

Bible Study – The Epistles of Peter

Session 1. Introduction

The Writer

Peter wrote this letter, although there are some theologians state that the letter came much later than Peter's death; therefore believing that someone else wrote the letter.

Peter, of course, was one of the 12 apostles.

His name was Simon, but Jesus changed it to Peter (John 1:42).

'Peter' means 'a rock' or 'a stone'.

*In *New Testament times many people could speak and read the *Greek language. Peter wrote this letter in the *Greek language. This meant that the good news about Jesus could spread easily.*

Silas (sometimes the Bible calls him Silvanus) helped Peter to write the letter (1 Peter 5:12).

In those days, some men were expert writers. They helped people to write their letters in the proper way.

Most theologians believe Peter wrote this letter about 30 years after Jesus returned to heaven (around 63 to 65 A.D.)

Recipients of the Letter

Peter lists 5 countries in the 1st verse of his 1st epistle . Most countries are in the country that we now call Turkey.

On the day of *Pentecost (Acts 2) people from three of these countries were visiting the city of Jerusalem. Some of these people may have become Christians there. Perhaps they went home and started new churches.

Peter wrote to *Jews and Gentiles who became Christians. The feeling is that Peter gave the letter to someone who travelled to the main churches in these areas. The norm would be that the person would read the letter aloud to the Christians. Then people copied it and sent it to all the smaller churches near to them.

Why He Wrote the Letter

- ***To encourage Christians who are suffering for Christ.***

*Although Christians might suffer in this life, they will not suffer forever. This world is not their real home. Heaven is their real home. One day they will live with God in heaven and share God's *glory.*

- ***To understand the *grace of God. He wants every Christian to know what God has done for them.***
- ***To learn more about God.***

This letter is very practical. When a person becomes a Christian his/her life changes...and Peter tells the readers how to live a good Christian life.

Peter was with Jesus for about three years. He saw all that Jesus did. He heard all that Jesus said. Peter is writing to encourage Christians to live like Jesus.

Themes

1 Peter is a short letter touching on various doctrines and has much to say about Christian life and duties.

Different scholars find different principal themes:

Characterizing it as a letter of:

- *separation*
 - *suffering and persecution,*
 - *suffering and glory*
 - *hope*
 - *pilgrimage*
 - *courage, and as*
 - *a letter dealing with the true grace of God.*
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Peter says that he has written “encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God” (5:12).

Place of Writing

1 Peter 5:13 indicates that he was “in Babylon” when he wrote the 1st epistle. Among the interpretations that have been suggested are that he was writing from:

- (1) Egyptian Babylon, which was a military post,*
 - (2) Mesopotamian Babylon,*
 - (3) Jerusalem and*
 - (4) Rome.*
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Peter may well be using the name Babylon symbolically, as it seems to be used in the book of Revelation (Rev 14:8; 17:9–10).

Tradition connects him in the latter part of his life with Rome, and certain early writers held that 1 Peter was written there.

It is also pointed out by some theologians that (1) Babylon is known to have existed in the first century as a small town on the Euphrates; (2) Note: no evidence that the term Babylon was used figuratively to refer to Rome until Revelation was written (around 95 A.D.c. a.d. 95);

Forefront of Thought:

The expectation of the second coming of Christ:

- *Christians are being kept for the salvation which is to be revealed at the last time (1:5).*
- *Those who keep the faith will be saved from the coming judgment (1:7).*
- *Christians are to hope for the grace which will come at the revelation of Jesus Christ (1:13).*
- *The day of visitation is expected (2:12).*
- *The end of all things is at hand (4:7).*

- *Those who suffer with Christ will also rejoice with Christ when his glory is revealed (4:13).*
- *Judgment is to begin at the house of God (4:17).*
- *The writer himself is sure that he will be a sharer in the glory to come (5:1).*
- *When the Chief Shepherd shall appear the faithful Christian will receive a crown of glory (5:4).*

Note:

From beginning to end of the letter the second coming is in the forefront of the writer's mind.

It is the motive for:

- *Steadfastness in the faith,*
- *Loyal living of the Christian life,*
- *Gallant endurance amidst the sufferings which have come and will come upon them.*

God wants us to be alert, be ready, be praying for the return of the Bridegroom to take home His bride.

“He that has an ear let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches” (Revelation 2 and 3...at the end of his message to each of the 7 churches).

