

Subject: Know Your Bible – Part 30

Scripture: 1 Peter 1:1-21

Time, Place, and Purpose of 1 and 2 Peter

1. Both epistles (1-2 Peter) were written by Peter, one of Christ's apostles and a member of His inner circle (with James and John). Peter was clearly the leader among the apostles and was often their spokesman. His name appears as the head of each listing (Mt. 10; Mk. 3; Lk. 6; Acts 1). He was a fisherman who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, near Capernaum. His brother Andrew brought him to Christ (Jn. 1:40-42). Christ called Simon as a disciple and then renamed him Peter (Greek) or Cephas (Aramaic) meaning "stone, rock." He was known for his impulsiveness and occasional weakness. After denying Christ it is remarkable that God used him to preach on the Day of Pentecost when 3,000 were converted (Acts 2) and to write two epistles of the New Testament.

2. The epistle of First Peter was written around 64-65 A.D., and Second Peter was probably written in 68 A.D., just before his death in Nero's persecution. According to tradition, Peter was crucified upside down at his own request (Jn. 21:18-19).

3. Both epistles of Peter were written at Rome. Peter refers to the capital city by the name "Babylon" (1 Pet. 5:13).

4. First Peter was written with several purposes in mind:

- A. To explain the relationship of trials to God's purposes in salvation (1:1-12)
- B. To encourage readers to holiness, love, growth, and testimony (1:13—2:12)
- C. To call for submission of believers to civil authorities (2:13-17)
- D. To call for submission of servants to masters (2:18-25)
- E. To call for submission of wives to husbands (3:1-8)
- F. To discuss the proper attitude of believers in suffering (3:9—4:19)
- G. To give guidelines to elders for their ministry (5:1-4)
- H. To call elders to humility (5:5-7)
- I. To warn believers against the tactics of Satan (5:8-11)
- J. To send greetings (5:12-14)

5. The key word in First Peter is suffering. It occurs 16 times, some of which refer to Christ's sufferings and some to the suffering of believers for their faith. Peter challenged believers to follow the example of Christ and suffer patiently (2:20), for the sake of righteousness (3:14), for well doing (3:17), with rejoicing (4:13), as a Christian (4:16), and according to the will of God (4:19). Christ's sufferings are mentioned in every chapter.

6. First Peter contains more Old Testament quotations than any other New Testament book of comparable size.

7. First Peter contains 34 commands and is written in a style similar to Peter's speeches recorded in Acts.

8. The theme of First Peter is Christian living in a hostile world. Peter reminds believers that they have been born again to a living hope. Their character and conduct should be above reproach as they imitate the holy God who called them. This epistle encourages believers in four ways:

- A. To live without losing hope
- B. To live without becoming bitter
- C. To live while trusting the Lord
- D. To live while looking for the Lord's return

9. Second Peter was written to expose false teachers and warn believers about their influence in the church. This epistle is similar to the letter of Jude in its description and condemnation of false teachers.

10. Second Peter gives assurance of the Lord's return. Whereas First Peter stresses that Christ's coming is near, Second Peter emphasizes the delay of His return. In the first epistle Peter is writing to encourage suffering believers about His imminent return, while in the second letter he warns about scoffers and explains Christ's apparent delay.

11. The clear theme of Second Peter is knowledge of truth. Some form of the word "knowledge" is found 16 times. Peter's solution to the problem of false teaching is the knowledge of true doctrine. The best protection is prevention. It has been said that "the hallmark of Christianity is certainty."

12. Second Peter contains several unique passages:

- A. The divine origin of Scripture (1:20-21)
- B. The future destruction of the world by fire (3:8-13)
- C. The confirmation of Paul's letters as Scripture (3:15-16)

Outline of First Peter

- I. The Salvation of the Believer (1:1-12)
- II. The Sanctification of the Believer (1:13—2:12)
- III. The Submission of the Believer (2:13—3:12)
- IV. The Suffering of the Believer (3:13—5:14)

Outline of Second Peter

- I. Cultivation of Christian Character (1:1-21)
- II. Condemnation of False Teachers (2:1-22)
- III. Confidence of Christ's Return (3:1-18)

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