

Grace & Peace

Long Beach Alliance Church • June 19th, 2011 • Pastor Chris Lankford

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.

~1st Peter 1:1-2 (NASB)

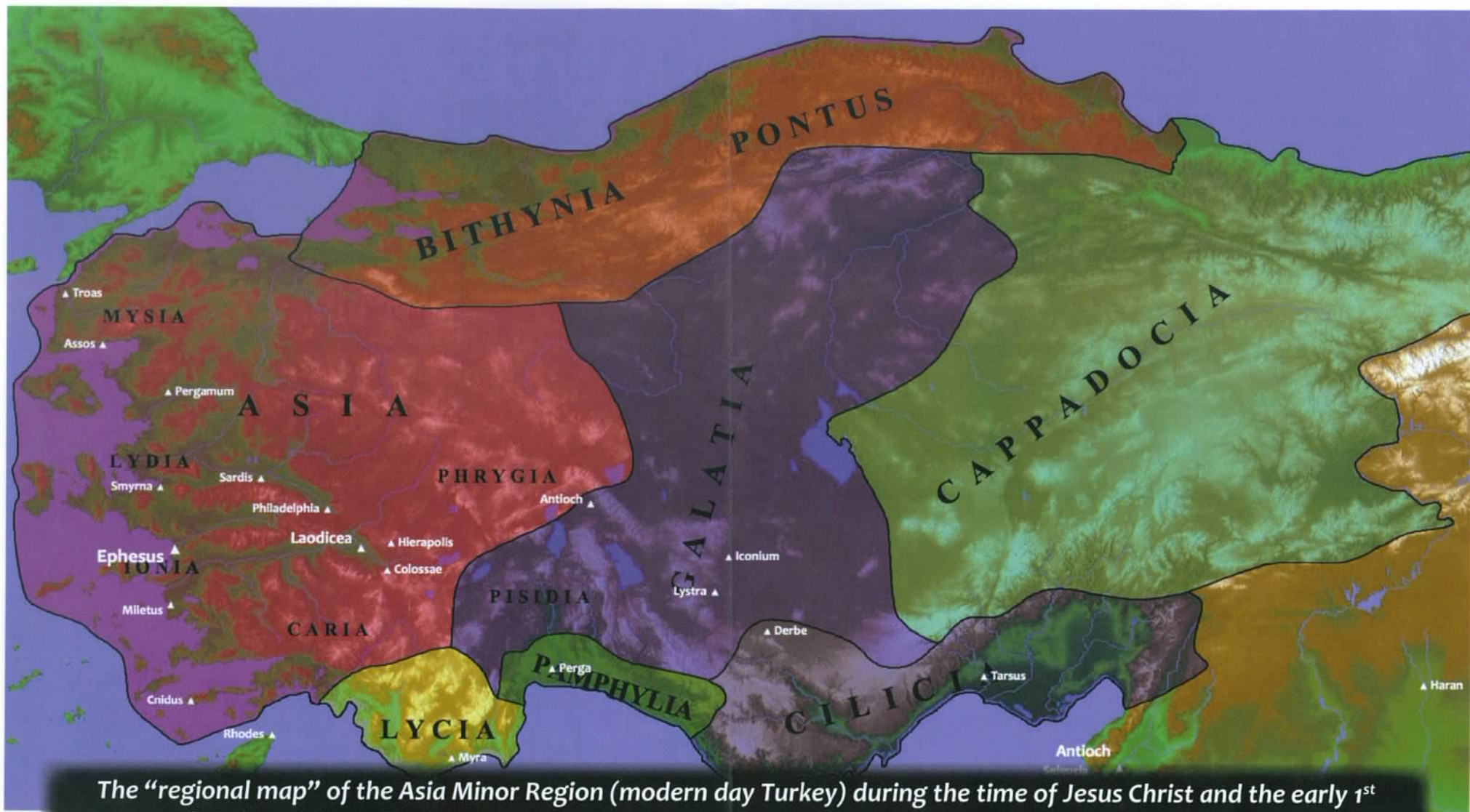
1) Peter, Apostle Of Jesus Christ

- A) The text indisputably asserts authorship by the Apostle Peter (1st Peter 1:1). This is the same Peter who was a disciple of Jesus Christ (John 1:42), denied Christ three times (John 18:15-18, 25-27), was forgiven and restored by Christ (John 21:4-22), and became the leader of the earliest known church of Jerusalem (Acts 2:14ff).
- B) Because the structure and grammar of 1st & 2nd Peter are complex and elegant, many scholars have concluded that an uneducated fisherman/disciple (Acts 4:13), such as Peter, could not have written these short letters, opting instead for “pseudonymous authorship,” an author who knew Peter and his teaching, and used his name to authenticate the content of the letter (a common occurrence in the ancient world), but was not actually the Apostle Peter.

- C) However, the “internal evidence” in these short letters: allusions to Christ’s teaching and humility, eyewitness claims of seeing the sufferings of Christ, etc., authentically supports Peter’s authorship. The “external evidence” surrounding 1st & 2nd Peter: they were universally accepted within Peter’s lifetime as being from his hand – also provide solid authentication of Peter’s authorship.
- D) It is significant that the Apostle Peter, who walked and talked with Jesus on the earth, and often tried to do things “his way” instead of patiently following the way of Jesus (cf. John 13:5-20), is both the author and our teacher!

2) Recipients & Opening Themes

- A) Peter writes to the “chosen foreigner of the dispersion” (1st Peter 1:1) in the region of Asia Minor (see map). This was rich language for both Jewish & Gentile converts to Jesus Christ, some of which probably came from the Jerusalem church (Peter’s home church).
- B) The language of God’s “choosing” and “foreknowledge” are significant in Peter’s introduction. While they are aliens/foreigners within Asia Minor, these are God’s chosen people with a divine calling, purpose, and lifestyle (1:2).
- C) God’s “election” or “choosing” (1:1-2) is:
 - i) according to foreknowledge of God (He compassionately chooses YOU),
 - ii) by the consecration of the Spirit (chosen from the world and secured by the Spirit),
 - iii) for obedience and salvation (blood) in Jesus Christ (chosen with a purpose).
- D) Note how the entire Trinity (God, Spirit, Christ) is at work for the fullest possible measure of grace & peace (1:2)!



The “regional map” of the Asia Minor Region (modern day Turkey) during the time of Jesus Christ and the early 1st Century church. While each of these areas had their own regional governments, they were all under the heavy hand of the Roman Empire. 1st Peter was probably written from Rome (“Babylon” in 1st Peter 5:13) by Peter just prior to a period of severe persecution by the Roman Emperor Nero against Christians. Nero himself ordered the burning of Rome in order to satisfy his tremendous lust/passion for building (and re-building). In the burning of Rome though, many died and much was lost, both personally and religiously. Nero spread the rumor that it was the Christians who were responsible for burning “pagan Rome,” ushering in an era of unprecedented persecution against Christians throughout the Roman Empire. Peter would have seen this persecution first-hand in Rome, and anticipated the “fiery ordeal” (1st Peter 4:12) which would come to Asia Minor. The letters of Peter to the churches are like those from a father warning his children of danger which is both present, and danger which will become even greater in the future.