

1 PETER

**What does God say to a
persecuted Church?**



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- Introduction
- Situation. A fire devastated Rome in A.D. 64 A.D. but suspiciously left unscathed the estates of Nero and his friend Tigellinus. Like any good politician, Nero needed a scapegoat for his ills, and what appeared to be a new religion, understood as a fanatical form of Judaism begun by a crucified teacher three and a half decades before, filled the need perfectly.
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HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- Romans viewed Christians, like Jews, as antisocial. Certain charges became so common that they were stereotypical by the second century: Romans viewed Christians as "atheists" (like some philosophers, for rejecting the gods), "cannibals" (for claiming to eat Jesus' "body" and drink his "blood"), and incestuous (for statements like "I love you, brother," or "I love you, sister"). Judaism was a poor target for outright persecution, because its adherents were numerous and it was popular in some circles.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- By contrast, Christianity was viewed as a form of Judaism, who were hated even by the Jews, therefore it was an appropriate political scapegoat. In other words, followers of Jesus were the most hated group in society.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Introduction

According to the early-second-century historian *Tacitus, who disliked Christians himself, Nero burned Christians alive as torches to light his gardens at night. He killed other Christians in equally severe ways (e.g., feeding them to wild animals for public entertainment). In all, he must have murdered thousands of Rome's Christians, although most Christians there escaped his grasp.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- Introduction
- Thus, even though the Greek part of the Empire loved Nero and the Jewish community generally favored him, Christians saw him as a prototype of the antichrist. Nero died in disgrace several years later, pursued by fellow Romans who hated him.

WHY THIS LETTER?

- 1. To teach believers how to live victoriously among an hostile culture, without losing hope.
- 2. Without becoming bitter
- 3. While trusting in their Lord
- 4. While looking forward to His second coming

GOD SPEAKS TO THE PERSECUTED

- 1 Peter 1:1-2
- Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,
- To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:
- Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

GOD SPEAKS TO THE PERSECUTED

- 1 Peter 1:3-4
- 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

GOD SPEAKS TO THE PERSECUTED

- 1 Peter 1:4-5
- 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

GOD SPEAKS TO THE PERSECUTED

- 1 Peter 1:6-7
- 6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

GOD SPEAKS TO THE PERSECUTED

- 1 Peter 1:8-9
- 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith — the salvation of your souls.