

# Introduction to I Peter and I Peter 1:1-2

Thursday, October 18, 2012  
8:18 PM

Passages to Read:

1. II Corinthians 1:3-7
2. II Timothy 2:1-7, 3:10-16

## 1. Background

### a. Who wrote the book?

- i. I Peter 1:1 - Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ
- ii. This is the Peter who:
  - 1) Immediately left his fishing business to follow Christ - Matthew 4:18-20
  - 2) Was the spokesman for the apostles - Matthew 16:15-16
  - 3) On whom Christ said He would build His church - Matthew 16:17-19
  - 4) Who saw the glory of the transfigured Christ - Matthew 17:1-13
  - 5) Who promised to go with Christ to death - John 13:36-38
  - 6) Who attempted to save Christ from death - John 18:10-11
  - 7) Who denied Christ three times - John 18:15-27
  - 8) Who was restored by Christ and appointed to lead His church - John 21:15-19
  - 9) Who spoke before the Diaspora on the day of Pentecost - Acts 2:14-40
  - 10) Who testified before the Sanhedrin - Acts 4:1-21
  - 11) Who was imprisoned and released by an angel twice - Acts 5:12-31 and Acts 12:1-19
  - 12) Who died as a martyr for Christ - John 21:18-19
- iii. Why do I mention all this?
  - 1) To remind us who Peter is, especially for some of you children
  - 2) Because the author of this book writes as though he knows Christ and knows suffering, and Peter assuredly did

### b. When was the book written?

- i. This is less clear as it is not explicitly stated in the book
- ii. The reference to Babylon in chapter 5 is most likely a reference to Rome, so it appears that Peter was in Rome when he was writing this
- iii. According to church history, this would have been during the early 60s A.D., so the letter was probably written in the early 60s A.D., maybe A.D. 62-63

### c. To whom was the book written?

- i. I Peter 1:2 - To those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia
- ii. Peter wrote to believers, members of the church, calling them elect exiles
- iii. He wrote specifically to the churches in Asia Minor - Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia

### d. What are the circumstances surrounding the book?

- i. From the book, it is apparent that the Christians in Asia Minor were suffering persecution
- ii. From church history, we know that official persecution of the church by the Roman Empire did not occur until the Emperor Domitian around A.D. 81, so the persecution talked about in the book is not the famous stories about Christians hiding in the catacombs and being thrown to the lions in the arena
- iii. Instead, the persecutions must have been smaller in scale, but Peter views them as no less important
- iv. From the book, we get a hint of what these persecutions were:
  - 1) Local governments (governors) were persecuting Christians, especially claiming that Christians were anarchists
  - 2) Masters were persecuting their believing slaves
  - 3) Unbelieving husbands were persecuting their wives
  - 4) Society in general was maligning and reviling Christians for their holy conduct
- v. In other words, the persecutions the I Peter is directed to is similar in many ways to our situation today
  - 1) We do not face death or imprisonment over our faith
  - 2) But, if we do live out our faith in submission to Christ through His word, we will be maligning and reviled

**e. Why was the book written?**

- i. Peter wrote to the Christians in Asia who were facing various sufferings to encourage them in continuing in Christ
- ii. Specifically, Peter wanted to make sure that Christians who were suffering persecutions would continue to glorify God and proclaim the excellencies of Christ instead of trying to hide their faith and blend in

**2. Go through Overview of I Peter**

**3. Repeated Themes**

When you are suffering keep in mind that:

**a. You are elect exiles**

- i. The idea of exiles appears several times in I Peter
  - 1) I Peter 1:1, 1:17, 2:11
- ii. Peter wants us to remember when facing persecutions that it is because we do not belong to this world
- iii. But he also wants us to remember that we belong to someone else, we were chosen by God
- iv. We are elect exiles

**b. Everything in this world is temporary**

- i. Even the most permanent earthly things get a bad rap in I Peter - silver and gold are repeatedly called perishable
  - 1) I Peter 1:7, 1:18
- ii. Peter wants us to remember when facing persecutions that this world is temporary but our inheritance is eternal

**c. Christ also suffered**

- i. Peter pulls us back to Christ's suffering over and over again to make his points
  - 1) I Peter 1:11, 1:19, 2:21-25, 3:18-22, 4:1-2, 4:13, 5:1
- ii. Peter wants us to remember two things about Christ's suffering
  - 1) Why Christ suffered - to bring us to God
    - a) This ought to guide our hope during suffering, because Christ suffered for us
  - 2) How Christ suffered - without reviling or threatening
    - a) This ought to guide our actions during suffering, because Christ suffered well as an example

**d. Our salvation is for obedience to Christ and His Gospel**

- i. Obedience is also a very repeated them in I Peter
  - 1) I Peter 1:2, 1:14, 1:22, 2:8, 3:1, 3:20, 4:17
- ii. Peter wants to make sure that even in suffering we remember that the purpose of our salvation is to obey Christ
- iii. The presence of persecution is no reason to abandon our responsibilities

**e. Our salvation is to bring glory to God**

- i. Again, the glory of God is seen throughout I Peter
  - 1) I Peter 2:9, 2:12, 2:15, 3:16, 4:11
- ii. Peter calls us to see beyond this world to see the glory of Christ at stake in our lives
- iii. How we respond to suffering demonstrates who Christ is
- iv. We must live all of our lives, including times of persecution, in order to glorify Christ

**4. Read (Quote) I Peter 1-5**

## 5. Introduction

### a. To those who are elect exiles of the dispersion

- i. This is one of the most poignant phrases of the Bible
  - 1) It juxtaposes two contradictory terms
    - a) Elect and exile are pretty much exact opposites
      - Elect means that you are chosen, called, desired, given a place and a home
      - Exile means that you are rejected, kicked out, unwanted, without a place or a home
  - 2) It pulls in so much Biblical history
    - a) Exiles of the dispersion recalls the nation of Israel
    - b) Israel and then Judah had both been exiled from their lands for failure to keep the covenant
    - c) But God proclaimed that He would return them to their land
    - d) In one way, that happened under Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi
    - e) But, in many ways it still hadn't happened, the ethnic Jews were still scattered across the face of the earth and there was no Jewish kingdom or Jewish king ruling over the nations
    - f) Peter evokes that memory when he addresses his letter to the exiles of the dispersion
- ii. Peter uses this address to give a very memorable preview of the content of his book
  - 1) Contradictory terms
    - a) Peter calls the recipients elect exiles because they are rejected in one way and chosen in another
      - They are rejected by the world - therefore persecution should not be surprising
      - They are chosen by God - therefore persecution should be endurable
    - b) Peter's whole book calls us to recognize these juxtaposed facts and to live them out in our lives
  - 2) Biblical history
    - a) In using terms loaded with Biblical meaning, Peter is pointing out that Christians are the New Covenantal recipients of all of the blessings of God to His people
    - b) Christians are those who are currently cast out into the world
    - c) But, Christians are also those who will be gathered together under the king who will rule over the nations
    - d) Peter expands on this theme as well, especially in chapter 2
    - e) During suffering, we should remember redemptive history and recall our place in it

### b. By...In...For...For...

- i. Peter closes his address by expanding on his definition of elect exiles
  - 1) They are elect because they are foreknown by God
  - 2) They are elect by the sanctification of the Spirit
  - 3) They are elect for sprinkling with Christ's blood
- ii. Peter already holds up a Trinitarian view of salvation in the address of his book
  - 1) Obviously Peter believes the theology of salvation and the work of the persons of the Godhead are important to our understanding of suffering
- iii. Peter also makes a very short, but very powerful statement about the purpose of salvation
  - 1) They are elect in order to give obedience to Jesus Christ

### c. Application

- i. Good theology is necessary for good practice.
  - 1) Everything we do must be based on our understanding:
    - a) Who we are (elect exiles)
    - b) Who God is (the Trinity)
    - c) What God has done for us (foreknown, sanctified, sprinkled)
  - 2) So examine your life in light of your theology
    - a) Are you doing the things you are doing because you are elect exiles? Can you describe why being an elect exile causes you to do these things?
    - b) Are you doing the things you are doing because God the Trinity has acted to save us? Can you describe why being saved by the Trinitarian God causes you to do these things?

- c) Are you doing the things you are doing because God has foreknown you, sanctified you, and sprinkled you with Christ's blood? Can you describe why God's actions causes you to do these things?
  - 3) Two actions:
    - a) Study and meditate on the significance of who you are, who God is, and what God has done for us so you can describe how that causes you to act
    - b) Act in ways that reflect who you are, who God is, and what God has done for you
- ii. We must dedicate our lives to obedience to Christ
  - 1) This is a very simple, straightforward application
    - a) We ought to obey and be in submission to Christ
    - b) We obey and submit to Christ through submitting to His Word and submitting to His Church
  - 2) Our lives ought to be wholly given over to this obedience
    - a) Have you examined every area of your life for obedience to Christ?
    - b) Have you cared enough about obedience to examine your life?
    - c) Have you studied to know what your Lord requires of you?
    - d) Have you obeyed in the things that you already knew?
    - e) Can others see that your life is dedicated to obeying Christ?
- iii. We must live as though we are elect exiles
  - 1) We do not belong to this world, we belong to another
  - 2) Therefore, we shouldn't play by the rules of this world, we should play by the rules of another
  - 3) When we play by the rules of another world, we will be persecuted
  - 4) As we read earlier - " Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." (II Timothy 3:12)
  - 5) So, as Scripture says - II Corinthians 6:16-18 - "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty."