

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF 1 PETER

^a **PURPOSE:** To offer encouragement to suffering Christians.

AUTHOR: The apostle Peter

DATE WRITTEN: Approximately A.D. 62—64 from Rome

SETTING: Peter was probably in Rome when the great persecution under Emperor Nero began. (Eventually Peter was executed during this persecution.) Throughout the Roman Empire, Christians were being tortured and killed for their faith, and the church in Jerusalem was being scattered.

KEY VERSE: “These trials will show that your faith is genuine So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world” (1:7).

KEY PEOPLE: Peter, Silas, Mark

SPECIAL FEATURES: Peter used several images that were very special to him because Jesus had used them when He had revealed certain truths to Peter.

^a Adapted from the Life Application Bible, New Living Translation, Large Print Edition, Tyndale, pp. ^a 2,779

¹ Many first-century followers of Christ were suffering and being abused and persecuted for believing in and obeying Jesus. Beginning in Jerusalem at the hands of their Jewish brothers, the persecution spread to the rest of the world—wherever Christians gathered. It climaxed when Rome determined to rid the empire of the “Christ-ones”—those who would not bow to Caesar.

² THE BLUEPRINT

1. **GOD’S GREAT BLESSINGS TO HIS PEOPLE** (1 Peter 1:1—2:10)

2. **THE CONDUCT OF GOD’S PEOPLE IN THE MIDST OF SUFFERING** (2:11—4:19)

3. **THE SHEPHERDING OF GOD’S PEOPLE IN THE MIDST OF SUFFERING** (5:1—14)

Peter wrote to Jewish Christians who were experiencing persecution for their faith. He wrote to comfort them with the hope of eternal life and to challenge them to continue living holy lives. Those who suffer for being Christians become partners with Christ in His suffering. As we suffer, we must remember that Christ is both our hope in the midst of suffering and our example of how to endure suffering.

³ OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

1:1, 2	Opening address
1:3—9	Salvation: its nature
1:10—12	Salvation: its revelation
1:13 – 5:4	Salvation: its practical outworkings
1:13—21	Holiness of life
1:22—25	Love for the brethren
2:1—3	Desire for spiritual growth
2:4—10	Membership of God’s people
2:11 – 3:12	Witness in the world
3:13 – 4:6	Witness under persecution
4:7—11	Use of opportunities
4:12—19	Suffering for Christ
5:1—4	Duties of the elders
5:5—11	Final exhortations and assurance
5:12—14	Conclusion

¹ Adapted from the Life Application Bible, New Living Translation, Large Print Edition, Tyndale, p.2,779

² Adapted from the Life Application Bible, New Living Translation, Large Print Edition, Tyndale, p.2,780

³ The New Bible Commentary Revised, WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING CO., ©1970 Inter-Varsity Press, pp. 1,238, 1,239

¹ MEGATHEMES in the BOOK OF 1 PETER

SALVATION

Explanation – Our salvation is a gracious gift from God. God chose us out of His love for us, Jesus died to pay the penalty for our sin, and the Holy Spirit cleansed us from sin when we believed. Eternal life is a wonderful gift for those who trust in Christ.

Importance – Our safety and security are in God. If we experience joy in relationship with Christ now, how much greater will our joy be when He returns and we see Him face to face. Such a hope should motivate us to serve Christ with greater commitment.

PERSECUTION

Explanation – Peter offers faithful believers comfort and hope. We should expect ridicule, rejection and suffering because we are Christians. Persecution makes us stronger because it refines our faith. We can face persecution victoriously, as Christ did, if we rely on Him.

Importance – Christians still suffer for what they believe. We should expect persecution but we don’t have to be terrified by it. The fact that we will live eternally with Christ should give us the confidence, patience, and hope to stand firm even when we are persecuted.

GOD’S FAMILY

Explanation – We are privileged to belong to God’s family, a community with Christ as the founder and foundation. Everyone in this community is related—we are all brothers and sisters, loved equally by God.

Importance – Because Christ is the foundation of our family, we must be devoted, loyal, and faithful to Him. By living in obedience to Him, we show what we are His children. We must accept the challenge to live differently from the society around us.

² **FAMILY LIFE**

Explanation – Peter encouraged the wives of unbelievers to submit to their husband’s authority as a means of winning them to Christ. He urged all family members to treat others with sympathy, love, compassion, and humility.

Importance – We must treat the members of our family in a loving manner. Though it may not be easy at times, serving others in a spirit of humility can have a powerful effect in their lives. To gain the strength we need for self-discipline and submission, we need to rely on God for His strength and help.

JUDGEMENT

Explanation – God will judge everyone with perfect justice. We all will face God. He will punish evildoers and those who persecute God’s people. Those who love Him will be rewarded with life forever in His presence.

Importance – Because all are accountable to God, we can leave judgement of others to Him. We must not hate or resent those who persecute us. We should realize that we will be held accountable for how we respond and live each day.

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² Adapted from the Life Application Bible, New Living Translation, Large Print Edition, Tyndale, p.2,781