

1 Peter

Summary

The readers of 1 Peter (scattered Gentiles) are strongly encouraged to hold on and take heart in a time where there is increased persecution of Christians. The recipients of this letter lived in five specific areas, all provinces in Asia Minor (Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia). Each is listed at the beginning of the book. Peter directs people to honor authority, to live blameless lives, to continue praising God, and to be strong in their faith, all during a season of increased struggles and trials. In 1 Peter, we find useful guidance in presenting the gospel by choosing to not verbally attack. We are to capture the spirit of Christ's humility and gentleness when we deal with others as well as when we endure our own tribulations.

Author

The author identifies himself as the apostle Peter.

Date

1 Peter was written likely around A.D. 62-63, according to New Testament scholars.

Primary Characters

Peter (1 Peter 1-5)

Husbands and Wives (1 Peter 3)

Elders and Young Men (1 Peter 5)

Historical Moments

Peter Writes the First Letter to the People of Five Provinces in Asia Minor (1 Peter 1-5)

Major Theological Themes

God's Grace - By His mercy, we are given new hope. The resurrection of Jesus offers us an imperishable inheritance, one the world cannot match. The Giver of this potent gift of grace is to be honored and praised, even in the midst of great trials.

Salvation and Holiness - Growing up in our salvation guides us to change our behavior and words. We no longer engage in malice, deceit, envy, or slander because we now represent the One who saved us, Jesus Christ.

Submission and Respect for Authority - As Christians, we may not understand the reasons for being in a place of submission, but we are required to respect those in authority. We are not to follow those in leadership blindly, especially if it is against the Christian belief system, but we are to be humble in service and respectful in the way we act.

Bearing Good Fruit - Peter calls us to the high road in every situation and relationship: marriage, work, family, neighbors, and strangers. We are to exemplify the very best behavior as we follow Jesus and obey His commands. We are also to resist the wiles of temptation and the devil. Good works are the natural outcome of a solid and serious faith in Jesus Christ.

Lessons Learned from 1 Peter

God Calls Us to Persevere - It is hardest to hold fast to our faith when we are suffering, especially when we are suffering unfairly. The tendency in these times can be to return to "old self" behaviors that offer false comfort. Peter knows of this full well and exhorts believers to strive to be holy like Jesus, who suffered more than we can imagine. With His example, we have something to hold on to in our daily lives and relationships. This allows us to grow stronger in our walk of faith.

We Are a New Creation - Doing good is a natural outcome of becoming a new creature in Christ. In Ephesians 2:10, we are told that we are all His workmanship and that God has prepared good works for us to do. Our job is to be open to them, search for them, and dive into what He is calling us to do.

Living Like Christ - God wants us to behave and speak in the best way, day in and day out. When we draw near to Jesus and then love our family, friends, co-workers, and neighbors, we witness the transformation of hearts. Acting towards others with gentleness, respect, and humility opens the door to them knowing the essence of Jesus. We are His hands and feet.