Letters of Peter ~ Christian Bible Study

Introduction and 12 Lessons

1st Peter

Audience

1 Peter is addressed to the “elect resident aliens” scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. The five areas listed in 1:1 as the geographical location of the first readers were Roman provinces in Asia Minor. The order in which the provinces are listed may reflect the route to be taken by the messenger who delivered the circular letter. The recipients of this letter are referred to in 1:1 as “exiles of the Dispersion.” In 1:17, they are urged to “live in reverent fear during the time of your exile.[6] The social makeup of the addressees of 1 Peter is debatable because some scholars interpret “strangers” (1:1) as Christians longing for their home in heaven, some interpret it as literal “strangers”, or as an Old Testament adaptation applied to Christian believers.

While the new Christians have encountered oppression and hostility from locals, Peter advises them to maintain loyalty to both their religion and the empire (1 Peter 2:17).

The author counsels (1) to steadfastness and perseverance under persecution (1–2:10); (2) to the practical duties of a holy life (2:11–3:13); (3) he adduces the example of Christ and other motives to patience and holiness (3:14–4:19); and (4) concludes with counsels to pastors and people (chap. 5).

Jesus pulling Peter from the lakeOutline

• Greeting (1:1-2)

• Praise to God (1:3-12)

• God's Holy People (1:13-2:10)

• Life in Exile (2:11-4:11)

• Steadfast in Faith (4:12-5:11)

• Final Greeting (5:12-14)

2nd Peter

Audience

The audience in this book are the churches in general.

Outline

• Address (2 Peter 1:1-2)

• Exhortation to Christian Virtue (2 Peter 1:3-21)

• Condemnation of the False Teachers (2 Peter 2:1-22)

• The Delay of the Second Coming (2 Peter 3:1-16)

• Final Exhortation and Doxology (2 Peter 3:17-18)

Bible Study on Peter's letters

I have arbitrarily divided the 8 chapters of 1 and 2 Peter into 12 sections for discussion. The discussion questions are slightly different from traditional Bible studies in that they emphasize the application of the book to your life today. There is a Leader's Guide with each lesson, which you may or may not wish to use. Many of the questions are designed to be a springboard to further discussion and there is often no truly right or wrong answer. If you have questions or comments, please use the "Contact Me" button on the menu below. I guarantee that I will read your comments, however, as this web site gets more than 3,000 visitors per day, I can't possibly answer every one.

In response to your requests, these studies are in Adobe PDF format, so they can easily be printed out. When scripture verses are quoted, they are usually from the NIV, but not always. If you cannot read PDF files, click to download Adobe Reader.

Some discussion questions are borrowed or adapted from the book New Testament Lesson Maker from NavPress (ISBN 0-89109-688-4). I highly recommend this book, which is available from CBD as well as most large Christian bookstores.

David Ahl, January 2013