**1 Peter**

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| **Endurance in Righteous Suffering by God’s Grace**  **(is achieved by…)** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Sanctification** | | | **Submission** | | | | **Selflessness** | | | | | |
| **1:1–2:12** | | | **2:13–3:12** | | | | **3:13–5:14** | | | | | |
| **Holiness** | | | **Humility** | | | | **Honoring Others** | | | | | |
| Salu-tation  1:1-2 | Praise for Hope  1:3-12 | Holy Life Exhorted  1:13—2:12 | Gov’t  2:13-17 | Work  Place  2:18-25 | Marri-age  3:1-7 | Church & all of life  3:8-12 | Christ’s Triumph  3:13—4:6 | Edify Others  4:7-19 | Elders  5:1-4 | Young Men  5:5a | Humility/  Watchfulness  5:5b-11 | Purpose  5:12-14 |
| **Rome to Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Early AD 64** | | | | | | | | | | | | |

**Key Word: Suffering**

**Key Verses:** “*12Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: 13But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy…I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand.”* **(1 Peter 4:12-13; 5:12).**

**Summary Statement:** Believers must *suffer properly for Christ* as holy, submissive, and selfless witnesses motivated by Christ's example and the hope of future glory to help *attract others* to hear their message.

**Application:** Your response to suffering for Christ will either draw unbelievers to Jesus or repel them. Do you suffer with integrity?

**"When it is all over, you will not regret having suffered;  
rather you will regret having suffered so little—  
and suffered that little so badly."**

**— Sebastian Valfre (1629-1710) —**

**1 Peter**

**I. Title:**

The Greek title (*First of Peter*) follows the standard practice of naming the General Epistles after their authors.

**II. Authorship**

A. External Evidence: Early tradition has the Apostle Peter writing this epistle bearing his name. The Church Fathers supported his authorship, including Irenaeus (*Against Heresies*; *ca.* AD 185), Tertullian (*De Orations*; *ca.* AD 200), and Eusebius (*Eccl. Hist.* 3.3; *ca.* AD 325).

B. Internal Evidence: The content of the book itself supports the long-held belief that Peter authored the epistle:

1. The opening salutation identifies Peter as the author (1:1).

2. The authoritative tone of the work is confirmed in the author's identification with the elders and his claim to be a witness of the sufferings of Christ (5:1).

3. Many similarities exist between this letter and Peter's discourses in Acts (1 Pet. 1:10-12 and Acts 3:18; 1 Pet. 1:20 and Acts 2:23; 1 Pet. 2:4 and Acts 4:11; 1 Pet. 3:22 and Acts 2:33-34).

**III. Circumstances**

A. Date: Peter was martyred in the spring AD 64 (Hoehner, 381-84). In that 2 Peter followed 1 Peter chronologically (2 Pet. 3:1), some time must be included between the two works. Since 2 Peter was written shortly before Peter's death (2 Pet. 1:13-15), 1 Peter must be dated at the latest in early AD 64.

B. Origin: The epistle claims to have been written from “Babylon” (5:13). Several factors indicate that this is a code word for Rome rather than the literal Babylon:

1. External Evidence:

a. There exists no tradition that Peter ever visited the Babylon on the Euphrates or the Babylon on the Nile (now known as Old Cairo).

b. There does exist a tradition from Papias (AD 80-155) and Clement of Alexandria (AD 155-225) that “Babylon” refers to Rome (Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* 2.15).

c. The tradition is very strong that Peter was martyred in Rome (Guthrie, 801-803).

d. Revelation hints that Rome is “Babylon the Great” (cf. Rev. 14:8; 17:5; 18:10).

2. Internal Evidence: Since Mark was with Peter when he wrote (5:13) and Mark's residence was Rome (Col. 4:10; Philem. 24), Peter must have written from Rome.

C. Recipients: Peter addresses “God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia” (1:1b).

D. Occasion: On 19 July AD 64, one of the most significant dates for the church in the first century occurred. Beginning this day, much of Rome burned to the ground, perhaps at Nero's own hand, but the event provided fuel to the already suspect opinion of the many Christians in Rome. The infamous Neronian persecutions began at this time in which Christians were thrown to the lions and dogs, mutilated by gladiators, and lit on fire on posts in Nero's garden to provide light for his evening meals.

According to Hoehner's chronology (see “Date” above), Peter was crucified upside down a few months before the Neronian persecutions broke out. However, while civil persecution was not yet in full swing, believers experienced personal persecution (2:12; 3:16-17; 4:3-4, 12, 14) and the threat of imperial persecution loomed on the horizon. In this context Peter wisely penned this manual on suffering to encourage his brethren (5:12) in the provinces of northern Asia Minor to stand firm with submissive attitudes.

Little did Peter know how applicable his letter would soon become in the regions beyond his intended readership and especially in Rome itself. The words “suffer,” “suffered,” “suffering,” and “sufferings” occur 16 times. Suffering and glory often appear together in the epistle (1:11; 4:13; 5:1, 10) as an encouragement for believers to look ahead in faith (1:5, 7, 9, 21; 5:9) to the completion of their salvation (1:5, 9, 10; 2:2) at the return of Christ (1:5, 7, 13; 4:13; 5:1, 4). It seems that all of the biblical books that provide eschatological teaching do so in light of suffering (e.g., Daniel, Ezekiel, 1 & 2 Thess., Revelation, etc.). Peter’s epistles do the same through their emphasis upon the Second Coming of Christ in conjunction with the Christians’ present suffering.

**IV. Characteristics**

A. The epistle uses 62 *hapax legomena* (words that occur only once in the New Testament).

B. One of the most problematic NT passages is 1 Peter 3:18-22, which states that after his resurrection, Christ “preached to the spirits in prison who disobeyed long ago… in the days of Noah…”

C. Peter's advice on dealing with persecution counters the natural responses of man:

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| **Common Responses to Persecution** | **Peter's Exhortation** |
| **“I'll get even”** | “9Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.” (3:9; cf. 2:1) |
| **“I'm discouraged”** | “13But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings… let him not be ashamed…” (4:13, 16) |
| **“I'm afraid”** | “…and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled” (3:14b) |
| **“Forget Jesus. It's not worth it”** | “…by whose stripes ye were healed.” (2:24) |
| **“Why do they only persecute me?”** | “…knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.” (5:9) |
| **“Hey! I have my rights!”** | “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time” (5:6) |

D. First Peter may well be called the “Job of the New Testament” because of its theme of undeserved suffering and steadfast submission to the sovereignty of God (*TTTB*, 473).

**Argument**

While the letter has many themes, Peter explains the key purpose of his epistle near its end, “.…I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it” (5:12). Thus, the letter has these dual themes (adapted from Kay Arthur, Precepts):

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| “This is the true grace of God.” | “Stand firm in it.” |
| 1 Peter 1:1-12 | 1 Peter 1:13–5:14 |
| Election | Endurance |
| Sovereignty of God | Responsibility of man |
| Positional sanctification | Practical sanctification |
| Initiated by Godhead (1:2) | Effected in godly living (1:13ff.) |

Therefore, Peter’s purpose is to encourage his readers that God’s grace enables them to live appropriately despite the suffering they had already experienced and undoubtedly would still suffer. He exhorts holiness resulting from salvation (1:1—2:12), submissiveness in all aspects of life (2:13—3:12), and selflessness in the midst of suffering with Christ's example as motivation (3:13—5:14). The promise reiterated again and again is that suffering precedes glory.

The letter especially emphasizes at least nine positive results in those who persecute us. We can *be attracting* others to Jesus when we stand fast in God’s grace during suffering, for unbelievers will: (1) *see* our good works (2:12a), (2) *glorify* God (2:12b), (3) *silence* their ignorant talk (2:15), (4) be *won* over by godly wives (3:1), (5) be *ashamed* of their slander (3:16), (6) think our purity *strange* (4:4), (7) be *accountable* to God (4:5), (8) give us a *blessing* through insulting us (4:14), and (9) be *judged* for disobeying the gospel (4:17). All of these effects work to attract unbelievers to the Lord.

**2 Peter**

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| **Knowledge to Combat False Teaching** | | | | | | | | | |
| **God’s Election** | | | **Future Apostasy** | | | **Lord’s Return** | | | |
| **Chapter 1** | | | **Chapter 2** | | | **Chapter 3** | | | |
| Salutation  1:1-2 | Provides Every Need  1:3-11 | Foundation of Knowledge  1:12-21 | False Teachers Coming  2:1-3a | End in Hell  2:3b-10a | Character Described  2:10b-22 | Scoffers Before Rapture  3:1-4 | Destroys Heaven & Earth  3:5-13 | Motivates Holiness  3:14-16 | Protection/ Growth Exorted  3:17-18 | |
| **Adequacy of**  **Believers** | | | **Inadequacy of**  **Unbelievers** | | | **Expectancy of**  **Believers** | | | |
| **Holiness** | | | **Heresy** | | | **Hope** | | | |
| **Disciples of the Lord** | | | **Diabolical Leaders** | | | **Day of the Lord** | | | |
| **Rome to North Asia Minor** | | | | | | | | | | |
| **AD 64** | | | | | | | | | | |

**Key Word: Knowledge**

**Key Verse:** *“17Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.**18But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.”***(2 Peter 3:17-18).**

**Summary Statement: Peter reminds north Asian believers of their *knowledge* of the characteristics and future destruction of false teachers and of the grace of Jesus Christ in order to combat *false teaching* and stimulate *growth in godliness.***

**Application: Never stop being a student of the Scripture. If you do, you will stop growing in grace and you will eventually tolerate and/or promote heresy. So what new things in His Word has God been teaching you lately?**

**2 Peter**

**I. Title**:

The Greek title (*Second of Peter*) follows the standard practice of naming the General Epistles after their authors.

**II. Authorship**

A. External Evidence: The early tradition divides whether Peter wrote this epistle, but most regarded it authentic.

B. Internal Evidence: The liberal scholar Kümmel rejects Petrine authorship but candidly admits, “the letter clearly and unambiguously makes the claim that it was written by the apostle Peter” (Kümmel, 430). Then he cites the following evidence:

1. It says Peter was the author: “Simon Peter, servant and apostle of Jesus Christ” (1:1).

2. The author speaks as an eyewitness of the transfiguration of Jesus (1:16f.).

3. He makes reference to the saying of Jesus concerning the martyrdom of Peter (1:14).

4. Reference to the “beloved brother Paul” places the author on the same level of apostolic authority as Paul (3:15f.).

5. It clearly refers to 1 Peter: “This is already the second letter I am writing to you” (3:1).

6. “Since Peter regards his death as near (1:13ff), 2 Peter is written in the form of a testament of Peter.”

**III. Circumstances**

A. Date: Peter was martyred in the spring AD 64 (Hoehner, 381-84). Second Peter was likely written in this same year as it was shortly before his death (2 Pet. 1:13-15).

B. Origin: Both conservatives and critics agree that the evidence for the origin of 1 Peter in Rome undoubtedly applies to 2 Peter as well (1 Pet. 5:13; cf. 1 Peter notes).

C. Recipients: In 1 Peter the apostle addresses “God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia” (1 Pet. 1:1b). The readers were likely both Jews (the minority) and Gentiles (the majority) which Peter himself had nurtured (cf. 1 Peter notes). In 2 Peter he addresses the same group (2 Pet. 3:1).

D. Occasion: Peter referred to his readers as “strangers in the world” (1 Pet 1:1b), reminding himself and them that this earth is not their home. Such a truth was especially needed since Nero ruled Rome! In his letter Peter does not specifically refer to his imprisonment, unlike Paul, who calls himself as a “prisoner of Christ Jesus” in his Prison Epistles.

However, it is clear that Peter expected the persecutions to take his life (1:14-15a), which in fact did take place, according to tradition. Within a few months after recording this letter, Rome burned (16 July 64) and Nero used the Christians as his scapegoat. Believers suffered the most horrible kinds of deaths in the ensuing four years. Peter wrote this epistle before his soon death as a reminder of truths his readers already knew (1:12, 15b; 3:17a) to stimulate them to wholesome thinking (3:1b)—both knowledge of error (3:17) as well as truth (3:18). Interestingly, he cared about orthodoxy in the midst of this suffering.

**IV. Characteristics**

A. Contrasts Between Peter’s Two Letters

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|  | **First Peter** | **Second Peter** |
| **Nature of Problem** | Persecution (Hostility) | False Teaching (Heresy) |
| **Source of Problem** | External | Internal |
| **Theme** | Hope | Knowledge |
| **Key Word (all forms)** | “suffering” (16 times) | “knowledge” (16 times) |
| **Date** | early AD 64 | early spring AD 64 |

B. “Peter's scenario from the creation of the present heavens and earth to the dissolution of the universe and creation of the new heavens and earth is one of the most astonishing passages in all of Scripture (3:5-13)” (*TTTB*, 480).

C. This second letter of Peter has the most explicit teaching in Scripture on false teachers.

**Argument**

Second Peter emphasizes knowledge, shown in the 16 occurrences of words for “knowledge” (1:2, 3, 8; 2:20; 2:21a, 21b; 3:17; 1:16; 1:5, 6; 3:18; 1:20; 3:3; 1:12, 14; 2:9). Peter wanted his readers to know three areas: a knowledge of God and his choice of them (2 Pet 1), a knowledge of the characteristics and destruction of future false teachers (2 Pet 2), and a knowledge of Christ's return and the coming Day of the Lord (2 Pet. 3). However, the apostle was not content with knowledge alone, stored in a reader’s head. This knowledge must work itself out in godly behavior (1:3-9; 3:11, 14, 18) and a cautiousness that protects them from being ensnared by heresies surrounding them (3:17). The last two verses of the epistle especially emphasize this dual purpose for knowledge: protection and maturity (3:17-18).