

1 Peter: Historical, Cultural & Theological Study Packet

Section 1: Introduction & Overview

This study packet is designed to give background and context for the New Testament book of 1 Peter. It can be used for personal Bible study, small group discussion, or teaching preparation. The goal is to understand the historical, cultural, and theological setting of 1 Peter in order to better apply its timeless truths today.

Section 2: Historical & Cultural Background

Authorship - The Apostle Peter, leader among the twelve disciples.

Date - Early to mid-60s AD, before or during Nero's persecution.

Place of Writing - Likely Rome ("Babylon" in 1 Pet. 5:13).

Recipients - Believers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (modern Turkey). –

Situation - Christians faced suspicion, slander, and discrimination for refusing to participate in pagan worship and emperor cults. –

Purpose - To encourage perseverance in suffering, holiness in conduct, and hope in Christ.

Section 3: Timeline of Key Events

Year	Event
AD 30–33	Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension; Pentecost; Peter emerges as leader.
AD 40s–50s	Peter ministers in Jerusalem and Antioch; Paul's missionary journeys spread gospel in Asia Minor
AD 62	James (brother of Jesus) executed; tensions rise.
AD 63–64	Peter writes 1 Peter from Rome (Babylon).
AD 64	Great Fire of Rome; Nero persecutes Christians.
AD 64–68	Tradition: Peter martyred in Rome under Nero.

Section 4: Thematic / Literary Outline of 1 Peter

1. Greeting & Identity of Believers (1:1–2)
2. Living Hope through Christ's Resurrection (1:3–12)
3. Call to Holiness (1:13–2:12)
4. Submission & Witness in Society (2:13–3:7)
5. Endurance in Suffering (3:8–4:19)
6. Shepherding & Humility (5:1–11)
7. Final Greetings (5:12–14)

Section 5: Chapter-by-Chapter Study Questions

Chapter 1

- What does Peter mean by believers being 'strangers' or 'exiles' (1:1)?
- How does the resurrection of Jesus provide a 'living hope' (1:3–5)?
- What role does suffering play in refining faith (1:6–7)?
- How should holiness shape daily living (1:13–16)?

Chapter 2

- What does it mean to be 'living stones' built into a spiritual house (2:4–5)?
- How does Peter use Old Testament imagery to describe the church (2:9–10)?
- What does it mean to live as 'aliens and strangers' (2:11)?
- How can believers honor governing authorities without compromising faith (2:13–17)?

Chapter 3

- What instructions does Peter give to husbands and wives (3:1–7)?
- How are believers called to respond to evil and insult (3:8–12)?
- What example does Christ set in suffering unjustly (3:18–22)?

Chapter 4

- What does it mean to live 'for the will of God' rather than human desires (4:1–6)?
- How should Christians steward their gifts (4:10–11)?
- Why should believers not be surprised by fiery trials (4:12–16)?

Chapter 5

- What responsibilities are given to elders (5:1–4)?
- How are younger believers called to relate to their leaders (5:5)?
- What does it mean to humble ourselves under God's mighty hand (5:6–7)?

- How do believers resist the devil (5:8–9)?

Section 6: Application & Reflection

The message of 1 Peter remains powerful today. Christians are reminded that they are chosen by God, called to live holy lives, and sustained by a living hope in Christ—even when society marginalizes or opposes them. The call is to persevere, to bless others, and to stand firm in faith while awaiting the glory to be revealed in Christ Jesus.