

Chapter 1 of Peter's First Published Letter.

And

Matthew 16:18 *I name you Petros (a small stone) and on this petra (a large or foundation stone) I will build my church and even the power of death will not overtake it.*

Mark 14: 66 – 72 – *and he denied it...and he denied it....and he denied it.*

John 21: 15-19 - *...feed my sheep...feed my sheep...feed my sheep.*

Acts 10:...*what God has made clean you should not consider ritually unclean....Cornelius the centurion a righteous and God-fearing man... was directed by a holy angel to summon you to his house.*

I am including these texts for us to consider because:

1. They remind me of Peter's journey to learn the character of God. We've talked a lot about being confused about how God is working with people of the Old Testament. Well evidently Peter was also confused and needed some instruction – about God's feelings toward him...and toward others.
2. They remind me that God is using us fallible mortals of all ilk to demonstrate to others Heaven's love and healing.
3. There are people (even those who are part of an oppressive system) who may invite us to visit...
4. I think Peter's letter did not come to mind like Venus being born on the half-shell (without context)...it is a result of his journey toward and with God, the results of his choices to follow what he learned, the time period in which he wrote, and the audience that was the object of his care.

Question; - What qualities of Peter's journey do you think contributed to or made possible this letter?

Time of writing:

There are, of course, two differing thoughts about when Peter sent his letter off to what is now northern Turkey:

1. In or around 63 CE during the time of Nero's reign. (Nasty piece of work from a truly crazy family)
2. 81-96 CE during the time of Domitian's reign (Another truly nasty piece of work who somehow arrived on the planet into a rather honorable family. Vespasian and his older son Titus initiated economic and cultural reforms. Titus is reported to have wept when his soldiers set fire to the temple in Jerusalem.)

Either way, there is a good chance things weren't easy for those in the diaspora.

On to the chapter:

Salutation

In this section I am going to use the more exact translation of names because how we call ourselves affects how we are heard.

1. Why do you think Petros described himself as an apostle.
2. Why do you think he was clear to say he is an apostle of Yahweh Saves; The Anointed One

The term used for the hearers can mean resident foreigners or those living temporarily in the locations mentioned in the letter. This seems to indicate persecution or some form of diaspora.

3. Given possibility of persecution why do you think Petros might be writing this note. What do you think are his goals?

The Greek word for "chosen" used in verse 1 can be read as "chosen sojourners" and indicate their entire existence. Given the Calvinism we have studied this may read like some are chosen and some are not chosen by God.

4. What are your ideas about the notion of being chosen? Of course, I am chomping at the bit to get my ideas in but, this discussion belongs to all of us.

An alternate translation of the last phrase is "may grace and peace be multiplied in your" – clearly indicates they already have some and that Petros is not just wanting some added but some multiplied.

5. The phrase could be a proforma, but it can also be a wish for these particular people. Why do you think Petros may have written to this group specifically.

New Birth to Joy and Holiness

An expanded note on the word Blessed can also mean Praised.

6. How do you think the different uses might affect the meaning to the hearers.

I think that the phrase “by His great mercy” could harken Jewish believers back to the temple and its services. Depending on what might be an accurate date for the writing, the temple is still functioning or has been functioning in recent memory. Yom Kippur= Day of Mercy. Kippuret= room of mercy. And then there is the seat of mercy watched over by golden angels. The focus of the entire center of the temple is the Yahweh’s mercy. The name of Jesus used here could translate: Lord – the covenant God; Jesus Yahweh saves: Christ – the anointed one. Again even the name harks back the sanctuary metaphors that have been the hope of Israel.

In verses 3-9:

7. What would you think is Peter’s stage of spiritual development?
8. What do you think might be the stage of spiritual development of his readers?
9. In these verses what do you think he most wants to remind his readers about God.
10. What are the ways he wants to encourage them on their faith journey?

Verses 10 – 12

In these verses Peter talks about (what we now call) Old Testament prophets predicting grace, acknowledging the Spirit of Christ within them, talking about the glory of the Anointed One (more temple and priesthood metaphors), and about an understanding that those prophets were writing to and for the readers of Petros’s letter.

11. What do you make of this connection between those who lived before Jesus and those who are living in the 1st Century CE

Verses 13-21

It looks to me like here Peter is comparing the physical state of his reader being temporary residents in these areas of the Roman Empire to be temporary residents of the earth. As you know, in Hebrew thinking and writing it is common to compare the present and tangible to the eternal and conceptual. One is the example of the other. “Jesus lived on this earth for your sake.” In Vs. 21, there is a word translated “trust” that seems to be confusing in the Greek. It can be rendered faithful. Or there can be more discussion about it. Either way it seems to indicate an action. The text also seems to connect purity with love.

12. Why do you think Peter would write “Jesus lived on earth for your sake”?
13. Hebrew is a concrete language and concepts like love are often delineated by the actions that are part of Love. Why do you think the writing of purity is connected to acting in love?
14. What parts of this first chapter touch you or are important to you?
15. What questions does this intro raise for you.
16. Has this intro left you curious about what is to follow?

I know it's not our normal format but, this week, if you have questions or confusions about what I wrote, be welcome to write them in our chat or to me.

I am looking forward to seeing you soon. Take good care of yourself – because you are infinitely valuable.

Catherine