

Introduction to 1 Peter  
1 Peter 1:1

### Introduction

This morning we finally begin our study of 1 Peter. It has been on my mind to preach through this book for several years, and though that has been delayed the last couple of years by issues that have arisen in what Jim Phelan accurately described as “upside down world,” the importance of this book to us has only increased as we have been experiencing the self-destruction of our society. As we shall see, a major theme of Peter’s letter was to give hope to believers who were starting to go through persecution, and that is a very appropriate message for our own time.

The apostle packed a lot into just five chapters, and I want us to have a good understanding of his message by the time we are done. For that reason this will be much more in depth than a 12 week survey that might occur in a quarterly Sunday School class, but at the same time I also want to avoid becoming bogged down in minutiae that might be interesting to the academic, but not for most other people. If I am able to follow my current preaching outline, we will finish next Spring. That will be followed by some selected sermons in Daniel, and then we will start a study of the book of Revelation. There is great encouragement in knowing that God is still in control even when the world around us is falling apart. He revealed long beforehand what we should be expecting in these last days.

Today I will give you some background on 1 Peter in order to set its historical context and then point out its main themes so that you will have a general understanding of the purpose and flow of the book.

### Author - 1 Peter 1:1

The letter begins with a heading that identifies its author, “*Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ.*” Historically, that had not been questioned until the rise of the academics following the principles of higher criticism which challenged everything. The ideas of higher criticism strive to apply literary theories and personal interpretation to determine authorship even in contradiction to the witness of history and of the text itself.

In this case, the critics point to the style of writing and the quality of the Greek and claim Peter could not have written it because he was a fisherman and untrained in scholarship. That is just the pride of the academics who naively think that only those trained in an approved institution are capable of deep thinking and quality work. That ignores the fact that it is the person who is curious and willing to put in the work to study and investigate that becomes capable and often the actual expert in that field regardless of the academic background. John Bunyan was a prolific author of high quality though by training and trade he was a tinker. My son, Jonathan, has been talking to an expert in a particular area of philosophy though by training and trade he is a blue collar worker. He is simply very curious about the subject and so studies it in depth. We all should have learned over the last couple of years with the government intrusion that has come into our lives that a degree and a position does not mean you know what you are talking about. There are now a lot of doctors that have forgotten basic biology and claim gender is fluid and you can transition from one sex to another. Paul’s comment in Romans 1:22 applies to many areas, “*professing to be wise, they became fools.*”

Peter may have been a fisherman, but that does not exclude him from becoming an excellent writer as he got older. In addition, and more to the point in this particular case, 1 Peter 5:12 specifically states “*Through Silvanus, our faithful brother (for so I regard him), I have written to you briefly.*” Peter does not say exactly how it was through Silvanus that he wrote, but at minimum, Peter has an editor that can ensure it is written well in Greek and in a style that would be easy to read. It seems that ignoring the obvious is a hazard for academics in their efforts to justify their supposed superior wisdom. That also

applies to their historical argument that the persecution referred to in the letter did not happen until later. We will see there was plenty of persecution during the time of Nero.

Their claim that someone else wrote this letter and then claimed to be Peter in order to gain a greater audience is nonsense. Perhaps it is reflection of their own character that such academics think an author would blatantly lie about his identity and being an eye witness to the sufferings of Christ and then include the command *“like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves in all your behavior”* (1 Peter 1:15-16) and commend them for their obedience to the truth in purifying their souls (1:22).

The author, as stated in the heading, is *“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ.”* Phrasing from this letter was used by Clement of Rome about A.D. 95. Polycarp quotes him in his letter to the Philippians written about A.D. 130, and Irenaeus quotes him by name in the late second century. William Barclay quotes C. Biggs writing in *St. Peter and St. Jude* in the ICC series regarding First Peter, *“There is no book in the New Testament which has earlier, better, or stronger attestation. It is true that Eusebius, the great fourth century scholar and historian of the Church, classes First Peter among the books universally accepted in the early church as part of scripture.”*

We are introduced to Peter in John 1:40-42. His brother, Andrew, heard John the Baptist point out that Jesus is the *“Lamb of God,”* so he began to follow Jesus and spent the day with Him. The next day Andrew brought his brother to Jesus who said upon meeting him, *“You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas”* (which is translated Peter). Cephas is Aramaic and Peter is Greek and both names mean “rock.” Andrew & Simon along with Philip and Nathanael, went with Jesus to Cana of Galilee for a wedding and then on to Capernaum. Andrew, Simon and Philip were from Bethsaida (John 1:44), but it appears the brothers had moved and ran a fishing business in Capernaum for that is the location of Simon’s home where Jesus healed Simon’s mother-in-law (Luke 4:36-39). After Jesus’s baptism, temptation, meeting with Nicodemus during the Passover, and rejection at Nazareth, He returned to Galilee and settled in Capernaum. Jesus then called *“Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother”* while they were fishing and said, *“Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”* Jesus then called James and John the sons of Zebedee in the same manner that same day. These men were the first disciples.

Simon Peter became the leader among the men for he is listed first among the twelve disciples Jesus called as apostles (Matthew 10:2-4; Luke 6:13-16), and he is also the one that usually spoke on their behalf (Matt. 16:16; John 6:68). That fit his personality for he was bold and quick to take action, such as getting out of the boat to walk on the water toward Jesus before he became afraid and began to sink and had to be rescued by Jesus (Matthew 14:29-31), or when he drew his sword to defend Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane and took off Malchus’ ear before Jesus had to tell him to put the sword away (John 18:10-11). Peter could even be rash and boastful in speaking up quickly such as Matthew 16:22 when his reaction to Jesus revealing to the disciples that He would be going to Jerusalem where he would suffer many things, be killed and then raised up on the third day was, *“God forbid, Lord! This shall never happen to You!”* Jesus then rebuked him saying, *“Get behind Me, Satan!. You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but your own.”* He was also rash in Matthew 26:33 when he boasted *“though all may fall away because of You; I will never fall away.”* Jesus then had to tell him that he would deny Jesus three times before the night was over. Peter could also be fearful, such as when Jesus was on trial and he denied knowing him when questioned (Matthew 26:72-74). He had an emotional side too for he became very distraught over that denial and wept bitterly (vs. 75), and later Jesus had to restore him to ministry (John 21:15-17).

Jesus changed Simon’s name to Peter on two different occasions. When Jesus first met him as already mentioned, and then again when he made the confession on behalf of the rest of the disciples that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus then said to him, *“Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.”*<sup>18</sup> *“I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it”*

(Matthew 16:17–18). But keep in mind that it was immediately after this that Jesus had to rebuke Peter as just mentioned.

He was most often called Simon among his family and friends and in neutral settings without any spiritual implications, but that name was also used specifically when he was demonstrating spiritual weakness or unbelief. He is referred to as Simon when Jesus gives him fishing instructions and Simon is a bit exasperated having failed to catch anything all night (Luke 5:4-5). Jesus warned him at the Last Supper “*Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail, and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.*” Jesus called him Simon when he kept falling asleep while Jesus was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:37). And Jesus called him Simon in John 21:15-17 when He questioned Simon’s love and then restored him to ministry. After Pentecost, he is always referred to as either Peter or Simon Peter. The Holy Spirit’s indwelling enabled him to live up to the meaning of his name, rock.

After Jesus’ resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit, the same disciples who were frightened and hiding became bold and courageous. Peter, who fifty days before had denied Jesus when questioned by a servant girl, “*took his stand with the eleven*” on the Day of Pentecost and fearlessly proclaimed Jesus Christ crucified and risen again. He charged the crowd listening, “*you nailed [Him] to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death, but God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.*” The result was 3,000 souls repented, believed and were baptized. Shortly after this Peter and John went into the temple, healed a lame man which caused a crowd to gather, and Peter preached another bold sermon of hope and forgiveness in Christ and warning of the destruction of those that would not heed. This greatly disturbed the priests and the Sadducees who arrested them, but the next day when they were brought before the same Sanhedrin that had condemned Jesus to death, Peter proclaimed and applied Psalm 118:22 that [Jesus] “*is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, but which became the chief corner stone,*<sup>12</sup> *And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.*” When they were commanded by the court “*not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus,*” Peter and John answered them “*Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard*” (Acts 4:19-20). They were further threatened and released.

Not long after this, the high priest had the apostles arrested again and put into prison, but an angel let them out that night and in the morning they returned to the temple to teach about Jesus. The guards and the chief priests were perplexed when they found the prison secure but no prisoners in it, and even more so when it was reported to them that the men who were supposed to be in prison were instead in the temple teaching the people. They were arrested again and brought before the Sanhedrin and the high priest charged them<sup>28</sup> saying, “*We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name, and yet, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and intend to bring this man’s blood upon us.*”<sup>29</sup> *But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men”* (Acts 5:28–29). This time they were flogged, but afterward the apostles “*went on their way rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name*” and continued to teach and preach Jesus is the Christ (Acts 5:40-42). The fear was gone and the gospel continued to be proclaimed and spread just as Jesus said it would.

It spread throughout Judea as persecution drove many of the disciples from Jerusalem. It then spread to Samaria and Peter and John were sent to find out what was happening. When they arrived and prayed for them, the Holy Spirit came upon the Samaritans. Peter had to rebuke a magician named Simon that wanted to buy the power to be able to bestow the Holy Spirit. (That is what gave the name simony to the practice of trying to purchase a spiritual gift or office).

Peter was instrumental in seeing the gospel go to the Samaritans, and he was also instrumental in the gospel going to the Gentiles as recorded in Acts 9-10. The Lord gave him a vision that broke his prejudice against the Gentiles so that he ended up preaching to Cornelius and those gathered with him

resulting in the Holy Spirit coming upon them. Peter's report to the apostles and brethren when he returned turned around their prejudices so that even those that had initially taken issue with him about going to the uncircumcised and eating with them also glorified God saying, "*Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance to life.*"

In Acts 12, Herod had James beheaded, and seeing that pleased the Jews, he had Peter arrested and was planning to do the same to him at Passover (vs. 1-4). However, God had different plans. An angel let Peter out of prison that night (vs. 5-10). It took Peter awhile to realize he was not dreaming, and he then went to the home of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where a group of believers had gathered to pray for Peter (vs. 11-12). They were shocked when he showed up at the door (vs. 13-16). Peter described what had happened and then departed to go to another place (vs. 17).

Peter is back in Jerusalem for the council held there recorded in Acts 15. Paul and Barnabas had reported about their missionary journey among the Gentiles and a debate broke out due to those that were part of the sect of the Pharisees insisting that the Gentiles had to be circumcised and taught to follow the law of Moses. It was Peter that put an end to the debate by recounting how God had used him to bring the gospel to the Gentiles and the Holy Spirit coming upon them. He then warned them about putting a yoke of bondage on them that they were not able to bear themselves, and then concluded, "*we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are.*"

Peter is not mentioned again in Acts, but he is mentioned in Galatians when Paul recounts meeting him in Jerusalem along with James and John and being given the right hand of fellowship. This was probably at the time of the Jerusalem Council. Paul then also recounted having to rebuke Peter when he had come to Antioch and had fallen under the influence of the party of the circumcision so that he had stopped eating with the Gentiles. We know that Peter took this to heart and appreciated Paul for in 2 Peter 3:15 he commends "*our beloved brother, Paul*" and his writings.

Church tradition, beginning with Clement, bishop of Rome (A.D. 88-97), has it that Peter went to Rome. That tradition is supported by Tertullian (c. A.D. 200) and Eusebius. Since he is not greeted in Paul's epistle to the Romans, his arrival would be after A.D. 55. Luke does not mention him being there when Paul arrived in A.D. 62, yet Peter's companions when he writes 1 Peter are Silvanus (Silas) and Mark, two of Paul's friends, and Mark was summoned to come to Paul in 2 Tim. 4:11. This lends weight to the possibility that Peter came to Rome while Paul was still there or just after his release. His mention of "Babylon" in 1 Peter 5:13 probably refers to Rome.

Nero's persecution of the Christians began in A.D. 64 after the burning of Rome and continued until his death in A.D. 68. The church historian Eusebius records that Peter was killed during the period of persecution brought on by Nero. He was executed in A.D. 68 by crucifixion just as Jesus had said in John 21:19, the only twist being that according to Jerome, Peter insisted on being crucified upside down because he felt unworthy to be crucified in the same form and manner as the Lord

### **Setting** (Date, Place, Circumstances)

**Circumstances.** Persecution erupted very quickly after the day of Pentecost as I already noted in the life of Peter. It began with arrests, threats and floggings of the apostles by the Jewish religious leaders and then escalated. Stephen was so effective at proclaiming Christ that the Jews "*were unable to cope with the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking*" (Acts 6:10). They resorted to lying about him and his defense in Acts 7 so infuriated the Sanhedrin and those who heard him stoned him to death. A general and great persecution then broke out that caused the followers of Christ, except the apostles, to scatter throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:2). Men such as Saul would pursue them to distant cities such as Damascus to arrest them (Acts 9). Throughout most of Acts, the persecution of Christians was usually by or instigated by Jews that refused to believe the gospel (Acts 14:19 at Lystra; Acts 17 at Thessalonica & Berea; Acts 18 at Corinth; Acts 21 in Jerusalem). However, it could also be caused by Gentiles who clung to their paganism such as recorded in Acts 16 in Philippi and Acts 19 in

Ephesus. However, those were localized persecutions and 1 Peter is speaking of something more widespread since his heading (vs. 1) states he is writing *“to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.”* These Roman provinces covers most of what is now Turkey. In addition, in 1 Peter 5:9 he refers to those having the same experience of suffering by the brethren *“who are in the world.”*

The Romans considered Christians to be a sect of Judaism which was designated as a *religio licita*, a permitted religion by Rome. That changed after Rome burned in July A.D. 64. Emperor Nero was clearly implicated since he watched it from the tower of Maecenas and expressed himself as being charmed with the flower and loveliness of the flames. A fire was a convenient beginning for Nero to rebuild Rome. There were also many reports that those that tried to extinguish the fire were hindered and men were seen to rekindle it when it was likely to subside. Roman historian Tacitus (*Annals* 15:44) wrote, *“Neither human assistance in the shape of imperial gifts, nor attempts to appease the gods, could remove the sinister report that the fire was due to Nero’s own orders. And, so, in the hope of dissipating the rumour, he falsely diverted the charge on to a set of people to whom the vulgar gave the name of Christians, and who were detested for the abominations they perpetrated.”*

The “abominations” is a reference to the slanders against Christians including that they were cannibals because at the Lord’s Supper they ate the body and blood of Christ, and that their agape “love feasts” were orgies of vice. The eschatological teaching that the world will be destroyed by fire and a new world created in the future made it easy to blame them for a present fire. The result was that Rome now distinguished Christianity from Judaism and made it an illegal religion. This allowed for both government approved persecution and the removal of legal defenses against it. What sufferings a Christian might experience would vary a lot from place to place, but the change in making it an illegal religion allowed for a more general spread of animosity and persecution of Christians than the more localized sufferings that had previously existed.

In Rome itself, it became severe before Nero died of assisted suicide on June 9, A.D. 68 to escape justice from the Roman Senate. Tacitus wrote (*Annals* 15:44), *“Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burned, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired. Nero offered his gardens for the spectacle and was exhibiting a show in the circus, while he mingled with the people in the dress of a charioteer or stood aloft on a car. Hence, even for criminals who deserve extreme and exemplary punishment, there arose a feeling of compassion; for, it was not, as it seemed, for the public good, but to glut one man’s cruelty that they were being destroyed.”*

**Date.** There are several factors that help date the approximate time period Peter wrote this letter. 1 Peter shows great familiarity with Paul’s writings which he commends in 2 Peter 3:15. 1 Peter and Ephesians especially have many parallels, and his instructions to elders (1 Peter 5) parallels Paul’s instructions to Timothy and Titus, so it is after those letters were written or Peter and Paul had communicated about these topics. The many references to suffering point to a widespread outbreak of persecution, but the lack of mention of martyrdom, and the commendation of governors as those sent by the king *“for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right”* (2:14) places it before persecution became very bad under Nero as I described earlier. These factors would place the date of the epistle in A.D. 64-65.

**Location.** Peter is writing from “Babylon” (1 Peter 5:9) which is a veiled reference to Rome for which Eusebius cites Papias and Clement. There is no indication in any literature or tradition that Peter ever traveled to the Babylon in either Mesopotamia or Egypt. This would have been done as a protective measure against possible retribution against the church in Rome.

## Theme

The theme and purpose of a letter are usually found in the opening and closing statements, and that is true for 1 Peter as well. Peter states his purpose in writing in 1 Peter 5:12, *“I have written to you briefly,*

*exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it!*” He began his letter with the salutation, *“May grace and peace be yours in fullest measure”* (1 Peter 1:2b). He then immediately gives the source of that grace and peace for it is to be found in God’s great mercy that caused them to *“be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,<sup>4</sup> to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,<sup>5</sup> who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time”* (1 Peter 1:3–5). It is this hope that enables Peter to encourage them on how to deal with the suffering that was present or would come with the various trials they would experience. That would purify them as a fire refines gold and prove out their faith resulting in *“praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ”* (1 Peter 1:7).

Peter refers to the suffering of believers 11 times and it is God’s grace in giving this living hope in Jesus Christ that enables the believer to transcend it. Peter will point to the example of Christ in His suffering (2:21-23) as the model for us to follow. In doing so, suffering properly can find favor with God (2:19-20), be a cause of rejoicing (4:13) for it can bring a blessing (3:14), purge away sin and put the focus on the will of God (4:1). Suffering is the common experience of Christians around the world, and the God of all grace has given us a hope He uses to *“perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you”* (1 Peter 5:9-10). Those suffering for being a Christian are not to be ashamed, but to glorify in that name (1 Peter 4:16).

Peter refers to himself as a “fellow elder” (1 Peter 5:1), and this is a pastoral letter of encouragement to those suffering or about to suffer to stand firm in God’s grace that has given them a living hope in Jesus Christ. This would enable them to *“greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory”* (1 Peter 1:8) regardless of their circumstances. There is a tenderness in Peter’s writing for there is the humility of a fellow traveler on the road of suffering and the pleas of a pastor who loves his sheep and wants to protect them. He is an encourager who explains and continually points to Christ.

As simple theme for 1 Peter would be *Preparation for Persecution*, or perhaps even better, *Hope in Suffering*. I like the title Warren Wiersbe gave to his short commentary, *Be Hopeful, How to make the best of times out of your worst of times*.

**Outline** - Here is a simple out line for the book

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|--|--|
| I) God’s Grace and Salvation (1:1-2:10)    | III) God’s Grace and Suffering (3:13-4:19) |
| A. Introduction (1:1-2)                    | A. Make Christ Lord (3:13-22)              |
| B. Plan of Salvation (1:3-12)              | B. Have Christ’s Attitude (4:1-11)         |
| C. Products of Salvation (1:13-25)         | C. Glorify Christ’s Name (4:12-19)         |
| D. Purpose of Salvation (2:1-10)           | IV) God’s Grace and the Saints (5:1-14)    |
| II) God’s Grace and Submission (2:11-3:12) | A. Elders - Shepherd the Flock (5:1-4)     |
| A. Submission to Authorities (2:11-17)     | B. Saints - be humble (5:5-9)              |
| B. Submission to Master’s (2:18-25)        | C. Benediction (5:10-14)                   |
| C. Submission at Home (3:1-7)              |  |
| D. Submission in All of Life (3:8-12)      |  |

*1:1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.*

The apostle Peter had an important message for them, and it is a message that is still important to Christians today. While Jesus’ warnings of suffering for righteousness and His name’s sake can be a bit frightening because we are human and sane, God’s grace has given us promises in Jesus Christ and proven by His resurrection that gives hope - a confident assurance - for the present and future. Whatever our circumstance may be now or in the days to come, God’s grace is sufficient to carry us on to fulfill the purpose of our existence in glorifying our Creator.

Sermon Notes - August 14, 2022  
*An Introduction to 1 Peter - 1 Peter 1:1*

## Introduction

### Author - 1 Peter 1:1 - *Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ*

Peter's authorship was universally \_\_\_\_\_ until the rise of academic following the ideas of Higher Criticism

Claim: The quality of Greek writing is beyond Peter's capability

Answer: You don't have to be an academic to produce high \_\_\_\_\_ work. Example: John Bunyan

Answer: 1 Peter 5:12. Peter wrote *through* \_\_\_\_\_ - at least an editor

Claim: A pseudo-Peter used the apostles name to gain a greater audience

Answer: Would a blatant liar / fraud call people to be \_\_\_ like God & holy in all their behavior? (1:15-16,22)

Peter's authorship attested by Clement (~A.D. 95), \_\_\_\_\_ and Irenaeus (2<sup>nd</sup> Century)

John 1:4-42. Andrew introduced Simon to Jesus who renamed him \_\_\_\_\_ - translated as Peter (rock)

Simon lived in \_\_\_\_\_ & had a fishing business with Andrew. Jesus called them to be fishers of men

Simon Peter became a \_\_\_\_\_ and spokesman for the twelve that became Jesus' apostles

Peter was \_\_\_\_\_ & quick to take action (Matt. 14:29-31 & John 18:10-11)

He could also be rash and \_\_\_\_\_ (Matt. 16: 22; 26:33)

He could be \_\_\_\_\_ (Matt. 26:72-74)

Jesus changed Simon's name to Peter, meaning \_\_\_\_\_, twice - John 1:42 & Matt. 1:16-17

Simon was his commonly used Jewish name, but Jesus would also use it when he was being spiritually \_\_\_\_\_

He is always Peter or Simon Peter after Pentecost, for the \_\_\_\_\_ enabled him to live up to his name, rock

Peter became a bold preacher after \_\_\_\_\_ and unafraid even when threatened and beaten (Acts 2-5)

Peter and John were instrumental in affirming that God was granting the gospel to the \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 8)

Peter was instrumental in bringing the gospel to the \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 9-10)

Herod imprisoned Peter, but an \_\_\_\_\_ let him out and he went to another place (Acts 12)

Peter played a major part in settling the \_\_\_\_\_ in the Jerusalem council about the gospel going to the Gentiles

In Galatians 2, Paul mentions meeting Peter with other apostles (Jerusalem?), and when he came to \_\_\_\_\_

He becomes a martyr in A.D. \_\_\_\_\_ when he is crucified upside down

### Setting: Circumstances

Persecution began soon after the church was born (Acts 2-5) with \_\_\_\_\_ become the first martyr (Acts 8)

\_\_\_\_\_ persecution of Christian escalated (Acts 9), and Paul encountered it in all three of his missionary trips

Paul also encountered localized persecution by \_\_\_\_\_ (Philippi - Acts 16, Ephesus - Acts 19)

1 Peter is addressing a more general, \_\_\_\_\_ persecution encompassing the Roman world (1 Pet 5:9)

Until A.D. 64, Rome considered Christians to be a Jewish \_\_\_\_\_ and therefore a permitted religion

\_\_\_\_\_ falsely blamed the burning of Rome on Christians to shift blame away from himself

Widespread \_\_\_\_\_ accused Christians of practicing cannibalism (Lord's supper) & orgies of vice (love feasts)  
\_\_\_\_\_ of legal status for Christianity allowed for both government approved persecution & mob violence  
Persecution of Christians in Rome by Nero reached levels of \_\_\_\_\_ cruelty (Tacitus, *Annals* 15:44)

**Setting: Date** ~ A.D. 64-65

Peter is very familiar with \_\_\_\_\_ letters and commends them (2 Peter 3:15)

The suffering of Christians is widespread, but not yet \_\_\_\_\_

**Setting: Location** - Babylon is a veiled reference to \_\_\_\_\_ (Papais, Clement)

No \_\_\_\_\_ Peter ever went to Babylon in either Mesopotamia or Egypt

## Theme

1 Peter 1:2b & 5:12 - May grace & peace be yours - this is the true grace of God, Stand \_\_\_\_\_ in it!

1 Peter 1:3-5 - God's grace grants living \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ and an imperishable inheritance reserved in heaven

This hope enables perseverance in \_\_\_\_\_ resulting in maturity & praise, glory & honor at Jesus' revelation  
\_\_\_\_\_ is the model for responding to suffering, and God uses it in positive ways in the believer's life

Peter, "a fellow elder," gives \_\_\_\_\_ encouragement regarding suffering to stand firm in God's grace & hope

*Preparation for Persecution or Hope in Suffering* - How to make the best of times out of your worst of times

## Outline

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Peter's message is important to us today - God's \_\_\_\_\_ gives hope in Christ in all circumstances

## ***KIDS KORNER***

Parents, you are responsible to apply God's Word to your children's lives. Here is some help.

**Young Children** - draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch. **Older Children** - Do one or more of the following: 1) Write down all the verses mentioned in the sermon and look them up later. 2) Count how many times a Simon Peter is mentioned. Talk with your parents about Peter's life and character and why he is a good role model to follow.

## ***THINK ABOUT IT!***

Questions to consider in discussing the sermon with others. What is the evidence that the Apostle Peter is the author of 1 Peter. Why is it ludicrous that an imposter wrote it? Trace major events in the life of Simon, called Peter. Why did Jesus call him Peter? What are the major positive and negative characteristics of Peter before Pentecost? What changed in him after Pentecost? Trace the rise of persecution against Christians in the early church? Why did it escalate during the later part of Nero's reign? How did he get the population to turn against Christians? About when was 1 Peter written? Where was it written from? Read 1 Peter and keep notes on what major themes can you find. How many references are made to suffering, grace, glory, hope, Christ? Why can Christians have hope in the midst of suffering? Make a brief outline of the book.