive that we actually believe that Jesus alone is the Living Lord and Savior. We believe, “... *there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved*” (*Acts 4:12*).

You could just as easily expect a letter from Peter to open with the words, “Peter, the man who denied Jesus Christ . . .” “Peter, the man who failed to keep his solemn promise to Jesus Christ . . .” “Peter, the man who used to be one of Jesus Christ’s closest followers.” Instead, you read, “*Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ.*” J. Allen Blair wrote a book called *Living Peacefully When the World Won’t Leave You Alone* identified the Apostle Peter as a person characterized in scripture, “*That appears so impetuous, unstable, and distrustful, and yet at the same time so bold, fearless, and devoted.*”

When Jesus meets Simon, he immediately nicknames him Peter, or Petros, in the Greek language; Cephas in Aramaic. Petros, or Peter, means “stone” or “rock”. It was as prophetic a name change as any, for Jesus Christ will take this impetuous, unstable, unpredictable, emotionally driven man, and make him rocklike, stable and steady.

Foolishness:

The Mount of Transfiguration, *Luke 9:33*, “*Master it is good for us to be here, let’s make three tabernacles, or tents, one for You, and one for Moses and one for Elijah.*” Peter reduces Jesus to the level of Moses and Elijah, which religions of the world have been trying to do for centuries, making Jesus just another prophet.

Perceptive

The Lord is asking His disciples who people think He is. “... *and Jesus said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”*¹⁶ *Simon Peter answered, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.*” (*Matthew 16:14*). Peter, filled with insight, becomes Peter, filled with arrogance. Jesus tells His disciples that He will suffer many things from the priest and will die.²² *Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, “God forbid it Lord . . . this shall never happen to You.”*

And Jesus calls him *Satan, a stumbling block* to the Divine plan of redemption. Why? Verse 23 explains,²³ “... *your mind is captivated by your own interests and not God’s.*”

Self-confidence.

John 13 is where Peter tells Jesus, “*Look, everybody else will leave you, but I will never deny You . . . I’ll follow You even to the death.*”

Failure:

Three denials signals Peter’s crushing defeat. It doesn’t take long for any of us to take our eyes off the Lord and focus on our expectations, our plans, our own self-confidence, and it isn’t long after when our promises lie crumbled and broken at our feet, in the dust of regret.

“*My soul is a jungle, when it ought to be a garden; I can scarcely tell if I have the grace of God or not; I am, perhaps, the most inconsistent, cold creature that ever possessed the grace of Christ. If God uses me, none need despair.*” [William Carey’s journal]

Application:

My self-confidence and my plans have sometimes gotten in the way of God’s plan for my life, what will I do to keep my eyes on the Lord’s plan for my life?

1 Peter 1:1

Eyewitness

In **John 20:6**, "... saw the linen wrappings lying there and the face-cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but folded in a place by itself." Mark's gospel records the angel saying, "Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen; He is not here; behold, here is the place where they laid Him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter" (**Mark 16:6**). It is implying that Peter, who thinks he doesn't belong with the other disciples, so make sure you specially tell him too!

Courage.

No longer denying Jesus, Peter, declares in **Acts 2:23** that the nation has murdered the Messiah; the world has ignored the Son of God. In verse 36 Peter further identifies Jesus is both "*Lord and Christ.*" He is both God and the anointed Messiah. And He is the Christ is their only hope.

1. The first question is this: did Peter learn the importance of prayer, transparent, open prayer?

Lord warned Peter of his future failure and denial, and the Lord even said to Peter in **Luke 22:31**, "*Peter, the devil wants to sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail.*" Jesus prayed for Peter, Peter still failed; but Jesus prayed with the perfect understanding that Peter's cowardice wasn't the conclusion, We learn from this that prayer doesn't always prevent failure ... failure can be used in God's providential development of someone's character and life. Peter did learn the value of prayer and he will write in this letter, "*Casting all your cares upon the Lord, because He cares about you.*" (**1 Peter 5:7**).

2. Second question: did Peter learn how easy it is to fail and how damaging self-confidence is?

Peter writes in this letter, "*Clothe yourselves with humility . . . God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.*" (**1 Peter 5:5- 6**). Peter writes, watch out, don't be overconfident, but reliant, as you remain "... alert, the devil prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." (**1 Peter 5:7**).

3. Question #3: did Peter replace hotheaded reactions with calm, clear thinking?

Three times, the Apostle Peter will write in this letter, for the believer to be sober. The Greek word "sober" literally refers to being clearheaded, to having a calm and collected perspective so that you remain focused on what's most important.

The church needs this attribute now, more than ever. Calm, clear thinking on what matters most, and that is the gospel, and the Lord whom we represent. This is no time to pitch tantrum, or panic, or spend our time complaining over the loss of all we've known in this country. Irwin Lutzer stated it in his book, *Where Do We Go From Here*, "*Let's not sing that we're standing on the Rock of Ages and then act as if we're clinging to a piece of driftwood.*"

Sometimes in history:

- God gives a nation a leader who is better than they deserve
- Sometimes God gives a nation a leader who is far worse than they deserve
- Sometimes God gives a nation a leader that they actually deserve

"*The people are immoral . . . decadent . . . deceitful . . . arrogant . . . spiritually blind . . . openly rejecting the gospel . . . willfully ignorant of the Bible . . . brazenly defying God's created order for gender and marriage God gives a leader to a nation that that nation deserves.*" [Irwin Lutzer]

The wonderful truth we will discover as we study the Book of First Peter is ... God's grace, our salvation, encouragement in face of trials, and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ ... our blessed hope for now and the future!

For the true believer the question is, are you truly living a godly life in Christ Jesus? The second question for us is ... What is your personal relationship with Jesus Christ?