



Summary of 1 Peter

Introduction

The letter clearly identifies the author as the apostle Peter and indicates that he was writing it from the Empire's capital city Rome, thus dating the letter to around 62-63AD. The letter is addressed to Christians dispersed in 'Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia', an area north and west of the Taurus Mountains in Asia Minor, modern-day Turkey.



The map shows all the places named by Peter, all of which are in Turkey.

Peter wrote the letter to encourage the recipients, who were probably a mix of Jewish and Gentile Christians, mostly living in relatively poor areas and suffering from at least verbal abuse if not worse persecution. Peter confirms that this type of suffering will continue and calls their attention to Christ's suffering and the need for his disciples to follow his example.

Peter reminds them of the eternal rewards that are theirs if they persevere in their suffering, with a special call to his fellow elders to take care of those in their charge. He also calls on the remaining believers to live lives that are self-controlled, Christ-centred, and to use their Spiritual gifts appropriately in all humility and love for one another.

Chapter One

The apostle Peter describes the intended recipients of the epistle, and greets them affectionately, blesses God for their regeneration into the true hope of eternal salvation, and it is in the hope of this salvation that he shows they had great cause of rejoicing. However, he confirms that for a little while they were and would continue to bear the burden of their affliction, for the trial of their faith, which would and should produce a time of unspeakable joy, leading to glory.

This is that salvation which the OT prophets had foretold in such amazing detail and of which the angels in heaven desire to look into. He exhorts them to single-minded faith in Christ and to holiness, which he presses from the consideration of the blood of Jesus, the invaluable price of man's redemption and reconciliation to God, and to brotherly love, from the consideration of their regeneration, and the excellence of their spiritual state.

Peter speaks of their rebirth as a new creation in Christ and that, if they hold fast to the truth that is proclaimed to them through the Gospel message, the true word of God, they will come through this time of suffering and into a new life for the time of judgement is drawing near.

Chapter Two

The general exhortation to holiness is continued, and enforced with several reasons taken from the foundation on which Christians are built, namely our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and from their spiritual blessings and privileges they receive through him. The means of obtaining it, i.e. being thoroughly conversant with the Word of God, is highly recommended, and all contrary qualities are condemned.

Peter gives particular directions as to how believers ought to obey the civil authorities, and then servants with regard to their masters, patiently suffering but performing their duties well whilst doing so, in imitation of Christ. For it was Christ who suffered for us and we are called to suffer in a similar manner - with patient endurance.

Chapter Three

In this chapter Peter describes the duties that husbands and wives have with regard to each other, beginning with the duty of the wife (vv.1-7). He exhorts Christians to unity, love, compassion, peace, and patience under sufferings; to expose the slanders of their enemies, not by returning evil for evil, or argument for argument, but by blessing; by a ready account of their faith and hope, and by keeping a good conscience (vv.8-17). To encourage them to this, he proposes the perfect example of Christ, who suffered, the just for the unjust, but yet punished

the old world for their disobedience, and saved the few who were faithful in the days of Noah (vv.18-22).

Chapter Four

The work of a Christian is twofold:

1. Doing the will of God.
2. Suffering his good pleasure.

This chapter directs us in both. The duties we are here exhorted to engage ourselves in are the abstinence from sin, living fully to God, showing self-restraint, giving time to prayer, showing generosity and hospitality, and through the best application of our Spiritual gifts, which Peter presses upon believers from the consideration of the time they have lost in their sins, and the approaching end of all things (vv.1-11).

The second half of this letter is given over to the idea of personal suffering as a believer in Christ. The directions for sufferings are that we should not be surprised by them, but rejoice in them, taking care not to suffer as wrong-doers. Peter intimates that their trials were near at hand, that their souls were in danger as well as their bodies, and that the best way to preserve their souls was to commit them to God, and thus live out a fulfilled life in God by doing so (vv.12-19).

Chapter Five

Here, Peter gives particular directions, first to the elders, how to model themselves and their duty towards their flock (v.1-4); then to the younger Christians, to be obedient and humble, and to cast their care upon God (v.5-7). He then exhorts all to humility, watchfulness against temptations, and steadfastness in the faith, praying earnestly for them; and so concludes his epistle with a solemn doxology, mutual salutations, and his apostolic benediction.