

The Background of First Peter

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2010

There are many theories on the authorship, audience, and date of 1 Peter. Below are the conclusions I have drawn after thorough research. A fuller explanation and defense of these positions can be found in my longer paper on 1 Peter's background. The longer work can be found at www.ibcgso.org or obtained from IBC's office.

Author: The Apostle Peter, writing from Rome.

- In 1 Peter 5:13, Peter says he is in Babylon. Most scholars are convinced that this is a veiled reference to Rome which Peter used in order to protect his whereabouts and the safety of his fellow believers in the event that the letter was intercepted.

Audience: Christians in Asia Minor who had been expelled from Rome and sent to colonize the newly established cities under Emperor Claudius in 49 AD. The letter would have been taken and read by a courier (Silvanus/Silas, 5:12) to churches in each of the areas mentioned in 1:1. These Christians were a mixed group of Jewish and Gentile believers with whom Peter had associated when they all lived in Rome during the 40s. Since arriving in Asia Minor, they had become the object of hostility and persecution.

- This theory is based on the work of Karen Jobes, with which I interact and cite heavily in my longer paper on the subject. Presently, it is a minority position, but I feel that it is more easily defensible than the alternatives.

Date: 50-55 AD

- Though a range of dates from the early 50s to mid-60s AD is possible, I am presently inclined to lean toward the early end of this range based on the conclusions I have drawn about the audience and setting of this letter.

Purpose: 1 Peter 5:12

- "I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it!"

