



Overview for 1 Peter

Purpose: Peter wrote to the scattered Christians of the Early Church, following the Lord's instructions for him to "strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:32) by encouraging them in the face of their intense suffering and persecution.

Author: Simon Peter, one of the twelve Apostles.

Time Period Covered: Possibly around A.D. 60-64. Emperor Nero's extensive and intensive persecution of Christians took place from A.D. 64 through 68. During this time, believers throughout the Roman Empire were tortured and killed for their faith. History indicates Peter was executed in Rome during this persecution.

Date Written: Bible scholars believe this epistle was written between A.D. 62 and 64, perhaps before Nero's official persecution began.

History: Because the Christians of this time were under such intense persecution, they often used code words to disguise their actual locations. Many Bible scholars believe that "Babylon" was a codeword for Rome and that Peter was there when he wrote the epistle (1 Peter 5:13).

A historical timeline of events in Peter's life:

- A.D. 26-27 Peter was called and followed Christ.
- A.D. 30 Peter denied Christ before the Crucifixion; he later repented, and on the day of Pentecost, proclaimed with boldness that Jesus had risen.
- A.D. 40 The Lord revealed to Peter that salvation is for the Gentiles. Cornelius and other Gentiles with him were filled with the Holy Ghost.
- A.D. 63-67 Peter wrote 1 Peter and 2 Peter.
- A.D. 67-68 Peter and Paul were martyred in Rome.

Setting: Once Nero had made his official decree that believers in Jesus be attacked and persecuted, many Christians were forced to flee for their lives, and the church in Jerusalem was scattered throughout the Mediterranean world. Peter wrote to Christians in five Roman provinces in the Black Sea area—Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia—where many had apparently tried to find safety. However, the letter was also intended to be read to all churches everywhere. Emperor Nero died in A.D. 68, which brought a temporary lull to the persecution, but soon after a new round of fierce persecution began.

Summary: Peter himself summarized the purpose of the Book of 1 Peter. In Chapter 5 verse 12, he offered concluding thoughts on his letter when he said, "I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand." Peter earnestly urged the dispersed Christians to have patience, hope, holiness, and endurance in the face of hostile mistreatment and persecution by those who wished to see this growing faith destroyed. His focus was on their attitudes in these trying situations, and he encouraged them to remember the inheritance God had promised them.

In chapter 1, Peter began his epistle by writing of the believers' character in their current circumstances, introducing the subject of holiness. He challenged them to holy living, and explained how holiness was provided and experienced in daily life. From chapter 2 through chapter 5 verse 9, Peter advised Christians on how holiness would lead them to conduct themselves in various types of relationships, especially in times of suffering and persecution. He concluded the epistle with personal salutations from the church, and a prayer for peace.

Timeline

Many of these dates are approximate, as reference materials differ slightly.

Jesus crucified; Pentecost; Church begun A.D. 30	Stephen martyred; Paul's conversion 35			Peter's ministry in Asia Minor 47	Jerusalem council 50	PAUL IMPRISONED (CAESAREA) 57-59	PAUL'S HOUSE ARREST 60-62	James (Jesus' brother) martyred 62	Peter & Paul martyred 67/68?	Jude martyred 72					
	PAUL IN CILICIA & SYRIA 35-46			PAUL'S MISSIONARY JOURNEYS 46-48 50-52 53-57			Paul's trip to Rome 59			Rome destroys Jerusalem 70					
			Holy Spirit falls on Gentiles 41	James (the apostle) martyred; Peter imprisoned 44											
				Galatians; James 49	1 & 2 Thessalonians 51/52	1 & 2 Corinthians 55	Romans 57	St. Mark 58/60	Ephesians; Colossians; Philemon 60	Philippians 61	St. Matthew; St. Luke 61/64	1 Timothy; Titus; 1 Peter 64	Jude 65	Acts; 2 Peter; 2 Timothy 66/68	Hebrews 68

Outline

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- I. Introduction: the author, recipients and blessing (1:1-2)
- II. The character of the believer (1:3-12)
 - A. The present possessions (1:3-5)
 - B. The present posture (1:6-9)
 - C. The present privilege (1:10-12)
- III. The challenge to the believer (1:13 — 2:10)
 - A. To holiness (1:13-21)
 - B. To love (1:22-25)
 - C. To growth (2:1-3)
 - D. To priestly service (2:4-10)
- IV. The conduct of the believer (2:11 — 5:11)
 - A. In summary (2:11-12)
 - B. In submission (2:13 — 3:12)
 - C. In suffering (3:13 — 4:19)
 - D. In service (5:1-11)
- V. Conclusion (5:12-14)
 - A. Closing exhortation (5:12)
 - B. Greetings and benediction (5:13-14)