



First Peter - 5 chapters

Title:

The First Epistle of Peter – because it is the first of two epistles written by Peter

Author:

The author of this epistle was Peter, one of Jesus's original twelve disciples. Peter was often thought of as the leader and spokesmen of the apostles. And Peter's ministry was described in the first part of the Book of Acts. He proclaimed Christ primarily among the Jews, but also had ministry to Gentiles (as in this letter).

Occasion and Purpose:

This book was written to five churches in Asia Minor who had been experiencing lesser forms of persecution, and who were likely to begin experiencing greater levels of persecution. They have been slandered and discriminated against, but they were in danger of legal and physical oppression for their faith. And so, Peter wrote to prepare them for suffering. But more specifically, he prepared them to suffer well – to suffer in a godly manner that would show their persecutors to be in the wrong. And this testimony would demonstrate the greatness of Christ, Who is worth suffering for, and result in the conversion of some who saw their suffering.

Themes:

1. **Chosen/Elect to be Holy** – By being in Christ, Peter's readers had a special relationship with God, with all the resulting benefits and responsibilities. Part of this calling was to be holy, as a result of being in relation with the Holy God
 - a. **OT Connection** – Peter made many references to the Old Testament to describe God's relationship with His people. His readers were heirs of the OT promises, including the call to be a holy nation and to be a missionary light to all the nations of the world.
 - b. **Hope (of Glory)** – Part of being God's elect people is the hope of the glorious future we have in Christ. This includes Jesus' return as rescuer and vindicator from suffering and persecution. But it also includes eternal glory with God. This is a great motivation to be faithful when enduring suffering in the meantime.
2. **Aliens/Strangers** – Peter highlights that, as God's chosen people, we are no longer completely at home in a fallen sinful world, that does not understand our goals and actions. We have greater loyalties to Christ, and so, this makes us out of step with society.
 - a. **Suffering Leads to Glory** – Peter connected suffering with glory. Jesus is the great example of suffering and then entering into His glory. And this is the same experience that believers will follow. We can be hopeful, even in the midst of our suffering, that we will be vindicated and rewarded. And so, we can suffer in an innocent, and even redemptive manner.
 - b. **Submission/Obedience** – Peter described the godly manner in which we are to suffer in terms of obedience and submission to proper authorities. We are to honor and submit to men, but we are to fear and obey God.
 - c. **Witness** – Even in suffering, Peter's readers are to demonstrate the greatness of Christ. This happens by our innocent lifestyle and redemptive suffering, that we demonstrate that God is real and true, and worth any suffering we experience. We show that we trust in His greatness, justice, and faithfulness, so that others can see and do this as well.

Summary:

Peter wrote to churches experiencing suffering and persecution. He encouraged them that their suffering would be worth it, because they are God's chosen people, with an eternal destiny greater than any temporary suffering. This motivated them to suffer well, living as strangers in a society that does not agree with them, and works against them. But by their holy lifestyle and faithful endurance, they will be vindicated over their persecutors, and even win people to Christ by their witness and love during suffering.

Organization:

1:1-2 Salutation – Elect Strangers

1:3-2:10 Elect

1:3-12 The Hope of Salvation

1:3-9 The Hope of the New Birth

1:10-12 The Greatness of this Salvation

1:13-2:10 Right Living in Hope

1:13-2:3 How Elect People Should Live

1:13-16 Holy Living in Hope

1:17-21 Honorable Living as Aliens in Hope

1:22-2:3 Love According to the New Birth

2:4-10 The Reason: Two Peoples With Two Destinies

2:4-8 Elect People Share the Destiny of the "Stone"

2:9-10 The Identity & Destiny of Those who Believe

2:11-5:11 Strangers

2:11-12 Theme – Live Worthily as Strangers to Disprove Slander

2:13-4:11 Live Worthily in Immanent Suffering

2:13-3:7 Live Worthily in Various Life Situations

2:13-17 Live Worthily Before Public Authorities

2:18-25 Slaves Live Worthily By Christ's Example

3:1-6 Wives Live Worthily By Sarah's Example

3:7 Husbands Live Worthily as Regards Wives

3:8-4:11 Live Worthily in Suffering

3:8-12 Live Worthily in Interpersonal Relationships

3:13-16 Suffer Worthily to be Vindicated

3:17-22 Christ Suffered Worthily and was Vindicated

4:1-6 Therefore, Suffer like Christ, Don't Live Like the Slanderers

4:7-11 Live Worthily in Light of the End

4:12-5:11 Live Prepared for Actual Suffering

4:12-19 Worthily Suffer With Christ, to Share His Glory

5:1-4 Elders, Serve Worthily as Church Leaders

5:5-7 Young Men Live Humbly

5:8-11 Be On Your Guard as You Wait for the Reward

5:12-14 Conclusion and Greetings

Key Verses:

1:1-2, 1:3-9, 1:10-11, 2:9-10, 2:11-12, 2:18-25, 3:8-17, 4:12-16, 5:8-11