

A Study in 1 Peter

Notes on the Author, Background and Theme

Author- The author of 1 Peter is **Peter the Apostle**, the **same** Peter who **loved** and **followed Jesus** in the Gospel **accounts**, and the same Peter that **denied** Jesus **three times** the night of His **crucifixion**. This is the Peter that Jesus **lovingly restored** on the shores of **Galilee** a few weeks after His **Resurrection** from the dead. Peter was recognized as the **author** of this book by the **early church** as far back as **95AD**. The **themes** and **concepts** in the book, as well as the experiential **knowledge** of the **author** are all consistent with the life of Peter as we know it. Peter of course was the out spoken and **fiercely loyal** leader of the 12 disciples. Dear Church family, aren't we **grateful** to **God** that he **penned** this letter to instruct the church for years to come with such a **vivid account** of our **great salvation** and the **Christian Life**? Peter's **Christology** is very **High**, exalting Christ and lifting up our **awesome Savior** to His rightful place in our affections. His **Soteriology** is rich, giving us a **penetrating** and **insightful** catalog of many of the great **doctrines** of **Salvation**. Peter's **Ecclesiology** gives us an enlightening and instructive **understanding** of the **Church**! His teaching on the **Christian life** is **simple** and **clear**. Thank God for this **wonderful gift** and **legacy** from our **brother** and **friend** the Apostle Peter!

Background and Theme – In the **mid to late 1st Century** the church and been scattered abroad when **Jerusalem**, along with its **Jewish Temple** was **destroyed** in 70AD by the Romans. This of course meant that all **Jewish and Gentile believers** had been **thrust** out of **Judea** almost completely, and dispersed into the Roman and Greek world which surrounded the Mediterranean Sea. In fact, Peter addresses his letter to **“those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.”** These are the provinces of what is today Northern Turkey which were at that time, Greek by culture, but under Roman rule. The Greek word he uses for **“scattered”** is the word *diaspora* which means, **“scattered”** or **“dispersed”** or a **“dispersion.”** This combined with the very zealous and successful evangelistic efforts of the Apostles, had called out Christian believers in much of the Roman world. You can see the **image** here then, in a way, of **“scattered”** believers who have come to **“reside as aliens”** in a very heathen, polytheistic Greek and Roman world. This also informs us of the Historical context of the letter, that these believers lived in world rather **hostile** to the **monotheistic** and **morally upright** teachings of Christ and His Church. The church therefore finds herself in a world where **animosity**, persecution, and **suffering** were the **common experience** of **everyday life**. And so then is the Christian life of believers down through the ages unto this

very day, living as **aliens** in a **foreign land**. A land that neither **loves** our **Christ**, nor His holy and beautiful **wisdom** and **way of life**. Peter shines bright light on our **role** as **pilgrims** in a strange land, **waiting** for the **homecoming** of our **Lord** who will in fact make **all things new** in this broken fallen world.

Themes present in 1 Peter: The **main theme** stated in a sentence. **“Those who persevere in faith while suffering persecution should be full of hope, for they will certainly enjoy end-time salvation since they already enjoy God’s saving promises here and now through the death and resurrection of Christ.”** Many people have believed through the centuries that Peter actually gives one of the best **primers**, or manuals, on the **basics** of **Christianity**. It has if you will in its contents, all the instruction a Christian needs to understand the basics of life in the **Kingdom of God**, and how to live as a **citizen** of **Heaven** in an **unbelieving** world. If you think about the different sections of Peters 2 books, they really are quite **comprehensive** in all the **instruction** they give us. It’s a great book to use in discipling a new believer.

Consider just a **few** of its **themes**;

- Those who **suffer** as **Christians** will be **exalted** by God and **strengthened** by Christ.
- The **Church** has a unique **identity** as the **new people** of **God** in a spiritual **priesthood** of all believers.

- Believers now have a **living hope** that guides us to an **end-time inheritance** of glory and contentment.
- **Christ died** as a **sacrifice** for our **sins** and this is the **basis** of our **new life** in Him.
- **Christ's suffering** is an **example** for us and **teaches** us **how to live** as God's own people.
- The **resurrection** of **Christ** is the **basis** of our **hope** and His victory over His enemies.
- Christians should **live** a life of **love** and **holiness** in their homes, in the church, and in the world.

Peter's letter is filled with many **riches** and **promises** that **God** has given to us in and through the **life, death** and **resurrection** of Jesus. These we call **indicatives**. They indicate beautiful and powerful **realities** that we have in Christ. Peter also gives us many **commands** and **instructions** that are proper for our lives as the **new people** of God. These we call **imperatives**. They call us to our specific **roles** and **duties** as **pilgrims waiting** for Christ's return and **living** for His **glory** while we **wait**. 1 Peter is a very rich a beautiful **gift from God** to the church that strengthens our **faith**, empowers our **hope**, teaches us to **love**, and shows us how to **glorify God** and **enjoy Him** forever. Let us pay careful attention to this Heaven sent Word as we work our way through it!