

# expound

EXPLORING THE  
**TRUTH** OF THE  
WORD OF GOD

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## An Overview

### 1<sup>st</sup> Peter Session 1

1 Peter was written in a time of intense persecution of Christians and Jews. The Roman Empire was shaking under the corruption and debauchery of Nero, who would be responsible for the deaths of thousands of Christians in Rome, including both Paul and Peter. Christians were being driven from their homes, deported to the outer borders of the empire, and forbidden to worship openly. It was a dark season of suffering for Christians.

In A.D. 68 Emperor Nero saw himself surrounded by political enemies and took the easy way out: suicide. In the next year and a half, three emperors (Galba, Otho, and Vitellius), in rapid succession, took his place, but couldn't hold the job. So in A.D. 69 troops proclaimed the military leader Vespasian as emperor, and he would reign for almost 10 years.

Vespasian hated Jews, and he counted Christians among them. Prior to becoming emperor, his goal had been to trample Judea and erase it from existence. As emperor, he sent his oldest son, Titus, to finish the job. Titus put Jerusalem under siege for three months. His troops leveled buildings to the ground, and crushed the temple until it became a crumble of stones. Jerusalem fell. Jews (and Christians) became Roman captives.

How were Christians to endure?

Peter sensed this coming darkness. He wrote his first letter to Christians in about 64 AD, probably from the city of Rome – which he called *Babylon* in 5:13. Yet, it is not a bleak letter. It is full of hope and practical counsel on how to endure. It tells us to balance holy living with correct doctrine, to nurture spiritual growth, to work within existing authority structures, and to take care of each other.

This letter, sent with prophetic love to first-century Christians, still lives today. It provides a compass for our own dark road informing us how to live as strangers in a strange land.

## Important points ...

There is strong support for the acceptance of Peter's authorship of this book. Verse 5:12 indicates that Silas gave assistance to Peter in writing this epistle.

It was written from Rome to Christians in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.



## The Structure

Chapter 1:1-25: God's Grace in Salvation

Chapter 2:1-3:7: God's Grace in Submission

Chapter 3:8-5:14: God's Grace in Suffering

**1 Peter 1:1-25**  
**God's Grace in Salvation**

**1:1-2: SALUTATION**

Peter's description of Christians...

The *Elect* – the chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father

Through the sanctifying work (being set apart) of the Holy Spirit

Cleansed by the blood of Christ

Strangers in the world

Resident aliens

**1:3-12 THROUGH GRACE WE HAVE RECEIVED A LIVING HOPE**

The new birth (regeneration) brings us hope.

A Living Hope

A Lasting Hope that sustains us in times of dark trials

A Hope that refines us and fills us with great joy

A Hope the Old Testament prophets foresaw but did not see

**1:13-21 THROUGH GRACE WE CAN LIVE HOLY (life set apart unto God)**

*Therefore*

Prepare your minds for action.

Hope should lead to holiness (see 1 John 3:1-3)

Strangers – we are people who are different.

Holiness is possible because of what Christ has done for us and in us.

## **1:22-25 THROUGH GRACE WE CAN LIVE IN HARMONY**

God's grace produces love for the family of God

Through grace we are called into a fellowship of love in the community of faith.

### **Questions for Table Conversation**

1. What do you think it would be like if you actually faced imprisonment or death because of your faith in Christ? What would it like be like? How would you find the strength to stand for Christ in the middle of that experience?
2. What is the implication of Peter's description of Christians as "strangers" – resident aliens?
3. How does a Christian "prepare his/her mind for action" in regard to how we live our daily lives?

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### **Before Our Next Session**

1. Read 1 Peter 2:1-3:7 – once a day would be great
2. Use the following questions to assist you as you reflect on your reading:
  - What are Christians to crave in the same way babies crave milk?

- Jesus is the Stone – the Cornerstone – of our faith. To whom is he precious? To whom is he a stumbling block? What is the difference between these two groups of people?
- What four terms does Peter use to describe the church in v.9?
- What should be the attitude of a Christian toward civil law and authorities?
- Verse 21 says we were called to something. To what are we called?
- What example of Christ are we called to follow in v. 21?
- How can the Christian wife of an unbelieving husband turn their husband's hearts toward Christ without even saying a word? (3:1-3)
- What can happen to a Christian husband's prayers if he does not treat his wife with tenderness and respect? (3:7)