

1 PETER INTRODUCTION

January 4, 2026
Library Bible Study

1

1 Peter: Introduction

- Peter seeks to reassure Christian church in Asia Minor as stormy seasons of persecution begin.
- To Whom is the letter written? Christians in Asia Minor
- Who wrote the letter? Almost certainly Peter
- What kind of letter is it? Encouragement-of the grace of God
- Where and when was it written? Written from Rome (Babylon) in 63 AD.
- Summary: Peter is testifying to the grace and REALITY of God

2

1:2
dRo 8:29
e2Th 2:13
/Heb 10:22;
12:24

1:3
g2Co 1:3;
Eph 1:3
hTit 3:5;
Jas 1:18
i1Co 15:20
1:4
/Col 1:5

ing to the foreknowledge^d of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit,^e for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood:^f

Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

Praise to God for a Living Hope

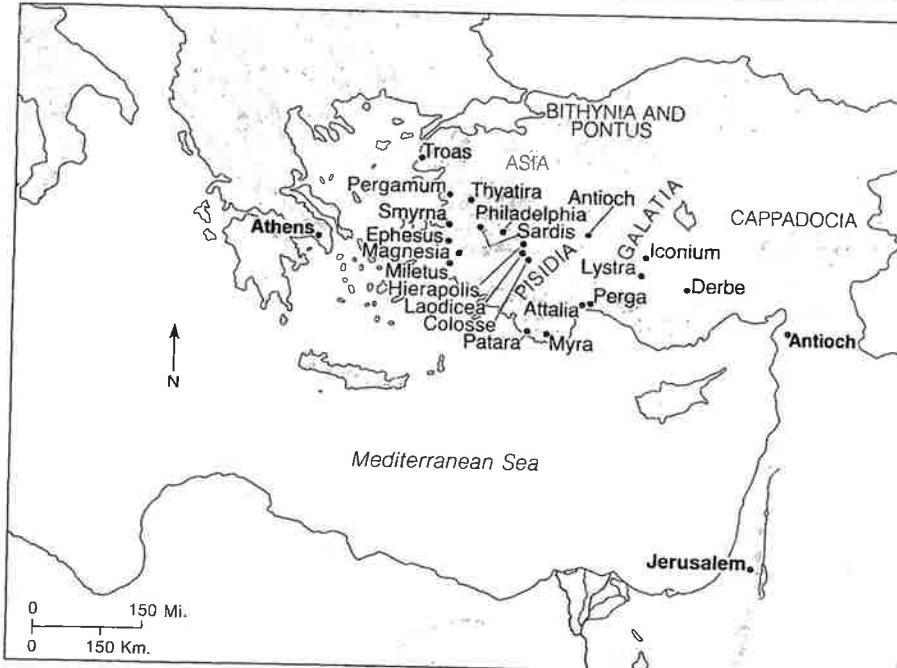
³Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!^g In his great mercy^h he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,ⁱ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you,^j who through faith

*Summary of
SALVATION*

THE CHURCHES OF PETER'S LETTER

Peter addressed his letter to the churches located through Bithynia, Pontus, Asia, Galatia, and Cappadocia. Paul had evangelized many of these areas; other areas had churches that were begun by the Jews who were in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost and heard

Peter's powerful sermon (see Acts 2:9–11).



God. Our salvation and security rest in the free and merciful choice of almighty God; no trials or persecutions can take away the eternal life he gives to those who believe in him.

1:2 This verse mentions all three members of the Trinity—God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ), and God the Holy Spirit. All members of the Trinity work to bring about our salvation. The Father chose us before we chose him (Ephesians 1:4). Jesus Christ the Son died for us while we were still sinners (Romans 5:6–10). The Holy Spirit brings us the benefits of salvation and sets us apart (sanctifies us) for God's service (2 Thessalonians 2:13).

1:3 The term *new birth* refers to spiritual birth (regeneration)—the Holy Spirit's act of bringing believers into God's family. Jesus used this concept of new birth when he explained salvation to Nicodemus (see John 3).

1:3–6 Do you need encouragement? Peter's words

offer joy and hope in times of trouble, and he bases his confidence on what God has done for us in Christ Jesus. We're called into a living hope of eternal life (1:3). Our hope is not only for the future; eternal life begins when we trust Christ and join God's family. No matter what pain or trial we face in this life, we know that it is not our final experience. Eventually we will live with Christ forever.

1:4 The Jews had looked forward to an inheritance in the promised land of Canaan (Numbers 32:19; Deuteronomy 2:12; 19:9). Christians now look forward to a family inheritance in the eternal city of God. God has reserved the inheritance; it will never fade or decay; it will be unstained by sin. The best part is that you have an inheritance if you have trusted Christ as your Savior.

1:5 God will help us remain true to our faith through whatever difficult times we must face. "last time" is the judgment day of Christ desc

134
JUD
REV

Elliott, Elect

J. H. Elliott, *The Elect and the Holy: An Exegetical Examination of 1 Peter 2:4–10 and the Phrase basileion hierateuma* (Supplements to Novum Testamentum 12, Brill, 1966).

Elliott, Home

J. H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy* (Fortress Press, 1981; SCM Press, 1982).

Feinberg

J. S. Feinberg, '1 Peter 3:18–20, Ancient Mythology, and the Intermediate State', *Westminster Theological Journal* 48 (1986).

Reicke, Spirits

B. Reicke, *The Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism: A Study of 1 Pet. III 19 and Its Context* (Acta Seminarii Neotestamentici Upsaliensis XIII, Munksgaard, 1946).

Spicq, Vie

C. Spicq, *Vie chrétienne et pérégrination selon le Nouveau Testament* (Lectio Divina 71, Cerf, 1972).

Traver

B. A. Traver, *Christ's Proclamation to the Spirits: The Interpretation of 1 Peter 3:18–22* (unpublished Master's thesis, Westminster Theological Seminary, 1980).

Introduction

"The First Epistle of Saint Peter – the most condensed New Testament résumé of the Christian faith and of the conduct that it inspires – is a model of a "pastoral letter". Ceslas Spicq begins his rewarding commentary on 1 Peter with this apt description.¹

Pastoral – Peter's letter is surely that. The apostle seeks to encourage and reassure Christian churches in Asia Minor as stormy seasons of persecution begin. Those storms rage on today – in India where a Hindu mob destroys a Christian church built at great sacrifice in the poorest slum of Mumbai; in many lands where to confess Christ brings the loss of educational privilege and job opportunities, and often results in imprisonment. In much of the English-speaking world such threats may seem distant; perhaps we fail to read the signs of the times. No Christian avoids suffering, however, and no true Christian escapes a measure of suffering for Christ's sake. Peter speaks to us all when he tells of suffering now and glory to come.

Peter's pastoral letter encourages us by instructing us. Our deepest needs drive us to our deepest beliefs. What hope do we have? Peter proclaims Jesus Christ, our sure hope now and for ever. Throughout his letter he grounds our hope in the reality of what God has done and will yet do for us through Christ. The apostle is a witness, not just to what Jesus did and said while he was in his fishing boat or in his house, but to the meaning of Christ's life, death, resurrection and ascension. Peter's testimony about the life of Jesus is reflected in Mark's Gospel.² In this letter he

¹ Spicq, *Epîtres*, p. 11.

² Eusebius, III.39, cites Papias (c. AD 60–130), bishop of Hierapolis in Asia Minor. Papias, in turn, quotes the elder John: 'Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately everything that he remembered, without however recording in order what was either said or done by Christ.' AF, p. 265.

shows us what that story means for us as Jesus calls us to take up our cross and follow him.

1. To whom is the letter written?

Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia are the provinces or areas where the Christians lived to whom the letter is addressed. If the terms are used to name Roman provinces, the area covers the whole of Asia Minor north of the Taurus mountain chain that skirts the southern coast. Most of modern Turkey would be included. It is possible, however, that the terms describe regions rather than official provinces.³ If so, the area is smaller, since both Galatia and Asia, thought of as regions, were more restricted. The possible significance of the smaller area would be that some of the regions of Paul's intensive missionary work would not be included (e.g. Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe). Paul was restrained by the Spirit from entering Bithynia; was that region reserved for others? The early church historian Eusebius suggests that Peter himself may have had a part in the evangelization of the areas he names.⁴ Obviously, Peter had some reason for addressing Christians in these provinces or regions and not in others. (He does not include Lycia and Pamphylia, or Cilicia, provinces south of the Taurus Mountains.) It is attractive to suppose that he has in view areas of Asia Minor that had been more directly related to his own ministry than to Paul's.

Pontus and Bithynia, on the shore of the Black Sea, are named separately although they had been joined into one Roman province. It has been suggested that Peter begins with Pontus and ends with Bithynia because he is thinking of the route that Silas or another messenger might take in delivering the letter; a traveller could start from Amisus at the eastern end of Pontus on the Black Sea and finish at Chalcedon in Bithynia. From there the traveller could cross to Byzantium where ship passage could be found for Rome.⁵

The geographical areas addressed include a 'fantastic conglomeration of territories' – coastal regions, mountain ranges, plateaux, lakes and river

³ Kelly, p. 3; Elliott, *Home*, p. 60. Both scholars favour the broader geographical area of the Roman provinces.

⁴ Acts 16:7; Eusebius, III.1.2–3. Eusebius seems to be inferring this from 1 Peter rather than from any independent tradition.

⁵ The most likely route of the bearer of the letter is traced by Colin Hemer, 'The Address of 1 Peter', *Expository Times* 89 (1978), pp. 239–243.

systems. The inhabitants were even more diverse. They had 'different origins, ethnic roots, languages, customs, religions, and political histories'.⁶ Galatia was so named after Gauls who had settled there; Gallic was still spoken there in the fourth century.⁷ Luke refers to the language of Lycaonia spoken by the people of Lystra (Acts 14:11). There was a substantial Jewish population in Asia Minor.⁸ Jews from Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia were present in Jerusalem at Pentecost, and heard Peter's sermon (Acts 2:9). Converts returning to those provinces may well have planted the gospel there.

If the spread of the Christian faith in these regions followed the pattern of Paul's missionary strategy, we may suppose that churches were first established in urban centres, and that Jewish believers along with Gentile adherents to Judaism ('God-fearers') formed the original nucleus of many house churches and congregations. Much of the population was rural, however; the interior was dotted with tribal villages where Roman culture had made little impact.⁹ The power of the Christian gospel among tribal peoples may first have become evident in Asia Minor. The experience of Paul and Barnabas at Lystra indicates the dramatic impact of the gospel in a region that was only partly Hellenized (Acts 14:8–18).

While we do not know just what 'people groups' or strata of society were included among the Christians of Asia Minor, we are struck by the unity that the gospel produces. Diverse as the backgrounds of these people were, they had become the new people of God, the family of believers, the chosen people scattered in the world (2:9–10, 17; 5:9; 1:1).

The inclusive language in which this letter speaks of the church makes it clear that Peter is addressing the whole church, not just one segment of the Christian community. He writes not only to those who are 'resident aliens' in the literal sense,¹⁰ nor only to Jewish believers. This last issue has been long debated. If Peter were writing to Jewish converts, they certainly must have been lapsed Jews, for Peter speaks of 'the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors' (1:18). He describes that

⁶ Elliott, *Home*, p. 61; Selwyn, pp. 47–52.

⁷ T. R. S. Broughton, 'Roman Asia Minor', in Tenney Frank (ed.), *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome* (Johns Hopkins Press, 1938), 4, p. 738, cited in Elliott, *Home*, p. 62.

⁸ Elliott, *Home*, p. 66 n. 19.

⁹ Elliott, *Home*, pp. 61–63.

¹⁰ The 'elect transients of the Diaspora' (1:1, my translation) should not be taken in the sociological sense, as though Peter were addressing only displaced persons or those without local citizenship. See Appendix A, "'Resident Aliens' – Literal or Figurative?"

wicked lifestyle: 'doing what pagans choose to do – living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry' (4:3). Jews would be lapsed indeed who could be so described! But even if their lives were fully pagan, Peter would hardly say that such a way of life had been handed down from their ancestors.¹¹ Neither could we understand pagan neighbours being surprised if such apostate Jews returned to the moral lifestyle of Judaism.¹² It seems clear, therefore, that Peter thinks of the churches to which he writes as predominantly Gentile. The extensive use that Peter makes of the Old Testament reveals his own Jewish training, but we need not assume the same background for his hearers. Paul's letters to predominantly Gentile churches are also steeped in the Old Testament.

2. Who wrote the letter?

The address of the letter claims the apostle Peter as the author, a claim that should not be discounted. It is not true that the church would regard such a claim as a 'harmless literary device'.¹³ A number of other works claiming to be written by Peter were rejected as not apostolic. Since the apostles were rightly regarded as invested with Christ's authority for the establishment of the church, a false claim to that authority could not be taken lightly. We need only recall Paul's defence of his apostolic office to see the importance that the church attached to apostolic authority.

The attestation of the letter in other writings is early and strong.¹⁴ The earliest is the reference in 2 Peter 3:1. Clement of Rome (before the end of the first century) quotes from the letter, although he does not identify his quotation. Quotations continue to appear in other early Christian writers. Irenaeus, in the second century, expressly attributes his quotations to the epistle.

Those who hold that Peter was not the author of the letter advance four principal arguments.¹⁵ First they maintain that the Greek style is too polished for a Galilean fisherman (a reference in Papias to John Mark as Peter's 'interpreter' is taken by some to mean that Peter needed an

¹¹ See Acts 15:10, where Peter alludes to the efforts of the ancestors to bear the yoke of the law.

¹² Selwyn, pp. 42–44.

¹³ The phrase is from Beare, p. 4. See Stibbs, p. 20; Bénétreau, p. 40, and the literature cited, n. 1.

¹⁴ See the summary in Selwyn, pp. 36–38.

¹⁵ The arguments are presented in Best, pp. 49–63. They are summarized and answered in Grudem, p. 16.

interpreter because he was not fluent in Greek).¹⁶ Second, it is urged that the persecutions alluded to in the letter did not occur till after Peter's death. Third, the letter is said to be too much like Paul's writings to have come from Peter. Fourth, many who recognize significant differences from Paul's writings maintain, nevertheless, that 1 Peter contains traditional teaching materials from the early church and is not the kind of letter that one of the first disciples of Jesus would have written.¹⁷

The last objection is met by recognizing the purpose of the letter. Peter's eyewitness to the words and deeds of Jesus had already been given. John Mark's 'interpreting' of Peter's message involved his recording of Peter's witness in the Gospel of Mark. In the epistle, knowledge of the story of Jesus is assumed, and Peter is concerned to instruct the church in the apostolic interpretation of the gospel. This apostolic teaching is found also in Paul's letters. The objection that 1 Peter is too Pauline is met by recognizing that Paul as well as Peter conformed his teaching to the apostolic 'pattern of sound teaching'.¹⁸ On the other hand, Peter's teaching has distinctive elements. For example, Paul does not employ the 'servant of the Lord' description of Christ's work as Peter does.¹⁹

It is true that the traditional date for the death of Peter under Nero precedes the major periods of Roman persecution. The letter, however, does not reflect a situation of official and general oppression. Rather, it is a time of local harassment and sporadic persecution, a time in which Christians are warned to prepare for greater suffering for Christ's sake in the future.²⁰

The issue of Peter's proficiency in Greek has been made the key objection to his authorship. Some commentators who hold that the letter does come from Peter think that he must have had help, and that his mention of Silas (5:12) indicates who his helper was. This argument, too, has been challenged. For one thing, the Greek of 1 Peter is not as polished in style as has sometimes been suggested.²¹ Further, the charge that

¹⁶ Bigg, p. 5. Papias is quoted in Eusebius, III.39.15. See p. 1 n. 2 above. Grudem replies to the arguments of W. G. Kummel, E. Best and others on the Greek style of 1 Peter.

¹⁷ 2 Tim. 1:13; cf. 2:2 and 1 Cor. 15:1–11. For a summary of similarities between 1 Peter and Paul's letters, see Kelly, p. 11; Selwyn, pp. 20–21, 382–384, 459.

¹⁸ Spicq, *Epîtres*, pp. 23f.; Selwyn, p. 30.

¹⁹ See Selwyn's comments on 1 Pet. 1:6; 3:13–17; 4:12–19, pp. 53f.; also Bigg, pp. 24–33, and Kelly, pp. 5–11.

²⁰ Both Bigg and Kelly (p. 31) recognize this, while still convinced that the Greek is too good for Peter. The reference to Peter and John as 'unschooled' (Acts 4:13) does not mean illiterate; it seems that some critical commentators are as amazed as the Sanhedrin was at Peter's grasp of the Old Testament.

Peter's Greek must have been informal or lacking fails to take account of the bilingual culture of Bethsaida in Galilee. An imaginative grammarian of the Greek language has said that Galilee could be compared to a bilingual region like Wales and that Peter's Greek was probably as good as a Welshman's English.²¹ Ceslas Spicq reminds us that Peter did, after all, receive the gift of tongues at Pentecost.²²

The greatest assurance of the authenticity of 1 Peter comes from the letter itself.²³ Its message is closely linked to the speeches of Peter reported in the book of Acts. Spicq points to 1 Peter 1:10–12, a section unique in the New Testament letters: it speaks of the searching enquiries of the Old Testament prophets as they looked forward to the day of Christ. This, he says, is only to be expected from the pen of the apostle 'who founded the first Christian apologetic in referring to their testimony (Acts 2:25–31; 3:18–25; 10:43)'.²⁴ So, too, the references in the letter to the sufferings of Christ reflect Peter's understanding of the calling of Jesus as the Servant of the Lord: an understanding that was drawn from Christ's own teaching and example. As Selwyn says, 'This impression of eyewitness runs through the Epistle, and gives it a distinctive character'.²⁵ Peter marvels at the love of those who have never seen Christ (1:8); his message of the living hope in Christ has its background in his despair at the crucifixion, and his joy in fellowship with the risen Christ. His emphasis on humility has poignant meaning after the boasting that preceded his fall. The Lord had charged him to tend his flock, and he passes that admonition on to other undershepherds.

On the role of Silas ('Silvanus' in some versions), see the comments on 5:12. Silas was Paul's fellow missionary in Asia Minor and in Greece, and is associated with Paul in the address of the letters to the Thessalonians. He was also a representative of the apostles and elders in Jerusalem, and is named as a prophet (Acts 15:32). If he did serve as an editor or co-author with Peter, he did so as an inspired man. Peter's phrase describing the service of Silas is used of the bearer of a letter, who was regarded as a representative of the sender. This was the function of Silas in relation to the letter sent from Jerusalem as described in Acts 15. If Silas were the

27

²¹ J. H. Moulton, *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, I (third edition 1906), pp. 6ff., cited in Stibbs, p. 24 n. 4.

²² Spicq, *Epîtres*, p. 22.

²³ See summaries of the teaching of the letter in Selwyn, pp. 23–36; Spicq, *Epîtres*, pp. 23–25.

²⁴ Spicq, *Epîtres*, p. 23.

²⁵ Selwyn, p. 28.

bearer in such a role, he was much more than a letter-carrier. He had a voice in the Jerusalem Council that prepared the letter he carried for that body. So, too, he may have conferred with Peter in the preparation of the letter, or may have drafted it under Peter's direction.

3. What kind of letter is it?

In Peter's brief letter there is great variety in both form and content. Quotations from and allusions to the Old Testament abound.²⁶ Psalm 34, for example, is directly cited twice (2:3; 3:10–12), and its themes of hope for the persecuted exile echo through the letter.²⁷ While there is no direct quotation of the words of Jesus, 1 Peter, like James, continually reflects the sayings of the Master.²⁸

Some would claim that 1 Peter is not a letter, but a sermon or catechetical instruction to accompany the sacrament of baptism.²⁹ It has even been represented as a liturgy for a baptismal service.³⁰ (The baptism is supposed to take place after 2:21.) As Wayne Grudem points out, however, the only explicit reference to baptism in the letter is in 3:21, and 'mention of the beginning of the Christian life does not in itself imply a reference to baptism'.³¹ Another form that has been detected in the letter is that of early Christian hymns or credal statements.³² The possibility cannot be excluded, but the rhythmic expression that suggests a hymn or creed may be simply the eloquence of preaching and teaching.

The best account of the form of 1 Peter remains the summary at the end of the letter: 'I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it' (or 'in which you stand

²⁶ No fewer than sixty verses or passages of the Old Testament have a reference from 1 Peter set beside them in the 'Index of Quotations' found in CNT, pp. 897–918.

²⁷ Bénétreau (p. 50) calls attention to such expressions as approaching the Lord (Ps. 34:6, Lxx; 1 Pet. 2:4); not being ashamed (Ps. 34:5; 1 Pet. 2:6); hoping (Ps. 34:8, 22); fearing (Ps. 34:9, 11); contrasting the good and the evil (Ps. 34:10, 11, 14, 15); blessed (Ps. 34:8); and the term for residing as a foreigner (Ps. 34:4, Lxx; 1 Pet. 2:11).

²⁸ Robert H. Gundry lists the parallels in an article cited by Bénétreau and Grudem: 'Verba Christi 1 Peter...' (NTS 13.4 [1966–7], pp. 336–351). Note the allusions to the Sermon on the Mount pointed out by Bénétreau, p. 47: the blessedness of the persecuted (Matt. 5:10; 1 Pet. 2:19ff.; 3:9, 14); good deeds (Matt. 5:16; 1 Pet. 2:12); calling on the Father (Matt. 6:9; 1 Pet. 1:17); the inheritance (Matt. 6:19–21; 1 Pet. 1:4).

²⁹ P. Carrington, *The Primitive Christian Catechism* (Cambridge University Press, 1940). See Selwyn, p. 18.

³⁰ F. L. Cross, *1 Peter: A Paschal Liturgy* (Mowbray, 1954). See the treatment in the introduction to Grudem's commentary.

³¹ Grudem, p. 41.

³² M.-E. Boismard, *Quatre hymnes baptismaux dans la première épître de Pierre* (Paris, 1961). See Bénétreau, pp. 16–20.

fast'; 5:12b). The letter is full of encouragement and witness common to the apostolic teaching; we may assume that this is not the first time that Peter has taught these things. But the letter is freely written; Peter does not piece together material drawn from others. He speaks with deep understanding and feeling out of his own knowledge as an apostle of Christ.

4. Where and when was it written?

The 'Babylon' from which Peter sends his greetings (5:13) can scarcely have been the desolate and ruined city in Mesopotamia. Rome is called 'Babylon' in the book of Revelation (16:19; 17:5; 18:2), and it is understandable that Peter would use the name in a symbolic way. He thinks of the Christian church as the people of God in exile and dispersion (1:1, 17; 2:9-11). Babylon was the great city of world empire for the Old Testament prophets; it was also the city of exile, where Israel lived as resident aliens. Peter's use of the name 'Babylon' reminds his hearers that he, too, shares their status as a 'displaced person'.

Further, the early Church Fathers understood that both Peter and Paul had been martyred in Rome. Eusebius, the historian of the early church, quotes from both Papias and Origen to support this.³³ (Papias, the bishop of Hierapolis, died about AD 130.) John Mark, who is mentioned by Peter (5:13), is also mentioned by Paul, writing from Rome.³⁴

Since Peter's letter mentions Mark but not Paul, it seems unlikely that Paul was in Rome at the time it was written. By the same token, Paul does not mention Peter in his letters, even when he seems to be naming the 'only ones of the circumcision group' who remained his faithful comrades.³⁵ According to tradition, Peter was at Rome only at the end of his life.³⁶ It would seem, therefore, that Peter wrote from Rome after Paul had left, released from his first imprisonment in AD 62.³⁷

It does seem unlikely that Nero's fierce assault on the Christians in Rome could have begun. One would suppose that Peter would have made some reference to it in describing the loyalty due to the emperor (2:13-17).

³³ Eusebius, II.15.2; III.1.2-3.

³⁴ 2 Tim. 4:11; Phlm. 24.

³⁵ Phil. 2:20-21; Col. 4:10-11, NIV mg.

³⁶ Eusebius, III.1.2.

³⁷ Grudem, pp. 35-37.

The date AD 63, after Paul's departure and before Nero's persecution, has a high degree of probability.

5. What is its message?

Facing impending assaults on the gospel, Peter witnesses to the grace of God, the overwhelming reality of what God has done in Jesus Christ. The apostle knows that Jesus rose from the dead; he saw him ascend to heaven. He knows, too, why Jesus died, and what his death accomplished: "He himself bore our sins" in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; "by his wounds you have been healed" (2:24). The reality of what Christ has done makes sure the hope of the Christian 'family of believers'. Christians can not only endure suffering for Christ's sake; they can rejoice, for in their agony they are joined to Jesus who suffered for them. Their very sufferings become a sign of hope, for, as Christ suffered and entered into his glory, so will they. The Spirit of glory and of God rests on them (4:14).

Whether their neighbours attack or respect them, they can bear witness to the grace of God by their Christian lifestyle. Quietly and humbly they can live holy lives, not seeking to claim their own rights, but honouring others. Such humble living is in no way servile or demeaning, for Christians know themselves to be the royal people of God's own possession, the chosen heirs of the new creation. They need not avenge themselves, nor need they claim for themselves what is their due; their trust is in the judgment of God. Christians are 'resident aliens' in Babylon, but they are members of God's own household.

The gift of God's love, the blood of Jesus Christ, has redeemed Christians from the corrupt and empty lifestyle of their pagan past; that grace now unites them in fervent love for one another. They serve and help one another, using the rich spiritual gifts with which God's grace equips them. Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of the flock of God, watches over his people. He calls undershepherds to serve him in guarding his sheep. The victory of Jesus Christ over all the powers of darkness frees his people from the power of Satan. They can repulse the roaring lion; in the fires of trial their faith will not be destroyed but purified like gold in the furnace. They may cast all their cares on God, knowing that he cares for them.

The grace that already fills Christians with joy will be brought to them fully at the appearing of Jesus Christ. The Lord, whom they love but have