

I Peter – Introduction

I. Author: Peter

- a. Vocation: Fisherman (Matt. 4:18), eventually partners with James and John (sons of Zebedee) (Luke 5:1-10). After the resurrection of Christ, Peter apparently returned to his job as a fisherman to continue to support his family (John 21:3)
- b. Was led to Christ by his brother Andrew (John 1:40-42)
- c. Hometown was Bethsaida (John 1:44) the name for which means “house of fishing” or “fishery”. Was located not far from Capernaum (almost perhaps a suburb) on the west side of the Sea of Galilee
- d. Was married with a family. In Matt. 8:14 we know Peter had a mother-in-law who was ill. Paul cites Peter in I Cor. 9:5 as “taking along” his wife as a preacher of the Gospel. It is required of an elder to be married and having believing children (I Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:6), and Peter calls himself a fellow elder in I Peter 5:1.
- e. Was an elder (I Pet. 5:1) perhaps in Jerusalem and perhaps along with James and John (Gal. 2:9)
- f. Was not educated, as observed by the Sanhedrin in Acts 4:13
- g. Was part of the “inner circle” of Jesus’ disciples, as Peter was one of the only three to witness:
 - i. The raising of Jairus’ daughter – Mark 5:37
 - ii. The transfiguration – Matt. 17:1
 - iii. The Lord’s agony in Gethsemane – Matt. 26:37
- h. Had a character that was enthusiastic and energetic, if sometimes impulsive
 - i. Walked on water to Jesus – Matt. 14:22-33
 - ii. Cut off the ear of Malchus when Jesus was betrayed – John 18:10
 - iii. At some point was the first apostle to see Jesus resurrected – Luke 24:33-34, I Cor. 15:5
- i. Was known by three names: Simon, Peter (Matt. 4:18) and Cephas (John 1:42)
- j. Was a leader among the brethren in the early goings of the church – Acts 1

II. Date of writing

- a. Has been estimated anywhere between AD 58-64; definitely before the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70
- b. Was sent to the brethren by the hands of “Silvanus” (Silas) – I Pet. 5:12

III. Purpose

- a. See II Peter 3:1-2
- b. The letter of I Peter deals primarily with maintaining faith and hope amid terrible trial, specifically persecution. There seem to be some possible suggestions to the destruction of Jerusalem as well which would have

serious repercussions all over the known world, and especially for Jewish Christians

IV. Audience

- a. It has been suggested that Peter was addressing Jewish Christians exclusively, perhaps due to the term “dispersion”. However passages like I Pet. 2:10 and 4:3 make it clear that he is including Gentile Christians in his address. The term “pilgrim” or “stranger” means “foreigner”. The term “dispersion” means “a scattering”. Given the context of Peter’s writing, it is clear he does not mean this as talking about the physical scattering of the brethren in these areas but rather the spiritual dispersion of Christians among the lost. Consider that many of the brethren to whom he writes are natives of these areas and thus not physical pilgrims. (See I Pet. 2:11) As noted earlier, he is also not specifically singling out Jewish Christians, as what he says will apply to both Jews and Gentiles alike. He specifies what Christians he is addressing as being in the regions of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. (see map)

V. Overview:

- a. **Chapter 1** – How wonderful a salvation we have in Christ
- b. **Chapter 2-3:12** – Remember who and what you are and how you should conduct yourself in different roles
- c. **Chapter 3:13-4:19** – The importance of suffering for what is good and how to conduct yourself while enduring it
- d. **Chapter 5** – Final notes from Peter as an elder to the elders, to the young people, and to all the brethren to maintain their work and faith