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1 Peter in the Christian Canon

The Muratorian Canon (ca. 170–210), our earliest written list of books regarded as Scripture in the Christian church, does not list 1 Peter. This is strange because the book was already well known in the church at that time, and if it was regarded as noncanonical by the composers of this list, they almost certainly would have mentioned it as a book to be rejected, as they do other apocryphal writings that had attained popularity. The canonical status of 1 Peter is not questioned in any other document of the church, as is the status of the four other New Testament writings missing from the Muratorian Canon (Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 3 John). Furthermore, the identification of the letter's author as the apostle Peter found unanimous acceptance in the early church and has been questioned only in recent times.

Accordingly, some scholars think that the omission of 1 Peter from the Muratorian Canon is accidental: the manuscript containing that list is fragmentary, so it is possible that 1 Peter was listed in a portion of the manuscript that is missing (though this would mean that it was listed in an odd sequence, not with other epistles). No one really knows why 1 Peter was not included in this one early list of canonical books, but the fourth-century historian Eusebius lists it as an “undisputed work” that has been “acknowledged as genuine and true by the tradition of the church” (*Ecclesiastical History* 3.25, 1–7).