

Peter's First Letter to the Gentile Churches (c. 62–63)

1 Peter 1–5

Salutation

1:1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the chosen who are residing temporarily in the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and *for* sprinkling with the blood of Jesus Christ. May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

Born Again Into a Living Hope

3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

4 into an inheritance imperishable and undefiled and unfading, reserved in heaven for you

5 who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time,

Trials Test and Prove the Genuineness of Our Faith

6 in which you rejoice greatly, *although* now for a short time, if necessary, you are distressed by various trials,

7 so that the genuineness of your faith, more valuable than gold that is passing away, but is tested by fire, may be found to *result in* praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

8 whom, *although you* have not seen, you love; in whom now you believe, *although you* do not see *him*, and you rejoice greatly with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

9 obtaining the goal of your faith, the salvation of *your* souls.

The Privileged Status of Those Who Know and Believe the Gospel

10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace meant for you sought and made careful inquiry,

11 investigating for what *person* or which time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating *when he* testified beforehand to the sufferings with reference to Christ and the glories after these *things*,

12 to whom it was revealed that they were serving not themselves but you with reference to the same *things* which now have been announced to you through those who proclaimed the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels desire to look.

A Call to Holiness—Remember That You Were Set Free from Sin

13 Therefore, when you have prepared your minds for action *by* being self-controlled, put your hope completely in the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former desires *you used to conform to* in your ignorance,

15 but as the one who called you *is* holy, *you* yourselves be holy in all *your* conduct,

16 for it is written, “You will be holy, because I *am* holy.” [[Lev 19:2](#)]

A Call to Reverence—Remember That You Were Redeemed With Christ's Precious Blood

17 And if you call on *him as* Father who judges impartially according to each one's work, conduct yourselves with fear during the time of your temporary residence,

18 *because you* know that you were redeemed from your futile way of life inherited from your ancestors not with perishable things like silver or gold,

19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like *that of* an unblemished and spotless lamb

20 who was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has been revealed in these last times for you

21 who through him *are* believing in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

A Call to Love—Remember That You Were Born Again Through God's Enduring Word

22 Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for sincere brotherly love, love one another fervently from the heart,

23 *because you* have been born again, not from perishable seed but imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

24 For

“all flesh *is* like grass,

and all its glory like the flower of the grass.

The grass withers and the flower falls off,

25 but the word of the Lord endures forever.” [[Isa 40:6–8](#)]

And this is the word that has been proclaimed to you.

Put Aside All Evil and Crave Pure, Spiritual Milk

2:1 Therefore, ridding yourselves of all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander,
 2 like newborn infants long for the unadulterated spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up to salvation,
 3 if you have tasted that the Lord *is* kind, [[Ps 34:8](#)]

Living Stones Built On Christ the Cornerstone

4 to whom you are drawing near, a living stone rejected by men but chosen *and* precious in the sight of God.
 5 And *you* yourselves, as living stones, are being built up *as* a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
 6 For it stands in scripture,

“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a chosen *and* precious cornerstone,
 and the one who believes in him will never be put to shame.” [[Isa 28:16](#)]

7 Therefore the honor *is* for you who believe, but for those who refuse to believe,

“The stone that the builders rejected,
 this one has become the cornerstone,” [[Ps 118:22](#)]

8 and

“A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense,” [[Isa 8:14](#)]

who stumble *because they* disobey the word to which also they were consigned.

9 But you *are* a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, [[Exod 19:6](#)] a people for *God's* possession, so that you may proclaim the virtues of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light,

10 who once *were* not a people, [[Hos 1:9](#)] but now *are* the people of God, the ones *who were* not shown mercy, [[Hos 1:6](#)] but now are shown mercy. [cf. [Hos 2:23](#)]

Lifestyle Evangelism

11 Dear friends, I urge *you* as foreigners and temporary residents to abstain from fleshly desires which wage war against your soul,
 12 maintaining your good conduct among the Gentiles, so that in *the things* in which they slander you as evildoers, by seeing your good deeds they may glorify God on the day of visitation.

Submit to the Governing Authorities

13 Subject yourselves to every human authority for the sake of the Lord, whether to a king as having supreme authority,
 14 or to governors as those sent out by him for the punishment of those who do evil and the praise of those who do good.
 15 For the will of God is as follows: *by* doing good to silence the ignorance of foolish people.
 16 *Live* as free *persons*, and not using your freedom as a covering for evil, but as slaves of God.
 17 Honor all *people*, love the community of believers, fear God, honor the king.

Slaves Submit to Your Masters—Christ Is Our Example of Suffering

18 Domestic slaves, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to those *who are* good and gentle, but also to those *who are* unjust.

19 For this *finds* favor, if because of consciousness of God someone endures sorrows *while* suffering unjustly.

20 For what credit *is it* if, *when you* sin and are beaten *for it*, you endure? But if you endure *when you* do good and suffer *for it*, this *finds* favor with God.

21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his footsteps,

22 who did not commit sin, nor was deceit found in his mouth, [[Isa 53:9](#)]

23 who *when he* was reviled, did not revile in return; *when* suffering, he did not threaten, but entrusted *himself* to the one who judges justly,

24 who himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that *we* may die to sins *and* live to righteousness, by whose wounds you were healed. [[Isa 53:4–5](#)]

25 For you were going astray like sheep, [[Isa 53:6](#)] but you have turned back now to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

Wives Submit to Your Husbands, Husbands Honor Your Wives

3:1 In the same way, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some are disobedient to the word, they may be won

over without a word by the conduct of their wives,
 2 *when they* see your respectful, pure conduct.
 3 Let your adornment not be the external *kind*, braiding hair and putting on gold jewelry or putting on *fine* clothing,
 4 but the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable *quality* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is highly valuable in the sight of God.
 5 For in the *same* way formerly the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves *by* being subject to their own husbands,
 6 like Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose children you have become *when you* do good and are not frightened with respect to any terror.
 7 Husbands, in the same way live with *your wives* knowledgeably, as with the weaker female vessel, showing *them* honor as fellow heirs also of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.

Practical Christian Living

8 And finally, all *of you be* harmonious, sympathetic, showing mutual affection, compassionate, humble,
 9 not repaying evil for evil or insult for insult, but on the other hand blessing *others*, because for this *reason* you were called, so that you could inherit a blessing.
 10 For

“The one who wants to love life
 and see good days
 must keep his tongue from evil
 and *his* lips must not speak deceit.

11 And he must turn away from evil and do good;
 he must seek peace and pursue it.

12 For the eyes of the Lord *are* on the righteous,
 and his ears *are open* to their prayer.

But the face of the Lord *is* against those who do evil. [[Ps 34:12–16](#)]

You are Blessed If You Suffer for Doing Good

13 And who *is* the one who will harm you if you are a zealous adherent for what is good?
 14 But even if you might suffer for the sake of righteousness, *you are* blessed. And do not be afraid of their intimidation or be disturbed, [[Isa 8:12](#)]
 15 but set Christ apart *as* Lord in your hearts, always ready to *make* a defense to anyone who asks you *for* an accounting concerning the hope *that is* in you.
 16 But *do so* with courtesy and respect, having a good conscience, so that in *the things* in which you are slandered, the ones who malign your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame.
 17 For *it is* better to suffer for doing good, if God wills it, than for doing evil.

Christ Also Suffered for Doing Good—The Result Was Our Salvation

18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, in order that he could bring you to God, being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit,
 19 in which also he went *and* proclaimed to the spirits in prison,
 20 who were formerly disobedient, when the patience of God waited in the days of Noah, *while* an ark was being constructed, in which a few—that is, eight souls—were rescued through water.
 21 And also, corresponding to *this*, baptism now saves you, not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,
 22 who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, with angels and authorities and powers having been subjected to him.

Choosing a Life of Suffering Demonstrates That You Have Ceased From Sin

4:1 Therefore, *because* Christ suffered in the flesh, you also equip yourselves with the same way of thinking, because the one who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,
 2 in order to live the remaining time in the flesh no longer for human desires, but for the will of God.
 3 For the time that has passed *was* sufficient to do what the Gentiles desire to do, having lived in licentiousness, *evil* desires, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties, and wanton idolatries,
 4 with respect to which they are surprised *when* you do not run with *them* into the same flood of dissipation, *and so they* revile you.
 5 They will give an account to the one who is ready to judge the living and the dead.
 6 Because for this reason also the gospel was preached to those who are dead, so that they were judged by human standards in the flesh, but they may live in the spirit by God’s standards.

A Life of Love

7 Now the end of all *things* draws near. Therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for *your* prayers.

8 Above all, keep your love for one another constant, because love covers a large number of sins. [[Prov 10:12](#)]

9 *Be* hospitable to one another without complaining.

10 Just as each one has received a gift, *use* it for serving one another, as good stewards of the varied grace of God.

11 If anyone speaks, *let it be* as the oracles of God; if anyone serves, *let it be* as by the strength that God provides, so that in all *things* God will be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom is the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.

Rejoice That You Share in the Sufferings of Christ

12 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, *when it* takes place to test you, as *if something* strange were happening to you.

13 But to the degree that you share in the sufferings of Christ, rejoice, so that also at the revelation of his glory you may rejoice *and* be glad.

14 If you are reviled on account of the name of Christ, *you are* blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests [[Isa 11:2](#)] on you.

15 By all means do not let anyone of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler.

16 But if *someone suffers* as a Christian, he must not be ashamed, but must glorify God with this name.

17 For *it is* the time for the judgment to begin out from the household of God. But if *it begins* out from us first, what will be the outcome for those who are disobedient to the gospel of God?

18 And if the righteous are saved with difficulty, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner? [[Prov 11:31](#) (LXX)]

19 So then also those who suffer according to the will of God must entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing good.

Instructions for Elders

5:1 Therefore *I*, *your* fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, *and* also a sharer of the glory that is going to be revealed, exhort the elders among you:

2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not by compulsion but willingly, in accordance with God, and not greedily but eagerly,

3 and not as lording it over those under your care, but being examples for the flock.

4 And *when* the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

The Need for Humility

5 In the same way, younger men, be subject to the elders, and all *of you* clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. [[Prov 3:34](#) (LXX)]

6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you at the *right* time,

7 casting all your cares on him, because he cares for you.

Resist the Devil!

8 Be sober; be on the alert. Your adversary the devil walks around like a roaring lion, [[Ps 22:13](#)] looking for someone to devour.

9 Resist him, steadfast in your faith, *because you* know the same *kinds* of sufferings are being accomplished by your community of believers in the world.

10 And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, *after you* have suffered for a short time, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, *and* establish *you*.

11 To him *be* the power forever and ever. Amen.

Closing Greeting

12 Through Silvanus, the faithful brother (as I consider *him*), I have written to you briefly to encourage *you* and to attest that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it.

13 She *who is* in Babylon, chosen the same as *you*, greets you, and *so does* my son Mark.

14 Greet one another with a loving kiss. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

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Chronological Notes

- 1) “The best indicator as to the date of the letter, given Peter’s authorship, is the reference to Rome at 1 Peter 5:13. Most agree that ‘Babylon’ refers to Rome. If so, Peter most likely was in Rome in the mid- to late 60s. The letter gives no hint that there is ongoing persecution, by the state or otherwise, in the environment of the author. This indicates a date prior to the persecution

of Nero, which began in approximately 64. Most likely, 1 Peter was written slightly before then, around 62–63, when the harbingers of this persecution were already on the horizon.”¹

¹ Andreas J. Kostenberger, L. Scott Kellum, Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown*, (B&H Academic, 2009), p. 736.