

# OpenTheo

## 1 Peter Introduction (Part 1)



### 1 Peter - Steve Gregg

In this introduction to 1 Peter, Steve Gregg discusses the importance of Peter in the early church and his relationship with Christ, as well as the question of authorship of the book. Gregg explores Peter's leadership among the apostles and his role as a shepherd. He also examines the Greek style of 1 Peter and its similarities to Paul's writings, suggesting that Peter may have been influenced by Paul. Gregg concludes by highlighting the significance of Christ's judgment and the need for Christians to use their freedom responsibly.

## Transcript

Today we're turning to 1 Peter and beginning our study in this book. Peter, of course, is an extremely important person in the story of Jesus and of the early church, although Paul is sometimes more prominent because of a number of things. One is the book of Acts, although it does center on Peter's activities in the early chapters.

The whole last half of the book of Acts is about Paul and his travels, so that by the time we finish with the historical study of what the New Testament has given us about the early church, we've been focusing on Paul for the last half of the book of Acts, and we've kind of left Peter behind and haven't been following his itinerary. But Peter had an itinerary too, just as Paul did. Sometimes people say that when Paul and Barnabas parted company in Acts 15, that Barnabas was the one mistaken and Paul was the one who was right because we never hear of Barnabas again in the book of Acts.

So clearly Barnabas was the guy who went the wrong way. Or sometimes people say that when they chose Matthias to replace Judas in Acts 1, that was not a good choice because we never hear of Matthias again after that. And they say, well, Paul was certainly the one God had in mind.

The fact that we don't hear of Matthias again after chapter 1 or of Barnabas again after chapter 15, or for that matter, Peter again after chapter 15, does not mean that the author is trying to slight those people. The author, Luke, the author of Acts, he traveled with Paul. He was documenting Paul's travels and so forth.

He was with him. And therefore, it's no surprise that it's Paul whose itinerary receives the treatment in the book of Acts that it does. Luke didn't travel with Barnabas.

He didn't travel with Peter. And therefore, we don't read the similar stories that must have been going on in their lives and their ministries, similar to those in Paul's life, but we just don't have a record of them. Peter certainly was as important as Paul, if not more so in his own sphere.

Peter, of course, was one of the early disciples of Jesus. Paul was not, although, by the way, I'm not slighting Paul. I'm a great hero.

Paul's a great hero of mine. I'm a great fan of Paul's. But Peter was one of the earliest disciples.

He met Jesus in John chapter 1 before Jesus' public ministry even began. Jesus was just kind of hanging out where John the Baptist was baptizing. And Peter was one of John's disciples along with his brother Andrew.

And it was on that occasion that his brother Andrew heard John speak about Jesus, referring to him as the Lamb of God. And so Andrew ran and got his brother Simon. And when Simon came with Andrew to meet Jesus, Jesus renamed him and said, Well, your name's Simon, but you're going to be called Cephas now or Cephas.

That's an Aramaic word. It means a stone. In Greek, the same word is petros, which means a stone.

And so the name Peter in the Greek Bible is petros, stone. We anglicize that as Peter. But it is exactly the same word or the same meaning as the word Cephas or Cephas, depending on how we choose to pronounce that Aramaic term.

He is sometimes called Cephas and sometimes called Peter and on rare occasions called Simon. Sometimes he's called Simon Peter. And on one occasion in our English Bibles, he's called Simeon, which is actually the Hebrew form of his original name, Simon.

So this man is known by a variety of names in the Bible. But we generally know him as Peter because Jesus named him that and because the New Testament was written in Greek. And Peter is the Greek form of the name stone, which was the name Jesus gave him.

Why Jesus named him stone is not entirely clear. The man was not in his early days the kind of individual that we would necessarily think of as rock solid. He was a fluctuating kind of a guy, impetuous.

He spoke without thinking sometimes. He often blurted out what he was thinking while the other disciples were still thinking about what they might want to say. He'd speak up

for them, sometimes well and sometimes not so well, because he wasn't always thinking in advance.

We know he fluctuated even in his loyalty to Christ, not in his heartfelt loyalty, but he certainly fluctuated in his courage. He thought and said very strongly that he would never deny Christ, but he did deny Christ. We know that in his heart he never really sought to disown Christ, but he was just a coward on those occasions when he knew it was going to be dangerous for him to maintain his loyalty to Christ publicly.

He repented of that, and at the end of Christ's tenure on earth, he met with Peter in John chapter 21 and asked him three times, Jesus, do you love me, Peter, more than these? Peter said that he did, and Jesus then said, well, feed my sheep then, or tend my lambs. He gave different answers. It's three different times he asked the question.

He answered a little differently at different times, but basically he assigned Peter a role of shepherding God's sheep. Actually, the Roman Catholics give a lot more importance to that than Protestants usually will, because the Roman Catholics believe that this was actually putting him in charge even of the other shepherds, that Jesus was making Peter the shepherd of the shepherd, the apostle of the apostles, the head of the church, essentially, in Christ's absence. This is reading probably more into Jesus' words than he intended.

He told all of the leaders to feed his sheep. In fact, Peter, in writing 1 Peter in chapter 5, said the elders of the church should feed the sheep. Peter said, I also am an elder, and I do this too, but Peter didn't act like he was the supreme shepherd.

He was just assigned back into the ministry after having denied Christ three times. Remember, Jesus had earlier said, whoever denies me before men, I'll deny before my Father in heaven. But Peter had denied him before men, and therefore, essentially, didn't have any hope of Christ speaking up for him before God, unless he repented.

And he did repent, and Jesus, before he left, made sure that Peter knew that. You might remember that when the angels appeared to the women at the tomb before the male disciples even knew Jesus had risen, Jesus said, go tell the disciples and Peter that I'm risen from the dead. He singled out Peter for notice, not because Peter was the most authoritative, but probably because Peter was the most demoralized.

Having denied Christ three times and living with that guilt and then having seen Jesus die, you'd feel particularly guilty if your best friend and someone you admired and looked up to had died prematurely, and the last thing you had said about him was something that was betraying him. You wouldn't feel real good about that. And yet Jesus, or the angels in that case, singled out Peter for special notice, and Jesus singled him out among the disciples to restore him to ministry.

He said, feed my sheep. That makes him a minister. It doesn't make him the chief apostle.

It doesn't make him the head of the church. But it makes him a shepherd again of the sheep, of which Peter himself will say that all elders are to be shepherds. He says that in the opening verses of 1 Peter 5. Another important passage where Peter figures in the Gospels is at Caesarea Philippi.

When Jesus said to his disciples, who do men say that I am? And they gave a range of opinions that the crowds had been speculating about. Some say you're Elijah. Some say you're John the Baptist.

Some say you're Jeremiah or one of the prophets. Strange they'd have so many answers, and none of them had the right answer, because the Jews were looking for the Messiah. You'd think, in fact, in the early days, a lot of them said they thought he was the Messiah.

But Jesus, at that point, his campaign had more or less collapsed. He had fed the 5,000. The crest of his popularity had just occurred, and he'd given them an offensive speech about eating his flesh and drinking his blood, and the crowds dissipated, and there were none left but the apostles.

Some may have thought Jesus was the Messiah up to that point, but apparently he didn't look much like a Messiah once the crowds dwindled, you know, the balloon popped. And so people are still saying, well, he's somebody, certainly. He's Elijah or John the Baptist or one of the prophets at least.

And Jesus said to the disciples, well, who do you say I am? And Peter, typically speaking up for the rest of the year, the Messiah, the Son of the living God. And Jesus seems like he was very relieved to hear Peter say that, like, you know, very few people were thinking that anymore, but at least the disciples were still on his team. They still saw him as the Messiah, though he didn't look anything like a Messiah at this point.

He looked like a failure. He looked like he wasn't doing any of the things that Jews thought Messiah should do. But Peter said, you're the Messiah.

We know you're the Messiah. And a little earlier, just a week earlier or less, when the crowds had dissipated, the 5,000 had left and only the 12 were left, this is even before Caesarea Philippi, Jesus said to the 12, are you going to go away also? And Peter spoke and said, to whom shall we go? You alone have the words of eternal life. So these guys were going to stick to Jesus like white glue.

They were not going to give up on him just because everything looked like it was falling apart. And it did. And when Peter at Caesarea Philippi said, you're the Messiah.

I mean, this was something that Jesus wouldn't have been surprised to hear him say a few months earlier. But at that point in time, that was especially reassuring to Christ that he was not going to be abandoned by his disciples. They knew, unlike John the Baptist, who had a problem with him.

And Jesus had sent a message to John saying, blessed is the man who's not offended by me, not stumbled by me. Well, the disciples certainly came close to being stumbled by him, but they held in there. He wasn't the kind of Messiah expected, but he was still the Messiah they had their money on.

They're going to stick with him, even if they alone did. And Jesus said, blessed are you, Simon bar Jonah. Bar Jonah means son of Jonah.

Jonah is a Hebrew form of the name John. And so sometimes Peter's father is called John. Bar means son of.

So Simon bar Jonah means Simon's father's name was John. He said, blessed are you, Simon bar Jonah, flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my father in heaven has. And he said, and I say to you, you are Peter.

And upon this rock, I will build my church. And the gates of hell will not prevail against it. And he says, I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven and whatsoever you loose on earth will have been loosed in heaven.

And whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven. Now, these statements that Jesus made to Peter on that occasion, and once again, the Roman Catholics use this passage to elevate Peter above all the apostles. Jesus said, he's the rock.

The church is built on Peter. He gave him the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Well, he did.

He did that. Of course, there's some controversy and Protestants don't all agree whether Jesus was saying that Peter was the rock upon which the church would be built. Obviously, Protestants have a variety of other opinions that Jesus was the rock or the profession of faith in Christ that Peter made was the rock or even divine revelation.

The father has revealed this to you. Divine revelation is even the rock upon which the church is built. I've heard all these theories from Protestants.

Roman Catholics are pretty sure that Peter was the rock upon which the church is built. And Protestants often shy away from that conclusion for fear of falling into Roman Catholicism. But actually, there's not a major problem.

If he said to Peter, you're the rock on this rock, I'm going to build my church. After all, Paul said in Ephesians 2 that the church is built on the foundation of the apostles and

prophets. Peter is one of the rocks upon which the church is built.

Jesus is talking to Peter personally. He said, your name is rock. You're going to have the role of being a rock in the foundation of my church.

The church is going to be built upon you and your pals here. The fact that the statement was made not only to Peter exclusively, which is where the Roman Catholics, I think, are reading more than they need to into it or more than they should, is that this promise he made to Peter was you'll have the keys to the kingdom of heaven and whatever you loose on earth will be have been loosed in heaven. Whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven.

He made that statement to Peter in Matthew 16. Two chapters later, in Matthew 18, he made the very same statement to all the apostles. The statement to Peter is not to Peter as an individual above the other apostles, but it's to Peter as one of the apostles.

This is the apostolic role that all the apostles had, of which Peter was one. After Jesus had ascended, the apostles seemed to allow Peter to speak for them. He intended to do that by default anyway, even when Jesus was here.

When Jesus asked the disciples something, Peter was the first one to speak up, usually. That continued to be true after Pentecost. The difference is that before Pentecost, Peter had been rather cowardly when facing hostile crowds and opposition.

After Pentecost, when he was filled with the Spirit, he was bold. Jesus had said to the disciples, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses. Peter certainly proved that.

On the day of Pentecost, he boldly proclaimed Christ risen from the dead to what was pretty much a hostile audience. Twice after that, he was hauled before the Sanhedrin and his life was threatened. He said, if it's better for us to listen to you than to God, you have to decide whether we're going to follow God.

The second time he said, we must obey God rather than man. In other words, you can do your worst or threaten your worst. We're going to do what Jesus told us to do.

You can see Peter was a transformed man. A man who was intimidated by a servant girl saying, you were with him in the garden, weren't you? She said, no, I never knew the man. That kind of a weak spined individual, unstable man.

He became a true rock, a solid disciple, unintimidated after the Holy Spirit came upon him as Jesus promised. So both seeing Christ resurrected and of course being filled with the Holy Spirit both had something to do with changing Peter and the other apostles into what they became. So Peter, for some time afterward, after Pentecost seemed to be a leader among the apostles.

And once again, the Roman Catholic church feels like this is an important point that Peter was seen by the other apostles as their leader. But this is again, reading more than is to be found in the text because James became the leader of the church after Peter. And even at the Jerusalem council in Acts 15, Peter was called in along with Paul and others to give testimony for the council to consider.

But once all the testimony was in, including Peter's testimony, James spoke up and he gave the final decision about whether the Gentiles need to be circumcised or not. And James is recognized as the leader of the church in Jerusalem, even before Peter disappears from the record of Acts. In fact, two, three chapters earlier in Acts 12, when Peter was put in prison by Herod and the angels came and let him out of prison in the night.

And he went and he met with the disciples who were having an all night prayer meeting at the house of Mark's mother in Jerusalem. There, Peter spoke to him briefly and then went off with these words. He says, go tell the brethren and James that I'm OK, but I'm going somewhere else.

So it's like Peter even had to sort of answer to James, let him know where he was going in a way. This, I don't think it's so much that Peter had to answer to James as much as I think Peter, when the persecution began to rise up, had made an arrangement prearranged with James. That if I have to, if it gets hot and I have to go out of here, if I have to run, will you step into my position here and speak up for the church? I think that that was prearranged.

And so he's telling, telling the disciples, I'm going away, tell James, you know, it's time for him to step up. And he did. And later, when the persecution died down a little bit and the church in Jerusalem was above ground and even the apostle Paul near the end of his ministry came to Jerusalem, he consulted with James, not Peter.

And James asked him, would you please do these things while you're here? And Paul submitted to those requests. So James seems to have as much authority in the church later in Acts as Peter had early in Acts. The Roman Catholic tradition is that Peter went to Rome and that he established the church there.

He planted the church there and then he was their first bishop in that church. Now, the word bishop is an ecclesiastical word that we should strike from our vocabulary. It is found in the King James Version and the New King James.

But the word in the Greek is episkopos. Episkopos means overseer. Skopos, scope is like our word to see.

Epi, E-P-I, is a preposition that means above or over. And so episkopos, episkopos means an overseer. This is the word that the King James Translation rendered as bishops.

And the reason is because the King James Translation was under King James and the church officials, they called bishops, which was an ecclesiastical title. But the Greek word actually just means someone who gives oversight. It's not really a guy who wears a pointed hat and a long robe.

It's just someone who's paying attention to how the sheep are doing, making sure the church is being managed okay. It's an overseer. And the overseers in the church were numerous.

They had elders in every church, according to Scripture, and they were also called the episkopos, the episkopos. And so a bishop was not really an ecclesiastical ruler of some kind. He was just a brother, an older brother in the church who was an overseer along with other older brothers, elders.

The point here is that in the Catholic tradition, a bishop became sort of a powerful figure in the geographical area of their diocese. And it's with this imagery of a bishop in mind that the Roman Catholic Church says Peter was the first bishop of Rome. And because they believe he was superior to all the other apostles, that means all the bishops of the other churches should submit to him.

He was the head bishop. And therefore, the bishop of Rome, as a position, was, the Roman Catholics believe, is a position that is above that of all other geographical areas, and that all the bishops of the world, the church world over, should submit to the bishop of Rome. Well, of course, what we call the pope today is the bishop of Rome.

And although Peter was an apostle, and none of the other bishops that were ever appointed or overseers that were appointed are ever called apostles in Scripture, yet the tradition is that Peter, by being the first bishop of the church of Rome, established that sea or that site, that oversight there, as the principal sea of the church, and all other seas or diocese of bishops are submitted to that. And so when Peter died, they believed that a successor sat on his seat in Rome. And then when that man died, another successor, and so forth throughout until the present time.

The present pope is the present successor of the sea of Rome that Peter is thought to have overseen. So this is how Peter's significance is interpreted in the traditional church. And remember, the Roman Catholic Church was really the only church in the West until the Reformation that really had any kind of, what shall we say, visibility.

There were dissenting groups like the Waldensies and others that dissented from the Catholic Church, but they were pretty much wiped out by the Roman Catholics' inquisitions. So Peter, as the head of the church, is the way that the Roman Catholic Church tended to see it. And they often did so based on Jesus saying to Peter, You are the rock, and upon this rock I will build my church.



Or saying to Peter, Feed my sheep three times. What's interesting is in this very short letter of Peter's, he seems to say enough to refute that mentality about himself. Because in chapter 2 of 1 Peter, he says in verses 4 and 5 that we are coming to him, to Christ, as to a living stone.

Christ is the significant stone, not Peter. We're coming to Christ as unto a living stone. Rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious.

You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood. So we're all living stones. He doesn't say he's a different kind than the rest.

Christ is a different kind. Christ is the living stone. The rest of us are all just living stones that are built upon him.

And notice that when he says that Jesus is chosen by God and precious, He's quoting actually from Isaiah chapter 28, 16. A prophecy about Jesus. And he quotes it in verse 6. Peter quotes this verse in verse 6. Therefore it is also contained in the scripture.

Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone. Elect precious. He who believes in him will by no means be put to shame.

This elect and precious is a reference to Christ, the cornerstone. Actually, in Isaiah, Peter kind of shortens it. In Isaiah 28, 16, it says, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, an elect cornerstone.

So Christ is in that passage that Peter quotes the foundation of the church. Peter is not the foundation. Peter is just one of the living stones.

We all as living stones. You all as living stones are built up. Everyone, all.

All Christians are living stones. Christ is the foundation and cornerstone. So Peter does not, at this point where he begins to talk about the Christians as stones, the very thing that Jesus renamed him, you are Cephas, a stone.

No other New Testament writer speaks of the Christians in general as stones. Peter does this. And it's, of course, a play on words of his own name, Peter.

But in the one place where he actually uses this imagery, the place where he could have pointed out his special status as the stone upon which the church is built, the rock, he simply lets it go by and doesn't say anything to support that notion. He just makes it Jesus who's the stone the church is built on. So upon this rock I will build my church.

When Jesus said that to Peter, apparently did not communicate to Peter that he was personally special in that respect or unique. And then in 1 Peter chapter 5, 1 Peter 5 verses 1 and 2, he says, The elders who are among you I exhort. Now, the elders were just ordinary overseers in the local churches.

Most churches had them. It says, The elders among you I exhort. I, whom also a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ and also partaker of the glory that will be revealed, shepherd the flock of God, which is among you, serving as overseers.

That's the Episcopal. And he goes on to give further instructions. And then he says in verse four, And when the chief shepherd appears, that means Jesus, you will receive the crown of glory.

Now, it's interesting here is the again, the idea that Jesus said to Peter, feed my sheep three times is sometimes interpreted to mean Jesus made Peter the leader over the other apostles. Because he's to feed the sheep. Peter told all the church, all the local church leaders to feed the sheep.

And he did speak about one shepherd who is above the rest, the chief shepherd, but he met Christ. In the two passages that have traditionally been used to give Peter elevation above all the apostles, where he's called the rock or he's called the shepherd. It's like both of them, Peter alludes to them and does not put himself in that position.

And so it does not appear from reading this, that Peter thought of himself the way that some later Christians in later centuries did. And he's just he sees himself as one of the apostles. And that's how he should see himself.

He is one of them. He was prominent, outspoken. He kind of was a visible leader among the apostles in the early days of the church.

But that even changed. And eventually, James was in that position. There is no certainty that Peter ever really went to Rome, but he probably did.

There is a strong tradition that he died in Rome under Nero. But he certainly did not found the church in Rome, as the tradition suggests. We know this because Claudius, the emperor, in the year 49 AD, banished the Jews from the city of Rome because of strife between the Jews and the Christians there.

This is recorded not only in Acts chapter 18, I think it is, but it's also recorded in either Tacitus or Suetonius. One of the Roman historians who wrote about the emperors mentioned that Emperor Claudius did this, that he banished the Jews from Rome because of strife they had over Christ. So that means that Christians were in Rome enough for there to be friction between them and the Jews in Rome as early as 49 AD.

When Claudius made that decree. And no doubt had been there for a while before. However, in 50 AD, we have the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, and Peter is in Jerusalem, apparently still.

So we don't have any record of Peter going to Rome before that. And the church of Rome existed before that. And the church of Rome was not founded by Peter, apparently.

But he did later, according to tradition, go to Rome, and he died there crucified upside down at the command of Nero. Now the upside down part of the tradition is associated with the tradition that Peter was going to be crucified in the normal fashion. But he believed himself unworthy to die in the same way Jesus did.

And so he requested to be crucified upside down. And according to the tradition, he remained upside down, alive on this cross for some days before he died. So he suffered a long time, if the tradition is true.

And it probably is. I say it probably is because the deaths of the apostles would be things that would be very much memorialized by the church in the first century. And it's not likely that they would allow themselves to lose track of what really happened to someone like Peter.

I mean, the way he died would be very memorable. And it's not likely that they'd forget it or substitute it with another story so that they would lose their historical information about their leaders. So, I mean, the traditions are very early and probably reliable.

So, this much about Peter. Now, was Peter actually the author of this book? Well, from the earliest times, the church recognized Peter as the author of 1 Peter. Not so much with the book of 2 Peter.

We're going to be studying 2 Peter separately, of course. And 2 Peter is one of the books of the Bible that was the last to be accepted by the church historically in the canon of scripture. It wasn't until about 397 A.D. that 2 Peter, along with Jude, Hebrews, and Revelation, were finally accepted in the canon of scripture.

Now, these books were in circulation and they were accepted by some churches all along. It's not as if they just appeared out of nowhere in the 4th century and someone said, oh, look, let's put these in the Bible. These books were circulating in the church from the earliest days and some churches accepted them as genuine from the very beginning.

It's just a matter of getting all the churches to recognize them as genuine. That didn't happen until the 4th century. But 2 Peter was one of those very questionable books.

1 Peter, not so much. Virtually every one of the church fathers recognized Peter as the author of 1 Peter from the beginning. However, in the course of the history of biblical scholarship, of course, there's a lot of scholars who've tried to come up with innovative theories about almost all the books of the Bible.

And some have gone so far as to deny that Peter wrote 1 Peter. Again, this was not open to question in the early church, but it has become open to question in some of the centuries since then. I'll tell you my theory about why things like this come up.

There's no good reason for them, in my opinion. But in the scholarly world, if you want to get a PhD, you have to write a dissertation on something that no one has written on before. You have to come up with something innovative, something new.

It doesn't have to have any validity, but it has to be something that no one's done before and that you can defend convincingly. And so, with the large number of persons seeking PhDs in the area of theology and biblical studies and so forth, just about every theory in the world has been defended. And among liberal scholars, which usually means unbelieving scholars, they usually are trying to pull the authority out from under almost all the biblical books.

And one of the best ways to do that is to deny their traditional authorship. If Peter wrote this book, he's an apostle and it's written by an apostle. It belongs in our Bible.

Jesus appointed the apostles to speak for him. And if they wrote a letter, it's as good as if Jesus wrote us a letter. But if Peter didn't write it, if some other person did claim to be Peter, well, that changes everything.

Then it's just written by some person we don't even know. And while we might appreciate its contents and say, yeah, this looks pretty good, we wouldn't have to really take it that seriously as an apostolic work. Certainly, it wouldn't belong in the Bible.

But the claims that Peter did not write it are based on some pretty flimsy arguments, in my opinion. One of the arguments is that the Greek style of 1 Peter and of 2 Peter are different from each other. Now, that doesn't really prove Peter didn't write 1 Peter because many scholars doubt that he wrote 2 Peter.

So even if Peter wrote 1 Peter in one style, we might not be surprised that 2 Peter is written a different style by some other author. I believe Peter wrote both books, by the way. I accept both of them.

But the scholars have disputed those things. The main problem with 1 Peter is that its Greek is too good. Its Greek style and syntax and so forth are that of a pretty well-spoken, literate Greek writer.

And they say the problem with this, of course, is that Greek would have been, at best, a second language for Peter. And, you know, the Greek in 1 Peter is better than the Greek in Paul's writings. Paul's writings is much less literary than 1 Peter.

And yet, Paul was a scholar. Both Peter and Paul were Jews and both knew some Greek, of course. But Paul was probably much better at Greek than Peter would be because Peter was a fisherman, probably minimally educated.

Paul was a university-trained scholar. Paul's Greek is not as good as the Greek in 1 Peter, which makes it questionable. How could Peter, an uneducated fisherman, have written

such a perfect book in terms of the Greek style and so forth? And so that Peter wrote it is sometimes questioned because the Greek is just too good for Peter to have written.

That is not really a damning criticism, however, because all scholars acknowledge that many of the letters in our Bible were not written by the hand of the author, but at the dictation of the author. Paul dictated a lot of his letters. He even mentions that he did, although he wrote some of them with his own hand, too.

It is thought that Peter probably dictated this letter and that somebody else wrote it at his dictation. We know, for example, that Paul dictated Romans and another man named Tertius wrote it down because it is acknowledged in chapter 16 of Romans that Tertius wrote the letter. Paul dictated it.

Now Tertius, in the case of Romans, was therefore what we call an amanuensis. An amanuensis is a secretary who takes dictation. He was not exactly a stenographer, like a court stenographer who took things down word for word.

He was somebody who would listen while the person talked and then write down what they were saying, but often in his own words. People have actually made transcripts of my lectures from tapes and sent them to me, like maybe you could publish these. Well, when you read the transcripts, you couldn't publish them.

I mean, they'd have to be totally rewritten or done differently because even though when you're listening to someone speak, you're not aware of it as much. But it's not, a lot of times, like just now. It's not, a lot of times my, you know, there's unfinished sentences, dangling phrases and things like that.

When people speak, they talk that way. They don't write that way, hopefully. If they do, it's very difficult to follow them.

It's strange how it's different speaking and writing. But you see, if a person's dictating a letter and someone's writing it, the person writing it hopefully has a little bit of skill in smoothing things out. And that's what an amanuensis was.

An amanuensis would listen to what someone was saying and write it down, sometimes more or less in their own words, because they were saying it in writing better than the person was saying it verbally. And therefore, it is thought that Peter's, you know, the high level of Greek style in 1 Peter is owed more to an amanuensis' Greek style than to Peter's own. In which case, it retains the credibility of Peter being its substantial author.

Who was the amanuensis? Well, no one knows for sure, but in chapter 5, verse 12, the third from the last verse in the book, chapter 5, verse 12, Peter says, Now, by Silvanus I have written to you suggests to many scholars that Silvanus was the one writing the letter at Peter's dictation. So we may be reading the Greek style of Silvanus, not the Greek style of Peter. And we don't know much about Silvanus.

This could have been Silas. Silvanus is short for Silvanus. There could have been more than one Silvanus in the early church, but it's possible that Peter and Silas were now hanging out together.

Mark was now with Peter, as we know, it says in verse 13, and he was with Paul in Rome at an earlier time. So Mark and Silvanus, who had been at one time with Paul, if Paul was now dead, as many assume to be the case here, or at least in prison, these men were now associating with Peter more. And that Silvanus may have written it, and we don't know anything about Silvanus' education or anything like that, but he might well have written very good Greek.

So to suggest that Peter couldn't have written this, despite the prevailing church tradition from earliest times that Peter did, and simply to deny that on the basis of the quality of the Greek is pretty vacuous. Because we have no guarantees that even if Peter is the author, that we're reading his style of writing. It may be the style of his Emanuels, whoever that may have been, and it could have been Silvanus.

Another argument against it being Peter is that in chapter 5, as we saw a moment ago, he refers to himself as a fellow elder with the other elders. Chapter 5, verse 20 says, Now, they say Peter was an apostle. He wouldn't call himself an elder.

An elder? That's like a, an elder was a rather low status church leader. An elder would teach and lead a local congregation along with other elders. There was no congregation we know of in the early church that had a single elder overseeing it.

As far as we know, all the churches had elderships, groups of elders. There's no record in the Bible of any church having an individual pastor or an individual elder. This was a development that came up later in church history.

But in the early church, individual congregations were generally overseen by a group of elders. And they were not high level, you know, ecclesiastical politicians. They were just local older brothers in the church who could teach the youngsters.

And for Peter to call himself an elder when in fact he was an apostle, they say that that'd be too demeaning for him to use such a term. But you know, the scholars who say that tells you something about their attitude, doesn't it? They're saying, if I was an apostle, I wouldn't demean myself by calling myself an elder. But that doesn't tell us anything about Peter.

Peter might've been as humble as a Christian ought to be. And thought himself, well, I'm an apostle, sure. But I mean, I'm like you, I'm an older brother, I'm an older Christian, that's all.

I'm not seeing myself as anything special. It's clear that the scholars who make this argument have some arrogance in their own position. It's like a Christian broadcaster I

used to listen to a little bit.

I stopped after he made this comment. But he used to have a radio talk show like mine where people would call and ask questions. And he had five earned degrees.

I'm gonna call him Dr. Smith for this illustration rather than his real name. I know his real name, but I won't give it. But someone called his show and said, Brother Smith, I have a question for you.

And he said, that's Dr. Smith. He says, I have earned these degrees and I have the right to be called Dr. Smith. Well, I guess that's how scholars sometimes feel if they're not Christian or if they're very carnal or very immature.

And that certainly is the opposite of what Jesus said. They don't call you rabbi. You're just brothers.

Don't be called by names of honor among yourselves. You're all brothers. This man apparently had forgotten that in all his training.

Maybe he had not read the New Testament yet. But he was a Bible scholar. And he had an attitude such as maybe many Bible scholars have.

I would never just allow myself to be called Mr. Smith when I'm actually Dr. Smith. And Peter certainly would never allow himself to be called an elder. Such a lowly level of a church official when he's really an apostle.

Well, Peter might have been a real Christian, unlike these other guys who are just professionals. Professional scholars, professional guys who want to blow their horn and put letters after their name. Peter wasn't of that mindset.

And so to say an apostle would not call himself an elder is absurd. Besides, it is generally believed that John wrote the three epistles of John and one of those he simply calls himself the elder. He's an apostle.

Why couldn't an apostle once he was an old man call himself an elder? The word elder means old man. So this argument against Peter's authorship is pretty flimsy. It seems to me along with the previous.

Now the other argument that is given is that this letter shows some dependency on Paul's epistles. Now this is, to my mind, true. A person who wished to deny this might just argue, well, the Holy Spirit who inspired Paul also inspired Peter and therefore we find an awful lot of overlap in the statements by Peter and by Paul.

And while one could argue this and no one could prove it wrong, the way I understand inspiration and the way the New Testament is written, I think it's the way most scholars probably do, is that these men, they were inspired but they weren't in a trance. It's not

like the Holy Spirit is just dictating words to them like an automatic writing, like in some occult practices. There's an occult set of books called the Course of Miracles, which is said to have been channeled by Jesus.

A lot of people get into it. It's a cultic thing, of course. But it's like the author claims that Jesus was just writing his words through them like automatic writing.

The apostles didn't write their letters that way. And they wrote from what they knew. Their memories, their understanding of things came out in their writings.

And even the subject matter they chose to address. When you think of the thousands of subjects that anyone might address in writing a letter to other Christians, it's interesting that there are such a close parallel between 1 Peter and some of Paul's letters. For example, of course, chapter 13 of Romans has a discussion about how God has ordained the leaders and we should submit to the leaders of the country because they are ordained of God.

Peter brings this same point up somewhat shorter in 1 Peter 2, verses 13 and 14, where he says, These two verses are sort of a summary of what Paul says in Romans 13, verses 1 through 7. Same thoughts. They're not found exactly like this anywhere else in the New Testament. But it looks like Peter may have been influenced by Paul's letter to the Romans.

And he says, If Peter wrote this from Rome, then he would, of course, have access to the letter that Paul had written to the church in Rome. And so that he would repeat what Paul said, only summarize it in this manner is not too weird. But probably the closer parallels are between 1 Peter and Ephesians.

Ephesians begins by talking about many of the same things that 1 Peter begins to talk about, especially the issues of election and God's foreknowledge and our inheritance and so forth. And then as the book progresses, you find the same concerns addressing husbands and wives and servants and masters and so forth that we have in Ephesians and Colossians. But it's just as we go through 1 Peter, anyone who's familiar with Ephesians will recognize the likelihood is that Peter had read Ephesians also and was somewhat influenced in what he was saying.

Not that he would have required Paul saying it in order for him personally to know it. Peter would have known these things too. He didn't depend on Paul for his education, I don't think.

Although, who knows, maybe he did depend on Paul for some of his education. We know that Peter didn't claim to be scholarly himself. In fact, he even claimed that Paul's writings were scripture.

So there's really no good reason why he should not stoop to being influenced by Paul if



he believed Paul's writings were scripture. In 2 Peter chapter 3, not 1 Peter, 2 Peter 3, 15 and 16, Peter says, "...and account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation, as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you. As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which those who are untaught and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the scriptures." Now, one thing we can see here is that Peter claims to be familiar with all of Paul's epistles.

He says, our brother Paul speaks about these very things I'm talking about in all of his epistles. So, whether all the epistles of Paul that we are familiar with had been gathered and were available to Peter or not, or whether he just means all of his epistles that I've had a chance to read, doesn't really matter. The point is he was familiar with more than a few of Paul's epistles, and with their contents, and claimed to be writing in agreement with them.

He said Paul wrote about this too. So, if in 2 Peter, Peter claims that his letter and content agrees with what Paul's letters say, it should not surprise us to find similarities between 1 Peter and Ephesians or Romans or any other Pauline epistles. Once again, it's kind of weak to argue that Peter couldn't have written this epistle because it shows dependence on Paul's epistles.

We don't know to what degree he depended on it, but obviously he was familiar with Paul's epistles, respected them as scripture, and did follow in outline at least, in some respects, some of Paul's other writings. But this would not be wrong. He's writing his letter here to people that were from Paul's former ministry.

The assumption by many is that Paul was dead by the time this was written, because he addresses his letter to those who he says were in Pontus, Galatia. This is, of course, chapter 1, verse 1. Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. Now, we don't know that Paul went to all those places, but we know he did extensive ministry in Asia and in Galatia, and those are regions.

These were Paul's regions, plus maybe some additional that Peter was writing to. But it may be that he was following up on Paul's churches after Paul was dead. This is what many people think.

And that he would be reminding them of things Paul had said to them or written to them. In any case, the three arguments against Peter being the author, the fact that the Greek is too good to be his, the fact that he called himself an elder, and the fact that he seems to show some dependency on Paul's writings, none of those arguments really are very substantial. And given the very strong early tradition of the church from all the church fathers that Peter did write it, I think accepting Peter's authorship is a pretty safe bet.

Now, there are some interesting parallels between 1 Peter's wording in the Greek and

things that Peter is recorded as having said in the book of Acts. Now, since the book of Acts was written by Luke, who traveled with Paul, not with Peter, it's interesting that if, I mean, it would seem that Luke must have authentic sources for Peter's sermons, since Luke was not present for those sermons. But Luke must have gotten that information about Peter's sermons from people who were there.

Luke did spend a lot of time with people who were in the early church in Jerusalem, and he could interview them, and even Peter, he could interview Peter. But the point is that Luke records a number of Peter's sermons in the book of Acts, and there are certain verbal similarities to Peter's sermons in Acts and the actual wording of things in 1 Peter, which seems to show, obviously, some kind of correspondence, possibly confirming the common authorship of both. For example, in Acts chapter 4, in Acts chapter 4, verses 10 and 11, Peter is speaking to the Sanhedrin about Christ, and he says, Let it be known to you all and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by him this man stands here before you whole.

This, meaning Jesus, is the stone which was rejected by you builders, which stone has become the chief cornerstone. Now, I mentioned that this is an allusion to, actually there's two allusions, one to Psalm 118 verse 22, but also to Isaiah 28 16. There's two Old Testament passages about Jesus being a stone.

One of them is Isaiah 28 16 and he alludes to it. He's kind of phrasing, taking phrases from two passages here, but Peter quotes that same Isaiah 28 16 in first Peter chapter two and verses seven and eight, which I've mentioned earlier, actually both passages. The one in Psalm 118 verse 22 and the one in Isaiah 28 16, both of them are included in his citation in Acts 4 11 and both of them are found in first Peter chapter two verses seven and eight.

Now that doesn't mean that Peter wrote both, but we do know this in Peter's mind, those two passages were joined. He apparently preached them in conjunction with each other and we find him putting them together in first Peter. It's, I mean, any writer might have done so, but it's just an interesting parallel given the fact that we know Peter was the preacher in Acts and we're exploring the likelihood of him being the author of first Peter, which I believe is clearly the case.

In Acts chapter 10, when Peter is preaching in the house of Cornelius at chapter 10 verse 34, it says Peter opened his mouth and said, in truth, I perceive that God shows no partiality. God is not a respecter of persons. I think it's how it reads in the Greek, but it's, he shows no partiality is it's meaning, it's idiomatic meaning.

Well, in first Peter 1 17, Peter says, and if you call on the father who without partiality or who does not show respect to persons and judges everyone according to his work, conduct yourselves throughout your lifetime of your sojourning here in fear. So this idea

that God shows no partiality is something that Jesus showed Peter on the occasion when he was persuading Peter to go to this house of the Gentile. And now Peter brings that point up to in his epistle.

Now, just in order to balance this out, Paul also mentions in his letters that God shows no partiality or is not a respecter of persons. So it's not as if Peter's the only person who says this, but we do know that that was a special revelation that was made with impact to Peter when that sheet of animals was lowered to him and God was giving him a revelation about this. It would certainly be a meaningful truth to Peter.

And it happens to be mentioned by Peter in first Peter 1 17. In Acts 2 23, on the day of Pentecost, Peter is preaching in Acts 2 23. Peter says him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands of crucified and put to death.

Jesus was crucified, he says, by the foreknowledge of God. Well, in first Peter chapter 1 and verse 20, he says, Christ indeed was foreknown or foreordained, it says in this version, but it's foreknown in the Greek, before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you. Once again, this idea of God foreknowing Christ beforehand and foreknowing his death beforehand, foreordaining it, whatever, this concept could have been included in any Christian writer's work.

I mean, any Christian might have said this, but not all Christian writers did. Peter did, and we find it in his sermon and in his epistle, the foreknowledge of God. Also, the expression he used in the household of Cornelius in Acts chapter 10, verse 42, it says, he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that it is he who was ordained by God to judge the living and the dead.

Christ is going to judge the living and the dead, Peter said to Cornelius. He also says in first Peter 4, 5, they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. So, this expression that Jesus will judge the living and the dead is something Peter used in a sermon, and we find the same expression also here.

By the way, however, it is possible, it's also the case that Paul uses that expression, and therefore, you know, we don't want to assume too much. I mean, it's not like Peter's the only person who used that expression. In 2 Timothy 4, 1, Paul said, I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ who will judge the living and the dead.

So, that Christ will judge the living and the dead is something that Paul and Peter both said. The difference, though, is that we have only a limited number of speeches from Peter recorded and a very limited number of chapters written by Peter in his epistle, and despite the smallness of the volume of what is given, there's these verbal parallels that might not otherwise be expected. For example, James didn't use these expressions, or John, or Jude, or, you know, certain other writers didn't use these expressions.

Peter did. The fact that Paul used some of the same ones, too, might even reflect Paul's influence on Peter that was mentioned earlier. One other interesting thing is that the cross, when Peter writes or speaks about the cross, he uses the word zylon or zoolon.

There's a self-publishing company for Christians called Zoolon Press. It's this word in the Greek, zoolon. It's talking about the cross, but it's actually a word in the Greek that means wood or tree.

It literally means wood, but it means wood in certain contexts. It means the tree, and it's translated as tree in our English Bibles. For example, in Peter's preaching to the Sanhedrin in Acts chapter 5, in verse 30, he says, the God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a zoolon or zylon, a tree.

Now, he could have said cross, but he used this word that means tree instead, and Peter used the same word in Acts chapter 10. To the house of Cornelius, Acts chapter 10, in verse 39, says, and we are witnesses of all these things which he did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem whom they killed by hanging on a tree, a zylon or zoolon. The reason it's pronounced either way is because the letter epsilon in Greek can be substituted with either the English letter U or the English letter Y, and different transliterators make different choices about that, so it could be zylon or zoolon.

But in 1 Peter 2.24, 1 Peter 2.24, Peter says, who himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree. Again, the same word. Now, Paul also uses the word, but of course, Paul more often uses the word cross.

Peter fairly consistently uses the word tree, and this is true in his sermons and in 1 Peter. So, these are just some interesting verbal parallels between the book of 1 Peter, which we already suspect is written by Peter since the early church said so, and these would seem to confirm, they don't prove it, but they seem to go well with the thesis that Peter is the author. I just want to real quickly go over some other points here, and then we'll take our break, and that is that there are things in 1 Peter that might have been allusions to events in Peter's life that would be significant that he'd remember and mention.

For example, it was Peter who objected to Jesus washing his feet in John chapter 13. He said, you'll never wash my feet, and Jesus said, what I do now, you don't understand, but you'll understand later. Well, he did understand later, and when he wrote to leaders, well, in chapter four, in verse 10, when he's not writing to leaders, but he's there, he says, each one has received a gift.

Minister it, that means serve it. The word minister means serve it to one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. The gifts of the spirit are there to make you serve, not to give you status in the church, but they are services to perform.

That ministry is a service performed, a slave act offered to the body of Christ, is something Peter points out here, and that's something he probably had burned in his knowledge from that, frankly, that rebuke from Jesus, that he didn't understand that being a leader is being a servant, or being a minister is being a servant. Also, the balance between servanthood and freedom that Peter mentions in 1 Peter 1.16, in 1 Peter 1.16, it says, oh, wait, that's not what I'm thinking of, I don't think so. No, that's a different reference.

Okay, I do have the wrong reference there, I'm sorry to say, but basically he says, as free, yet not using your liberty as a cloak of maliciousness. That's in 1 Peter somewhere, I'm afraid I've got the wrong reference down, I forget the actual reference. But the idea is you have liberty, but you shouldn't abuse your liberty, and this comes perhaps from Jesus' statement to Peter in Matthew 17, verses 24 through 27, that we are free from paying the temple tax, but to avoid offense, let's go ahead and pay it anyway.

That is, you have liberty, but you don't want to take all the liberties you might. You need to be considerate of stumbling other people and so forth. 2.16, thank you, I had it down as 1.16. Your notes say 1.16, it's actually chapter 2.16 where he says that, thank you.

And then, of course, the reference to human stones in 1 Peter 2.5, you are living stones. Well, of course, that's Jesus said to Peter in John chapter 1, in verse 42, you are a stone, and this, no doubt, has something to do with Peter being the only person who refers to Christians as stones in this manner. And then, as we mentioned earlier, the shepherd and the flocks.

In John 21, Jesus said to Peter, feed my sheep, feed my sheep, feed my sheep. In 1 Peter 5, 2 through 4, he tells the leaders, feed the sheep, or shepherd the sheep. So there's a lot of things in here, vocabulary-wise, and even possibly allusions to things in Peter's early life that may have stuck with him that became part of the emphasis of his preaching and his writing.

And we see, therefore, a lot of reason to accept the traditional view that Peter is the author of this book. And we'll take a break now, and come back and finish our introduction in our next session.