



The apostle Peter looms large in the accounts of Jesus' life. In many ways only second to Jesus himself. He is often at the heart of the action in a good way and in a tragic way.

- He kneels before Jesus and asks him to leave because Peter is convicted of his own sin.
- He follows when called.
- He is protective of Jesus and tells him to stop talking about being killed.
- He volunteers to make a tent for Moses, Elijah and Jesus when Jesus is transfigured before them.
- He shows fight and flight when threatened.
- He denies knowing Jesus before his death.
- He runs to the tomb.
- He jumps off his boat to race to the risen Lord.
- He confesses his love of Jesus and promises to care for his sheep.
- Jesus indicates that he will suffer for his faith and leadership.
- He gives the first clear articulation of the gospel in Acts 2.
- He is a leader in the church firstly in Jerusalem

Peter is the author of 1 Peter. His shortcomings, commitment and dependence upon Jesus make him compelling. His recognition that he is a shepherd under the chief shepherd help him to be a great model for the Christian faith and the power of the Holy Spirit to change us.

Location

Peter writes to churches in Asia minor. All of the regions mentioned in 1:1 lie in the Asian area of modern day Turkey.

It is hard to know whether the people he is writing to have been pushed into the region from Judea (see the first persecutions in Acts to see how early believers were persecuted and driven out of Jerusalem bring the gospel with them to other parts of the world). Or whether they have been driven east from Rome due to the persecutions of emperors against the Jews. Either way they are not in their hometown. Peter points to a greater citizenship in heaven and how to live their lives under Jesus leadership wherever they are.



It is thought that Peter was writing from Rome and is imprisoned so there is a great deal of empathy with those under pressure.

Themes

The transformation of the lives of those who receive the gospel in a world that rages against Jesus is one of the strongest themes of the book. He wants to remind Christians of God's plan to keep building his kingdom around the Lord Jesus which will give us assurance. Those that seem to have been pushed aside by the world have been set apart (made holy) by God. This assurance should be reflected in the lives of believers in how they conduct themselves both towards each other and to those who do not believe. And, at several points, he addresses the issue of suffering for doing good and for one's faith directly. The theme certainty in uncertain times is what binds this book together.

Things we can consider:

What does it mean to be holy? We have been made holy and we have been asked to put on behaviour that is in line with that holiness. It is both a status that God has laid upon us and a process to work at for the Christian. What does that mean for our thinking, behaviour and life mission?

How do we respond and honour Jesus when we face opposition? (We need to take care that we do not think what we face is the same as Christians in other dire areas where their life and freedom are at risk or look for persecution that may not be there...Here is an article by a skeptic which has some uncomfortable truths while being inaccurate in some areas. It does quote 1 Peter at some point. It is helpful for you as a leader to see how others, who are not Christian, may interpret what you think. <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/godlessindixie/2016/04/01/persecute-me-please/>)

Secondly, how can we pray for and support persecuted churches throughout the world?

<https://www.opendoors.org.au> is a great resource for seeing what our brothers and sisters are facing around the world. I'd encourage you to do some praying for them during the course of this series. We hope to profile the persecuted church on Sundays through the series.