

# The Letters of **Peter**



## Lesson 1-Sufferings and Glory in Christ Jesus!

**Focus:** 1 Peter 1:1-25

- **Introduction:** *The first letter from Peter is believed to have been written just shortly before the beginning of the terrible persecution of Christians under the Roman Emperor Nero in A.D. 64. Although it references the church at “Babylon,” which seems to be the place of writing for this letter (See 1 Peter 5:13), scholars have been a little bit divided as to the place of writing. The basic consideration was whether this reference was to the ancient city and place of old Babylon in Mesopotamia or if it was symbolically referring to the city of Rome. Evidence seems to weigh more heavily for the latter of those two choices. There is no tradition of Peter ever going to the old ancient city of Babylon (which had very few inhabitants in those days), but there is however, a strong tradition that tells us Peter spent the last years of his life in Rome. Peter also mentions the apostle Mark as being there with him (1 Peter 5:13), and we do know that Mark was in Rome in the earlier days of Paul’s first Roman imprisonment (see Colossians 4:10). Peter also liked to speak symbolically in his writings or use figurative expressions at times. This view also fits with what Revelation 17 and 18 have to say about spiritual “Babylon,” which idea is connected with the city of Rome as well. The evidence leads us favorably to conclude the writing of this epistle to be from Rome.*

*Peter wrote this letter, not to the Jews primarily, but to Gentiles who were scattered throughout the Roman provinces where he had spent time ministering. He had a ministry primarily focused towards the Jews, but also took time in ministering to the Gentiles. His statements in this letter show us that the first readers of this letter were those Gentiles who were spread throughout the Roman Empire (See Galatians 2:8, on Jewish ministry, and Acts 10:34-48; Gal. 2:12; 1 Peter 2:9,10, on his ministry to Gentiles). We don’t know all the places exactly that Peter was able to visit during the days of his ministry but we do know that he traveled a lot along with his wife (1 Corinthians 9:5), who would have helped him in his ministry by her support. According to tradition, Peter was finally martyred for his faith by being crucified upside down in Rome sometime before Emperor Nero’s death by Suicide on June 9, A.D. 68. [Nero had lost the throne in that year by a rebellion in his kingdom. He was going to be assassinated, but killed himself first]. Sometime before that, Peter had been executed, according to tradition. This also fits the description that Jesus **prophetically** gave us concerning Peter’s death (See **John 21:17-19**).*

*This letter gave a lot of instruction and counsel about standing faithful in Christ Jesus even amidst lots of persecution. It instructed Christians how to accept such things, as even Jesus had suffered and died for us! Peter also deals a lot with holiness, and character perfection, submission, godly husbands and wives, the second coming of Christ Jesus (and false teachers, in his second epistle).*

- **Peter's introduction (v.1-5)**
  - Peter clearly marks this epistle with his name on it as an apostle sent by God! The evidence of his authorship of this letter is quite clear by tradition and also by both internal and external evidence. Some radical critics attempted to challenge this in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, but their arguments simply do not hold water. The letter stands clearly as a work of Peter the Apostle of God!
  - Peter addressed this letter to Gentile believers (and other readers) who were spread all throughout the Roman Empire!
  - He encouraged them to continue in the faith, the lively or living hope and faith that Jesus had brought everyone to by His life and resurrection from the dead! Jesus had given us a true faith and hope! Therefore, we are to grow and experience sanctification or growth in holiness through Him! **We are to live and grow "by the power of God" (v.5)** for He is our only hope and help!
- **Our faith is a faith of rejoicing! (v.6-12)**
  - The believers were to be glad in Jesus Christ, even in the face of persecution! Jesus Christ had suffered and died for us, and even if we are to suffer and die for Christ, yet we should be glad and thankful in Him for His many blessings despite the pain of this world. We should know that the comforts of Jesus Christ are strong enough to bring us through anything—and even to bring us to our deaths in peace should they come early through persecution of whatever it may be! Christ especially wants to see our characters perfected! Often through our hardships our characters will be forced to grow and develop in Christ Jesus unto life eternal! (v.6,7).
  - (v.10-12) The prophets and even angels desired to look into the things which are now revealed unto us, but they could not see in the same detail that we can now see the fullness of Christ revealed. They only knew that their ministry was for us, in the future. Such an example may be found in the 53<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Isaiah, prophesying of the coming Christ who would suffer and die for our sins! (Written 800 years before His appearance!)
- **Christ our Savior died to save us from sin and to make us holy (v.13-20)**
  - *Christ came to save us **from our sins**, not in our sins (Matthew 1:21). Jesus wants us to become holy in Him. We should always be thankful to God for His mercies and should not faint or become weak in our minds towards Him. We must not be fashioned like our old sinful selves but we must be renewed and purified in Christ Jesus! That is God's calling for us! Christ our Savior was promised from the very entrance of sin into our world—that He should save us! (v.20). We are saved by His **precious** blood!! The dear innocent Lamb of God, in whom there is no sin, nor ever was, has died for us! Let us fear God and obey His Holy voice therefore!*
- **We are to live by the power of our Great and All powerful God (v.21-25)**
  - Our souls should be **purified by obeying** the truth! Our characters will be changed as we grow in Christ Jesus! We are to live by His word and to grow in Him!

*Question (s) for the Heart:*

**Would you like to know Jesus and be joyful in Him (even though sufferings may come to us)? \_\_\_\_\_**