

PETER'S FIRST
LETTER TO THE
SCATTERED
SAINTS

By Frank Jamerson

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Lesson 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF FIRST PETER

- A. Both internal and external evidence agree that Peter was the author, 1:1.
1. Peter had been a disciple of John (John 1:35-40), and was brought to Jesus by his brother, John 1:40-42.
 2. He was married (Matthew 8:14, 15), and his wife accompanied him on some of his teaching trips, 1 Corinthians 9:5.
 3. The last mention of him in Acts is at the council in Jerusalem (Acts 15), though later reference is made to him in Antioch with Paul, Galatians 2:11.
 4. He was an apostle, not a chief bishop (though he was a bishop, 1 Peter 5:1-4. The church was built upon the confession that Peter made, not upon Peter, Matthew 16:13-18; 1 Corinthians 3:11.
- B. To whom was it written? verses 1, 2
1. The word “dispersion” referred to the Jews scattered outside of Palestine, but here is used to refer to God’s people sojourning on earth among unbelievers.
 2. The places named covered most of Asia Minor and those addressed were mostly Gentile Christians (1:14; 2:9, 10), though there were probably some Jews among them.
- C. The date of writing:
1. Mark was with Peter when he wrote this epistle, 5:13. He was also with Paul when he wrote the Colossian letter in Rome in 62 or 63 A.D., Colossians 4:10.
 2. Christians were suffering trials (1:6, 7; 3:14; 4:12, 13) and they were going to grow worse, 4:17-19. Nero was accused of burning Rome on July 19, 64 A.D. and then blamed the Christians. The date was probably 64 or 65 A.D.
- D. From where was it written?
1. Babylon is named at the close of the epistle, 5:13. The identity of this Babylon has been much disputed. Some say it was a figurative description of Rome, others that it was in Egypt, and others that it was on the Euphrates.

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2. "Babylon in Egypt was a small, unimportant, insignificant place... It is exceedingly unlikely that such was the 'Babylon' to which the apostle alluded. There thus seems sufficient reason to conclude that the view that the epistle was written from the world famous Babylon on the Euphrates is the correct one" (**Commentary** by Guy N. Woods).

E. Content:

"The personal experience of Peter with Christ is reflected in this epistle to his friends who were imperiled by impending persecutions. He had known the feeling of helplessness when he realized that Jesus was dead, but his hope had become living when Jesus rose, 1:3. His reference to love for Christ (1:8) recalls Jesus' challenge to him, 'Lovest thou me more than these?' (John 21:15ff), and His exhortation to 'tend the flock of God' (5:2) is an echo of Jesus' injunction to him to do the same thing, John 21:15-17. The command, 'gird yourselves with humility' (5:5) meant 'to put on a slave's apron,' which recalls Jesus' girding Himself with a towel to wash the feet of the disciples, John 13:4. Five times he speaks of the sufferings of Christ (2:23; 3:18; 4:1, 13; 5:1) as if the scene of Gethsemane and the crucifixion left an indelible impression upon him" (**The New Testament – A Survey**, by Merrill Tenney, p. 364).

F. The Godhead involved in redemption, verse 2:

1. The foreknowledge of God the Father.
 - a. This plan of redemption was in God's eternal purpose, 1:20; Ephesians 1:3-6.
 - b. God predetermined the plan, but not the specific persons who would respond to that plan, Matthew 11:28-30.
2. The sanctification of the Spirit.
 - a. Sanctification means set apart, separated to a special purpose.
 - b. The Spirit has always worked through the message, 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 14; John 16:7-13; 17:17.
3. The sprinkling of the blood of Christ.
 - a. This alludes to the ceremonial cleansing in the Old Law, Exodus 24:8.
 - b. This is accomplished when we obey the Lord's command to be baptized for the remission of sins, Hebrews 10:22; Ephesians 5:25, 26; Titus 3:5.
 - c. "Unto obedience" is man's part and "the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" the Divine part.

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STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. Discuss Peter's introduction to Jesus.
2. Prove that Peter was not a pope.
3. To whom was the epistle written?
4. What is the probable date?
5. From where was it written?
6. Give five teachings in the book that are connected with Peter's personal experiences with Jesus.
7. What did each member of the Godhead do in redemption?
8. Discuss how God predestinated who would be saved?
9. How are we sanctified?
10. When are we sprinkled by the blood of Jesus?