

Introduction to NT Books

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XVIII. The Book of I Peter

A. The Authorship of I Peter¹

1. External Evidence: Polycarp, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Eusebius recognized Peter as author.
2. Internal Evidence
 - a. He claimed his name (1:1) and status as eyewitness (5:1).
 - b. His father was Jonas and brother was Andrew (Mt. 16:17; Jn. 1:40).
 - c. He was married (as were all of the Apostles [I Cor. 9:5; Acts 1:20]).
 - d. He was the first of the Apostles and traveled with the Lord, denying Him and then being restored (Mt. 10:1-2; 26:69 ff.; Jn. 21:15 ff.).

B. The Audience and Time of I Peter

1. As the Apostle to the circumcised, he wrote to the Jews (Gal. 2:8).
2. His audience was the scattered Jews in churches throughout Asia Minor (I Pet. 1:1).
3. He apparently wrote around AD 62-63, before the imperial persecution began (c. AD 64).

C. The Purpose of I Peter

1. He dealt with the reason for and solution to suffering as Christians (1:11 ff.; 4:12 ff.).
2. He used 34 imperatives to exhort the churches to sanctification through humility (1:13 ff.).
3. He instructed on submission to secular authorities (2:13-17).

D. The Characteristics of I Peter

1. He gave revelation about the OT prophets and their understanding of Scripture (1:10-11).
2. He enjoined the Christians to follow Christ in suffering patiently (2:20), righteously (3:14), for well doing (3:17), with rejoicing (4:13), and in the will of God (4:19).
3. He expressed the life of Christ in terms pre-ordination (1:20), sinless-ness (1:19), suffering and death (2:24),² resurrection (3:21-22), ascension (3:22), and His Second Coming (1:7; 4:13).
4. He revealed the pre-incarnate ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. He preached to the ante-diluvians through Noah (1:11) about the coming judgment (3:18 ff.).

¹“Peter” occurs 158x in the NT whereas “Paul” occurs 157x.

²According to Lev. 4:2 ff., six steps were involved in the slaughter of the lamb which pre-figured the Lord Jesus: the selection of the animal, the laying on of hands, the slaughter of the animal, the manipulation of the blood, the burning of the parts, and the communion meal. Peter mentioned the first four of these in relationship to the Saviour (1:18-20; 2:4, 6, 24).

They now are imprisoned in *sheol*. Other views on the *descensus ad inferos* include the following:

- a. Intermediate-Second Chance View—Christ allegedly descended into hell to preach a second chance Gospel during His three days in the tomb.
 - b. Intermediate-Victory View—Christ proclaimed victory over death to the inhabitants in *sheol* during His entombment.
 - c. Figurative View—Christ’s suffering on the cross is figurative alluded to in this passage.
 - d. Descent of Enoch—this passage actually teaches that Enoch descended to *sheol* and preached the Gospel, based on the unintentional omission of Enoch and the similarity of the Greek behind “*by which also*” (ἐν ᾧ καὶ [*en-o-kai*]).
5. Peter taught that baptism separates the believer from the world (3:20-21).
 6. Peter encouraged pastors about feeding the flock and avoiding professionalism, materialism, and authoritarianism (5:1-4).