

I am going to give a general overview of Peter so you can have a long distance look at 1st and 2nd Peter. This is certainly not an exhaustive overview. "The Peters" — despite some end-of-the-world language — are deeply concerned with the every day conduct of those called by Jesus.



Beginning of 1 Peter —

1 Peter an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God's elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia. 2 who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father

The place names in verse 1 are not meaningless, if you see Peter greeting believers relatively close to each other (see map). These believers are a tight knit band of spiritual exiles (I'll talk about that in a second).

On a practical level - these two letters (and most epistles) were meant to circulate among these different communities and be read at their meetings.

These meeting become the proto

church service we are familiar with today. Circuit letters formed a precursor of the collection of writing we now call the NT epistles.

In Peter, being chosen does not afford some right of place:

1 Peter 2:11 Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul.

Another Translation has 1 Peter 2:11 Dear friends, I urge you as aliens and temporary residents not to give in to the desires of your old nature, which keep warring against you;

Wrap you head around two ideas: First, we are called by Jesus. Second, we are temporary residents who are owed nothing. We are called together by Jesus, and are still aliens in land. Our "chosen-ness" does not give us special earthly privileges. We actually have less privilege as Christians to throw our weight around in this world because we are resident aliens, not completely home. The ideas of call and earthly status are necessary to understand what the 2 Peter reading says today. John the Baptist in the gospel is a great story, but few of us feel a special desire to emulate this wild eyed desert preacher. Peter has a different view on how to prepare the-way-of-the-Lord. We can focus on how to be the best prepared Tom, Dick and Harriet in our own way and in our own day.

And remember Advent is about 2nd coming Jesus and not baby Jesus.

Today's Reading — 2 Peter 3

The Lord is not slow about his promise.... But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed. Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire?

Peter's message to us — Prepare yourselves through humility and holiness. Wait with hopeful expectation because — for now — we are beggars before God. The privilege we have is to live a life that embodies holiness and humility. The opposite of humility is holding on to our perceived entitlements which are meaningless anyway because God is going to dissolve everything with fire. Why try so hard to end up with the most toys at the expense of humility!

2 Peter continues — in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home. Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

I don't like the images of fire burning everything up, BUT, I can see how —through God's grace — I can open my heart to the righteousness and peace of Christ and welcome him into my home. This is true if God starts everything over today or a million years from now.

Peace, Todd