

1ST & 2ND PETER
STUDY GUIDE
LESSON ONE – INTRODUCTION/1 PETER 1:1-9

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The letters of 1st and 2nd Peter were written during the reign of the Roman Emperor, Nero (A.D 54-68). Most scholars believe that Peter wrote both of his letters from Rome. 1st Peter was written around A.D. 62-63 and 2nd Peter was written around A.D. 64-67. The apostle Peter and the apostle Paul were both martyred in Rome during these troubled years.

On July 19th, A.D. 64, a great fire broke out in Rome. For six days the fire continued to grow, consuming seventy percent of the city. Tacitus, a historian who lived during the time, recorded that rumors arose accusing Nero of torching the city so he could erect marble palaces and other monuments that would help establish his name in history. The people of Rome were ready to revolt and overthrow him. The Emperor looked for someone to blame and found a scapegoat in the newly formed religious group called Christians. The Christians preached a coming King to rule the earth which was a threat to Roman power. Furthermore, Jewish leaders in Judea (which was under Roman rule) were also persecuting Christians. James, the brother of our Lord, was murdered in Jerusalem by the Jewish high priest in A.D. 62, just two years before Rome burned.

As Nero blamed the Christians for the fire, persecution in Rome intensified. It was during this time that Christians were dipped in tar and burned as torches to light the gardens of Nero. They were tied to his chariot and dragged through the streets until they were dead. They were thrown into the arena with lions at huge coliseums where the spectators would watch them get eaten alive. Although this type of brutal persecution was only in localized areas and not widespread through the entire empire, Christians were not accepted anywhere. 1st Peter was probably written before the great fire, when persecution wasn't as severe, while 2nd Peter was probably written afterwards. Peter died as a martyr shortly after 2nd Peter was written. Early church tradition states, "Upon his death, he is said to have been martyred by Emperor Nero and crucified upside down on an inverted cross, as he saw himself unworthy to be crucified the same way like Jesus Christ." (Wikipedia.org/Saint Peter)

1) **Peter's Story** – What interesting facts do you learn about Peter from the following verses?

As you read, take special note of how Peter's faith is up and down before he is filled with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. As you think about your own faith, you can be comforted that by the fact that God is the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2). God begins the story of your faith and keeps writing until the last page when your faith is complete. *For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus (Phil 1:6-7).*

a) **Before the death and resurrection of Christ:**

i) John 1:40-42

ii) Matthew 10:2-4

iii) Matthew 8:14-15 and 1 Corinthians 9:5

iv) Matt 14:22-33

v) Matt 16:13-18

vi) Matt 16:21-23

vii) Luke 22:54-62

b) **After the resurrection of Christ:**

i) Mark 16:5-7

ii) John 21:15-19

c) **After Pentecost when the apostles and many others were filled with the Holy Spirit:**

i) Acts 2:37-41

ii) Acts 10:44-48

iii) 2 Peter 1:12-15 (*Peter wrote this right before he was killed by Nero.*)

d) Peter's faith became so strong that his focus was on sharing the Gospel of Christ even though he was about to be put to death for his beliefs. God used ALL of the experiences Peter went through in his walk with Christ to increase his faith. What experiences has God brought you through that increased your faith?

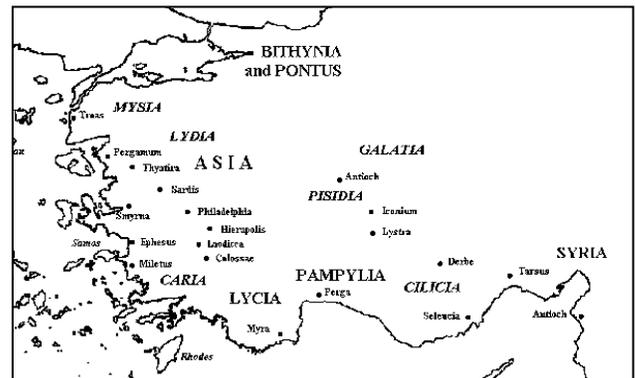
2) **Read 1 Peter 1:1-2**

a) To whom is this letter written?

Note:

The areas that received Peter's letters are in present day Turkey. They were all within the Roman Empire.

Both James and 1 & 2 Peter are written to the dispersed or scattered. The Greek word for dispersed is "diaspora" and was a reminder of when Assyria and Babylon took the twelve tribes of Israel captive and dispersed them to other lands in the Old Testament. James was written to the Jewish Christians while 1 & 2 Peter was written to Christians from both Jewish and Gentile backgrounds. Peter reminded them that they were not only aliens or pilgrims in the land that they lived, but they were also aliens just passing through this world on their way to true citizenship in heaven.



- b) Look at 1 Peter 1:1-2 written below. Underline the three Persons of the Trinity in verse 2. Circle the words that show what each member of the Trinity does on our behalf (starting at the end of verse 1).

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen 2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure. NASU

Note: Warren Wiersbe writes, "The plan of salvation includes more than the Father's electing love; it also includes the work of the Spirit in convicting the sinner and bringing him to faith in Christ. Also, the Son of God had to die on the cross for our sins, or there could be no salvation. We have been chosen by the Father, purchased by the Son, and set apart by the Spirit. It takes all three if there is to be a true experience of salvation.

As far as God the Father is concerned, I was saved when He chose me in Christ before the foundation of the world. As far as the Son is concerned, I was saved when He died for me on the cross. But as far as the Spirit is concerned, I was saved one night in May 1945 when I heard the Gospel and received Christ. Then it all came together, but it took all three Persons of the Godhead to bring me to salvation. If we separate these ministries, we will either deny divine sovereignty or human responsibility, and that would lead to heresy."

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3) Read 1 Peter 1:3-5

- a) Fill in the blanks revealing key phrases from this passage taken from the NIV Bible. Your Bible version may read a little differently but the key words should be the same.

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great _____ he has given us new birth into a _____ through the _____ of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an _____ that can never perish, spoil or fade — _____ for you, 5 who through _____ are shielded by God's _____ until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be _____ in the _____.

- b) The word "hope" in the Greek is to anticipate, usually with pleasure. It is to expect with confidence. Look up Romans 8:23-25. How is hope described in verse 24?

- i) What is it that we are eagerly waiting for?

- c) Compare 1 Peter 1:4-5 with John 10:27-28 and Eph 1:13-14. When we become born again believers, our inheritance in heaven is reserved for us. No one will snatch us out of God's hand. We are sealed with the Holy Spirit who is a pledge, or a down payment, of our future inheritance. Eternal life with God is no longer determined by whether we sin or not. All of our sins are covered by the blood of Jesus Christ. How does the fact that your salvation is safe and secure, protected by the power of God, bring you hope in your everyday struggles with sin?

4) Read 1 Peter 1:6-9

- a) Verse 6 begins with, "In this you greatly rejoice." Connect verses 3-5 to 6. What are we greatly rejoicing in?
- b) The word "trials" in verse 6 can also be translated "temptations." Both words fit because when I'm going through a trial, I'm easily tempted to sin. When I am stressed out, I can be tempted to not trust God, to lose hope, to not have an eternal perspective of heaven, and to run to something that will bring me immediate "comfort." Some of the worldly comforts that people run to are alcohol, drugs, friends, a love relationship, sex, shopping, food, or Facebook! Every time we put our faith in God, rather than these false idols, our faith becomes stronger and pure like precious gold. *Person question: What worldly comfort do you tend to run to when you are stressed?*
- c) From verse 7, when our faith is tested and proven genuine, what will be the result?

Note: Christ will be revealed as we step into eternity with Him but He is also revealed to us on earth. When our faith is proven genuine in the midst of our daily trials He will be revealed in a new and exciting way. Our faith will include these three elements: PRAISE (we will find Him commendable), GLORY (we will see His beauty and splendor), and HONOR (we will highly respect Him).

- d) Verses 8 & 9 are the result of genuine faith. Compare these verses to Hebrews 11:1. What do you learn about faith?
- i) From the end of verse 8, what is the human emotion that comes from faith?

NEW TESTAMENT TIMELINE DETAILING FROM NERO TO THE ARCH OF TITUS

Adapted from the ESV Study Bible

- 54–68 Nero reigns.
- 62 James the brother of the Lord is executed by the Sadducean high priest Ananus at the temple in Jerusalem.
- 62–63* Peter writes his first letter (*1 Peter*) from Rome (1 Pet. 5:13, most scholars believe Babylon is a reference to Rome).
- 62* Paul arrives in Rome and remains under house arrest (Acts 28:16–31); he writes *Ephesians* (see verses for Colossians), *Philippians* (Phil. 1:7, 13, 17; 4:22), *Colossians* (Col. 4:3, 10, 18; cf. Acts 27:2 with Col. 4:10), *Philemon* (cf. Philem. 23 with Col. 1:7; Philem. 2 with Col. 4:17; Philem. 24 with Col. 4:10; also cf. Col. 4:9). Luke, Paul’s physician and companion (cf. Col. 4:14), writes *Luke* and *Acts*.
- 62–64 Paul is released, extends his mission (probably reaching Spain), writes *1 Timothy* from Macedonia (cf. 1 Tim. 1:3) and *Titus* from Nicopolis (Titus 3:12); he is rearrested in Rome (2 Tim. 1:16–17).
- 64 (July 19) Fire in Rome; Nero blames and kills many Christians.
- 64–67* Peter writes his second letter (*2 Peter*). Jude writes his letter. Paul writes *2 Timothy* (cf. 2 Tim. 4:6–8). Paul and Peter are martyred in Rome.
- 66 First Jewish-Roman War begins with a riot between Greeks and Jews at Caesarea; Roman procurator Gesius Florus (a.d. 64–66) is murdered and a Roman garrison wiped out; Menahem, son or grandson of Judas the Galilean, murders the high priest Ananias and seizes control of the temple; Nero dispatches Vespasian with three legions.
- 67* Romans destroy the Qumran community, who beforehand hid the so-called Dead Sea Scrolls in nearby caves.
- 68 Nero commits suicide; year of the three emperors.
- 69 Rebellion quelled in Galilee and Samaria; Vespasian summoned back to Rome to become emperor.
- 70 (Aug. 30) Titus, Vespasian’s son, after a five-month siege of Jerusalem, destroys the temple after desecrating it; the temple’s menorah, Torah, and veil are removed and later put on display in a victory parade in Rome; the influence of the Sadducees ends; the Pharisee Johanan ben Zakkai escapes and convinces the Romans to allow him and others to settle in Jamnia, where they found a school.
- 81 The Arch of Titus, celebrating his destruction of the temple, is erected in Rome.

*Approximate date



Arch of Titus, Rome



Detail from the Arch of Titus showing spoils taken from the Jerusalem Temple