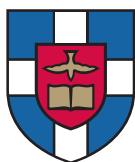


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Editorial: Learning with Peter to “Stand Firm in God’s Grace”

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Simon Peter is perhaps one of the most attractive of all the people and writers of the NT. He is a predominate individual in the Gospels and the early part of Acts, as an apostle of our Lord Jesus Christ. Like his brother Andrew, Simon was a fisherman before he was called to follow Christ. Peter came from Bethsaida, on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee (John 1:44), but he made his home in Capernaum (Mark 1:21, 29), where he lived with his wife, his mother-in-law, and Andrew (Mark 1:29-30). From the Gospels we know of his temperament as strong-willed and quick to express his thoughts and emotions (see John 13:6-9; Matt 26:33). He clearly is the leader of the apostolic circle which is evidenced by the fact that he is listed first in every list of apostles and he functions as the spokesman for the apostles (see Matt 16:15ff). It is not accidental that Jesus nicknamed him “The Rock,” a pun

on his name and reflective of his personality, his leadership skills, and his deep love for Christ.

Peter, as a Galilean, was probably caught up with revolutionary Messianic expectation. Similar to others in the first century, faithful Israelites longed to see the OT prophecies of God's rule and reign come to this world in salvation and judgment. They longed to see a reversal of Israel's fortunes and God's kingdom break into this world through the coming of the Messianic, Davidic king. Given that Peter shared these same hopes and longings, it is not surprising that we discover in the Gospels that when news reached him and his brother about Jesus, he and his friends left their fishing and travelled south to hear him, and in the words of his brother Andrew, "We have found the Messiah" (John 1:41). As Peter accompanied Jesus, heard him preach and witnessed the power of the dawning kingdom in him, eventually at Caesarea Philippi he rightly confessed that Jesus is the promised Messiah and Davidic king (Matt 16:16). Jesus accepted the title, but then began to teach them that the Messiah was the triumphant ruling King who first "must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things ... and be killed" (Matt 16:21). Peter was not expecting a suffering Messiah and Jesus rebuked him strongly.

Initially, Peter did not learn from Jesus' rebuke; at this point in his life he simply did not understand that Jesus was the Messianic King who first had to die. Peter's initial views of the kind of Messiah Jesus should be were probably confirmed when only a week later he saw Jesus transfigured before him in power and glory, even though Moses and Elijah spoke of his "departure" (Luke 9:31) and Jesus repeatedly spoke of his upcoming death (Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33f, 45). After the events of the Upper Room, the trial, and his threefold denial of Jesus, Peter went out into the night to weep tears of deep disappointment—the Messiah whom he longed for was now dead. Seemingly, Peter's hopes, along with the other disciples, were dashed.

But then the resurrection occurred. Finally, after the resurrection, Peter understood that Jesus was the Messiah who first had to suffer and die for our sins in order to take his throne and be seated at the right hand of the Father. Peter now grasped what Jesus had taught the disciples from the beginning, namely that he *had* to suffer to fulfill all Scripture (Luke 24:25-27). After Jesus' Ascension and the events of Pentecost, Peter, and the other disciples, now began to preach that the cross was not an afterthought in God's plan;

instead it was foreordained (Acts 2:23-24). In Christ and his cross, the OT prophetic word is fulfilled and the new covenant era is now here. In Christ, the end of the ages had dawned, the church comprised of believing Jews and Gentiles is now formed, and the inter-advental age has begun. But Peter also grasped that during the time between the first and second coming of Christ, the church, as God’s new covenant people, would experience trials, suffering, and difficulties simultaneously with the glorious proclamation and spread of the gospel. As such, Peter, along with the other apostles, learned what it meant to suffer for Christ’s sake. In fact, according to tradition, Peter was crucified in Rome under Nero. By the power of the gospel, Peter’s old fiery, fighting spirit was replaced by his new and living hope in Christ Jesus (1:3). Following Christ entailed that he would enter glory by first experiencing suffering—all truths that are predominant in 1 Peter.

First Peter is truly a model pastoral letter. In it, Peter encourages the church as persecution surrounds them. He does so by reminding them that although Christ is the King and in his work has inaugurated the new creation, no Christian will avoid suffering until Christ returns. Christ’s cross-work has accomplished our eternal redemption, but we, as his disciples, must also learn that we will suffer now with glory to follow. This is a message that the church needs to hear today. Outside of the West, the church is facing ongoing onslaughts of persecution and suffering for Christ’s sake. In the West, we see looming increased pressures to compromise to the culture and conform our thinking to the “spirit of the age.” In such a time as this, 1 Peter is a book to study, teach, and preach in our individual lives and in the church.

Peter addresses his letter to “God’s elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia” (1:1). Today, the places named are in the northern part of modern Turkey. It is unlikely that the readers had been evangelized by Peter (cf. 1:12) but nonetheless Peter writes to encourage them in the midst of their trials. Most argue that the church is comprised of believing Jews and Gentiles. Some try to argue that the church is only comprised of Jewish believers due to the language of Israel applied to the church (2:9-10), but this is hard to justify. Within the letter Peter addresses the church as coming from a pagan or Gentile background (see 1:14, 1:18, 2:25; 3:6; and 4:3-4). Peter says that the readers lived in “ignorance” (1:14), “vainly” (1:18), and once living a life characteristic of Gentiles (4:3-4). A better explanation is that the church is now comprised of

believing Jews and Gentiles who are viewed as the renewed, eschatological true Israel because of the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. In him, God's new humanity, the church, has been formed and in Christ, all of God's promises are now fulfilled in him and his people. Yet, until Christ returns, the church will live as "resident aliens" in this world even though they are the people of the new creation. Living between the times, we stand firm in God's grace, but we also have realistic expectations of what we will face as we await the coming of our Lord.

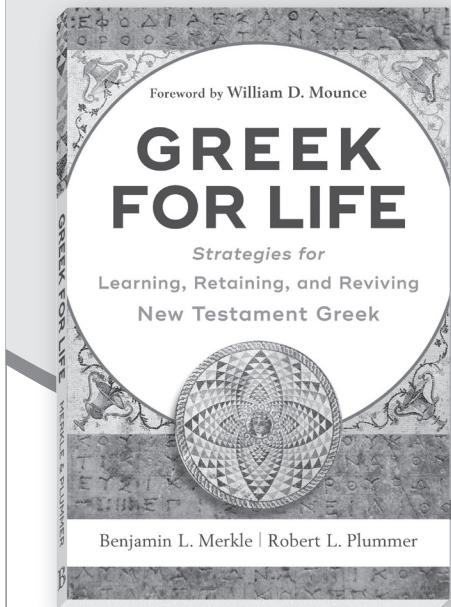
Throughout the letter, Peter reminds the church of many glorious truths, but he does so by focusing on what God has done for us in Christ Jesus. Peter reminds this suffering church about the glories of the crucified, risen Son of God. In Christ's suffering he has brought us salvation. Peter presents Jesus' death as sacrificial (1:2, 18-19) and central to God's eternal plan—Christ was "chosen before the creation of the world" (1:20). Jesus' death was no tragic accident but the fulfillment of God's purpose to inaugurate a new covenant and bring about the full forgiveness of our sins (3:18; 4:1; especially 2:4-8). Christ is the "stone" the builders rejected (cf. Isa 8:14; 28:16; Ps 118:22), but they have rejected the one whom the prophets predicted in regard to his death and the glories that would follow (1:11).

Although Christ's death and resurrection is utterly unique and the only ground for our justification before God, Peter also presents Jesus as an example for us of how to bear suffering (2:21). Jesus did not respond to insults with insults but committed himself to the Father. In Christ bearing "ours sins in his body on the tree" (2:24), he not only accomplishes our salvation but also provides an example for us in how we are to face the onslaughts of this world opposed to God and under the power of Satan. Peter also encourages the church that our salvation in Christ is a present possession. We have already been purified (1:22) since we have been born again by the Spirit (1:23). But even though salvation is presently ours, we still must await its appearance "to be revealed in the last time" (1:5) as the end of all things draws near (4:7). We must wait patiently to receive our crown of glory when our Chief Shepherd appears (5:4).

In light of this, Peter reminds us how we ought to live as the church between the times. The message of 1 Peter is needed for us today. We constantly need to be reminded of the glories of Christ and how we ought to live as "resident aliens" in the world. This present world is not our home; we await the

consummation of the new creation. But in the meantime, we are to live as God’s holy people, bearing witness to God’s sovereign grace in their lives, as we live quiet, humble, and godly lives, knowing we are God’s own possession and heirs of the new creation. It is my prayer that this issue of *SBJT* will be an encouragement to the church today.

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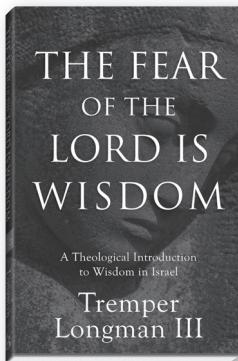
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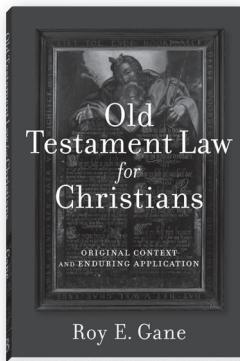


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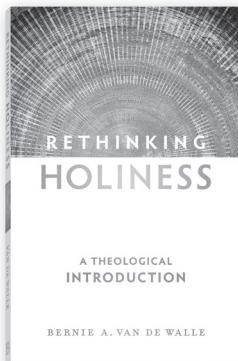


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Immigrants in Our Own Land, Citizens of God

PETER H. DAVIDS

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The letter known as 1 Peter is no longer a New Testament “stepchild,” as John Elliott famously called it,¹ but is rather the subject of numerous studies and is rich in theological nuance and implications. This is hardly the place to attempt to fully explore the wealth of this letter,² but it is the appropriate setting to summarize its instruction and in doing so to highlight its theological perspective and major exegetical issues. That is the limited but still ambitious goal of this article,³ which will in general follow the structure of this circular letter.

LETTER OPENING

The first thing that one notices about 1 Peter is the addressees: those addressed are “immigrants” or “resident aliens” and yet they are “chosen” or “elect.” They are a “diaspora,” but in provinces in which they were once very much at home (1 Pet 4:3-4). And this theme of being “immigrants” is repeated multiple times in the letter, as is the language of being a chosen people. The point of 1 Peter is that there has been a change: chosen by God, those addressed have

obeyed or submitted to the rule of Jesus the Anointed One and have been made holy by the Spirit, the imagery being that participating in the being set aside as holy that Moses did to the people of Israel, although this time the sprinkling is with the blood of Jesus rather than animals of lesser phyla. The addressees are a new people, a holy people, and yet still live in their original communities, which, as will become clear, is part of the problem.

We learn how this happened in the thanksgiving, 1 Peter 1:3-12. These largely-Gentile men and women have been “born anew,” another repeated concept in the letter. Unlike John 3:3, where “born again” is a *misunderstanding* of Jesus, here the image is taken very seriously. They have been born again (1 Pet 1:23) of an imperishable “sperm,”⁴ that is “the living and abiding word of God.”⁵ They are now “children [of God]” (1:14), even if they once lived in ignorance, following the empty or foolish way of life of their patrimony.⁶ They are newborn babies (1 Pet 2:2) drinking spiritual milk. They who were not a people are now a “chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people” (2:9-10, echoing Exod 19:6). In other words, they who were largely Gentiles are now God’s renewed people, receiving the promises and titles of Israel.⁷ And, as a result, they are now foreigners in the lands of their birth (notice how 2:11 follows right on 2:9-10) and are treated as such by their former compatriots.⁸

That being the case one can now understand the strategy of the thanksgiving. Jesus did die, and 1 Peter will refer to the death of Jesus as an example for the suffering community, which is living an *imitatio Christi* even if their suffering is more rejection and ostracism than execution, but Jesus is resurrected, ascended, and presently rules, so there is hope, a hope that permeates the letter. The people have been estranged from their earthly inheritance, but they have one stored in heaven, not because they will go there to receive it, but because it will be there when Jesus is revealed as king. They feel vulnerable, but they are in fact guarded by God. In other words, 1 Peter deftly reframes their situation in terms of their being God’s chosen people, God’s family, one with Jesus (terms that will be significant later in the letter). And that means that while suffering is their present situation, it has a purpose—their honor status when the reigning Jesus the Anointed One is revealed. Notice that in 1 Peter it is not that Jesus will come back to reign, but that his presently unseen reign will be revealed. And that is the time of their salvation. Salvation, in 1 Peter, is a present process with a future fullness, not a past event.⁹

BODY OPENING

The body opening of the letter, 1 Peter 1:13 – 2:10, focuses on the implications of this new identity. The addressees are to focus their minds on the favor that will be theirs when Jesus is revealed as divine ruler and king. In other words, eschatology determines ethics. Grace or favor is *future*, when Jesus is revealed, and so all of their present life should be lived in the light of this reality on which their mind is focused.

They are re-born (the point of which birth is probably baptism, which is explicitly mentioned in 1 Pet 3:21) and therefore have a new Father. This means that their values or ethics should not be those of their pagan birth family, but those of their new Father, a Father who is holy (and what that means is described in the Hebrew Scriptures, 1 Peter being very familiar with them in Greek translation) and whose ethics, like that of any good *pater familias* of the Greco-Roman world, determines the ethic of the family. Significantly, this call to holiness was first spoken in the Torah to God's Hebrew family (e.g. Lev 11:45), which, as will be made clear later in 1 Peter, is the family that these former pagans now continue in this present age. They were part of a pagan family and so lived those values; they are now ransomed (which suggests that as pagans they were captives or exiles in a different sense than that in which they are presently exiles, perhaps captives of the devil, since he is mentioned in 1 Peter 5). The ransom price is the blood of Christ (exactly which "lamb" is being thought of is indeterminate, in part because lambs were used in multiple sacrifices and in part because the language is deliberately designed to repeat an initial alpha for effect).¹⁰ The paragraph finishes with a reference to the greater "theodrama;" that is, to the whole narrative of God's history with this world, for the Messiah was planned all through the drama, but the implied readers are privileged to live in the "end of the times" or "end-times," in the period when Jesus was manifested (i.e., in his life, death, and resurrection).

Conversion for 1 Peter is "obedience to the truth," similar to Paul's definition of it as submission to Jesus as resurrected Lord (Rom 10:8b-10). That obedience is visible in love, which is not an emotional feeling for the others in the family, but which is what one might call family loyalty, or, as Thomas Aquinas would later define it, "Seeking the good of the other as other." And the reason is that the re-born one is part of a new *ethnos* or new family: one

is born anew, not of corruptible sperm, but of incorruptible, the word of the living God.¹¹

The ethical implications of new birth are brought up again in 1 Peter 2:1: live ethically, throwing out the old behavior and desiring “the pure milk” appropriate to newborn babies, resulting in their growing up into a “salvation” or “deliverance” that is future. The re-born have tasted this milk in the kindness or graciousness of “the Lord,”¹² so the image is redolent of the behavior of a newborn that has tasted his or her mother’s milk.

But 1 Peter shifts images very quickly and merges metaphors. “The Lord” is a rejected stone (as the implied readers are rejected) but chosen by God. They are built into a temple (“spiritual house”) in which Jesus is the cornerstone.¹³ But they are also the priesthood in this temple that is offering sacrifice “through Jesus the Anointed One.”¹⁴ This idea is, quite naturally for 1 Peter, supported by Scripture, perhaps *testimonia*, but the scriptural culmination comes when the titles of Exodus 19:6 are applied to these former pagans with promises of Hosea applied to them as well. The ancient theodrama in which Israel plays such a prominent part finds its fulfillment in this latest chapter, the reborn people of God, without any sense of irony or discontinuity.

BODY MIDDLE

The body middle (2:11 – 4:11) helps the implied readers wrestle with the tension that is set up with their living in a pagan earthly society while fully submitted to God’s now and coming king, Jesus the Anointed One. The believers are now indeed immigrants and exiles in the lands of their birth, and this sets up a tension with the surrounding culture that tries to force them to conform to its values and behavior. In contrast, 1 Peter states that the Christian behavior of his addressees is to show them honorable or virtuous,¹⁵ even though their pagan neighbors might only acknowledge this fact at the final judgment: there is no “feel good fast” in 1 Peter, but rather an inner peace and joy in the light of a future expectation.

When it comes to rulers, “Be subject for the Lord’s sake.” In other words, the ruler (i.e., the Roman emperor, perhaps Nero, in the setting of 1 Peter, or local representative or client king) has no ultimate claim or authority. Therefore “be subject” does not include behavior of which Jesus the Anointed One

would not approve. But the ruler does do a job for God in dampening down evil, for even a poor ruler is better than anarchy. Thus, while technically free (a follower of Jesus belongs to another people than the local populace and is under another ruler) the believer fits in as much as possible so that even in pagan eyes he or she will be seen to be virtuous. One even gives honor to the ruler, (“Mr. President,” “Your Majesty”)—that is not disloyalty, for one does that to all human beings in this same passage. But one is not the slave of the ruler, but the slave of God. And when it comes to God, he is the one and only being that one reverences. The relationship to the state is a dance, a dance that 1 Peter knows that the pagan world will often not appreciate, but it is an attempt to find some common ground, if only on terms laid down by God.

Household slaves (the setting of 1 Peter is urban, and that is where most slaves would be household slaves) are also to “be subject” to their masters. But while there was not much other choice in the ancient world (Romans, in particular, were very sensitive to any hints of resistance among slaves and they met such a threat, or even hint, of *stasis* with the ultimate punishment), 1 Peter transforms the necessary subjection in three ways. First, it is done “mindful of God” (RSV) and “seeking God’s approval” (1 Pet 2:20 RSV). Second, the same patient obedience is shown towards the just and the over-bearing masters, towards those who were kind and those who punished one for doing good.¹⁶ Third, when a slave does suffer unjustly, the situation is reframed as identification with Jesus so long as the slave shows the behavior of Jesus. In other words, the slave has been healed by Jesus and brought into his flock, but in this identification in suffering the slave enters into the salvific mystery. That gives deep meaning to what otherwise could appear to be meaningless. Reframing is a powerful psychological technique simply because it brings the person into contact with a new reality, and in this case the reality is ultimate reality.

Likewise wives of pagan husbands (and that seems to be the focus of 1 Peter 3:1-6) were legally under the power of their husbands; they are told by 1 Peter to focus on virtues that both followers of Jesus and pagans would see as praiseworthy (although Christians praised those virtues in both male and female believers, while pagans thought them important only for women) and in that way they would emulate the Hellenistic Sarah of the *Testament of Abraham* (at least that is the form in which that version of the

Sarah narrative is available to contemporary readers).¹⁷ Meanwhile, as an addendum, Christian husbands are told to treat their Christian wives, not as pagans would treat their wives, but as equals.

What is the summary of this matter? 1 Peter tells his addressees that it is: Pursue virtue, particularly pursue community-forming virtues, such as love and humility. Then the Sermon on the Mount, and, in particular, the Beatitudes in the beginning of Matthew 5 and the non-retaliation teaching in the end are cited by the technique of *aemulatio*.¹⁸ But, given that 1 Peter sees continuity with and fulfillment of the Hebrew Scriptures in the way of Jesus, this reference is backed up by the citation of Psalm 34:13-17 (with one significant change made to the text).

This leads the author into a summary: generally, pagans will not punish one for exhibiting (Christian) virtue (given its overlap with Stoic and other Greco-Roman virtue teaching), but that is only generally true, not absolutely true, so when one does suffer for one's virtue, identify with the Anointed One—and if an explanation is demanded of one in court, be ready to give it.

The parallel with Jesus is carried farther resulting in a type of reframing of one's life experience when the end of 1 Peter 3 and the beginning of 1 Peter 4 are read together. Jesus suffered to the point of death, condemned in the eyes of the world. But that is only one dimension or sphere, that of "the flesh." (And in that sphere he will only be fully vindicated when his rule is revealed, when all will have to acknowledge his vindicated, exalted status.) In the spiritual dimension or sphere he was vindicated by resurrection. And, using material from the first part of *1 Enoch*, the "Book of the Watchers," 1 Peter points out that in his resurrected state he proclaimed final doom to the "spirits in prison" (which also show up in 2 Peter 2 and in Jude)¹⁹ and ascended to take his exalted place at God's right hand with all other powers and authorities subject to him. In other words, he could not be more vindicated or more exalted.

This reference to the denigration and vindication of Jesus is applied in two ways. First, the reference to the "spirits in prison" takes the author to the Noah narrative and its typological meaning: as Noah and only a few others were saved by means of water, so also water, i.e., baptism, is the means of salvation for the believers. It is not just that the body is washed, but that in the process of that rite one gave a pledge to God from a good conscience (i.e., the pledge was not faked) through [the power of] the resurrection of

Jesus. That is, as in Romans 10:8b-10 referred to above, one pledged one's allegiance to Jesus as resurrected Lord.²⁰

Second, the main application is that the believer identifies with the Jesus narrative and uses it to reframe their negative experience. He or she, too, has "suffered in the flesh" or at least set themselves to do so if necessary (and, again probably in baptism, has left behind living according to the human passions as the pagans do, much to the dismay of their pagan neighbors). This identification with Jesus explains why the good news was preached to those who have died in the human sphere. In their death they have lost nothing, for they have simply been judged or condemned "in the sphere of the flesh" according to human beings (which phrase could mean either a human judgment or "the way it goes" with human beings). In truth, the purpose or result of this is that they might live "in the sphere of the Spirit" according to God (i.e., according to God's vindicating judgment or "in the way that God does," which would mean something like the *theosis* or divinization that one finds in 2 Peter 1:4). Those who have died as believers have lost nothing but have gained everything. This eschatological perspective (not in that it happens in a future end time, but that it happens in a different dimension, the sphere or dimension of God) should be encouraging to the once-native-born-citizens-of-this-world-and-now-immigrants-due-to-Jesus that 1 Peter is addressing.

The follower of Jesus holds an eschatological perspective: "the end of all things is at hand." They are not waiting for the "last days," but are in the last days, with the conclusion or goal (*telos*) close, just as Jesus proclaimed that the rule of God was close (e.g. Mark 1:15). History, according to 1 Peter, has almost reached its goal, so this is no time to give up or to fail. Rather, one should be alert before God and pursue community building virtues (as opposed to the community destroying vices which are "what the Gentiles like to do"). These virtues start with love (again, not a feeling, but seeking the good of the other) which implies forgiveness, hospitality (which is especially needed by exiles), and employing one's gifting for the good of the community in the consciousness that it is a divine gift. The result will be that the (re) new(ed) Israel, the (re)new(ed) people of God, the new community will have such a lifestyle that "God will be honored through Jesus the Anointed One."²¹ Our author, then, does just, he honors God with a doxology and on this note the body middle ends with an "Amen."

BODY CLOSING

The body closing (1 Pet 4:12–5:5 or 5:11 if the summary is included) draws the theological themes together. As 1 Peter 1:6–7 indicates, the believers are undergoing a “fiery ordeal,” being tried by the fire of rejection, slander, and the like in a world in which honor was the highest value and rejection could lead to the loss of livelihood. This “ordeal” is not happenstance or foreign to Christian existence. Rather, as 1 Peter 2 concludes, it is an opportunity to share in the sufferings of Jesus (as opposed to a theology in which he alone suffers and believers reign without suffering). The embracing of the cross is central to Christian existence for 1 Peter. But, as 1 Peter 1:8 indicates, one embraces the cross because with it one embraces the (anticipated) joy of the revelation of Jesus’ honor. While in 1 Peter 1:6–7 there is eschatological anticipated joy, joy in the present in the light of the future, here in 1 Peter 4:13 the joy is future in that the public revelation of Jesus as universal Lord is future. Yet there is a “now” as well, for when they are criticized due to their identification with the Anointed One (i.e., *Christos*, who was known to have been executed as a rebel) it is precisely in that dishonoring and rejection that they are blessed, that the “Spirit of honor and of God” or “the honorable Spirit of God” (if read as a hendiadys) rests on them. This is a reframing indeed. Naturally, given the virtues that the follower of Jesus should display, it is inappropriate that they suffer as a criminal, including, interestingly enough, a “meddler” or “busybody.” This surely presumes that such charges were not trumped-up (as groups in power often do to justify their persecution). But if the charge is that of being a follower of the “*Christos*,” then, while the culture certainly thought that shameful (who would want to be identified with such a malefactor?), 1 Peter exhorts his implied readers to wear it proudly and let their actions bring honor to God (which has previously been defined as an honor that will be attributed to God at the final judgment).

That final judgment has already begun in this purging persecution, this fiery rejection. But rather than limiting it to those who are outside of the faith, 1 Peter points out that it has begun with God’s own people, for it is a purification, as he has already written in 1 Peter 1:6–7. If that is what it is, painful as it is for the followers of Jesus, what will the result be when it extends to those who “disobey God’s good news?” (Again, especially in 1 Peter the good news is something to be *obeyed*, for it announces that Jesus

is Lord.) This “outcome” or “*telos*” for those disobeying the command, stated or implied, in the good news is suggested in the citation of Proverbs 11:31 LXX.²² Conclusion: if one is suffering according to God’s will (i.e., for one’s commitment to Jesus) then by doing right commit oneself to “a faithful Creator” or “a trustworthy Creator.” It is interesting that here closed to his conclusion 1 Peter returns to the Father and the beginning of the “theodrama”²³ rather than to Jesus. Perhaps this resumes his earlier references to God as Father, as the origin of the family, although this time under the rubric of the whole creation. Or perhaps it indicates that far from being immigrants in a homeland that has become foreign, they are under the protection of the real landlord of the whole world.

It is time to “bring it on home,” so to speak. 1 Peter addresses the elders or presbyters, i.e., the leaders of the various communities, leaders who, if one accepts the Pauline examples, had been appointed by the delegate of Jesus who had founded the community²⁴ or by that delegate’s representative (as in 1 Timothy and Titus). The author places himself in this same category, that of a shepherd appointed by the chief shepherd (taking a humble position and not pointing out that Peter’s appointment was unmediated and theirs surely mediated),²⁵ although he indicates that he has witnessed the sufferings of the Anointed One and is a participant in the honor or glory that is about to be revealed.²⁶ The two poles of suffering and glory are spanned in the one person; the whole history from Jesus’ death to his revelation as Lord is grasped in one embodied phrase.

Shepherds are, then, to tend the flock, which persecution will attempt to scatter. It is God’s flock, not theirs. And while this duty was certainly both dangerous and costly, they are to do it: (1) willingly “according to God” or perhaps “in a God-like manner” (which could indicate God’s self-giving love), (2) freely (versus greedily, for the money), and (3) exemplarily (versus domineering). In other words, they are to do it like Jesus, whose example has been cited multiple times in this letter. Then Jesus the chief shepherd, when he appears, will give them “an unfading crown of glory/honor.” There is a shift of metaphor here in that a chief shepherd should give wages or perhaps a better position. The “crown” was given by a ruler to a victorious general or the like,²⁷ but this is no laurel garland (as Caesar was pictured with on coins and in statuary) but one that is “unfading,” since it is no passing honor. The elders experienced temporary labor and shame, for surely leaders would be

singled out for rejection and calumny, but this is contrasted with permanent honor. The “exiles” or “immigrants” turn out to have leaders like Jesus, for they are really God’s people incognito. The sheep are not the usual type of flock.

If there are leaders, there must be followers, who are the younger members of the flock. They are to submit to leadership, i.e., to follow. And everyone is to be humble with respect to others in the community. Humility is a core Christian virtue, which is why Benedict of Nursia could write a chapter on it (chapter 7) in his *Rule*, although he is by far neither the first in church history to assert its importance nor the last. This point of humility is underlined by the use of Proverbs 3:34 LXX.

The final summary uses a catchword connection to the humility mentioned above: the rejection and persecution they are enduring are the “mighty hand of God” so “humble yourselves” under it, for then he will later exalt them. Anxious in the fact of such rejection? Give anxiety to God, since he cares about the addressees. There is, however, one who does not care about them: the devil. He wants to swallow them down. One resists the devil, not directly, but by standing firm in one’s commitment to Jesus as Lord, realizing that their experience is not foreign to that of the rest of the followers of Jesus. Our author realizes that shaming, rejection, discrimination and the like as the lot of followers of Jesus was not limited to the north half of Asia Minor. He has a truly apostolic vision for the situation of the followers of Jesus in general. Having exhorted them in the present, 1 Peter immediately summarizes the hope they should have for the future: the present is “a little while” and the future is “eternal glory in Christ.” In other words, our author relativizes their present suffering in the light of eschatological hope. And given that he has pictured Jesus as a ruler or “Anointed One,” he rightly closes this summary with “to him be sovereignty unto the ages.”

The letter closing includes a commendation of the letter carrier, Silvanus,²⁸ along with the exhortation that their situation of exile and suffering is “the true favor of God” and that therefore they should “stand fast.” This is underlined by a reference in the greetings to a person in another place of “exile,” “She who is in Babylon, likewise chosen, greets you, as does my son Mark.” That “Babylon” is a cipher for Rome, as it is in Revelation 17-18, is generally accepted. The “she” is variously interpreted as either the community in Rome (*ekklēsia* being feminine) or Peter’s wife (whom Paul claimed traveled with Peter, 1 Cor 9:5). Mark could be a physical son, of course, but that is less likely unless

it was a son born after Peter started traveling, since Mark is not a common Galilean Jewish name, or Mark could be Peter's "interpreter" (according to Papias), John Mark. What is clear from the sending of greetings is that they knew and were known to at least some in the communities in Asia Minor. Probably the easiest reading is that this refers to his wife and John Mark, for then one has two individuals mentioned in parallel and then one is more in parallel with the Pauline greetings that only name communities ("the church in x's house") if there has been community to community contact. But the point of the phrase is a shared exile, a shared sense of being an immigrant. The implied readers are family in their various communities (thus the "kiss of love," which was a family greeting) even if, perhaps, estranged from their blood families. In this context of exile and hope, the final benediction of "peace" is most fitting.

CONCLUSIONS

This article has been a summary of the teaching of 1 Peter, which means that it has been condensed and has relied on the author's previously published work to fill in the detailed arguments. Yet there has been a continual theme in the article, one focusing on the main theological points of 1 Peter, which is that being born again makes one part of the people of God, a new race, and therefore makes one a stranger in one's own land of physical birth. The believer is in a new family with a new *pater familias*. He or she is in a new political entity, with a new king. But there is more to it than that: this king already rules, and his presently unseen rule will be openly manifested. Therefore, the one who has obeyed the good news lives in expectancy of this open manifestation and that hope determines their life in the present. In that sense eschatology determines ethics. This perspective of having an unseen but active king determines the degree to which they can fit into the culture around them by stressing virtues that both cultures have in common and the necessity of reframing their suffering inflicted by that culture both as conformity to Jesus their Anointed King and as something to be reversed when his rule is openly revealed. This reframing is reinforced by a vision of his resurrection triumph that is to be kept in mind. The result is a consciousness that they are indeed a different people, God's people, God's temple, God's priests, even though, most likely, born in the lands in which they live. They

therefore have a different loyalty than the people around them, which should result in community solidarity under the leadership of their elders as they live in the light of Jesus' rule and their hopeful future.

¹ See John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB; Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 2001), 3.

² Having written *The First Epistle of Peter* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990) and updated it in *A Theology of James, Peter, and Jude: Living in the Light of the Coming King* (BTNT; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), this scholar is well-aware that much more could be written. Even John H. Elliott's *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, massive as it is, does not fully explore this letter.

³ Because of this limited goal, virtually nothing will be said about issues of introduction.

⁴ Many translations use the term "seed," but the first century usage in such a context was for that which a man sowed in a woman (her uterus being thought of as a type of field) that grew into a child. Thus "sperm" is a better translation, since in contemporary usage (in contrast to first century usage) it is the proper term for the male gamete of animals, while "seed" is generally reserved for the reproduction of plants.

⁵ The Patristic writers, of course, would take this as "Word of God," i.e., Jesus as Word. And there is a sense in which this is true, for 1 Peter clearly indicates that this came about through Jesus. Yet the quotation of Scripture in the next verse with its reference to God's spoken word and the creational reference contained there make it more likely that God's spoken and proclaimed word is intended, although again in Patristic understanding this is also Jesus the Word.

⁶ This is one indication that the addressees are not thought of as Jewish, for the traditions handed down in the Jewish patrimony are thought of as righteous and people are criticized for not following them. Another indication of largely-gentile origin comes in the next point in this paragraph in that the addressees have become a people of the promise of Exod 19:6, which would not have been something that a Jew would have needed to become.

⁷ The term "renewed people" is used deliberately, for, given that the author is presented as Simon Peter, a Jew, the addressees are not a gentile-Christian replacement for Israel, but are born again into the people of God (often in the first century thought of as a subset of Jews, a faithful remnant of Israel, such as those gathered by John the Baptist through repentance). They therefore have a heritage in ancient Israel.

⁸ This author acknowledges Reinhart Feldmeier, *The First Letter of Peter* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2008) as the first scholar to point out this realistic connection between their state of being in exile and their new birth. Once that is realized, the letter's theology makes sense. They are treated as Jews, a foreign people or nation living among "us" (and, while technically legal, Jews were still despised, subjected to harassment, and even to pogroms), but a worst type of Jew in that they had been fellow citizens and now had changed their allegiance and were actively conversionist (at this stage the question as to whether they were "legal" or not in the eyes of Rome had not yet arisen, although in terms of local persecution what Rome thought was a remote and unimportant matter).

⁹ There is no intention in this article of denying that in the New Testament salvation occurs in the past tense. It does indeed do so. But is also occurs in the present (as an ongoing process) and in the future. All three tenses occur in the Pauline corpus, but 1 Peter is distinctive in his focusing on the present and future tenses. The same can be said for "grace" or "favor" in 1 Peter.

¹⁰ One possibility is that the reference is to the redemption of the firstborn males, which was by a lamb. That would fit the probability that these people did not "come to new birth" all at the same time, but were reborn individually. If it were collective, one might think of the Passover, although in Hebrew the same term means "lamb" and "kid," which is clear in that the Passover animal could be taken from the sheep or the goats. However, in Greek the words are distinct, and our author's Semitisms appear to be Septuagintalisms (some of which have probably slipped into his speech as King James language slipped into the speech of the author of this article), so there is no clear evidence that 1 Peter was aware of Hebrew.

¹¹ This reference to the *logos*, or word, is probably not yet the *Logos = Christos* identification that would appear early in the Patristic period, for that was dependent upon John 1, which is likely later than 1 Peter. Also,

- in this 1 Peter passage in question 1 Pet 1:25, shifts the language to a synonym of *logos*, *rēma*, which shift would not be typical of the Patristic period.
- ¹² Who “the Lord” is (God the Father or Jesus the Anointed One) 1 Peter does not clarify, although in the following verses it is clear that “the Lord” refers to the rejected stone, i.e., Jesus.
- ¹³ The date of 1 Peter is disputed, of course, so it is not clear whether the Jerusalem Temple is under the threat of destruction but still standing or long a smoking ruin. But such a reference as this is consonant with Jesus as the replacement of the Temple, a theme that runs through all the gospels, which is one reason why after the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple followers of Jesus did not talk a lot about its being rebuilt, for it was already being rebuilt, believer by believer. Of course, in Rev 21 the New Jerusalem itself is a temple, indeed a Holy of Holies, built of and on people, continuing the Patriarchal old in the Apostolic new, with God himself living in its midst.
- ¹⁴ This author tends to use “Anointed One” or “Anointed King” or “God’s Anointed King” for *Christos* rather than “Christ” because most, and perhaps all, writers of the New Testament were aware that *Christos* was Greek for the Hebrew usually transliterated Messiah (in English) and of the various Messiah’s or anointed individuals in the Hebrew Scriptures, it was the coming rescuer, restorer, and king that was expected in significant parts of first century Judaism. Since *Christos* in itself would make little or no sense to a Greek speaker, it was surely explained as part of the proclamation of the good news (such as in answer to the question, “What does that mean that Peter is saying, ‘You are the *Christos*, the Son of the Living God?’”) or Christian initiation. Thus, it is this present author’s assertion that the readers of the letters, including 1 Peter, who were all initiates, would surely hear *Christos* as Messiah or, in English “Anointed One” or “Anointed King” just as they would have learned to hear “Amen” as something more than a noise one makes in response to a prayer. The common use of it in transliteration in English likely makes scripture readers confuse a title with what they take to be a surname or nickname.
- ¹⁵ This honorable or virtuous is honorable or virtuous according to the norms of the surrounding society. Aristotle and later the Stoics, among others, had described virtuous behavior, and in many cases such behavior coincided with what Christians considered virtuous behavior (which is why the Pauline ethic is often compared to Stoic ethics), although the motivations were different. 1 Peter calls on the commonalities with culture, although in some cases the common value was applied differently by followers of The Way (as followers of Jesus of Nazareth were referred to at least part of the time).
- ¹⁶ Because the slave was “mindful of God” the good that he or she did might well be that of following The Way. That is, since these slaves were part of the household, they were expected to worship the household gods and follow the household behavior (which could include sexual exploitation of both male and female slaves). Following Jesus would mean slipping off to the gatherings of “that Jesus sect” and gently refusing to engage in the worship of household deities, thus undermining both the household and the state. Some masters would tolerate this deviation because they could see other values, such as honesty, in such slave, values which were cultivated by what was in their pagan eyes a Jewish sect. Other masters would try to force the slave to stop their Christian behaviors, recognizing that they were ultimately subversive of their authority.
- ¹⁷ While Genesis is not particularly critical of Sarah, her behavior towards Abraham was a significant embarrassment in the Hellenistic period. She not only told him what to do, but he did what she told him. Various Hellenistic Jewish authors, such as Philo and Josephus, had different ways of handling the embarrassing narratives (or even just leaving them out). Meanwhile modern interpreters have searched for places where Sarah actually calls Abraham “lord,” a search largely in vain if one is thinking of that as a serious noun of address. The *Testament of Abraham* shows another way of handling Sarah, which is by making her into the ideal Hellenistic wife. In that document she addresses Abraham as “my lord” multiple times. For further documentation see Peter H. Davids, “A Silent Witness in Marriage: 1 Peter 3:1–7,” in *Discovering Biblical Equality* (ed. R. W. Pierce, Rebecca M. Groothuis, and Gordon Fee; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 224 - 240.
- ¹⁸ A most accessible discussion of this rhetorical technique is found in John S. Kloppenborg, “The Reception of the Jesus Tradition in James,” in *The Catholic Epistles and the Tradition*. (ed. Jacques Schlosser; Leuven, Leuven University Press, 2004), 93-141.
- ¹⁹ The use of the 1 Enoch, or at least the material now found in 1 Enoch, is the one major text or tradition (they both knew the content of the “Book of the Watchers” either as text or as oral tradition, but may well have known other parts of the work as well) that 1 and 2 Peter have in common. Whereas 1 Peter frequently cites the Hebrew scriptures (in their Greek translation), 2 Peter never does. 2 Peter does refer to narratives found in the Hebrew scriptures but does so only in the form they are found in Second Temple literature. Yet

both 1 and 2 Peter use 1 Enoch, as does Jude. See further Robert L. Webb, “The Apocalyptic Perspective of 1 Peter,” unpublished Th.M. thesis, Vancouver: Regent College, 1986, on the use of 1 Enoch, and Peter H. Davids, “What Glasses Are Your Wearing? Reading Hebrew Narratives Through Second Temple Lenses,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 55.4 (2012): 763-771.

- ²⁰ For the detailed exegesis see Peter Davids, *First Epistle of Peter*, 128-147. While something of an aside in 1 Peter, this has become the major focus of many commentators. This author compares the day of baptism to a wedding day: the couple may or may not have made many promises to one another beforehand, but on the wedding day they officially make the pledges on the basis of which they are declared married and held to be so by their society, and these pledges are made in the context of a powerfully symbolic ceremony, effecting the state of life to which they refer. Whether the analogy holds or not, it is clear that the early accounts of baptism in Patristic literature all include as the central part of the rite the making of a pledge to Jesus as Lord (and often the renunciation of the devil before making that pledge) and the invocation of the Triune name. This was done in the context of dipping into water, although *Didache* 7, arguably the earliest post-New Testament account of baptism presently existing, indicates that while cold running water was preferred, the temperature and amount of water was not an issue. In need, a bit of water could be poured on the head in the Triune name. Whatever the amount and type of water, 1 Peter and the Patristic writers agree that the water + pledge + Triune name combination effects what it symbolizes, i.e. “baptism now saves you.”
- ²¹ One must remember that throughout 1 Peter the honoring of God by the world at large happens when the Anointed One’s rule is revealed. So, in the human sphere this might not be presently actualized, only in the spiritual or divine sphere.
- ²² See Peter Davids, *First Epistle of Peter*, 172, and the literature cited there. There is no indication that our author knew the Hebrew version.
- ²³ This term for the grand narrative of Scripture that has God as its chief protagonist is frequently used by Bishop Robert Barron in his podcasts (see www.wordonfire.org) but is probably not original to him. It is what Barron uses where N. T. Wright (whose work Barron draws on) would use “metanarrative,” although “theodrama” explicitly includes the divine actor in the term.
- ²⁴ *Apostolos* is Jesus’ term for the Twelve and Paul’s term for his own office, but it is also Paul’s term for delegates of the various believing communities (e.g. 2 Cor 8:23) and perhaps 2 Peter’s term for those who found communities (2 Pet 3:2). However, when it comes to appointing people to office, it is only the former two uses of the term (and those they in turn delegate) that function in this way in the New Testament. This is true not only of presbyters and overseers (also translated “bishops”), but also of the appointing of “deacons” (although that translation can be quite misleading) in Acts 6, for while the aggrieved community nominates the candidates, according to the text, the Twelve appoint.
- ²⁵ This is true whatever one decides about authorship, for the author or ghostwriter certainly writes in the person of Peter.
- ²⁶ This is a vivid statement in that his participation or sharing in that glory or honor is something that now characterizes him, even if the glory or honor itself is “about to be revealed,” i.e. is future, even if imminent. Here the eschatological anticipated joy of 1 Pet 1:6 becomes vivid indeed.
- ²⁷ The “crown” or garland was also given to the winners in athletic contests, but with (1) the strong emphasis here on Jesus as coming king, (2) the picture of the presbyters as overseers or administrators, and (3) the lack of athletic metaphors, which are only found in other New Testament writers, it is arguable that it is civic and military honors that are in view here, not athletic ones.
- ²⁸ Since the letter carrier would normally both read the letter aloud and interpret it to the recipients, perhaps answering questions about the author and expanding on some topics, if appropriate, it was important that the addressees know that the letter carrier was fully trusted by the author. That the formula used here indicates the letter carrier and not the amanuensis has been demonstrated by E. Randolph Richards, “Silvanus was not Peter’s Secretary: Theological Bias in Interpreting δια Σιλουανοῦ ... ἐγράψα in 1 Peter 5:12,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 43.3 (2000): 417-432.

Sojourners and Exiles Living in a Foreign and Hostile Land: An Overview Sermon of 1 Peter

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For ten years now, I've been traveling to Cuba at least once a year. On my second visit, I received an "Official Citation from the Ministry of the Interior" in Santa Clara, regarding "Immigration and Foreigners." Much to my surprise, the office was a military installation abuzz with personnel in military uniform. After initial questioning, my friends and I were escorted to the commanding officer, a lieutenant colonel. He questioned us about the reason for our visit, then instructed us regarding what we were and were not allowed to do and where we were and were not allowed to go. Never once did we feel our safety was in question, much less that our lives were in danger, but that experience helped me understand better what many Christians face throughout the world.

When we think of persecution, we often think of what we read in *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* or what we see in the news: imprisonment, torture, beheadings, and shootings. But much of the persecution in the New Testament was

much like what I experienced in Cuba: an oppressive government controlling its citizens, restricting religious freedoms, and discriminating against believers simply because of their allegiance to Jesus. This is the kind of persecution the Christians in Asia Minor faced when Peter wrote his first letter. Ironically, it's not much different than the kind of persecution Christians in the West face today. As citizens of a heavenly kingdom, we live in this world as strangers and aliens. The question Peter answers in his first letter is, "How are we to endure such suffering in this world and remain faithful witnesses to our king and his kingdom?" Peter encourages our faithful endurance in the face of hostility by reminding us to rest in the salvation God has accomplished for us, remain faithful to fulfill the mission God has called us to, trace Jesus' steps on the road marked with suffering, and stand in the Grace that God has given us. Let's consider each of these exhortations in turn.

1:1-2 | REST IN THE SALVATION GOD HAS ACCOMPLISHED FOR YOU

To endure faithfully through trials and persecution, Peter points us first to the great salvation God has accomplished for us. We are "exiles" in this world because God "chose" us out of this world to be a people for his own possession (1:1). And because salvation has been granted to us by the triune God, we are secure in God's hand, no matter what we may face in this world. The Father planned our salvation from eternity past. He chose us "according to [his] foreknowledge" (1:2a). In other words, he foreknew and foreloved us, marking us out for salvation. Jesus Christ accomplished this salvation for us in history, shedding his blood as a payment for the sins of repentant sinners (1:18-19). And the Holy Spirit applied this salvation to us, setting us apart at a particular point in our lives "for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood" (1:2). That is, the Holy Spirit set us apart for initial faith in Christ to receive the benefits of his substitutionary sacrifice.

To get his point across, Peter takes us back to the covenant ratification ceremony at the end of Exodus 24, where Moses set Israel apart at Mount Sinai, and sprinkled them with the blood of sacrificial animals, indicating that they were ready to obey all God had revealed to them in that covenant. Israel broke that old covenant, yet God promised to restore them through a new and better covenant (Jer 31:31-34). Unlike the old covenant ratified on Mount Sinai, though, the new covenant promised the power to obey: a

new heart, God's Spirit, and the forgiveness of sin in a once for all sacrifice. By capturing this covenantal imagery, Peter begins his exhortation to perseverance by reminding us that we are the new covenant people of God whom he has delivered out of slavery and is now leading us to the promised land, the new Jerusalem. While we're on this earth, we are sojourners and aliens, strangers in a foreign and hostile land; however, because the triune God has accomplished our salvation, he will bring us all the way home.

As we rest in God's salvation, we gain a living hope (1:3). The God who saved us is the God who raised Jesus from the dead. When we responded to the Spirit's gift of a new heart with repentance and faith, we were united with Christ in his life, death, and resurrection. That means, even though we die, we will live again. And because of this living hope, we don't have to fear death. For even if our Christian suffering ends in death, we can rest now in the truth that because God raised Jesus, he will raise us too on the last Day. That is our living hope.

Our living hope frees us to long for our future inheritance. While everything we accumulate on this earth will eventually perish, become defiled, and fade away, the inheritance we will receive is "imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for [us]" (1:4). And because God is the one who saved us, he is also the one who sustains us, strengthening our faith until our salvation is revealed once and for all on that last Day (1:5). But as difficult as it is to hear, one of the means God uses to strengthen our faith is by permitting trials in our lives. God does not waste any of our suffering. God uses each trial to purify our faith, in the same way that gold is purified by fire (1:6-7). As God strengthens our faith through trials, we rejoice that God is at work in us so that our persevering faith "may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1:7-9).

As we rest in God's salvation for us in Christ, we are also humbled by the reality that we live in the privileged time of the promised new covenant (1:10-12). The prophets who predicted Israel's restoration on a new covenant (Isa 54-56; Jer 31:31-34; Ezek 36:22-38) also promised that the restoration would be accomplished by a son of David (Isa 9:1-7), a suffering servant who would take the sins of the people on himself (Isa 53). These prophets longed for the revelation of God's Christ, having predicted his "suffering" but looking forward to his "subsequent glories." But because we live in the privileged time of the new covenant, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and

the Twelve were all serving us, for they provided the content of the gospel message that was preached to us, and that, by the Spirit's gracious work, we heard and received (1:11). This great salvation is something angels look at with astonishment because they will never experience it. When God chose to save, he chose to save humanity, not angels. Though we may wish, even hope to live in better times, this is the privileged time of the new covenant. So, let us humble ourselves, and no matter what we face in this world, rest in the salvation that God has accomplished for you, that is, "preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1:13).

When we rest in God's salvation, we can face any hardship, any trial because we know there is no difficulty, not test, no pain, no sorrow, no affliction, no disease, no loss that can separate us from the love God has for us in his own Son, Jesus. Not even death can separate us from God's love for us in Christ. So, where is your hope? Who are you trusting in to save you? God offers this salvation to all who turn from their sins and embrace Christ in faith. And all who repent and believe, all who "obey" the Spirit's call to salvation can rest in the salvation God has accomplished for you. The Father has planned it; the Son has accomplished it; and the Spirit has applied it to you. So, keep looking to Christ; keep hoping in Christ. But know that God hasn't saved us just to keep us out of hell and bring us to heaven. He has saved us for mission.

2:9-12 | FULFILL THE MISSION GOD HAS CALLED YOU TO

We often say that God has saved us for his own glory, but what does that mean? Peter clarifies the purpose for which God has saved us in 1 Peter 2:9-12. In salvation, God made us "a people for his own possession" to be "a royal priesthood, a holy nation" (2:9). Once again, we need to look back to the Old Testament to understand what Peter proposes. In Isaiah 43, God promised to restore Israel through a second exodus, and he tells them to forget the first (Isa 43:16-19). In verses 20-21, God declared how he would sustain his people on this exodus, giving "drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself." Then, at the end of verse 21, God provides the purpose of this second exodus – "... that they might declare my praise." Peter applies this language to the new covenant people of God. But what Peter does with Isaiah 43:20-21 is informative.

In 1 Peter 2:9, Peter splits Isaiah 43:20, “my chosen people,” and 21, “that they might declare my praise,” then inserts Exodus 19:5-6, between them: “you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine, and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” In Exodus 19, God explains that after having saved Israel and guided them to Mount Sinai, though all the peoples of the world belong to him, he chose Israel as his special possession to be a royal priesthood and holy nation that would display his rule on the earth. For this reason, God established them in the central location in their known world, the land of Canaan. They were to be a “city on a hill” to show the surrounding nations who their God was, what he was like, and what it meant to live under his rule. To fulfill this purpose, God gave them laws that would distinguish them from their pagan neighbors in their monotheistic worship, their theocratic government, their sexual ethic, even their clothing and diet (Exodus 20-24). It is this relationship between God and Israel, where they promise to be God’s display nation, which Moses ratifies in the covenant ceremony in Exodus 24:3-8.

By putting these Old Testament texts together in this manner in 2:9, Peter argues that the church is the new covenant people of God, “my chosen people” (cf. Isa 43:20), having been rescued through a second exodus, set apart by the Holy Spirit, and sprinkled with Jesus’ blood to obey Jesus’ commandments in order to display God’s rule on the earth as a royal priesthood and holy nation. As a holy nation, we live under a heavenly government. Our citizenship is in heaven, and our king is Jesus. As a royal priesthood, we are ambassadors of king Jesus and his heavenly kingdom, representing God’s rule on the earth. As God’s special possession, our mission is to display God’s rule on the earth and to “proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (2:9; cf. Isa 43:21). We glorify God as we fulfill this two-fold mission to display and declare.

Except, the new covenant people of God are no longer established in a central geographical location. We are exiles scattered throughout the world, being led by Jesus on a second exodus to our eternal, imperishable inheritance in the new heavens and new earth. So, unlike the people of God formed under the old covenant to display God’s rule to the surrounding nations from Canaan, we are scattered throughout the earth. Each local church is an outpost or embassy of the heavenly kingdom in their locale, called to display God’s rule and declare that he has placed his king, Jesus, on

his throne. While the nations may rage against God's king, we continue to call all peoples everywhere to consider Christ, to bow down to God's king, and to kiss the Son, lest when he returns in wrath to judge the world, they be caught up in his judgment (cf. Ps 2). Peter explains what this two-fold mission might look like in the world today.

We are called to display God's holiness as we reflect his holiness in our own lives (1:14-2:3). As those set apart by the Spirit "for obedience to Jesus Christ," (1:2), we are to reflect the character of our Father in heaven, rather than the character of our earthly father, Adam (1:14-17). The foundation for our holiness is Jesus' substitutionary, sacrificial death (1:18-21). God purchased us from the old ways of ignorance and rebellion by the precious blood of Christ. In other words, God set us free from slavery to the old ways of Adam through the forgiveness of sin in Christ's once for all sacrifice. We are now empowered with a new heart, given to us when the Spirit gave us life when the gospel was preached to us (1:22-25). Therefore, since we have "tasted and seen that the Lord is good" (2:3), we are to put aside all wickedness (2:1), and grow in maturity by longing for the same word by which we were saved (2:2).

We also display God's holiness together as a church, for when the Spirit set us apart for salvation, he incorporated us into the new temple, the church (2:4-8). "As you come to him," declares Peter, "you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (2:5). Again, Peter looks back to Isaiah to remind us that the privilege of being God's temple is only for those who believe in Jesus, the cornerstone of God's spiritual house (2:6-7). Those who reject Christ will experience his judgment (2:8). As God's new temple, we display who our God is, what he is like, and what it means to live under his rule as we follow Jesus on the road to suffering (2:21-25) and live together as a church in unity (3:8-12), serving one another (4:7-11), and following the example of the elders Christ has given us (5:1-5). And as God's priests, we offer "spiritual sacrifices," as we live holy lives before an unbelieving world, that "they may see [our] good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation" (2:12).

As both individual Christians and as a church, we also display God's rule as we submit to those in authority over us, whether governing authorities (2:13-17) or "masters" (2:18-25). Our sovereign, heavenly king has placed human

authorities over us while we live on this earth: emperors, governors, kings, queens, presidents, prime ministers, law enforcement officials, employers. These divinely appointed authorities are to represent God's good authority as they punish evil and promote good (2:14). To be sure, many world leaders abuse such authority. Nevertheless, it is God's will "that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people" (2:15). As God's display nation, we show the world what it is like to submit to God's rule by submitting to those he has placed over us, even those who do not represent God's authority well. Of course, ultimately, we must obey God rather than man when forced to decide between obedience to Jesus' commands or obedience to man's. Generally, though, we are to obey human authorities as if obeying God himself to show the unbelieving world that, while exiles, we are good citizens on this earth. But also, we serve a greater authority and display to world what it's like to live under God's rule as his loyal subjects. Consequently, we will "honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor" (2:17).

Likewise, as Christians and as a church, we display God's love for his people as we live out the gospel in human marriage (3:1-7). As Christian husbands, we are to "live with [our] wives in an understanding way," or according to knowledge (3:7). As we "study" our wives, we will understand how to love them and care for them as God created them. For their part, rather than promoting a war-like environment in the home, Christian wives are to cultivate an environment of peace by following her husband's leadership (3:1-6). When Christian husbands love their wives, understanding how God has made them and following Christ's example as a husband, our wives will have no reason to fear our authority. Consider what a powerful display this would be to the unbelieving world that devalues marriage and commitment, that takes advantage of women, and promotes the feminization of men. Ultimately, however, we display the gospel story in human marriage—how Jesus, the always-faithful, never-failing bridegroom pursues his continually-faithless, always-failing bride and dies for her to cleanse her and prepare her that she may wear the white dress on her wedding day.

God has saved us to display his rule on the earth as his distinct people: a royal priesthood and holy nation. Sadly, the church today looks little different than the world. Professing Christians engage in vitriolic political rhetoric just like the world, criticizing one political party and idolizing the

other. Professing Christians lie, cheat, and steal from their employers, just like the world. Professing Christians violate the marriage covenant, just like the world. Professing Christians join in immorality and debauchery just like the world. As God's display people, we need to hear Peter's exhortation: "I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evil doers, they may see your good deeds [our spiritual sacrifices] and glorify God on the day of visitation" (2:11-12). The purpose of the display aspect of our mission is to provide the credibility of our declarative mission. Our ultimate purpose in salvation is to exalt Christ by pointing all others to him. So, we are to live lives that show Christ and his rule over us and this world. And having shown his rule, we invite all peoples everywhere to bow down to king Jesus.

God set Israel apart on Mount Sinai to be his display nation. While we retain that aspect of mission, under the new covenant, we are the people of the second exodus called to be God's witnesses (Isa 43:9, 10, 12) and declare his praise (2:9; cf. Isa 43:21). Even in the midst of Christian suffering, we are to be "prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you" (3:15). What are we to declare?—"the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (2:9). We declare Christ, his excellencies, his work (1:18-19), his words (1:22-25). As we proclaim the good news about king Jesus, we call the people in darkness to come into the light through faith in Christ. But notice that we cannot separate the display and declarative aspects of mission. They stand or fall together. If we fail to faithfully display God's rule, it undermines our declaration. If we fail to declare the good news, it does not matter how well we display God's rule. Our mission is two-fold: to display God's sovereign rule and to declare God's gracious gospel. For this we have been saved. And for this, we will also suffer.

2:21-25 | FOLLOW THE ROAD TO SUFFERING JESUS HAS ALREADY TRAVELED FOR YOU

When little children first learn their alphabet, often, their teacher will have them trace an outline of each letter. This is the image Peter paints as he urges us to trace Jesus' steps on the road to suffering. Because Christ suffered for us,

we are called to suffer (2:21). And in his suffering, Jesus left us an example to trace (2:22). “He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly” (2:23-24). As we trace Jesus’ steps on the road to suffering, we are not to repay evil for evil; instead, we are to bless those who persecute us, “for to this you have been called, that you may obtain a blessing” (3:9).

In this world, we are likely to suffer at the hands of unbelieving rulers (2:13-17). In such times, we are to trace Jesus’ steps as he suffered at the hands of the Roman officials. He did not revile them, justify himself, or call down his angels. Instead, he entrusted himself to God who judges justly. When we suffer at the hands of unbelieving authorities (2:18-25), we are to trace Jesus’ steps as he submitted to the Jewish leaders who mocked him, abused him, and handed him over to the tyrannical government leaders. In all this, Jesus he did not sin. He answered his oppressors honestly, and he allowed himself to be handed over in order to bear our sins as he received the crucifixion we deserved. We are likely to suffer at the hands of an unbelieving spouse, particularly. In such times, the Christian wife submits to her unbelieving husband, trying to win him over by displaying Christ’s submission to the Father in the home, hoping that her display will point her husband to Christ (3:1-6). Likewise, the believing husband is to love his unbelieving wife, loving her and honoring her as Christ loves his bride, the church (3:7). In these and many other ways, we are to display God’s rule over us and declare the excellencies of God’s king, even as we face suffering.

But the road marked with suffering is also the road to resurrection, exaltation, and glory (3:18-22). So, we trace Jesus’ steps to come home to God. “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God” (3:18). While 1 Peter 3:18-22 is the most difficult passage to understand in the entire letter, the most important point is clear. Jesus brings us to God by following the road of suffering unto death in the body (flesh). But he did not remain dead (3:18). He was raised on the third day (3:21), and is now exalted to the right hand of our heavenly Father, where he has been enthroned and given rule over all things in heaven and on earth (3:22). Whatever we may say about verses 18-22, that much is clear. For Jesus, the road marked with suffering was also the road to resurrection, exaltation, and glory. As we trace Jesus’ steps on the road to suffering, we are

also tracing Jesus' steps to resurrection, exaltation, and glory.

Verses 18-20 explain Jesus' resurrection victory and vindication. Jesus was "put to death in the flesh," that is, in the body. Since spirits do not die, Jesus' spirit did not die and did not need to be "made alive." "Made alive in the spirit" (3:19), refers to Jesus resurrection in a spiritual body. Arguing for the resurrection, the apostle Paul uses the same language in 1 Corinthians 15:22. "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be *made alive*" (emphasis mine). Christ was the firstfruits of our resurrection, but "then at his coming those who belong to Christ" (1 Cor 15:23). In other words, because Christ was *made alive* (resurrected with a spiritual body) as the firstfruits, promising our resurrection, when he returns those who are his will be *made alive* (resurrected with a spiritual body). When we die "in the flesh" our body is "sown a natural body." When we are "made alive in the spirit," "it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body" (1 Cor 15:44). This is Peter's point: Jesus suffered in the flesh, being sown a natural body, but on the third day, he was *made alive in the spirit*, raised in a spiritual body (3:18). And the encouragement we receive from such news is that as we trace Jesus' steps into suffering, we are also tracing his steps into resurrection.

After his resurrection, then, Jesus announced his victory to the demonic spirits who rebelled during the time of Noah by transgressing the boundaries God had set for them (Gen 6:1-4; Jude 1:6; 2 Peter 2:4; cf. 1 Enoch 15:3). At that time, God judged the world with a cleansing flood and all but Noah's family was swept away (3:20; cf. Gen 6:5-8). Baptism serves as a picture of God's salvation from the sweeping waters of judgment through Jesus' victorious resurrection (3:21). Baptist does not save us. It reminds us that we are united with Christ by faith, and as we trace his steps into his suffering and death, we also trace his steps into resurrection, glory, and exaltation. We are rescued from God's judgment because Jesus received our judgment when "he died in the flesh." But the fact that he was "made alive in the spirit" shows that God accepted Jesus' substitutionary life and death on behalf of repentant sinners. So, like Noah, we too are rescued from God's judgment. Except, we are rescued from God's judgment because Jesus experienced it in our place.

Therefore, at baptism, we make "an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (3:21). In other words, baptism is a time when we make a "pledge" to God, based on Jesus' resurrection, to

remain faithful to our profession of faith and live in a manner that allows us to maintain a good conscience. While 1 Peter 3:18-22 may be difficult to interpret, baptism is a glorious picture of our union with Christ, our cleansing from sin, and our rescue from God's judgment. We are not rescued from God's judgment because of anything we have done but because we have trusted in Christ and traced his steps on the road to suffering and death. And now we know that the road marked with suffering is also the road to resurrection and glory.

"Since therefore Christ also suffered in the flesh [body]," we now can "arm [ourselves] with the same way of thinking" (4:1). If we have the mind of Christ regarding suffering, we will be able to live in this hostile world, not pursuing human passions, but pursuing the will of God (4:2). And even in our suffering, we are to display God's rule over us so that we may point unbelievers to our suffering, conquering king, Jesus. This is "why the gospel was preached even to those who are [spiritually] dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are [in death], they might live in the spirit [realm] the way God does" (4:6).

When we trace Jesus' steps, suffering becomes normal; therefore, we shouldn't be surprised when we encounter it (4:12). But when we suffer as Christians, we can rejoice, not only that God is using that suffering to strengthen our faith (1:6-7), but that we also have the privilege of sharing in Christ's sufferings (4:13-16). To be sure, we are not to look for suffering. We do not delight in or enjoy suffering. Christian suffering and persecution are evil. It is evil when governments seek to eradicate Christian populations. It is evil when Christian minorities are hunted down and killed by other religious extremists. It is evil when governments restrict the religious rights of Christians. But because God chose us out of this world, the world hates us. And because we identify with God and his king, we will be persecuted. 1 Peter is an exhortation to Christians to endure in a foreign and hostile world. How? Peter explains in one verse: "I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it" (5:12). This is the melodic line of 1 Peter, Peter's thesis statement—"Stand firm in God's grace."

5:12 | STAND FIRM IN THE GRACE GOD HAS GIVEN YOU

In one phrase, Peter summarizes his entire message to the Christians in Asia Minor. “Stand firm in it,” that is “the true grace of God” that he has written them about (5:12). We stand firm by resting in the salvation God has accomplished for us; we stand firm fulfilling the mission God has called us to; we stand firm tracing Jesus’ steps on the road to suffering. What does it look like to stand firm in the true grace God has given us?

We stand firm in the grace of God as we love and serve one another (4:7-11). The Christian life is not meant to be lived in isolation. We need each other, and the gift of the church is one of God’s great graces. The church is the community of heaven where we practice loving one another, forgiving one another (4:8) and welcoming one another in our homes (4:9). And God has graciously gifted us to serve one another. Those who speak are to speak the truth of the gospel in love, as if God’s very words, encouraging one another and building one another up (4:10a). And those who are gifted to serve, are to serve the body so that in our ministry to one another, God may be glorified (4:11b). If we are to endure suffering as exiles in this hostile world, we need each other. We need everyone in the church. So, let us stand firm in God’s grace by loving and serving one another.

We stand firm in the grace of God as we entrust ourselves to the just judge and leave room for his wrath (4:19). When we are persecuted, we will be tempted to retaliate and to fight for our rights. We want justice! To the degree that our system of government permits such justice, we should take advantage of it. That is our right as citizens of earthly nations. But we must realize that ultimate justice will never happen at the hands of human authorities. This is especially true for those Christians living under corrupt and tyrannical governments. Regardless, we are to entrust ourselves to God, the creator of all things, who alone judges justly. When we do, we will not have to exact vengeance. We can trust God for ultimate justice. But realize that God’s justice comes in one of two ways: either at final judgment or at the cross of Christ. Entrusting our souls to the faithful creator means that we also must trust him when he saves our enemies and makes them our brothers. This too is standing firm in the grace of God.

We stand firm in the grace of God as we follow the examples of the pastors Christ has given us (5:1-5). Thankfully, Jesus hast not abandoned us.

Though he is exalted to the Father's right hand, he has given us his Spirit. And now, as God's temple, his Spirit dwells in us (2:4-8). And he has given us each other, the church (4:7-11). But he has also given us pastors to lead us by their example (5:1-5). Pastors are a gift from the ascended Christ (Eph 4:7-11) to feed us and protect us and lead us by their example. So, Peter urges these pastors to be faithful under-shepherds of Christ, leaving us an example to follow (5:2-3). Thankfully, as we face difficult situations and decisions in this hostile world, Christ has made his shepherds available to us. Follow them. Seek their counsel. They are a grace from God, and we are to stand firm in such grace.

We stand firm in the grace of God as we humble ourselves and trust God's care for us (5:6-7). We give thanks to God for our pastors, but they are not our priests. There is only one priest: Jesus. He has gained access for us to God's presence. Therefore, we can draw near to God. So, as we face hardships, trials, temptations, and persecutions, we can humble ourselves under God's strong, powerful hand and cast all our anxieties upon him "because he cares for you" (4:7). God is not weak. He is not deaf or blind. He can carry all our burdens, so when life gets hard, even too difficult to bear, don't be proud! Humble yourself, cry out to God, and cast all your cares on him. Stand firm in his grace.

We stand firm in the grace of God when we realize that we are not alone in our suffering (5:9). Ever since Jesus defeated the demonic realm (3:19-20), Satan has sought to destroy God's people (Rev 12:13-17). But we have been warned about the devil and his schemes; therefore, we are to be sober and watchful, resisting him, "firm in our faith" (5:9). Peter also informs us that Satan's activity is not limited to us. He seeks to destroy all God's people through corrupt rulers (Rev 13:1-10), false religions (Rev 13:11-18), and immoral cities (Rev 14:8). Therefore, our suffering is not unique. It's not unique to our time in history, and it's not unique to our geographical location. But as we stand firm in God's grace resting in God's salvation, we don't have to fear Satan because we have a living hope. We can press on fulfilling our mission because not even death will prevail against Christ's church. And we can trace Jesus' steps on the road to suffering because just as Jesus defeated Satan by his resurrection, so will we. So, Christian, stand firm in the true grace of God, knowing that "after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you" (5:10).

CONCLUSION

Some Christians forget that the apostle John wrote Revelation to seven churches in the same region that Peter wrote his letter to. Both Peter and John sought to equip the churches in Asia Minor for the persecution that was to come, the persecution that some of them were already experiencing. In A.D. 155, Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna, one of the cities in Asia Minor, was brought before the governing officials and told to recant his faith in Christ. He replied, “For eighty-six years I have been his servant, and he has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?” The proconsul then threatened him with wild beasts and fire. Again, Polycarp responded, “You threaten me with a fire that burns only briefly and after just a little while is extinguished, for you are ignorant of the fire of the coming judgment and eternal punishment, which is reserved for the ungodly.” Then he added, “But why do you delay? Come, do what you wish!”¹

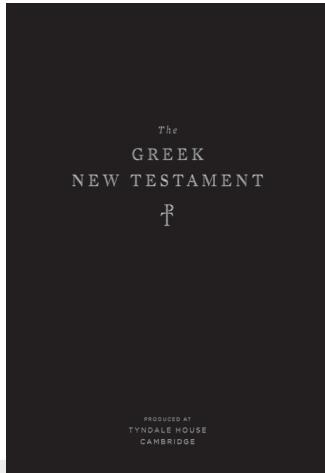
What empowers an octogenarian Christian to say to his persecutors, “Bring it on!”? Polycarp knew what it was to stand firm in the grace God has given him. He knew to rest in the salvation God has accomplished for him. If God, in his salvation, has shown us that he is for us, then who can be against us? No thing and no person can separate us from the love God has for us in Christ Jesus, so we can stand firm in the grace of our salvation! Polycarp also fulfilled the mission God gave him to his dying breath. He not only displayed what it meant to live under a greater king than the proconsul and his superiors, he continued to declare that Jesus alone is his king and that unless the proconsul repented, he would taste the fire of God’s judgment. Polycarp could stand firm in God’s grace, knowing that king Jesus will build his church. And Polycarp willingly traced the steps of Jesus on the road to suffering because he knew that this “fire that burns only briefly” was nothing compared to the eternal weight of glory that awaited him in his king’s presence.

The life that we live, we live by the grace of God. So, as long as we have breath, or until Jesus returns, let us encourage one another to rest in the salvation God has accomplished for us in Jesus; and let us bear one another’s burdens as, together, we trace Jesus’ steps on the road marked with suffering, knowing we are not alone; and finally, let us continue to fulfill our mission, displaying who our God is, what he is like, and what it means to live under

his rule, so that those who presently rage against king Jesus may bow down and kiss the Son on that final day. And after we have suffered a little while, God himself will establish us. “To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen” (5:11).

¹ Michael W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek texts and English translations* (Updated ed.; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 235.

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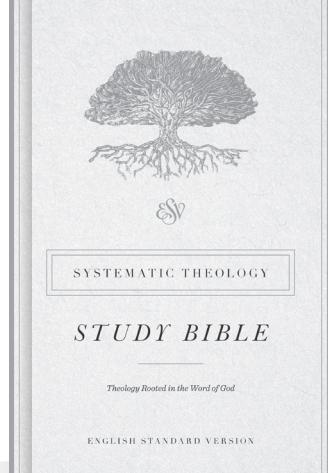
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The Church as the Renewed Israel in Christ: A Study of 1 Peter 2:4-10

BRENT E. PARKER

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First Peter 2:4-10 is a theologically rich passage that has important implications for Christology and ecclesiology. In this text, Peter presents Jesus as the one appointed by God, the elect and precious living stone who is the cornerstone, the foundation of the spiritual house made up of those who are united to Christ. Via their relationship with him, believers identify with Christ, the defining and constraining cornerstone, and so they too are living stones. Moreover, Peter also teaches that the church has taken on the role of Israel as Peter's readers—Christians—are God's new temple and priesthood. They offer spiritual sacrifices that are pleasing to God through Jesus Christ. Along with these theological themes, 1 Peter 2:4-10 has also garnered attention as a case study for Peter's exegetical method of interpreting the Old Testament (OT). The pericope features three explicit OT quotations (Isa 28:15; Ps 118:22 [117:22 LXX]; Isa 8:14) in verses 6-8 and three OT allusions (Exod 19:5-6; Isa 43:20-21; and Hos 1:6, 9; 2:25 LXX) in verses 9-10. While the complexities of Peter's citations and allusions cannot be addressed fully here, the aim of this study is to explore

how Peter presents the church as the renewed Israel, the antitype of Israel through Jesus in 1 Peter 2:4-10.

In claiming that Peter presents the church as the renewed, eschatological, antitypical Israel in 1 Peter 2:4-10, I will argue that this passage does not quite fit either the theological paradigm of covenant theology or dispensationalism. Instead, the theological implications of this passage serve to buttress a mediating view known as progressive covenantalism.¹ For covenant theologians, 1 Peter 2:4-10 is a passage that shows a direct correspondence between Israel and the church. For example, Cornelius Venema, commenting on 1 Peter 2:9-10, finds that the language of OT Israel that Peter applies to the church means that “the new covenant church is altogether one with the old covenant church. The Lord does not have two peculiar peoples, two holy nations, two royal priesthoods, two chosen races—he has only one, the church of Jesus Christ.”² While there is ontologically one people of God throughout history, the question though is whether the nature and structure of the people of God has forever changed due to the coming of Christ and his work on the cross in fulfilling the OT promises and ratifying the new covenant.³ On the other hand, for dispensationalists, the church is not presented as a “new Israel” that replaces or fulfills OT Israel in 1 Peter 2:4-10. Some dispensationalists believe the application of the terminology of national Israel to the church (see 1 Pet 2:9-10) is simply analogical, while others affirm a form of typology whereby the church represents an escalated, initial fulfillment of Israel’s prophecies, but not in a way that negates a future restoration of national Israel.⁴ More recently though, dispensationalists argue that the original addressees of 1 Peter were Jewish Christians with the entailment being that the OT designations for Israel in 1 Peter 2:9-10 is not primarily directed to Gentile Christians.⁵ Therefore, before exploring the content of 1 Peter 2:4-10, a brief examination of Peter’s audience is in order.

THE ORIGINAL RECIPIENTS OF 1 PETER

The claim by some dispensationalists that the addressees of 1 Peter were Jewish Christians is not new as there were some in the early church who also believed the letter was sent to Jewish Christians. However, most scholars in the modern era understand the original recipients to be primarily Gentiles.⁶ The reasons for affirming that Peter’s readers are mainly Gentiles are quite

persuasive. First, the letter appears to be a circular letter as it was sent to Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (1 Pet 1:1) regions where Jews lived, but also where there would have been large Gentile populations who would have heard the gospel as Paul's letter to the Galatian churches and his ministry in Asia (see Colossians and Philemon) indicate. Secondly and more importantly, the internal evidence within the letter shows that a significant readership of 1 Peter was from a pagan or Gentile background as evidenced by 1 Peter 1:14, 1:18, 2:25; 3:6; and 4:3-4.⁷ That the readers lived in “ignorance” (1:14) points to a past that was characterized by idolatry. Further, based on 1:18, “Peter would scarcely say that Jewish forefathers lived vainly” and given Peter’s description of their past pagan activities (4:3-4) it is “difficult to believe that Peter would characterize Jews as indulging in such blatant sins, whereas the vices were typical of the Jewish conception of Gentiles.”⁸ It is also interesting that in the midst of the readers’ sufferings, their pagan neighbors are not to confuse them as Jews, but they are to be identified as Christians (1 Pet 4:16).

Therefore, from the very beginning of the epistle, Peter identifies his Jewish and Gentile Christian readers with language of exile and diaspora (1 Pet 1:1, 17; cf. 2:11). Imagery of OT Israel is applied to the eschatological people of God, the church. The exilic language associates Peter’s readers with Israel as does the term *Gentiles* which refers to non-Christian outsiders in 1 Peter 2:12.⁹ The prophets anticipated and foresaw the salvation to come in the Christ and such prophecies not only apply to the church, but were specifically intended for the church (1 Pet 1:10-12).

1 PETER 2:4-10: THE CHURCH AS THE RENEWED ISRAEL THROUGH UNION WITH CHRIST

Turning now to the text of 1 Peter 2:4-10, the identity and function of the church is presented in a way to reveal that the church is the fulfillment of Israel through Christ.¹⁰ Jesus, the resurrected messiah (1 Pet 1:21; cf. 1:3; 3:18), is the “living stone” and the cornerstone laid in Zion (2:4, 6; cf. Isa 8:14-15; 28:16; Ps 118:22; Matt 21:42-44). A living stone is a paradoxical notion, but stone imagery carried messianic connotations and as the stone, Jesus is living since God raised him from the dead (1 Pet 1:21; cf. 1:3; 3:18). Those conjoined to him by faith are the “living stones” of God’s “spiritual house”

or new temple (cf. 2 Sam 7:13; 1 Kgs 3:2). This new temple is indwelled by the Holy Spirit (cf. 1 Pet 1:2; 4:14).¹¹ Jesus is the foundation of the eschatological temple, the church. In addition, the church is “being built up”¹² by God (cf. Matt 16:18) for the purpose of exercising priestly service which is the offering of spiritual sacrifices (1 Pet 2:5; cf. Eph 2:20-22). Peter can naturally mix the metaphors as the church is not only the living stones that make up God’s new temple, but the people of God are also the priests who serve in the temple.

The implication of 1 Peter 2:5 is that the “temple in Jerusalem is no longer the center of God’s purposes; rather, the church of Jesus Christ, composed of believers ... constitutes the temple of God.”¹³ Through union with Christ, what is true of Christ (the “living stone,” 1 Pet 2:4, the elect and precious cornerstone, v. 6) is true of the church (the “living stones,” the building which takes its shape from the cornerstone and forms God’s elect race). By being in solidarity with the vindicated and resurrected Lord (vv. 6-7), God’s new temple and household of believers takes on Israel’s identity and role in a heightened, eschatological sense.¹⁴ The church is not just the new temple that the OT physical temple foreshadowed, but the church is also the eschatological holy priesthood which offers acceptable spiritual sacrifices through Jesus Christ. As God’s corporate priesthood, the church communicates God’s glory to the nations (2:7) and mediates God’s blessings in the world (cf. vv. 5, 9) through Christ.¹⁵ It is not difficult to see then, given the temple and priestly themes, along with the spiritual sacrifices and the broader theme of union with Christ, that these realities interface with the presence of the Holy Spirit and thus reveals that the new covenant has been ratified as the promises of the new age have dawned in the church. The church is the eschatological people of God, the participants of the new covenant as they are sealed with the blood of Christ (1:2, 18-21).¹⁶

The theological conclusion to be drawn from 1 Peter 2:4-5 is that while Peter employs OT cultic imagery to describe the church (temple, priesthood, sacrifices) that link the church back to OT Israel, his description of the nature of the new covenant community is markedly different than national Israel. The church consists of believers who have come to Jesus (2:4) and who are “living stones” unified together as the eschatological temple, a community who in totality is indwelt by the Spirit (2:5; cf. 1:2; 4:14) and not just comprised of Spirit-filled individuals. Moreover, the church is uniformly a holy

priesthood (2:5) that offers acceptable spiritual sacrifices through Christ. Such things could not be said of the old covenant community of Israel. The nation of Israel was not a holy priesthood or a spiritual temple and their animal sacrifices were often not accompanied by a whole-hearted devotion or done so in the power of the Spirit. The whole new covenant community is incorporated into Christ with each member being a living stone in the spiritual house. The church is also the holy priesthood “which takes the place of the Levitical priesthood of the old temple.”¹⁷ The eschatological advance or heightening characteristic of the typological relationships, in this case an Israel-church typology *through* Christ, is further elucidated and made explicit in the following verses.

First Peter 2:6-8 reveals how Christ as the divine and eschatological cornerstone divides people into two groups, unbelievers and those who constitute the church, believers. The emphatic contrast between the status of unbelievers and believers is further highlighted as Peter describes the church as God’s chosen race, royal priesthood, holy nation, special possession, and the people God has claimed through his remarkable mercy (2:9-10).¹⁸ These titles of the church are characteristic of its present status since the eschatological salvation is already achieved through Jesus Christ (v. 10): “It is Jesus Christ and the bond of faith which determine and acknowledge the eschatological present and the ascription of titles of election.”¹⁹ The OT language that Peter alludes to in verse 9 and 10 is from Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 43:20-21; and Hosea 2:23.

Exodus 19:6 is Israel’s charter statement when it was constituted as God’s people following the exodus and as such features the divine goal of the covenant relationship: if Israel obeys God’s covenant then they would be God’s treasured possession, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. Peter applies these designations to the church because they are the people of the new exodus.²⁰ As a royal priesthood, they have come under the dominion of the sovereign king and so can offer spiritual sacrifices, mediating between God and the nations by proclaiming his mighty acts.²¹ Furthermore, Peter ascribes his readers as God’s holy nation as members of the new covenant people, for they are devoted to God, God’s possession through Christ.

The Israel and exodus typology is also evident from Isaiah 43:20-21 (cf. Isa 43:16-19) as God’s chosen race is depicted coming out of the Babylonian exile with overtones of new creation. Regardless of ethnic background, the

church is now the true race, the antitypical descendants of Abraham, who God redeems through the lamb of the greater exodus (see 1 Pet 1:19; cf. Isa 53:7; note 1 Pet 1:2 with Exod 24:6-8). Lastly, Peter's use of Hosea 2:23 (cf. Hos 1:9-11) in 1 Peter 2:9-10 indicates that God's mercy on the church fulfills Hosea's restoration prophecy. In the context of Hosea, God has disowned Israel because of her idolatry and spiritual adultery. Israel is no longer the covenant people; they are "not my people," becoming just like a Gentile nation, cut off from the promises. In Hosea 2:23, however, God promises to mercifully restore this faithless, gentile-like nation. According to Peter, the prophecy regarding God's "Gentile" people returning and becoming his people once again is understood to be typologically fulfilled as God's mercy is extended to the church, including those who really are Gentiles. As D. A. Carson observes, "The logic of the situation—that if the ancient covenant people have become 'Gentiles,' then perhaps God's mercy may extend to those who are (racially) Gentiles—breeds a second line of thought: God's merciful handling of his own 'Gentile' people becomes an action, a pattern, a 'type,' of his handling of even more Gentiles."²² Throughout this passage, Peter is making it clear that "the privileges belonging to Israel now belong to Christ's church. The church does not replace Israel, but it does fulfill the promises made to Israel; and all those, Jews and Gentiles, who belong to Christ are now part of the new people of God."²³

DRAWING CONCLUSIONS FROM 1 PETER 2:4-10 FOR THEOLOGICAL SYSTEMS

If the above analysis of 1 Peter 2:4-10 is correct, then there are significant ramifications for systems of theology. For Peter, the church is the eschatological people of God that is inextricably linked to the promises and heritage of OT Israel. A variety of OT typological patterns converge in this passage as Peter teaches that the church is the new temple, the new priesthood, and via the new exodus in Christ (Isa 43:20-21; Hos 2:15, 23; cf. Exod 19:1-6) the church is the fulfillment of OT Israel in being the elect race, holy nation, and the people ($\lambda\alpha\circ\varsigma$; 1 Pet 2:9-10; cf. Deut 4:20; 14:2; Heb 2:7; 4:9) set aside for God's special possession. Further, the church carries out the task that Israel was originally assigned in the aftermath of the Babylonian exile (Isa 43:21): declaring God's praises and his mighty

acts of salvation and transformation (1 Pet 2:9). Dispensationalism fails to account for the typological fulfillments presented in this passage. Peter identifies the church as the restored and renewed Israel through Christ. The church is now God's people (2:10) because of their faith union with the eschatological cornerstone that has been laid in Zion (2:6). The privileges and identity of Israel are now the church's in an escalated and heightened sense through the living stone—Jesus Christ—and the salvation he has accomplished in the last days (1:20-21).²⁴ If there was to be a future restoration of national and political Israel, Peter's allusions to key OT structures (temple, priesthood, sacrifices) with reference to being fulfilled in the church as well as Peter's application of Israel's pivotal identity markers to the church renders such a notion to be counterintuitive and unexpected.²⁵ Peter's understanding of the church as the people of God is emphatically Christocentric and eschatological.

Curiously, progressive dispensationalist Edward Glenny recognizes the typological patterns in 1 Peter 2:4-10, including the element of escalation and advancement intrinsic to typological relationships, but he then nullifies these typological links when he concludes that these typological patterns do “not negate the future fulfillment of the national, political, and geographic promises ... made to Israel in these [OT] contexts.”²⁶ If so, Peter's applications of these texts are purely analogical, *not* typological. As I have argued, these OT texts featuring Israel's national/political identity and role which Peter directly applies to the church through Christ are typological because of the fulfillment accomplished by Christ as he establishes the prophesied true temple and executes the new exodus. Glenny is also inconsistent, for Christ can be the final fulfillment of the typological patterns of 1 Peter 2:6-8, but the church is only the initial fulfillment of the pattern described in 1 Peter 2:9-10.²⁷ This is unconvincing, for if Christ, the living stone and cornerstone laid in Zion, is the end of the road for these typological patterns, why would this not be the case for those conjoined to this eschatological stone, the living stones—the church—in these last times (1 Pet 1:20)?

On the other hand, Peter does not just present the church as an equivalence to or in direct continuity with OT Israel as the ecclesiological formulations of covenant theology indicate. Rather, the new covenant community obeys the word by putting on faith in Christ in contrast to those appointed to stumble (2:6-7). Peter's readers are those who have experienced the new birth (1:3,

23) and conversion (2:9; cf. 2:25)²⁸ in receiving God's mercy in Christ (2:10). Moreover, according to Peter, the new covenant community is comprised of living stones built together as the spiritual house indwelt by the Holy Spirit because they have come to Christ and are conjoined to this living stone as their foundation. Each member of the new covenant community is considered a living stone; the structure of the new temple is not made up of living and dead stones. The escalation and heightening of the typological relationship between Israel and the church is also unavoidable in this passage of 1 Peter because the church is the restored Israel, for the new covenant community has gone through the new exodus in Christ and thus, in contrast to Israel of old, Peter's readers, and by extension the whole church, truly are the chosen race, the royal priesthood, the holy nation, and the people of God. While believers need encouragement and they are exhorted to contemplate whether they have experienced the kindness of the Lord (1 Pet 2:3), Peter does not present the church as a mixed covenant community of believers and unbelievers as advocates of covenant theology affirm. Instead, the new covenant people of God belong to Jesus and are joined to him.

The result of my brief look at 1 Peter 2:4-10 suggests that neither dispensationalism or covenant theology can put together all the pieces of what Peter teaches concerning Christ and the church in relation to Israel. The key point is that there is not a straight line directly from OT Israel to the church in the NT. The path from Israel to the church goes through Jesus Christ. Peter can apply Exodus 19:6, Isaiah 43:20-21, and Hosea 1:6-9; 23 to the church in 1 Peter 2:9-10 only because of what Christ has accomplished and fulfilled in being the messianic cornerstone that has been deposited in Zion (1 Pet 2:4-8). The progressive covenantalism framework advanced by Peter Gentry and Stephen Wellum serves as a mediating position to dispensational and covenant theology and is more faithful to the contours of the Bible's storyline with respect to the people of God and specifically to passages like 1 Peter 2:4-10. National Israel is a typological pattern not unlike other OT persons, events, and institutions, but Israel is a type of the church in only a secondary fashion because it is Jesus Christ who is the chief antitype and true Israel. It is because of Jesus Christ, the living stone and chosen cornerstone, and the wonderous work he has achieved on the cross that the eschatological people of God, the church, is indeed the new temple, the royal priesthood, the chosen race, God's possession

and holy nation, and recipients of mercy.

- ¹ For the definition, description, and defense of progressive covenantalism, see Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012); Stephen J. Wellum and Brent E. Parker, eds., *Progressive Covenantalism: Charting a Course between Dispensational and Covenant Theologies* (Nashville: B & H, 2016); and Brent E. Parker, *The Israel-Christ-Church Typological Pattern: A Theological Critique of Covenant and Dispensational Theologies* (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017).
- ² Cornelius P. Venema, *The Promise of the Future* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2000), 272. For Michael S. Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 719, 795, 1 Pet 2:9 is just one verse of many that he cites in arguing that the church is the fulfillment of Israel. Of course, for Horton, this needs to be understood within the covenant of grace framework where the church is just like Israel of old in being a mixed community comprised of believers and unbelievers. Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Rev. ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 633, takes the national idea in 1 Pet 2:9 and other NT texts to argue that organic nature of the covenant and the constitution of the family which figures significantly for his view of baptizing infants.
- ³ See Stephen J. Wellum, “Beyond Mere Ecclesiology: The Church as God’s New Covenant Community,” in *The Community of Jesus: A Theology of the Church* (ed. Kendell H. Easley and Christopher W. Morgan; Nashville: B&H, 2013), 183–212, esp. 195–96.
- ⁴ For the argument that Peter’s use of Exod 19:6, Isa 43:20–21, and Hos 1:9–10, 2:23 is applied to the church in the form of an analogy, see Robert L. Saucy, *The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism: The Interface Between Dispensational and Non-Dispensational Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 205–6. In contrast, W. Edward Glenny, “The Israelite Imagery of 1 Peter 2,” in *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church: The Search for Definition* (ed. Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 156–87, contends that use of the OT is typological-prophetic as there is a sense of fulfillment as Peter is not merely comparing Israel and the church in terms of analogy (see esp. p. 180–81, 187). Michael J. Vlach, *Has the Church Replaced Israel? A Theological Evaluation* (Nashville: B&H, 2010), 150, seems to concur with Glenny.
- ⁵ See Barry E. Horner, *Future Israel: Why Christian Anti-Judaism Must Be Challenged* (NACSBT; Nashville: B&H, 2007), 285–90; Craig A. Evans, “Israel according to the Book of Hebrews and the General Epistles,” in *The People, the Land, and the Future of Israel: Israel and the Jewish People in the Plan of God* (ed. Darrell L. Bock and Mitch Glaser; Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2014), 140; Vlach, *Has the Church Replaced Israel?*, 147–48; Craig Blaising, “Typology and the Nature of the Church” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Evangelical Theological Society, San Diego, November 19, 2014), 9; and Jim R. Sibley, “You Talkin’ to Me? 1 Peter 2:4–10 and a Theology of Israel,” *SWJT* 59 (2016): 59–75. In contrast, Glenny, “The Israelite Imagery of 1 Peter 2,” 156n2, thinks the recipients of 1 Peter were predominantly Gentile.
- ⁶ See Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude* (NAC, vol. 37; Nashville: B&H Academic, 2003), 38–41; Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 50–51; Peter H. Davids, *A Theology of James, Peter, and Jude* (BTNT 6; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 102–5; Richard Bauckham, “James, 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter,” in *A Vision for the Church: Studies in Early Christian Ecclesiology in Honour of J. P. M. Sweet* (ed. Marcus Bockmuehl and Michael B. Thompson; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 160–61; Lutz Doering, “You Are a Chosen Stock ...: The Use of Israel Epithets for the Addressees in First Peter,” in *Jewish and Christian Communal Identities in the Roman World* (ed. Yair Furstenberg; Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity 94; Leiden: Brill, 2016), 245; Ray F. Van Neste, “The Church in the General Epistles,” in *The Community of Jesus*, 137–38.
- ⁷ See the helpful chart of these verses in Davids, *A Theology of James, Peter, and Jude*, 103.
- ⁸ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 39.
- ⁹ Bauckham, “James, 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter,” 160. Contra Evans, “Israel according to the Book of Hebrews and the General Epistles, 140; Vlach, *Has the Church Replaced Israel?*, 147–48; Blaising, “Typology and the Nature of the Church,” 9; and Sibley, “You Talkin’ to Me? 1 Peter 2:4–10 and a Theology of Israel,” 59–75. Sibley argues unpersuasively that the original readers were Jewish Christians. Moreover, Sibley’s contention that the letter is exclusively for Jewish Christians cannot be proven given the geographic designation

of the letter. Overall, Sibley's reading is colored by his theological agenda for national Israel, resulting in the implication that Gentile believers are second-class Christians since 1 Peter 2:4-10 does not apply to them. For an overview of the church in 1 Peter, including the imagery of the church as the elect, the called, God's people, God's flock, the priesthood, the temple, and the reborn, see Allen Black, "Called to Be Holy: Ecclesiology in the Petrine Epistles," in *The New Testament Church: The Challenge of Developing Ecclesiologies* (ed. John P. Harrison and James D. Dvorak; McMaster Biblical Studies Series 1; Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012), 226-42.

- ¹⁰ Larry R. Helyer, *The Life and Witness of Peter* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012), 185, states, "Peter's letter assumes that all who respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ are now part of the Israel of God (cf. Gal 6:16). But it is a new Israel, a regenerated Israel (Ezek 36:25-27), living under the new covenant (Jer 31:31-34) established 'with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish' (1 Pet 1:19)." For more on the presence of the new covenant in 1 Peter with Christians being the elect people of God experiencing their own trials as sojourners in the wilderness, but delivered by the new exodus lamb in the covenantal death of Christ, see J. W. Pryor, "First Peter and the New Covenant (I)," and "First Peter and the New Covenant (II)," *RTR* 45 (1986): 1-4, 44-51.
- ¹¹ For further on the church as the "spiritual house" (1 Pet 2:5) in the sense that the church is where the Holy Spirit dwells and is present, along with the reference of "house" being a description of the church as God's new temple given the context of the "stone" complex, priesthood, and sacrifices, see Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 155-56, 158-59; Doering, "You are a Chosen Stock," 255-56; Ernest Best, "1 Peter II 4-10—A Reconsideration," *NovT* 11 (1969): 270-93, esp. 280; Mary Jo Bailey Wells, *God's Holy People: A Theme in Biblical Theology* (JSOTSup 305; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 216-17; Andrew M. Mbuvu, *Temple, Exile and Identity in 1 Peter* (LNTS 345; New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 90-95; Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 86-87; contra John H. Elliott, *1 Peter* (Anchor Bible, vol. 37b; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 414-18, who unpersuasively argues that "house" refers to household or family in 1 Pet 2:5 with no allusion to the temple. The connection of the spiritual house with the temple of Jerusalem is further underscored by 1 Pet 2:6 with the cornerstone being laid in Zion which also conjures up ideas of the temple. Dan G. McCartney, "House, Spiritual House," in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and its Developments* (ed. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997), 507-11, thinks that both temple and family/household ideas are merged together in 1 Pet 2:5 (see p. 510). Clearly the imagery of a building made up of stones on the foundation of Christ indicates that the temple reference is foremost. McCartney helpfully observes that the "spiritual house" is permanent and not a temporary arrangement until a proper temple can be reconstituted (see p. 511).
- ¹² In 1 Pet 2:5, οἰκοδομήθετε should be translated as a passive indicative as it is never used as an imperative in the NT and only rarely so in the LXX. See Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 155; and Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 106. David Peterson, "The New Temple: Christology and Ecclesiology in Ephesians and 1 Peter," in *Heaven on Earth: The Temple in Biblical Theology* (ed. T. D. Alexander and Simon Gathercole; Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2004), 173, also observes that it would be strange for believers to be commanded to "come" and "be built into a spiritual house" as that "would obscure the point that membership of the church is an immediate consequence of believing in the gospel and being 'born anew' (1:22-25)."
- ¹³ Thomas R. Schreiner, *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 744. Similarly, Richard T. France, "First Century Bible Study: Old Testament Motifs in 1 Peter 2:4-10," *JEPTA* 28 (1998): 35, writes, "The house of God is no longer a building in Jerusalem, but is made up of living stones who themselves had no part in national Israel, but who through being 'built upon' Jesus have inherited Israel's privileged place as the locus of God's true worship and presence on earth." G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 741, notes that the "building of the latter-day temple was to occur in conjunction with other restoration promises and was one of the telltale signs that the restoration was commencing." Mbuvu, *Temple, Exile and Identity*, 94-95, and Wells, *God's Holy People*, 217, also find typological fulfillment as the OT physical temple pointed to the new eschatological reality, the church. For a general discussion of typology in 1 Pet 2:4-10, see Leonhard Goppelt, *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New* (trans. Donald H. Madvig; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 153-55.
- ¹⁴ Peterson, "The New Temple," 172, rightly describes the church from this passage in 1 Peter as "the community of all who have come to Christ and fulfil the role of eschatological Israel. However, this new people of God is not simply an earthly entity, with its locus in Jerusalem or Rome or anywhere else. Its locus is in heaven because it consists of those who have been brought by faith to the resurrected and exalted Christ (2:4-5; cf. 3:21-22)." Similarly, John H. Elliott, *The Elect and the Holy: An Exegetical Examination of 1 Peter*

- 2:4-10 and the Phrase βασιλείον λεράτενμα (NovTSup 12; Leiden: Brill, 1966; repr., Eugene OR: Wipf & Stock, 2005), 198, writes, "All that has been anticipated aforesome under the Old Dispensation has now reached its culmination in the union between the Elect Stone and the Elect Race."
- ¹⁵ The spiritual sacrifices in 1 Pet 2:5 are not just the proclamation of God's excellencies though, for surely spiritual sacrifices entail everything that is pleasing to God in one's conduct and dedication to God by the sanctifying work of the Spirit (cf. Rom 12:1; Heb 9:13-14; 12:28-29; 13:15-16). See Peterson, "The New Temple," 174-75; Wells, *God's Holy People*, 219-21; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 107-8; Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 150-51. For a helpful biblical theological treatment of priesthood from the OT to Christ as the eschatological priest and the priesthood of all believers that supersedes the OT priesthood through union with Christ, see Alex T. M. Cheung, "The Priest as the Redeemed Man: A Biblical-Theological Study of Priesthood," *JETS* 29 (1986): 265-75.
- ¹⁶ Glenny, "The Israelite Imagery of 1 Peter 2," 173, 182. Glenny recognizes that the new covenant is in effect and that the recipients of Peter's letter are now under the new covenant (see p. 179-181). Yet, Glenny holds that the new covenant must also be fulfilled in the future to national Israel. The problem with this view is that the spiritual aspects of the new covenant are considered already and not yet while the supposed physical aspects of the new covenant (i.e. the promised land) is entirely not yet and must be directed to national Israel. However, the new covenant has been ratified through the cross of Christ, there is no future covenantal act and as NT makes clear, the new covenant people of God is the church consisting of both Jews and Gentiles. Those who receive the benefits of the new covenant now and in the future are incorporated into the church.
- ¹⁷ France, "First Century Bible Study," 35.
- ¹⁸ For discussion of these OT titles and allusions of Israel and their application to the church, see D. A. Carson, "1 Peter," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 1030-33; Elliott, *The Elect and the Holy*, 38-47; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 163-68. In regard to the church being a royal priesthood, Mbvui, *Temple, Exile and Identity*, 107, observes, "For Ezekiel, the foreigner could not present offerings at the temple nor even serve as a priest [Ezek 44:6-16]. 1 Peter reverses the edict and without apology regards the Gentile believers as part of the new 'holy' and 'royal' priesthood. Second, we note that 1 Peter does not seem to leave room at all for any other special lineage of priests, Levitical or otherwise. The believers constitute the new priesthood." These changes from the OT administration to the NT arrangement can only be possible in light of the work of Christ.
- ¹⁹ Elliott, *The Elect and the Holy*, 47. See also Wells, *God's Holy People*, 221, 224.
- ²⁰ Bauckham, "James, 1 Peter," 161; Carson, "1 Peter," 1030-31; Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 743; cf. Wells, *God's Holy People*, 222; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 158-59.
- ²¹ Carson, "1 Peter," 1030-31.
- ²² Carson, "1 Peter," 1032. See also Jobes, *1 Peter*, 163-64; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 114. Bauckham, "James, 1 Peter," 161, also notes that Peter's "image of 'new birth' (1.3; 23), effected by God's word which also accomplishes the new Exodus (1 Pet. 1.24-25; Isa 40.7-8), is probably also to be connected with the prophecy of Hosea. This new birth makes those who previously were not God's people 'children of the living God' (Hos 1:10)." The usage of Hos 1:10; 2:23 is also applied by Paul in Rom 9:23-26. For discussion, see Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 705-8. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 93, writes, "Unlike Israel these Christians never experienced themselves as unfaithful to the covenant, but they did realize that were once outside God's favor, that is, rejected."
- ²³ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 115. Likewise, Wells, *God's Holy People*, 227, concludes, "Not only are Christians given the title λαός ('people'), which previously served as the ethnic (as well as theological) designation for Jewish Israel; they are also termed (far more specifically) a γένος ('race') despite the fact that they are drawn from many nations. This makes the point even more emphatically: that ethnic boundaries are superseded. Prerequisites for belonging to the eschatological λαός are no longer historical or genetic but purely religious: belief in Jesus the Christ." Cf. Goppelt, *Typos*, 140-41, 154-55. Contra, Saucy, *The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism*, 205-6, and Glenny, "The Israelite Imagery of 1 Peter 2," 156-87.
- ²⁴ Contra Vlach, *Has the Church Replaced Israel?*, 148-50. Vlach's attempts to counter what he describes as a supersessionist reading of 1 Pet 2:9-10 (whereby the church replaces Israel and believing Gentiles are identified as "Israel") ultimately fail. Peter's point is not to argue a one-to-one correspondence between Israel and the church, rather, the typological correspondences reveal that the end-time people of God, the church, is not equivalent or equal to national Israel, but is the far greater covenant community through union with Christ even as it takes on the status and identity of what national Israel was unable to achieve. Israel's identity markers and titles come over to the church in an escalated sense (a feature indicative of

all typological patterns), and once the antitype has arrived given the eschatological orientation, there is no need to posit a future for national Israel. Vlach arguments ignore the eschatological significance of the work of Christ and his theological conclusions are not grounded in actual exegesis of 1 Pet 2:4-10.

- ²⁵ In lieu of his study of 1 Pet 2:4-10, France, "First Century Bible Study," 42-43, observes, "How central to Peter's thinking was the view that the people of God was now, since the coming of Christ, focused not in the national community of Israel but in a reconstituted people of God, drawn from all nations, whose unity was to be found not in political or racial solidarity, but in relationship to Jesus ... [I]t is remarkable how reluctant some Christian readers of the Bible are to adopt this central insight of the New Testament theology. Some still look for a central place for national Israel in the future outworking of God's purpose, basing their belief not on the teaching of Jesus and his apostles but on elements of Old Testament prophecy interpreted without reference to the New Testament's view that it is in Christ, and derivatively in his people, that those promises have been and continue to be fulfilled. Our study of these verses in Peter's letter have introduced us to one strong expression of this new Christian perspective, but it does not stand alone. Throughout Peter's letter, the same perspective keeps emerging, and it is consistently found through the writings of the New Testament, however different they may be in focus and in literary form. New Testament Christians would not have understood the preoccupation of some of their successors [i.e., dispensationalists] with the supposed literal fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy in a specifically Jewish context or if they had understood it, they would have wished to remonstrate with such a reversion to the perspective of the days of preparation before Christ came."
- ²⁶ Glenny, "The Israelite Imagery of 1 Peter 2," 187.
- ²⁷ Glenny, "The Israelite Imagery of 1 Peter 2," 186 and for the strong sense of fulfillment in regard to Christ in 1 Pet 2:6-8, see p. 163-68.
- ²⁸ The imagery associated with light and darkness at the end of 1 Pet 2:9 strongly suggests that conversion is in view. See Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 166-67; Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 93; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 116.

Peter's Theology of Discipleship to the Crucified Messiah (1 Peter 2:18-25)

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INTRODUCTION

The apostle Peter is one of the most prominent of the first disciples of Jesus in the canonical record. He was among the earliest of the disciples of Jesus (cf. John 1:35; 2:1-11; Matt 4:17-22), and quickly became the leader of the band of disciples (Matt 10:1-4), a position he held into the earliest days of the post-resurrection church (Acts 1-15). He is perhaps the most visible of the disciples whose discipleship to Jesus transitions from following Jesus around Palestine in the earthly ministry, to following a crucified and resurrected Master in the earliest days of

the post-resurrection church, to ministering to disciples of the risen Jesus in churches in the expanded Greco-Roman world (Asia Minor and Rome). Peter knows well what discipleship to Jesus entailed, and guides the early church into discipleship to Jesus in the post-resurrection age.¹ In this article we will be exploring the apostle Peter’s theology of discipleship as found in 1 Peter.²

THE CURIOUS ABSENCE OF “DISCIPLES” IN 1 PETER

But first we must address an intriguing phenomenon: the words for “disciple” (noun μαθητής) and “make disciples”/“discipleship” (verb μαθητεύω) do not occur in 1 Peter. Indeed, those Greek terms do not occur in any of the epistles of the NT (nor the book of Revelation), only occurring in the Gospels and the book of Acts. This leads some, especially Karl Rengstorf, the author of the highly influential article on μαθητής in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, to come to the conclusion that the relative absence of the explicit terms for “disciple” in the OT and the absence of the terms for “disciple” and “discipleship” in the epistles of the NT indicate that the concept of discipleship is missing. He states, “If the term is missing, so, too, is that which it serves to denote.”³ He then goes on to suggest that while the word μαθητής was appropriate to use in Jewish circles, when the church spread into the Hellenistic world it would not have been appropriate. He suggests that the term implied, in common Greek usage, a student from one of the philosophical schools. The writers of the epistles therefore avoided it since they did not want to give rise to the idea that Christianity was simply a philosophical movement.⁴ For this reason, the words “disciple” and “discipleship” did not make their way into the church in the Greek-speaking world and declined in usage in primitive Christianity.⁵

A Broad Use of μαθητής

Several problems arise with Rengstorf’s suggestion. First, although μαθητής could refer to Greek philosophical students, it was not a technical term reserved for this usage. Not only were several other terms also used to designate philosophical students, but μαθητής had a much broader use in common, religious, and philosophical circles.⁶ Discipleship was a common phenomenon in the ancient Mediterranean world. In the earliest classical

Greek literature, μαθητής was used in three ways: (1) with a general sense of a “learner,” in morphological relation to the verb μανθάνω, “to learn” (e.g., Isocrates, *Panathenaicus* 16.7); (2) with a technical sense of “adherent” to a great teacher, teaching or master (e.g., Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 1.6.3, 4); (3) and with a more restricted sense of an “institutional pupil” of the Sophists (e.g., Demosthenes, *Contra Lacritum* 35.41.7). Sophists such as Protagoras were among the first to establish an institutional relationship in which the master imparted virtue and knowledge to the disciple through a paid educational process.

Socrates and Plato objected to such a form of discipleship on epistemological grounds, instead advocating a relationship in which the master directs dialogue to draw out innate knowledge from his followers. Therefore, Plato records that Socrates (and those opposed to the Sophists) resisted using μαθητής for his followers in order to avoid Sophistic misassociations (Plato, *Sophista* 233.B.6–C.6). But he used the term freely to refer to “learners” (Plato, *Cratylus* 428.B.4) and “adherents” (Plato, *Symposium* 197.B.1), where there was no danger of misunderstanding. Hippocrates likewise rejected charging fees for passing on medical knowledge, but he vowed in the famous Hippocratic oath that, in the same way his teachers and gods passed on the art of medicine to him, “By precept, lecture, and every other mode of instruction, I will impart a knowledge of the Art to my own sons, and those of my teachers, and to disciples.”

In the Hellenistic period at the time of Jesus, μαθητής continued to be used with general connotations of a “learner” (Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica* 23.2.1.13, 26), but it was used more regularly to refer to an “adherent” (Dio Chrysostom, *De regno* 1.38.6). The type of adherence was determined by the master, ranging from being the follower of a great thinker and master of the past like Socrates (Dio Chrysostom, *De Homero* 1.2), to being the pupil of a philosopher like Pythagoras (Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica* 12.20.1, 3), to being the devotee of a religious master like Epicurus (Plutarch, *Non posse suaviter vivi secundum Epicurum* 1100.A.6). The relationship assumed the development of a sustained commitment of the disciple to the master and to the master’s particular teaching or mission, and the relationship extended to imitation of the conduct of the master as it impacted the personal life of the disciple.

Therefore, the terms “disciple” and “discipleship” were broad enough in

their normal usage that the authors of the epistles of the NT did not need to avoid their usage. Other explanations for their absence must be explored.

The Chronology of Acts

Secondly, in the narrative of Acts, Luke allows us to see that the terms for “disciple” and “discipleship” were used commonly to designate Christian believers in Hellenistic Asia Minor (cf. Acts 14:20, 21, 22, 28; 16:1; 18:23; 19:1, 9, 30; 20:1, 30) and in Achaia, the heart of Greece (Acts 18:27). The book of Acts does not record the establishment of the churches in the regions mentioned in 1 Peter 1:1 (i.e., Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia), but their cultural and linguistic interplay with the regions of Pauline church planting assumes similar usage of “discipleship” language. Indeed, Jesus’ command to “make disciples” of all the nations finds remarkable verbal fulfillment in the activities of the early church as the apostles went from Jerusalem to Greek-speaking regions such as Asia Minor. Luke tells us that when going through the pagan city of Derbe in Asia Minor, Paul and Barnabas “preached the gospel to that city and had *made many disciples*” (Acts 14:21 ESV; my emphasis), using the same verb, μαθητεύω, found in Matthew’s record of Jesus’ Great Commission. Luke goes on to say that “they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the *disciples* (μαθητῶν; plural of μαθητής; my emphasis), encouraging them to continue in the faith” (Acts 14:21-22 ESV). Luke emphasizes that in Greek-speaking Asia Minor to believe in the gospel message was to become a disciple of Jesus. There was no inherent meaning in the terms μαθητής or μαθητέων that made them inappropriate for use by converts from Greek-speaking circles. Other terms used in Christianity had different connotations in secular Greek circles than in Christian (e.g., “word=λόγος; “love”=ἀγάπη; “fellowship”=κοινωνία), but Christians did not eliminate their usage. Indeed, Christians often sought to use common terms as bridges to other cultures. One of the positive gains in the application of modern linguistics to Biblical studies is the emphasis that words must be understood in their context, whether written or spoken.⁷ According to the record of Acts, μαθητής was used to designate Christians on all three of Paul’s missionary journeys, which was all throughout the primary missionary extension of the church on Hellenistic soils. The chronology of usage in Acts in the very places where the churches of the Epistles and the Revelation were located overlaps the origin and development of these

churches. The converts in these areas were readily and casually called disciples for quite some time, well into the second century, as we see in the literature of the apostolic fathers, especially, though not exclusively, in Ignatius of Antioch (c. A.D. 35-110).⁸ The reason for the absence of μαθητής and μαθητεύω cannot be attributed to inappropriateness in Hellenistic circles.

The Type of Disciple was Determined by the Type of Master

Third, Jesus spent much time refining the definition of his form of discipleship within Judaism, because evidence indicates that he used the same terminology that the Jews did. Similar to the usage we indicated above within Hellenism, within Judaism of the first century a.d. several different types of individuals were called “disciples,” using the essentially equivalent terms μαθητής and תַּלְמִיד (talmid).⁹ The terms designated adherents or followers who were committed to a recognized leader, teacher or movement. Relationships ran the spectrum from philosophical,¹⁰ to technical rabbinical scribes,¹¹ to sectarian,¹² to revolutionary.¹³ Apart from the disciples of Jesus, the Gospels present us with “disciples of the Pharisees” (e.g., Matt 22:15–16; Mark 2:18), who possibly belonged to one of the schools (cf. Acts 5:34; 22:3); “disciples of John the Baptist” (Mark 2:18), the courageous men and women who had left the status quo of Jewish society to follow the eschatological prophet John the Baptist; and the “disciples of Moses” (John 9:24–29), Jews who focused on their privileged position as those to whom God had revealed himself through Moses.

The type of discipleship within Judaism, Hellenism, and the early church was not inherent to the terms “disciple” or “discipleship,” but rather took the shape that was advocated by the type of master. Jesus took a commonly occurring phenomenon—a master with disciples—and used it as an expression of the kind of relationship that he would develop with his followers, but he would mold and shape it to form a unique form of discipleship, far different than others. As Christianity moved out into the Greek-speaking Hellenistic world it continued to maintain the type of discipleship that Jesus had developed. Jesus developed a relationship with his disciples that was unique to his status as the messianic Son of God, whose disciples would ultimately worship him, an action reserved solely for God with his people (Matt 28:16–17).

The Nature of the Epistles

A more likely explanation for the absence of the terms “disciple” and

“discipleship” in the epistles and Revelation focuses on the change of circumstances and the nature of the content of those writings. Other terms began to be used more frequently that focused on the believers’ relationships, especially to each other, and to a risen Savior. This does not necessarily demand that the term dropped from common usage; it simply stresses that its absence from the Epistles and the Revelation may be explained by the adoption of words more expressive of the state of affairs addressed in that genre of literature. The Gospels and Acts are narrative material, describing in third person the actions of the earthly Jesus and his followers as he prepares them to carry his gospel into the world. The Epistles are letters to churches, written in the first person to fellow believers addressed in the second person, describing relationships with an ascended Lord, with a community of faith, and with an alien society. The Revelation is a vision, narrating the activities of the glorified Lord who brings judgment on the earth before his return in triumph. The genre of literature reflects the terms most appropriate to describe Jesus and his followers.

Μαθητής continued to be an appropriate word to designate adherents to the Master, but since he was no longer present to follow around physically, other terms came naturally into use to describe the relationships of these disciples to their risen Lord, to the community, and to society.¹⁴ This is the case in the Epistles and Revelation especially, where the subject matter spoke of the risen Lord, where mutual affairs of believers in the church are addressed, and where the church must define its interface with society. However, we do not see strong evidence that the term disciple was actually dropped from usage. The chronology of usage in Acts in the very places where the churches of the Epistles and Revelation were located overlaps the origin and development of these churches. As we have noted, the converts in these areas were called disciples for quite some time, even well into the second century.

A wide-spread explanation for the absence of disciple terminology suggests that other terms more appropriate to the post-ascension conditions were used within the Christian community. Although “disciple” was still an important term in Acts for describing the relationship of believers to Jesus, a transition to other terms began to occur. One description that naturally expressed the new relationship with the risen Lord was “believers” (*οἱ πιστεύοντες*, Acts 5:14; *οἱ πιστοί*, Acts 10:45). Among other names used

to describe the relation of believers to the risen Lord in Acts are “those of the way” (e.g., Acts 9:2) and “Christians” (Acts 11:26; 26:28). Names which indicated the relationship of disciples to one another became very prominent, especially the terms “brothers” and “sisters” (*ἀδελφοί, ἀδελφή*), which expressed the spiritual family-nature of the new community (e.g., Acts 1:15-16). Where *μαθητής* does not occur after Acts 21:16, “brothers” comes into use to designate those of the community (e.g., Acts 21:17, 20; 21:7, 17, 20; 28:14-21). An expression which designated the believers’ sacred calling and their relationship to society was “saints” (*οἱ ἄγιοι*; Acts 9:13, 32, 41; 26:10).

This explanation suggests that the epistles reflect day-to-day concerns of the post-resurrection community. Jesus said that mutual discipleship implied a new family relation of brothers and sisters (e.g., Matt 12:46-50; 23:8), and the church now experienced that relationship under their risen Lord. Terms which addressed their shared oneness in Christ, such as “brethren” or “saints,” should be expected to be used in the epistles. We therefore see Paul, for example, referring to fellow believers as his brothers/sisters (Col 1:1/Rom 16:1) and addressing his letters to the saints (2 Cor 1:1), and Peter addressing a fellow-believer as brother (1 Pet 5:12), and referring to the church as the household of God (4:17), and referring to members of the church as his beloved (2:11; 4:12), and Christians (4:16).

This is similar in common usage today. Jesus’ final Great Commission indicated that the outcome of conversion to Christianity is that a person becomes a disciple of Jesus. Therefore, all Christians are disciples of Jesus. However, we seldom address each other as disciples: “How are you, disciple?” Rather we regularly use expressions similar to what we find in the epistles: “How are you, sister/brother?” Pastors address their “beloved flock.” Newspaper articles compare the number of “Christians” in a nation in comparison to the number of Muslims or Hindus.

Therefore, the absence of the words “disciple” and “discipleship” in 1 Peter is a curiosity, but most likely attributable to the general circumstances of the post-resurrection church and the nature of the literature as an epistle offering instruction and admonition in life with the ascended Lord Jesus. With this in mind, we can now turn our attention to how the *concept* of discipleship occurs in 1 Peter.

DISCIPLESHIP IN OTHER WORDS

Jesus had left them. He had comforted them with the promise of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-17). He had promised to be with them forever (Matt 28:20). But Jesus was no longer there for his disciples to see, to walk with, to follow as Master. What would discipleship be like in the days that stretched out beyond them? What would it mean to be a disciple of Jesus in the days when he was not with them? Not with them to teach them personally, not with them to correct them, not with them to encourage them, not with them to point the right way.

These were the new days, the new dilemmas, the new crises that faced the fledgling group of disciples whose Master was no longer with them physically. For some of the disciples, this created at first a stumbling-block of faith. Thomas, well known as “doubting Thomas,” had difficulty accepting the news of the risen Jesus. When he finally saw Jesus physically, he confessed, “my Lord and my God” (John 20:28), one of the most profound declarations of Jesus’ deity in Scripture. But Jesus avowed that the kind of faith that would be needed in the days to come was the kind that would believe while not seeing. “Jesus said to him, ‘Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed’” (John 20:29 ESV).

We understand the situation of those disciples as they faced a new age when Jesus would not be with them physically, because our situation is so similar. We do not have Jesus here with us physically to follow. For some of us this is a stumbling-block of faith. For some of us this means the blossoming of a real life of faith following our Master in the day to day activities of life.

The apostle Peter understood this concept clearly. He gave his readers an example of how to handle suffering in their day to day lives. The example is Jesus. Peter writes, “But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps” (1 Pet 2:20-21 ESV).

We are well aware of the obvious fact that our Master is not here for us to follow around physically. Yet in the example and teaching he provided in his earthly ministry, Jesus still leads the way in our world today. Peter and the other apostles had walked with Jesus in his earthly ministry, and the passion of their ministry was to bring Jesus alive in the hearts and lives of

those around them. That is the meaning of discipleship.

It is this kind of language that compels us to respond with a resounding “Yes!” to the question of whether or not the concept of discipleship is present in the epistles. The consensus in the history of the church—ancient and modern—is that the concept of discipleship is apparent everywhere in the NT, from Matthew through Revelation. While scholars’ emphases and methods of inquiry vary, virtually all scholars now agree that the concept of discipleship is present everywhere in the NT in related terminology, teachings, and metaphors.¹⁵ The following charts emphasize that relationship.

| TERMS EQUIVALENT TO “DISCIPLE” IN THE GOSPELS, WHICH TRANSITION THROUGH ACTS AND THE EPISTLES / REVELATION | | |
|---|-----------------------------|------------------|
| <i>Gospels</i> | <i>Acts</i> | <i>Epistles</i> |
| disciple = believers | disciple = believers | believers |
| disciple = brothers/sisters | disciple = brothers/sisters | brothers/sisters |
| disciple = servants | disciple = servants | servants |
| disciple = church | disciple = church | church |

| TERMS EQUIVALENT TO “DISCIPLE” IN THE ACTS, WHICH TRANSITION TO THE EPISTLES / REVELATION | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Gospels</i> | <i>Acts</i> | <i>Epistles</i> |
| disciple | disciple = “saint” | saint |
| disciple | disciple = Christians | Christians |

| RELATED TEACHINGS AND METAPHORS OF THE DISCIPLESHP LIFE FOUND IN THE GOSPELS, ACTS, AND EPISTLES / REVELATION | |
|--|--------------------|
| <i>Teachings</i> | <i>Metaphors</i> |
| Following Jesus | Walking |
| Bearing the Cross | Shepherd and sheep |
| Marks of discipleship | Branches |
| Light of the world | Imitation |
| Prayer | |
| Pattern of Righteousness | |

For the community that Peter addresses, like for us on this side of the cross, a certain amount of restatement of discipleship as found in the Gospels is needed. Discipleship as it unfolded in the earthly ministry of Jesus as his

disciples followed him around the Palestinian countryside must be adjusted in the age of the early church, and today, to having an ascended Master who is now at the right hand of the Father. Jesus developed a form of discipleship in his earthly ministry that was unique, and by the time he issued his Great Commission to “make disciples” of all the nations, his followers knew what his kind of disciple would look like, and what the life of discipleship to the ascended Jesus would look like.

I define discipleship to Jesus in his earthly ministry, as well as in Peter’s experience in the early church in Jesus’ ascended ministry, as follows: *Discipleship means living a fully human life in this world in union with Jesus Christ, growing in conformity to his image as the Spirit transforms us from the inside-out, nurtured within a community of disciples who are engaged in that lifelong process, and helping others to know and become like him.*

PETER’S THEOLOGY OF DISCIPLESHP TO THE CRUCIFIED MESSIAH

With this definition in mind, we can outline briefly what we might understand to be Peter’s theology of discipleship to the Crucified Messiah, focusing initially on 1 Peter 2:21-25, but then broadening to include 1 Peter generally. Scholars have noted allusions to the teachings of Jesus in 1 Peter, with some especially noting that these allusions refer to contexts in the gospels that are especially associated with the apostle Peter.¹⁶ To take that one step further, the connection of 1 Peter with the teachings of Jesus and Peter’s involvement helps draw a connection with Peter’s experience of burgeoning discipleship to the *earthly* Jesus with Peter’s articulation of discipleship to the *ascended* Jesus. The same Peter who brashly tried to prevent Jesus from suffering and dying (cf. Matt 16:21-23), is now the tested apostle who declares that “Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps” (1 Pet 2:21 ESV). This is at the heart of Peter’s theology of discipleship to the Crucified Messiah. This can be unpacked in six brief points.

1. Grounded in a Personal, Costly Relationship

The starting point for Peter’s theology of discipleship is that it is grounded in a personal, costly relationship to the Crucified Messiah. Discipleship to Jesus is costly; it cost Jesus his life, and it costs us ours. Although it is nothing we can buy, it is costly nonetheless. The cost is *life*. Jesus’ life, and our life. This

is perhaps the central point of our passage, and extends the tradition found in Jesus' words in Mark's Gospel. "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it" (Mark 8:34-35 ESV). Peter states, "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed" (1 Pet 2:24 ESV).

Thomas Schreiner comments, "The verse begins, then, with the basis upon which believers are forgiven: Christ's atoning death. Peter then emphasized the purpose of his death: so that believers will live a new kind of life."¹⁷ Paul Achtemeier extends that thought, "What is evident is that our author sees in Jesus' death a vicarious suffering by which a new life freed from sin is made possible, a theology already nascent in the description of the suffering servant in Isaiah 53 from which this verse is largely drawn."¹⁸

The verb πάσχω ("I suffer") is a favorite of Peter, occurring twelve times in this little letter,¹⁹ nearly thirty percent of the total of forty-one occurrences in the NT. Likewise, the noun πάθημα ("suffering") occurs four times in 1 Peter (1:11; 4:13; 5:1, 9), twenty-five percent of the sixteen times the noun occurs in the NT. Those percentages are one of the clues as to the importance of the theme of suffering in this letter. Suffering is a common phenomenon of life, but there is purpose in Jesus' suffering, and there is purpose in suffering in the lives of those for whom Jesus suffered. The purpose (*ἵνα*) of Christ's death was to empower his people "to live for righteousness" (2:24), not in the forensic sense, but in the sense of transformational discipleship; living to righteousness by dying to sins, an experiential relationship with Jesus that brings freedom from bondage to sin (cf. 1:17–19).²⁰

Discipleship to Jesus is a costly relationship.

2. Originates with Gracious Call

Peter emphasizes that discipleship to the Crucified Messiah originates with a gracious call from Jesus to enter into an intimate relationship with him in the midst of the readers' suffering. The verb "called" (ἐκλήθητε) here (cf. 1:15; 2:9; 3:9; 5:10), along with the noun "called," "elect," or "chosen" (ἐκλεκτός) (1:1; 2:4, 6, 9), are significant in Peter's understanding of discipleship. On one level, this refers to the beginning practice of Jesus as he called individuals to follow him (Mark 1:20; cf. 2:17). In Rabbinic circles and in Greek philosophical

schools and the mystery religions, a person made a voluntary decision to join the school of the master and in so doing became a disciple. With Jesus it was his call that was decisive. From the beginning of his public ministry Jesus called, and individuals were faced with the decision either to follow him as his disciple, or turn away. Rengstorf states that “This aspect dominates all the Gospel accounts of the way in which they began to follow Jesus.”²¹

This was Peter’s own experience, as he was one of the first individuals that Jesus called, along with his brother Andrew and the brothers James and John, the sons of Zebedee (cf. Mark 1:16-20). This is far different than other forms of discipleship in the ancient world, which were largely oriented toward learning a profession or entering into a school or religious training. As in our day, an apprentice entered into the relationship with the goal of one day becoming a master craftsman or teacher.²² But with Jesus, he called men and women into a relationship with him in which he would always be the Master and Teacher.

On another level, the expression “called” will come to refer theologically to the divine activity in which God is the Savior who seeks the sick and the sinners. This activity was revealed early in Jesus’ ministry when he was questioned by the religious leaders of his day why he was dining with tax-collectors and sinners. Jesus’ reply was that, “It is not those who are well who need a doctor, but those who are sick. I didn’t come to call the righteous, but sinners” (Mark 2:17 CSB17). This became the identifying expression, so that in Jesus’ use the noun “elect” or “chosen” (*ἐκλεκτός*) was essentially synonymous with the term “disciple” or “believer”: “And if the Lord had not cut short the days, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he shortened the days” (Mark 13:20 ESV; cf. 13:22, 27; Matt 22:14; 24:22, 24, 31).

On still another level, the “call” extends to a purpose of discipleship. J. Ramsey Michaels states, “Contrary to much that has been written on 1 Peter, the call to discipleship in this letter is not a call to suffering, as if suffering in itself was something good. Rather, it is a call to do good—and, furthermore, to do good even in the presence of undeserved suffering, like that faced by Jesus.”²³ The referent of the demonstrative pronoun *τοῦτο* (“this”) in the phrase *εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ* that fronts 2:21 encompasses all three verbs in the clause at the end of 2:20: *ἀγαθοποιοῦντες καὶ πάσχοντες ὑπομενεῖτε*: *ἀγαθοποιοῦντες* (“when doing good”) *καὶ πάσχοντες* (“and are suffering for

it") ὑπομενεῖτε ("you remain firm"): For to *this* you have been called.²⁴ The goal of their calling is to find favor with God by doing good while suffering for it, and remaining firm. This theme—"doing good"—is for Peter a central element of his theology of discipleship. Peter's readers have been called by grace to do good.

The term χάρις ("grace") is found ten times in 1 Peter.²⁵ It appears prominently in Peter's opening salutation to the letter as he gives a prayer/blessing for the recipients: "May grace and peace be multiplied to you" (1:2). The term likewise appears prominently in the epistolary closing, where Peter gives a summary purpose for writing this letter: "I have written briefly, exhorting and bearing witness that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it!" These two opening and closing references to "grace" comprise an important *inclusio* or "bookends" to Peter's letter and indicate that "grace" is the nature of the letter itself. This letter is an embodiment of the gospel; it is a gift and it is enablement to live the gospel.

Thus Peter's theology of discipleship to the Crucified Messiah begins with a gracious call from Jesus that then characterizes the ongoing life of discipleship. It is an underserved call that includes the enablement to be and to become and to do all that to which Jesus has called the readers; especially suffering for doing good.

Discipleship to Jesus originates with a gracious call.

3. A Spirit Empowered Transformed Identity

Peter's theology of discipleship to the Crucified Messiah is experienced especially in a transformed identity, an identity that is produced by and grown by the Spirit of God in our new creation in Christ. Peter's opening exordium is a powerful blessing of God for bringing about a new birth for Peter and his readers: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again" (1:3 NAS). In three rapid εἰς-prepositional phrases, Peter indicates that they were born again "to a living hope" (εἰς ἐλπίδα ζῶσαν; 1:3), "to an inheritance" (εἰς κληρονομίαν; 1:4), "for a salvation" (εἰς σωτηρίαν; 1:5). Peter indicates that from the moment of salvation God views us differently. We are his beloved, obedient children who have been born into a new identity as his child (1:14, 23). This new identity in Christ affects all that we are, including the way we see ourselves, the way we relate to God, and the way we relate to others.²⁶

Against the first century AD cultural values of honor and shame Peter illustrates with notable unambiguousness the ways in which Christian identity was forged from Jewish traditions and converted in the generally hostile Roman Empire. For example, David Horrell points to the unique occurrence of the term “Christian” in 1 Peter 4:16, and indicates that “this text represents the earliest witness to the crucial process whereby the term was transformed from a hostile label applied by outsiders to a proudly claimed self-designation.”²⁷ While the surrounding culture viewed the communities of 1 Peter with derision and hostility, Peter calls them to remember that they are born again (1:3, 23) to a new identity as “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession. Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people” (2:9-10 ESV). These latter metaphors aid Peter in transforming the readers’ identity in how they approach the world and reinforce their experience of election as those who are consecrated and sprinkled (1 Pet 1:1-2), ransomed for holiness (1:13-19), and are living stones and holy priests (2:1-10).²⁸

Christian identity (as a disciple of Jesus) is a transformed identity, an identity that is produced by and grown by the Spirit of God in our new creation in Christ. As Karen Jobes indicates, “Christ is not only essential to the new birth but is central to the Christian’s new life.”²⁹ Three primary characteristics mark this new life:

a) *Transformation of the mind to be free like Jesus*—Peter states, “For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God” (1 Pet 2:15-16 ESV). Being “free” means the ability to do the right and good thing, the ability to choose God, to be liberated from sin’s bondage. This comes from being born again to a transformed identity. This was Jesus’ challenge (cf. John 8:31-32), which Peter echoes.

b) *Transformation of the heart to love like Jesus*—Peter encourages, “Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God” (1 Pet 1:22-23 ESV). This means to experience an unconditional commitment to imperfect people in which we give ourselves to bring relationships to God’s intended purpose. This was Jesus’ encouragement (cf. John 13:34-35), which now becomes central for Peter.

c) *Transformation of character to live like Jesus*—Peter exhorts, “So put

away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good” (2:1-3 ESV). This means to experience the sanctifying work of the Spirit (1:2) and the new life unto righteousness that comes through Jesus’ vicarious death (2:24). This was Jesus’ promise (cf. John 15:7-8), which Peter applies to his readers’ experience of the risen Lord.

It is vitally important for Peter’s communities to see themselves from these perspectives. The starting point of transformation is the recognition that they are born again, now as God’s child. That is the starting point for everything they will become: the roles that they will carry out in life, the hurts and the failures they will overcome, the accomplishments that they will achieve.

Discipleship to Jesus comes with a transformed identity.

4. Enabled and Guided by the Living and Abiding Word

Discipleship to the Crucified Messiah also emphasizes that it is enabled and guided in all areas of life by the living and abiding Word of God. This is an enablement and guidance by the absolute Truth and the nurturing of the Truth in our heart through the Spirit enabling and impelling us toward growth in Truth. This stems from Jesus’ statement, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:31-32 ESV). Peter is one of the clearest examples of one who grasped the Word of God completely as the truth that directed his walk as Jesus’ disciple, and he articulated that principle as central to community and personal transformation. He states,

Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; for “All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever.” And this word is the good news that was preached to you (1:22-25 ESV).

This means a radical commitment to the authority of the Word of God as the absolute truth about reality. This is not simply the acquisition of truth, but the internalization of truth so that it expresses our world-view,

characterizes our values, and conveys our entire lifestyle. As those within the communities that Peter addresses respond obediently to the Word of God that is energized by the Spirit, the newly transformed heart of the person directs transformation from the inside to the outside.

The OT is the Scripture of Peter's community, especially as it points to salvation in Messiah and his people. Including direct quotations of OT texts, allusions, and echoes picking up OT themes, scarcely a verse in 1 Peter is exempt from OT influence.³⁰ But Peter also echoes Jesus' teaching throughout his epistle, here in the parable of the soils as he draws upon the image of a "seed" to refer to the Word of God.³¹ Here, however, the metaphor refers to human regeneration. The imperishable seed refers to the eternal Word of God, and the new birth indicates the spiritual birth that has been generated by this divine, imperishable seed of God's Word. Thus Peter continues the theme of the exordium in 1:3 where he praises God who has brought about their new birth (*ἀναγέννησις* in both passages). This is in comparison with birth brought about through a perishable seed, which refers to human procreation, and is compared to the temporal and fragile nature of the flowers of the field. Achtemeier states, "Such rebegetting, in contrast to their original begetting, comes from imperishable seed, with the result that the ensuing life shares the characteristics of the divine and imperishable rather than the human and thus perishable world."³² The love commanded in 1:22 is thus possible for a believer to exercise because of the "spiritual energy" of this new birth that God has enacted by his imperishable, eternal word.³³

This is a link between Jesus' teaching on discipleship in the kingdom of heaven (cf. Matt 5:1-20) and Peter's discussion of regeneration and sanctification through the work of the Holy Spirit. The life made possible through the arrival of the kingdom of heaven is described by the apostle Peter as the transformational process of the person who has been born anew by the living and enduring word of God (1 Pet 1:22—2:3). As Jesus' disciples, and the communities that Peter addresses, face the daily challenges lived in the everyday realities of a fallen world, they must choose to allow the Spirit of God to produce Christ-like characteristics in them.

Discipleship to Jesus is enabled and guided by the living and abiding Word.

5. *The Process of Becoming More Fully Human in Families of Faith*

Discipleship to the Crucified Messiah is developed through a whole-life, life-long process of becoming more fully human, and it is carried out in families

of faith. This is a process that is our regenerated humanity being restored ultimately to the full image of God, which God had intended from creation.

Because of being created in the image of God, humans are like God and represent God in a way unlike any other creature (Gen 1:27-31). The image of God is something in our nature as humans, and refers to what we *are* (e.g., mentally, morally, spiritually, relationally), rather than something we *have* or *do*. This is our identity as humans created in the image of God. Sin distorted the image of God in humans by affecting every aspect of our likeness to him, yet the restoration process has begun with our redemption in Christ (e.g., Col 3:10), and will be completed at the end of our own journey.³⁴

As the complete image of God (Col 1:15-20) and the one whose humanity was never spoiled by sin (Heb 4:15), Jesus is the ultimate pattern of human life for our transformational example. Since he is the image of God in its purest sense, he is the appropriate object that we imitate as we are transformed into his image (Rom 8:29). And since he experienced holistic human development (cf. Luke 2:52) as we do, yet perfectly, we have the perfect example in him of what it means to experience fully human transformation throughout the course of our entire life.

Peter surfaces specifically the example (*ὑπογραμμός*) of Christ's suffering. His readers are to follow Christ's pattern and endure whatever suffering comes their way, so that they would "follow in his steps" (*ἴνα ἐπακολουθήσητε τοῖς ἵγεσιν αὐτοῦ*; 2:21). Martin Hengel compares "following" Jesus as his disciple to other forms of disciples in the ancient world who follow their own masters. He emphasizes about following Jesus,

Here "following" means in the first place unconditional *sharing of the master's destiny*, which does not stop even at deprivation and suffering in the train of the master, and is possible only on the basis of complete trust on the part of the person who "follows"; he has placed his destiny and his future in the master's hands.³⁵

Schreiner further emphasizes, "As Christ's disciples, believers are to suffer as he did, enduring every pain and insult received because of their allegiance to the Master."³⁶

Further, Christian identity is nurtured in communities of faith. Each individual enjoys a personal relationship with Christ that facilitates transformation into his image, but that personal relationship must be nurtured

within two primary communities of faith—the spiritual family and the biological family.

The spiritual family is the church. Entrance to discipleship is based on obeying the will of the Father and experiencing the new birth (1 Pet 1:3; cf. Mark 3:31-35), which simultaneously in this age provides entrance to the church. Brothers and sisters in Christ need each other as a spiritual community of faith to stimulate the growth of individuals as well as the body as a whole (1 Pet 5:5-7).

But the biological family continues to play a major role in God's program. Marriage is a relationship in which husbands and wives mutually nurture each other's transformation (1 Pet 3:1-7). The responsibility of the church is to equip families so that husbands and wives can nurture each other and so that parents can nurture their own children. And the responsibility of the family is to be the training grounds for the next generation of the church (e.g., 1 Tim 3:4-5; Tit 1:6-7).

God is Father of the family into which Peter's addressees have been born (1 Pet 1:1-3), and they are to be obedient children (1:14). Submission becomes a significant issue for Peter in our human institutions: "Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution" (2:13 ESV; cf. 2:11-3:12).³⁷ Biological families headed by human husbands and wives are to live out a relationship of mutual submission, honor, and understanding. The discipleship of marriage is lived out in the context of submission to God and other God-ordained social relationships. The voluntary submission of Christian wives to their husbands is a specific application of 1 Peter 2:13-17, which is the overriding principle of the discipleship of submission.³⁸ This is the countercultural Christian value that believers are to be in submission to one another, which we also see in Paul: Υποτασσόμενοι ἀλλήλοις ἐν φόβῳ Χριστοῦ (Eph 5:21).

I understand submission to be a positive placing of one's will under the will of another so that a higher goal may be accomplished. In the case of Christians, this especially means God's higher goals. Another way of expressing it may be: yielding my autonomy to serve another so that God's higher purposes can be accomplished. All humans are created equal, but each has specific roles assigned by God for accomplishing his will. Leadership in this world is a derived responsibility and all earthly leadership is ultimately derived from God. Therefore, to obey earthly leaders is to obey God who

works through them. Submission means placing one's autonomous will under the will of another, and allowing that person to be responsible for the direction the relationship takes in following God's will for the relationship. I suggest that mutual submission of believers to one another is the standard principle, which is then to be displayed within various relationships, such as household slaves to master (2:18), the marital relationship (3:1-7), and the church (5:1-5). It is important to balance the responsibility of mutual submission with the responsibility of leadership roles.

Biblical submission does not indicate inequality. The Bible teaches clearly that women and men are equal creations of God: both are made in his image (Gen 1:26-27), both have equal access to salvation (Gal 3:28), and both are fellow heirs of the grace of life eternal (1 Pet 3:7). Submission does not indicate inferiority, but rather points to different roles for men and women. Husbands and wives are in mutual submission to each other as brothers and sisters in Christ, yet for wives to submit to a leadership role of husbands does not indicate that they are of lesser value. And Peter provides one of the most dramatic statements about the connection of personal formation and the biological family, indicating that husbands who abuse the relationship with their wives will have a hindered prayer life (1 Pet 3:1-7).

Discipleship to Jesus is developed through a whole-life, life-long process of becoming more fully human in two families of faith, the church and the biological family.

6. Sojourning Experienced in our Everyday, Watching World

Discipleship to the Crucified Messiah is carried out by sojourning in our everyday, watching world, which is a sojourn that flows from our rootedness in Jesus as he walks with us in the real world.

Peter is one who comprehended the unmistakable reality that he must take hold of his calling as Jesus' disciple to be witness to the world of the forensic and transformational good news of the kingdom of God. "Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation" (1 Pet 2:11-12 ESV).

The recipients of this letter are identified in the first verse as "the chosen sojourners of the dispersion" (*ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις διασπορᾶς*).

The adjective “chosen” or “elect” (*έκλεκτος*) identifies them as God’s chosen people, linking them with the people of Israel in the OT, but now alluding to their status as those who have been chosen in Christ Jesus to form the new people of God (2:9). As “chosen sojourners” the readers are visitors in the world because of their special relation to God through Jesus Christ, knowing that God has called them out of the darkness of the world—i.e., temporary residents in this world. And further, the readers are “chosen sojourners of the dispersion.” The noun “dispersion” harks back to the people of Israel, who, because of their sin were dispersed among the Gentiles. It later was used more generally, and less pejoratively, to refer to Jews living outside Palestine (John 7:35), a theme that James applies to Jewish Christians living among the Gentiles outside of Palestine (James 1:1).

In recent years a debate has ensued as to whether Peter means this description literally or metaphorically. That debate does not concern this article significantly, but I lean toward Peter using the expressions “elect sojourners of the dispersion” (1:1) and “aliens and sojourners” (2:11; *παροίκους καὶ παρεπιδήμους*) to indicate that the recipients are members of the kingdom of heaven, which is established in part on earth (cf. Matt 4:12-20; 13:24-30, 36-43), but is not fully established as it will be when the King returns. Believers today are members of that kingdom, so when the world sees us it sees the kingdom. We are sojourning as members of the kingdom in this world while we await the full establishment of the kingdom.

In this earthly life, a human is a sojourner, a resident alien (Ps 39:12). The creation awaits its renewal and it groans under bondage to sin and decay (Rom 8:19-22). Regenerated Christians, however, live as people who have been set free from death and sin; our transformation has already begun. Therefore, we are at this time not of this world; our citizenship is in heaven (Phil 3:20). But we were created for an earthly existence and while we await the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth, we are aliens and strangers in the world (1 Pet 2:11).

Nonetheless, our purpose for being here is to advance the gospel message that has redeemed and transformed us, to be salt and light in a decayed and dark world, and to live out life in the way God intended life to be lived before a watching world (cf. John 17:15-21). Communities

of faith are necessary for purposeful gathering away where believers are strengthened and equipped. But the growth and transformation that we experience is what enables us to live effectively with Jesus in this world. Our transformation enables us to live as sojourners in the world, and “live such good lives among the pagans that … they may see your good deeds and glorify God” (1 Pet 2:11-12). Transformed disciples bear and exemplify the message of the gospel of the kingdom, offering life in our everyday realm of activities to a world that is dying without it.³⁹

Discipleship to Jesus is experienced by sojourning in our everyday, watching world.

CONCLUSION

Life with the risen Christ in the church was indeed different from life with the earthly Jesus. However, this survey demonstrates the continuity that the NT writers understood between both phases of his ministry. We saw in the overview of continuity/discontinuity in discipleship methodology from the Gospels to Acts that some scholars suggest that the age of the church requires a completely new form of discipleship. For example, one suggests, “The old relationship of a single teacher, superior to his little cluster of devoted followers, is ended. The training process implicit in the term discipleship is replaced by another.”⁴⁰ The strength of this argument lies in its emphasis upon the change in relationship that did occur when Jesus ascended. However, to suggest that discipleship is to be defined simply by the picture of “a single teacher, superior to his little cluster of devoted followers” is to overlook the defining process through which the concept went in Jesus’ ministry. Jesus’ disciples were not simply identical to the Jewish form of rabbinical student. The form of discipleship Jesus intended for his disciples was unique, and it was not intended only for the time when they could follow him physically; it was also intended for the time when they would gather as the church.⁴¹ Discipleship as a concept is much more expansive than merely certain terms. While the term “disciple” naturally contributes to and describes the concept of discipleship, other related terms, teachings, and images are important as well. Those discussed in this article are some of the ways Jesus provided continuity between his earthly and ascended ministries among his people.

Following in Jesus’ steps is a wonderful picture of discipleship which Peter

uses to encourage his readers in the middle of difficult daily circumstances. Peter, who followed in the physical steps of the Master, exhorts us all to continue to follow the ascended Master: “For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps” (2:21 ESV). This is the heart of the apostle Peter’s theology of discipleship to the Crucified Messiah.

- ¹ For a thorough overview of “canonical Peter” and his own discipleship and his testimony to identity and character formation, see Hans F. Bayer, *Apostolic Bedrock: Christology, Identity, and Character Formation According to Peter’s Canonical Testimony* (Paternoster Biblical Monographs; Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2016).
- ² The explicit self-identification of the author of 1 Peter as “Peter, apostle of Jesus Christ” (Πέτρος ἀπόστολος Τησοῦ Χριστοῦ; 1 Pet. 1:1) was largely unquestioned throughout much of church history. This is not the place to argue against a large body of Petrine scholars who today, mostly since the 19th century, view that explicit self-identification as false. On the basis of strong internal and external evidence from the earliest days of the church, we will assume here the identity of the author of 1 Peter to be the apostle Peter. For discussion and affirmation of Petrine authorship for 1 Peter, see Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 5–19; Andreas J. Köstenberger, L. Scott Kellum, and Charles L Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown: An Introduction to the New Testament* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010), 730–735.
- ³ Karl H. Rengstorf, “μαθητής,” TDNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), IV: 427, 459.
- ⁴ Rengstorf, “μαθητής,” 459.
- ⁵ Cf. also Mark Sheridan, “Disciples and Discipleship in Matthew and Luke,” *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 3 (1973), 239–242.
- ⁶ For an analysis of the use of μαθητής in classical and Hellenistic writings, see Michael J. Wilkins, *The Concept of Disciple in Matthew’s Gospel: As Reflected in the Use of the Term Μαθητής* (NovTSup 59; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988), 11–42. For the following excerpt, see Michael J. Wilkins, “Disciples and Discipleship,” in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, 2nd ed., ed. Joel B. Green, Jeannine K. Brown, and Nicholas Perrin (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2013), 202–212.
- ⁷ A common error in imprecise “word studies” is to force one historical definition of a term into all contexts. Modern lexicological and semantical analysis has revolutionized such studies, demonstrating how words often have broad contextual concepts. The classic work by James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), has been followed by such works as G. B. Caird, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1980); J. P. Louw, *Semantics of New Testament Greek* (SBLSS; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982); Moisés Silva, *Biblical Words and Their Meaning: An Introduction to Lexical Semantics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983); Peter Cotterell and Max Turner, *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1989); Constantine R. Campbell, “Lexical Semantics and Lexicography,” in *Advances in the Study of Greek: New Insights for Reading the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 72–90.
- ⁸ For discussion of the phenomena of discipleship in the apostolic fathers of the late first and early second centuries A.D, see Michael J. Wilkins, *Following the Master: A Biblical Theology of Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), ch. 16. The noun μαθητής occurs 9 times in Ignatius: Ign. Eph. 1.2.4; Ign. Magn. 9.1.6; 9.2.3; 10.1.3; Ign. Trall. 5.2.4; Ign. Rom. 4.2.4; 5.3.2; Ign. Pol. 2.1.1; 7.1.5. The verb μαθητεύω occurs 4 times in Ignatius: Ign. Eph. 3.1.3; 10.1.4; Ign. Rom. 3.1.2; 5.1.4.
- ⁹ D. O. Wenthe, “The Social Configuration of the Rabbi-Disciple Relationship: Evidence and Implications for First Century Palestine,” in *Studies in the Hebrew Bible, Qumran, and the Septuagint: Presented to Eugene Ulrich*, ed. P. W. Flint, E. Tov and J. C. Vanderkam (VTSup 101; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2006), 143–74.
- ¹⁰ Philo, *De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini* 7; 64; 79.
- ¹¹ m. *Abot* 1:1; b. *Šabb.* 31a.
- ¹² Pharisees in Josephus, *Ant.* 13.289; 15.3, 370.
- ¹³ Zealot-like nationalists in *Midrash Šir Haširim Züta*.
- ¹⁴ This is a widespread conclusion among many scholars; e.g., Avery Dulles, “Discipleship,” *The Encyclopedia of*

- Religion*, Mircea Eliade, ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1987), IV:361-364; Charles H. Talbert, "Discipleship in Luke-Acts," in *Discipleship in the New Testament*, ed. Fernando F. Segovia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 62.
- ¹⁵ Examples of this are found in Fernando F. Segovia, ed., *Discipleship in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985) and Richard N. Longenecker, ed., *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996). Cf. Dulles, "Discipleship," IV:361-364; Paul Helm, "Disciple," *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (gen. ed. Walter A. Elwell; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 630.
- ¹⁶ Cf. Robert H. Gundry, "'Verba Christi' in I Peter: Their Implications concerning the Authorship of I Peter and the Authenticity of the Gospel Tradition," *New Testament Studies* 13 (1966-1967): 336-350; followed by Jobes, *I Peter*, 17-18. For comparison, see John H. Elliott, "Backward and Forward 'In His Steps': Following Jesus from Rome to Raymond and Beyond. The Tradition, Redaction, and Reception of 1 Peter 2:18-25," in *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament* (ed., Richard N. Longenecker; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 184-208; esp. 191-193.
- ¹⁷ Thomas R. Schreiner, *I, 2 Peter, Jude* (The New American Commentary 37; Nashville: B&H, 2003), 145-146.
- ¹⁸ Paul J. Achtemeier, *I Peter: A Commentary on First Peter* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 203.
- ¹⁹ 1 Peter 2:19, 20, 21, 23; 3:14, 17, 18; 4:1[2x], 15, 19; 5:10.
- ²⁰ Cf. Schreiner, *I, 2 Peter, Jude*, 145; Michaels, *I Peter*, 149; Achtemeier, *I Peter*, 202-3.
- ²¹ Rengstorf, μαθητής, 444.
- ²² Dietrich Müller, "Disciple/μαθητής," *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (ed., Colin Brown; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 1:483-490.
- ²³ J. Ramsey Michaels, "Going to Heaven with Jesus: From 1 Peter to Pilgrim's Progress," in *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament* (ed., Richard N. Longenecker; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 248-268; esp. 254.
- ²⁴ Mark Dubis, *I Peter: A Handbook on the Greek Text* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2010), 76.
- ²⁵ 1:2, 10, 13; 2:19, 20; 3:7; 4:10; 5:5, 10, 12.
- ²⁶ See Bayer, *Apostolic Bedrock*, 202-204.
- ²⁷ David G. Horrell, "The Label Χριστιανός: 1 Peter 4:16 and the Formation of Christian Identity," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 126.2 (Summer 2007): 361-381, specifically 362.
- ²⁸ Nijay K. Gupta, "A Spiritual House of Royal Priests, Chosen and Honored: The Presence and Function of Cultic Imagery in 1 Peter," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 36.1 (2009): 61-76.
- ²⁹ Jobes, *I Peter*, 47.
- ³⁰ D. A. Carson, "I Peter," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (eds., G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 101S.
- ³¹ Mark uses the verb στέιπω (Mark 4:14-20), while Peter uses the related noun στορά. For additional discussion see Carsten Peter Thiede, "The Apostle Peter and the Jewish Scriptures in 1 & 2 Peter," *Analecta Bruxellensia* 7 (2002): 145-155.
- ³² Achtemeier, *I Peter*, 139.
- ³³ Jobes, *I Peter*, 125.
- ³⁴ For recent discussion, see Ryan S. Peterson, *The Imago Dei as Human Identity: A Theological Interpretation* (Journal of Theological Interpretation Supplements 14; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2016).
- ³⁵ Martin Hengel, *The Charismatic Leader and His Followers* (trans., James Greig, 1968; New York: Crossroad, 1981), 72 (emphasis original).
- ³⁶ Schreiner, *I, 2 Peter, Jude*, 142.
- ³⁷ Peter H. Davids, *A Theology of James, Peter, and Jude* (Biblical Theology of the New Testament; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 171.
- ³⁸ See James R. Slaughter, "Submission of Wives (1 Pet. 3:1a) in the Context of 1 Peter," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 153 (January-March 1996): 63-74.
- ³⁹ See Torrey Seland, "Resident Aliens in Mission: Missional Practices in the Emerging Church of 1 Peter," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 19.4 (2009): 565-589.
- ⁴⁰ Lawrence O. Richards, *A Practical Theology of Spirituality* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 228.
- ⁴¹ Like some other scholars, Richards dichotomizes the ages of Jesus' earthly ministry and the church. Richards' proposal has three basic difficulties. We have addressed these difficulties earlier. First, he commits the common error of placing too much emphasis upon parallels between the rabbinic form of discipleship and Jesus' form. Second, he does not emphasize enough the distinctive progression in discipleship as initiated and developed by Jesus throughout his ministry and into the church. Third, he does not recognize the continuity/ discontinuity tension between the gospels period and the early church.

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Persecution and the “Adversary” of 1 Peter 5:8

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INTRODUCTION

Of the 105 verses that make up the epistle of 1 Peter, none are quoted more by the early Church Fathers than 1 Peter 5:8: “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” As a seemingly straightforward encouragement in the face of spiritual warfare, it is not difficult to see why many Christians throughout the history of the church have pointed to this exhortation and the surrounding context in the face of temptation or perceived demonic oppression. As this passage stands at the conclusion of the epistle, however, the reader would expect an exhortation in line with the primary aims of the author. In a letter primarily concerned with encouragement and exhortation to believers in the midst of suffering and persecution, a warning against the chief demonic entity and his desire to “devour” Christians might seem out of place. Indeed, this verse marks the first, and only, mention of the Devil in the entire epistle.

This closing warning is, I suggest, not out of character with the rest of the epistle, but instead offers an insight into the author’s worldview and depiction of the plight of his readers. I will argue that the suffering and persecution envisioned in the letter should be viewed through the Jewish and early Christian apocalyptic tradition of cosmic conflict, wherein earthly events and conflicts are seen as a reflection of heavenly ones. In particular, Peter

pictures the current conflict and persecution of the readers as a necessary and inevitable product and reflection of the cosmic struggle against Satan and the demonic realm. Peter thus not only exhorts his readers to view themselves as the people of God, born into an eschatological hope (1:3–5), but also to view their present conflict with hostile human individuals and institutions as an important part of the ongoing and eschatological conflict with Satan (5:8–10). In so doing, Peter provides meaning for their present suffering and explains the reason they are experiencing such hostility by picturing their persistence in holiness as a means of spiritual warfare. Further, these eschatologically charged exhortations provide a basis for hope and perseverance in his readers' present suffering, since Christ has already ensured ultimate victory (3:22).

To demonstrate this claim, I will begin by briefly summarizing ancient conceptions of cosmic conflict and the demonic realm from biblical literature, especially the NT. Next, I will discuss the nature of the persecution envisioned in 1 Peter. Despite many modern scholars maintaining that the persecution depicted in the letter was primarily verbal and social, I will suggest that legal and even violent suffering remained a distinct threat to the Christians in Asia Minor. Lastly, I will bring these two lines of argument to bear on the closing exhortation of 1 Peter 5:8ff, as these verses sum up the contents of the letter as a whole, encouraging as well as exhorting the readers to perseverance in the midst of their “fiery trial” (4:12).

JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN PORTRAYALS OF COSMIC CONFLICT

There are only three instances in the OT where Satan is used as a proper name, and his influence in each case is limited and not a major point of emphasis. However, this relative absence of the figure of Satan does not necessitate the absence of the tradition of cosmic conflict. Though the name of Satan is sparsely used, the presence of the Devil is felt as early as Genesis 3 (cf. Rev 12:9; 20:2), seeking to undermine the plans of Yahweh and oppose his people. In general, however, lacking a solidified figure of Satan under which all evil might be subsumed, the OT authors instead frequently depicted Yahweh at war with the gods of surrounding nations, and saw their conflict with these nations in terms of Yahweh's conflict with (and triumph over) these beings (e.g., Num 33:4b; 2 Sam 5:7; 7:23; 2 Chron 25:15).

Jewish writings in the Second Temple period, particularly those apocalyptic in nature, greatly expanded upon the role and nature of Satan. These Jewish authors conceived of a host of demonic spirits in opposition to Yahweh and his people, with a single evil cosmic force at their head. The names for this cosmic opponent of God—Samael, Azazel, Mastema, Beliar, Semihazah, Satan, etc.—varied among authors, and even within the same texts. Yet, this adversary was consistently portrayed as the enemy of God and his people, with a demonic force and even human beings under his control. Whereas the OT tended to depict Yahweh in conflict with a multitude of gods of other nations, literature in the Second Temple period reflects the notion of Satan as the unified cosmic figure of evil. Space prohibits a substantive survey of OT and Second Temple texts related to cosmic conflict and the demonic realm. In the following section, then, I will focus my remarks on a brief selection of NT texts that reflect the early Christian understanding of the role of Satan and the demonic realm in conflict with Yahweh and his people.

Satan as the “Ruler of This World”

One of the most common ways the NT speaks of Satan is as the “ruler of this world.” The Fourth Gospel uses this specific label three times, all in reference to Satan (12:31; 14:30; 16:11; cf. “the god of this world,” 2 Cor 4:4). In the Fourth Gospel, the “world” is typically used symbolically of “fallen humanity in opposition to God.” Satan, then, as the ruler of the world, represents the ultimate cosmic opponent to Yahweh. Implied in this label, further, is the considerable influence that Satan exerts over the earth. As the ruler of the world, in some sense he holds sway over its inhabitants and their actions. This is seen in the Fourth Gospel by the identification of Jesus’ greatest opponents, the religious leaders and Judas, as the offspring of Satan and as under his influence (see below).

The influence of Satan upon the earth as its ruler may also be observed in the temptation narrative in Matthew and Luke, when Satan takes Jesus to a high mountain to show him “all the kingdoms of the world and their glory” (Matt 4:8; par. Luke 4:5). Satan offers to give Jesus these kingdoms in exchange for his worship. Implicit in this offer is that the kingdoms are actually his to give. There is no indication in the text that Satan’s offer is illegitimate, as Jesus’ response centers around his refusal to bow down to anyone but the Lord rather than any insistence that those kingdoms were not

actually under Satan's control anyway. This is not to say that the NT authors limit God's sovereignty in any kind of dualistic sense, but only that Satan is permitted influence of some kind over these earthly kingdoms. France's summary captures the idea well, “[Satan] is understood to have real power in the present age, though always under the perspective of the ultimate victory of God. And as such he can offer power and glory, but not ultimate fulfillment, still less in accordance with the will of God.” In the same way that Daniel 10 pictures the nations of the earth represented by supernatural “princes” (e.g. the “prince of Persia” and the “prince of Greece”; Dan 10:20), so here the NT acknowledges that the kingdoms of the earth are ruled by the prince of the demons—Satan himself. Satan's aims are not just the corruption of individuals, therefore, but of entire societal structures and governments.

Other NT authors reflect this same understanding of the influence of Satan upon the earth as its ruler. Paul refers to Satan using the term “the prince of the power of the air” (2:2). For Paul and his readers, the “air” referred not so much to the atmosphere, but to the “dwelling place of evil spirits.” The ruler of this realm, then, is the ruler of the evil spirits, i.e., Satan. Significantly, Paul says that prior to Christ, the Ephesians walked under the power of this “prince.” For Paul, then, it is not merely the explicit enemies of God portrayed under the influence of Satan, but every person on earth apart from the grace of God in Christ. As the author of 1 John explicitly states, “[T]he whole world lies in the power of the evil one” (1 John 5:19; see also 3:8–10).

Satan in Conflict with the Kingdom of God

Satan is also shown consistently to be the primary instigator of conflict against the ministry of Jesus and the Church. While this opposition usually involves the agency of human beings or institutions, within the biblical worldview, the ultimate source of this opposition was the Devil himself. This connection is frequently seen in the depiction of the enemies of Jesus and the church with demonic imagery. As the betrayer of Jesus, Judas is spoken of in demonic terms more than any other individual or group. Following the multiplication of the fishes and loaves in the Fourth Gospel, Jesus says to the disciples, “Did I not choose you, the Twelve? And yet one of you is a devil.” The author immediately clarifies his meaning, “He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the Twelve, was going to betray him” (John

6:70–71). Other passages speak of Satan influencing Judas to betray Jesus, or “entering into him” (see Luke 22:3–6; John 13:2, 26–27). Further, in the Fourth Gospel’s account of the farewell discourse prior to the arrest of Jesus in Gethsemane, Jesus tells the disciples, “the ruler of this world is coming” (John 14:30). Here the author clearly refers to Judas Iscariot and the arresting force with him, but identifies him as the “ruler of this world.” As noted above, this designation commonly describes the influence of Satan on earth. Similar statements about the coming of Judas to arrest Jesus merely speak of him as the “ betrayer” (see Matt 26:46; Mark 14:42), yet here the author of the Fourth Gospel again makes explicit the work of Satan through Judas.

In addition to Judas, the Jewish religious leaders in general are also portrayed as agents of Satan and the demonic realm. In John 8, the Pharisees confront Jesus over the authority concerning the claims he was making about himself. Jesus responds by claiming his authority from the Lord himself, his Father. Further, Jesus tells them that, due to their desire to put him to death, their father is not Abraham nor God himself, but Satan. He says, “You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him” (John 8:44). In their opposition to Jesus, therefore, and specifically in their desire to kill him, they are aligned not with the Lord, but with his cosmic enemy. Beyond the earthly ministry of Jesus, the opponents of the apostles and the spread of the gospel in Acts are similarly equated with the cosmic forces of evil. Barnabas and Paul, while ministering in Cyprus, encountered a man named Bar-Jesus (also called Elymas, Acts 13:8), who is described as a Jewish false prophet and a magician. This magician served under the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, and sought to undermine the teaching of Paul and Barnabas, “seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith” (v. 8). Paul rebukes the false prophet, calling him a “son of the devil” and an “enemy of all righteousness” (v. 10), ultimately cursing him with blindness. Insofar as Bar-Jesus opposed the message of the gospel and acted as an “enemy of righteousness,” then, he showed himself to be a tool of Satan. While not directly opposing Jesus himself, his opposition to the apostles and the spread of the gospel is still regarded as demonic in nature.

Even those seemingly aligned with Jesus may be described as doing the works of Satan. Following the first prediction of his betrayal and death in the Gospel of Mathew, Peter pulls Jesus aside to rebuke him, protesting that

these things will surely not come to pass. Jesus responds strongly, saying, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man” (Matt 16:23; par. Mark 8:33). In Matthew’s account, Jesus had just declared Peter to be the rock upon which his church was to be built (vv. 16–19) and yet, in Peter’s suggestion that Jesus would not die at the hands of his enemies and be raised, he carried out not the will of the Lord, but of Satan. France describes Peter’s suggestion as “acting as a spokesman of God’s ultimate enemy.” Again, therefore, the biblical authors identify any opposition to the ministry of Jesus, including his sacrificial death, to be the work of Satan.

Jesus in Conflict with Satan

If opposition to the ministry of Jesus is seen to be the work of Satan, for the writers of the NT, the ministry of Jesus, culminating in his death and resurrection, is a part of Yahweh’s conflict with and triumph over Satan and the demonic realm. After the initial success of Jesus’ exorcistic ministry, the Synoptic writers describe a controversy that arose over the source of Jesus’ authority over demons. In particular, Jesus’ ability to cast out demons is attributed to Satanic power, as Jesus is accused of being possessed by Beelzebul, called “the prince of demons” (Mark 3:22; Matt 12:24; Luke 11:15). In their record of Jesus’ defense to this accusation, the gospel writers cast Jesus’ ministry in terms of conflict with Satan. Jesus responds first by pointing out the absurdity of suggesting that Satan’s power would work against itself, for if Satan were at work through Jesus in driving out demons, he would effectively be working towards the end of his own kingdom. Matthew and Luke make explicit what Mark merely implies—it is the “Spirit of God” (Matt 12:28) and the “finger of God” (Luke 11:20) that gives Jesus authority over demons.

Jesus continues his defense by picturing his ministry in a different way—namely, the binding of the “strong man” and plundering his goods (Mark 3:27; Matt 12:29; Luke 11:21–22). The context makes clear that the “strong man” is Satan himself, and the “goods” he seeks to protect are the innocent sufferers oppressed by demons. Therefore, in casting out demons and healing the sick, Jesus is not merely giving proof of his divinity or messianic status, nor is he merely showing compassion on the weak and downtrodden. Instead, Jesus’ ministry of exorcisms is an attack on Satan and the demonic realm, that he may rescue those in his grasp and thus “plunder his house” (Mark

3:27; Matt 12:29). Lane writes, “The expulsion of demons is nothing less than a forceful attack on the lordship of Satan.” Similarly, France suggests, “[T]he imagery of ‘binding the strong man’ relates not to Jesus’ exorcistic methods, but rather to the eschatological salvation which he now brings, as God’s kingship renders Satan ultimately powerless to oppose God’s will or to harm his people.”

The binding of the strong man, therefore, describes both Jesus’ conflict with the demonic realm as well as his mastery over it. His statements here help the reader to understand what is taking place in the numerous exorcism accounts littered throughout the Synoptics. When Jesus is met by a demon-possessed individual, the demon frequently speaks from a place of submission and fear (Mark 1:23; 3:11; 5:7), and Jesus expels the demon with but a word (Mark 1:25; 7:25; 9:25). Specifically, Jesus’ description of exorcism as the binding of the strong man, then, paints his entire healing and exorcistic ministry as an earthly reflection of the cosmic conflict between Yahweh and Satan, and his effectiveness as an indication of the certainty of his victory.

Reflecting on the consequences of Jesus’ death and resurrection, Paul makes clear that Jesus’ death and resurrection have secured victory over Satan and the demonic realm. In 1 Corinthians, he speaks of Christ’s resurrection in terms of his dominion over spiritual enemies. In the last day, Paul writes, Christ will deliver “the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power” (1 Cor 15:24). Paul explains further in the next verse that Christ “must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet” (v. 25). Thus the rulers, authorities, and powers of v. 24 are equated with Christ’s enemies in v. 25, suggesting they are intended to serve as references to cosmic powers hostile to God and his people. Paul elsewhere makes reference to these cosmic entities in Ephesians, where he says that in the resurrection, God placed Christ “in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion” (Eph 1:20–21). Paul also speaks of these powers being placed “under his feet” (v. 22), alluding to Psalm 110:1.

The Church in Conflict with Satan

Paul also makes clear that the church plays an active role in this conflict between Christ and Satan. In the closing exhortation in Ephesians, Paul encourages the believers to “stand against the schemes of the devil” (Eph 6:11). Believers are elsewhere exhorted to resist the devil (Jas 4:7; 1 Pet

5:8–9), but here Paul elaborates more than other biblical authors. He explicitly describes the struggle of the believers in terms of cosmic conflict when he indicates that the true battle faced by believers is against “the rulers,” “the authorities,” and “the cosmic powers (*kosmokratōr*) over this present darkness” (v. 12). I have already noted how both “rulers” and “authorities” can refer to cosmic beings in other NT texts. Here Paul introduces the figure of the *kosmokratōr*, used only here in the NT. From the further description that these beings are “spiritual forces of evil” (v. 12), it is clear these terms are all intended to refer to malevolent spiritual beings.

Paul then describes how the believers are to engage in this cosmic conflict—namely, by putting on the armor of God. Though Paul draws here on heavily militaristic language, the believers are to “arm” themselves with such things as truth, righteousness, and faith (vv. 14–17). As Asumang notes, “[T]he list of weapons in Ephesians 6 includes Christian virtues that are inaugurated by Christ’s redemptive work.” Their struggle, therefore, is not so much about their own might and strength, but rather on the strength of their God and their dependence upon him. In his might they would be able to stand firm, even against such a foe.

Finally, in the closing exhortation of Romans, Paul promises his readers, “The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet” (Rom 16:20). Paul likely here is alluding to the promise of Genesis 3:15, where the Lord declares that the “seed of the woman” will crush the head of the serpent. Significantly, Paul says that Satan will be crushed underneath the believers’ feet, rather than Christ’s. The Lord is still the one who defeats Satan, but does so in some connection to the believers (cf. 1 John 2:13–14). Furthermore, the immediate context of Paul’s exhortation is in reference to false teachers who cause division in the church (v. 17). The defeat of these false teachers, then, is tied to the defeat of Satan, as they are agents of the devil, insofar as they seek to oppose and undermine the Church.

In summary, though the NT writers portray Satan as the “ruler of this world,” they picture his influence waning under the growing kingdom of God inaugurated by Christ. Both in his healing/exorcism ministry and ultimately in his death and resurrection, the ministry of Jesus is seen as an expression of cosmic conflict against Satan and the demonic realm. Further, the NT authors draw close connections between the conflict that exists in the heavenly realms between God and Satan and the conflict that believers

experience on earth. Followers of Jesus participate in conflict and victory over Satan and the demonic realm, though the ultimate power and victory belong to the Lord. The earthly conflict the believers experience is not a conflict between nations (as in the OT), but instead a conflict between those who belong to the kingdom of God and all those who would oppose it. Therefore, any individual, group, institution, or nation that stands against God’s people acts as an agent of Satan. Yet, while believers experience suffering at the hands of Satan through these agents, they have ultimate hope in the gospel and the certain victory of Christ in the eschaton. Therefore the believers are exhorted and empowered to resist the schemes of the devil and stand firm in their faith, confident of ultimate eschatological victory. Now our attention must turn to the particular conflict and suffering depicted in 1 Peter.

THE NATURE OF PERSECUTION IN 1 PETER

Prior to the 1970’s, the predominant position on the persecution described in 1 Peter was that it reflected an official, empire-wide, state-sponsored proscription against Christianity. Since Peter mentions that his readers were suffering “as Christians” (4:16), and that “the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world” (5:9), scholars theorized that Peter was describing a situation reflected during the reign of Nero (54–68), Domitian (81–96), or Trajan (98–117). Since the mid-20th century, however, a different view of the persecutions of 1 Peter began to emerge. Selwyn argued, instead, that the sufferings experienced by the recipients of the letter were not the result of an official proscription enforced across the empire, but were “spasmodic and particular rather than organized on a universal scale, a matter of incidents rather than of policy.” Others have pointed out that even the persecutions under Nero, Domitian, and Trajan were not universal in scope, reflecting some official stance on Christianity, and therefore these three historical eras are of no use in dating the epistle or informing the situation it describes. The first true worldwide persecution of Christians did not begin until the reign of Decius (ca. AD 250). Elliott argues, “Prior to this time, anti-Christian actions against individuals or groups were sporadic, generally mob-incited, locally restricted, and unsystematic in nature.”

As a result, these scholars argue, the persecution the readers of 1 Peter

faced were not likely to be violent or criminal in nature, but rather “persistent slander and verbal abuse from nonbelieving outsiders aimed at demeaning, shaming, and discrediting the Christians in the court of public opinion” (e.g., 2:12, 15; 3:9, 16; 4:4, 14). Even verbal persecution, however, could carry significant consequences, especially as it relates to ancient conceptions of honor and shame, which Bechtler notes were considered to be “of the utmost importance” in Greco-Roman society. The accumulation of honor was important insofar as it played a role in establishing social rank and status. To gain honor was to gain social status, whereas to suffer shame was to lose social status. Social ostracism and slander could therefore legitimately be called “suffering.”

Further, for Christians involved in trade in Asia Minor, a loss of social status would have significant economic impact on already low profit margins. Williams writes,

For the majority of urban inhabitants in Asia Minor, income was generated through some form of commercial undertaking. In most cases, these local trades or businesses did not generate large financial surpluses. Therefore, even the slightest economic hindrance could have produced a devastating impact on a person’s (or family’s) financial stability. Numerous ways could be listed in which one could be ruined through this form of economic oppression: censoring or boycotting of business and trade relations, breaking of patron-client relationship, canceling the tenancy of a person’s place of business operation, or withdrawing financial assistance.

Furthermore, the centrality of the imperial cult in Roman society, particularly in Asia Minor, made participation in the marketplace a moral dilemma for Christians. Beale remarks, “[T]he imperial cult permeated virtually every aspect of city and often even village life in Asia Minor, so that individuals could aspire to economic prosperity and greater social standing only by participating to some degree in the Roman cult.” For Christians who could only set apart Christ as Lord (1 Pet 3:15), compromise in this area was untenable. As Williams concludes, the subsequent marginalization from the marketplace for these Christians could have devastating economic impacts, such that “even a slight alteration to one’s income could mean the difference between life and death.”

Christianity as “Effectively Illegal”

The persecution envisioned in the letter likely extends beyond the social and economic realm, however. As Holloway writes, “Commentators who describe the suffering of the readers of 1 Peter as social ostracism with little or no reference to the ever-present threat of active persecution fail to do justice to the predicament facing these early Christians.” There is good reason to conclude that the Christians in Asia Minor also lived under constant threat of legal action for their faith, even without any official law in place prohibiting Christian practice. Williams draws attention to an often-ignored tradition of scholarship that advocates for a “median’ view of persecution.” This view made note of the impact of the Neronian pogroms following the fire in Rome of AD 64 on the imperial provinces. The violent treatment of Christians in Rome set a precedent for local governors and magistrates, which could erupt into abrupt outbreaks of violence against a suddenly vulnerable Christian community. While persecution was still sporadic and unsystematic, it could still result in legal punishment at the hands of Roman officials at any time when charges were brought by a private accuser. Therefore, though no official laws were in force making Christian practice a criminal offense and Christians were not hunted down by any police force, Christianity was “effectively illegal,” and could be punished by death across the empire from the time immediately following Nero’s persecution in Rome. Goppelt writes of the effect of Nero, “If an imperial measure affected Christians as Christians in this way in the capital city, the name certainly carried the same burden for all public officials of the Empire.” Holloway, writing from a social-psychological perspective, argues that the popular prejudice against Christians posed a “lethal threat.”

Some scholars argue that the threat of legal persecution is unlikely, given that Peter portrays Rome in an overall positive light, urging submission to the government and honor to the emperor (2:13–17). This line of reasoning does not necessarily follow, however. While Peter does clearly urge submission to the emperor and local governors, this exhortation is in the beginning of his “household code,” where he also urges submission to other parties that could bring about physical abuse and other forms of suffering. In the verses immediately following Peter’s command to honor the emperor, he urges slaves to treat their masters with respect even if they are beaten unjustly for it (2:20). The example of submission in the face of unrighteous suffering is

Jesus himself (2:21–23), who faced reviling and death at the hands of the Jewish and Roman authorities. Peter’s instruction to submit and honor the emperor, then, does not preclude the possibility of some kind of official suffering from the state. Even Polycarp, moments before his execution at the hands of a Roman proconsul, reaffirmed the duty of Christians to pay respect to human rulers and authorities (*Mart. Pol.* 10.2).

Legal Persecution in 1 Peter

There is also evidence within 1 Peter that legal proceedings were at least a genuine perceived threat, even if they were not regarded as the most likely form of persecution. Peter’s first mention of suffering in the letter makes clear that the believers were experiencing “various” trials (1:6), suggesting that the trials experienced by the readers should not be confined to (or restricted from) any one category without good reason. Later, Peter urges the believers to abstain from the desires of the flesh in the face of the claim of the Gentiles that the Christians are *kakopoioi* (2:12). Most English translations render *kakopoios* here as “evildoer,” “wrongdoer,” or some minor variation thereof. As Holloway notes, however, this translation places too much weight on etymology and not on contextual exegesis. Just two verses later Peter uses *kakopoios* again to describe the function of governing authorities as those who punish *kakopoioi* (2:14). Here Peter clearly means not just those who commit moral evil, but those who violate laws. For Christians to be accused of being *kakopoioi*, then, they were being accused of being criminals. The two meanings are not, of course, mutually exclusive, but Peter’s other uses of the word help show that the criminal connotation should not be ignored.

In 4:12ff, Peter transitions from his household code to the beginning of his closing exhortation to persevere in the midst of suffering. Peter tells his readers not to be surprised at the “fiery trial” they are experiencing, but to rejoice insofar as they share in Christ’s pattern of righteous suffering. Peter adds that the basis of their suffering, however, must not be due to evil deeds or criminal associations, but only “for the name of Christ” (4:14–15). He then declares that the one who suffers “as a Christian” (4:16)—functionally equivalent to “for the name of Christ”—ought not to be ashamed but to give glory to God. The label of “Christian,” then, is held in parallel with labels such as “murderer” and “thief.” One’s suffering for these actions would doubtless be of official legal prosecution. There is no apparent reason why the punishment

for the charge of Christian would be any different. Some accusations against Christians could involve insinuations of evil deeds (*Minucius Felix, Oct.* 9.5–6; *Mart. Lyons* 1.52; *Tertullian, Apol.* 9; *Origen, Cels.* 6.27), but in 4:16 the label of “Christian” is treated as independent of the charges of “murderer,” “thief,” or even the broader designations *kakopoios* (see above) and “meddler” (ESV). Indeed some hostile descriptions of Christians from ancient sources make no mention of any particular accusations of immorality, but rather a disdain for the religion as a whole (*Suetonius, Vit.* 6.16; *Pliny, Ep.* 10.96.8).

The third passage to be considered that points to the possibility of legal proceedings against Christians is the encouragement found in 3:13–17. Here Peter begins with the general statement that the believers need not fear mistreatment and persecution if they remain committed to good works (3:13), but then immediately acknowledges that it is possible to suffer because of righteousness (v. 14). Here again Peter envisions not accusations of general moral corruption, but the behavior that should normally mark Christians. Peter counsels his readers in such a situation to maintain their allegiance to Christ, and be prepared to give a “defense” (*apologia*) to anyone at any time (v. 15). Some scholars maintain that the situation pictured in 3:13–17 relates only to informal, everyday questions and opposition and not to any kind of judicial proceedings. Indeed, the presence of terms like “always” and “anyone” suggest that we should not narrow the focus to any one kind of situation. This exhortation, however, would make sense in a legal and judicial setting as much as in an informal setting, if not moreso. As Williams notes, the encouragement not to fear in v. 14 makes more sense if some threat were attached to the questioning. Everyday questions about the faith of the believers would be no cause for fear unless the tone were at least somewhat threatening or some consequences could result, even if just social in nature. Further, the use of the term *apologia* points to the possibility of legal proceedings. The term can be used to describe a general reply (1 Cor 9:3; 2 Cor 7:11; Phil 1:7), but is also used in explicitly judicial settings (Acts 22:1; 25:16; 2 Tim 4:16). The notion that the believers are asked to give an “account” (*logos*) could be seen in an informal context, but the language also calls to mind the notion that those who slander these Christians will also have to give a *logos* to the Lord, who comes “to judge the living and the dead” (4:5). With nothing to definitively suggest whether legal proceedings are in view or not, then, it is best not to restrict the conflict in these verses

either entirely within the judicial sphere or entirely outside of it.

Persecution and Christian Exclusivity

If popular prejudice against Christians could result in the distinct possibility of legal trials and persecution from the local government, what then was the source of this prejudice? As noted above, some ancient sources make misinformed claims of immoral behavior by Christians, but often simply being named a Christian was enough to incur harassment and persecution. Christians were seen as a destabilizing influence upon society, in large part due to their refusal to participate in the Emperor Cult and the worship of local, civic gods. The exclusivity of the Christians led to their branding as “atheists,” abandoning the traditions of their forebears (see 1 Pet 1:18). Judaism in the Roman Empire was open to the same charge, but it was generally treated more favorably due to its ancient roots. Once Christianity began to be distinguished from Judaism as its own movement, these charges of atheism were compounded by the fact that Christians did not have a similar ancient heritage to which to point. Accordingly, Suetonius describes Christians as “a class of men given to a new and mischievous superstition” (Suetonius, *Vit. 6.16*; Rolfe, LCL).

The danger this new and exclusive religion posed related to the spurning of the gods, which would in turn invite divine chastisement on the entire community. Ste. Croix writes, “The monotheistic exclusiveness of the Christians was believed to alienate the goodwill of the gods, to endanger what the Romans called the *pax delorum* (the right harmonious relationship between gods and men), and to be responsible for disasters which overtook the community.” Writing at a later time, Tertullian describes the blame cast on Christians, “[T]hey take the Christians to be the cause of every disaster to the State, of every misfortune of the people. If the Tiber reaches the walls, if the Nile does not rise to the fields, if the sky doesn’t move or the earth does, if there is famine, if there is plague, the cry is at once: ‘The Christians to the lion!’” (Tertullian, *Apol.* 40.2; Glover, LCL). The Christians, then, in their spurning of the worship of the gods and withdrawal from participation in the cultic rites, “were seen to be willfully and deliberately wishing misfortune upon local communities and the Empire” and “inviting divine disaster.” This, in part, was why Tacitus could refer to Christianity as a “deadly superstition” and Christians as having a “hatred of the human race” (Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.44).

The Christians in Asia Minor, then, faced opposition from a local level to their very existence, but this opposition was in many ways a function of the Roman Empire as a whole, even if no official laws were in place prohibiting Christian practices. As noted in the previous section, for the biblical authors in the first-century, groups such as the Jewish religious leaders and individuals such as Judas, Bar-Jesus, and even Simon Peter, insofar as they opposed the gospel and the coming kingdom of God, were said to be representatives of Satan, the chief cosmic power opposed to the Lord. By extension, therefore, any institution, from a local magistrate to the Roman emperor himself, made itself an instrument of the Devil insofar as they opposed and persecuted the church. The early Christians could therefore perceive of their suffering with local, imperial and even cosmic dimensions. Their struggle was not just about the Church and the State, but rather about the heavenly war between Yahweh and the forces of Satan.

1 PETER 5:8FF AND PARTICIPATION IN COSMIC CONFLICT

Now, finally, we may return to the closing exhortation of 1 Peter and the warning against the “adversary.” This closing reference to the Devil is not disconnected from the rest of the paraenesis throughout the letter, as though Peter now turns to warn his readers of the dangers of spiritual warfare in addition to the suffering and persecution they are experiencing. Rather, this passage represents the climax of Peter’s exhortation in the midst of persecution as he pictures the suffering of these Christians through the apocalyptic lens of Yahweh’s conflict with Satan and the demonic realm. Several indications within this closing exhortation make clear that the suffering at the hands of the “roaring lion” is closely tied with the suffering described throughout the epistle by the Christians’ human opponents.

Peter’s exhortation begins with the double imperative “Be sober! Be watchful!” (5:8). The two terms (*nēphō* and *grēgoreō*) are virtually synonymous and usually occur in eschatological contexts, where believers are instructed to be on guard for the Day of the Lord (e.g., Matt 24:42, 42; 25:13; see esp. 1 Thess 5:6, where the words occur together). The command to be watchful also occurs in the context of human opposition. After Matthew uses the verb *grēgoreō* three times in chs. 24–25, it occurs three additional times in the Garden of Gethsemane, as Jesus instructs his disciples to keep watch

(*grēgoreō*). Here the danger is not some cosmic judgment, but Judas and the arresting force who arrive in v. 47, “while he was still speaking” (see also Mark 13:34, 35, 37; cf. 14:34, 37, 38). Paul urges the Ephesian elders to be alert (*grēgoreō*), where the stated danger is the “fierce wolves” who will seek to lead the people into false teaching (Acts 20:29–31). Further, Revelation 16 describes the sixth bowl judgment, where the Euphrates dries up and three “unclean spirits” arise from the dragon, beast, and false prophet to incite the kings of the earth to do battle with the Lord at Armageddon (16:12–16). In a parenthetical comment in the midst of this description, the author inserts the words of Jesus, “Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake (*grēgoreō*) ...” (v. 15). These commands, then, are an encouragement to stand firm in the midst of false teaching and opposition in light of the imminence of the eschatological Day of the Lord. Most relevant for 1 Peter 5:8, Peter uses *nēphō* in his opening exhortation (1:13), where the near context speaks of the “various trials” the readers are suffering (1:6), thereby forming an *inclusio* between the two texts.

Following the exhortation to watchfulness, Peter begins his description of the Devil with the word “adversary” (*antidikos*). The term is rare in the NT, occurring only three times outside of the present reference (Matt 5:25; Luke 12:58; 18:3). In each of those occurrences, it denotes an opponent in the lawcourt (see also Prov 18:17 LXX). In some instances, however, it simply referred to an opponent in a general sense. In 1 Peter 5, the term is likely used in this secondary, general sense, though the legal connotations should not be totally dismissed (see above on the possibility of legal trials in 1 Peter). The lawcourt imagery could also be applied to Satan directly—as in Revelation 12:9–10 where he is named the “accuser” (*katēgōr*). Given the descriptions of God as judge throughout the epistle (1:17; 4:5, 17), as well as the numerous references made to Christians being reviled for their behavior or accused of doing evil (2:12, 23; 3:9, 16–17; 4:15–16), the use of “adversary” would be an apt descriptor for the local opponents and accusers of the Christians in Asia Minor, as well as the Devil himself.

Even Peter’s choice of *diabolos* as a name for this adversary—rather than the more Semitic *satanas*—may be significant. The latter term refers to an actual spiritual entity in every instance except one—namely, Jesus’ rebuke of Peter in Mark 8:33. “Devil” still primarily serves as a reference to the cosmic figure of Satan, but at times has a more general reference. The Pastoral

Epistles use *diabolos* to refer not only to Satan himself, but also to a slanderous person in general (see 1 Tim 3:11; 2 Tim 3:3; Tit 2:3). In Revelation 2:10, Jesus warns the church at Smyrna that “the devil” is about to throw some of them in prison, clearly referring to some local political entity, if not Rome as a whole by extension. A “devil,” then, could be both the cosmic enemy of Yahweh as well as human enemies of his people, bringing slander and accusations against them. Asumang notes, “What is striking in 1 Peter’s use is that these two functions of the devil—accusations and slander—are previously used throughout the epistle to describe some of the unjust sufferings that the believers were facing (e.g., 2:12, 15; 3:16; 4:14–16). In other words, ... Peter unveils the devil as the slanderer and accuser-in-chief spearheading the persecution of the believers.” The point ought not to be pressed too far from such little evidence, but Asumang’s observation may well provide another piece of evidence that links the activity of Satan with the persecution the Christians suffer from their peers and local governments.

Peter goes on to describe the Devil as “prowling about” as a “roaring lion.” This imagery is nowhere else tied to descriptions of Satan, but most commentators have suggested its background lies in the LXX. Boris Paschke, however, has argued that the phrase carries a more literal referent—namely, the *ad bestias* executions inflicted upon Christians. Though many wild beasts were utilized in these executions, lions in particular held a place of prominence. The threat of being “devoured,” then, was a very literal one. Paschke concludes by suggesting that the Devil “then would be seen as responsible for what was going on in the arena at the *ad bestias* executions of Christians.” Horrell has sought to expound on Paschke’s thesis, arguing that the comparison of the Devil with a roaring lion is an example of *ekphrasis*—a vivid description used for rhetorical effect. They write, “The image of the roaring lion is particularly important, then, as a way of vividly depicting the threats that face the readers.”

Paschke’s suggestion is possible, but ultimately is unnecessary. Given Peter’s frequent use of the OT throughout the epistle, it is much more likely that he does so here, especially since there are several OT texts that may shed light on the connotation intended here. This imagery is not used with reference to Satan, but nearly always carries with it threatening and hostile overtones. One of the parallels most commonly noted is Psalm 22:13 LXX, where David speaks of his enemies as a “ravaging and roaring

lion.” Here the referent is clearly human enemies seeking David’s life. Other texts similarly utilize lion imagery for hostile human opponents, as well. The Psalms and Amos both utilize such language to describe general opposing forces (Pss 7:2; 17:12; 35:17; Amos 3:4). Jeremiah uses the lion metaphor several times to refer to enemy nations bringing judgment upon Israel (Jer 2:15; 50:17; 51:34ff). In the NT, Paul speaks of the harm done him by Alexander the coppersmith, and then characterizes the Lord’s protection by saying, “I was delivered from the lion’s mouth” (2 Tim 4:17). Therefore, while this lion imagery could be applied directly to Satan in a spiritual sense, it also naturally fits as a reference to human opponents, whether corporate or individual.

Closely related to the description of Satan as a lion is the mention that his desire is to devour someone. This “devouring” likely does not refer to physical destruction, but rather to apostasy and thus to spiritual death. However, Elliott has noted that this terminology was also used figuratively of human enemies who are said to “devour” God’s people (Pss 35:25; 124:3; Hos 8:8; Isa 49:19; Jer 51:34, 44; Lam 2:16). This usage connects the activity of Satan, one of whose primary goals is to produce apostasy (Matt 24:24; Luke 22:31; 2 Cor 11:12–14; 2 Tim 2:24–26), with the aims of the local magistrates who might seek to punish the believers. The Christian readers faced the hostile persecution of their localized human enemies, who sought to see them deny their faith, commit apostasy and thus be “devoured.” Indeed, Ste Croix maintains that “the essential aim” of Roman torture in these settings “was to make apostates, not martyrs.”

In 1 Peter 5:9, Peter shifts to tell his readers to “resist” this roaring lion. The word used for resist (*anthistēmi*) is frequently used to describe opponents of the gospel fighting to suppress its message (Luke 21:15; Acts 13:10; 2 Tim 3:8; 4:5). As Schreiner argues, “Resistance, then, is not passive but represents active engagement against a foe.” This resistance, however, is not accomplished through physical opposition, as Peter next makes clear. They are to resist by remaining “firm in their faith.” In the face of the threat of being “devoured” in the midst of suffering, imprisonment, or even torture and execution, the believers are exhorted to stand firm and be faithful, thus resisting the devil and his chosen instruments of persecution.

The final element connecting the activity of Satan with the suffering experienced through the churches’ human oppressors is the final clause of v. 9,

which functions as a ground for the believers’ resistance. The readers are to resist the Devil because they know that “the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.” When Peter speaks of “suffering” throughout the letter, the reference is clearly to the persecution carried out by human enemies and institutions (see also 2:19, 20; 3:14, 17; 4:1, 13, 15, 19). As such, Peter clearly equates the spiritual opposition of the Devil with the human opposition of the enemies of the gospel throughout the Roman Empire. Green suggests that this wide-angle view offers a more accurate view of the believers’ circumstances. If an individual—or even an isolated community—suffers, it is a tragedy, or perhaps even just rewards for some wrongdoing. “If the whole family of believers throughout the world is undergoing suffering, however, a less individualistic and more systemic, cosmological explanation is required.”

If Christians from all corners of the empire are experiencing persecution, they should recognize that they are up against a foe greater than any local magistrate, or even Caesar himself. They are a part of the eschatological battle between good and evil—one in which they are certain to see victory. If the struggles facing the believers in Asia Minor are a matter of a minority religious sect at odds with the might of the Roman Empire, the plight of the Christians is desperate and their outlook is bleak. If however, their sufferings are primarily a spiritual issue rather than a social, economic, or legal one, then their sufferings are temporary, and their vindication is assured. As Peter fittingly ends his closing exhortation, “And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen” (5:10–11).

Christians today may expect to experience much of the same kinds of sufferings the readers of 1 Peter did—whether social, economic, or even violent or criminal in some parts of the world. Like these early Christians, 1 Peter invites us to view our conflict not as a product of a society changing its values, but as a product of the cosmic battle between the Lord and the spiritual forces of darkness. However dire the predicament Christians may face in this world, Christ remains at the right hand of God, with every spiritual foe subject to him (3:22). With such a reminder, believers today are empowered to stand firm in the midst of their suffering, as those who “entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good” (4:19).

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- ¹ Urbanus Holzmeister, *Commentarius in Epistulas SS. Petri et Iudae Apostolorum. Epistula Prima S. Petri* (Paris: Lethielleux, 1937), 404–405.
- ² All English translations of Scripture, unless otherwise noted, are taken from the ESV.
- ³ Day goes so far as to suggest that Satan as a proper noun is entirely absent from the OT. Instead, she argues, the noun is used in a more general sense, applied to anyone who behaved in an adversarial role; Peggy Day, *An Adversary in Heaven: Satan in the Hebrew Bible* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988); Cilliers Breytenbach and Peggy L. Day, “Satan” in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 726–732. For a brief rebuttal to Day’s thesis, see Antti Laato, “The Devil in the Old Testament,” in *Evil and the Devil* (Library of New Testament Studies, vol. 481; ed. Erkki Koskenniemi and Ida Fröhlich; London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 3–4.
- ⁴ Jason A. Mackey, *The Light Overcomes the Darkness: Cosmic Conflict in the Fourth Gospel* (Ph.D. Dissertation, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014), 74. For a more detailed examination of the usage of *kosmos* in the Fourth Gospel, see *ibid.*, 105–120.
- ⁵ R. T. France, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 135. Cf. Bock, who says the devil’s offer is best seen as “a mixture of truth and error” and an “oversell” at best. Darrell L. Bock *Luke* (2 vols. BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 1:376.
- ⁶ Collins calls these beings “patron angels,” while Di Lella offers the name, “tutelary spirits” or “guardian angels.” John J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 374; Alexander A. Di Lella and Louis F. Hartman, *The Book of Daniel* (The Anchor Bible; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1978), 282. See also Deut 32:8, where Moses reminds the people that the nations were divided “according to the number of the sons of God.” These “sons of God” here are best regarded as angels (cf. Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7), suggesting that cosmic beings are associated with the nations of the earth, in some sense.
- ⁷ Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians, Power and Magic: The Concept of Power in Ephesians in Light of Its Historical Setting* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 60, citing PGM 1.97–194; IV.2699; TBenj 3:4. See also Frank Thielman, *Ephesians* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 125, citing Diogenes Laertius (*Vit. phil.* 8.32) and Plutarch (*Mor.* 274b).
- ⁸ For more on the gospel writers’ use of Satan to describe human opposition to Jesus, see Elaine Pagels, “The Social History of Satan, Part II: Satan in the New Testament Gospels,” *Journal Of The American Academy Of Religion* 62, no. 1 (1994): 17–58.
- ⁹ See also 1 John 3:11–12, where Cain’s murder of Abel is also portrayed as the work of Satan.
- ¹⁰ Schnabel suggests the magician’s interests were self-serving, as “accepting faith in Jesus as Israel’s Messiah will bring the proconsul’s willingness, perhaps eagerness, to receive guidance through magical incantations and rituals to an end.” Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Acts* (ZECNT; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 558.
- ¹¹ The language used in calling Elymas a “son of the devil” is probably also intended as an ironic twist on his other name, “Bar-Jesus.” So also F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 298; C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Acts of the Apostles* (2 vols. ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 1:617.
- ¹² R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: a Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 338.
- ¹³ In describing Jesus’ ministry, death and resurrection as a part of cosmic conflict against Satan, I am not seeking to deny or undermine the biblical portrayal of the cross as penal substitution, but instead merely show the cosmic dimensions to the events in the Gospels.
- ¹⁴ France relates the charge to that of sorcery, where sorcerers were thought to gain their power through a “familiar spirit”; France, *Matthew*, 478. So also William L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark: The English Text With Introduction, Exposition, and Notes* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 142, who notes the charge of sorcery against Jesus is found both in the Talmud and the early Patristic era.
- ¹⁵ On the identification of the strong man’s possessions with the demon possessed, see, e.g., W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical And Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (3 vols., ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988–1997), 2:342; Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 458; Robert H. Stein, *Mark* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 184; France, *Mark*, 173.
- ¹⁶ Lane, *Mark*, 143.
- ¹⁷ France, *Mark*, 173–174.
- ¹⁸ Contrast with the numerous and complex aids and adjurations described in extrabiblical exorcism accounts. See Graham Twelftree, “Devil, Demon, Satan” in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (ed. Joel B. Green and Scot

- McKnight; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 167–168; PGM IV.1227–1264; IV. 3007–3086; V.116–120; VIII.6–13.
- ¹⁹ So also David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 710; Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (rev. ed.; NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 835, n. 185.
- ²⁰ For an in-depth look at the LXX context of these terms and their usage as cosmic forces, see Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 277–280.
- ²¹ Notably, the referent in Psalm 110 is to the human opponents of Israel—“he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath. He will execute judgment among the nations” (v. 5–6). Paul and the other NT writers quoting this psalm therefore reinterpret the enemies of Christ not merely as human, but cosmic beings.
- ²² In T. Sol. 8.2–4, seven demons present themselves before Solomon, describing themselves as *kosmokratores tou skotou*. As Thielman notes, “The Testament of Solomon may have been influenced by Ephesians, but even so, it probably reflects the kinds of associations Paul intended his reference to *kosmokratores* to carry.” Thielman, *Ephesians*, 421. Arnold notes the magical connotations of the word and suggests that the referent is perhaps to the deities previously worshipped by the Ephesians—i.e. Artemis, Helios, and Serapis, among others—whom they now feared. Arnold, *Power and Magic*, 67.
- ²³ Annang Asumang, “Resist him” (1 Pet 5:9): Holiness and Non-Retalatory Responses to Unjust Suffering as ‘Holy War’ in 1 Peter.” *Conspectus*, Vol. 11 (2011): 23.
- ²⁴ So also Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 804; Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 932–933. Cf. Brown, who suggests that the reference is to Ps 110:1, as a reference to the “subjugation of Satan,” rather than a fulfillment of Gen 3:15. See Derek R. Brown, “‘The God of Peace Will Shortly Crush Satan Under Your Feet’: Paul’s Eschatological Reminder in Romans 16:20a,” *Neotestamentica* 44, no. 1 (2010): 1–14.
- ²⁵ So also Schreiner, *Romans*, 804; Brown, “The God of Peace,” 4–5. Contra James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8* (2 vols., WBC; Waco: Word Books, 1988), 1:905. Cf. Moo, *Romans*, 932, who calls for a “mediating” position, whereby the referent is both to general opponents, yet with some relevance for the false teachers of v. 17.
- ²⁶ For a detailed survey of scholarship, see Travis Williams, *Persecution in 1 Peter: Differentiating and Contextualizing Early Christian Suffering*, NovTSup 145 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 4–15.
- ²⁷ John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (The Anchor Bible; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 98; Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude* (NAC; Nashville: B&H, 2003), 24; Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter: a Commentary on First Peter* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 30–32; Travis B. Williams, “Suffering from a Critical Oversight: The Persecutions of 1 Peter within Modern Scholarship,” *Currents in Biblical Research* 10 (2), 278.
- ²⁸ Edward G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1947), 55.
- ²⁹ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 98.
- ³⁰ Ibid., 100.
- ³¹ S. R. Bechtler, *Following in His Steps: Suffering, Community, and Christology in 1 Peter* (SBLDS 162. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 109.
- ³² Ibid., 95–96.
- ³³ Williams, *Persecution*, 134.
- ³⁴ G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 240.
- ³⁵ Williams, *Persecution*, 325.
- ³⁶ Paul A. Holloway, *Coping with Prejudice: 1 Peter in Social-Psychological Perspective* (WUNT 244; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 68.
- ³⁷ Williams, “Oversight,” 278.
- ³⁸ Ibid, 284; see also David A. Horrell, *1 Peter* (New Testament Guides; New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 57.
- ³⁹ Leonhart Goppelt, *A Commentary on First Peter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 43.
- ⁴⁰ Holloway, *Prejudice*, 65.
- ⁴¹ See Elliott, *1 Peter*, 100; Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 176; Kelly D. Liebengood, *The Eschatology of 1 Peter: Considering the Influence of Zechariah 9–14* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 163–164; Bechtler, *Following*, 50.
- ⁴² See, e.g., Polyb., *Hist.* 15.25.1. Williams, *Persecution*, 304, notes on the use of the terms *ekdikēsin* and *epainon* in 2:14, “[W]hen ‘punishment’ and ‘praise’ are used with respect to a governor, the most natural context in which these words would have been understood by a provincial inhabitant would have been a legal-juridical setting.”
- ⁴³ Holloway, *Prejudice*, 67. Contra Elliott, *1 Peter*, 794. The usage of the term in 4:15 may have moral rather than criminal connotations, but even in that passage it is comprehensible to understand the term as a general label for a criminal. The nearer referent in 2:14 is preferable for understanding the ambiguous usage in

- 2:12.
- ⁴⁴ The “fiery” nature of this trial should not be interpreted as a key to the severity of the persecution and suffering experienced by the readers, as the imagery of fire here is best seen as analogous to the “fire” of testing in 1:7. There, as here, the focus is on the purifying effect of the fire rather than the intensity of the trial. So also Schreiner, *1 Peter*, 124; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 771–772; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 9; Selwyn, *Peter*, 54; D. E. Johnson, “Fire in God’s House: Imagery from Malachi 3 in Peter’s Theology of Suffering (1 Peter 4:12–19),” *JETS* 29 (1986): 285–294.
- ⁴⁵ So also David G. Horrell, “The Label Χριστιανός: 1 Peter 4:16 and the Formation of Christian Identity,” *JBL* 126, no. 2 (2007): 371.
- ⁴⁶ Most charges centered around accusations of incest, cannibalism, orgies and sedition. See Paul Middleton, *Radical Martyrdom and Cosmic Conflict in Early Christianity* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 67.
- ⁴⁷ For more on the connotations of this notoriously difficult to translate word, see Jeannine K. Brown, “Just a Busybody? A Look at the Greco-Roman Topos of Meddling for Defining ἀλοτριεπίσκοπος in 1 Peter 4:15,” *JBL* 125 (2006): 549–568; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 788.
- ⁴⁸ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 628; Schreiner, *1 Peter*, 30.
- ⁴⁹ Williams, *Persecution*, 315. The use of *autōn* in 3:14 should be understood as an objective genitive, thus, “Have no fear of them.” So also Ibid, 312, n. 42; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 624–625; J. Ramsey Michaels. *1 Peter* (WBC; Waco: Word Books, 1988), 186–187. Contra NRSV, CSB, who translate it subjectively, “Do not fear what they fear.”
- ⁵⁰ Williams, while arguing for a judicial context to these verses, prudently says that *apologia* is not determinative on its own for what kind of meaning may be intended; Williams, *Persecution*, 314.
- ⁵¹ So also G. E. M de Ste. Croix, “Why Were the Early Christians Persecuted?”, in *Studies in Early Christianity* (ed. Everett Ferguson; Studies in Early Christianity, vol. 7; New York: Garland Publishing, 1993), 34; Schreiner, *1 Peter*, 30; Williams, *Persecution*, 43; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 34–35.
- ⁵² Middleton, *Radical Martyrdom*, 55.
- ⁵³ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 24; Middleton, *Radical Martyrdom*, 55.
- ⁵⁴ Ste. Croix, “Why Were the Early Christians Persecuted?”, 34.
- ⁵⁵ Middleton, *Radical Martyrdom*, 55, 68.
- ⁵⁶ Schreiner, *1 Peter*, 241; see also the usage in 4:7, where it is coupled with *sōphroneō* in a similar expression.
- ⁵⁷ See Schrenk, “ἀντίδικος”, in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey William Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-c1976), 1:374–75; Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 190.
- ⁵⁸ Asumang, “Resist him,” 26.
- ⁵⁹ Boris A. Paschke, “The Roman *Ad Bestias* Execution as a Possible Historical Background for 1 Peter 5:8” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 28, no. 4 (2006): 489–500. Paschke argues that *ad bestias* executions were in practice during the 1st century and posed a real concern for Peter’s readers, regardless whether the epistle is the product of the apostle Peter or a later pseudoeigraphical writer. See also David G. Horrell, Bradley Arnold, and Travis B. Williams, “Visuality, Vivid Description, and the Message of 1 Peter: The Significance of the Roaring Lion (1 Peter 5:8)” *JBL* 132, no. 3 (2013): 697–716.
- ⁶⁰ Paschke, “Roman *Ad Bestias* Execution,” 494.
- ⁶¹ Ibid, 498.
- ⁶² Horrell, Arnold and Williams, “Visuality,” 698.
- ⁶³ Ibid, 715.
- ⁶⁴ Best draws attention to the Targums of Isa. 35:9; Jer. 4:7; 5:6; Ezek. 19:6, which make clear that opposing nations are in view, as they translate “lion” as “king.” Ernest Best, *1 Peter* (New Century Bible; London: Oliphants, 1971), 174.
- ⁶⁵ Green, *1 Peter*, 174; Schreiner, *1 Peter*, 242; Davids, *1 Peter*, 191; Duane F. Watson, *First and Second Peter* (Paideia; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 121. Contra Paschke, “Roman *Ad Bestias* Execution”, 498.
- ⁶⁶ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 859.
- ⁶⁷ Ste. Croix, “Why Were the Early Christians Persecuted?”, 30.
- ⁶⁸ Schreiner, *1 Peter*, 242; see also Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary* (TNTC; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2009), 204.
- ⁶⁹ Dubis rightly notes that the phrase should be interpreted with an implied *ontes*, functioning as a participle of manner, modifying *antistēte*. Mark Dubis, *1 Peter: a Handbook on the Greek Text* (Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament; Waco: Baylor University Press, 2010), 169.
- ⁷⁰ Green, *1 Peter*, 174–75.

Leaving the Past Behind: A Sermon on 1 Peter 4:1-6

GREG W. FORBES

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INTRODUCTION

Julius spent much of his time around the local temple. He was a trader, a merchant, and there were always crowds around the temple plying their trade and willing to do business. On Fridays when he had finished his day's work he enjoyed the weekly feast sacrificing to the local gods. There was certainly no lack of food and drink, and he and his friends would party long into the night being careful, of course, to pay homage to the relevant god or goddess. He also enjoyed the occasional time with the temple prostitutes.

But things changed. He met a man who told him about Jesus and the Christian faith. Although he would not admit this to his friends, Julius was dissatisfied with the Greek and Roman gods. It was confusing and not intellectually compelling. He needed to comprehend the reason for his existence and understand the purpose of the creation around him. What the man told him provided the answers he longed for. So he was baptized and became one of the Christ followers.

But this created an unexpected problem with his friends. He now avoided the temple feasts, no longer drank all night, and would not go to the temple prostitutes. His friends did not understand him, no matter how much he tried to explain it, and they started abusing

him and insulting his new way of life. His family were also extremely critical of him for abandoning the family religion.

The Epistle of 1 Peter was addressed to people like Julius. They were suffering for their faith. Not suffering persecution from the governing authorities, but from friends and pagan neighbors who were upset that they no longer followed their former way of life.

Maybe you can identify with this. Possibly you have created tension in your family because of your faith in Jesus. They cannot grasp the necessity for a commitment like yours, nor for the reason for the ethical choices that you make. For those brought up in Christian families tension may still exist, but it originates from an antagonistic wider society. Peter writes for such people. They are to expect this response from unbelievers, look to Jesus as an example of unjust suffering, and commit themselves to God's care.

THEREFORE, SINCE CHRIST HAS SUFFERED IN THE FLESH (4:1A).

The sufferings of Christ are a key part of this letter. Obviously this is so because Christ's sufferings are central to the Christian faith. But the other reason lies in the situation that we have discussed above. Peter wants his readers to identify with Christ's example.

ARM YOURSELVES WITH THE SAME RESOLVE (4:1B).

The Greek verb ὀπλίζω was often used in a military context of taking up weapons for battle. Christian believers are to be resolute in imitating the resolve of Jesus. This does not mean that martyrdom is a mandatory requirement, but there must be a willingness to suffer if need be. It also involves mirroring the attitude of Jesus in the midst of suffering, an attitude which finds expression in a non-retaliatory response and a willingness to accept insults and abuse (2:21-25; 3:13-18; 4:12-19).

This is very hard to do. I find it hard not to retaliate even when I am in the wrong! I may not retaliate physically; my preferred means of response is sarcasm. But that response is not what Jesus wants.

There were two brothers who constantly fought and argued. The older brother enjoyed a

fight and was jealous of the younger one and tried to provoke him. The younger brother just wanted to be left alone. He found it very hard to ignore his older brother's taunts and not to retaliate. But one day he decided that no matter what he would ignore the teasing of his brother. At first the older brother kept at it, but after a while he grew tired and went and played on his mobile phone. Later that day the older brother teased him again. But the younger brother, recalling what had happened earlier, steadfastly ignored him. The older brother became very angry that he was being ignored and struck the younger brother. But the younger one still did not retaliate and so the older brother went off to his room and sulked.

Have you ever considered that not retaliating actually disempowers the offender? Look at the trial of Jesus; you get the impression that Jesus is really the one who is in charge. So non-retaliation is not only honoring to God, it is a subtle way of undermining the power of the aggressive person (3:15).

BECAUSE THE ONE WHO HAS SUFFERED IN THE FLESH HAS CEASED FROM SIN (4:1c).

This is a very difficult expression as the identity of “the one who has suffered in the flesh” is unclear. On the one hand, some consider this to be a further reference to Jesus, thus mirroring the opening clause. As the moral perfection of Jesus has already been mentioned several times in the letter (1:18; 2:22; 3:18) this can hardly be indicating that Christ reached a state of sinless perfectionism after his suffering. But it may be highlighting the fact that sin has been decisively dealt with in the sense of forgiveness, or that Christ has conquered the power of sin.

More likely, however, it is a reference to individual believers. But what does it mean? There is no warrant at all, either from this epistle or the rest of the NT, to regard suffering as a means for forgiveness or as leading to perfection of character. Rather, the sense is likely to be that those who suffer for their faith have, by definition, turned from a life of sin—and we see examples of such sin in the following verses. And, of course, the converse is also true. You are unlikely to suffer for your faith if a non-Christian lifestyle is more attractive to you than following Jesus.

SO THAT YOU MAY NO LONGER LIVE THE REMAINING TIME IN THE FLESH BY HUMAN DESIRES BUT BY THE WILL OF GOD (4:2).

An important qualification is needed at this point. Suffering for your faith in Jesus does not make you a more worthy Christian, and it does not mean that you will never sin again. But it does indicate a willingness to follow the cause of Jesus and leave behind a lifestyle of sin, no longer governed by sinful human desires but controlled by the will of God.

FOR THE TIME HAS LONG PASSED TO ENGAGE IN THE WILL OF THE PAGANS, IMMERSED IN VARIOUS ACTS OF RECKLESSNESS, CRAVING, DRUNKENNESS, REVELRY, CAROUSING AND LAWLESS IDOLATRY (4:3).

Julius recognized that in order to follow Jesus he would need to let go of a pagan lifestyle. Jesus was not just one god among many and he could not claim to be a follower of Jesus and continue with his temple practices. This was what his friends could not understand. Sure, it was okay to follow a particular deity—many people followed different Greek or Roman gods. But why do you have to be so exclusive, and why do you have to do stop living the way you used to and cut everyone off? They just didn't get it.

But Julius recognized that in terms of that style of life “the time is long past.” He had sinned more than enough—it was time to move on.

What past have you left behind? For me it may not be idolatrous religious practices, but it may be for some of you. The idolatry that we battle in Western Christianity is more often a subtle idolatry of various things that compete for our devotion. It may be sport. It may be materialism. It may be success in the business world. Take note of what controls your thinking. What is your default focus of attention? This may be an indication that all is not what it should be from a Christian perspective. But Peter insists that worship of Jesus must be kept pure. It is impossible to mix Christian faith with other religious or pagan practices and remain faithful to God.

Then there is the sin of looking back. Do you sometimes catch yourself looking back to a past life with some interest, maybe even affection? Jesus tells us that “those who put their hand to the plough and look back are not fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62), whereas the Second Epistle of Peter uses the image of a washed pig returning to wallow in the mud, or a dog returning to its vomit (2 Peter 2:22). But the time is past, long past!

THEREFORE THEY ARE SURPRISED THAT YOU NO LONGER RUN HEAD-LONG WITH THEM INTO THE SAME FLOOD OF RECKLESS LIVING (4:4A).

The picture is almost comic. Pagans running and plunging into a torrential stream. But this is not a stream of water. It is a stream of indulgence, wickedness and depravity.

The metaphor of flood is very real from time to time in Australia. In fact, as I write the eastern coast of Queensland and New South Wales is struggling to recover from the devastation wrought by Cyclone Debbie. Similar catastrophic flooding was caused by prolonged rain in the U.S. State of Louisiana in 2016.

What can we say about floods? (1) Floods create mess; the clean-up effort after a cyclone of this magnitude is immense. (2) Floods damage people's lives; many people have lost their homes in this event and only have the clothes they are wearing. (3) Floods are more dangerous than they look; we have all seen the footage of those who attempted to cross raging floodwaters but were caught in the torrent. (4) Floods also overtake the unsuspecting or the unprepared. There have been several warnings designed to stop a recent trend of tourists exploring the underground waterways of Melbourne. This is an extremely hazardous enterprise as just a small amount of rain can result in flooding of these waterways.

Wickedness and sin are no different. Sin creates mess and complicates people's lives. Sin damages lives; rarely does it only affect the person committing it. Sin also overtakes the unsuspecting and is definitely more dangerous than it may appear.

AND SO THEY BLASPHEME (4:4B).

The object of this "blasphemy" is ambiguous. On the one hand, there have been ample previous references that indicate a slandering of believers by those hostile to the Christian faith (2:12, 15; 3:9, 16; 4:14). However, of the variety of terms used for this of verbal abuse, this word ($\beta\lambda\alpha\sigma\phi\eta\mu\epsilon\omega$) is not one of them. Consequently, it is more likely that this refers to blasphemy directed towards God as a result of the astonishment and annoyance of people that their Christian neighbors no longer join them in sinful practices.

Julius could identify with this. He found that his friends were not content to ridicule and insult him. In addition, they said derogatory things about Jesus and God because of the distinctive lifestyle of Christians.

THEY WILL GIVE AN ACCOUNT TO HIM WHO IS READY TO JUDGE THE LIVING AND THE DEAD (4:5).

Julius desperately wanted his friends to understand about Jesus and realized that God was willing to accept them and that Jesus died for all people. After all, hadn't he been like them just a short time ago?

But he was also realistic enough to know that not all would come to Christian faith. In that case they would still see God, but see him as judge. Nothing escapes his notice.

The concept of judgment is not a popular concept in today's world and is one sure way to lose your audience very quickly! In our culture people believe that they are only accountable to themselves for their actions. Judgment is considered too harsh, and inappropriate for a God of love.

Yes, God is a God of love, but also a God of justice. He has given us the freedom to choose and our choices are significant. If people choose a sinful lifestyle, and want to live independently of God, then he gives them the freedom to do that. But there are consequences to be paid in the future.

Even as Christians we must give an account of our life and choices to God. Our salvation is not the issue, but we do have to answer for the choices that we have made. Paul says that we will all appear before the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor 5:10). I would prefer for this to be a positive experience, rather than one of shame and regret.

FOR THIS REASON THE GOSPEL WAS ALSO PROCLAIMED TO THE DEAD (4:6A).

So far so good. But now things get really difficult! Who are "the dead"? Who proclaimed the gospel to them and why? Here we are confronted with several interpretive options. We will discuss three of these.

First, the reference is to the spiritually dead, who had the gospel proclaimed to them while they were alive. But this is not the meaning of "the dead" in

the previous verse and we should expect a correspondence in meaning given the clear linking of these terms. In addition, the idea of being “spiritually dead” is foreign to the thought of this epistle.

Second, it relates to the dead who hear the gospel in Hades, with this passage read in conjunction with 3:18-19 where Christ proclaims to the “spirits in prison.” However, the view of most commentators, correctly in my opinion, is that 3:18-19 relates to a proclamation of victory over evil spiritual powers. The language here in 4:6 is quite different and there is no sense here that Christ himself performs a proclamation. Furthermore, the idea that the dead receive a second chance finds no support in this epistle or the wider NT, and actually hinders the repeated exhortations in this epistle to stand firm in the face of suffering. Peter clearly expects a negative outcome for some at the final judgment (4:18).

Third, “the dead” are those who heard the gospel while alive and responded, but have since died. This is the best interpretation because it avoids the difficulties of the above two options and aligns with Peter’s repeated concern to encourage his readers that divine vindication awaits those who suffer for doing good (2:18-25; 3:8-12, 13-17, 18-21; 4:12-19; 5:8-10).

THAT ALTHOUGH CONDEMNED IN THE FLESH BY HUMAN STANDARDS THEY MIGHT LIVE IN THE SPIRIT BY GOD’S STANDARDS (4:6B).

Christians who have died may well have been viewed in one way, a negative way, by pagan society. Julius was well familiar with that. Christians were condemned as unsociable, different and even harmful to society. But from God’s perspective they are viewed in an entirely different matter.

Here is the challenge. What matters most to you? To receive a positive evaluation by others, or to receive a positive evaluation by God? It is easy to say the opinions of others don’t matter, but in many cases that is a lie. To be viewed positively by others is a part of our hard-wiring as human beings, however this has been distorted by the fall to the extent that it becomes an unhelpful obsession. As sinful human beings we are driven by other people’s perception of us. How else do we explain, for example, the exponential growth in cosmetic surgery?

The irony is that when we try too hard to get approval from other people we most often don’t get it anyway! Sin in one of its ugliest and most subtle

forms is to care more about people's perception of us rather than our standing before God.

SUMMARY OF 1 PETER 4:1-6

Some of us may be able to relate to Julius. Converted from a pagan background. Left behind a pagan lifestyle, even an idolatrous lifestyle. And you may be the target of some abuse and insults because of that. God wants you to expect that this will happen, not to retaliate, and commit yourself, and those who mistreat you, to him.

Others of us, raised in a Christian environment, are also aware of the pressures to conform. We also need to recognize that Christian privilege is being eroded in the West. What were once Christian nations are now definitely secular and becoming increasingly antagonistic to Christianity. In this environment Christians must expect tension and ridicule and be prepared to follow the example of Jesus in the way we conduct ourselves in this society.

THE END OF ALL THINGS IS NEAR (4:7A).

How do we understand a statement like this, given that 2000 years have transpired and we are still going strong? In fact, we have quite a few statements like this in the NT, statements that appear to expect the return of Jesus and the end quite soon.

We need to understand such statements with respect to the decisive moment in history of the coming of Jesus, and his death and resurrection. With the coming of Jesus the kingdom of God has been established; God's plan for the ages is coming to fulfilment. Seen in this light the end is always near because of the character of the time in which we live. So, these are not so much statements about how long to go until the end, but of the nature of the time in which we live. We live in the kingdom age, on this side of the cross and resurrection. All that remains is for God to complete his plan for creation.

In verses 7b-11, notice what Peter says should be the consequences of living near the end. It is not to engage in speculation regarding signs of the times. It is not to write and publish fiction books based on fanciful interpretations of what might happen. It is not to opt out of life and pack your bags for eternity. Rather, the consequences he lists are four:

1. Be vigilant for prayer (4:7b).

Prayer is a crucial part of maintaining a relationship with God. How can you have a proper and growing relationship with someone that you don't talk to? It is important that believers are not distracted by suffering, or by anything else for that matter, and contact with God through prayer be lost.

2. Love one another deeply (4:8a).

Love for fellow believers has been a constant exhortation throughout 1 Peter. Persecuted Christian communities, indeed all Christian communities, need to stick together otherwise they will disintegrate. We need lots of encouragement from each other, and need to give a lot of encouragement to others if we are going to prosper in the Christian life.

What, however, does Peter mean by the statement "love covers a multitude of sins" (4:8b)? This saying may well draw on Proverbs 10:12, but the precise way in which sins are *covered* is unclear. At the outset, we should rule out any understanding that sins can be atoned for, even in part, by a human act. This finds no support elsewhere in this epistle, and contradicts previous passages where Christ suffers for human sin (2:21-24; 3:18). This leaves three main possibilities:

(1) The sins are the sins of the person who is showing love, with the idea that while love is being expressed sin is not.

(2) The sins are the sins of the person who is being loved, in the sense that love can keep a person from straying into sin.

(3) *Cover* is used in the sense of *forgive* (cf. Ps 32:1), with the sense that love always forgives the other. Love *covers* offences in the sense that it minimizes wrongs by refusing to take offence. This fits with Peter's repeated insistence on a non-retaliatory response (2:23; 3:9), and is probably the best option.

3. Show hospitality (4:9).

In the early church individual Christians used their homes for corporate meetings and also to support itinerant teachers. Hospitality may have been difficult due to the extra stresses this would bring during times of potential persecution. Yet hospitality has always been a defining mark of Christians and must continue to be so today in an age where individuality threatens to dampen a sense of corporate solidarity.

4. Serve God and the Christian community by exercising the gift you have been given (4:10-11).

Peter does not provide an exhaustive list of gifts here but gives some examples. What is clear is that each person has received a gift and it is the responsibility of each believer to find out what that gift is and employ it for the good of all. It is simply not the job of the pastor or minister to do everything in the church. This leads to serious problems including burnout for the pastor and a lack of spiritual growth for the congregation. Christian growth occurs not only by knowing but by doing, and serving is a crucial component of learning to follow Jesus faithfully. The role of the pastor is to be a facilitator for the growth of the Christian community, to help people discover their gifts and to use them effectively.

CONCLUDING REFLECTION

So friends, just like the original recipients of this important letter known to us as 1 Peter, we live in the shadow of the end of all things. This should enable us to get a proper perspective on difficulties we encounter for our faith and witness for Jesus. It must motivate us to a distinctive Christian lifestyle that is not some crass mixture of Christianity and pagan or secular practices. We need to be vigilant, prayerful, and supportive of those in the Christian community, showing love and exercising the gift we have been given.

Finally, Peter's conclusion of this section of the letter provides an over-arching motto for the life we seek to live as followers of Jesus today:

... in everything may God be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong glory and power forever and ever. Amen.

Book Reviews

The Lost Sermons of C. H. Spurgeon, Volume 1. Nashville: B&H, 2017. Edited by Christian George. 400 pages. \$59.99

Charles Spurgeon once accused a student of plagiarizing one of his own sermons. During the inquisition, the student confessed to using Charles Simeon's outline. In the moment of conflict, Spurgeon recalled that he also had lifted his sermon outline from the great preacher. Similarly, preachers from his day until now have benefitted (and borrowed) from the sermons of Charles Spurgeon. His use of metaphor combined with his ability to coin a phrase leaves few who can stand in his company. But how did the preacher become so masterful at his craft?

In *The Lost Sermons of Charles Spurgeon*, editor Christian George provides valuable answers to this question as he introduces the reader to the young preacher's earliest sermons. As Assistant Professor of Historical Theology and Curator of the Spurgeon Library at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, George is uniquely qualified to spearhead this work of supplying the church with these sermons. George's work is not merely academic, but proof of a deep interest in the life and labor of the famed preacher.

The sourcebook for this work is a handwritten notebook filled with the outlines that Spurgeon used while preaching. In cooperation with Spurgeon College, this series of sermons will survey nine notebooks, amassing a total of 400 sermons and filling 1,127 handwritten journal pages, all with the aim of fueling continued Spurgeon scholarship. The first edition contains seventy-six sermons. The title of the book hints that these sermons were "lost," but they were indeed never lost, simply—unpublished. Spurgeon disclosed in his autobiography his hope to publish these volumes, but other ministry endeavors combined with ailing health did not allow for its completion. This initial collection of sermons is a welcome addition to the renaissance of Spurgeon research as it displays the early ministerial development of the Prince of Preachers.

Part one of the book contains introductory matter, including a supportive timeline overlay of Spurgeon's life along with contextual entries. George offers a colorful description of the Victorian era that provides the necessary historical setting to understand the sermons. Additionally, George addresses

the congruencies and disparities between Spurgeon and his time. The section concludes with a detailed analysis of the sermons, surveying word count, percentages of texts used from specific testaments and books, as well as a word cloud of topical frequency.

Part two of the book consists of the heart of this work: outlines of the first seventy-six sermons preached by Charles Spurgeon. Spurgeon calls these outlines “skeletons,” and on the title page of his journal confesses they are “only skeletons without the Holy Spirit” (60). The layout of the book includes a high-resolution facsimile of the original manuscript on the left page, with an exact rendering in type on the facing page. This inclusion of both old and new creates a wonderful presentation that allows the reader to get as close to the writing of Spurgeon as possible, with the benefit of an organized outline also readily available.

This volume’s strength is its detailing of Spurgeon’s early development as a preacher as well as George’s careful examination and commentary on each sermon outline. The sermon outlines show the preacher growing in his grasp of Scripture and his concern for doctrine while consistently maintaining the crux of his preaching: the free grace offered in the gospel of Christ. The manuscripts reveal a young preacher demonstrating strong conviction and intentionality aimed at the glory of God and the joy of the listener. The outlines include reference to the many times Spurgeon “uses the brains of other men” in his homiletical process. George outperforms the role of editor in cross-references to other sermons and presentation of related works to help his reader attain a full understanding of Spurgeon. George shows how Spurgeon consulted the work of John Gill, George Whitefield, and Charles Simeon to help build out sermon content, as well as how his vocabulary grew from the hymnody of John Newton, Isaac Watts, and others. These editorial notes aid readers feeling overwhelmed at the content Spurgeon created.

Some may propose a weakness regarding the source material of the first volume of *The Lost Sermons of Charles Spurgeon*: Spurgeon’s methodology of preaching a single disconnected verse at a time. This may appear to uncover a church led by Spurgeon which did not hear the “whole counsel of God.” However, analysis of this volume reveals Spurgeon’s incredible distribution as forty-four percent of his sermons originated from the Old Testament, and fifty-five percent from the New Testament. Further analysis shows that twenty-four percent of his Old Testament sermons were from the Psalms, a book

dear to his heart as evidenced by his later work, the *Treasury of David*. This specific critique must acknowledge its survey of a brief window of the preacher's tenure; certainly these books of Scripture were addressed in future sermons.

The Lost Sermons of Charles Spurgeon will certainly prove to be a treasure to the church and a help to preachers. While many look at Spurgeon's mountain of published work and sense comparative diminution, this collection of sermons helps preachers and writers see the cumulative effect of the regular discipline of faithfully communicating truth. On some cold Saturday night in the study of the preacher, surely one of these "skeletons" will serve to frame the thoughts and warm the heart of the pastor, thereby completing the joy of the editor, who aims to guide readers not just to Spurgeon, but *through* Spurgeon to Jesus Christ (xxiii).

Matthew Boswell

Greek for Everyone: Introductory Greek for Bible Study and Application. By A. Chadwick Thornhill. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2016, 272 pp. \$24.99, paperback.

A. Chadwick Thornhill received his Ph.D. from Liberty University. He serves at Liberty's School of Divinity as the chair of theological studies where he is an assistant professor of apologetics and biblical studies. He is the author of *The Chosen People: Election, Paul and Second Temple Judaism* (IVP, 2015), and has taught beginning Greek at Liberty since 2007.

Dr. Thornhill says that his goals in writing *Greek for Everyone* were to lay "a foundation for those who lack formal training in the biblical language to gain insights from the original language of the New Testament," and to provide "an exegetical framework to help guide the way in which those insights are developed" (214–215). The book begins in chapter 1 by teaching the student how to pronounce Greek letters and words (he prefers a reconstructed first century pronunciation rather than Erasmian). In chapter 2 he discusses word meanings and semantic range, as well as how language is structured into levels of meaning such as words, groups of words, sentences, and pericopes, with the highest level being the whole discourse. In chapter 3 he defines grammatical units such as phrases, clauses, and sentences, and then shows

the functional meaning of the major conjunctions. Then in chapter 4 he introduces his readers to some of the tools they will need to study the text, such as interlinear Bibles, lexicons, and parsing tools.

Chapters 5–13 contain the bulk of the book's grammatical information. Chapter 5 explains the grammatical information communicated by verbs and nominals, such as tense, aspect, mood, case, and so on. Chapters 6–7 discuss the main functions of the cases, and chapter 8 discusses the main uses of the article, pronouns, adjectives, and prepositions. Chapters 9–13 deal with verbs and verbals, including indicative mood verbs (chapter 9), imperatives (chapter 10), subjunctives (chapter 11), infinitives (chapter 12), and participles (chapter 13). For each of the chapters dealing with verbal forms, he discusses the main uses of the various tenses (especially highlighting the importance of verbal aspect) and the significance of the verbal form under consideration (e.g., subjunctive mood, participle, etc.).

Chapters 14–18 contain practical information on the use of Greek in Bible study, in addition to addressing other hermeneutical issues. Chapter 14 explains how to trace the flow of thought by attention to matters of coordination and subordination and word order, and introduces the reader to some of the basic concepts related to discourse analysis and how to block diagram passages of Scripture. Chapter 15 explains how to compare English translations, including a very concise introduction to textual criticism and an introduction to the translation issues that often result in differences among the various translations. Chapter 16 discusses various contexts (historical, social, cultural, literary, intertextual, and canonical) that should impact how we interpret Scripture. Chapter 17 provides a discussion of word studies, including an explanation of several common mistakes (e.g., etymological fallacy, word-concept confusion), and a few helpful theoretical categories (e.g., synonymy, synchronic linguistics). It helpfully includes specific instruction on how to do word studies in the form of three basic steps: (1) selecting a significant word, (2) examining the lexical data using critical lexicons, and (3) making a judgment about which possible meaning is most contextually appropriate. The book concludes in chapter 18 with various topics related to the interpretive process such as the proper attitudes that interpreters must have when approaching Scripture, some recommended resources (such as background resources and commentaries), and some guidance in how to apply the biblical text to the modern context.

Thornhill knows that this text will not actually teach people to read Greek.

His goals for the reader who completes this book are modest: “We have the ability to understand some grammatical frameworks and interact with good exegetical commentaries and essays. We even have some ability to evaluate those resources. We have not, however, developed proficiency with the language” (213). In light of these goals, the book does not teach the *forms* of the language, but the *meaning* conveyed by the grammar. So in chapter 7, for example, while he gives examples of words in the genitive and dative cases, he is focused on the most important *meanings* of the genitive and dative cases rather than their morphology. In place of teaching readers the forms of the language, he gives them the following method for identifying grammatical information: (1) “identifying a particular word in our interlinear text,” (2) “identifying its meaning though a lexical tool,” (3) “finding its grammatical information through an analytical lexicon or parsing tool,” and (4) “studying its grammatical force through scholarly works such as commentaries, books, and journal articles” (44). Readers should probably know this up front so that their expectations are framed accordingly.

This approach to teaching Greek certainly has a place. Despite the fact that every Christian or Christian teacher who interacts with the NT in a serious way will encounter issues related to the original language, it is undoubtedly true that not every Christian or Christian teacher will have the opportunity to *learn* Greek. Given this approach, Thornhill’s presentation includes a number of beneficial components.

First, the approach is above all practical, and in light of the intended goal of helping the reader use the knowledge to engage the text, it strikes its target. For example, Thornhill shows the reader a clear method for how to study the grammar without knowing the forms (see above), and follows it throughout the book. He also provides instruction on many of the major tasks that students and teachers of Scripture will actually use when sitting in their study with their Greek NT, such as how to do word studies (chapter 17), how to track the main argument and flow of thought (chapter 14), and how to compare English translations (chapter 15). Ironically, this kind of explicit teaching in methods and skills is often lacking in more traditional grammars that are more rigorous in their treatment of issues of syntax and morphology.

Second, he emphasizes the structures larger than the word or clause level. In contrast with many beginning grammars which are almost exclusively focused on grammar at the word and clause level and seem to address the

larger structures of the language only in passing, Thornhill makes this a prominent part of his book. For example, in chapter 2 he frames the study of Greek in terms of all of the levels of meaning, which in this reviewer's opinion is a very helpful move, as it provides a context in which the discussions of verbal and nominal grammar can be placed. Another way that he helpfully pushes the reader above the word and clause level is in teaching the conjunctions based on their function rather than simply providing translational equivalents (25–26). Finally, after the bulk of his grammatical discussion, he caps off his grammatical treatment by instructing readers how to distinguish independent from dependent clauses for the sake of determining the main idea of biblical texts.

However, while the scope of the book and the emphasis on skills and methods are excellently done, the book has a few weaknesses. First of all, some of the grammatical discussions either lack clarity or have inconsistencies. One example of this is his discussion on verbal aspect. On p. 37, where he introduces verbal aspect, he says that imperfective aspect “views the action in progress, or from an up-close perspective.” Later, in his chapter on the indicative, he describes imperfective aspect as “an up-close perspective” (74 and 76), but when he puts the tenses and aspects into chart form at the end of the chapter, he describes imperfective as “in progress” (85). This is confusing because it treats “up-close” and “in progress” as synonymous ways of describing aspect, which they are not (though they might complement each other).

This is compounded by his description of “perfective” aspect (which is his name for the aspect that is expressed by the Greek perfect tense). In one place he describes this aspect as expressing “*a completed action or a state that is given additional focus*” (81, emphasis his), while in another place he describes it as expressing “up close” action (85). This leaves the reader wondering why perfective aspect is described in different ways in different sections of the book, and whether “up-close” action is indicated by imperfective aspect, perfective aspect, or both. (Should the reader then consult another source to gain clarity regarding what kind of action perfective aspect indicates, they will likely there find that it is the aspect of the aorist tense and give up!)

Another example of inconsistency is how he handles participial clauses. In chapter 3 (“Phrases, Clauses, and Conjunctions”), he defines a clause as “a group of words containing a subject and predicate in which the predicate contains a finite verb” (23). He continues: “Thus the major difference between

a clause and a phrase is that clauses contain a verb that can create a complete thought, while phrases, though they may contain verbals (i.e., participles and infinitives), do not contain a finite verb” (*ibid.*). However, on p. 121, where he discusses dependent clauses, he says there “are four main kinds of dependent clauses in Greek: *relative*, *infinitival*, *participial*, and *subordinate conjunction*” (emphasis his). Here and elsewhere the reader is left confused over contradictory or unclear definitions of grammatical details.

A final area that could use some improvement (though this is more of a minor criticism) is the focus of the book. Both the title and the subtitle lead the reader to expect that the content of the book will revolve around the topic of Greek language and its use in Bible study and application. However, the author includes some sections that are more properly hermeneutical and not directly connected to Greek. One example is chapter 15 (“Bridging the Contexts”), where the author includes a concise summary of Second Temple history and numerous other details that are important but not related to the use of Greek. The author’s stated intention to help readers apply what they have learned in their study of the Greek text could be achieved more effectively by limiting the discussion of hermeneutical issues to those topics that are directly related to the use of the Greek language in interpretation. Other helpful information could be placed in an appendix or dealt with in a separate volume in which they could receive adequate attention.

In sum, Thornhill has given us a handy introduction to Greek for those who have not learned the language. Despite some of its shortcomings, those who are responsible to teach in the church and yet for whatever reason legitimately cannot take an actual course in Greek could have their exegetical skills sharpened through the use of this book. Though, as Thornhill himself acknowledges, readers will not actually have proficiency with the language, nevertheless they will be better equipped to use the resources that are available to them. In addition, it could be profitably used by students who are about to take a course in Greek at the Bible college or seminary level. Having worked through this book in advance, one would have a much better grasp on the concepts involved in the study of Greek and be much less likely to get lost as they work through the details of the language in a college-level course.

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