

# New Testament Survey

## 1 Peter

### I. Attestation and Authorship<sup>1</sup>

#### A. External

1. 1 Peter was universally recognized by the early church as being written by Peter and being authoritative.
2. Possible allusions to 1 Peter can be found in the *Epistle of Barnabas*, Clement's *Epistle to the Corinthians*, and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*.
3. Hermas alludes to 1:7 in *Vision* (IV.iii), to 4:15 in *Similitudes* (IX.xxviii).
4. Polycarp quotes 1:8, 3:9, 2:11 in his *Epistle to the Philippians* (chapters 1, 2, and 5 respectively).
5. Clement of Alexandria quotes freely from every chapter of 1 Peter.
6. 1 Peter appears in the Old Latin, Old Syriac, and Old Egyptian translations although Marcion rejected it and it does not appear in the Muratorian Canon.

#### B. Internal Evidence

1. The writer calls himself Peter.
2. The writer is well aware of Christ and his ministry.
3. The admonition to "feed the flock of God" recalls Christ's words to Peter in John 21:15-17 where Peter is told to "feed my lambs."
4. The writer claims to have been a witness of the sufferings of Christ (1 Peter 5:1).
5. There is a great deal of similarity between what we find in 1 Peter and the words of Peter as recorded in Acts (e.g. Acts 10:34 compared to 1 Peter 1:7, Acts 4:10 compared to 1 Peter 2:7-8, Acts 2:32-36; 10:40-41 compared to 1 Peter 1:21).

#### C. A Brief Biography of Peter<sup>2</sup>

1. Peter was originally known as Simon or Simeon (Acts 15:14; 2 Peter 1:1) and was born in Bethsaida (John 1:44).
2. His father's name was Jonas (Matthew 16:17) or John (John 1:42).
3. His brother's name was Andrew, who brought Peter to Christ (John 1:40-42), and who was also one of the inner circle of disciples.

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<sup>1</sup> Henry C. Thiessen, *Introduction to the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Co., 1987), p p. 279-280.

<sup>2</sup> Thiessen, pp. 281-282.

4. He and Andrew were fishermen at Capernaum (Matthew 8:14).
5. Peter was married (1 Corinthians 9:5).
6. Peter was called by Christ three times. The first time was to discipleship (John 1:40-42). The second was to constant companionship (Matthew 4:19; Luke 5:10), and the third was to apostleship (Matthew 10:2; Mark 3:14-16).
7. He was the most outspoken of all the disciples, and heads up the inner circle of disciples consisting of Peter, James, John, and Andrew (Matthew 10:2; Mark 3:16; Luke 6:14; Acts 1:13).
8. Before Pentecost the chief events in Peter's life were:
  - a. Jesus healed his mother-in-law at Capernaum (Matthew 8:14ff).
  - b. Christ miraculously gave Peter a great catch of fish (Luke 5:1-11) and then called him as an apostle (Matthew 10:2).
  - c. Peter attempted to walk on the water when Christ came to them on the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 14:28).
  - d. Peter made two great confessions of Christ (John 6:68-69; Matthew 16:13-17), witnessed the raising of Jairus' daughter (Mark 5:37) and the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-5).
  - e. At the last supper he objected over Christ washing his feet (John 13:1-10).
  - f. He boasted of his devotion to Christ (Luke 22:31-33) only to be told that he would deny Christ three times (Matthew 26:31-35).
  - g. He was one of the three disciples that were allowed to follow Christ into Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-46).
  - h. Peter is the one that drew the sword to cut off Malchus' ear (John 18:10-12).
  - i. At Christ's trial, Peter denied him three times but genuinely repented (Matthew 26:56-75).
  - j. He ran with John to the tomb (John 20:1-10). The Lord appeared to him (Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5), and he was recommissioned and restored (John 21:15-19).
  - k. He was most likely present when the Lord ascended (Acts 1:10-11). After that, he presided over the selection of Matthias (Acts 1:15-26).
9. After Pentecost, the major events in Peter's life are:
  - a. Peter preached the first major sermon (Acts 2:14-41) which resulted in 3,000 conversions.
  - b. Along with John, Peter healed a man lame from birth (Acts 3:1-10) and preached another sermon (Acts 3:11-26). After that, he and John were arrested, tried, and then released (Acts 4:1-22).

- c. Peter dealt with the deceit of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11).
- d. Peter was arrested along with the other apostles, tried, beaten, and released (Acts 5:12-41).
- e. Peter was sent to Samaria to communicate the Holy Spirit to the Samaritans (Acts 8:14-25). Afterwards, Paul paid him a short visit in Jerusalem (Galatians 1:18).
- f. Peter then journeyed throughout Judea and Samaria preaching Christ, and after received a vision visited Cornelius (Acts 9:32-10:48).
- g. He was imprisoned by Herod Agrippa I who was going to have him killed, but was miraculously released by an angel (Acts 12:1-17a).
- h. He was present at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1-21; Galatians 2:6-10), and apparently took a leading role in it.
- i. When he journeyed to Antioch a little later, he withdrew himself from Gentiles and was rebuked by Paul (Galatians 2:11-15).
- j. Little more is known although we know he travelled extensively with his wife (1 Corinthians 9:5).
- k. He probably visited the areas of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (1 Peter 1:1-2), and maybe also Babylon (1 Peter 5:3).
- l. According to tradition, he eventually journeyed to Rome where he was martyred for his faith under the reign of Nero. Tradition also has it that he was crucified upside-down.

## II. Background and Destination

### A. Written to the “strangers scattered”.<sup>3</sup>

1. The actual word for “scattered” is *diaspora*.
2. The word for strangers literally means “aliens.”

### B. Written to those in the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. These make up most of the modern-day nation of Turkey.

## III. Occasion and Date<sup>4</sup>

### A. The general conditions surrounding the book of 1 Peter are:

1. The church appears to have been led by elders (1 Peter 5:1-4).
2. Some sort of persecution was in effect (1 Peter 3:17; 4:12-19), but no mention is made of martyrdom, imprisonments, or confiscations of property.

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<sup>3</sup> Thiessen, pp. 282-283.

<sup>4</sup> Thiessen, pp. 284-285.

3. The persecution seems mainly to be in the form of ridicule by withdrawing from heathen amusements and accusations of disloyalty to the state (1 Peter 4:4-5; 1 Peter 2:13-17).
  4. The Epistle appears to show some acquaintance with earlier New Testament books (compare Colossians 3:22 with 1 Peter 2:18; Ephesians 1:1-3 with 1 Peter 1:1-3; Ephesians 5:22-24 with 1 Peter 3:1-6; Philippians 4:19-20 with 1 Peter 5:10-11). This would lead us to believe it was written some time after the Prison Epistles of Paul.
  5. The *Chronicon* of Eusebius puts the martyrdom of Peter in the thirteenth year of the reign of Nero which would place it sometime in A.D. 67-68.
- B. Most likely then, this Epistle was written around the year A.D. 65-66.
- C. Place of Writing
1. Peter makes an interesting statement in 1 Peter 5:13 regarding Babylon. From the verse, it appears as though he is saying that he is writing the book from Babylon. The question becomes, then, is this the real city of Babylon or a spiritual reference to Rome or some other city.
  2. Evidence for the actual city of Babylon:
    - a. Many scholars hold this view such as Erasmus, Calvin, Hort, Gregory, Alford, Mayer, and Moorehead.
    - b. There is no evidence that the term "Babylon" was used to refer to Rome until the writing of the Apocalypse some thirty years later.
    - c. It is unlikely Peter would use an allegorical name in the midst of a lot of literal statements. A veiled reference to Rome is not likely.
    - d. The order of the provinces mentioned would suggest an east to west visit by Silas in the delivery of the letter.
  3. Evidence for the city of Rome:
    - a. We know from church history that Peter was in Rome in the mid to late sixties and that Mark was with him.
    - b. Spiritually Rome could be considered Babylon as it was the center for the false religious system of Babylon at that time.
    - c. The Christians were just beginning to suffer persecution under the hand of Nero and Rome in the mid-sixties.

#### IV. Purpose and Plan<sup>5</sup>

- A. To encourage believers in their present trials and to admonish them to live in light of their salvation.
- B. To encourage the believers that they were right even though they were facing persecution.

#### V. A Basic Outline<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Thiessen, p. 286.

- A. Salutation - 1 Peter 1:1-2
- B. The Certainty of the Future Inheritance - 1 Peter 1:3-12.
- C. A Befitting Personal Life - 1 Peter 1:13-2:10.
- D. A Befitting Social and Domestic Life - 1 Peter 2:11-3:12.
- E. A Befitting Faith and Conduct in the Midst of Persecution - 1 Peter 3:13-4:6.
- F. A Befitting Conduct and Attitude in the Light of the End - 1 Peter 4:7-19.
- G. A Befitting Relationship Between the Elders and the Congregation - 1 Peter 5:1-11.
- H. Conclusion - 1 Peter 5:12-14.

#### VI. Chapters To Remember

1 Peter 1	Our Great Inheritance
1 Peter 2	The Believer's Privileges
1 Peter 4	The Fiery Trial

#### VII. Points and Peculiarities

1. 1 Peter's main theme is that of patient endurance through trials.
2. 1 Peter tells us, along with 2 Timothy, how the Scripture was inspired by the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>6</sup> Thiessen, p. 286.

## VIII. A Closer Look

## A. 1 Peter 1

1. Chosen by God - 1 Peter 1:1-2
2. Our Great Salvation - 1 Peter 1:3-12
3. Obedient Children - 1 Peter 1:13-17
4. The Price of Redemption - 1 Peter 1:18-21
5. Supernatural Love - 1 Peter 1:22
6. The Value of the Word - 1 Peter 1:23-24

## B. 1 Peter 2

1. Desiring the Word - 1 Peter 2:1-3
2. The Believer's Privileges in Christ - 1 Peter 2:4-10
3. Living for God - 1 Peter 2:11-20
4. Suffering and the Christian - 1 Peter 2:21-25

## C. 1 Peter 3

1. Reaching a Lost Spouse - 1 Peter 3:1-7
2. The Good Life - 1 Peter 3:8-17
3. Christ's Triumph in Suffering - 1 Peter 3:18-22

## D. 1 Peter 4

1. Dealing With Sin - 1 Peter 4:1-6
2. The Believer's Responsibility in a Hostile World - 1 Peter 4:7-19

## E. 1 Peter 5

1. A Charge to Elders - 1 Peter 5:1-4
2. Spiritual Maturity - 1 Peter 5:5-14