

1 PETER

“Even though all may fall away because of You, I will never fall away! . . . Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You” (Matt 26:33). Just a few hours after Peter made that promise to Jesus, it was smashed to smithereens as Peter _____ [a] his Savior not once, not twice, but _____ [b] times (Matt 26:69-75), just as Jesus had prophesied (Matt 26:34). For many, that would have been a sad ending to a promising ministry, but for Peter it clarified how absolutely weak he was before God, and it prepared him for true God-given greatness in the kingdom of God. It’s hard to imagine that the same man who cursed and said, “I do not know the man” (Matt 26:72) later wrote these words: “Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense” (1 Pet 3:15). Who is this man?

WHO WAS PETER?

We catch our first glimpse of Peter in Mark 1, when Jesus calls him and his brother, _____ [c], as _____ [d]. When Jesus said to these rugged, coarse fishermen, “Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of _____ [e],” both brothers immediately turned their backs on their fishing business which was based in the Galilean city of Capernaum, and they followed Jesus (Mark 1:16-18).

Matthew refers to Peter as “the _____ [f]” of the twelve apostles (Matt 10:2). The Greek word for “first” (*protos*) means “first in prominence,” not “first in order.” This is confirmed by a casual glance at the Gospels and the book of Acts where he is by far the central figure, both during the three years of Jesus’ earthly ministry and during the early years of the church after Pentecost. Jesus spent more time with Peter than any of the others, partly because he was always at Jesus’ side. He was never far from Jesus, and he quickly became the _____ [g] for the apostles. His boldness led him to step forward with _____ [h] nobody else would ask (Matt 15:15; 18:21; 19:27). One might say he also acted as Jesus’ PR man to those on the outside (Matt 17:24). And when they stayed in Capernaum, Jesus used Peter’s home as the _____ [i] for His Galilean ministry (Mark 1:29-32).

Apart from that of Jesus, no name is mentioned more often in the New Testament than Peter’s. No other person speaks as often or is spoken to as often. No disciple was reprovved as often or as severely as Peter, and only he was presumptuous enough to reprove the Lord. No other disciple so boldly _____ [j] Christ or so boldly _____ [k] Him. No

other disciple was so _____ [l] and _____ [m] by Jesus, and yet no other did He call Satan.

PETER'S MINISTRY AFTER JESUS' RESURRECTION

Immediately after Jesus rose from the dead, an angel at the empty tomb instructed the group of women who had come to anoint Jesus' body, "Go, tell His disciples and Peter" (Mark 16:7). With those words, God began His plan to _____ [n] Peter. This rehab of Peter is in keeping with what Jesus said to Peter soon before his betrayal of Jesus: "Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers" (Luke 22:31-32). The climax of this _____ [o] happens after Jesus ate breakfast with His apostles on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus asked Peter _____ [p] times, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" (John 21:15-17). Each time Peter replied, "Yes Lord; You know that I love You." And then Jesus responded to each of his affirmations of love with an exhortation to "Tend my sheep." After the third time Peter must have recognized the connection to his three _____ [q], and also recognized that Jesus was restoring Peter to his position of leadership among the apostles by allowing him to offset his three-fold denial with a three-fold affirmation of love. From this point on, Peter would give his life leading and tending Christ's _____ [r].

We can see that Peter had truly been restored from his great denial as we read the book of Acts and see Luke's focus on Peter's ministry for the first _____ [s] of that book. Just consider all these ways that Peter exercised front-and-center leadership in Acts:

- He took the lead in finding a replacement for _____ [t] as the twelfth apostle (Acts 1:15)
- On the Day of Pentecost, he was the major spokesman who announced _____ [u] of sins through Jesus (Acts 2:14-40).
- He, along with John, healed the lame man at the temple (Acts 3).
- He defied the _____ [v] when he refused to stop preaching Jesus (Acts 4).
- He courageously presided over the tough task of dealing with Ananias and Sapphira's _____ [w] (Acts 5).
- He confirmed the preaching of the gospel to the _____ [x] and dealt with the deceit of Simon the Magician (Acts 8).
- He _____ [y] the sick and raised the dead in Lydda, Sharon, and Joppa (Acts 9).
- He was given the privilege to be the first to reach out to the Gentiles when he was sent to preach to the Roman _____ [z] Cornelius (Acts 10)

Of course, Peter was no stranger to controversy in his growth toward maturity in Christ. At Antioch Paul had to publicly _____ [aa] Peter for hypocritically withdrawing himself from the _____ [bb] believers when Jewish believers from Jerusalem arrived (Gal 2:12-13). We know Paul's rebuke was effective. Peter learned from it, because at the Jerusalem _____ [cc] he stood up among the apostles and made it clear that the gospel of grace was for the Gentiles apart from keeping the works of the Law of Moses (Acts 15:7-11).

DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING 1 PETER

Three possible locations have been suggested for the "Babylon" from which Peter wrote (1 Pet 5:13). First, it could be the ancient city Babylon in Mesopotamia, but there are plenty of reasons that's unlikely. Second, it could be a Roman military settlement named Babylon on the Nile River near modern Cairo, but there are good reasons to doubt this location too. Third, it could be _____ [dd], and that's what most conservative scholars believe. "Babylon" is probably a _____ [ee] name Rome because in the Old Testament Babylon was a symbol of godlessness, sensuality, and oppression. Like John in Revelation (Rev 17-18), Peter seems to think that Rome is the moral and spiritual equivalent of ancient Babylon.

The most probable date for 1 Peter is just before _____ [ff] persecution which broke out in AD 64 after the great fire that ravaged the city. The vast majority of scholars accept the idea that Peter was martyred by order of Nero around AD 64 or 65.

DESTINATION AND READERS

First Peter is addressed to "those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" (1 Pet 1:1). These are all regions in modern-day _____ [gg] that were within the Roman Empire when Peter wrote this letter. These believers who were scattered throughout Asia Minor included both Jewish and Gentile Christians suffering _____ [hh].

PURPOSE AND CONTENT

Four times Peter directly addresses the _____ [ii] of his readers (1 Pet 1:6-9; 3:13-17; 4:12-19; and 5:9-10). There is no indication that the _____ [jj] they are facing is state-sponsored in which they are being imprisoned or executed by civil authorities for their faith. That is, at this date there was no empire-wide persecutions being generated by Rome, but that's definitely on the horizon (under Nero) and it will very soon hit Christians hard. The suffering being experienced by Peter's

readers was more on a “local level.” Of course, this would have been no less _____[kk] emotionally, physically, and spiritually. What kind of persecution are we talking about? It would have been things like _____[ll] reprisals such as being unable to sell your products in the marketplace. And it would have been being _____[mm] socially. They would find themselves _____[nn] from former friends and _____[oo] (1 Pet 4:1-4). The point of 1 Peter, then, to put it simply, is to encourage us to keep holding on the Jesus in hurtful times. It’s a word of encouragement to Christians who need to “stand fast” in their faith (1 Pet 5:12).

So, throughout the book of 1 Peter we see reminders of the reality of _____[pp]. The theme keeps rising to the forefront of Peter’s mind. It’s the message his readers needed to hear. Peter wants to remind God’s people that painful trials are _____[qq], but they are not the end. God will be victorious over His adversaries and bring about a redemptive purpose through these periods of pain and suffering.

Peter develops his encouraging message that Christ gives hope in hurtful times through three movements. First, he _____[rr] his readers regarding their living _____[ss] (1 Pet 1:1-2:12). In this section he lets us know that grace and peace can be ours as we claim our hope (1 Pet 1:3-12), as we walk in holiness (1 Pet 1:13-25), and as we grow in Christ (1 Pet 2:1-12). Peter highlights the grace to go on, describing a living hope through Christ’s resurrection (1 Pet 1:3). Christ become the source of our hope in hurtful times.

Second, Peter _____[tt] his readers to hopeful living despite their strange life (1 Pet 2:13-4:11). He urges his readers to submit to various authorities (1 Pet 2:13-3:7), to be humble in spirit (1 Pet 3:8-22), to be armed with endurance (1 Pet 4:1-6), and to glorify God (1 Pet 4:7-11). These principles become the key to living as Christians in a hostile world. Peter emphasizes grace to stand firm, describing a calm hope through personal _____[uu] (1 Pet 3:6). Christ becomes the example of hope in hurtful times.

Third and finally, Peter _____[vv] his readers in the midst of their fiery ordeal (1 Pet 4:12-5:14). He reminds them not to be _____[ww] at their difficult circumstances (1 Pet 4:12). Instead, they should keep rejoicing (1 Pet 4:13), entrust their lives to God (1 Pet 4:19), and cast their _____[xx] on Him (1 Pet 5:7). Peter encourages us with grace to rejoice, turning our attention toward a firm hope through faith (1 Pet 4:19). Christ becomes the foundation of hope in hurtful times.

LESSONS FROM 1 PETER

- Maintain your _____[yy]: we don't _____[zz] here (1 Pet 1:1, 17; 2:11).
- There are two essential elements of our salvation: (1) God's _____[aaa] and faithfulness, and (2) our _____[bbb] (1 Pet 1:5).
- The process of leading others to Christ begins and continues with excellent moral _____[ccc] (1 Pet 2:11-12).
- When suffering for Christ, make sure you don't _____[ddd] it (1 Pet 2:21-25; 3:14).
- When suffering for Christ, don't take _____[eee] (1 Pet 2:21-25; 3:9).
- Cultivating a strong _____[fff] with God's people is critical in getting through this life (1 Pet 1:22; 2:1; 3:8).
- When suffering for Christ, don't _____[ggg], don't forget who you _____[hhh] is, don't stop _____[iii] the faith, and don't stop _____[jjj] like a Christian (1 Pet 3:13-16).
- In _____[kkk] we are asking God to clean our conscience (1 Pet 3:21).
- You're going to suffer _____[lll] or suffer _____[mmm] (1 Pet 3:17-18).

KEY PASSAGES FROM 1 PETER

- 1 Peter 1:3-4; 14-16, 18-19
- 1 Peter 2:1-2, 11-12
- 1 Peter 3:1-7
- 1 Peter 3:21
- 1 Peter 4:3-4, 12-13
- 1 Peter 5:6-7

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK ANSWER KEY

[a] denied	[ss] hope
[b] three	[tt] exhorts
[c] Andrew	[uu] submission
[d] apostles	[vv] comforts
[e] men	[ww] surprised
[f] first	[xx] anxieties
[g] spokesman	[yy] perspective
[h] questions	[zz] belong
[i] headquarters	[aaa] power
[j] confessed	[bbb] faith
[k] denied	[ccc] behavior
[l] praised	[ddd] deserve
[m] blessed	[eee] revenge
[n] restore	[fff] relationship
[o] restoration	[ggg] panic
[p] three	[hhh] master
[q] denials	[iii] defending
[r] sheep	[jjj] living
[s] half	[kkk] baptism
[t] Judas	[lll] now
[u] forgiveness	[mmm] later
[v] Sanhedrin	
[w] deception	
[x] Samaritans	
[y] healed	
[z] centurion	
[aa] rebuke	
[bb] Gentile	
[cc] council	
[dd] Rome	
[ee] cryptic	
[ff] Nero's	
[gg] Turkey	
[hh] persecution	
[ii] suffering	
[jj] persecution	
[kk] devastating	
[ll] economic	
[mm] ostracized	
[nn] isolated	
[oo] ridiculed	
[pp] suffering	
[qq] inevitable	
[rr] informs	