

# 1 PETER

RESTORED  
**STRONG**  
*be* **firm**  
*steadfast.*

1 PETER 5:10 NIV



Evangelical  
Community  
Church

AND THE GOD OF ALL GRACE, WHO CALLED YOU TO HIS **ETERNAL GLORY** IN CHRIST, AFTER YOU HAVE SUFFERED A LITTLE WHILE, WILL HIMSELF RESTORE YOU AND MAKE YOU STRONG, FIRM AND STEADFAST. TO HIM BE THE POWER FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN. (NIV)

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FROM PASTOR DAVE

By God’s grace, I intend to preach through the book of 1 Peter in a series of twelve messages. As I have read, studied, and prayed through this wonderful book in preparing to preach these messages, I have been overwhelmed by its relevancy and how it speaks to Christ’s church today with such prescience, power, and comfort.

The purpose of this short brochure is to provide some very basic information about the book so that everyone - even those who may miss a Sunday or two - will have a common starting point for our twelve-week study. Please pray that as I follow Paul’s admonition to “preach the Word,” that I may faithfully proclaim the richness of God’s truth as found in this marvelous letter.

To God be the Glory.

*Pastor Dave*

Hong Kong, 2018

# INTRODUCTION 1

In this letter the apostle Peter “...explains the significance of Jesus’ suffering and how those who follow him must live out their faith.” (Jobes, 1). One author has described 1 Peter as “the most condensed New Testament résumé of the Christian faith and of the conduct that it inspires.” (Clowney, 15).

This letter has been held in the highest regard throughout the history of the church. Martin Luther, for example, described it as “one of the noblest books in the New Testament.” He further said it was a “paragon of excellence” in the same way that the Book of Romans and the Gospel of John are. He believed that it contained all that was necessary for a Christian to know. (Jobe, 1).

One esteemed 17th century church leader began his commentary on 1 Peter by summarizing its critical importance like this:

*“This excellent Epistle (full of evangelical doctrine and apostolical authority) is a brief, and yet very clear summary both of the consolations and instructions needful for the encouragement and direction of a Christian in his journey to Heaven, elevating his thoughts and desires to that happiness, and strengthening him against all opposition in the way, both that of corruption within, and temptations and afflictions from without.*

*The heads of doctrine contained in it are many, but the main that are most insisted on, are these three, faith, obedience, and patience, to establish them in believing, to direct them in doing and to comfort them in suffering.”* (Grudem, 46).

## AUTHOR

The author identifies himself by name in the first verse of the letter: “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ.” From the earliest days of the church, this letter was acknowledged to be and accepted as a letter written by Peter. Note that at 1 Peter 5:1 the author refers to himself as “a witness of Christ’s sufferings.”

## WHERE WRITTEN

The best evidence suggests that Peter wrote this letter from Rome.

In 1 Peter 5:13 Peter writes, “She who is in Babylon . . . sends you her greetings, and so does my son Mark.” This could not have referred to the ancient city of Babylon, the capital of the Babylonian empire, for at this time it was a small and obscure place. However, the name “Babylon” is used elsewhere in the New Testament in reference to Rome (Rev. 16:19; 17:5; and 18:2). Grudem explains the reference to Babylon like this: “Just as in the Old Testament Babylon was the centre of worldly power and opposition to God’s people, so in the time of the New Testament Rome was the earthly centre of a worldwide system of government and life which was set in opposition to the gospel. By referring to Rome as “Babylon,” Peter was carrying through the imagery of the church as the new people of God or the new Israel, which he uses throughout this letter.” (Grudem, 35).

## DATE 4

This letter was “almost certainly written in A.D. 62-63” (Carson and Moo); (Grudem at 38 posits a date between A.D. 62-64).

## TO WHOM WRITTEN 5

There is some difference of opinion among evangelical scholars regarding the intended recipients of Peter’s letter. For example, Carson and Moo (142) contend that “Peter’s intended audience is mainly, if not exclusively, Gentile. These Christians lived in the five Roman provinces of Asia Minor occupied today by the nation of Turkey. Peter’s reference to ‘those who have preached the gospel to you’ (1:12) suggests that he did not personally evangelize these Christians.”

Grudem, on the other hand, argues that Peter’s readers were probably mixed congregations of Jewish and Gentile Christians. He reasons as follows (39): “...if all the churches in Asia Minor in A.D. 62-63 were reached by this letter and were the intended recipients of it, then the question of whether Peter is writing to Jewish Christians or Gentile Christians is already answered. By this time, over thirty years after Pentecost, the rapid growth of the church would have meant that there were both Jewish and Gentile Christians in all of these churches.”

However, Jobes' analysis regarding the original recipients of Peter's letter is the most cogent of the three different positions (24): "...it makes little difference whether the original readers were Jews or Gentiles. Both spiritual systems were empty in that in themselves they offered no redemption, and both people groups were equally guilty in God's sight. Whether converts from paganism or Judaism, the letter's recipients needed to understand their new covenant relationship with God in Christ and the implications of that relationship for transformed living."

## MAP 6



- Where Apostle Peter wrote the letter
- Peter's Original Audience in Asia Minor

From Crossway Bibles. "ESV: Study Bible: English Standard Version." Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles (2007).

One scholar has identified seven different problems that existed in the Christian communities to which Peter was writing. What is so powerful about this analysis is it demonstrates how the problems Peter was facing in first-century Asia Minor are a mirror image of problems being faced in real churches around the world today! (Jobes, 43). **Peter's letter today speaks directly to ECC in Hong Kong with the same relevance and authority as it had for our first century brothers and sisters trying to survive in Asia Minor.**

The seven distinct problems are as follows (Wendland, 66):

1. "Physical problems resulting from various responses to social pressure;
2. Social ostracism and exclusion;
3. Potential lingering attraction to the former pagan way of life;
4. A surrounding, seductive non-Christian worldview;
5. Tensions and inconsistent behaviors with the church fellowships;
6. Spiritual doubts about the reliability of God's promises and the future;
7. Satan's constant, deadly temptations and trials."

## COMMON THEMES

Although 1 Peter is a short letter, it traverses the landscape of important Christian doctrines and ethical behaviors. As Grudem points out, it addresses a whole range of topics: holiness; the sufferings of Christ; how to suffer as a Christian; God’s sovereignty in salvation and life; the grace of God; the reality of the unseen spiritual world; and trusting in God in the midst of daily circumstances. And the glue that holds all of these topics together is suffering. In particular, “suffering as a form of imitating Christ, who, by bearing our sins on the cross, gives meaning and comfort to Christians in all aspects of their daily lives.”

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