I Peter – Introduction

August 3, 2014 · https://letgodbetrue.com/sermons/2014/1-peter-introduction/

I Peter: The Gospel of Hope

Introduction

A. Expository preaching will take us through every sentence and most every word of the epistle.
   1. Many love expository preaching, for it gives them a specific reference point for learning.
   2. Hearers can more easily remember what they heard, read ahead, and review the passage.
   3. They can focus on each sentence, verse, phrase, and word for fine learning and retention.
   4. It helps us learn the Bible, not just a subject from the Bible, though both have their place.
   5. It tends to keep the speaker closer to the scriptures, as inspired words drive the preaching.
   6. Expository preaching always opens up topical studies within it by Holy Spirit placement!
   7. I Peter touches on marriage, the second coming, government, suffering, employment, reprobation, baptism, eldership, Satan, the Flood, a happy life, regeneration, holiness, etc.
   8. For those superstitious about expository preaching, is there record Jesus and Paul used it?
   9. The best or only example of expository preaching in the Bible is a great one (Neh 8:8).
   10. Paul, by the record of his epistles, used a topical approach. See quotes in Rom 3 or Heb 1.

B. What attitude should we have when taking up a book of the Bible by expository preaching?
   1. God's words are pleasant and profitable beyond comparison (Job 23:12; Psalm 1:2; 19:10-11; 119:72,97,103,105; 111,127; Jeremiah 15:16; I Peter 2:2; II Peter 1:19-21).
   2. It is a spiritual book so every word is necessary for maximum living (Pr 30:5; Luke 4:4).
   3. It is a life-changing book for those that believe and obey, as Paul wrote (I Thess 2:13).
   4. We have found within the Bible 20 one-word arguments by our Lord and His apostles, which further confirm to us the importance of every word – not one should be neglected.
   5. Can you be excited about one book, one chapter, one verse, and then one word at a time?
   6. Hebrews is a precious book: so is chapter one, and the first argument, and the first word!
   7. We want to immerse ourselves in I Peter to the dulling of all others but for interpretation.
   8. Our thoughts and words should reflect Peter's words by the Holy Ghost for a few months.
   9. Most cannot synthesize too much data at a sitting, so we go a word or phrase at a time.
   10. Slow down in your reading and take more time to meditate and exalt individual phrases.

C. What value should we get from the study? What is the purpose of I Peter and preaching it?
   1. The value of scripture is significant over creation to the conversion of souls (Ps 19:7-11).
   2. Scripture is given for doctrine, so we can believe truth about all things (II Tim 3:16-17).
   3. Scripture is given for reproof, so God may rebuke or reprove false assumptions or ideas.

4. Scripture is given for correction, so we may be told of wrong practices that we follow.
5. Scripture is given for instruction in righteousness, so we can be moved and guided into it.

D. Pray for your pastor, as he studies, prepares extensive outlines, and delivers many sermons.
1. We depend on God for any correct understanding of His word (Ps 119:18; Eph 1:17-18).
2. We must rightly divide the word of truth and obtains its true sense (II Tim 2:15; Neh 8:8).
3. We must grasp all the Holy Spirit intended but not go beyond the Holy Spirit (Prov 30:6).
4. We must make it as manifestly clear and simple as possible (II Cor 3:12; 4:2; Col 4:4).
5. We must preach it boldly and authoritatively (Eph 6:19-20; II Cor 10:4-6; Jude 1:3).
6. We must put what we learn into spiritual and earthly practice (Gal 1:6-9; James 1:21-25).
7. We must follow a course for optimal learning and retention (I Tim 3:2; II Peter 1:12-15).
8. We must see and exalt the Lord Jesus Christ – the Person of all scripture (John 5:39).
9. This speaker and writer is truly less than the least of all saints for starting such a project.
10. God can open a book during its preaching by blessing expository emphasis in context.
11. Controversy is the mother of orthodoxy, as it forces men to refine and defend a position.
12. Expository preaching militates against proof-texting, sound bites, and simple solutions.

E. God kindly blessed us from Hebrews (1988), Ecclesiastes (2008), and Romans (2009-2014).
1. We thanked God for contextual light of Jewish believers in Hebrews shortly before the end of Jerusalem in 70 AD and the proofs of Jesus Christ's preeminence (33 sermons).
2. We rejoiced in many lessons from Ecclesiastes for maximizing a godly life here and how earthly ambitions are vanity and vexation without a heavenly context (35 sermons).
3. We thanked God for contextual light of Paul's defense of the gospel against Jewish legalists in Romans and a tremendous foundation of doctrine and practice (159 sermons).

F. Labor to learn this epistle thoroughly and retain its lessons and explanations in your memory.
1. You could read one chapter Monday through Friday to cover the whole book every week.
2. You could memorize one or more favorite verses from each chapter during the series.
3. You could listen to the sermons again during the week from the website MP3 postings.
4. You could pray for your pastor to make it manifestly plain and for you to grasp it clearly.
5. Learning from this epistle will vary widely over the congregation, with the prepared and studious far outstripping the casual and neglectful.

G. Context of any speech or writing is very important, but it must be fully studied elsewhere.
1. A simple rule for remembering context is who, whom, why, what, when, and where.
2. The context of Hebrews makes is easy to understand, especially the whom and the when.
3. While more could be presented about the context for I Peter, we will limit ourselves.

AUTHOR

A. The Holy Spirit inspired the identity of the epistle's writer with the very first word of it (1:1).

1. Peter's gifts and faults are clearly seen; more is known about him than the other eleven.
2. Since so much is known and recorded about him elsewhere, we must review the writer, for God would not have left so much detail unless there was profit to learn or review it.
3. Saints have found consolation, connection, instruction, and warning reading about Peter.
4. He is a perfect writer for this book, but a full study of Peter is well beyond these sermons.
5. He knew the Jewish situation well; he was a leading Jewish apostle; he had encountered Jewish propensities many times; he was esteemed as a chief apostle of Jewish authority; he could lend valuable support to Paul's gospel among Jews in Paul's mixed churches.
6. His name was Simon son of Jonas or Simon Barjona. Jesus named him Cephas and Peter.
7. His father was Jonah (Jonas in Greek), thus Simon Barjona (Matt 16:17; John 21:15-17).
8. Jesus surnamed him or gave him a second name of Cephas (Aramaic) and Peter (Greek), which mean a stone (John 1:42), which Jesus used to some advantage later (Matt 16:16).
9. Peter was from the city of Bethsaida (John 1:44) and later lived with his family in Capernaum (Matt 8:14; Luke 4:38). These two cities are only 5-10 miles from each other.
10. He was a fisher on the Sea of Galilee with brother Andrew. His father is not mentioned.
11. Though many of the N.T. epistles are Pauline, it was Peter that led the church early on.
12. He wrote this epistle from Babylon, where he was associated with a church (I Peter 5:13).

B. For sinners coming to scripture to learn of Christ for the comfort of their souls, Peter is dear!
   1. He could speak foolishly and impetuously in his passion, recorded twice (Matt 16:21-23).
   2. He denied his Lord with cursing in His time of need, recorded four times (Mat 26:69-75).
   3. He was foolishly fearful in Antioch and his rebuke by Paul was fully recorded (Gal 2:11).
   4. Yet, he led the apostles (Acts 1:15-26), took the gospel to Gentiles (Acts 10:1-20; 15:6-11), and here has two epistles named not for the audience but rather for the writer! Glory!
   5. I'd rather be a forgiven and productive Peter than a self-righteous, fruitless steady-Eddie.
   6. Jesus' favorite three apostles were the most zealous – Peter and the two sons of thunder!
   7. The apostle to the Gentiles, Paul, was more zealous than all, so let us seek zeal (Ga 4:18).

C. What else can we learn about Peter for a good perspective on the epistles bearing his name?
   1. He was apostle and minister of the circumcision, preaching primarily to Jews (Ga 2:7-9).
   2. Yet it was known and established he opened the gospel door to Gentiles (Acts 15:6-11).
   3. He was also one of Christ's three favorites with privileges (Matthew 17:1-2; 26:36-41).
   4. He had great excitement, passion and zeal, especially for his Lord Christ and the gospel.
   5. Sometimes his zeal caused him to over-speak, and sometimes in weakness he feared men.
   6. Jesus Christ loved Peter and loaded him with gifts, opportunities, and responsibilities.
   7. Emulate His passionate leadership and initiative while avoiding his fear and impetuosity.

D. What is historically recorded and scripturally educational about Peter, this epistle's writer?
   1. He found Jesus by his brother Andrew's efforts after leaving the Baptist (John 1:35-42).

2. Jesus renamed him from Simon (heard) by Leah (Gen 29:33) to Peter and Cephas (stone).
3. He is always first in any list of the 12 or of the 3 favorites (Matt 10:2; 17:1; Acts 1:13).
4. He was one of three privileged to see the transfiguration (Matt 17:1-6; II Peter 1:16-18).
5. He was married, so as the first pope he must have rejected celibacy (Mat 8:14; I Cor 9:5)!
6. He had at least two fishing bonanzas by the Lord's power (Luke 5:1-11; John 21:1-14).
7. He was bold to ask to walk on water but quickly lost enthusiasm for it (Matt 14:24-33).
8. He was bolder than the rest of the apostles to profess Christ (Matt 16:16; John 6:68-69).
9. Peter only preached the rock Christ Jesus – for He alone was the Cornerstone (Eph 2:20).
10. He was given keys of the kingdom of heaven by Jesus (Matt 16:19; 18:18; John 21:23).
11. Jesus gave him the miracle of the tribute money in the fish's mouth (Matthew 17:24-27).
12. He could go back and forth in impetuous zeal quite quickly (Matt 16:16-23; John 13:8-9).
13. He had the conviction and devotion to promise to never be offended (Matthew 26:31-33).
14. Jesus took Peter with the two into Gethsemane but confronted Peter (Matthew 26:36-47).
15. In early zeal in Gethsemane, he cut off the ear of the servant Malchus (John 18:10-11).
16. But he denied Jesus with oaths and cursing, which is recorded by all four gospel writers.
17. He received a special look from Jesus reminding him of his prophecy (Luke 22:60-62).
18. Jesus confronted him later to undo his three denials by three affirmations (Jn 21:15-17).
19. Jesus took care of him personally after His resurrection (Mk 16:7; I Cor 15:5; Lu 24:34).
20. He was fearless at Pentecost to preach Jesus Christ without compromise (Acts 2:14-41).
21. He did not back down at all from the Jewish leadership after Pentecost (Acts 4:19; 5:29).
22. He had the power to discern lies by Ananias and Sapphira and drop them (Acts 5:11).
23. He had great apostolic power to heal by shadows of those put in the streets (Acts 5:15).
24. He also had power to raise the dead, which he did for Tabitha or Dorcas (Acts 9:36-42).
25. He had at least two prison escapes, one chained to 16 soldiers (Acts 5:17-32; 12:1-19).
26. He was cured enough after Pentecost he slept the night before his execution (Acts 12:6).
27. Paul perceived James, Cephas, and John were pillars in the church at Jerusalem (Gal 2:9).
28. He compromised once again due to fear in Antioch where Paul rebuked him (Gal 2:11).
29. The latter part of his ministry was out of Babylon, not Rome, as some think (I Pet 5:13).
30. He died a martyr (likely crucifixion; likely upside down) by prophecy (John 21:18-19).

E. Do not be confused by reviewing Peter – the real matter is the inspired words through him; there is really little to nothing else we want to know about him outside the scripture record.

AUDIENCE

A. If you question whether knowing the audience has value or not, remember that the title of Hebrews greatly helps with its difficulties, and the mixed church at Rome helps that epistle.

B. We understand the scattered strangers to be Jewish Christians resulting from the Diaspora.

1. Persecution by Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks, and Romans had scattered Jews at times.
2. These Jews were strangers in that they were living in strange nations rather than Israel.
3. They were also strangers in that they lived among the Gentiles rather than their people.
4. These Jews were scattered in that they had been deported or had moved to other nations.
5. These Jews were scattered, as opposed to gathered, with only relatively few in any place.
6. James identified his similar audience as the twelve tribes scattered abroad (James 1:1).
7. John had made mention of these scattered or dispersed Jews in his gospel (John 7:35).
8. Peter at Pentecost had met some of these scattered Jews back in Jerusalem (Acts 2:5-11).
9. We have further evidence of a Jewish audience by the distinction of Gentiles (2:12; 4:3).
10. We have further evidence of a Jewish audience by quotations for Israel (Joel 1:9; 2:23).
11. Peter also referred to the tradition of their fathers, which is somewhat Jewish (1:18).
12. Familiarity with the people of Israel and their prophets is assumed (II Peter 2:1; 3:2).

C. We understand their location as five small areas in what is now central and western Turkey.
   1. Paul had written the churches of Galatia with warning against Jewish legalism (Ga 1:1-2).
   2. If Jewish legalism was an adversary, then Peter's confirmation of Paul's gospel was key.
   3. Peter closed both epistles showing his agreement with Paul (I Peter 5:12; II Pet 3:15-16).

D. Gentiles are not excluded, since idolaters are identified, which is truer of Gentiles (1:14; 4:3).

PURPOSE

A. One reason Peter wrote Gentile churches is to lend his support (I Peter 5:12; II Pet 3:15-16).
   1. Paul preached a gospel against Moses' Law that was repugnant to Jews (Acts 21:20-25).
   2. The controversy between Gentile churches and Jerusalem was longstanding (Act 15:1-5).
   3. Peter was a leading apostle in Jerusalem, so his agreement would surely benefit (Gal 2:9).
   4. Paul had written the churches of Galatia with warning against Jewish legalism (Ga 1:1-2).
   5. The first epistle was sent from Peter to these Jews by Paul's friend Sylvanus (I Pet 5:12).
   6. Consider that either by personal visit or by his authority, some claimed Peter (I Cor 1:12).

B. Another reason Peter wrote his epistles is by content, which is much exhortation to godliness.
   1. Unlike Hebrews' preeminence of Christ, Peter covered many aspects of Christian living.
   2. Much like James, addressed to a similar audience, there is warning against carnal living.
   3. The Jews were tempted to use the law of liberty for fleshly lusts (Gal 5:13; I Peter 2:16).
   4. Growing up in strict rule-keeping, the gospel of grace could cause an opposite reaction.

C. A third reason Peter wrote was to confirm the Jewish saints in the second coming of Christ.
   1. From the first chapter of the first epistle to last chapter of the second, it is a prime topic.
   2. He will specifically identify scoffers questioning and denying Christ's second coming.

D. A four reason is suffering, which as third-class citizens they most certainly endured much.

E. A fifth reason and related to their minority status was to silence enemies by their good works.

METHOD

A. Peter wrote with a personal style more than a doctrinal, didactic, or logical style and spirit.
B. His approach is more practical and detailed than using broad-brush or theoretical generalities.
C. He did not have Paul's academic training, so he differs some from Romans and Hebrews.
D. There is no mention of Greek or Cretian poets, which Paul could use (Acts 17:28; Tit 1:12).
E. He is passionate by bringing points to bear that should elicit love, desire, fear, zeal, hope, etc.
F. Jesus Christ is presented more in glory and coming than in the past on the cross for our sins.

TIMING

A. No one knows when they were written, and the "experts" vary in their guesses from 44 to 65.
B. It is hard to use 4:7 to prove much about 70 AD, for these distant Jews would hardly feel it.
C. Would Peter encroach on Paul's territory during his life? Some Bible facts imply otherwise.
D. There is little or nothing to be gained by a date, thus why there is no internal evidence for it.

LOCATION

A. The audience was shown above – dispersed Jews in what is now central and western Turkey.
B. The writer, Peter, wrote the first epistle from Babylon in Mesopotamia, now Iraq (I Pet 5:13).
C. At this point it is valuable to point out Paul made no reference to Peter in Rome whatsoever.
    1. The Original Catholic Encyclopedia claims Peter reigned as pope from 33 to 67 in Rome.
    2. Paul in his lengthy list of names in Romans 16 makes no mention at all of Simon Peter.
    3. If Peter were ruler at Rome, Paul would have listed him first and far above others noted.
    4. Peter was ignored as chief bishop and sole possessor of keys of the kingdom of Heaven.
    5. Paul called on the Romans to rectify their disorders without a word to Peter to help out.
    6. There is no Bible evidence of any sort that Peter ever visited Rome or had anything to do with converts there, just like there is no Bible evidence the assumption of Mary, etc., etc.
    7. We find Peter penning his first epistle from Babylon (I Pet 5:13), 1800 miles from Rome!
    8. Papists, needing Peter in Rome, suggest Babylon as its mystical name! See Rev 17:1-6!
    9. These fools consign their church and its pope to hell in order to place Peter in Rome!
    10. Many Jews stayed after captivity, and some at Pentecost were dwellers in Mesopotamia.
    11. Peter was an apostle of the Jews, as Paul noted and his epistle repeats (Gal 2:9; I Pet 1:1).
    12. Let God be true, but every man a liar, especially the deluded devils of the Roman brothel!

INTERPRETATION

A. Our interpretation will be based on our presuppositions based on all the Bible and I Peter.
    1. Since no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation, we do not allow for I Peter to teach

something new that is contrary to what we have learned from the rest (II Pet 1:20).

2. There is one Author, so Peter's epistles are compared to Paul's (II Pet 1:21; I Cor 2:13).

B. We will use the English Bible, the King James Version, as opposed to critical commentaries attacking scripture, questioning canonicity, altering words, altering meanings, etc.

C. We trust the King James as God's words in English.

D. Inspired ambiguity means we will allow more than one interpretation or application of words, if both are true, and if both fit the words and context. There is nothing so broad as God's word, though Origenistic allegorizing is wrong (Ps 119:96). Consider the ox (I Cor 9:9-10).

E. We follow these rules of hermeneutics.

OBSERVATIONS

A. Peter referenced brotherly love in all chapters of the first epistle (1:22; 2:1; 3:8; 4:8; 5:14).

B. He taught submission to civil authority and employers in greater detail than others (2:13-21).

C. His instructions to holiness, such as to wives, is much more practical than doctrinal (3:1-6).

D. The audience was a Jewish minority, so he repeats suffering (1:6-9; 3:13-18; 4:12-19; 5:10a).

E. I Peter touches on marriage, the second coming, government, suffering, employment, reprobation, baptism, eldership, Satan, the Flood, a happy life, regeneration, holiness, etc.

F. I Peter 5 has a number of similarities to James 4, where summary exhortations were made.

G. II Peter 2 has a number of similarities to Jude, for both deal with the danger of false teachers.

SUGGESTIONS

A. If you wish the study proceeded faster, be patient, consider others, and thoroughly grasp it.

B. If you wish the study proceeded slower, read and review and study to gain comprehension.

C. The more familiar you are with I Peter, the more you will benefit and enjoy the study of it.

D. Read and study James and Jude, for they are related epistles and nearly identical in places.