

Christians Don't Cope, We Hope!

An Introduction to 1 Peter (v. 1, 2)

WHAT IS TRUE, AND WHAT SHOULD CHRISTIANS DO?

Verses 1 and 2 reflect the mindset we should have during our trials. We are chosen, but we must live as resident aliens. We know that we belong to the triune God rather than to this world. Our living hope and blessed assurance is in nobody but Jesus Christ. So, believe in Jesus!

1. THE AUTHOR (v.1)

1. Old Name: Simon Barjona (Simon, son of Jona)
2. New Name: Peter (Greek, "Petros"; Aramaic, "Cephas")
3. Prophetically, Jesus gave him his new name, "Peter" (meaning a piece of bedrock), which was to describe his character after Jesus had finished His work in him, Jn. 1:42.¹

2. HIS OFFICE— "An apostle of Jesus Christ" (v.1)

1. The word "apostle" means "a sent one." Refers to "The Twelve," plus Paul, to those men who were directly called, directly commissioned, and directly sent by Christ to establish and extend His church on the earth. An apostle had authority over not just a local church or churches but over the universal church.²

3. HIS AUDIENCE (v.1)

1. God's chosen people, living as exiles
 - a. In Peter's Day: Churches in Asia Minor
 - b. Us Today: All Christians; the universal Christian Church

4. GOD'S FOREKNOWLEDGE AND PLANS TO SAVE US (v.2)

1. What foreknowledge is
2. What foreknowledge is not

5. THE HOLY SPIRIT SANCTIFIES (SETS US APART) TO SERVE GOD

1. Sanctification is a gift of God (Eph. 3:7, Ro. 6:23, Jn. 4:10, 16:13)
2. Sanctification is how we grow and mature in the Lord
3. Sanctification can be hindered by sin in our lives (*obedience, v.2*)

6. JESUS CHRIST IS OUR BLESSED ASSURANCE AND LIVING HOPE

1. The blood of Jesus Christ pays the price for our salvation (v. 2)
2. O.T. sacrifices were continual (Heb. 9:19-22)
3. Jesus provides a new and living way. He offers a permanent blood covenant, removing the sin barrier between God and humanity (Heb. 7:22, 8:6, 12:24)

ABOUT PETER & HIS LETTER (Πέτρος, *Petros, Peter; Cephas*).

"Simon Peter is an apostle of Jesus Christ and one of the three named pillars of the early church in Jerusalem. He was the first Christian missionary to Gentiles, a Christian missionary to the Jews, and a Christian martyr in Rome. He was one of Jesus' first disciples and later became the spokesman of the Twelve. Although Jesus gives Simon the name "Peter" ("rock"; Πέτρος, *Petros*; in Matt 16:18; Mark 3:16; Κηφᾶς, *Kēphas*; in John 1:42), his ability to live up to it is often shaky in the Gospels. Peter's rebuke of the Lord (Matt 16:22–23; Mark 8:32–33), his falling asleep in the garden (Matt 26:40; Mark 14:37), his attack on Malchus (Mark 14:47; John 18:10–11), and his denial of Jesus (Matt 26:69–75; Mark 14:66–72; Luke 22:55–61; John 18:15–27) each show his sinfulness and weakness.

Jesus' reinstatement of Peter in John 21:15–17 ("Do you love Me ... feed My sheep") communicates His confidence in and selection of him as the head of the early church. Luke reveals this in the book of Acts, which portrays Peter as a bold proclaimer of the gospel (Acts 2:14–41; 3:12–26; 4:8–21), a miracle worker (Acts 3:1–11; 9:32–35, 38–42), an authoritative figure in the early church (Acts 1:15–26; 5:3–10; 8:14–17; 15:7–11), the first missionary to the Gentiles (Acts 10:1–45), and a missionary to the Jews outside of Jerusalem (Acts 12:17). Ultimately, Peter demonstrates his total devotion as a follower of Jesus when he dies a martyr's death in Rome (extra-biblical, 1 Clement 5:4).³

"The apostle Peter wrote this letter to encourage believers who would likely face trials and persecution under Emperor Nero. During most of the first century, Christians were not hunted down and killed throughout the Roman Empire. They could expect social and economic persecution from three main sources: the Romans, the Jews, and their own families. All Christians would very likely be misunderstood; some would be harassed; a few would be tortured and even put to death. Peter may have been writing especially for new Christians and those planning to be baptized. He wanted to warn them about what lay ahead—they needed his encouraging words to help them face opposition.

Peter reminded them of their heavenly hope and eternal inheritance so that they would be strengthened to persevere in the midst of suffering. He emphasized that believers are called to holiness and a life of love. Believers are called upon to glorify God in their daily lives and to imitate Christ, who suffered on the cross for the sake of His people. Peter sketched what it means to live as a Christian, how believers relate to governing authorities, to cruel masters, and unbelieving husbands. He warned believers that suffering may be intense, but believers should rely upon God's grace, knowing there is a heavenly reward."⁴

"Today, this letter continues to encourage Christians facing trials. Two-thirds of believers around the world live under governments more repressive than the Roman Empire of the first century. Christians everywhere face misunderstanding, ridicule, and even harassment by unbelieving friends, employers, teachers, and family members. In some countries, converting to Christianity is punishable by death. No one is exempt from disaster, pain, illness, and death—trials that, like persecution, make us lean on God."⁵

¹ Roy E. Gingrich, *The Book of 1 Peter* (Memphis, TN: Riverside Printing, 1997), 7.

² Ibid.

³ Jason Gish, "Peter the Apostle," ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

⁴ Thomas Schreiner, "Peter, First Letter From," ed. Chad Brand et al., *Holman Bible Dictionary* (Nashville: Holman, 2003), 1282.

⁵ Bruce B. Barton, *1 Peter, 2 Peter, Jude*, Life Application Bible Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Pub., 1995), 17.