

Key to I PETER

1. BACKGROUND:

Writer is Peter the disciple-apostle (Matthew 10:2), brother of Andrew, spokesman of the Twelve and commanding figure in the early church.

Time of writing is about A.D. 65; written from Babylon on the river Euphrates (5:13).

Occasion: Peter writes to Jewish Christians of the dispersion (1:1), but also the Gentile Church (2:10) is included. The faith of the early Christians was being severely tested by manifold persecutions. They were also in extreme poverty. Peter writes to comfort.

2. THEME:

The distinctive note is that of "victory over suffering." The truth is, that this is the order of the Christian life. . . the suffering and then the glory (4:13). The word suffering appears 15 times. Peter writes also for Christians to live blamelessly before magistrates so that their enemies' charges of sedition and lawlessness may be shown to be baseless. He also suggests that Paul's teachings (II Peter 3:15, 16) are Scripture truth. Key word is "hope."

3. MAIN DIVISIONS:

Christian suffering in the light of full salvation (1:1-2:8); the believer's life in view of his sevenfold position (2:9-4:19); Christian service in the light of CHRIST's coming (5:1-14)

4. SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS:

Peter is an important name in Scripture. While Paul's name is mentioned 162 times, and the rest of the apostles' names together are given 142 times, the name of Peter is mentioned 210 times.

Peter's letters bear close resemblance to Paul's. They open with a similar salutation, give thanksgiving and then conclude with that personal touch.

All the chief doctrines of Christianity are emphasized in Peter's writings; the suffering and death of CHRIST (2:24); the new birth (1:23); redemption by blood (1:18, 19); the Resurrection (3:20, 21); the return of CHRIST (1:7, 13; 5:4).

Peter is not mentioned in The Acts after chapter 15. But his visit to Syrian Antioch is given in Galatians 2:11. Also he must have labored chiefly among his own people (Galatians 2:8). Some think that his last years were spent in Rome where he is said to have suffered martyrdom. There is little evidence to substantiate this.

It is thought that Peter may have written this letter immediately after Paul's death and sent it by Silas (Sylvanus) to the churches which Paul had founded, to encourage them to bear up under suffering (5:12).

5. OUTLINE:

Introduction (1:1-12)

Conduct Before GOD (1:13-2:10)

Holiness, Love,
Spiritual Growth, Praise

Conduct Before Men (2:11- 4:19)

Submission to Authority
Submission to Persecution
Family Relations
Social Relations
Christian Example

Conduct of Church (5:1-11)

Pastor, People

Conclusion (5:12-14)

6. OUTSTANDING TEACHINGS:

This book is the outstanding authority on the "why" of suffering. Peter reminds the flock that they were to share in the rejection and hatred of CHRIST (4:12-16). The coming of the Lord was to be their hope (4:7).

Wives were to be submissive, thus testifying of the grace of GOD. Servants were to be obedient even under oppression (2:18-20).

An illuminating commentary on inspiration is here given (1:10-12), where it is said that the Prophets studied carefully their own writings to learn GOD's truth.

Mark or Marcus (writer of second Gospel) was evidently with Peter (5:13) when this letter was written.

7. KEY:

In this book we are viewing some of GOD's eternal truth through Peter's pen. The broad outline is first suffering, then glory.

~ end of I Peter ~

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