

Outline of 1 Peter

This outline of 1 Peter is intended to assist you as you dig into God's Word. May you discover His character as you study.

This book was written by Peter, the apostle of Jesus Christ, as set forth in the first verse. Peter was one of the three apostles in the "inner circle," and together with Paul became a part of the "dynamic duo" of the early church. Following his appearance at the Jerusalem council, Peter disappears from the pages of Scriptural history. He may have visited Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:12) as an itinerant missionary (1 Corinthians 9:5). Clement of Rome, somewhere around 95 A.D., stated that in his generation Peter had suffered martyrdom, as had Paul (1st Clement ch.5). Ignatius, the third bishop of Antioch, and one who knew the apostles, stated that Peter and Paul laid the foundations of the Church at Antioch (Epistle to the Magnesians, Ch.X) Ignatius linked Clement to Peter as Timothy was linked to Paul (Epistle of the Trallians, Ch. VII). Ignatius further stated that Peter, along with Paul, issued commandments to the Roman Christians (Epistle to the Romans, Ch.IV). Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons from around 175 to 195, who knew Polycarp, stated that Peter and Paul preached at Rome, laying the foundation of the church there (Against Heresies, Ch.1:1). Dionysius, bishop of Corinth around 180 A.D., states that Peter and Paul planted the church at Corinth and then taught in Italy, suffering martyrdom about the same time (EH II.25.8). Lactantius, a Christian apologist and historian who lived from 240 to 320 A.D., wrote that Nero crucified Peter and slew Paul. This is about all we know about the history of Peter. There are many stories about Peter from a group of writings known as the Clementines and attributed to Clement of Rome, but these were most likely not written until much later and it is difficult to separate out the truth from fiction.

The book was written to the Jewish diaspora, as stated in 1:1. This is in line with the statement Paul makes in Galatians 2:7-8 that the gospel to the Jews was committed to Peter. And it is the diaspora in a relatively small region, that of north and western Turkey. Based upon this and the mention of Babylon, some have suggested that Peter wrote the book from Babylon. However, there is no other evidence that Peter ever visited the east, and the linkage with Silvanus and Mark make such a location unlikely. The book was probably written from Rome.

Peter gives us the title of the book as being the "the true grace of God" in 5:12. The word "grace" appears 10 times in the book. The book deals much with suffering, with the word "pathama" or suffering being found four times in the book, more than in any other New Testament book. The verb "to suffer" occurs 12 times in this book, out of a total of 42 times in the New Testament, or almost one out of every three times. The book speaks much about the brevity of life on earth (1:6, 17; 4:2) and the return of Jesus (1:7, 13; 2:12; 4:5, 7, 13; 5:1, 4). This book ties with Luke, Romans, and 1 Corinthians in the number of mentions of the word "revelation" or "revealing" (six times). There are 62 words found in 1 Peter not found anywhere else in the New Testament. The book contains 56 direct references to Jesus Christ. In this book, he is the "Lord" (1:3), "pleasant" (2:3), "living stone" (2:4), "chief corner stone" (2:6-7), "stone of stumbling" (2:8), "rock of a bait trap" (2:8), "sinless" (2:22), "Shepherd" (2:25), "Bishop of our souls" (2:25), and "Chief Shepherd" (5:4). Most of all, He is our example (2:21) for bearing under suffering.

This book contains 45 allusions to the Old Testament and 15 direct quotes. Scholars have noted that the Greek depends heavily on LXX (Septuagint) usage.

As is usual, there are some puzzling passages in the book. In 1:11-12 we find that both the prophets and angels were curious about the sufferings and the glory of Christ. In 1:17 we find that the Father judges although Christ in John 5:22 states that all judgment has been given to the Son (See also Is. 9:6). In 3:19-21 we have a reference apparently to Christ preaching to the spirits. There are at least four main interpretations given to these verses:

- Christ, in the Spirit, spoke to Noah;

- Christ, after His death, preached to the nephilim, the offspring of angels and men;
- Christ preached to the fallen angels;
- Christ preached to all the dead (angels and men) and led believing men out.

In 4:6, there is another reference to preaching, this time to the dead. There are three main interpretations:

- Christ preached to those who had not heard and gave them a chance for salvation;
- the apostles preached to those who were spiritually dead as well as those who had life;
- the apostles proclaimed the gospel to those who are now physically dead but spiritually alive.

I believe that the last interpretation must be the correct view.

In 4:18, we have a quote from the LXX (Septuagint) at Proverbs 11:31 indicating the extreme measure God had to take to effect our salvation, without which we would have no hope.

There are two doxologies (4:11: 5:11). Some have seen this as evidence that the book is composed of a sermon (1:1-4:11) and an accompanying letter (4:12-5:14). But there is not strong evidence for this.

The book gives us one of the most straightforward statements on the vicarious (substitutionary) nature of Christ's atoning work (3:18).

The book begins with a greeting to those who are without a country. It ends with those who are in Jesus Christ. The true grace of God is not manifested in the superabundance of things or in a life free from suffering, but in the person of Jesus Christ. He is the true grace of God.

Date: 62 A.D. (?)

The book of 1 Peter was written probably within a few years of Peter's death under Nero.

I. Introduction 1:1-2

II. True Grace through Salvation 1:3-25

- A. The hope of salvation vs. 3-5
- B. The joy of salvation vs. 6-9
- C. The inquiry into salvation vs. 10-12
- D. The new life of salvation vs. 13-16
- E. The redemption of salvation vs. 17-21
- F. The new birth of salvation vs. 22-25

III. True Grace through Sanctification 2-3

- A. The sustenance of sanctification vs. 1-3
- B. The structure of sanctification vs. 4-8
- C. The society of sanctification vs. 9-10

- D. The service of sanctification vs. 11-17
- E. The suffering of sanctification vs. 18-20
- F. The Shepherd of sanctification vs. 21-25
- G. The spousal duties of sanctification 3:1-7
- H. The speech of sanctification 3:8-12
- I. The seat of sanctification 3:13-17
- J. The Savior of sanctification 3:18-22

IV. True Grace through Suffering 4

- A. The present response to suffering vs. 1-11
- B. The future hope of suffering vs. 12-19

V. True Grace through Serving 5:1-11

- A. The charge to the elders vs. 1-4
- B. The instructions to the suffering church vs. 5-10
- C. The Doxology vs. 11

VI. Closing 5:12-14

Key Idea: God's grace carries us through suffering.

Key Passage: 1:6-8

Key Lesson: Live your position.