

# God's Amazing Book

Journey Through the New Testament

## WHEN TIMES GET TOUGH

A Quick Look at the First General Epistle of 1 Peter

FOCUS	SALVATION OF THE BELIEVER		SUBMISSION OF THE BELIEVER	SUFFERING OF THE BELIEVER			
REFERENCE	1:1	1:13	2:13	3:13	3:18	4:7	5:1-5:14
DIVISION	SALVATION OF THE BELIEVER	SANCTIFICATION OF THE BELIEVER	GOVERNMENT, BUSINESS, MARRIAGE, AND ALL OF LIFE	CONDUCT IN SUFFERING	CHRIST'S EXAMPLE OF SUFFERING	COMMANDS IN SUFFERING	MINISTER IN SUFFERING
TOPIC	BELIEF OF CHRISTIANS		BEHAVIOR OF CHRISTIANS	BUFFETING OF CHRISTIANS			
	HOLINESS		HARMONY	HUMILITY			
LOCATION	EITHER ROME OR BABYLON						
TIME	C. A.D. 63-64						

Source: NELSON'S COMPLETE BOOK OF BIBLE MAPS & CHARTS, 1 PETER

### Fast Facts on 1 Peter

**Written by?** Peter

**Written to whom?** Christians who were scattered, persecuted, and maligned.

**Written when?** A.D. 63-64

**Written why?**

1. Hope in suffering
2. Holiness in living
3. Submission to authorities
4. Trust in God
5. Leadership in the Church

**Key Verse?** 1 Peter 2:21

**Persecution can either cause you to grow or grumble in the Christian life. It all depends on your response!** In writing to Jewish believers struggling in the midst of persecution, Peter reminds them of their "roots." They have been born again to a living hope, and therefore both their character and conduct can be above reproach as they imitate the Holy One who called them. The fruit of that proven character will be actions rooted in submission: law-abiding citizens, obedient employees, submissive wives, loving husbands.<sup>1</sup>

When the city of Rome burned, the Romans believed that their emperor, Nero, had set the city on fire, probably because of his incredible lust to build. In order to build more, he had to destroy what already existed. The Romans were totally devastated. Their culture, in a sense, went down with the city. All the religious elements of their life were destroyed—their great temples, shrines, and even their household idols were burned up. This tragedy had great religious implications because it made them believe that their deities had been unable to deal with this conflagration and were also victims of it. The people were homeless and hopeless. Many had been killed. Their bitter resentment was severe, so Nero realized that he had to redirect the hostility. The emperor's chosen scapegoat was the Christians, who were already hated because they were associated with

<sup>1</sup> Bruce Wilkinson and Kenneth Boa, *Talk Thru the Bible* (Nashville: T. Nelson, 1983), 469.

Jews, and because they were seen as being hostile to the Roman culture. Nero spread the word quickly that the Christians had set the fires. As a result, a vicious persecution against Christians began, and soon spread throughout the Roman Empire, touching places north of the Taurus mountains, like Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (1:1), and impacting the Christians, whom Peter calls “pilgrims.” These “pilgrims,” who were probably Gentiles, for the most part (1:14, 18; 2:9, 10; 4:3), possibly led to Christ by Paul and his associates, and established on Paul’s teachings. But they needed spiritual strengthening because of their sufferings. Thus the apostle Peter, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote this epistle to strengthen them.<sup>2</sup>

### THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT 1 PETER<sup>3</sup>

1. Peter is one of only three original disciples used by God to write New Testament books or Epistles (see also: Matthew and John).
2. The suffering of Christ is spoken of in every chapter of 1 Peter.
3. In 1 Peter, the subject of suffering is mentioned over fifteen times.
4. 1 Peter has been called the “Job” of the New Testament, as it deals with suffering and God’s sovereignty.
5. 1 Peter was probably written in the early stages of the great Christian persecution under Caesar Nero in Rome.
6. Peter is one of only two New Testament authors to refer to Jesus as a “lamb” in 1 Peter 1 :19 (John was the other; see John 1 :29, 36 and Revelation 5:6).
7. Peter seemed to have an appreciation and fondness for the word “precious,” In his two epistles, Peter tells us about seven “precious” things that we either possess or are, by God’s grace. In 1 Peter these are: salvation (1:7); Christ’s blood (1:19); God’s people (2:4); Christ Himself (2:7); inner Christian beauty (3:4). In 2 Peter these are: our faith (1:1) and God’s promises (1:4).

*Robert Lee said, “The portrait of Peter in the Gospels and his own writings are amazingly and gloriously different. In the former, Peter saw his Lord transfigured; in the latter, we see Peter transfigured by the boundless grace of God.” J. Allen Blair said, “1 Peter is a favorite book because of its practical approach to the needs of every believer... This little epistle provides a splendid source of peace and comfort for all God’s people who are perplexed and troubled.”*

### Life Lessons from 1 PETER<sup>4</sup>

1. You are expected to submit to governing authorities.
2. Your conduct should point unbelievers to Christ, especially those in your family.
3. You should not be surprised when persecution comes.
4. You can face persecution victoriously as Christ did if you rely on Christ for strength.

#### Suffering in Divine Perspective

Human Suffering	Divine Perspective
Various trials (1 Pet. 1:6).	Rejoice; they are temporary (1 Pet. 1:6).
Unjust authority (1 Pet. 2:18).	Silence evil men by doing good. Follow the example of Christ (1 Pet. 2:21).
Suffering for doing what is right (1 Pet. 3:14).	Be ready to give testimony of your faith (1 Pet. 3:15).
Suffering because of a determination to resist carnal desires (1 Pet. 4:1).	Give up carnal pursuits (1 Pet. 4:2).
Religious persecution (1 Pet. 4:12-14).	Be partakers in Christ’s sufferings (1 Pet. 4:13, 14).
Suffering as part of God’s refining fire for spiritual growth (1 Pet. 4:19).	Commit your life to Him; He is faithful (1 Pet. 4:19).
Suffering from the attack of Satan (1 Pet. 5:8).	Resist Satan; be steadfast in faith (1 Pet. 5:9).

*Source: NELSON’S COMPLETE BOOK OF BIBLE MAPS & CHARTS, 1 PETER*

<sup>2</sup> John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Bible Handbook* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2003), 481.

<sup>3</sup> Jeff Lasseigne, *Highway 66* (Santa Ana, CA: Calvary Chapel Publishing, 2004), 185-187.

<sup>4</sup> Jim George, *The Bare Bones Bible Handbook*, pg. 269.