

## CHAPTER 9

### PETER'S EPISTLES

#### ***Peter's audience***

In addition to his sermons in Acts, Peter provided two epistles. As an apostle to the Jews, Peter had their concerns in mind primarily. However, these two epistles seem to be addressed to Christians in general.

According to 1 Pet 1:1-2 Peter was writing to the believers who were “scattered” in the Gentile, pagan world. In particular, he wrote to those scattered believers in “Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.” These are Roman provinces or parts of provinces in Asia Minor. Apparently his letter carrier, sent from Rome, sailed to a port on the south coast of the Black Sea and then made a circular tour of churches in those provinces, beginning and ending his tour on the northern border. It could be that Peter had traveled extensively in this region (cf. 1 Cor 9:5).

The Christians in this region later were the object of the attention of the Roman governor Pliny the Younger, who followed a policy of persecution that led a number of them to return to their old pagan worship (see Pliny's correspondence with the emperor Trajan).

Both these letters are written under a cloud of impending persecution, and deal with the difficulties the Christians faced living out their faith in a pagan environment.

#### ***Dates of 1 Peter and 2 Peter***

The two letters seem to be written fairly close together. Nero's persecution of Christians in Rome started with the great fire of A.D. 64, and ended with his death in A.D. 68. A probable range of dates for these letters is A.D. 65-67. 1 Peter was written while he still was free in Rome; 2 Peter was written from prison shortly before his execution under Nero.

#### ***1 Peter***

## **Occasion and theme of 1 Peter**

- Peter was in Rome, ministering to the church there (called “Babylon” in 1 Pet 5:13)
- It was a time of persecution, with more on the way (1 Pet 3:17; 4:12-19)
- Peter wanted the Christians to focus on their “hope,” the second coming of Jesus (1 Pet 1:3, 7, 9, 13; 3:15; 4:13; 5:4)
- The Christians needed to live consistent Christian lives amid the pagans (1 Pet 2:1-2; 5:10)
- Silas (Latin form “Silvanus”) was with Peter and helped him write the letter (1 Pet 5:12; cf. 2 Cor 1:19)

## **Content of 1 Peter**

1. Hope in persecution (1 Pet 1-2)
2. The Christian in the world, the home, the church (1 Pet 2-5)

## **Points of interest in 1 Peter**

- Prophets look for Christ (1 Pet 1:10-12)
- Price of redemption (1 Pet 1:18-19)
- Growth as Christians (1 Pet 2:2)
- Honor the government (1 Pet 2:13-17)
- Peter feeds the flock (1 Pet 5:2-4)
- The roaring lion (1 Pet 5:8-9)
- Rome is “Babylon” (1 Pet 5:13)
- John Mark, Peter’s “son” (1 Pet 5:13)

## **2 Peter**

## **Occasion of 2 Peter**

- Peter is in prison in Rome
- Peter is about to die (2 Pet 1:14)
- (Predicted by Jesus – John 21:18-19)
- Peter is concerned to remind believers of his teachings and his warnings against false teachers

## **Content of 2 Peter**

1. The certainty of the faith and of the Word of God (2 Pet 1)
2. False teachers condemned (2 Pet 2)
3. Second coming of Christ (2 Pet 3)

## **Points of interest in 2 Peter**

- Peter's testimony to the transfiguration (2 Pet 1:15-18)
- Superiority and inspiration of Scripture (2 Pet 1:19-21)
- Strong anti-apostate chapter, similar to Jude (2 Pet 2)
- 1000 years = 1 day with the Lord (quoting Ps 90:4; 2 Pet 3:8)
- Earth and heavens to be dissolved (2 Pet 3:10-13)
- Peter's testimony to Paul and his epistles (2 Pet 3:15-16)