



1 Peter Overview

Introductory Material

Peter's first epistle was written to instruct and encourage believers how to live in a world in which they are strangers and aliens. Persecution, therefore, is to be expected. Suffering is inevitable. But knowing who we are in Christ and that our final inheritance is secure supplies the Christian with the strength to endure and live a godly life in the face of opposition.

Who Wrote 1 Peter?

Although the first verse of chapter one identifies the author of this epistle as "Peter," there is considerable debate among scholars concerning who wrote 1 Peter.¹ We know that he was an eyewitness of the sufferings of Jesus ([1Pet 5:1](#)) and was most likely residing in Rome when he wrote the letter ([1Pet 5:13](#); "Babylon" being a cryptic reference to Rome), both of which are consistent with what we know of the apostle. This, together with the external evidence supporting Peter as the author, is enough to assure us that he is indeed its author. The polished Greek of the letter may be attributed to the fact that Peter made use of an amanuensis, Silvanus, so named in [1 Peter 5:12](#).

When Was 1 Peter Written?

Most agree that the epistle was written sometime in the mid-sixties, AD, perhaps as early as 62–63 before the outbreak of persecution by Nero.

To Whom Was the Letter Addressed?

Peter wrote to Christians living in the northwest region of Asia Minor, on the Black Sea, identified more specifically in [1 Peter 1:1](#) as "those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." Considerable debate swirls around the question of whether the recipients were Jews or Gentiles. Some have pointed to Peter's frequent use of the OT ([1Pet 1:16, 24–25; 2:3, 6–10, 22; 3:10–12; 4:18; 5:5](#)) as evidence that he directed this letter to an audience that was primarily Jewish. But others argue that his description of his audience as having lived in "ignorance" suggests a pagan, Gentile past. One must also ask if Peter would have described the ways of Judaism as "futile" ([1Pet 1:18](#)). The most balanced conclusion is suggested by Carson, Moo, and Morris: "It seems that the writer is concerned neither with Jews nor Gentiles as such, but with those who in Christ have become the people of God. We need not doubt that most who came from the provinces named were Gentiles, although there would have been some Jewish converts. But the emphasis is on what they have become, not on what they were originally."²

What Is the Theological Focus of 1 Peter?

Although this letter covers a wide range of themes, 1 Peter is decidedly Christocentric. Christians have been delivered from sin for "obedience to Jesus Christ" ([1Pet 1:2](#)). The resurrection of Jesus is the ground for our "living hope" ([1Pet 1:3](#)) and his return is the singular expectation of the believer for final deliverance from sin and corruption ([1Pet 1:5, 7, 13](#)). Only through the shedding of his "precious blood" do we find redemption ([1Pet 1:19](#)) and only on him as the "living stone" ([1Pet 2:4](#)) is the church being built. Jesus provides the pattern for how to respond to unjust persecution ([1Pet 2:21–25](#)). We are brought to God because "Christ", our penal substitute, suffered once for sins, "the righteous for the unrighteous" ([1Pet 3:18](#)). In his name, believers willingly endure insults and suffering ([1Pet 4:14–16](#)) and under his authority as "the chief Shepherd" ([1Pet 5:4](#)) that Elders govern the local church.

Purpose

Although 1 Peter addresses a variety of issues relevant to Christian living, its primary purpose is to encourage Christians who are suffering for their faith. His aim is to remind them of the all-sufficiency of Christ to sustain them even when the persecution they endure is undeserved.

Key Verse

"For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps." — [1 Peter 2:21](#) ESV

This material is adapted from a commentary on 1 Peter by Sam Storms that can be accessed at no charge at <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/commentary/1-peter/>

1 Peter Teaching Schedule

Summer 2023

Date	Passage	Topic
5/28	1 Peter 1:1-2	The Exile's Circumstance
6/4	1 Peter 1:3-12	The Exile's Hope
6/11	1 Peter 1:13-25	The Exile's Lifestyle
6/18	1 Peter 2:1-10	The Exile's Identity
6/25	1 Peter 2:11-17	The Exile's Good Works
7/2	1 Peter 2:18-25	The Exile's Submission
7/9	1 Peter 3:1-7	The Exile's Marriage
7/16	1 Peter 3:8-22	The Exile's Suffering
7/23	1 Peter 4:1-11	The Exile's Love
7/30	1 Peter 4:12-19	The Exile's Joy
8/6	1 Peter 5:1-5	The Exile's Humility
8/13	1 Peter 5:6-14	The Exile's Resistance

Additional resources:

Sonic Light Commentary by Dr. Constable: <https://www.planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/html/nt/1peter/1peter.htm>

Intro to First Peter video from The Bible Project: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/1-peter/>

ESV Study Bible 1 Peter Intro: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/course/1-peter-introduction/#overview>