

Read the Bible in a Year

Week 49 – May 8-14

Read on Your Own this Week:

Psalm 141-143

John 5-8

Readings in Class:

Hosea 1-9

1 and 2 Peter

Joel 1-3

Amos 1-4

Introduction to 1 and 2 Peter

The apostle, Simon Peter, wrote both 1 and 2 Peter (though Silas may have helped him write the first one). Besides stating at the beginning that it is Peter writing it, in 2 Peter 1:16-18 he makes reference to the Transfiguration, which only James, John, and Peter witnessed. The letters are most likely written in the early to mid 60s. Peter was martyred around AD 68, but he also makes reference to Paul's letters, meaning that the earliest Peter could be writing is AD 60.

1 Peter has a lot to do with hope amidst suffering. Christians at this time were starting to suffer more persecution at the hands of the Romans. He encourages them to stand fast in the grace of God and instructs them in how to handle persecution that comes from outside the Church.

2 Peter deals with God's grace amidst false teaching. He encourages Christians to be on their guard so that they are not led astray. He also warns them that scoffers will come and that Jesus will return.

A brief summary of 1 Peter

- Greeting and Praise to God (1:1-12)
- Be Holy (1:13-2:3)
- A Chosen People (2:4-12)
- Submission to Rulers (2:13-25)
- Husbands and Wives (3:1-7)
- Suffering for Doing Good (3:8-22)

- Live for God (4:1-11)
- Suffering for being a Christian (4:12-19)
- To Elders and Young Men (5:1-10)
- Final Greetings (5:12-14)

A brief summary of 2 Peter

- Introduction (1:1-2)
- Make your Calling Sure (1:3-11)
- Prophets (1:12-21)
- False Teachers (2)
- The Day of the Lord (3)

Suffering and Submission

The early Christian Church faced a lot of persecution and suffering. First from the Jews and later from the Romans, who saw the worship of the Roman gods as a patriotic duty. The outside world saw the religious beliefs and practices of Christians as foreign, weird, and even dangerous. The Romans even accused Christians of being atheists. This is the context of Peter's letters. While 1 Peter has a lot of themes, a big focus is on suffering. He tells Christians to expect suffering. In chapter 2 he tells of how Christ suffered for us. He encourages Christians to endure suffering, knowing that we are saved.

Despite the expectation of suffering and persecution, Peter urges Christians to live holy lives and to submit to rulers, even though the persecution often came directly from the emperor. He tells us we should follow the example of Jesus, who did not retaliate when he was being beaten and crucified.

Scoffers Will Come

Peter states his purpose for writing his second letter is to remind his readers that what he is telling them is not a myth or made-up story, but something that he and the other disciples actually witnessed. He wants them to be sure that they are saved and to live their lives accordingly. To this end he speaks against false teachers who make up stories in their greed. Chapter 2 has some pretty harsh language when talking about people who speak falsely about Christ, emphasizing the seriousness of such things. He also warns against scoffers who will come, those who don't believe Jesus is coming back. But Peter assures us that Jesus is coming back, and that the only thing keeping him back is his desire for all people to be saved.

