

1 Peter

Peter

Peter was from Bethsaida (John 1:44) which is three miles east of Capernaum where Peter had a house (Mk. 1:21, 29).

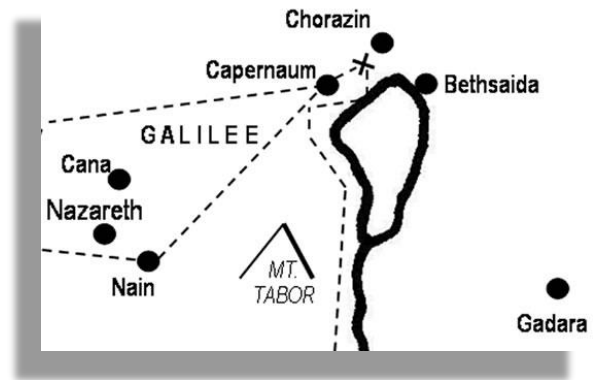
Peter was married (Mt. 8:14; Mk. 1:30; Lk. 4:38)

Peter's wife traveled with him (1 Cor. 9:5)

Peter was a follower of John the Baptist (John 1:35-42)

Peter's death occurred in Rome with Nero's persecution

Peter's death would have occurred after 64 AD but by 67 AD



Recipients Historical Background

There was persecution (sporadic) but it had not become the official Roman Government position yet. Local persecution.

After Nero's burning of Rome in 64 AD Christianity would become illegal.

Gentiles:

- 1:14 – “the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance.” Paul's clear reference to Gentiles in Ephesians 4:17
- 1:18 – “the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers.”
- 2:9-10 – “you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation... Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God.
- 4:3-4 – “You have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do.”

Place of Writing

It appears this letter was written from Rome.

In 5:13 Peter writes, “She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you her greetings.”

Babylon was the head of the Babylonian and Persian empires. Alexander the Great, who was the head of the Greek Empire conquered Babylon, died there. The Roman Empire replaced the Greeks and is the fourth of the beast predicted by Daniel.

Babylon is also a figure of immorality, the anti-god attitude and materialism.

The evidence not read “Babylon” as figurative speech for Rome are:

- Babylon did exist on the Euphrates at this time as a small town.
- Babylon is not used as figurative of Rome in other places
- The writing of 5:13 is not in a figurative sense.

Author

Peter has been accepted as the author of this letter since the early days of the church.

Papias (60-130 AD) said that Mark was a disciple of Peter who did his interpretation work.

This is cited by Eusebius and Irenaeus (175-195 AD)

Mark is reference in 1 Peter 5:13. Mark was an eyewitness of Jesus life, death and resurrection.

It wasn't until the corrupt biblical criticism of the 1800's became popular that anyone even mentioned that Peter wasn't the author.

In 2 Peter 3:1 Peter refers to his former letter (1 Peter).

- Clement refers to First Peter in 95 AD
- Polycarp (John's disciple) uses First Peter in his letter to the Philippians
- Eusebius, the church historian from the 300's, gives First Peter universal acceptance.
- Irenaeus (140-203), Tertullian (150-222), Clement of Alexandria (155-215) and Origen (185-253) all credit Peter with the authorship of this letter.

Some critics have said the style of Greek in this letter are beyond Peter's ability since he was a Galilean fisherman. But, Peter would have spoken Greek and been very familiar with it. Also, according to First Peter 5:12 Silas was the scribe who wrote the book down for Peter:

“With the help (“through” or “by means of”) of Silas, whom I regard as a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this it's the true grace of God. Stand fast in it.”

Date of Writing

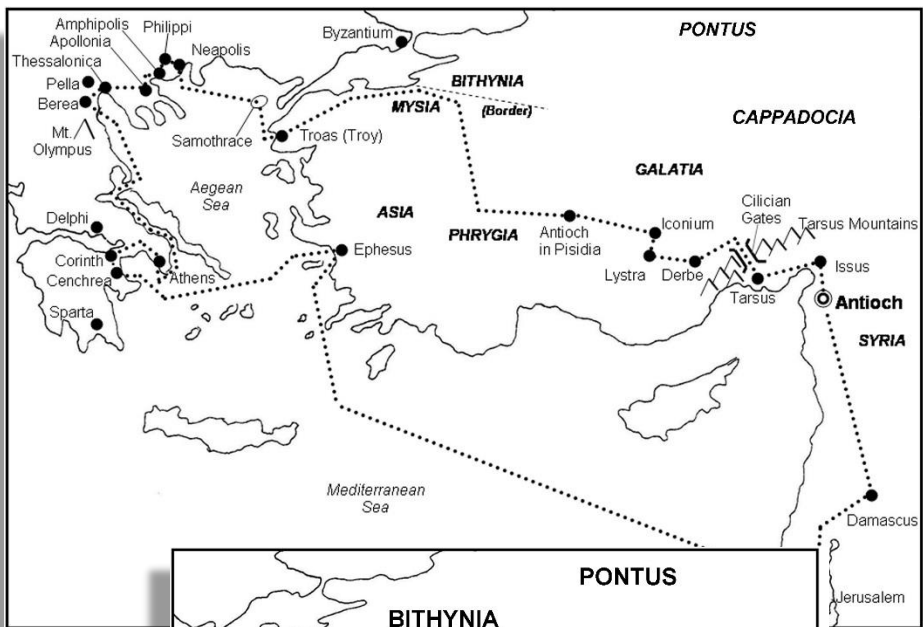
This book would have been written in between 63-65 AD

Peter appears to have been familiar with Paul's letters written from prison around 61-62.

Peter was martyred by Nero between 65-67 AD

Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, Bithynia were Roman provinces in northern Asia minor (Turkey).

Peter may have worked in this area and started churches



Purpose for Writing

Peter is encouraging while providing teaching and guidance.

Recipients are struggling with:

1. Their place in society
 - a. Humility
 - b. Submission
 - c. Live a life worthy of your calling
2. Persecution
 - a. It will get worse before it gets better
3. Ignorance (or, recall) of some useful information
4. Perspective of the temporal with the eternal
 - a. God will meet your trouble with the grace you need
5. Help the body of believers

Peter encourages the readers to use their faith to maintain the divine perspective concerning difficulties, trials, persecution

Peter compares the Christians in these distant pagan lands with the dispersed Jews (Diaspora) scattered among the Gentiles

Don't be surprised that following Christ and his righteousness results in suffering. It is in conflict with the world.

Peter continues to stress and circle back to the points:

1. Suffering at the hands of the ignorant pagans
2. Live kind, hospitable, gracious lives among the pagans

Three parts:

1. 1:3-2:10, Opening focused on
 - a. salvation,
 - b. hope for future,
 - c. suffering now,
 - d. genuine faith to make it to the end
2. 2:11-4:11, begins the second section with "Dear Friends" – you are God's people
3. 4:12-5:11, begins the third section with "Dear Friends" – Some theology and teaching to respond correctly to suffering

