

“Picturing First Peter?”

I Peter 1:1-5:14

Context: About 0.2 % of the population of ancient Asia Minor was made up of Christians at the time of this letter. This small Christian population was branded as suspect by the Romans mostly due to popular rumors and misunderstandings. These suspicions led to further isolation of those who considered Christianity another burial cult that shunned Roman traditions and separated themselves from the festivals and feast days of the local deities. The historian Tacitus recorded that Christians were an affront to the Roman social and religious order. Thus thought, their increase in social isolation provided fodder for the brutalities that were soon to be visited upon them by the next insane Roman emperor, Nero Claudius.

Pivotal verse: Stand firm in the true grace of God (cf. I Peter 5:12).

1. Facing the diaspora – I Peter 1:1-2

The letter's introduction can be applied to every Christian's since citizenship is elsewhere, God's attributes are at work, and our obedience demonstrates both of the aforementioned.

2. Living in diaspora – I Peter 1:3-5:11 - 2 Peter 3:13

The majority of Peter's letters poignantly describe the living out of a life separated from an unbelieving populous yet among them.

3. Growing in diaspora – 2 Peter 3:14-18

Peter concludes both epistles with a return to the upon which those of the Diaspora stand, “the true grace of God.”

For Further Study:

- Using a word study aid, like a *Vine's Dictionary*, look up the imperative verb “stand.” Using your concordance, find 3 examples that depict the concept of Peter’s appeal (i.e. Acts 2:14). Give one example of what “standing for the true grace of God” might look like in your life last week.

- As a **Bible study method**, use [Wikipedia](#) do a quick historical on “Persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire.” Describe how Christ was the flash point for both the popular and government motive for persecution. How do these flash points color an understanding of Peter’s exhortation to “stand firm for the true grace of God.”

- How would the FBC doctrinal statement on **the Trinity** (<http://fbccorvallis.org/wp/about-fbc/what-we-believe/>), run afoul of Roman notions of piety and sectarian superstition. How does our notion and exaltation of the Trinity run afoul with modern Pacific Northwest piety?

Transformation exercise:

Memorize 1 Peter 5:12d picture in your mind one example of where you “stand firm for the true grace of God” in your daily life.