

1 Peter: *Standing Firm in God's Grace*

Introduction

I. The Author—First Peter 1:1 identifies the author as “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ.” This is clearly the apostle named Simon whose name Jesus changed to Cephas (John 1:42). Silas probably served as Peter’s secretary in writing this letter (5:12).

II. The Audience—The audience for this letter is Jewish believers scattered throughout the Roman provinces of Asia Minor: Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. The area was probably evangelized by converts from Pentecost (Acts 2:9). Peter may have preached in this area (Acts 12:17; 16:7; 1 Cor 9:5), but it is unlikely that they first heard the gospel from Peter (1 Pet 1:12). The readers were suffering some degree of persecution. However, the suffering of the readers seems to have been social, personal, local persecution instead of governmental or civil (2:12; 3:16-17; 4:3-4, 14). They lived in a “Christian unfriendly” culture.

Many commentators see the audience as mixed Jew and Gentile with even a Gentile majority. Support for this is drawn from several verses in 1 Peter (1:14, 18; 2:9-10; 4:3-4). However, there are four key factors that point to a Jewish audience.

- 1) Peter was the apostle to the circumcision (Gal 2:7-8).
- 2) The epistle contains numerous OT quotations and allusions.
- 3) Why would he say that they had “carried out the desire of the Gentiles” (4:3) if they were Gentiles. This seems to fit much better if they were Jews who were living like Gentiles.
- 4) The word *diasporas* in 1:1 only used of Jews in the LXX. It is never used of Gentiles.

The reference to elders (5:1-3) makes it clear that these believers are organized in local assemblies under the care of godly shepherds.

II. The Aim— First Peter was written to Jewish believers scattered throughout the Roman provinces of Asia Minor to encourage them in the face of localized persecution so that others could witness the true grace of God in their lives (5:12). In short, the purpose of 1 Peter is—*how to stand firm in God's grace in a Christian-unfriendly culture.*

IV. The Arrangement—

- I. Introduction (1:1-2)
- II. *Salvation* – The Believer’s Destiny (1:3–2:10)
- III. *Submission* – The Believer’s Duty (2:11–3:12)
- IV. *Suffering* – The Believer’s Discipline (3:13–5:11)
- V. Conclusion (5:12-14)

V. The Analysis

I. Introduction (1:1-2)

A. Author (1a)

B. Audience (1b-2)

II. Salvation – The Believer’s Destiny (1:3–2:10)

A. The Praise for Salvation (1:3-12)

B. The Practical Implications of Salvation (1:13–2:10)

III. Submission – The Believer’s Duty (2:11–3:12)

IV. Suffering – The Believer’s Discipline (3:13–5:11)

V. Conclusion (5:12-14)

VI. The Application