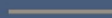




CHRISTIAN STANDARD
COMMENTARY

1 & 2 PETER AND JUDE



Thomas R. Schreiner





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“True to the goals of this series, Schreiner has produced a commentary that is exegetically rigorous yet accessible to a broad audience in the church or classroom. Clear writing and mature theological reflection make it appealing for anyone looking for a solidly evangelical commentary.”

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“Schreiner’s revised volume is precisely what one would expect from him: up-to-date, thoroughly evangelical, carefully reasoned without rejecting differing positions out of hand, and clearly written. In fact, even if you do not like evangelical positions, purchase it, for it is carefully reasoned, open to positions Schreiner ultimately rejects, long enough to cover the topic, and a contribution to knowledge.”

Peter H. Davids, Chaplain, Our Lady of Guadalupe Priory, Dominican Sisters of Mary Mother of the Eucharist

“The general neglect of Peter’s two epistles, along with Jude, has been a staple of modern scholarship for generations. In this environment, Schreiner’s commentary is a breath of fresh air. How refreshing to have a volume that addresses the tough historical issues, engages with modern scholarly views, and yet maintains a faithfulness to the historic Christian witness while seeking to bless the church. This is now my go-to commentary for these books.”

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“Schreiner’s first edition already has a rich life in guiding students and pastors in understanding and proclaiming these letters. With this new edition, Schreiner has not only addressed new scholarly developments, but also highlights even more how these texts display Scripture’s redemptive storyline which is aimed at personal transformation. Schreiner’s commentary is a *tour de force* in rendering the highest scholarly exegesis relevant to students and pastors for the task of preaching the gospel.”

Darian Lockett, Associate Professor of New Testament, Talbot School
of Theology

“I’m happy to see a new edition of this excellent commentary, updated to interact with recent scholarship. Here is a resource rich in exegetical meat mined from a close reading of the text and its structure. Schreiner’s considerations of interpretive options are consistently fair and helpful, and his own conclusions are measured, cogent, and informed by a wide range of texts. Schreiner is a sure-footed guide through these often difficult, but always important, texts.”

Brandon D. Crowe, Associate Professor of New Testament,
Westminster Theological Seminary



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1 & 2 PETER AND JUDE

—

Thomas R. Schreiner

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SERIES INTRODUCTION

The Christian Standard Commentary (CSC) aims to embody an “ancient-modern” approach to each volume in the series. The following explanation will help us unpack this seemingly paradoxical practice that brings together old and new.

The *modern commentary* tradition arose and proliferated during and after the Protestant Reformation. The growth of the biblical commentary tradition largely is a result of three factors: (1) *The recovery of classical learning* in the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries. This retrieval led to a revival of interest in biblical languages (Greek and Hebrew). Biblical interpreters, preachers, and teachers interpreted Scripture based on the original languages rather than the Latin Vulgate. The commentaries of Martin Luther and John Calvin are exemplary in this regard because they return to the sources themselves (*ad fontes*). (2) *The rise of reformation movements* and the splintering of the Catholic Church. The German Reformation (Martin Luther), Swiss Reformation (John Calvin), and English Reformation (Anglican), among others (e.g., Anabaptist), generated commentaries that helped these new churches and their leaders interpret and preach Scripture with clarity and relevance, often with the theological tenets of the movements present in the commentaries. (3) *The historical turn in biblical interpretation* in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This turning point emphasized the historical situation from which biblical books arise and in which they are contextualized.

In light of these factors, the CSC affirms traditional features of a *modern commentary*, evident even in recent commentaries:

- Authors analyze Old and New Testament books in their original languages.
- Authors present and explain significant text-critical problems as appropriate.

- Authors address and define the historical situations that gave rise to the biblical text (including date of composition, authorship, audience, social location, geographical and historical context, etc.) as appropriate to each biblical book.
- Authors identify possible growth and development of a biblical text so as to understand the book as it stands (e.g., how the book of Psalms came into its final form or how the Minor Prophets might be understood as a “book”).

The CSC also exhibits recent shifts in biblical interpretation in the past fifty years. The first is the literary turn in biblical interpretation. Literary analysis arose in biblical interpretation during the 1970s and 1980s, and this movement significantly influenced modern biblical commentaries. Literary analysis attends to the structure and style of each section in a biblical book as well as the shape of the book as a whole. Because of this influence, modern commentaries assess a biblical book’s style and structure, major themes and motifs, and how style impacts meaning. Literary interpretation recognizes that biblical books are works of art, arranged and crafted with rhetorical structure and purpose. Literary interpretation discovers the unique stylistic and rhetorical strategies of each book. Similarly, the CSC explores the literary dimensions of Scripture:

- Authors explore each book as a work of art that is a combination of style and structure, form and meaning.
- Authors assess the structure of the whole book and its communicative intent.
- Authors identify and explain the literary styles, poetics, and rhetorical devices of the biblical books as appropriate.
- Authors expound the literary themes and motifs that advance the communicative strategies in the book.

As an *ancient commentary*, the CSC is marked by a theological bent with respect to biblical interpretation. This bent is a tacit recognition

that the Bible is not only a historical or literary document but is fundamentally the Word of God. That is, it recognizes Scripture as fundamentally both historical *and* theological. God is the primary speaker in Scripture, and readers must deal with him. Theological interpretation affirms that although God enabled many authors to write the books of the Bible (Heb 1:1), he is the divine author, the subject matter of Scripture, and the One who gives the Old and New Testaments to the church, the people of God, to facilitate her growth for her good (2 Tim 3:16–17). Theological interpretation reads Scripture as God’s address to his church because he gives it to his people to be heard and lived. Any other approach (whether historical, literary, or otherwise) that diminishes emphasis on the theological stands deficient before the demands of the text.

Common to Christian (patristic, medieval, reformation, or modern) biblical interpretation in the past two millennia is a sanctified vision of Scripture in which it is read with attention to divine agency, truth, and relevance to the people of God. The *ancient commentary* tradition interprets Scripture as a product of complex and rich divine action. God has given his Word to his people so that they may know and love him, glorify him, and proclaim his praises to all creation. Scripture provides the information and power of God that leads to spiritual and practical transformation.

The transformative potential of Scripture emerges in the *ancient commentary* tradition as it attends to the centrality of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the One whom God sent to the world in the fullness of time and about whom the OT anticipates, testifies to, and witnesses to. Further, he is the One whom the NT presents as the fulfillment of the OT promise, in whom the church lives and moves and has her being, and who the Old and New Testaments testify will return to judge the living and the dead and who will make all things new.

With Christ as the center of Scripture, the *ancient commentary* tradition reveals an implicit biblical theology. Old and New Testaments work together as they reveal Christ; thus, the tradition works within a whole-Bible theology in which each testament is read in dialectic relationship, one with the other.

Finally, the *ancient commentary* tradition is committed to spiritual transformation. The Spirit of God illumines the hearts of readers so they might hear God's voice, see Christ in his glory, and live in and through the power of the Spirit. The transformational dimensions of Scripture emerge in *ancient commentary* so that God's voice might be heard anew in every generation and God's Word might be embodied among his people for the sake of the world.

The CSC embodies the *ancient commentary* tradition in the following ways:

- Authors expound the proper subject of Scripture in each biblical book, who is God; further they explore how he relates to his world in the biblical books.
- Authors explain the centrality of Jesus appropriate to each biblical book and in the light of a whole-Bible theology.
- Authors interpret the biblical text spiritually so that the transformative potential of God's Word might be released for the church.

In this endeavor, the CSC is ruled by a Trinitarian reading of Scripture. God the Father has given his Word to his people at various times and in various ways (Heb 1:1), which necessitates a sustained attention to historical, philological, social, geographical, linguistic, and grammatical aspects of the biblical books which derive from different authors in the history of Israel and of the early church. Despite its diversity, the totality of Scripture reveals Christ, who has been revealed in the Old and New Testaments as the Word of God (Heb 1:1; John 1:1) and the One in whom all things hold together (Col 1:15–20) and through whom all things will be made new (1 Cor 15; Rev 21:5). God has deposited his Spirit to his church so that they might read spiritually, being addressed by the voice of God and receiving the life-giving Word that comes by Scripture (2 Tim 3:15–17; Heb 4:12). In this way, the CSC contributes to the building up of Christ's church and the Great Commission to which all are called.

AUTHOR PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

This commentary is written primarily for pastors and laypersons who are interested in serious study of the Scriptures. I hope the commentary will be of interest to scholars, but I have tried to keep it short enough so that busy pastors will have time to read it. Commentaries are getting longer and longer, and I fear that only other scholars are reading such mammoth works. I have read representatively in commentaries, monographs, and journals on 1, 2 Peter and Jude, learning much from those that have preceded me. Another distinctive of the commentary is its theological slant. I understand the Scriptures to be a canonical unity. Hence, I attempt to explore at various junctures how the message of 1, 2 Peter and Jude coheres with the rest of the NT. No attempt is made in the commentary to defend the notion that the NT, despite its diversity, ultimately yields a coherent message. I believe such a defense can be made, but that would take another book.

I would like to thank Ray Clendenen for inviting me to contribute to the New American Commentary series and for his encouragement and friendship. I am also grateful for his keen editorial eye and his suggestions as to how the manuscript could be improved. It was a joy to teach 1, 2 Peter and Jude to a number of classes, and each class has made the commentary better than it would have been otherwise. Students in those classes spotted a number of errors in the manuscript that were corrected. Four students at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary read the manuscript with special care and corrected errors: John Folmar, Michael Hardy, Randall Tan, and Brian Vickers. I thank each one for his labor of love. Philemon Yong and Jason Meyer helped me in countless ways by copying articles, chasing down references, and by their careful reading. Jason Meyer was an

immense help in the proofing stage in checking references and giving the manuscript a final reading. Their friendship and help have been precious to me. John Glynn volunteered to read large sections of the commentary. He made innumerable suggestions that were remarkably helpful to me as I finished up the work. I cannot thank him enough for his labor of love on my behalf. Finally, I dedicate this book to the love of my life, Diane, who introduced me to the gospel of grace and is my coheir in the grace of life (1 Pet 3:7).

AUTHOR PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

It is a privilege and a joy to revise the first edition of my commentary on 1 & 2 Peter and Jude. I have read widely (but not exhaustively) recent research for the sake of the revision, and I have rethought every line written and made quite a few changes. I haven't changed my mind significantly on major interpretive questions, but I have added new material and nuanced what was said in the first edition. For instance, interacting with feminist thought has helped me think through more clearly the import of Peter's words to wives in 1 Pet 3:1–6, and I have also tried to think through the Trinitarian implications where such a discussion is relevant.

I am grateful for the careful reading of the manuscript by one of the experts in the world on the Catholic Epistles, Darian Lockett. Darian's comments, suggestions, and observations were of significant help in the revision. I am also grateful for the editorial work of Brandon Smith and for the pleasure of working with Ray Clendenen again. Brandon particularly encouraged me to think through the Trinitarian significance of various verses in 1 & 2 Peter and Jude and also made a number of helpful suggestions that I incorporated. Russell Meek carefully read and edited the manuscript, and I am grateful for his careful work. I am also thankful to one of my Ph.D. students, Coye Still, for checking out books from the library and for sending me the articles needed for the revision and helping chase down other details. Such work saved me valuable time so that I could concentrate on research and writing. Finally, I am grateful to God, who has reminded me through these great epistles of our unshakable hope in Christ, of the grace he has poured out on his people, and of the call to live holy and beautiful lives for the glory of his name.

—Thomas R. Schreiner

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ABBREVIATIONS

BIBLE BOOKS

Gen	Isa	Luke
Exod	Jer	John
Lev	Lam	Acts
Num	Ezek	Rom
Deut	Dan	1, 2 Cor
Josh	Hos	Gal
Judg	Joel	Eph
Ruth	Amos	Phil
1, 2 Sam	Obad	Col
1, 2 Kgs	Jonah	1, 2 Thess
1, 2 Chr	Mic	1, 2 Tim
Ezra	Nah	Titus
Neh	Hab	Phlm
Esth	Zeph	Heb
Job	Hag	Jas
Ps (pl. Pss)	Zech	1, 2 Pet
Prov	Mal	1, 2, 3 John
Eccl	Matt	Jude
Song	Mark	Rev

APOCRYPHA, PSEUDEPIGRAPHA, AND OTHER ANCIENT WRITINGS

<i>Abraham</i>	Philo, <i>On the Life of Abraham</i>
<i>Ag. Ap.</i>	Josephus, <i>Against Apion</i>
<i>Agric.</i>	Tacitus, <i>Agricola</i>
<i>Am.</i>	Ovid, <i>Amores</i>
<i>Ann.</i>	Tacitus, <i>Annales</i>
<i>Ant.</i>	Josephus, <i>Jewish Antiquities</i>
Apoc. Adam	Apocalypse of Adam
Apos. Con.	Apostolic Constitutions and Canons

b. Sanh.	Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin
<i>Bapt.</i>	Tertullian, <i>De baptism</i>
Bar	Baruch
2 Bar.	2 Baruch (Syriac Apocalypse)
Barn.	Barnabas
<i>Ben.</i>	Seneca, <i>De Beneficiis</i>
<i>Bib. Ant.</i>	Pseudo-Philo, <i>Biblical Antiquities</i>
<i>Cat.</i>	Cyril of Jerusalem, <i>Catechetical Lectures</i>
CD	Cairo Genizah copy of the Damascus Document
1 Clem.	1 Clement
2 Clem.	2 Clement
<i>Comm. Matt.</i>	Origen, <i>Commentarium in evangelium Matthew</i>
<i>Conj. praec</i>	Plutarch, <i>Conjugalia Praecepta</i>
<i>Cult. fem.</i>	Tertullian, <i>De cultu feminarum</i>
<i>Dial.</i>	Justin Martyr, <i>Dialogue cum Tryphone</i>
Did.	Didache
<i>Drunkenness</i>	Philo, <i>On Drunkenness</i>
<i>Ecl.</i>	Clement of Alexandria, <i>Eclogae prophetae</i>
<i>Embassy</i>	PhilApcolayseo, <i>On the Embassy to Gaius</i>
1 En.	1 Enoch (Ethiopic Apocalypse)
<i>Ench.</i>	Epictetus, <i>Enchiridion</i>
<i>Ep.</i>	Pliny the Younger, <i>Epistulae</i>
<i>Ep.</i>	Seneca, <i>Epistulae moralies</i>
<i>Ep. Epict.</i>	Athanasius, <i>Epistula ad Epictetum</i>
<i>Epig.</i>	Martial, <i>Epigrams</i>
<i>Epist.</i>	Jerome, <i>Epistulae</i>
1 Esd	1 Esdras
4 Ezra	4 Ezra
<i>Haer.</i>	Irenaeus, <i>Adversus haereses (Elenchos)</i>
<i>Heir</i>	Philo, <i>Who Is the Heir?</i>
<i>Helv.</i>	Seneca, <i>Ad Helviam</i>
<i>Herm. Mand.</i>	Shepherd of Hermas, <i>Mandate(s)</i>
<i>Herm. Sim.</i>	Shepherd of Hermas, <i>Similitude(s)</i>
<i>Hist. eccl.</i>	Eusebius, <i>Historia ecclesiastica</i>
<i>Ign. Eph.</i>	Inatius, <i>To the Ephesians</i>

Ign. <i>Magn.</i>	Ignatius, <i>To the Magnesians</i>
Ign. <i>Phld.</i>	Ignatius, <i>To the Philadelphians</i>
Ign. <i>Pol.</i>	Ignatius, <i>To Polycarp</i>
Ign. <i>Rom.</i>	Ignatius, <i>To the Romans</i>
Ign. <i>Smyrn.</i>	Ignatius, <i>To the Smyrnaeans</i>
Ign. <i>Trall.</i>	Ignatius, <i>To the Trallians</i>
<i>In Jer.</i>	Origen, <i>Homiliae in Jeremiam</i>
<i>Ira</i>	Seneca, <i>De ira</i>
Jdt	Judith
<i>Joseph</i>	Philo, <i>On the Life of Joseph</i>
Jub.	Jubilees
J.W.	Josephus, <i>Jewish War</i>
<i>Life</i>	Josephus, <i>The Life</i>
m. Sotah	mishna Sotah
1, 2, 3, 4 Macc	1, 2, 3, 4 Maccabees
Mek.	Mekilta
<i>Migration</i>	Philo, <i>On the Migration of Abraham</i>
<i>Mor.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Moralia</i>
<i>Moses</i>	Philo, <i>On the Life of Moses</i>
<i>Nat.</i>	Pliny the Elder, <i>Naturalis historia</i>
<i>Nat. d.</i>	Cicero, <i>De natura deorum</i>
<i>Or.</i>	Tertullian, <i>De oratione</i>
<i>Paed.</i>	Clement of Alexandria, <i>Paedagogus</i>
<i>Paenit.</i>	John Chrysostom, <i>De paenitentia</i>
<i>Phil.</i>	Polycarp, <i>To the Philippians</i>
<i>Poly.</i>	Polybius, <i>The Histories</i>
Ps.-Phoc.	Pseudo-Phocylides
Pss. Sol.	Psalms of Solomon
1QapGen	Genesis Apocryphon [Dead Sea Scroll]
1QH ^a	Hodayot ^a or Thanksgiving Hymns ^a [Dead Sea Scroll]
1QM	Milhamah
1QpHab	Peshar Habakuk [Dead Sea Scroll]
1QpNah	Peshar Nahum
1QS	Serek Hayaḥad or Rule of the Community [Dead Sea Scroll]
<i>Rewards</i>	Philo, <i>On Rewards and Punishments</i>

<i>Scorp.</i>	Tertullian, <i>Scorpiace</i>
Sib. Or.	Sibylline Oracles
Sir	Sirach/Ecclesiasticus
<i>Spec. Laws</i>	Philo, <i>On the Special Laws</i>
<i>Strom.</i>	Clement of Alexandria, <i>Stromateis</i>
T. Ab.	Testament of Abraham
T. Benj.	Testament of Benjamin
T. Jud.	Testament of Judah
T. Levi	Testament of Levi
T. Moses	Testament of Moses
T. Naph.	Testament of Naphtali
T. Reu.	Testament of Reuben
Tob	Tobit
<i>Ven.</i>	Dio Chrysostom, <i>Venator</i> (Or. 7)
<i>Vir. ill.</i>	Jerome, <i>De viris illustribus</i>
<i>Virt.</i>	Dio Chrysostom, <i>De virtute</i> (Or. 8)
<i>Vit.</i>	Suetonius, <i>Vitellius</i>
Wis	Wisdom of Solomon
<i>Worse</i>	Philo, <i>That the Worse Attacks the Better</i>

COMMONLY USED SOURCES FOR NEW TESTAMENT VOLUMES

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	D. N. Freedman (ed.), <i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>
ABR	<i>Australian Biblical Review</i>
ACCS	Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture
ACNT	Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
AJBI	<i>Annual of the Japanese Biblical Institute</i>
AJPS	<i>Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies</i>
AJT	<i>American Journal of Theology</i>
AJTh	<i>Asia Journal of Theology</i>
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANF	Ante-Nicene Fathers
ANQ	<i>Andover Newton Quarterly</i>
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentaries

ASNU	Acta seminarii neotestamentici upsaliensis
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten and Neuen Testaments
ATR	<i>Anglican Theological Review</i>
ATRSup	<i>Anglican Theological Review Supplemental Series</i> AusBR <i>Australian Biblical Review</i>
AUSS	<i>Andrews University Seminary Studies</i>
BAGD	W. Bauer, W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and F. Danker, Greek-English <i>Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> , 2nd ed.
BARev	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
BBR	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BDAG	W. Bauer, F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich Greek-English <i>Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> , 3d ed.
BDF	F. Blass, A. Debrunner, R. W. Funk, <i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament</i>
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium
BETS	<i>Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
BHGNT	<i>Baylor Handbook of the Greek New Testament</i>
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
BibInt	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BIS	Biblical Interpretation Series
BJRL	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library</i>
BK	<i>Bibel und Kirche</i>
BLG	Biblical Languages: Greek
BLit	<i>Bibel und Liturgie</i>
BR	<i>Biblical Research</i>
BRT/RBT	<i>Biblical Review of Theology</i>
BSac	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
BT	<i>The Bible Translator</i>
BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BTCB	Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible
BVC	<i>Bible et vie chrétienne</i>
BZ	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
BZNW	Beihefte zur ZAW
CBC	Cambridge Bible Commentary
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>

CCWJCW	Cambridge Commentaries on Writings of the Jewish and Christian World
CJT	<i>Canadian Journal of Theology</i>
CTJ	<i>Calvin Theological Journal</i>
CNT	Commentaire du Nouveau Testament
CNTC	Calvin's New Testament Commentaries
CO	W. Baum, E. Cuntiz, and E. Reuss eds., <i>Ioannis Calvini opera quae supereunt omnia</i>
ConBNT	Coniectanea Biblica: New Testament
Conybeare	W. J. Conybeare and J. S. Howson, <i>The Life and Epistles of St. Paul</i>
CSR	<i>Christian Scholars' Review</i>
CTM	<i>Concordia Theological Monthly</i>
CTQ	<i>Concordia Theological Quarterly</i>
CTR	<i>Criswell Theological Review</i>
CurBR	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
DNTT	<i>Dictionary of New Testament Theology</i>
DownRev	<i>Downside Review</i>
DSB	Daily Study Bible
EBC	Expositor's Bible Commentary
EC	Epworth Commentary
EDNT	<i>Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
EEC	Evangelical Exegetical Commentary
EGGNT	Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament
EGNT	<i>Exegetical Greek New Testament</i>
EGT	<i>The Expositor's Greek Testament</i>
EJT	<i>European Journal of Theology</i>
EKKNT	Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
ESV	English Standard Version
ETC	English Translation and Commentary
ETL	<i>Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses</i>
ETR	<i>Etudes théologiques et religieuses</i>
ETS	Evangelical Theological Society
EvQ	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
EvT	<i>Evangelische Theologie</i>
Exp	<i>Expositor</i>
ExpTim	<i>Expository Times</i>

FNT	<i>Filologia Neotestamentaria</i>
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GAGNT	M. Zerwick and M. Grosvenor, <i>A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament</i>
GNBC	Good News Bible Commentary
GSC	Griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller
GTJ	<i>Grace Theological Journal</i>
HBD	<i>Holman Bible Dictionary</i>
HDB	J. Hastings, <i>Dictionary of the Bible</i>
Her	Hermeneia
HeyJ	<i>Heythrop Journal</i>
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HNTC	Harper's New Testament Commentaries
HTKNT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HUCA	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
IB	<i>The Interpreter's Bible</i>
IBS	<i>Irish Biblical Studies</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IDB	<i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i>
IDBSup	Supplementary Volume to IDB
Int	<i>Interpretation</i>
INT	Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Preaching and Teaching
ISBE	<i>International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</i>
JAAR	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
JANES	<i>Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Studies</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JES	<i>Journal of Ecumenical Studies</i>
JETS	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
JJS	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
JOTT	<i>Journal of Translation and Textlinguistics</i>
JR	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
JRE	<i>Journal of Religious Ethics</i>
JRH	<i>Journal of Religious History</i>
JRC	<i>Journal of Theological Interpretation</i>

JRS	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSS	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
JTT	<i>Journal of Translation and Textlinguistics</i>
KEK	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament
LB	Linguistica Biblica
LD	Lectio Divina
LEC	Library of Early Christianity
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
<i>LowSt</i>	<i>Louvain Studies</i>
LSJ	Liddell, Scott, Jones, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i>
LTJ	<i>Lutheran Theological Journal</i>
LTP	<i>Laval théologique et philosophique</i>
LTQ	<i>Lexington Theological Quarterly</i>
LW	<i>Luther's Works</i>
LXX	Septuagint
MCNT	Meyer's Commentary on the New Testament
MDB	<i>Mercer Dictionary of the Bible</i>
MM	J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, <i>The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament</i>
MNTC	Moffatt New Testament Commentary
MQR	<i>Mennonite Quarterly Review</i>
MT	Masoretic Text
<i>Mus</i>	<i>Muséon: Revue d'études orientales</i>
NA ²⁸	<i>Novum Testamentum Graece</i> , Nestle-Aland, 28th ed.
NAB	New American Bible
NAC	New American Commentary
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NBD	<i>New Bible Dictionary</i>
NCB	New Century Bible
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
NEB	New English Bible
<i>Neot</i>	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
NHS	Nag Hamadi Studies

NIBC	New International Biblical Commentary
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
<i>NIDNTT</i>	<i>New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology</i>
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NIV	New International Version
NIVAC	NIV Application Commentary
NTL	The New Testament Library
<i>NorTT</i>	<i>Norsk Teologisk Tidsskrift</i>
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	<i>Novum Testamentum</i> , Supplements
NPNF	Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
<i>NRT</i>	<i>La nouvelle revue théologique</i>
NTD	Das Neue Testament Deutsch
<i>NTI</i>	D. Guthrie, <i>New Testament Introduction</i>
<i>NTM</i>	<i>The New Testament Message</i>
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>OTP</i>	J. H. Charlesworth, ed., <i>The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i>
PC	Proclamation Commentaries
PCNT	Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament
<i>PEQ</i>	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
PNTC	Pelican New Testament Commentaries
<i>PRS</i>	<i>Perspectives in Religious Studies</i>
<i>PSB</i>	<i>Princeton Seminary Bulletin</i>
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
<i>RefTR</i>	<i>Reformed Theological Review</i>
<i>RelSRev</i>	<i>Religious Studies Review</i>
<i>ResQ</i>	<i>Restoration Quarterly</i>
<i>RevExp</i>	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
<i>RevQ</i>	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
<i>RevThom</i>	<i>Revue thomiste</i>
<i>RHPR</i>	<i>Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses</i>
RNT	Reading the New Testament
<i>RSPT</i>	<i>Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques</i>
<i>RSR</i>	<i>Recherches de science religieuse</i>
RSV	Revised Standard Version

RTP	<i>Revue de théologie et de philosophie</i>
RTR	<i>Reformed Theological Review</i>
SAB	<i>Sitzungsbericht der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaft zu Berlin</i>
SB	Sources Bibliques
SBJT	<i>Southern Baptist Journal of Theology</i>
SBL	Studies in Biblical Literature
SBLAB	Society of Biblical Literature Academia Biblica
SBLDS	SBL Dissertation Series
SBLMS	SBL Monograph Series
SBLRBS	Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study
SBLSP	SBL Seminar Papers
SBT	<i>Studia Biblica et Theologica</i>
Scr	<i>Scripture</i>
ScrB	<i>Scripture Bulletin</i>
SE	<i>Studia Evangelica</i>
SEÅ	<i>Svensk exegetisk årsbok</i>
SEAJT	<i>Southeast Asia Journal of Theology</i>
SecCent	<i>Second Century</i>
Sem	<i>Semitica</i>
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
SJT	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
SNT	Studien zum Neuen Testament
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SNTU	<i>Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt</i>
SP	Sacra Pagina
SPB	Studia postbiblica
SPCK	Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge
ST	<i>Studia theologica</i>
Str-B	H. Strack and P. Billerbeck, <i>Kommentar zum Neuen Testament</i>
StudBib	Studia Biblica
SwJT	<i>Southwestern Journal of Theology</i>
TB	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
TBC	Torch Bible Commentaries
TBN	Themes in Biblical Narrative
TBT	<i>The Bible Today</i>
TCGNT	B. M. Metzger, <i>A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament</i>

TDNT	G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, eds., <i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
TEV	Today's English Version
<i>Them</i>	<i>Themelios</i>
THKNT	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
THNTC	Two Horizons New Testament Commentary
<i>Theol</i>	<i>Theology</i>
<i>ThT</i>	<i>Theology Today</i>
TLZ	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
TRE	<i>Theologische Realenzyklopädie</i>
<i>TrinJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
TRu	<i>Theologische Rundschau</i>
TS	<i>Theological Studies</i>
TSK	<i>Theologische Studien und Kritiken</i>
TTZ	<i>Trierer theologische Zeitschrift</i>
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
TZ	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
UBS	United Bible Societies
UBSGNT	<i>United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament</i>
USQR	<i>Union Seminary Quarterly Review</i>
VC	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
VD	<i>Verbum domini</i>
VE	<i>Vox evangelica</i>
VR	<i>Vox reformata</i>
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WC	Westminster Commentaries
WEC	Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary
WP	<i>Word Pictures in the New Testament</i> , A. T. Robertson
WTJ	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZDPV	<i>Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i>
ZECNT	Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZRGG	<i>Zeitschrift für Religionsund Geistesgeschichte</i>

ZST *Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie*
ZTK *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*

1 PETER

INTRODUCTION OUTLINE

- 1 Author
 - 1.1 Internal Evidence
 - 1.2 External Evidence
 - 1.3 Arguments against Petrine Authorship
 - 1.4 Arguments Supporting Petrine Authorship
- 2 Date
- 3 Destination and Situation of the Readers
- 4 Character of the Letter
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INTRODUCTION

The first letter of Peter is beautiful and powerful as it sets forth what it means to be Christians in a hostile world, in a world where Christians were persecuted for their faith. Even though the readers were spiritual exiles, they were at the same time recipients of a great salvation that gave them a future hope and inheritance that guaranteed their future. Jesus as the suffering servant took the punishment they deserved and redeemed them from their useless and godless way of life. They were homeless spiritually, but they were also bound for a home and an inheritance from which they would never be displaced.

As believers, most of them lived on the underside of society—under the authority of Rome, under unbelieving and cruel masters, or under unbelieving husbands. They suffered both in everyday life and from imperial authority.

Still, they were the people of God, the true and restored Israel, the recipients of God's great promises to Abraham, Moses, David, and the prophets through Jesus Christ. They were the Lord's new temple, and they were priests offering praise to God and mediating blessing to the world. They are exhorted not to live in fear of human beings but in fear of the Lord, and such fear, paradoxically, would give them confidence and hope. They were called to suffer as the Lord Jesus

Christ suffered, but such suffering was characterized by hope. As the people of God, they were to live as those consecrated to God, as obedient children. Unbelievers who examined their lives would have no grounds for criticizing them since their lives would demonstrate that they belonged to another king and another kingdom. The beauty of their lives would, it was hoped, attract others so that unbelievers could join God's chosen race, royal priesthood, and holy nation.

1 AUTHOR

1.1 Internal Evidence

First Peter claims to be from Peter: "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 1:1).¹ No other direct reference to Peter exists in the letter. Some have seen a contrast between the readers and Peter in the statement that the readers have not seen Christ (1:8), implying that Peter has. Such an implication may be present, but it is hardly determinative for establishing authorship. A stronger piece of evidence is the author's claim to be a "witness to the sufferings of Christ" (5:1). It is difficult to see how this could be said of someone outside the apostolic circle (but see the commentary on 5:1 for alternate interpretations of this expression). The references to Silas, Mark, and Babylon (5:13) may reflect Petrine authorship, but by themselves they are unclear, for the NT more closely connects Silas and Mark to Paul than Peter (see the commentary on 5:12 and 5:13). Also significant is 2 Pet 3:1, for there Peter says that he writes his second letter to the readers. Even if 2 Peter is pseudonymous (which I dispute), the reference is probably to 1 Peter, suggesting that the first letter is genuinely Petrine. To sum up, the letter itself claims to be written by the apostle Peter, and the self-claim of the letter should be accepted unless there is clear evidence to the contrary.

1.2 External Evidence

Some scholars have detected dependence on 1 Peter in 1 Clement (see 1 Clem. opening; 7:6; 9:3–4; 21:7; 22:2–6; 49:5; 57:1), but none of the parallels clearly establishes dependence on 1 Peter, and the evidence is insufficient to conclude that 1 Clement knew or used 1

Peter. Neither do Barnabas or Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* indicate dependence on 1 Peter, despite the claims of some scholars. Polycarp's letter to the Philippians—written probably ca. AD 112–114—is the first evidence of dependence on 1 Peter. In four texts Polycarp's wording is remarkably close to 1 Peter, indicating that Polycarp used Peter as a source (cf. *Phil.* 8:2 and 1 Pet 2:21; *Phil.* 1:3 and 1 Pet 1:8; *Phil.* 8:1 and 1 Pet 2:22, 24; *Phil.* 2:1 and 1 Pet 1:13, 22). The Didache may use 1 Peter (see Did. 1:4 and 1 Pet 2:11), although certainty here is impossible. If the latter were to be established, the authenticity of 1 Peter would be strengthened.

By the end of the second century and the beginning of the third century, the letter is explicitly identified as Peter's. Tertullian cites verses from Peter and explicitly identifies Peter as the author (*Scorp.* 12; cf. *Scorp.* 14; *Or.* 20). Clement of Alexandria and Irenaeus also quote from 1 Peter and attribute the writing to Peter himself (e.g., *Paed.* 1.6.44; *Strom.* 3.11.75; 4.7.33–47; and *Haer.* 4.9.2; 4.16.5 respectively). First Peter is not listed in the Muratorian Canon, but the omission may be due to the destruction of part of the document, so not much can be gleaned from this.² The external evidence for 1 Peter's authenticity is quite early, and no one raised doubts about its Petrine authorship.

1.3 Arguments against Petrine Authorship

Despite the self-claim of the book and the early tradition attesting Petrine authorship, many scholars doubt that Peter is the genuine author of the letter. Various reasons are given for denying the authenticity of 1 Peter, although scholars who dispute authenticity differ on what arguments are persuasive and the weight that should be assigned to the different arguments.³

First, the cultivated Greek of the letter convinces many that the letter could not have been written by a Galilean fisherman.⁴ In Acts 4:13 Peter is described as “uneducated” (*agrammatos*), thus it seems quite improbable to many scholars that the sophisticated knowledge of Greek grammar evident in the letter can be traced back to the apostle. Indeed, scholars generally agree that the Greek in Peter is

among the best in the NT. Further, how do we explain the different quality of the Greek in 2 Peter if both letters were composed by Peter?

Second, and related to the first, the citations of the OT in the letter come mainly from the Septuagint, and this does not seem to fit with Peter, whose native language would not be Greek.⁵ Third, scholars have often remarked that 1 Peter is noticeably Pauline in theology.⁶ Peter focuses on the death of Christ, the need to suffer with Christ, obedience to governing authorities, the responsibility of wives to submit their husbands, and other allegedly Pauline themes. The apparent dependence on Paul seems especially strange, given that Peter and Paul disagreed in Antioch about how to relate to Gentiles (Gal 2:11–14).⁷

Fourth, conservative scholars often appeal to Silvanus, arguing that he functioned as Peter's amanuensis (1 Pet 5:12). The quality of the Greek, therefore, derives from Silvanus rather than Peter. Scholars who reject Petrine authorship argue, however, that the formula in 1 Pet 5:12 does not indicate that Silvanus functioned as the secretary. Many say that the phrase "to write through someone" (*graphein dia tinon*) refers to the *bearer*, not the secretary, of the letter. It is also said that if Silvanus truly was the scribe, he should have been listed as the coauthor. Fifth, some scholars question Petrine authorship because the letter says little about the historical Jesus, and this is deemed incredible if the author is the historical Peter who walked and talked with Jesus.

Sixth, some scholars argue that the persecution described in the letter stems from Rome itself and is empire wide (1 Pet 5:9).⁸ Some conclude from this that such persecution can only be assigned to the reign of Domitian (AD 81–96). The late date of Domitian's reign most likely excludes any reference to Peter. Similarly, some scholars think the mistreatment of believers in 1 Peter fits well with the correspondence between Pliny the Younger and the emperor Trajan (AD 98–117).⁹ Pliny was the legate to Bithynia in Asia Minor, and he wondered how he should respond to Christians in his province. On the one hand, he was sure he should execute believers who refused to

sacrifice to the emperor and curse Christ. He suspected, however, that he should not impose punishments upon those who were identified as Christians if they cursed Christ. Furthermore, Pliny wondered if Christians should be actively sought out and anonymous charges accepted, or if he should only prosecute Christians who confessed their faith. Trajan responded by recommending a conservative course.¹⁰ He did not want a witch hunt because it would undermine stability. Christians who cursed Christ and sacrificed to the emperor were exempt from any punishment, whereas those who were stubborn and obstinate in their devotion to Christ were to be executed. If 1 Peter is dated during Trajan's reign (AD 98–117), the apostle Peter cannot be its author. Along the same lines, Peter refers to Babylon as Rome, and he would have been the first to do so, and it is difficult to see why, especially if Peter was written before the Neronian persecution.

Many scholars opt, then, for pseudonymity.¹¹ The letter claims to be written by Peter, but it was actually authored by someone else. P. Achtemeier's commentary exemplifies this theory.¹² Achtemeier notes that the early church rejected pseudonymous writings, but he insists that the rejected writings were dismissed because of their *content*, not because they were pseudonymous. He thinks a pseudonymous author felt justified in writing in Peter's name since there was a tradition that disciples wrote in the name of their teacher. This tradition is found in rabbinic literature, among the Pythagoreans, and in Tertullian. Further, Achtemeier appeals to evidence in both the Greco-Roman world and in the early church fathers supporting the notion of a "therapeutic lie."¹³ Such a theory fits with the work of Donelson, who argues that pseudepigraphers defended lying on the basis that some lies were "noble."¹⁴ Others depart from Achtemeier and Donelson and argue that it was readily apparent that Peter did not write the letter and that there was no attempt to deceive; such an expedient was a "transparent fiction."¹⁵ Others argue that the letter was composed by a Petrine group or a Petrine school.¹⁶ This last

theory is possible but unsupported.¹⁷ No early tradition suggests the letter derived from a group of writers, and it is difficult to believe such a beautiful piece of literature could be composed by a group, as anyone who has served on a committee writing a report knows rather well. Ascribing the letter to a group evades the challenge of supporting Petrine authorship while attempting to situate the letter within a Petrine circle.¹⁸ The vagueness of the theory makes it difficult to refute, but at the same time it is difficult to substantiate. Elliott ascribes the work to a fictive Peter (since he did not write it) but a genuine Mark and Silvanus. It is difficult to see how the latter can be accepted as historical while dismissing the former. A more consistent approach would accept the reference to all three as historical or understand each person as fictional.¹⁹

1.4 Arguments Supporting Petrine Authorship

Despite the above objections to Petrine authorship, good and substantial reasons exist for accepting such authorship.²⁰ In answering the objections, we will begin with the last argument and proceed to the first.²¹ The letter claims to be written by the apostle Peter. This point should be emphasized since the earliest evidence we have on the matter supports Petrine authorship. Further, early church tradition also supports Petrine authorship. There is no evidence that anyone in the early church believed the letter was written by anyone other than Peter. Hence, we should reject any notion that the letter is a transparent fiction. We have no evidence from antiquity that the letter was recognized as pseudonymous or as being written by one of Peter's disciples. If the letter is a "transparent fiction," we have no historical attestation for such a claim.

More credible than the transparent fiction theory is that the letter was written as a "therapeutic lie" or "noble lie." Still, there are serious problems with this theory. The letter itself criticizes deceit (2:1, 22; 3:10), which is inconsistent if the writer practices it himself. The high premium placed on truth in the early Christian movement does not square with such deceitful practices.²² In the early church both the

Gospel of Peter and the Acts of Paul and Thecla were rejected because they were pseudonymous.²³ To say they were rejected as authoritative only because of their content is reductionistic since both Eusebius and Tertullian report that the books were rejected because of their content *and the false claim of authorship*. Cyril of Jerusalem rejects all the Gospels except four, since the others are “falsely written and hurtful.”²⁴ Indeed, Achtemeier’s attempt to legitimize pseudonymity by appealing to ancient practice fails. Donelson rightly observes: “No one seems to have accepted a document as religiously and philosophically prescriptive which was known to be forged. I do not know a single example.”²⁵

Another problem with the noble-lie theory is that if Peter died in the 60s and the letter was written in the 70s or 80s (or even later), how would the attempt to pass off the letter as a noble lie have any chance of success.²⁶ Certainly the believers in Asia Minor could not have thought Peter was still alive ten to thirty years after his death. It must have been well known that he was deceased. Hence, it seems unlikely the readers would have actually been deceived by a letter purporting to be by Peter. We are left, then, with a person writing in Peter’s name with an intent to deceive, but the likelihood of success was minimal.

Referring to the practice of the Pythagorean school does not solve the problem since the issue is whether such a practice was accepted in the Jewish and Christian communities.²⁷ Appeal to rabbinic practices does not advance the argument either because the rabbinic sayings do not have the same personal allusions as the NT letters. Further, it is questionable whether the category of pseudepigraphy is appropriate for what we find in rabbinic literature. Surprisingly, Achtemeier points to examples where the early church defended lying or deception (e.g., Rahab). These examples, however, are not applicable to Petrine authorship. Even today Christians debate whether there are some instances in which the truth should be withheld from another person in order to preserve someone’s life. Such exceptional circumstances and statements do not suggest that a therapeutic lie was routinely accepted. Further, they provide no evidence that the same standard

applies to literary documents and, in particular, to epistles. In conclusion, the theory of pseudepigraphy either involves outright deception or it was rejected by the early church. The ancient evidence indicates that the latter is more convincing. Since the same issue is even more pressing in 2 Peter, see the more detailed discussion in the introduction to that letter.²⁸

The nature of the persecution will be explained below in the discussion of the destination and situation of the readers, but note that the nature of the persecution in 1 Peter does not certify a late date for the letter, a date that precludes Petrine authorship. When we examine the evidence of the letter and the nature of the persecution in the Greco-Roman world, the claim that Peter could not have written the letter because of the kind of persecution described in the letter is shown to be fallacious.

Others find it incredible to think that Peter is the author since there are so few references to the historical Jesus or allusions to his words. Scholars debate, however, whether Peter alludes somewhat regularly to the words of Jesus. Gundry detects quite a few allusions, whereas Best contests Gundry's evidence.²⁹ We do not have space to negotiate this matter here. Suffice it to say that some verses appear to allude to sayings of the historical Jesus, but the number of such verses is not large. In any case, the objection made against Petrine authorship does not seem compelling. The objection is psychological since it posits what someone who knew the historical Jesus would do if he indeed wrote 1 Peter. Arguments like these are not as compelling as they might appear on first glance, for we must beware of asserting what Peter would certainly do as an apostle of Jesus Christ.³⁰ We might *think* he would appeal often to events in the life of Jesus or to Jesus's teaching, but such assertions belong to the realm of conjecture. We need to remember that 1 Peter is a short letter in which Peter does not communicate all he knows to his readers. He writes for a limited and specific purpose to address the concrete circumstances of his readers. Thus, nothing can be concluded about Petrine authorship from what is left out of the letter.

The most significant objection against Petrine authorship may be the quality of Greek in the letter. Some scholars answer this objection by suggesting that Silvanus served as Peter's amanuensis on the basis of 1 Pet 5:12.³¹ As noted earlier and as we discuss in the commentary on 5:12, the formula used in 5:12, "through Silvanus . . . I have written this short letter" (NRSV) may refer exclusively to the *carrier* rather than the secretary of the letter. On the other hand, Peter may be referring to a secretary since he says the letter *was written* through Silvanus. Even if 1 Pet 5:12 describes Silvanus exclusively as the carrier of the letter, it is possible that he served as the secretary as well. We know secretaries were common from Paul's letters (e.g., Rom 16:22; cf. 1 Cor 16:21; Gal 6:11; Col 4:18; 2 Thess 3:17; Phlm 19).³² It is therefore also possible that someone else with Peter served as his secretary and we are not told about this matter. A secretary who knew Greek well could have assisted Peter in the writing of the letter, and this would explain the cultivated Greek in the epistle. Such a theory cannot be dismissed, but neither can it be proved. In any case, Peter may have used a secretary, which could explain the excellent Greek used in the letter.³³

The preference for Greek instead of Hebrew also seems strange to some since the citations and allusions to the OT come from the Septuagint rather than the Masoretic Text in 1 Peter. Some scholars are convinced that Peter, as a Galilean Jew, would not have cited the Greek OT. The argument fails to convince. It is quite natural that Peter would appeal to the Septuagint since that is the Bible his readers would use in Asia Minor.³⁴ Peter wrote to communicate to his readers, and therefore it is hardly surprising that he relayed his message in their idiom.

We return to the objection that the cultivated Greek in the letter does not fit with Peter as a Galilean fisherman. This piece of data raises serious questions about Petrine authorship. As noted above, it is possible that Peter used an anonymous amanuensis or Silvanus, and the quality of the Greek could then be ascribed to the secretary. On this scenario Peter may have given orally the substance of his message,

and the secretary composed it. Presumably Peter himself would have reviewed the first draft or perhaps more than one draft of the letter and suggested changes before sending out the letter. Such careful composition fits with the design and beauty of the letter. The disadvantage of this view is that it cannot be established as certain. On the other hand, we must admit that we live in the realm of possible hypotheses when discussing historical questions like these.

It is also possible that Peter himself, as a Galilean fisherman, could have written 1 Peter.³⁵ First of all, Greek was the language of commerce and had penetrated into Galilee.³⁶ Hellenism, as M. Hengel has demonstrated, was influential in Palestine by the time the NT documents were composed.³⁷ Furthermore, Galilee was near the Gentile Decapolis, and linguistic contact and overlap between the two areas was inevitable. Indeed, the city of Sepphoris in Galilee was a Hellenistic city in which both Aramaic and Greek were spoken. Peter, as a person of business, probably knew Greek, and it would have been necessary for him to know the language to advance his business interests. Porter rightly remarks,

Greek was the prestige language of Palestine, and anyone wishing to conduct business on any extended scale, including any successful fishermen from the Hellenized region of Galilee and probably any craftsmen or artisans who would have come into contact with Roman customers, would have needed to have known—indeed would have wanted to know—Greek.³⁸

Sevenster argues that several lines of evidence suggest that ordinary people in Israel, particularly in Galilee, would have known Greek.³⁹ In Jerusalem and Beth Shearim many ossuaries (stone coffins containing bones of the dead) have Greek inscriptions rather than Hebrew or Aramaic.⁴⁰ One of the letters written by Simon bar Cochba (AD 132–135) or one of his assistants was written in Greek, which is surprising in a nationalistic messianic movement, suggesting that Greek was well known. Some Greek has also been found in Qumran, even though Aramaic and Hebrew dominate. Josephus

seems to indicate that other Jews could write Greek well if they were so motivated (*Ant.* 20.262–65). An imperial inscription warning against the robbing of tombs was published in Greek (found in Nazareth) in the first century AD. This inscription was likely intended for Galilee since it was found in Nazareth, indicating again, presumably, that some Galileans could read Greek. Inscriptions in Greek have also been found in several Jewish synagogues.

It seems, then, that Greek was known and used in Palestine and in Galilee. The question should be posed more sharply than, Did Peter know and use Greek? He almost certainly knew Greek and used it as well. The question is, Is it plausible to say that Peter as a Galilean wrote such beautiful Greek? Some confidently say that he could not because he came from the business class. After all, the Sanhedrin in Acts 4:13 labels him “uneducated” (*agrammatos*). The epithet “uneducated” does not mean Peter was illiterate.⁴¹ The Sanhedrin did not know Peter so intimately. What they did know was that Peter was not trained rabbinically. He did not have the equivalent of a seminary education, so how could he instruct them in theological matters? We have to remember that Peter, as the leader of the Twelve, was almost certainly an extraordinary person, and he likely had remarkable speaking gifts. We have a hint of Peter’s rhetorical abilities in 1 Cor 1:12 because in Corinth the strife over leaders centered on their speaking abilities.⁴² We could become guilty of educational snobbery that refuses to recognize the intellectual and literary gifts of those in business.

I am not arguing that Peter necessarily wrote the letter himself. He may have used a secretary, but Peter himself may have been gifted in Greek. Those who claim that the letter could not have come from the historical Peter, as if such a claim is more historically probable than the alternative position, cannot claim the historical high ground. The historical evidence we have (the letter itself) claims that Peter wrote the letter, and this historical claim should be accepted, especially when there are grounds for accepting such a verdict.

Jobes supports Petrine authorship by proposing that the syntax of 1 Peter betrays a “bilingual interference that is consistent with a Semitic

author for whom Greek is a second language.”⁴³ She notes a lack of mastery in the use of prepositions, genitive personal pronouns, “the position of attributive adjectives,” and datives “with the preposition ἐν.”⁴⁴ Perhaps Jobes is correct here, and further study on her thesis should prove helpful. Even if Jobes’s theory is discounted, the style could come from a secretary or Peter himself. Obviously, we do not and cannot know the precise circumstances about who penned the letter, and we must be content with various hypotheses.

Others insist that Peter could not have written the letter because the theology is too similar to Paul’s.⁴⁵ The matter of Peter’s relationship to Paul is complex, deserving further analysis than can be presented here. A number of themes in 1 Peter resemble what we find in Paul: (1) salvation is an eschatological gift (1 Pet 1:3–9; Rom 5:9–10); (2) believers will suffer for their faith (1 Pet 1:6–7; 3:13–17; 4:12–19; 2 Tim 3:12); (3) believers should live holy lives (1 Pet 1:13–2:3; Rom 6:1–23; Eph 4:1–6:9; Col 3:5–4:6); (4) Jesus is God’s cornerstone (1 Pet 2:6; Rom 9:33); (5) believers should submit themselves to governing authorities (1 Pet 2:13–17; Rom 13:1–7); (6) wives should submit to husbands (1 Pet 3:1–6; Eph 5:22–24); (7) husbands should treat their wives kindly (1 Pet 3:7; Eph 5:25–29); (8) Christ is exalted as Lord over angelic powers (1 Pet 3:18–19, 22; Eph 1:20–23; Col 1:16; 2:10, 15); (9) the end is near (1 Pet 4:7; Rom 13:11–14). Common themes stand out, but the Petrine letter does not show clear evidence of using Paul’s letters as a literary source.⁴⁶ Peter’s wording is not exact enough to demonstrate that he wrote with any of the Pauline letters before him. Furthermore, important Pauline themes are lacking in 1 Peter: justification, the role of the law, Pauline christology, and others. Some claim they shared common Christian tradition on these matters,⁴⁷ but certainty is elusive. In any case, shared subject matter on some topics doesn’t exclude the notion of Petrine authorship since it is possible that Peter and Paul shared central theological convictions. In any case, Peter and Paul are not carbon copies of each other, and 1 Peter is distinct enough to make this clear.

We must also beware of a Tübingen overemphasis that erases the shared theology of Peter and Paul (cf. 1 Cor 15:11).⁴⁸ The incident in Antioch (Gal 2:11–14) does not suggest fundamental and long-standing disagreements between Peter and Paul. If we take the written text seriously, Peter acted hypocritically and fearfully, not from conviction. Many scholars, of course, dismiss Paul’s explanation and contend that Peter differed from Paul theologically. The text certainly indicates that Peter was more concerned and sensitive to Jewish objections than Paul. Still, no evidence exists that he differed with Paul’s theology. I am not denying that Peter and Paul had different emphases in their theology, nor should we cancel out the diversity of the NT witness. Nevertheless, the alleged Pauline character of 1 Peter does not rule out Petrine authorship. It is not the purpose of this commentary to consider the common tradition between Peter and other writers. In the history of Petrine scholarship, some have appealed to a common baptismal tradition, and it is now common to posit shared tradition (hymnic, catechetical, liturgical, exhortatory).⁴⁹ The entire question is fascinating and difficult but outside the province of this commentary.

Some claim that identifying Rome as Babylon constitutes a strong argument against Petrine authorship since we do not find such connections until post-AD 70. But there is nothing surprising about labeling Rome as Babylon pre-AD 70 since, as Jobes notes, it would make sense to identify Rome as Babylon after 63 BC since, like Babylon, Rome robbed Israel of its independence.⁵⁰

There are no decisive grounds to reject Petrine authorship for the letter. Both internal and external evidence support such a view, and there was no controversy over whether Peter wrote the letter in the early church, showing that there is no evidence from antiquity that the letter was a “transparent fiction.” The objections raised against Petrine authorship are not compelling, and credible responses can be given to each one. The cultivated style of the Greek is the most important objection to authenticity, but a number of pieces of evidence indicate that Peter could have used a secretary or that Peter knew Greek well and wrote 1 Peter himself. It is unnecessary to say that Peter had

visited the churches personally,⁵¹ although we cannot rule out such visits. The reference to Babylon (see the commentary on 5:13) almost certainly refers to Rome, thus we can conclude that Peter wrote the letter while in Rome.⁵²

2 DATE

Discussion of the date of the letter depends on the question of authorship.⁵³ Those who reject Petrine authorship typically date the letter in the time of Trajan (AD 98–117),⁵⁴ Domitian (AD 81–96), or Vespasian or Titus (AD 69–81).⁵⁵ If Peter is the author of the letter and if he wrote from Rome, as the reference to Babylon in 5:13 suggests (see commentary on 5:13), it was likely written near the end of Peter's life when he was in Rome.⁵⁶ Assigning a specific date is conjectural, but the letter was likely written in the 60s.⁵⁷ Arguments from silence are notoriously slippery, but there are good grounds for thinking that Peter would have mentioned the Neronian persecution if it had started and would have encouraged the believers in Asia Minor by the example of suffering experienced by Roman Christians. Therefore, I would date the letter around AD 62–63 before the onset of the Neronian persecution.⁵⁸

3 DESTINATION AND SITUATION OF THE READERS

The reference to Babylon in 5:13 is almost surely a reference to Rome, indicating that Peter wrote the letter from Rome to churches in Asia Minor.⁵⁹ We have corroborating evidence that Mark (5:13) was in Rome about the time Peter was written (Col 4:10; Phlm 24). The letter is addressed to believers dispersed in “Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia” (1 Pet 1:1).⁶⁰ When Peter wrote the letter, Bithynia and Pontus were a single province (see commentary under 1:1), and hence Peter probably wrote generally, designating a geographic area north of the Taurus mountains (in what is now modern-day Turkey) as the recipients of the letter. Some think Peter designates the area by province instead of geographically; for if it were

the latter he probably would have included Paphlagonia, Phrygia, Pisidia, and Lycaonia.⁶¹ Others suggest that the order in which the areas are listed designates the order in which the courier (Silvanus per 5:12) carried the letter.⁶² The regions are roughly in a circle. We would expect a person coming from the sea to land at Bithynia first and then go on to Pontus. Alternatively, Seland says that the area was much too large for a single carrier, and thus it is more likely that several couriers delivered the letter, which would mean that several copies of the letter were made.⁶³

We know from the letter that the readers faced suffering and persecution for their faith (1:6–7; 2:18–20; 3:1, 13–17; 4:1–4, 12–19; 5:10). The persecution represents a test and is compared to fire (1:6–7; 4:12), and their suffering is compared to what believers faced in the rest of the Greco-Roman world (5:9). Slaves and wives were mistreated, which probably included beatings and perhaps even sexual assault (2:18–20; 3:1–6). Believers were slandered by unbelievers for failing to participate with them in idolatry and a whole range of sins (4:1–4), and thus they were out of step socially with their society. Peter instructs them not to suffer for practicing evil, but they should gladly suffer as Christians (4:13–16).

Earlier Petrine scholarship argued that the letter reflects empire-wide persecution, positing that it occurred either during the reign of Domitian (AD 81–96) or Trajan (AD 98–117). A new consensus emerged in recent decades that claims an official policy of persecuting the church was not enforced under Nero (AD 54–68), Domitian, or Trajan.⁶⁴ The new consensus has been recently challenged by T. Williams and Horrell,⁶⁵ reminding us how difficult it is to come to a firm conclusion on historical questions with partial data.

The emperor Nero blamed Christians for the fire in Rome to stave off the notion that he intentionally started the fire.⁶⁶ Certainly the persecution of believers was intense in Rome under Nero, but we do not have clear evidence that the persecution of Christians was the official policy throughout the empire thereafter, although there may

have been legal ramifications quickly for Christians outside Rome.⁶⁷ Scholars in the past often argued that Domitian launched an official policy of persecution against Christians. Domitian's reign was marked by injustice as he executed opponents among the nobility and extradited philosophers.⁶⁸ Domitian's discrimination against the church was of a piece with his mistreatment of all who opposed him, and faithful Christians would resist calling him "our god and lord" (*deus et dominus noster*).⁶⁹ It is now more common to conclude that an *organized* and *systematic* repression of Christians did not take place under Domitian.⁷⁰ On the other hand, there were certainly local and spasmodic eruptions against believers during his reign, which even led to loss of life (e.g., Rev 2:12; 6:9; 16:6; 17:6; 18:24; 19:2; 20:4),⁷¹ and imperial power and rule almost certainly played a role.

The last emperor we need to consider is Trajan. I have summarized briefly above the correspondence between Pliny the Younger and Trajan. We can discern an imperial policy from the correspondence since Pliny executed those who identified as Christians. Still, Pliny would not have sought counsel from Trajan if Rome had worked out thoroughly and clearly its stance toward Christians. Trajan counseled that Christians must not be sought out and put to death. Still, when Christians were encountered who refused to curse Christ and to express their devotion to the emperor, they were to be executed.

It is not clear from the letter of 1 Peter that the kind of persecution present during the reigns of Domitian (AD 81–96) or Trajan (AD 98–117) was taking place.⁷² Some in the history of interpretation have detected an official and empire-wide persecution from the need to make a defense when asked about one's faith (3:15), the charges that were brought against Christians (4:14–16), and the reference to believers suffering all over the world (5:9). Other scholars have responded by saying that none of these texts point to an official, state-sponsored policy of persecution, arguing that the questions and charges brought against believers in 3:15 and 4:14–16 were typical of the everyday questions believers would encounter because of their

faith.⁷³ In some instances, naturally, the resistance might lead to official action, but even then it was a local and restricted response to Christians. For instance, Paul was often punished by local authorities during his travels. Such opposition should not be equated with an empire-wide proscription of the Christian faith.⁷⁴ Nor, according to the view that has become a new consensus, does the reference to believers suffering throughout the world signal that the Roman Empire had promulgated a decree against the Christian faith (5:9). This verse simply reveals that the faith of believers was under threat in the entire Greco-Roman world. Threats, discrimination, and occasionally loss of life were the lot of Christians everywhere. Hence, Peter reminds the believers in Asia Minor that their situation is not unique. Discrimination and mistreatment for Christian faith may arise at any time, but being a Christian was not formally illegal.⁷⁵

More recently, Horrell and T. Williams have suggested a more nuanced view, although some previous scholars hint at a similar reconstruction. Horrell points out that unofficial complaints by ordinary citizens could lead to official action by the government.⁷⁶ T. Williams argues that even though Christianity was not technically illegal, it was “effectively illegal” from the time of Nero’s outbreak against believers.⁷⁷ The persecution was still sporadic and limited, but it had a legal dimension as well. Christians would be under suspicion since their participation in voluntary associations, especially where there was worship of the gods, would be altered upon conversion. In addition, Christians would not participate in the imperial cult, which was popular in Asia Minor.⁷⁸ Horrell and T. Williams argue 1 Peter reflects both official and unofficial persecution. If earlier scholarship emphasized the former, more recent scholarship has limited itself to the latter, but there are good reasons to think it could be both. Citizens may have reported Christians to the government, and as a consequence some believers may have been executed.⁷⁹

We have seen that Horrell’s argument depends in part on the date (AD 75–95) set for the letter. Still, such a situation, as T. Williams

notes, could have been the case earlier (say the 60s), with the result that the persecution could have been both unofficial and official. This is not to say that there was an official imperial policy, and persecution was still sporadic and occasional. On the other hand, Peter does not mention anyone being put to death, and although it is possible some were sacrificing their lives, it seems as if Peter would mention such if it were occurring.⁸⁰ The line between discrimination and mistreatment and physical punishment is thin, and hence the former could easily lead to the latter.

T. Williams says that identification as a Christian could signify rejection of the emperor, and thus the acceptance of the name “Christian” could imply rebellion against imperial authority.⁸¹ The suffering of believers included verbal abuse (2:12, 15; 3:9, 16; 4:4, 14), physical abuse (2:18), and court settings where Christians would be punished as evildoers (cf. 2:12, 14).⁸² We see in 3:14–16 that Christians must be prepared to defend themselves in every circumstance, which would include situations where they were brought before legal authorities. Similarly, in 4:12–19 the charge of being a Christian probably included legal settings.

In my reading, the letter was probably written before the Neronian persecution in Rome. Still, believers in the churches addressed faced difficult times. The Christian faith would be frowned upon because “it was an inferior upstart lacking an authentic, ancient heritage. . . . Furthermore, Christianity’s claim to sole possession of the truth violated an important tenet of Roman society, what Goppelt calls ‘conforming tolerance, i.e., reciprocal acceptance.’”⁸³ In other words, Christians were viewed as alarming because of their exclusivism. As Feldmeier says, Christians “joined together in their particular religion at the cost of the community, an exclusivity that was not understandable for the ancients.”⁸⁴ Apparently matters have not changed much since the first century. Indeed, Christians were under suspicion because they engaged in proselytism, which Goodman says was “a shocking novelty in the ancient world.”⁸⁵ Christians did not participate in the same social activities (such as in the trade guilds),

and their view of food offered to idols made sharing meals “with pagans difficult.”⁸⁶

The setting of 1 Peter does not exclude the time period within Peter’s lifetime. The letter was written during Nero’s reign, when opposition to the Christian movement was increasing. Discrimination and mistreatment against Christians were growing, and T. Williams may be correct that the Christian faith was “effectively illegal,” at least after the Neronic persecution. Still, 1 Peter was probably written before the Neronic persecution, and we have no firm evidence in the letter that believers were being put to death. Believers were probably abused physically in some situations and discriminated against socially, and the persecution probably included some legal challenges that may have led to beatings or other forms of persecution in society.

Were the readers Jews or Gentiles? Peter assumes the readers know the OT since he quotes from it or alludes to it often (e.g., 1:16, 24–25; 2:3, 6–10, 22; 3:10–12; 4:18; 5:5). A number of characters from the OT are named: prophets (1:10–12), Sarah and Abraham (3:6), and Noah (3:20). Some in the history of scholarship, noting this emphasis on the OT, conclude that the readers were Jewish.⁸⁷ B. Witherington maintains that the readers are Jewish, supporting this with the reference to *paroikoi* (resident aliens), the Jewish nature of the letter, and the claim that the readers dwell “among the Gentiles” (1 Pet 2:12). In addition, the Jewish population in Asia Minor was large.⁸⁸ By way of contrast, most scholars agree that the readers were mainly Gentiles.⁸⁹ The evidence in support of this conclusion is compelling.⁹⁰ Saying that the readers lived in “ignorance” (*agnoia*) suggests an idolatrous and pagan past (1:14).⁹¹ Even more telling is the claim that they had been “redeemed from your empty way of life inherited from your fathers” (1:18).⁹² Peter would probably not say that Jewish forefathers lived vainly since the Jews were God’s elect people (cf. also 2:10, 25). The Gentile origin of the readers seems clear from 4:3–4:

For there has already been enough time spent in doing what the Gentiles choose to do: carrying on in unrestrained behavior, evil desires, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and lawless idolatry. They are surprised that you don't join them in the same flood of wild living—and they slander you.

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.⁹³

The citations and allusions to the OT and the mention of certain characters from the OT do not necessarily point to Jewish readers. We know from other letters (e.g., Romans and 1 Corinthians) that allusions and citations from the OT are included in letters written to Gentiles. Apparently when Gentiles were evangelized, they received significant instruction in the OT. This is not to say that the churches in northern Asia Minor were exclusively Gentile, for presumably some Jews were members of the churches. On the whole, however, the churches were Gentile, and texts like 1:18 and 4:3–4 indicate that their members were mainly so.

Witherington's arguments in defense of a Jewish readership fail to convince. Identifying the readers as resident aliens is not convincing. The issue is whether Peter applies what the OT says about Israel to his readers. For instance, we see elsewhere (cf. 1 Cor 5:1) that Gentile readers are no longer considered to be Gentiles.⁹⁴ T. Williams goes on to show that 1 Pet 1:18 does not square with Witherington's reading since the negative things said about the past life of the converts is never found elsewhere in describing Jewish converts.⁹⁵ In addition, Williams rightly observes that it is unlikely that the Jews who converted had a propensity (as Witherington says) to engage in Gentile-like activities before conversion.⁹⁶

Strikingly, the readers are identified as “exiles” (1:1, *parepidēmoi*), “strangers and exiles” (2:11, *paroikous kai parepidemous*), and are said to be in “exile” (1:17 NRSV, *paroikia*).⁹⁷ In his sociological and groundbreaking study of 1 Peter, Elliott argues that the terms refer to the political status of the readers before they became believers. The

two terms refer to permanent strangers and to those who are living temporarily in the regions addressed in the letter.⁹⁸ Hence, for Elliott the readers were not aliens *by virtue of their faith*. They were literally resident aliens and visiting strangers in regions addressed by Peter and were mainly from rural areas.⁹⁹ Despite the creativity of the hypothesis, it is unconvincing.¹⁰⁰ The pair of terms in 1 Pet 2:11 harkens back to Gen 23:4 and Ps 38:13, showing that the church of Jesus Christ occupies the status of God's people throughout history.¹⁰¹ In a thorough study of the evidence, Chin demonstrates that the terms cannot be distinguished so sharply from one another, based on his study of the LXX, Philo, the NT, and the early fathers.¹⁰² Hence, both words are used in a spiritual sense and should not be understood literally, and together they form a hendiadys.¹⁰³ Pryor rightly observes, "It is just not imaginable that a group of churches in Asia Minor at this time would be made up of one social class, 'resident aliens.'"¹⁰⁴ Some have observed that 1 Pet 2:11 uses "as" (*hōs*) to introduce the words "aliens and exiles," indicating a comparison instead of a literal description of the status of the readers in society, but T. Williams rightly notes that "as" in itself does not resolve the issue.¹⁰⁵ In any case, the readers are identified as aliens and exiles for theological reasons,¹⁰⁶ although in saying this I am not denying the sociological character of their experience as exiles.

Bechtler notes that the term "dispersed" (*diaspora*) in 1 Pet 1:1 derives from a Jewish rather than a Hellenistic background.¹⁰⁷ The word literally designates the *Jewish* dispersion, but Peter metaphorically applies it to Gentiles. The metaphorical use of the term calls into question Elliott's view that Peter uses technical terminology from the Hellenistic domain in identifying the readers as "strangers" and "aliens." The believers in 1 Peter are the new people of God, but as God's people they are disenfranchised, discriminated against, and mistreated. Their home is not earth but heaven.¹⁰⁸ Williams points out that the troubles of the readers are never traced to their legal

status before they were converted. Indeed, all their problems come after their conversion, which calls into question that they were “legally disenfranchised . . . prior to their entrance into the Christian community.”¹⁰⁹ In addition, Elliott’s claim that all rural inhabitants were poor and that noncitizens were excluded from land ownership is questionable.¹¹⁰

Jobs proposes a variant of Elliott’s view, claiming that the recipients of the letter were Jews converted under Peter’s preaching in Rome in the 40s, exiled from Rome under the expulsion ordered by Claudius, migrated to the places addressed in 1 Peter, and colonized them.¹¹¹ Jobs’s theory is no more convincing than Elliott’s.¹¹² It requires Peter preaching in Rome in the 40s, which is speculative and improbable. Nor is there evidence that Jews expelled from Rome settled in Asia Minor at this time, and the evidence for new colonies in the time of Claudius is minimal. The readers were probably mainly from the urban areas since the Greek of 1 Peter would be more accessible to them than to those in rural areas. Indeed, the evidence we have suggests that the Christian faith first took root in cities.¹¹³ Furthermore, Jobs confuses expulsion and colonization, for those who were expelled were not in the same category as those sent out by Rome to colonize.¹¹⁴ The reference to house slaves in 1 Pet 2:18 also suggests that the readers were mainly urban,¹¹⁵ and Horrell says that the readers represented a cross section of society with some who were probably wealthy, some at the middle income level, and most living at subsistence level.¹¹⁶

The purpose of the letter is also debated intensely, and it has especially focused on the disagreement between Balch and Elliott. Balch emphasizes the apologetic nature of the letter, contending that Peter counseled believers to conform to the social roles expected in society so that unbelievers would not criticize their behavior.¹¹⁷ Elliott, on the other hand, suggests that the letter was not intended to answer the objections of unbelievers but to promote social cohesion within the Christian church.¹¹⁸ Believers are to live as exiles and

hence should not conduct their lives to please other human beings but to please God. Pryor advances still a third interpretation, arguing that the exhortations are given because they represent God's will,¹¹⁹ but this latter view, although true, doesn't answer the specific question before us.

Bechtler raises some objections to Balch's view: the language expressing tensions between believers and their opponents is too general to indicate a focus on the role of slaves and women; the words to slaves function paradigmatically for all believers; the "stereotyped" words to wives suggest they are not framed to counter specific criticisms; and such a theory gives too much prominence to the household code in 1 Peter, which is confined to only a few verses.¹²⁰ Horrell and T. Williams maintain that previous studies have not solved the problem.¹²¹ They suggest a postcolonial reading of 1 Peter where there is polite and cautious resistance to imperial authority. The letter does not paint the same negative picture of the empire that we find in Revelation. On the other hand, there are clues in the letter of cautious resistance. The empire is designated as Babylon (5:13), which signifies opposition to the people of God. The emperor is a human creature and not divine (2:13), and he is to be honored but not worshiped (2:17). The readers are exiles and strangers and part of the dispersion (1:1; 2:11), and thus their ultimate loyalty is not to Rome. Furthermore, the ultimate loyalty of wives is to Christ, not to their husbands (3:1–6), which runs contrary to the pattern in the Greco-Roman world. When we examine the evidence in 1 Peter, it seems that Horrell and T. Williams have shown that Elliott's thesis is closer to the state of affairs than Balch. Still, Balch's view has some merit since the good works of believers (including slaves and wives) have a missional and apologetic function.

4 CHARACTER OF THE LETTER

The structure of 1 Peter has been the subject of discussion from the earliest history of the church. Martin usefully surveys the different structures proposed from Pseudo-Euthalius up until the contemporary

period.¹²² The diversity of outlines illustrates that the task of exegesis is not merely a science but also an art. We will note here contributions that have been particularly important in the history of exegesis. Dryden rightly says that 1 Peter is a paraenetic letter in which the readers are admonished to grow in moral excellence, maturity, and Christian character.¹²³

Some scholars see hymnic or creedal material in the letter (e.g., 1:3–12, 18–21; 2:21–25; 3:18–22). Boismard maintains that there are four baptismal hymns in 1 Peter.¹²⁴ Possibly Peter draws upon preformed material, but the criteria to establish such are anything but certain in the texts so identified.¹²⁵ Evidence that such hymns are “baptismal” is even more difficult to defend. In any case, the texts are integrated into the fabric of the letter as a whole, and hence whether we have traditional material does not affect their interpretation unless we speculatively identify the setting of the hymns. The exegete’s responsibility is to explain how they fit into the context and argument of 1 Peter. If the texts are creedal, this would play a role in establishing the history of early Christianity.

Selwyn defends the notion that Peter uses common catechetical traditions.¹²⁶ He demonstrates that Peter shares common themes and even common wording with both OT texts and other epistles, especially the Pauline Epistles. We can agree with Lohse, however, that the conclusions presented cannot be proven since “there will always be weighty objections that must be raised against such an attempt at reconstruction, because in doing this one too easily ventures into the realm of hypotheses that cannot be proven.”¹²⁷ As Bechtler says, “No fixed schema of catechetical instruction can be discerned within or even behind the text.”¹²⁸ Peter’s letter demonstrates that early Christians shared common traditions, but it exceeds the evidence to postulate some kind of shared catechetical tradition.

A number of scholars have understood 1 Peter as a baptismal document.¹²⁹ Preisker even sees a baptismal service in progress when the letter was written, placing the baptism between 1:21 and 1:22.

The theory is improbable, and we lack any convincing rationale why Peter would send the order of a baptismal service to churches in Asia Minor.¹³⁰ Cross identifies the letter as a baptismal liturgy for an Easter baptismal service, but this theory suffers from lack of evidence and is speculative.¹³¹ The claim that baptism is fundamental in 1 Peter should be rejected since the word only occurs in 1 Pet 3:21.¹³² Scholars who read 1 Peter looking for baptism inevitably find it everywhere, but a more sober and critical reading shows the weakness of the hypothesis.¹³³ These theories were once popular in critical circles, but now most scholars reject them.¹³⁴ The rejection of such theories, which were once embraced by many, reminds us that views lacking persuasion can seem compelling for a period of time.

Some scholars also have suggested that 1 Peter consists of two different letters, the first letter consisting of 1:3–4:11 and the second consisting of 4:12–5:14.¹³⁵ Those who defend a partition theory argue that the sufferings in 4:12 are present, while in 3:17 suffering is only hypothetical. Similarly, it is argued that joy is in the present time in 1:6, 8, whereas joy is confined to the future in 4:12–13. The “amen” in 4:11 signals the end of the first letter, as does the doxology in that verse. The claim to write a “short letter” (5:12 NRSV) is only credible if 4:12–5:14 constitutes a separate letter.¹³⁶ This theory, although once popular, seems to be losing proponents as scholars become increasingly convinced of the letter’s unity.¹³⁷ Convincing replies can be made to those who argue for partition.¹³⁸ First, it is clear from 1:6–7 that the sufferings of believers are not merely potential but actual in the first section of the letter (1:3–4:11). Hence, the reputed difference between 1:3–4:11 and 4:12–5:14 falls to the ground.¹³⁹ Second, it is a mistake to claim that joy is only present in 1:6–8 and is exclusively future in 4:12–13. In 4:12–13 Peter called readers to “present” joy in light of their future joy. The imperative “rejoice” (*chairete*) is present tense. In fact, the theme of both 1:6–8 and 4:12–13 is remarkably similar. The reason believers are to rejoice in the present is because of the eschatological joy promised. Third, the

presence of a doxology and “amen” in 4:11 does not necessarily signal the end of a letter. We see a similar formula in Rom 11:36, where a section of a letter concludes, but the letter itself does not end. Other examples also could be adduced (e.g., Gal 1:5; Eph 3:21). What the doxology and the “amen” signal is that a section of the letter concludes at 4:11. Fourth, it is conventional at the end of letters to call them brief (cf. Heb 13:22), and hence such a statement says nothing about the length of the letter. In conclusion, there is no reason to doubt the unity of the letter, and it will be interpreted as a unity in this commentary.

Schutter argues that the body opening of the letter reflects “homiletic midrash” rooted in a Jewish hermeneutic.¹⁴⁰ He sees the closest parallels in Jewish apocalyptic sectarian groups who employ a *pesher* hermeneutic.¹⁴¹ Schutter carefully observes the use of link words, *inclusio*, significant themes, and transitional devices. Schutter’s analysis is helpful at many points, but 1 Peter does not engage in a sustained explanation or commentary on OT texts, and the words *midrash* and *pesher* are slippery and used in various ways by different scholars; thus, 1 Peter should not be described as midrashic.¹⁴²

Martin argues that the letter fits the epistolary form and should be analyzed as a paraenetic letter, arguing that the controlling metaphor in the letter is the diaspora.¹⁴³ The prescript is confined to 1:1–2. The blessing section—1:3–12—follows next. Martin locates the body opening at 1:13, arguing that the body middle includes 1:14–5:11. He subdivides the body middle into three discrete sections: (1) the elect household of God (1:14–2:10), (2) aliens in the world (2:11–3:12), and (3) sufferers of the dispersion (3:13–5:11). The body of the letter closes in 5:12 and concludes with a greeting (5:13–14a) and a farewell (5:14b). Martin’s thesis that 1 Peter is a paraenetic letter is helpful and on target, but the notion that the diaspora is the controlling metaphor for the letter is not as convincing.¹⁴⁴ Jobes rightly says that “there is no reason to believe that the Diaspora letter formed a distinct, indigenous literary genre.”¹⁴⁵

Campbell argues that the letter should be understood as a species of Greek rhetoric.¹⁴⁶ He divides the letter into the *exordium* (1:3–12) and the concluding *peroratio* (4:12–5:14). The intervening sections (1:13–4:11) contain several rhetorical schemas, including *propositio*, *ratio*, *confirmatio*, *exornatio*, and *complexio*. It is doubtful that 1 Peter is patterned after Greco-Roman rhetoric. The *peroratio* in Campbell's schema is inordinately long, and he does not convincingly demonstrate that the categories assigned actually fit 1 Peter.¹⁴⁷ Moreover, there are serious questions about whether any NT letters practice Greco-Roman rhetoric.¹⁴⁸ It is best, then, to understand 1 Peter as a paraenetic letter written to encourage and strengthen suffering believers. They are called upon to conduct themselves in a godly way in order to bring glory to God and to demonstrate to the world that its opposition is groundless.

5 PURPOSE

The purpose of the letter is to encourage believers to hold fast and to hold on while they endure suffering and distress in the present evil age.¹⁴⁹ Achtemeier says that the letter is intended “to strengthen the readers in the ‘now’ of their suffering and persecution by assuring them that the future of glory will transform their present condition as surely as their present situation transformed them from their past.”¹⁵⁰ They are encouraged to persevere, knowing that a great reward will be theirs on the day of salvation.¹⁵¹ Such perseverance is exhibited by living a holy life, as good citizens, model slaves, gentle wives, and understanding husbands. Believers will thus indicate that they are placing their hope in God rather than in the joys and comforts of this world. Another way of describing 1 Peter is to say that those who hope and trust in God and in his future reward will have the strength to endure whatever comes their way. The new life of believers is based on the cross of Christ, who bore their sins (2:24; 3:18). The Christ who suffered is also the Christ who is now exalted (1 Pet 3:19–22). Those who persecute the people of God will be judged on the last day (4:1–6). Since the end is coming soon, believers

should imitate Jesus Christ and follow his example of suffering because all those who suffer will experience a great reward.

Those who have had their sins forgiven by means of the cross and resurrection of Christ, those who have been begotten for “a living hope” (1:3), those who are redeemed (1:18) and forgiven by Christ’s death (2:21, 24; 3:18) are to set their hope on Christ and their eschatological inheritance. The message of Peter can be summarized as a call to stand in grace (5:12). Their new life flows from the grace received when God called them to himself (2:9; 5:10) as his people.

Peter’s readers are the people of God. They had become part of restored Israel, the Lord’s new temple, by believing in Jesus Christ and thus were God’s holy nation and special people (2:9–10). They are exiles and strangers during their earthly journey. The encouragement to live as exiles and set their hope on God is also matched by the threat that they will be judged if they turn away from the gospel. The promise and threat are corollaries in the letter, for the threat of final judgment also spurs the readers to set their hope entirely on the promise of final salvation.

6 STRUCTURE

The outline proposed below is not novel.¹⁵² Peter has the conventional opening (1:1–2) and then begins the next major section (1:3–2:10) with a blessing (1:3).¹⁵³ The two succeeding sections are marked by “dear friends” (*agapētoi*, 2:11; 4:12), and as noted earlier the segment from 2:11–4:11 concludes with a doxology and “amen.”¹⁵⁴ The fourth section of the letter also ends with a doxology and “amen” (5:11) before the closing. In the commentary the flow of argument of the text will be explained before analyzing individual verses, and hence there is no need to extend the discussion of structure here.¹⁵⁵

Kendall maintains that all the imperatives in the letter (1:13–5:11) flow from the introduction in 1:3–12.¹⁵⁶ He then divides the text into the following sections: (1) 1:13–2:10 explains generally what it means to be the people of God; and here we have three subdivisions, focusing

on the need for holiness (1:14–21), love (1:22–2:3), and election in Christ (2:4–10). (2) He argues that the next major section (2:11–4:11) is more specific than the first section, in that the author now explains what holiness, love, and election look like in everyday life. (3) Finally, 4:12–5:11 functions as a “climactic summary” of the letter’s contents, in which the author addresses the relationship with hostile unbelievers (4:12–19), community relationships (5:1–7), and God’s purpose for believers in their conflict (5:8–11). He summarizes the message of 1 Peter as “a movement from present suffering to future glory and a fellowship of love.”¹⁵⁷

Talbert, on the other hand, thinks the letter falls into two main sections: 1:13–2:10 and 2:11–5:11.¹⁵⁸ He sees a pattern in the letter in which the first section explains the “ground of Christian existence (conversion spoken of in multiple metaphors like new birth, ransoming, tasting, election) and its ramifications, while 2:11–5:11 treats the norms of Christian behavior together with their warrants.”¹⁵⁹ In the second major section of the letter, Peter sometimes addresses all Christians, but he also addresses specific groups. Talbert sees a pattern:

A 2:11–17

B 2:18–3:7

A’ 3:8–4:6

B’ 5:1–5b

A’ 5:5b–11

Talbert argues that the pattern found here indicates that no break should be posited between 4:11 and 4:12. The words in 5:12 summarize the entire epistle, indicating that the entire letter is composed of declarations and exhortations. Talbert argues that declaration refers to the ground and warrants of Christian existence, while exhortation refers to the behavior Christians should exhibit. Talbert distinguishes between grounds and warrants, seeing the former as the ultimate reason for godly living (such as new birth, conversion)

and the latter as providing specific reasons for the paraenesis (e.g., the Christological warrant for submitting as slaves to unjust masters). Talbert believes the author wanted to ensure both social cohesion and social adaptation and hence warned against adopting a false either/or on this matter. Without the first, Christians would lose their distinctiveness, but without the second they would have no avenue for evangelism. Talbert's chiasm is scarcely clear and quite subjective, but he helpfully distinguishes between grounds and exhortations. My own outline of 1 Peter follows.

OUTLINE OF 1 PETER

- 1 Opening (1:1–2)
- 2 Called to Salvation as Exiles (1:3–2:10)
 - 2.1 Praise for Salvation (1:3–12)
 - 2.2 The Future Inheritance as an Incentive to Holiness (1:13–21)
 - 2.3 Living as the New People of God (1:22–2:10)
- 3 Living as Exiles to Bring Glory to God in a Hostile World (2:11–4:11)
 - 3.1 The Christian Life as a Battle and Witness (2:11–12)
 - 3.2 Testifying to the Gospel in the Social Order (2:13–3:12)
 - 3.3 Responding in a Godly Way to Suffering (3:13–4:11)
- 4 Persevering as Exiles in Suffering (4:12–5:11)
 - 4.1 Suffer Joyfully in Accord with God's Will (4:12–19)
 - 4.2 Exhortations to Elders and the Community (5:1–11)
- 5 Concluding Words (5:12–14)

COMMENTARY

SECTION OUTLINE

1 Opening (1:1–2)

1 OPENING (1:1–2)

¹ *Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ:*

To those chosen, living as exiles dispersed abroad in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, chosen ² according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient and to be sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ.

May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

The opening greeting in 1 Peter is hardly a customary hello. It is theologically rich and densely packed with themes. The author, Peter, introduces himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ. He does not mean by this that he is merely a messenger of Christ. The word “apostle” is used in the technical sense. Jesus Christ designated Peter as an authoritative messenger and interpreter of the gospel. The letter does not represent good advice but a binding apostolic word for the church. It is written to God’s sojourning people, who are exiles in this world. Because they are God’s elect and chosen people, they are sojourners. Peter’s letter is an encyclical, addressed to churches in areas in Asia Minor, all contained in modern-day Turkey. The order in which the provinces are listed may reflect the order in which a courier or couriers would deliver the letter. The chosen exiles are foreknown by God the Father. Foreknowledge does not only mean God foresaw that they would be his elect strangers. Foreknowledge should be understood in covenantal terms, and the foreknown are those upon whom God has bestowed his covenant favor and affection. As elect

sojourners, believers are also set apart or sanctified by the Spirit. Their entrance into the sphere of the holy, that is, their conversion, is the result of the Spirit's work. Finally, their conversion means that they have obeyed God and been cleansed by Christ's blood—forgiven of their sins. We note here the Trinitarian work of the Father, Spirit, and Son, although Peter does not tease out the implications of the work of the Father, Son, and Spirit; that work was left to the church in subsequent years and centuries. The opening closes with the prayer that grace and peace be multiplied in the believers' lives.

1:1 The letter begins with Peter identifying himself as the author, and he addressed his readers as chosen exiles, listing the places to which the letter was sent. The name "Peter" was given to Simon by Jesus Christ early in his ministry (John 1:42; cf. Matt 10:2; 16:18; Mark 3:16; Luke 6:14). Peter designates himself as an apostle. The term "apostle" may simply mean "messenger," but here the idea is that Peter is one of the twelve apostles specially chosen by Jesus himself for that office (Mark 3:13–19 par.). The special function and authority of the Twelve is also communicated by the selection of Matthias in Acts 1:15–26. Grudem notes that "apostle" is the only office where the words "of Jesus Christ" are added, likely indicating the unique authority of the apostolate.¹⁶⁰ What Peter writes, then, is not merely his personal opinion. As an apostle he is commissioned by Christ and writes God's words to the churches (cf. 1 Cor 2:13; 14:37; Gal 1:8–9; 1 Thess 2:13; 4:8, 15; 2 Thess 3:6, 14; 2 Pet 3:2, 16).

The letter is addressed to the "chosen" (*eklektois*), which may modify the term "exiles" (*parepidēmois*) so that we can translate "chosen exiles" or "chosen sojourners."¹⁶¹ Perhaps it is better to see the term as appositional so that the reference is to the elect who are also exiles.¹⁶² In any case, to speak of his readers as chosen means that they have been elected by God, and this is remarkable since the readers are primarily Gentiles (see introduction). The OT often designates Israel as God's chosen and elect people (Deut 4:37; 7:6–8; 10:15; 14:2; Ps 106:5; Isa 14:1; 41:8–9; 43:20; 45:4; 51:2; 65:9, 15, 23; cf. also Wis 4:15; Sir 46:1). Peter indicates at the outset, therefore, that the church of Jesus Christ is the restored Israel of God, his chosen

people.¹⁶³ He forecasts here the theme of 1 Pet 2:9, where the church is called “a chosen race.”¹⁶⁴

The word “exiles” (*parepidēmois*) introduces a crucial idea in the letter, namely, that God’s people are sojourners and temporary residents on earth. Again, a key theme of the letter is anticipated (cf. 2:11). The word used for exiles here denotes people residing outside of their homeland, typically for a brief period of time.¹⁶⁵ The church is God’s suffering people, having no place of rest in this world. The term *parepidēmos* is used in the NT only here and in 1 Pet 2:11 and Heb 11:13. In the Septuagint it is found in Gen 23:4 and Ps 38:13. In the OT, exile was Israel’s punishment for their sin, when they were evicted from their land by Assyria (722 BC) and Babylon (586 BC). Any notion that Peter’s readers are being *punished* as exiles is foreign to 1 Peter. Elliott, as we noted in the introduction, understands the exile in terms of the political status of the readers. By doing so he misses the theological point of Peter from the outset. Believers are exiles but not because they are displaced from their homeland. Many people in the Greco-Roman world no longer lived in their place of origin.¹⁶⁶ Believers are exiles because they suffer for their faith in a world that finds their faith off-putting and strange.

Goppelt rightly observes that God’s election is what accounts for their being exiles.¹⁶⁷ This interpretation is borne out with the word “chosen” standing in apposition with “exiles.” They are not exiles literally; they are sojourners because they are elected by God, because their citizenship is in heaven rather than on earth.¹⁶⁸ Even though the sociological interpretation advanced by Elliott fails to persuade, he is correct in detecting a sociological implication from the elect status of the readers. Those who understand themselves as God’s elect have the ammunition to resist the norms and culture of the society they inhabit.¹⁶⁹ After all, as J. Green says, we “do not embrace rejection easily. We want to belong. We want to be chosen. We want status. We do not want to be strangers, aliens, people for whom ‘home’ is not and can never really be ‘home.’”¹⁷⁰ Divine election reminds the

readers that they have status, not because they are so worthy or noble but because God has bestowed his grace upon them.¹⁷¹ Hence, they have the energy to counter accepted cultural norms and to live in accord with God's purpose.¹⁷²

The location of the readers is communicated in the words "scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" (NASB). The term "dispersed" (*diasporas*) could be translated literally as "of the Dispersion" (NRSV). The term "dispersion" was often used of Jews who lived outside Palestine, scattered from their homeland because of their sin (Deut 28:25; 30:4; Neh 1:9; Ps 147:2; Isa 49:6; Jer 15:7; 41:17; cf. also Jdt 5:19; 2 Mac 1:27; Pss Sol 8:28; 9:2), although it does not follow that the dispersed in NT times were in sin.¹⁷³ In the NT the word is used in only two other places, in both cases probably referring to Jews who were outside the land (John 7:35; Jas 1:1). In this instance, however, the word is used metaphorically. Peter was not writing to Jews but primarily to Gentiles, and hence he was hardly suggesting that they were the dispersed of Israel in the literal sense. Peter signals that the readers are the people of God, participating with believing Jews in the promises given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Dispersion belongs with the word "exiles" in that it communicates again that believers are distinct from the world.¹⁷⁴ The dispersion of the readers has temporal significance as well, signifying that although believers are God's elect, they are living in the interval before the consummation of God's promises, awaiting their final inheritance.

Peter addresses believers from various areas in Asia Minor, in regions of modern-day Turkey. The area covered extends about 300,000 square miles, which is nearly all of Turkey.¹⁷⁵ We cannot be certain whether Peter intended to refer to Roman provinces or generally to certain regions.¹⁷⁶ When the letter was written, Bithynia and Pontus were a single province.¹⁷⁷ So perhaps it is best to see a general reference to the areas included in the destination. Can we discern the reason for the order in which the areas are named? The

most surprising element is the separation of Pontus from Bithynia since they were next to each other and constituted one province. Further, if the messenger came from Rome, we would expect him to travel to Bithynia first since it is closer to Rome than Pontus.¹⁷⁸ Some think the bearer of the letter traveled roughly in a circle, delivering it to churches in each region successively.¹⁷⁹ Sylva suggests that the letter was delivered to Pontus first because the persecution was especially intense there,¹⁸⁰ but that theory lacks confirmation. Hemer says that by ending up in Bithynia the courier could sail off to another destination.¹⁸¹ Jobes says the problem with the proposals is that they don't match our knowledge of the roads in Asia Minor,¹⁸² and thus certainty on the reason for the order is unattainable. It is also possible that there was more than one carrier for the letter, and if this is the case the locations may not designate the order in which the letter was delivered.

1:2 The work of the triune God is featured in v. 2. The readers were chosen according to God's covenant foreknowledge, set apart by the Spirit at conversion, and at conversion they gave themselves entirely to God in obedience and were cleansed of their sins through the blood of Jesus Christ. They now belong to the covenant people of God; the OT promises were theirs! Peter prays that grace and peace will continue to be multiplied to them.

The phrase "according to the foreknowledge of God the Father" modifies the word "chosen" in v. 1. Some scholars maintain, on the contrary, that God's foreknowledge links up with all of v. 1.¹⁸³ It is unlikely, however, that every idea in v. 1 is modified by the prepositional phrases in v. 2, and it is more natural to see the phrase "according to the foreknowledge of God the Father" modifying the word "chosen."¹⁸⁴ The term "chosen" is a common one for Israel as God's people.

The term "foreknowledge" (*prognōsis*) could simply mean that God foresaw who would be his elect or chosen.¹⁸⁵ No one doubts, of course, that such an idea is included. The question is whether the term

means more than this, whether it also includes the idea that God ordains who would be elect. We should begin by observing the covenant dimensions of the word.¹⁸⁶ The word “know” in Hebrew refers to God’s covenant love bestowed upon his people (cf. Gen 18:19; Amos 3:2). The rich associations of that term continue in the NT. That foreordination also is involved is clear from Acts 2:23, where foreknowledge is paired with predestination (cf. also Jer 1:5).¹⁸⁷ Romans 11:2 drives us in the same direction. Paul queries whether God has “rejected his people whom he foreknew” (NRSV). The terms “rejected” (*apōsato*) and “foreknew” (*proegnō*) function as antonyms. We could rephrase the verse, “Has God rejected his people whom he chose?” The same notion informs Rom 8:29, where we see that God has foreknown those whom he predestined. God foreknew “people,” not objects or things, by setting his love upon them (cf. also 1 Cor 8:3; Gal 4:9).

Probably the best parallel is in 1 Pet 1:20, where Peter declares that Christ “was foreknown (*proegnōsmenou*) before the foundation of the world.” Peter is not merely saying that God foresaw when Christ would come, although that is part of his meaning. He is also saying that God foreordained when Christ would come.¹⁸⁸ Indeed, God had to plan when he would come since Christ was sent by God. Christ’s coming hardly depends on human choices. God’s election and foreknowledge are regularly linked with christology in the letter (1:20; 2:4–10), showing that the Son’s mission was due to the will of God the Father. When Peter says that believers are elect “according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,” the emphasis is on God’s sovereignty and initiative in salvation.¹⁸⁹ Believers are elect because God the Father has set his covenant affection upon them.¹⁹⁰ The words “according to” (*kata*) may designate “result” or “cause.”¹⁹¹ And thus it is unconvincing to say, as Witherington does, that God chooses based on his foreknowledge of what human beings would choose.¹⁹²

The second prepositional phrase, “through the sanctifying work of the Spirit” (*en hagiasmō pneumatōs*),¹⁹³ also modifies “chosen.” Not only does God the Father foreknow whom the elect will be, but the Spirit is the source of their sanctification.¹⁹⁴ The term “sanctification” often refers to the progressive growth of holiness in the lives of Christians (cf. 1 Thess 4:3). In this context, however, the focus is on conversion.¹⁹⁵ Peter explains how believers came to be part of God’s elect people. When believers are converted, they become God’s holy and set-apart people (e.g., 1 Cor 1:2). Michaels probably is correct, then, that this work of God accompanies the preaching of the gospel (1:12).¹⁹⁶ As the gospel is proclaimed, the Spirit sanctifies some by bringing them to faith—into the realm of the holy.

The most difficult phrase to interpret is the last one. We begin with the preposition *eis*, translated “to be” in the CSB. Some understand the phrase as causal. Believers are elect pilgrims because of the obedience of Jesus Christ and the sprinkling of his blood.¹⁹⁷ According to this view, “Jesus Christ” is a subjective genitive, that is, it refers to his obedience. Several deficiencies make this interpretation untenable.¹⁹⁸ First, it is unlikely that the obedience described is that of Jesus Christ. Peter reflects on God’s work in the lives of believers. They are foreknown, sanctified, and *obedient*.¹⁹⁹ Indeed, Peter anticipates the theme of the believer’s obedience, which plays an important role in the letter (1:14, 22). Second, the genitive Jesus Christ is more naturally understood as possessive after the word “blood.”²⁰⁰ Third, and even more decisive, the preposition *eis* occurs three times in the subsequent verses (vv. 3–5), and in every instance the preposition designates result.²⁰¹ In this case, however, the result also includes purpose since Peter speaks of the outworking of God’s saving plan. A causal reading of the preposition is unusual in any case, and it is more natural to understand it in terms of result/purpose. The NRSV suggests another interpretation: “to be obedient to Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled with his blood” (cf. also RSV). In this case Jesus Christ functions as the object of the noun “obedient” and as the

subject of “sprinkled with his blood.” This interpretation should be rejected as awkward and “a grammatical monstrosity.”²⁰² It is too confusing to imagine that Jesus Christ would be both an objective and subjective genitive in the same phrase.

Peter teaches that the foreknowing work of God and the sanctifying action of the Spirit result in human obedience and the sprinkling of Christ’s blood. Seeing a reference to human obedience and Christ’s atoning work, which separates the noun “obedience” and the phrase “sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ” from each other, is most satisfying. The first refers to human obedience; the second, to Christ’s work of cleansing and forgiveness. Grudem argues that obedience here refers to ongoing obedience in the Christian life, not the initial obedience of receiving the gospel.²⁰³ He thinks obedience never refers to conversion in 1 Peter and that no clear example of obedience referring to conversion can be found in the NT. Grudem rightly maintains that the term “obedience” may refer to ongoing progress in the Christian life (e.g., Rom 6:16; Phlm 21; 1 Pet 1:14) but is mistaken in saying that it never refers to conversion, and in fact, a reference to conversion is most likely in this verse.²⁰⁴ First, the most natural way to interpret 1 Pet 1:22 (“Since you have purified yourselves by your obedience to the truth”) is in reference to conversion.²⁰⁵ And Peter elsewhere connects obedience to conversion. Unbelievers “disobey the word” (2:8), and unbelieving husbands “disobey the word” (1 Pet. 3:1). Second, the “obedience of faith” (NRSV) in Rom 1:5 and 16:26 most naturally refers to conversion. Third, the “obedience from the Gentiles” in Rom 15:18 (NRSV) refers to Paul’s missionary work in bringing them to salvation. Fourth, in the context of Rom 10:14–17, the statement “not all have obeyed the good news” (Rom 10:16, NRSV; cf. Acts 6:7) clearly refers to conversion. Fifth, the parallel phrase on the sprinkling of Christ’s blood confirms that conversion is intended. Two different sides of conversion are contemplated—the believers’ obedience to the gospel and Christ’s cleansing and forgiveness. Conversion is not merely an intellectual acceptance of the gospel, nor is it faith with a blank slate. Conversion involves

obedience and submission to the gospel, what Paul calls the “obedience of faith” (Rom 1:5; 16:26).

The sprinkling of blood anticipates a significant theme in 1 Peter—the redemption won for believers by the suffering and death of Christ. What is the antecedent to the sprinkling of blood? In the OT the sprinkling of the blood is used for the cleansing of a leper (Lev 14:6–7), for the sprinkling of priests in ordination (Exod 29:21), and the sprinkling of the blood when the covenant with Moses was inaugurated (Exod 24:3–8). We can reject the sprinkling of blood in the ordination of priests immediately since the context suggests nothing about ordination. Grudem thinks the background is in the cleansing of lepers, arguing that it is an apt picture of the need of cleansing and forgiveness for the sins that disrupt fellowship with God after conversion.²⁰⁶ In addition, he thinks a reference to sprinkling that occurs at conversion is unpersuasive since this sprinkling comes *after* sanctification and obedience.²⁰⁷ Grudem’s view is possible but ultimately unpersuasive.²⁰⁸ His objection about the order of sanctification and obedience only stands if both of these terms refer to life *after* conversion, but both of these terms refer to conversion as well. Sanctification, obedience, and the sprinkling of blood are three different ways of describing the new life of believers in this context. Further, Exod 24:3–8 is the most probable background to the passage.²⁰⁹ The covenant is inaugurated with sacrifices in which blood is shed and sprinkled on the altar (Exod 24:5–6). The people pledge obedience to the Lord of the covenant (Exod 24:3, 7). The promise to obey matches the obedience Peter notes in the first part of the *eis* clause. Moses then sprinkled the people with the blood, stating, “This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you” (Exod 24:8). The blood of the covenant signifies the forgiveness and cleansing the people needed to stand in right relation with God. We see, then, that entrance into the covenant has two dimensions: the obedient response to the gospel and the sprinkling of blood. Similarly, God’s work of foreknowing and the Spirit’s work of sanctifying induct the readers into the new covenant.²¹⁰ Believers enter the covenant by

obeying the gospel and through the sprinkled blood of Christ, that is, his cleansing sacrifice. Some scholars see a reference to baptism in the sprinkling of blood, but the allusion is scarcely clear since nowhere else is baptism described as a bloody sprinkling.²¹¹

The opening of the letter concludes with a prayer wish. The wording is similar to the prayer wish in 2 Pet 1:1, although in the latter instance the prayer wish is expanded. The word “grace” (*charis*) is substituted for the typical Greek word “greetings” (*chairein*). Peter proclaims a message of grace, praying that this grace would be the portion for his readers. The prayer is not only for the dispensing of God’s grace but also for the bestowal of his peace. A prayer for peace was common in Jewish circles (2 Mac 1:1; 2 Bar 78:3). God’s peace is a result of his grace and signifies the holistic sense of well-being that belongs to those who are in right relation with God. Peter prays that both grace and peace would be multiplied in the lives of his readers, asking God to fill them with his grace and peace.

We should also note the reference to the Father, Spirit, and the Son. The Father foreknows, the Spirit sanctifies, and the Son cleanses. The idea is close to the traditional theological formulation of the Father as creator, the Son as redeemer, and the Spirit as sanctifier. Similar triadic formulas are found elsewhere in the NT (Matt 3:16–17; 28:19; 1 Cor 12:4–6; 2 Cor 13:14; Eph 4:6; 2 Thess 2:13–14; Jude 20–21; Rev 1:4–5). Peter, of course, does not articulate a full-fledged doctrine of the Trinity, but from verses such as this the doctrine was hammered out. The Father chooses and ordains, the Son comes to earth and secures redemption through the sacrifice of his blood, and the Spirit applies the redeeming work to the hearts of believers. Peter focuses here on the experience believers have of the triune God, for they come to know God through the electing work of the Father, the redeeming work of the Son, and the sanctifying work of the Spirit.

SECTION OUTLINE

- 2 Called to Salvation as Exiles (1:3–2:10)
 - 2.1 Praise for Salvation (1:3–12)
 - 2.1.1 A Promised Inheritance (1:3–5)
 - 2.1.2 Result: Joy in Suffering (1:6–9)
 - 2.1.3 The Privilege of Revelation (1:10–12)
 - 2.2 The Future Inheritance as an Incentive to Holiness (1:13–21)
 - 2.2.1 Setting One’s Hope on the Inheritance (1:13–16)
 - 2.2.2 A Call to Fear (1:17–21)
 - 2.3 Living as the New People of God (1:22–2:10)
 - 2.3.1 A Call to Love (1:22–25)
 - 2.3.2 Longing for the Pure Milk (2:1–3)
 - 2.3.3 The Living Stone and Living Stones (2:4–10)

2 CALLED TO SALVATION AS EXILES (1:3–2:10)

This first major section of the book is like a sandwich. Peter describes the blessings of believers in 1:3–12 and 2:4–10, and imperatives dot the center section (1:13–2:3). Believers are blessed because they are born again and have an imperishable inheritance, which sustains them even in the midst of their sufferings (1:3–12). Or to put it another way: they are the new temple, the new priesthood, the new people of God who offer spiritual sacrifices (2:4–10). As a result of these great blessings they are summoned to hope, holiness, love, and goodness (1:13–2:3).

2.1 Praise for Salvation (1:3–12)

The opening highlights God’s initiative and grace in the lives of believers, and vv. 3–12 continue that theme. In Greek one long and complex sentence comprises vv. 3–12. The main theme is introduced immediately in v. 3. God is to be blessed and praised for his saving work. It is an inestimable privilege and joy to be the object of God’s mercy.

We can also divide the text into three main movements: vv. 3–5, 6–9, 10–12. Interestingly, we see a focus on the work of the Father, Son, and the Spirit in these verses, continuing the trinitarian theme in vv. 1–

2. The Father grants new life and promises the final inheritance to believers (vv. 3–5). Believers love the Son and wait eagerly for his revelation on the last day (vv. 6–9). The Spirit revealed this great salvation to the prophets and now is the ultimate agent for the proclamation of the gospel (vv. 10–12). Verses 3–5 focus on the end-time inheritance or salvation that belongs to believers. They are to bless God because their future salvation is certain, and thus their lives should be marked by an undaunted hope. Second, the future inheritance gives them joy while they experience the difficulties and suffering of the present time (vv. 6–9). The trials they experience now are not meaningless but serve to refine and purify their faith; hence they will bring glory and praise to God when Jesus Christ reveals himself (vv. 6–7). Therefore, their lives are now characterized by joy and by love for Jesus Christ because they know that eschatological salvation lies ahead of them (vv. 8–9). Finally, they should praise God because they live in the age of the fulfillment of the OT promises regarding the coming of the Christ—his suffering and glory (vv. 10–12). The prophets anticipated and longed for his coming. The angels gaze from afar but have no firsthand experience of it. Peter’s readers, however, live in the day of fulfillment. The words of the prophets were written *for them!* God is in control of history, and the OT Scriptures point to the coming of Jesus Christ. Believers will praise God when they realize their privileged position in salvation history.²¹²

2.1.1 A Promised Inheritance (1:3–5)

³ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead* ⁴ *and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.* ⁵ *You are being guarded by God’s power through faith for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.*

1:3 Peter begins with the theme of the entire paragraph. God is to be blessed (*eulogētos*) and praised for the salvation he has given to believers.²¹³ Believers, since they are born again, have a great hope

by virtue of Christ's resurrection. Many NT letters begin with a thanksgiving, but a blessing formula is also found in 2 Cor 1:3 and Eph 1:3. Blessing God, not surprisingly, is rooted in the OT and is a pervasive feature of OT piety.²¹⁴ The blessing is not a prosaic introduction but begins the section with joy, a gladness that fills the rest of the passage. The blessing is directed to God, "even" (*kai*; CSB "and") the "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." The Father is the fount from which all goodness flows. We know from the Gospel of John that the Father commands and the Son obeys (John 5:19), the Father sends and the Son goes. We see the same theme in 1 John 4:9, 14 where the Father sends the Son to give life and as the world's Savior. And yet such a difference in role does not diminish the dignity of the Son, nor is there any notion that the Son is a creature or that he lacks any divine attribute of the Father (cf. John 1:1, 18; 20:28).

The reason God is to be praised is now explained—"he has given us new birth." The term *anagennēsas* emphasizes "rebegetting or begetting anew rather than being born anew," although the latter idea is also implied.²¹⁵ This is borne out in 1 Pet 1:23, where believers are said to be begotten (*anagegennēmenoi*) by the imperishable seed of God's word.²¹⁶ Begetting by "seed" directs our attention to the Father's role in producing children, with the means used being the word of God (1 Pet 1:23). The focus therefore is on God's initiative in producing new life. No one takes any credit for being born.²¹⁷ It is something that happens to us. The result of God's begetting is also included; believers are born anew (cf. John 3:3, 7) and enjoy new life.²¹⁸ The begetting again of believers is "because of his great mercy." The preposition translated "because" (*kata*) probably denotes the cause or reason for our new life.²¹⁹ Believers deserve judgment and wrath, but God is a God of mercy and grace, bestowing life upon those who are opposed to him (cf. Eph 2:4–5).

The goal or result of God's begetting is now explained with the first of three clauses beginning with the preposition *eis*.²²⁰ In v. 3 Peter mentions the living hope of believers, in v. 4 their inheritance, and in

v. 5 their salvation.²²¹ He seems to have a fondness for triads, for we have already noticed the threefold work of the Father, Spirit, and Son in v. 2. A “living hope” is one that is genuine and vital, in contrast to a hope that is empty and vain.²²² The focus, of course, is on the word “hope” itself.²²³ Those who are suffering persecution in Asia Minor are not dashed to the ground by their troubles. They look to the future with the sure confidence that inestimable blessing awaits them. Nor is their confidence baseless superstition. It is grounded in and secured by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Their hope, in other words, is the hope of resurrection, triumph over death; hence, whatever happens to them in this world is trivial compared to the blessing of the future resurrection. Some scholars link the resurrection to being begotten by the Father instead of to the living hope.²²⁴ This view is less likely for several reasons.²²⁵ First, the word order suggests that Christ’s resurrection should be linked to the living hope since the former immediately follows the latter. Second, Peter emphasizes that Jesus Christ was raised “from the dead.” If the stress were on new life, the words “from the dead” would not be added. Their addition suggests the focus is on the hope believers have after they die.²²⁶ Third, the word “living” connects the hope to the resurrection, and we see a similar theme in 1 Pet 1:21 where Christ is raised “so that your faith and hope are in God.”

1:4 The future hope of believers is now described more fully, as a sure “inheritance” (*klēronomia*). In the OT the inheritance was the land God promised to Israel (Num 32:19; Deut 2:12; 12:9; 25:19; 26:1; Josh 11:23; Ps 105:11; Acts 7:5). The word is especially common in Joshua for the apportionment of the land for each tribe or family.²²⁷ Peter understands the inheritance, however, no longer in terms of a land promised to Israel but in terms of the end-time hope that lies before believers.²²⁸ This hope is still physical, for we learn from 2 Peter that it will be realized in a new heaven and new earth (2 Pet 3:13; cf. Rev 21:1–22:5). Still, it transcends and leaves behind the land of Palestine. Paul’s view of the inheritance was similar to Peter’s,

for the inheritance is the eschatological hope of believers (Gal 3:18; 4:30; Eph 1:11, 14; 5:5; Col 1:12; 3:24). The author of Hebrews conveys a similar idea, saying that the patriarchs ultimately hoped for a heavenly country and city (Heb 11:13–16). We also see in the NT that the language of inheriting the kingdom is another way of saying that believers will receive eternal life (cf. Matt 19:29; 25:34; Mark 10:17; Luke 10:25; 18:18; 1 Cor 6:9–10; Gal 5:21). Grudem overreads the preposition “into” (*eis*) and suggests that believers may partially enter into the inheritance now.²²⁹ But Peter’s point is that they are currently sojourners and aliens, and as those who suffer now, their hope is directed to the future inheritance, for the time as dispersed ones is temporary. The inheritance is “imperishable” (*aphtharton*), and thus it can’t be corrupted. Elsewhere we are told that God is imperishable (Rom 1:23; 1 Tim 1:17) and that our resurrection bodies are incorruptible (1 Cor 15:22).²³⁰ The inheritance is also “undefiled” (*amianton*), which means that it will never lose its luster and beauty or become stained or filthy. The same word is used to denote Jesus’s sinlessness (Heb 7:26), the purity of marriage (Heb 13:4), and genuine religion (Jas 1:27). Finally, the inheritance is “unfading” (*amaranton*). It will last forever, just as the crown of reward that elders receive will never fade away (1 Pet 5:4). The verse concludes with the promise that the inheritance is “kept in heaven for you.” The passive of the word “kept” (*tetērēmenēn*) is a divine passive, referring to God as the one who reserves the inheritance for believers. Peter emphasizes in the strongest possible terms the beauty and certainty of the reward awaiting believers.

Marx complained that religion is the opiate of oppressed people. Was Peter making that mistake here by reminding those who are suffering of eternal life?²³¹ Not at all. We should remind ourselves that Peter was not exempt from suffering himself. He was not speaking as a rich and comfortable person to those experiencing difficulties. The promise of an eternal inheritance is abused if it is used to oppress the poor. And yet many who are suffering in this world find no relief and no justice. Marx offers nothing to them since his only paradise is a worldly one—a paradise that most never experience. The

fundamental issue is that Marx did not believe in a heavenly inheritance. Peter did believe in it, and it provides a great incentive for those suffering, reminding them that the vale of tears will not last long, that a great reward is laid up for those who are faithful. Furthermore, Peter reminds the readers of their future inheritance so that they will conduct their lives in a way that pleases God now; the inheritance isn't a call to forsake this world but to live as faithful disciples until the inheritance is realized.

1:5 The living hope of believers, according to v. 4, is their inheritance, and v. 4 emphasizes that the inheritance is imperishable, beautiful, and reserved for believers. Now in v. 5 Peter considers whether his readers will certainly receive the inheritance.²³² Before we consider that theme, we should note that Peter describes the inheritance in terms of “salvation” (*sōtēria*). Salvation can be defined as being rescued from God's judgment or wrath on the last day (1 Pet 4:17; cf. Rom 5:9; 1 Thess 5:9). In popular circles salvation is usually conceived of as a past or present possession, and both of these notions are found in the NT (cf. Eph 2:8–9; 1 Cor 1:18). In the majority of cases, however, salvation refers to the *future* deliverance believers will enjoy,²³³ and here Peter clearly conceives of salvation in future terms.²³⁴ Two pieces of evidence substantiate this judgment. First, in the context “salvation” is another way of describing the believer's inheritance, and the latter is certainly future. Second, the salvation is “ready to be revealed in the last time.” The verb “revealed” (*apokalyphthēnai*) is a divine passive, indicating that God will disclose this salvation on the final day. What is decisive, of course, is that Peter specifically informs his readers that the salvation will not be unveiled until the last day. In other words, it is a future event, and the full nature of the salvation to come is hidden from us now.²³⁵ When words for “revelation” are used with reference to believers in Christ in the letter, the reference is invariably to a future reality (see 1:7, 13; 4:13; 5:1).

Peter assures his readers that they will certainly receive this inheritance, that future salvation will be theirs. The reason for this

confidence is that they “are guarded by God’s power.” The word “guarded” (*phrouroumenous*) can also be translated as “protected.” It is used of putting garrisons in a city to protect it from foes (cf. Jdt 3:6; 1 Esd 4:56; Wis 17:16; 2 Cor 11:22; see also Phil 4:7). How does God protect believers?²³⁶ We know from the following verses that he does not exempt them from persecution or suffering. Believers may suffer agonizing pain, both physical and psychological, because of their faith. God preserves believers so that they will receive the final inheritance and experience the joy of eschatological salvation. Peter adds that believers are protected “through faith” (*dia pisteōs*). Obtaining the final inheritance does not bypass human beings, as if we are mere automatons in the process. Believers must exercise faith to receive final salvation. Faith here is “continuing trust or faithfulness.”²³⁷ Peter does not conceive of faith as a single isolated act; genuine faith persists until the day of redemption.²³⁸ But if receiving the inheritance is dependent upon human faith, is it possible that some will fall short and be destroyed rather than saved?

There is no final salvation apart from continuing faith, and thus faith *is a condition* for obtaining the eschatological inheritance.²³⁹ It is imperative to understand, however, that God’s protection cannot be kept in a separate compartment from our believing. We can get at the issue by asking, “How are we protected through God’s power?” All of 1 Peter clarifies that we are not exempted from suffering or death since the church experiences persecution. God’s power does not shield believers from trials and sufferings, but it does protect us from that which would cause us to fall away. What would prevent us from maintaining our allegiance to Christ until the end? Surely the answer is sin, and we know that sin stems from unbelief—from failing to hope in God during our earthly sojourn. God’s power, to be effective at all, must guard us from sin and unbelief. If his power plays no role in our faith, then it seems that his power accomplishes nothing in our making it to the end—since it is precisely unbelief and failure to hope in God that causes us to fall away from God. If God’s power does not protect us from unbelief, it is hard to see what it does. How is God

protecting us until the end if his guarding plays no role in our continuing faith? First Peter 1:5 contains a remarkable promise: God's power protects us because his power is the means by which our faith is sustained.²⁴⁰ E. Best rightly discerns that the ultimate reason for our preservation must be God's gift rather than our faith, since otherwise "the reference to God's power" is "unnecessary and provides no assurance to the believer since what he doubts is his own power to cling to God in trial."²⁴¹ We should not use this verse to deny that believers must maintain their faith until the end.²⁴² Its function is to encourage believers with the truth that God will preserve their faith through sufferings and the vicissitudes of life. Faith and hope are ultimately gifts of God, and he fortifies believers so that they persist in faith and hope until the day that they obtain the eschatological inheritance.

2.1.2 Result: Joy in Suffering (1:6–9)

⁶ *You rejoice in this, even though now for a short time, if necessary, you suffer grief in various trials* ⁷ *so that the proven character of your faith—more valuable than gold which, though perishable, is refined by fire—may result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.* ⁸ *Though you have not seen him, you love him; though not seeing him now, you believe in him, and you rejoice with inexpressible and glorious joy,* ⁹ *because you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.*

1:6 The main theme in vv. 3–5 is that believers should praise God because of the certainty of their eschatological hope. The thought shifts slightly in vv. 6–9. Now Peter focuses on the joy (vv. 6, 8) and love (v. 8) that fills the lives of believers, even though they are suffering. They are joyful because suffering is the pathway to a godliness that passes the test on the last day (v. 7), because suffering results in eschatological salvation (v. 9).

Verse 6 emphasizes the joy of believers in the midst of suffering. The words "in this" (*en hō*) are disputed since Peter does not specify for

the readers what “in this” harkens back to. The words “God” or “Christ” (v. 3) are too far removed to be likely candidates.²⁴³ “The last time” (*kairō eschatō*) fits better,²⁴⁴ but since the joy is a present experience (see below), the idea should not be restricted to the last time. The words “in this” can be translated “in which circumstances,”²⁴⁵ or “for that reason.”²⁴⁶ The phrase most likely reaches back to the entire content of vv. 3–5, focusing on the eschatological hope of believers.²⁴⁷ They rejoice now because of the inheritance that most certainly awaits them.

Some understand the word “rejoice” (*agalliaithe*) as a present tense with a future meaning.²⁴⁸ It is preferable, though, to retain the normal sense of the verb tense so that Peter refers to rejoicing now, not in the last day. This is the natural way to take the same verb in v. 8 as well. The strongest argument favoring this view is that the present tense verb “you love” (*agapate*) is clearly a present indicative and not a future.²⁴⁹

The CSB rightly understands the participle *lypēthentes* as concessive (“*even though . . . you suffer grief*”).²⁵⁰ Selwyn mistakenly identifies it as causal,²⁵¹ but this implies that suffering is intrinsically joyful instead of seeing that suffering is valuable for the benefits it brings. Suffering is still painful, or it would not be suffering. Believers rejoice despite suffering because they know it will not persist forever. It strikes “now” (*arti*) and “for a short time” (*oligon*), but it will be swallowed up by the eschaton.²⁵² Hence, when Peter says “a short time,” he is not promising that suffering on this earth will be brief (cf. 5:10).²⁵³ The difficulty is brief when compared to the impending inheritance, and in the meantime believers suffer from “various trials.”

Peter adds the interesting phrase “if necessary” (*ei deon*), which means that the sufferings believers experience are not the result of fate or impersonal forces of nature. They are the will of God for believers (cf. 1 Pet 4:19).²⁵⁴ The NT regularly sees sufferings as the road believers must travel to enter into God’s kingdom (cf. Acts 14:22;

Rom 5:3–5; Jas 1:2–4).²⁵⁵ We should not deduce from this that sufferings are somehow enjoyable or that a specific reason should be assigned to each suffering; nor should we minimize the evil actions of others in inflicting suffering (Acts 2:23). Peter assures his readers, however, that God is working out his plan even in their anguish.

1:7 Perseverance in suffering reveals the authenticity of faith and brings a great reward. Sufferings test the genuineness of faith, revealing whether faith is authentic. We have a hint here, which is expressed more clearly in the text from the Wisdom of Solomon below, that God in his providence and wisdom tests the faith of believers. If faith proves to be real, the believer will receive “praise, glory and honor” when Jesus Christ returns. The idea is similar to Wis 3:5–6: “Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good, because God tested them and found them worthy of himself; like gold in the furnace he tried them, and like a sacrificial burnt offering he accepted them” (NRSV). Also, “For gold is tested in the fire, and those found acceptable, in the furnace of humiliation” (Sir 2:5 RSV). Genuine faith leads to faithfulness. Those who truly believe will persist in their faith, continuing to trust in God when difficulties occur. Authentic faith is contrasted to and compared with gold. The words “more valuable than gold, which” is “perishable” are appositional to “the proven character of your faith” or “the genuineness of your faith” (NRSV; *to dokimion hymōn tēs pisteōs*).²⁵⁶ James in a similar way says that the “testing (*dokimion*) of your faith produces endurance” (Jas 1:3). Approved faith is more valuable than gold because the latter perishes, but faith is also compared to gold because like gold it is refined and proved through fire. Peter reminds believers again that the test may be intense and stringent. Life as exiles is anything but easy, and yet by God’s grace the lives of believers are filled with joy, not gloomy moaning.

The focus here is on the value of genuine faith in God’s sight on the day of judgment.²⁵⁷ The words “may result” or “may be found” (*heurethē*, NRSV) refer to the final judgment when God examines the life of each person (cf. 2 Cor 5:3; Phil 3:9; 2 Tim 1:18; 2 Pet 3:10, 14; Rev 14:5). “Praise, glory, and honor” are given on that day to the

person whose faith has been tested and approved by fire (cf. Rom 2:7, 10, 29; 1 Cor 4:5). The eschatological reward will be given to them because of the genuineness of their faith, which is proved by the sufferings they endure. God brings sufferings into the lives of believers to purify their faith and to demonstrate its genuineness. The eschatological reward reveals that believers have been transformed by God's grace, in that they find joy in God in the midst of their pain. Michaels correctly notes that the emphasis is on the reward believers receive; and yet praise, glory, and honor also, in a secondary sense, redound to God because he empowers believers to persevere (1:5).²⁵⁸ The reward will be given at the second coming, "at the revelation of Jesus Christ."²⁵⁹ Michaels rightly observes that the use of the term "revelation" demonstrates that Jesus is present with his people, but he is "invisible," and hence he must come and "be revealed" to them.²⁶⁰

1:8 Verse 7 concludes with the hope that animates believers—the revelation of Jesus Christ, his appearance at his second coming. Verse 8 features the love, faith, and joy of believers while they live as exiles. Everyone will see Christ in the future, and yet the readers of the letter had never seen him. The first phrase ("though you have not seen him") relates to the past, indicating that Peter's readers never laid their eyes on the historical Jesus.²⁶¹ Nonetheless, they "love him." The verb "love" (*agapate*) should be construed as an indicative rather than an imperative.²⁶² Peter is not exhorting the churches but commending them. Their sufferings have not made them morose and miserable. They are filled with love for Jesus Christ. He is precious and lovely to them.

The believers have never seen the Lord Jesus, nor do they see him now. Nevertheless, they believe in him.²⁶³ Believing is not based on seeing (cf. John 20:29).²⁶⁴ Seeing will become a reality at the revelation of Jesus Christ. In the meantime, the Christian life is marked by believing. We have an indication here that the "faith" in vv. 5, 7, and 9 should not be restricted to "faithfulness." Those who truly believe are also faithful, but faithfulness is invariably the result

of faith. The main thought in this clause emerges with the verb “rejoice” (*agalliasthe*) repeated from v. 6. Believers rejoice and exult in Jesus Christ, even though they do not see him now.²⁶⁵ “In faith and love the (yet) absent one is (already) present to them—and therefore their present is filled with joy.”²⁶⁶ The joy believers experience is a taste of heaven, an anticipation of the end, because it is “indescribable and glorious.”²⁶⁷ The word “glorious” (*dedoxamenē*) links back to “glory” (*doxan*) in v. 7, suggesting that eschatological glory is intended.²⁶⁸ There is probably also the suggestion that joy comes from God and is not self-generated.²⁶⁹

Peter’s main point is clear: believers who suffer are not dashed to the ground by their troubles. They love Jesus Christ and rejoice in him, even though they have never seen him and do not see him now. Their lives are characterized by a hope that fills the present with love and joy.

1:9 A reason is given for the love and joy of believers, namely, their hope of final salvation. The participle “receiving” (*komizomenoi*) in v. 9 could be understood as attendant circumstances so that the phrase is translated, “And you receive the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.”²⁷⁰ Alternatively, it could be translated as temporal, “when you receive the outcome of your faith, your final salvation.”²⁷¹ But the interpretation proposed by the CSB is most satisfying, understanding the participle as providing a reason, “because you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.”²⁷² Peter explains why believers are filled with love and joy for Jesus Christ (the two main verbs from v. 8). They have love and joy because of the prospect of future salvation. The idea that the participle is temporal should be rejected since then the verb “rejoice” in v. 8 would be future tense. But the present tense of the verb “rejoice” and the parallelism with the verb “love” in v. 8 indicate that “rejoice” describes the experience of believers now.²⁷³ Salvation, as we have seen in v. 5, is eschatological, consummated on the last day,²⁷⁴ but the joy is experienced now. The present participle (*komizomenoi*) does

not indicate that the salvation here is present. Indeed, the word “outcome” (*telos*) suggests that a future gift is in view.²⁷⁵ Perhaps we find here the “now” and “not yet” tension common in the NT. Believers now enjoy salvation and will experience it fully at the revelation of Jesus Christ,²⁷⁶ but the emphasis in context is on the future. Believers are full of love and joy even now because of the hope of salvation.

The word “souls” could be understood to refer to our immaterial substance. Most scholars argue that the term “souls” refers to the whole person. The reference is to “a person’s whole life or self-identity.”²⁷⁷ Feldmeier raises serious questions about the consensus that soul refers to the whole person and shows that the salvation of the soul may be indebted to Diaspora Judaism and Hellenistic thought, which focuses on the immaterial part of human beings.²⁷⁸ He especially notes Philonic parallels, maintaining that 1 Peter is conversant with Hellenistic Jewish traditions. Despite the strength of Feldmeier’s arguments, it seems that the term designates the whole person in the letter. For instance, suffering believers are to entrust their “souls,” i.e., all of who they are, to the Creator (1 Pet 4:19). It seems doubtful that the body is excluded especially since they were suffering. Also, the souls saved during the flood (1 Pet 3:20) naturally refer to the whole person since the wicked drowned bodily in the deluge and the righteous were spared from death. Thus, despite the impressiveness of Feldmeier’s arguments, the whole person is in view.

Such salvation is “the outcome of your faith.” The word “outcome” (*telos*) indicates result here. Achtemeier wrongly says that faith means “faithfulness” rather than “belief.”²⁷⁹ We have already observed several times that such a judgment is mistaken, and the word “faith” here is closely linked to the participle “believing” (translated “believe” by the NIV) in v. 8. Even though the word should be translated as “faith” here, it is clear from the whole of the letter that faithfulness marks out the lives of believers, and thus faith and faithfulness are ultimately inseparable for Peter. We can sum up the main idea in the verse: the love and joy of believers is rooted in the hope of

eschatological salvation. They know, therefore, that despite present sufferings they will see Jesus Christ when he is revealed and enjoy him forever.

2.1.3 The Privilege of Revelation (1:10–12)

¹⁰ *Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who prophesied about the grace that would come to you, searched and carefully investigated.*

¹¹ *They inquired into what time or what circumstances the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating when he testified in advance to the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.* ¹² *It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you. These things have now been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—angels long to catch a glimpse of these things.*

1:10 “Salvation” (*sōteria*) links vv. 9 and 10.²⁸⁰ The salvation believers experience now, which will be consummated in the future, was also prophesied in the past. Believers in Christ enjoy the great privilege of living in the days when the history of salvation was being fulfilled. The OT prophets “prophesied about the grace that would come to you.”²⁸¹ What was predicted in the past was intended for Peter’s readers. Their salvation is described as “grace,” and the point is that such grace is for the sake of the readers: God’s favor and power were “meant for you”²⁸² and were not experienced in the same way by the OT prophets. The prophets “searched and carefully investigated” (*exezētēsan* and *exēraunēsan*) this salvation. The two verbs should be interpreted together, indicating the intense examination conducted by OT prophets.

Some scholars have argued that the prophets mentioned here are NT prophets,²⁸³ saying it makes more sense to conceive of NT prophets searching the Scriptures rather than the OT prophets who actually wrote them. Most commentators agree, however, that the OT prophets are the subject of discussion. The latter view is almost surely correct for a number of reasons.²⁸⁴ First, searching need not be

confined to the Scriptures. It can refer to seeking the Lord (Ps 119:2, LXX), and in this instance it likely refers to their attempt to discern the time when their predictions would be fulfilled.²⁸⁵ Second, there is evidence that some of the prophets sought to comprehend their prophecies (Dan 8:15; 12:8). Third, some OT prophets reflected on earlier prophetic writings and attempted to grasp when they would be fulfilled (e.g., Dan 9:1–27). Fourth, the NT prophets knew and experienced the time of salvation, and thus it is difficult to perceive how they would be at any disadvantage in contrast to Petrine Christians.

Selwyn thinks “the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow” (v. 11) refer to the sufferings of Christians.²⁸⁶ This interpretation fails to convince: in v. 10 a similar construction is used “grace . . . to you” (*eis hymas charis*), and it refers to the grace that *belongs to Christians*. Similarly, the idea here is of the sufferings and glories that belong to Christ.²⁸⁷ Here we have a reference to “the sufferings destined for Christ.”²⁸⁸ Further, the idea that Christ would suffer and then enter glory is common in NT preaching (cf. Acts 2:14–36; 3:11–26; 13:16–41).²⁸⁹ For instance, “Wasn’t it necessary for the Messiah to suffer these things and enter into his glory?” (Luke 24:26); “This is what is written: The Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead the third day” (Luke 24:46); Paul was “saying nothing other than what the prophets and Moses said would take place—that the Messiah must suffer, and that, as the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light to our people and to the Gentiles” (Acts 26:22–23). Fifth, the phrase “have now been announced to you” in 1 Pet 1:12 indicates that the prophets belonged to a former era, one in which they did not grasp fully the things “now” revealed to believers.

1:11 Peter continues to emphasize that the OT prophets had a predictive ministry and did not live in the days of fulfillment. Their prophecies were inspired by “the Spirit of Christ,” showing that their words are authoritative and accurate. The prophecies were not the invention of the prophets or their best “guess.” They were “revealed” (*edēlou*, my translation)²⁹⁰ by the Spirit of Christ. The “Spirit of

Christ” does not refer to Jesus’s human spirit but the Holy Spirit sent from Jesus (cf. Acts 16:7; Gal 4:6; Phil 1:19).²⁹¹ The same Spirit that inspired the prophets also speaks authoritatively (v. 12) through the gospel. Peter points to the work of the Spirit in predicting Christ’s death and resurrection, showing that the Spirit’s ministry centers on Jesus Christ, which fits with what we see elsewhere in the NT. The Spirit glorifies and calls attention to Christ (John 16:14). Christ’s death and resurrection are a staple of NT preaching. Peter’s point, of course, is that the prophets predicted these matters but did not know when they would be fulfilled, hoping upon hope that they would be fulfilled in their days.

Christ’s preexistence can be inferred from what is said here and is also implied in 1:20.²⁹² Since the Spirit belongs to Christ and since the Spirit witnessed beforehand to the Christ, we have a hint of Christ’s preexistence, though such can’t be established definitively from this text. What the prophets desired to know and what they “inquired” (*eraunōntes*, note the link to the verb *exēraunēsan* in v. 10) fervently was “the person or time that the Spirit of Christ within them indicated” (NRSV). The words of the NRSV interpret the Greek phrase *eis tina ē poion kairon* to say that the prophets sought both who the Messiah was and when he would come. The CSB provides another interpretation; prophets were attempting to discern “what time or what circumstances the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating.” The NRSV favors the view that the prophecies were both about the identity of the person of the Messiah and the time of his appearing.²⁹³ The CSB, on the other hand, sees a reference to time, understanding the two pronouns as overlapping in meaning. A decision is difficult since both interpretations are sensible and lexically defensible.²⁹⁴ The pronoun *tis* is used both as an interrogative pronoun (e.g., 1 Pet 3:13; 4:17; 5:8; cf. Acts 8:34) and as an interrogative adjective (Matt 5:46; Luke 14:31; John 2:18; Acts 10:21; Rom 3:1).²⁹⁵ Dogmatism should be avoided, but it seems to me that the CSB interpretation is preferable.²⁹⁶

The CSB rendering should be accepted for three reasons. First, the prophets knew they were prophesying about the Messiah, and hence they would not be questioning that fact.²⁹⁷ It seems unlikely that they were wondering precisely which person would fill that role. Second, the entire focus of the text is on the temporal difference between the OT prophets and the Petrine Christians. The prophets prophesied about what was not fulfilled in their day. They “testified in advance” (*promartyromenōn*) about Christ’s suffering and glory (v. 11). His “glories” (*doxas*) are his resurrection and triumph over evil powers (1:3; 3:19–22).²⁹⁸ The prophets were serving Petrine Christians, not themselves, and the fulfillment is “now . . . announced to you” (v. 12). Third, the the prophets’ great desire was that the prophecies would be fulfilled in their days, that they would see what they promised coming to pass (cf. Dan 12:5–13; Hab 2:1–4).²⁹⁹ Therefore I suggest that the words (lit.) “which or what sort of time” are there for emphasis, to stress that the prophets did not know when the prophecies would be fulfilled, whereas Petrine believers lived in the days of fulfillment.

1:12 Old Testament prophets longed to see and experience the fulfillment of what they prophesied. But God “revealed” (*apekalyphthē*, it is a divine passive) to them that their ministry of prophecy and foretelling would not be realized in their day. Their ministry was not ultimately directed to themselves or their own generation but to Petrine readers and to all those who live on the other side of the death and resurrection of Christ. In other words, the OT prophecies *not only apply* to Peter’s readers but were *intended* for them.³⁰⁰ Further, Peter “claims not only that the Old Testament prophets were ministering ultimately to believers in the *eschaton*, but that the prophets *knew* it by revelation.”³⁰¹ What the prophets foretold has “now (*nun*) been announced” to believers through those who proclaimed the gospel. A distinction is drawn between the prophets who anticipated and predicted the coming of the gospel and those who have now actually proclaimed the fulfillment of the gospel to the believers in Asia Minor. Both are inspired by the Spirit. Saying

that the Spirit is “sent from heaven” signifies that the Spirit is a transcendent gift, one that comes from God himself.

We noted in v. 11 that the prophets prophesied by the Spirit of Christ, and here we learn that those who proclaim the gospel do so by the power of the Holy Spirit.³⁰² We have an early indication here of the authority of the NT message since the proclamation of the gospel is on the same level as the prophecies of the OT. Indeed, the gospel fulfills what is found in the OT, and in that sense the prophetic character of the OT can only be grasped in light of the fulfillment now realized in Jesus Christ. It seems fair to conclude from what Peter says here that the fulfillment of the OT in Jesus Christ is “*related to but more than* that which the human authors intended.”³⁰³ McCartney rightly argues that this text is paradigmatic for Peter’s use of the OT. The OT Scriptures speak of Christ and those who belong to him. Since believers are united with Christ, the OT prophecies are fulfilled with reference to Christ and those who believe in him.³⁰⁴ Egan sees 1 Pet 1:10–12 as “the hermeneutical key” for how Peter reads the OT, concluding that what is true of Christ is also true of the church: the church participates in the great restoration, promised in Isaiah, through Jesus Christ.³⁰⁵

Peter’s main point is that believers in Jesus Christ are blessed to live in the time when the predictions of the prophets have come to pass.³⁰⁶ Jesus communicated a similar lesson to the apostles: “Blessed are your eyes because they do see, and your ears because they do hear. For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see the things you see but didn’t see them, to hear the things you hear but didn’t hear them” (Matt 13:16–17).³⁰⁷ Believers stand in contrast to the angels because the latter long to see and reflect on God’s saving actions. More specifically, angels do not experience the gospel in the same way as human beings since they are not the recipients of redemption. Again, the privilege of enjoying and anticipating salvation comes to the forefront. Old Testament prophets saw it from afar, and

angels marvel when gazing upon what God has done in Christ, but the Petrine readers actually experience it.³⁰⁸

2.2 The Future Inheritance as an Incentive to Holiness (1:13–21)

Verses 1–12 celebrate what God has done for believers in Jesus Christ, featuring the saving work of the Father, Son, and Spirit (v. 2), emphasizing the certain inheritance of believers given by the Father (vv. 3–5), focusing on their love for and joy in Jesus Christ (vv. 6–9), and highlighting the privilege of living in the days when God’s promises predicted through the Spirit are being fulfilled (vv. 10–12). In typical NT fashion Peter calls believers to a holy life based on what God has done for them in Christ.³⁰⁹ Hence, v. 13 begins with “therefore.” Three imperatives mark this section (vv. 13, 15, 17). First, God has given them an unshakable hope in Jesus Christ, and so they are to fix their hope completely on what Christ has done (v. 13). Setting their hope on Christ means that they will reorient their thinking and live alertly and soberly. Second, Peter also summons the readers to holiness (vv. 14–16), and this means they will not capitulate to the desires that animated them formerly. They are to live in a godly way as God’s pilgrim people, conforming their lives to God’s character. Third, believers are to live in fear (v. 17), which does not refer to paralyzing fear but rather to awe and reverence. The one they invoke as Father is also their judge, who will assess their lives and their eternal destiny according to their behavior. Fear is also fitting because they have been redeemed by Christ’s precious blood (vv. 18–19), and God destined his atoning work for their benefit before history began (v. 20). In the meantime their lives are to be characterized by faith and hope, trusting God’s promises while they endure sufferings in the present age.

2.2.1 Setting One’s Hope on the Inheritance (1:13–16)

¹³ *Therefore, with your minds ready for action, be sober-minded and set your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.* ¹⁴ *As obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires of your former ignorance.* ¹⁵ *But as the one*

who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct; ¹⁶ for it is written, Be holy, because I am holy.

1:13 The word “therefore” (*dio*) reaches back to all of vv. 1–12.³¹⁰ The following verses exhort the readers to live a godly life. But all these exhortations are grounded in God’s saving work as explained in vv. 1–12. Believers are to obey because they are God’s chosen exiles, because they have been begotten by the Father, because they have an incorruptible inheritance, and because of the greatness of their salvation. God’s commands are rooted in his grace. Another way of putting this is that the indicative (what God has done for us in Christ) is always the basis of the imperative (how we should live our lives).³¹¹ The distinction between the indicative and imperative is misconstrued if one thinks one can have the one without the other. The indicative and imperative are closely related and inseparable, but that doesn’t mean they are indistinguishable. To confuse the order would be disastrous, and the result would be moralism instead of seeing holiness as the result of God’s grace and power, as a response to the love of God in Christ. The indicative and imperative always belong together in that one does not truly understand the indicative if it does not shape and transform one’s life.

In v. 13 believers are to set their hope on the grace that will be theirs when Christ is revealed, and they will set their hope on this grace by preparing their minds for action and by avoiding spiritual drowsiness. Scholars have often argued that many participles in 1 Peter function as imperatives, and this is reflected in the NRSV translation of v. 13.³¹² Nevertheless, it is significant that only one verb is actually in the imperative mood in v. 13 and that the other verbal forms are participles. The one imperative in v. 13 is “set your hope [*elpisate*] completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”³¹³ It has often been observed that hope in 1 Peter is virtually equivalent to faith in Paul, and Piper remarks that the term “hope” reminds readers that one trusts God for the future.³¹⁴

The participles (“preparing your mind” and “being sober-minded,” ESV) should be understood as subordinate to the main verb and thus construed as instrumental.³¹⁵ Hence, the verse should be translated, “Set your hope fully on the grace . . . by preparing your minds for action and by being sober.” This point is important because we can see more clearly the connection between the preceding paragraph and vv. 13–16. Peter emphasizes in vv. 3–9 that the salvation of believers is eschatological, that it is an end-time hope. Now he urges them to set their hope completely on the grace that will be theirs “at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (*en apokalypsei Iēsou Christou*).³¹⁶ This latter phrase repeats in exact words the conclusion of v. 7. In each instance Peter reflects on the coming of Jesus Christ, the revelation of the one who is now invisible. The exhortation also reminds us that God’s saving work in one sense is unfinished in believers. We await grace that will only be ours when Christ returns, and presumably that grace will complete sanctification so that believers no longer sin (cf. 1 John 3:1–3).³¹⁷ And yet no encouragement is given for sinning in the meantime. Believers are to live in hope even now, indicating that their greatest desire is for the consummation of the work that has begun in them.

The two participles explain how believers are to set their hope completely on Jesus Christ. First, they are to get their “minds ready for action.” More literally, they are to “gird up the loins of your minds.” “Girding up the loins” (*anazōsamenoī tas osphyas*) means tucking in one’s long, flowing garments to run or do serious work (cf. 1 Kgs 18:46; cf. also Exod 12:11; 2 Kgs 4:29; 9:1; Job 40:7; Jer 1:17; Nah 2:1; Luke 12:35).³¹⁸ Perhaps we have a reference to exodus traditions here, where Israel prepares to leave Egypt.³¹⁹ In any case, hope will not become a reality without disciplined thinking. Thinking in a new way does not happen automatically; it requires effort, concentration, and intentionality. Second, believers set their hope completely on the end by being sober. Peter is not merely saying that believers should refrain from drunkenness. There is a way of living that becomes dull to the reality of God, that is anesthetized by the

attractions of this world. When people are lulled into such drowsiness, they lose sight of Christ's future revelation of himself and concentrate only on fulfilling their earthly desires.

1:14 Those who set their hope on the coming grace will live obedient lives and will not be controlled by the desires that ruled them before their conversion. The main verb in vv. 14–15 appears in v. 15, where Peter calls on believers to be holy. Setting one's hope completely on Jesus Christ's coming (v. 13) means living a holy life now (v. 15). The participle in v. 14 is literally translated "not being conformed" (*mē syschēmatizomenoi*). The CSB translates the verb as an imperative, "do not be conformed." Perhaps the participle is instrumental, modifying the verbal clause "be holy."³²⁰ In this case, believers are to be holy by not being conformed to their former desires. The word "but" (*alla*) in v. 15 suggests, however, that the participle stands as an imperative in its own right since the command not to conform to former desires is contrasted with the injunction to be holy.³²¹ Evil desires characterized the Petrine readers before their conversion (cf. 1 Pet 4:3–4).³²² The reference to "ignorance" harkens back to the pre-Christian past of the readers (cf. 1 Thess 4:5; cf. Acts 3:17; 17:30; Eph 4:18), suggesting that they were Gentiles.³²³ J. Green says that ignorance "is less the state of 'lacking information,' more the profound failure to grasp the character and purpose of God."³²⁴

Peter recognizes that the Christian life is not passive. Ungodly desires still beckon and tantalize believers, tempting them to depart from God. They must refuse such desires and choose what is good. They are to do God's will just as "obedient children" obey their parents.³²⁵ The phrase reminds us that believers are begotten by God (1:3, 23; cf. 2:2), and thus Peter does not summon believers to do God's will in their own strength. They are God's children, and as his children they are to obey him. We have already seen in 1:2 (cf. 1:22 as well) that obedience is necessary for conversion and cannot ultimately be separated from faith. Peter has no conception of the Christian life

in which believers give mere mental assent to doctrines (cf. 2:13, 18; 3:1, 5, 6; 5:5).

1:15 Instead of capitulating to evil desires, believers are to live holy lives. The pattern for holiness is God himself, who is unremittingly good.³²⁶ The call to goodness is one of the distinctive emphases in 1 Peter (2:12–5, 20, 24; 3:6, 11, 13, 17; 4:2, 19). The holiness of their lives is to match that of God, who “called” (*kalesanta*) them to himself. “Calling” refers to God’s effectual call in which he infallibly brings people to himself (1 Pet 2:9, 21; 3:9; 5:10). This definition is borne out by 2:9, where God calls people “out of darkness into his marvelous light.” Calling does not merely mean “invite” but conveys the idea of God’s power in bringing people from darkness to light. Just as God’s call created light when there was darkness, so he creates life when there is death (Gen 1:3). The reference to “calling” is important, for again grace precedes demand. Otherwise the Petrine paraenesis could be confused with the idea that human beings live morally noble lives in their own strength. All holiness stems from the God who called them into the sphere of the holy.³²⁷ The command to be holy indicates that the exiled people of God (1:1; 2:11) are to live differently. They are to separate themselves from the evil desires of the world and live in a way that pleases God. Some scholars rightly point to Lev 18:2–4, where Israel is to distinguish itself from the evil practices of Egypt and Canaan.³²⁸ To be holy is to separate oneself from what is evil and to devote oneself to what is good. The injunction to holiness embraces all of life (“in all your conduct”). No sphere of life is outside God’s dominion.

1:16 The summons to holiness is now grounded (“for,” *dioti*) with a Scripture reference in God’s holy character. McCartney perceptively notes that Peter typically closes sections with scriptural references instead of opening a new section with one.³²⁹ Discerning where the citation comes from is difficult since a number of verses in Leviticus qualify (Lev 11:44–45; 19:2; 20:7, 26).³³⁰ The best candidate is Lev 19:2 since the wording matches precisely what we find in 1 Pet 1:16.³³¹ But the same principle can be applied to 20:7 and 20:26. It is

likely that Peter did not intend to refer to any one of these verses in particular but deliberately cited a theme suffused throughout all of Leviticus.³³² God's people are to live holy and pleasing lives because God is holy and good. Verse 16 reiterates that God's people are to model their lives after God himself. Pryor communicates well the theological impact of Peter's emphasis on holiness:

In the covenantal thinking of the O.T. blessing to the nations is important, but it is not the starting point. Israel must first be holy. And this appears to be Peter's emphasis as well. The minimal reference to evangelism (and dialogue) is not just because his primary concern is the church's survival in persecution (though this is a factor), but because he also sees the starting point as holiness in the covenant people (1:16).³³³

The first calling of the church is to live a consecrated, devoted, and godly life.

2.2.2 A Call to Fear (1:17–21)

17 If you appeal to the Father who judges impartially according to each one's work, you are to conduct yourselves in reverence during your time living as strangers. 18 For you know that you were redeemed from your empty way of life inherited from your fathers, not with perishable things like silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb. 20 He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was revealed in these last times for you. 21 Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

1:17 The theme of the paragraph appears in the injunction to live "in reverent fear."³³⁴ Because of the inheritance and salvation believers anticipate (vv. 1–12), they should set their hope completely on Christ's coming (v. 13), devote themselves to holiness (v. 15), and live in fear (v. 17). The remaining verses (vv. 18–21) explain why

believers should live with awe and reverence.³³⁵ Believers are to live with awesome reverence—not abject terror, which certainly does not fit with the joy and boldness of the Christian life.³³⁶ Reverence, however, can be watered down to become rather insipid. Peter contemplates the final judgment, where believers will be assessed by their works and heaven and hell will be at stake (see below). There is a kind of fear that does not contradict confidence. A confident driver also possesses a healthy fear of an accident that prevents him or her from doing anything foolish. A genuine fear of judgment hinders believers from giving in to libertinism. The background to such fear can be traced to Deuteronomy (e.g., Deut 4:10; 8:6) and the wisdom tradition (Prov 1:29; 3:7; 9:10; Job 28:28; Eccl 12:13), where the fear of the Lord informs all of life.³³⁷

Believers are to live in such fear while they are “strangers” (*paroikia*) on earth (cf. 1:1; 2:11). Some scholars insist that the term “strangers” refers to the social dislocation of believers in this world.³³⁸ Certainly believers do not fit into the social order, for their values and behavior contradict the customs of unbelievers. The Petrine believers cut across the grain of the culture in a way that alienates them from the mainstream (Lev 25:23; 1 Chr 29:15; Ps 39:12). Their social dislocation is rooted, however, in their eschatological inheritance and their new birth (cf. 1:3–5). Their heavenly destiny raises a social barrier in the here and now between them and unbelievers. Hence, we need not choose between the options of seeing an emphasis on their present status or their future destiny.³³⁹ Their experience of alienation in the culture can be traced to their shift in values and to the new life they enjoy. Their horizontal discomfort comes from their vertical commitment and the end-time promise that awaits them. The parallel with Israel’s sojourn in Egypt is apt (cf. Ps 105:12; Wis 19:10; Acts 13:17).

Peter summons his readers to live in fear during their earthly sojourn, but now we pick up the conditional clause that introduces the verse. The NIV translates the word “if” (*ei*) as “Since.”³⁴⁰ In one sense this interpretation is correct because Peter does not wish to

introduce any doubt into his readers' minds about whether God is their Father. Nevertheless, translating "if" as "since" is mistaken, and the CSB is to be preferred here. Peter intentionally wrote the sentence as a hypothesis to provoke the readers to consider whether they call on God as their Father, desiring, surely, that they would answer in the affirmative. The word "since" does not have the same effect, and therefore "if" should be retained. The word "Father" is used of God in the OT in a few instances (2 Sam 7:14; Ps 2:7; Jer 3:19; Mal 1:6; 2:10; cf. Wis 2:16; 3 Macc 5:7). The reference in 3 Macc 5:7 uses both the term "Father" and the verb "call" (*epikaleomai*), as does 1 Pet 1:17.³⁴¹ It is likely, however, that Peter derives the term "Father" from the teaching of Jesus, which emphasizes God's fatherhood (cf. Matt 6:1, 4, 8–9; 7:11; 10:32; 11:25–27; 18:35; 23:9; John 5:19–20; 20:17). Whether it stems specifically from the Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:9) is difficult to discern. God as Father denotes both his love and his authority, although here the stress is on his authority since reverence should characterize Christians in this world.³⁴²

The motivation for living in fear is explained in the conditional clause. Believers should fear on the final day because as an "impartial" judge the Father does not reward people as one who plays favorites (cf. Acts 10:34; Rom 2:11; Eph 6:9; Col 3:25). Grudem concludes from the present participle "judges" (*krinonta*) that Peter refers to judgment and discipline in this life.³⁴³ He adds that believers also have no reason to fear condemnation at the last judgment. His interpretation should be rejected for a number of reasons.³⁴⁴ First, the tense of participles is not decisive and therefore not a clear indication of present time. The context in which the participle occurs is most important for determining its temporal referent. Second, judgment according to works is a pervasive theme in Jewish literature (cf. Pss 28:4; 62:12; Prov 24:12; Jer 17:10; 25:14; 32:19; 51:24; Ezek 33:20; 1QS 10:16–18; Pss. Sol. 2:15–17, 33–35; 9:4–5; 2 Bar. 13:8; 44:4; 54:21). Such a theme is common in the NT as well and regularly refers to God's assessment of people, both believers and unbelievers, at the final judgment (Matt 16:27; Rom 2:6, 11, 28–29; 14:12; 1 Cor

3:13; 2 Cor 5:10; Tim 4:14; Rev 2:23; 20:12–13; 22:14). It is doubtful that Peter says anything different here, especially since he refers in this paragraph to many other themes common in Christian tradition. Third, no dichotomy exists between judgment according to works and God's grace.³⁴⁵ Good works are evidence that God has truly begotten (1 Pet 1:3) a person.³⁴⁶ Perhaps Peter uses the singular "work" to summarize the lives of believers as a whole. Fourth, the fear of judgment still plays a role in the Christian life. Paul himself realized that he would be disqualified at the final judgment if he did not live the message proclaimed to others (1 Cor 9:24–27). This inspired him to live faithfully; it did not paralyze him with fear.

1:18 Verses 18–19 together form a negative/positive. Peter contrasts what did not redeem believers (silver and gold) with how they were redeemed (Christ's blood). The CSB rightly interprets the participle "knowing" (*eidotes*) as causal ("for"), giving the reason believers should "live . . . in reverent fear" (NIV).³⁴⁷ Verses 18–21 are written "to increase the addressees' appreciation of their new relationship to God and their new status as Christians."³⁴⁸ Some scholars try to reconstruct confessional statements or hymnic fragments from these verses, but the evidence is insufficient to draw such conclusions, and it is better to conclude that Peter himself uses typical confessional language since no clear hymnic or poetic structure can be discerned here. The term "redeem" (*lutroō*) and its word group recalls Israel's liberation from Egypt (Deut 7:8; 9:26; 15:15; 24:18). The word is also applied to the liberation of individuals (Pss 25:22; 26:11; 31:5; 32:7), and in Isaiah the return from exile is portrayed as a second exodus or a second redemption (Isa 41:14; 43:1, 14; 44:22–24; 51:11; 52:3; 62:12; 63:9). In the Greco-Roman world slaves were often manumitted, meaning that their freedom was purchased. In this context, in which many associations with the OT are evident, OT associations are predominant.³⁴⁹

The word *redemption* signifies liberation, and here we see redemption "from your empty way of life inherited from your fathers."³⁵⁰ The emptiness (*mataias*) of life is a theme mentioned

often in Ecclesiastes (e.g., Eccl 1:2, 14; 2:1, 11, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 26). In the OT such futility was often associated with the idolatry of pagans.³⁵¹ Similarly, in the NT the word group depicts pre-Christian existence (Acts 14:15; Rom 1:21; Eph 4:17). The life of unbelievers before their conversion is futile, empty, and devoted to false gods. Such a way of life has been handed down from the forefathers, from generation to generation. The word “handed down from your forefathers” (*patroparadotou*) in Greek literature does not convey what is wearing out or declining.³⁵² In paganism it signifies a vibrant tradition conveyed from generation to generation and is associated especially with religious traditions passed down from ancestors. Here we have evidence that the readers were Gentiles (cf. 1 Pet 4:1–4) since the Jews were taught that they should worship the one and only true God.³⁵³ The verse also opens an interesting window on Peter’s view of paganism. He does not conceive of it as noble; in the final analysis, other traditions are futile and vain since they do not lead to faith and trust in the true God.³⁵⁴ Silver and gold may be mentioned because of their association with idolatry (Deut 29:17; Dan 5:23; Wis 13:10; Rev 9:20).³⁵⁵ They are “perishable” and do not persist through the ravages of time (cf. 1 Pet 1:4), and although they are greatly valued by human beings, they end up being vain and useless, even to satisfy in this life (Eccl 2:1–11).

1:19 Verse 19 now communicates positively the means by which believers were redeemed. We see from v. 18 that money was not the means, drawing on Isa 52:3 (“You were sold for nothing, and you will be redeemed without silver”).³⁵⁶ Instead, believers were purchased and ransomed and freed through the blood of Christ. Peter contrasts here the perishability of money with the preciousness of Christ’s blood.³⁵⁷ The contrast is not exact, but neither is it difficult to comprehend.³⁵⁸ Money perishes, but Christians have been redeemed with the blood of one who is Messiah and Lord. The shedding of blood signifies death, the giving up of one’s life. Blood is precious because without it no one can live (Lev 17:11). Morris rightly argues

that blood does not signify the release of life, as if life is somehow mystically transmitted by the spilling of blood.³⁵⁹ Instead, the shedding of blood indicates that Christ poured out his life to death for sinners. Some scholars have argued that in the Scriptures redemption always involves the notion of the payment of a price.³⁶⁰ Marshall has demonstrated, however, that the idea of price is not invariably present, although there is always the idea of the cost or effort involved in redemption.³⁶¹ In some texts the emphasis is on deliverance, and nothing is said specifically about price (Luke 21:28; Rom 8:23; Eph 1:14; 4:30). On the other hand, some scholars are too eager to strike out any notion of price at all.³⁶² A number of texts indicate that believers were redeemed with Christ's blood (Rom 3:24; Eph 1:7; cf. Matt 20:28; Mark 10:45), and Peter plainly teaches such here. Achtemeier denies that believers were ransomed with Christ's blood by saying that the only point is that redemption came "by means of God's own act through Christ."³⁶³ What Achtemeier affirms is true but incomplete since he passes over the specific wording of the text, which informs us that God ransomed believers with Christ's blood, and such a conclusion is warranted since Christ's blood is contrasted with silver and gold, which clearly designate price.³⁶⁴

The term "blood" harkens back to the sacrificial cultus in the OT, where blood was necessary for atonement. The OT imagery continues when Christ is compared to a lamb "without blemish or defect" (NIV). The requirement that sacrifices are to be "without blemish" (*amōmos*) is often stated in the OT (e.g., LXX Exod 29:1, 38; Lev 1:3, 10; 3:1, 6, 9; 4:3, 14, 23, 28, 32; 5:15, 18; 12:6; Num 15:24; Ezek 43:22).³⁶⁵ The word "without defect" (*aspilos*) is not found in the OT, but it reinforces the thought that Christ was a perfect sacrifice. Indeed, as the fulfillment he surpasses the type. Animals were without defect physically, but Peter's point was that Jesus was sinless (cf. 2:22). He was a perfect sacrifice because of his sinless life. Some scholars try to restrict the background imagery here to exodus traditions, but the

references above indicate that Peter referred to sacrificial language more generally.³⁶⁶

When Peter refers to Christ as the lamb, what OT antecedent does he draw on? Some argue that he refers to the Passover lamb (Exod 12:21–23), whose blood spared Israel from the wrath of the avenging angel.³⁶⁷ In Exod 12:5 a “perfect sheep” (*probaton teleion*) is required.³⁶⁸ Others see the reference to Isa 53:7, where the Servant of the Lord is led like a lamb to slaughter (cf. 2:21–25).³⁶⁹ Still others think the reference is to the sacrificial cult in general, where the requirement that animals should be without blemish is often stated.³⁷⁰ Some doubt that we have a reference to the Passover since Israel was not redeemed by the blood of the lamb at Passover but by God’s power. Further, the Passover blood was not redemptive but staved off God’s wrath.³⁷¹ These objections are not decisive. A false dichotomy between blood and God’s power is introduced since God’s power in salvation is bestowed on those who applied blood to their homes. The Israelites likely viewed the blood on the door as that which ransomed them. Against a reference to the lamb of Isa 53:7, it is objected that no other terms here indicate a reference to that text.³⁷² For instance, nothing is said about the blood of the victim in Isa 53. However, Isa 53 teaches that the Servant will die and that his death is a guilt offering (Isa 53:12), and we have already noted that blood signifies a life poured out to death. Hence, we could overemphasize the differences between the texts conceptually when it is clear that the same range of ideas is included. If one thinks of the sacrificial cult as described in Leviticus, it is evident that many of the sacrifices did not require a lamb, although in many cases a lamb “without blemish” is to be offered. To sum up, the text is too general to restrict ourselves to any one background, whether Passover, the Suffering Servant text, or the sacrificial cult. It probably is best to think of Peter as seeing the death of Christ as embracing all three ideas. Early Christians saw Passover, the Suffering Servant, and the

sacrificial system as fulfilled in the sacrifice of Christ as God's sinless lamb.

1:20 With two participial phrases Peter contrasts Christ being foreknown before history began with his manifestation at the climax of salvation history for the sake of the readers.³⁷³ In the Greek text of v. 19 the word "Christ" appears last, separated from the term "blood" by five words. The text was likely written in this way so that it would be clear that the Christ was the subject of the participle commencing v. 20. The Christ "was foreknown (*proegnōsmenou*) before the foundation of the world." The term "foreknown" has already been discussed in 1:2 (see commentary), and it was noted there that what God foreknows is also preordained.³⁷⁴ To say that something or someone is foreknown does not necessarily imply preexistence since God foreknows and foreordains all that will occur in history. Nevertheless, to say that the "Christ" is foreknown implies his preexistence.³⁷⁵

Why does Peter state here that Christ was foreknown? How does it fit into the argument? The main theme of the paragraph is that believers should conduct their lives in fear. They should do so because they have been ransomed with the precious blood of Christ (vv. 18–19). Now the readers are informed that this is no afterthought. God determined before history ever began ("before the foundation of the world"; cf. Eph 1:4) that the Christ would appear at this particular juncture of history as redeemer.³⁷⁶ This interpretation is confirmed by the last part of the verse. Christ "was revealed in these last times for you." The manifestation of Christ refers to his incarnation, and Peter emphasized that believers enjoy the blessing of living at the time when God was fulfilling his saving promises. The "last times" (*ep eschatou tōn chronōn*) signal the fulfillment of salvation history, which commenced with the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Michaels rightly notes that the phrase here is to be distinguished from "in the last time" (*en kairō eschatō*) in v. 5.³⁷⁷ The latter refers to the future inheritance that awaits believers, but the phrase here indicates that the last times have commenced with the coming of Christ.³⁷⁸

The stunning privilege of believers is communicated once again because all these things occurred for their sake (cf. vv. 10–12). What a tragedy it would be to throw all these privileges away by ceasing to live in the fear of God.

1:21 Verse 21 continues from v. 20, noting that the readers who live in the days of the fulfillment of God’s promises are “believers” (HCSB; *pistous*)³⁷⁹ in God “through” (*dia*) Christ. They have put their faith in God because of the work of Jesus Christ, whose work is featured in vv. 18–19. Peter closes this section of the letter by reiterating themes already highlighted. The God in whom they believed raised Christ “from the dead and gave him glory.” We probably should understand the clause here to refer to an intended result, in that God purposed that people would put their faith and hope in him as a result of Christ’s work.³⁸⁰ Christ’s resurrection from the dead is the foundation of the “living hope” of believers in 1:3, so too here the hope of believers is rooted in the resurrection of Christ.

The glorification of Christ after his sufferings is noted in 1:12 as well.³⁸¹ The vindication and glorification of Christ after his sufferings (see Isa 52:13) is the paradigm for believers. As God’s exiled people they suffer now, but their future hope is resurrection and glorification. They anticipate the day when sufferings will be no more and they will experience eschatological salvation. It is likely that “faith and hope” are practically synonyms here. In the first part of the verse, Peter emphasizes that through Christ they are “believers” in God. “Hope” functions as an *inclusio* in this section, opening the discussion in v. 3 and closing it in v. 21. It also bounds vv. 13–21, for v. 13 begins with the call to set one’s hope completely on future salvation. The close association between “faith and hope” also reaffirms that “faith” (*pistis*) in the earlier verses cannot be restricted to “faithfulness” (1:5, 7, 9).³⁸² Instead, Peter forges a unity between the two ideas so that faithfulness flows out of faith.³⁸³ What Peter says here is important for another reason. Three imperatives have dominated these verses: hope (v. 13), be holy (v. 15), and live in fear (v. 17). Verse 21 reminds readers again that the holy life to which they are called is a life in

which they are trusting in God's promises. Peter was not a moralist who trumpeted virtues for their own sake; a life of holiness is one in which God is prized above all things, in which believers trust and hope in his goodness.

2.3 Living as the New People of God (1:22–2:10)

We do not have a major break in the letter here, although the focus shifts to the community, from the call to live a holy life to proper relationships among church members. The three subsections are 1:22–25; 2:1–3; and 2:4–10. The first two paragraphs are marked by imperatives and the last one by an affirmation. First, Peter exhorts believers to love one another (1:22), grounding this call to love on their conversion (1:22a), on the fact that God has begotten them through his word (1:23). Peter emphasizes that the word is invincible, and this word is identified as the gospel proclaimed to the readers (1:24–25). The second section is also introduced with an imperative. Believers as newborn babes should long for the undiluted milk of God's Word (2:2). The command to long for God's Word is also grounded on v. 23, on God's begetting them to new life by means of his Word. According to 2:1–3 the Word is not only the means by which new life began (1:23) but also the means by which it continues, leading to salvation on the last day. Such spiritual growth also involves putting aside attitudes and actions that would poison the well of love within the community (2:1). Peter expects his readers to long for the message of the gospel if they have tasted the Lord's kindness (2:3) since the initial taste will give them a desire to experience more of the Lord's beauty and goodness.

The transition to the next paragraph is not as clear (2:4–10), but it seems likely that in 2:4–10 Peter returns to what God has done for believers in Christ, as he did in 1:3–12. Hence, the structure of the text as a whole is a sandwich. The indicative of God's gracious work predominates in 1:3–12 and 2:4–10, but sandwiched in between are imperatives in 1:13–2:3. This structure emphasizes that all of the Petrine commands are rooted in and dependent on God's grace. First Peter 2:4–10 emphasizes particularly that the churches in Asia Minor are God's temple, his chosen people, his new community in the world.

Just as Jesus Christ was God's chosen one, so too those who trust in Christ are God's new temple and his chosen priests.

In the transition between vv. 3–4, faith is described as tasting the Lord's kindness in 2:3 and then as coming "to him" in 2:4. The Lord in view here is none other than Jesus Christ, who was rejected by his contemporaries but chosen and honored by God as is evident by his resurrection from the dead. What Peter emphasizes, though, is an affirmation. As living stones, as a spiritual house, God is building believers into a spiritual priesthood (2:5). As God's priests animated by the Holy Spirit, they offer sacrifices that are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Most of vv. 6–10 is punctuated by citations and allusions to the OT. These verses elaborate and restate the themes articulated in vv. 6–10. From Isa 28:16 we learn that God has divinely appointed Jesus Christ as the cornerstone of the new house (2:6).³⁸⁴ The house, therefore, takes its shape from him, and the one who believes in him (i.e., comes to him, v. 4) will not be put to shame on the last day. Hence, v. 7a does not merely mean Christ as the living stone is precious. Instead, it means God will honor and vindicate believers on the last day just as he honored and vindicated Jesus.³⁸⁵ Conversely, unbelievers, fulfilling Ps 118:22, have rejected Jesus, even though he is the cornerstone of the building (2:7b). Thus, it is not surprising that they will trip over that stone and be judged on the last day (so Isa 8:14; 1 Pet 2:8a).

Here Peter reprises the theme that Jesus is rejected by human beings (2:4), but the theme of God's exaltation is also implied since unbelievers will stumble and be destroyed because of their rejection of Jesus. Their stumbling and disobedience have also been ordained by God (2:8b). Peter adds this theme to remind readers that God reigns over all that will come to pass, that even their enemies are under his rule. By way of contrast, the church of Jesus Christ is restored Israel (2:9–10). The church is God's elect people, his royal priesthood, his holy nation, and his special possession. Ethnic Jews are not left out, but they must believe in Jesus as Messiah to be part of God's people. The purpose of this new people of God is to proclaim his praises and wonders, which probably restates the call to offer spiritual sacrifices in

v. 5. The Petrine readers are truly blessed because they were formerly not God’s people, nor were they the objects of his mercy as Gentiles (2:10), but now they belong to God’s people and have experienced his bountiful mercy (Hos 2:23).

2.3.1 A Call to Love (1:22–25)

22 Since you have purified yourselves by your obedience to the truth, so that you show sincere brotherly love for each other, from a pure heart love one another constantly, 23 because you have been born again—not of perishable seed but of imperishable—through the living and enduring word of God. 24 For

All flesh is like grass,

and all its glory like a flower of the grass.

The grass withers, and the flower falls,

25 but the word of the Lord endures forever.

And this word is the gospel that was proclaimed to you.

1:22 The theme of the paragraph is found in the exhortation to love, and this command is bounded by two perfect participles, both of which give reasons or grounds for the command to love. The first participle uses the language of the cult and purification (v. 22), while the second participle uses the image of begetting and fatherhood (v. 23).³⁸⁶ The CSB translates the first clause, “Since you have purified yourselves by your obedience to the truth,” and the NRSV renders it, “Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth.” Both of these translations appear to understand “purified” (*hēgnikotes*), a perfect participle, as referring to conversion.³⁸⁷ The perfect tense of the participle supports this view, signifying a past action that has ongoing consequences. Moreover, the phrase (lit.) “by obedience to the truth” (*en hypakoētēs alētheias*) probably refers to the truth of the gospel. Often in the NT the gospel is designated as “the truth.”³⁸⁸ We should not understand the phrase as “true

obedience” (an adjectival genitive) but “obedience to the truth” (an objective genitive).³⁸⁹ The word “obedience” describes conversion elsewhere in the NT, signifying submission to the gospel (Rom 1:5; 15:18; 16:19, 26), and I have already argued that Peter has conversion in mind in 1:2 (cf. also 1:14) when he speaks of obedience.

Grudem argues vigorously, on the other hand, that the reference is to the ongoing process of sanctification.³⁹⁰ First, he thinks obedience in every instance in the NT is postconversion. Second, he argues that obedience in 1:2 and 1:14 follows new life. Third, the verb “purify” describes the everyday life of discipleship in Jas 4:8 and 1 John 3:3. Fourth, the context is one of holiness. Fifth, Christians are never agents of their conversion but are agents in sanctification. Every one of these arguments fails to convince. The first two arguments are refuted by the evidence presented in v. 2.³⁹¹ We saw there that obedience is often tied to conversion. The third argument is not decisive since the issue is not whether other writers use the language of purification in other contexts to refer to one’s ongoing life in holiness. The Petrine context suggests that conversion is in view since Peter clearly refers to the conversion of believers in v. 23, and in both this instance and in v. 23 the call to love is rooted in their conversion. Probably the most important argument is the last one. Believers are called upon to repent, believe, be baptized, and confess Christ to be saved (e.g., Acts 2:38; 3:19; 13:39; 16:31; Rom 10:9). It is not surprising, therefore, that the notion of obedience is used as well. Of course, the NT clarifies elsewhere that faith, obedience, and repentance are gifts of God (Eph 2:8; 2 Tim 2:25; cf. esp. the commentary on 1 Pet 1:2), and so no idea of synergism is involved, nor was Peter suggesting that believers are the ultimate agents of their salvation.³⁹²

The goal or purpose of their conversion is a genuine love for fellow believers: “so that you show sincere brotherly love for each other.”³⁹³ The RSV translation is clear, “Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere love of the brethren” (similarly ESV, HCSB, NASB). The term *philadelphia* indicates that fellow

believers are in view (cf. 3:8; 5:9).³⁹⁴ Since love is the goal of conversion, the injunction to love from the heart follows naturally.³⁹⁵ We should not draw distinctions between the verb “love” (*agapēsate*) and “love of the brethren” (*philadelphia*) here since they overlap semantically. The command to love is rooted in their conversion, in the purification of their hearts that enables love. The characteristic of a Christian community is enduring love for one another.³⁹⁶ Peter emphasizes the ideas of permanence, endurance, and incorruptibility in the near context. We should note that in vv. 21–22 Peter speaks of faith, hope, and now love. He does not summon a suffering church to anything other than the mainstream Christian life, to love one another, and the flames of such love should not be extinguished by the flood of persecution.

1:23 The command to love, it is now explained, is rooted in God’s prior saving work. Christians have been begotten (*anagegennēmenoi*) by the seed of God’s word. Most versions translate the term as the CSB, “born again.” We saw in 1:3 that “begetting anew” rather than “born again” is more precise.³⁹⁷ The emphasis is on God as the one who granted them new life, and the means by which God begat them was the seed of his word. God begetting his children by the seed of the word is likened to a father begetting a child by the seed of his sperm. Unfortunately, the RSV and the NRSV translations obscure the relationship of v. 23 to v. 22 by leaving out any connecting idea. The participle should be understood as causal.³⁹⁸ Peter’s argument is that they should love one another *because* they have been begotten by God. The CSB captures the nuance by introducing v. 23 with the word “because” (cf. also NIV). In vv. 22–23, then, conversion is described from a twofold perspective—the act of human beings in purifying their lives and God’s action in begetting them to a new life,³⁹⁹ but God’s action is foundational.

God begat his people through “imperishable” rather than “perishable seed.” The terms used here are among Peter’s favorites. The heavenly inheritance of believers is “imperishable” (*aphthartos*, 1 Pet 1:4), and God is pleased when wives have the “imperishable”

(*aphthartos*) qualities of a “gentle and quiet spirit” (3:4). On the other hand, believers are redeemed with Christ’s precious blood, not with perishable (*phthartos*) things like silver or gold (1:18). The human sperm of a father is perishable and earthly, and even if it produces children, they too will die eventually. The seed God uses to beget his people, on the other hand, is invincible and incorruptible. The term Peter used (*spora*) can be translated as “sowing” or “origin,” and some scholars understand it to have the latter meaning here.⁴⁰⁰ It makes better sense in the context, however, if the term refers to that which is sown, namely, seed, and so we should not distinguish the meaning from the usual term for “seed” (i.e., *sperma*).

But what is this seed? Some say the Holy Spirit. Against this the Spirit is not mentioned elsewhere in the context. Most agree that the seed is the divine word (*logos*), which is immediately mentioned. According to this view we should not distinguish sharply between the prepositions “of” (*ek*) and “through” (*dia*) since both communicate the instrument by which God begets his children. A few scholars think the “word” (*logos*) refers to Christ as the divine Word, a meaning clearly found in John (John 1:1, 14). We can be almost certain, however, that Peter used the term “word” (*logos*) to refer to the gospel. It often has this meaning in the NT (e.g., Eph 1:13; Phil 2:16; Col 1:5; 4:3; 1 Thess 1:8; 2:13; 2 Thess 3:1; 2 Tim 2:9; 4:2; Titus 1:3; 2:5; Heb 13:7; Jas 1:21) and bears this meaning elsewhere in 1 Peter (2:8; 3:1).

Grammatically we could translate the last phrase as “the word of the living and enduring God.”⁴⁰¹ But context indicates that the CSB is correct, “the living and enduring word of God” (cf. also Heb 4:12).⁴⁰² Verse 25 confirms our judgment since the word “endure” (*menō*) appears again: “the word of the Lord endures forever.” In both v. 23 and v. 25, then, the abiding character of God’s word is featured.⁴⁰³ And to say that something “abides” is another way of saying it is “imperishable.” The last part of v. 25 also conveys that the spotlight is on God’s word (and hence not the Spirit); there the word is identified with the gospel “that was proclaimed to you.” The means by

which God begets his people is the seed of God's word, the preaching of the gospel. Peter's theology matches Paul's teaching that "faith comes from hearing the message" (Rom 10:17 NIV). In Gal 3 the reception of the Spirit is mediated through believing the preached message (Gal 3:2, 5). Perhaps Peter uses the word "living" because the word produces life, and he uses the word "enduring" because the life once activated will never cease.⁴⁰⁴

1:24 Verses 24–25 support the notion that the word of the Lord endures by citing Isaiah. The word "for" introduces the OT citation (Isa 40:6–8), although Peter does not give any introductory formula, such as "it is written," but plunges immediately into the OT text. Typically the word "for" (*dioti*) signifies cause, but it is difficult to see how the OT quotation grounds what preceded. Contextually, it makes better sense as an explanation or restatement of v. 23, showing from the OT that the word of God endures forever.⁴⁰⁵ The OT citation continues into the first part of v. 25. Peter probably cites the Septuagint here (LXX) since it omits part of Isa 40:7 from the Hebrew text (MT), and Peter does the same.

The quotation hails from Isa 40 where comfort is proclaimed to Israel because the Lord will work once again and restore his people from exile in Babylon.⁴⁰⁶ The "good news" for Israel (Isa 40:9) is that God fulfills his promises and that the nations of the world that seem strong cannot resist his promised word to deliver them from exile (Isa 40:6–8). Such nations are like grass and the flower of the grass, which perish when the Lord's wind blows upon them. Perhaps Peter thought of the persecutors of his day, who seemed invincible but whose glory was short-lived. Grass and flowers are beautiful in the springtime, but when fall arrives, one would never know that they thrived (cf. Jas 1:11).

1:25 The main point from the OT quotation now emerges: "The word of the Lord endures forever." Isaiah therefore supports Peter's argument in v. 23 that the word of God is "living and enduring." It is an imperishable seed according to v. 23. Isaiah 40 emphasizes that no nation, even mighty Babylon, can thwart the Lord's promises. Does Peter's use of the word "Lord" (*kyriou*) refer to Jesus Christ? In Isaiah

the text shifts between “Lord” (*kyrios*) and “God” (*theos*), and Yahweh is clearly the referent in each case (e.g., Lord: vv. 2, 3, 5[2x], 10 and God: vv. 1, 3, 5, 8, 9). Probably Peter applies this text to Jesus Christ, as is the case with other NT writers when they cite Isaiah 40 (e.g., Matt 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 1:76; John 1:23; 1 Cor 2:16; but cf. Rom 11:34).⁴⁰⁷ If this is the case, is the genitive subjective (the word spoken by the Lord)⁴⁰⁸ or objective (the word spoken about the Lord)?⁴⁰⁹ Both are sensible, but the next clause points us to the latter. The word of the Lord that stands forever was preached to them. The historical Jesus did not proclaim the gospel to believers in Asia Minor, and so the word of the Lord is the word about the Lord Jesus, the gospel that was preached when these churches believed.

Verse 25 concludes with Peter’s commentary on the OT citation. The word of the Lord in Isaiah, which represents the promise that God will restore his people from exile and fulfill his promises to Abraham (Gen 12:1–3), is fulfilled in the gospel proclaimed (*euangelisthen*) to the churches in Asia Minor. We are reminded of 1:10–12 where the words of the prophets were for the sake of believers in Jesus Christ. Believers in Jesus Christ, since they live in the days of fulfillment, understand the full import of Isaiah’s words. The new exodus, the return from exile, and the fulfillment of all God’s promises to Israel have become a reality through the gospel. Peter’s use of the word (*euangelizō*) almost certainly comes from Isaiah as well since in Isa 40:9 (the next verse from the section Peter cited) “the good news” for Zion and Jerusalem is that God will come and fulfill his promises to Israel (cf. Isa 52:7). The promises in Isaiah are fulfilled in the proclamation of the gospel. Such are the privileges of Peter’s readers.

The word of God is identified as *logos* in v. 23 and *rhēma* in v. 25. The latter term is likely used in v. 25 because it occurs in the citation from Isa 40:8. We should not, therefore, posit a different meaning for the two terms.⁴¹⁰ They are synonyms, both referring to the gospel. God has used this gospel to beget them to new life, and on the basis of that life they are to love one another constantly.

2.3.2 Longing for the Pure Milk (2:1–3)

¹ Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all slander. ² Like newborn infants, desire the pure milk of the word, so that you may grow up into your salvation, ³ if you have tasted that the Lord is good.

2:1 Some understand the “therefore” (*oun*) to reach all the way back to 1:13–25. But it seems more likely that it relates to what has just preceded, namely, the new life that believers enjoy by God’s grace. They have been begotten by God (v. 23) by means of his word, and thus they are exhorted to lay aside all in their lives that quenches love for one another.⁴¹¹ The participle translated “rid yourselves” (*apothemenoi*) is actually not an imperative, although most English translations render it in such a way. Understanding it imperatively is acceptable, for it borrows, so to speak, its imperatival force from the main verb “crave” (NIV; *epipothēsate*) in v. 2.⁴¹² We should observe, however, that the central command in this paragraph is the injunction to long for the “pure milk of the word” (v. 2).

Why does Peter begin with the call to put away evil attitudes and actions? Probably because such things destroy love, and responsibility to love is the main idea in vv. 22–25.⁴¹³ We noticed the call to brotherly love in v. 22, and we are also told that Christians should “love one another” (ESV; *allēlous*). In the next section of the letter (2:11–4:11), Peter explains how believers should relate to unbelievers, but here the focus is on community relationships. The NT often uses “rid yourselves” (*apotithēmi*) for putting off sin or that which hinders Christian growth (Rom 13:12; Eph 4:22, 25; Col 3:8; Heb 12:1; Jas 1:21). Some scholars see a reference to baptism, where believers removed their old clothes and then were clothed with new garments.⁴¹⁴ This practice, however, is not clearly attested in the NT but rather belongs to the later history of the church.⁴¹⁵ Even more important, the removal of these vices is not a one-time event in the lives of believers, and thus it cannot be restricted to baptism. The

actor may be ingressive, but it does not limit the action to one occasion. In fact, believers need to put aside these sins on a daily basis.

The sins listed tear at the social fabric of the church, ripping away the threads of love that keep them together. Peter signals thereby that no sin is to be tolerated in the community, that sin is to be rejected comprehensively. The first sin named could refer to wickedness in general, but the CSB rightly renders it “malice” (*kakian*) since the latter fits better with the social slant of these verses. Ill-will toward one another destroys the harmony befitting the community of believers. Guile and hypocrisy are closely related, for in both cases deceit and falseness have entered the community. “Sincere brotherly love” (v. 22) is to be the goal of believers, and deceit and hypocrisy introduce pretense and disingenuousness so that the trust necessary for love vanishes. Envy is also contrary to love because instead of desiring the best for others, it hopes for their downfall or prefers the advancement of oneself to the joy of others. Slander is not limited to spreading false stories about others but also involves disparaging others.⁴¹⁶ Well-timed words that carry insinuations about others are often all that is necessary. Love, of course, finds the good in others and avoids speaking what is negative.

2:2 The central admonition in the paragraph is communicated here. Believers are to long for the “pure milk of the word” so that they will grow, resulting in their salvation. This longing for milk is compared to the craving for milk of “newborn babies” (*hōs artigennēta*). The reference to “newborn babies” (NIV) recalls the notion that Christians are “begotten” (*anagennaō*) by God (1:3, 23), and here the result of that begetting (i.e., new life) is brought to the forefront. Some scholars conclude that the readers were new Christians since they are compared to newborns.⁴¹⁷ That judgment is mistaken since the readers are not identified as infants in the faith.⁴¹⁸ They are compared to infants who have a longing for milk and are not defined as new converts. Peter uses an illustration, explaining one way all Christians should be like newborn babies. Achtemeier rightly comments, “The assumption that all the readers addressed in the vast area of northern Asia Minor would be recent converts all but defies

the imagination.”⁴¹⁹ The metaphor does convey that believers are dependent on God’s strength for their lives.⁴²⁰ As Donelson says, their status as babes is “a permanent condition,” and believers “are all helpless babies in need of” sustenance.⁴²¹

Peter’s purpose is to say that all believers should be like infants in this sense—they should “desire” (*epipothēsate*) the “pure milk.”⁴²² “Desire” is a strong word, used of the ardent desire believers should have for God in the OT (Pss 41:2; 83:3 LXX). Babies long for milk that will sustain bodily growth, and similarly believers should desire milk for growth in salvation. The reference to “milk” (*gala*) in 1 Cor 3:1–3 and Heb 5:11–14 occurs in contexts where believers are indicted for spiritual immaturity, but we must beware of imposing those contexts on the Petrine usage. Peter gives an illustration of those who are newly born and uses the image of milk to convey how believers grow.⁴²³ Milk, then, becomes the substance of life, comprising that which all Christians need to progress in their spiritual lives. The image of milk does not suggest, then, that believers in Asia Minor need elementary and basic teaching.⁴²⁴ We conclude from this that this admonition applies to all believers throughout their lives. No believers in Asia Minor could exempt themselves from the admonition by claiming spiritual adulthood.

What is the spiritual milk for which believers are to long? Two adjectives describe it, translated as “pure” (*adolon*) and “spiritual” (*logikon*) by the NIV. The word “pure” functions as a contrast to the deceit (*dolos*) believers are to put aside (v. 1), and the term refers to that which is unadulterated and uncontaminated. Contaminated milk produces sickness and even death, but this milk is health giving and pure. The word *logikos* is translated by the NIV and understood by many to mean “spiritual.”⁴²⁵ Usually, however, in Greek literature the term refers to that which is rational or reasonable.⁴²⁶ It is not equated with the term “spiritual,” even though it overlaps with it (cf. T. Levi 3:6; Philo, *Spec. Laws* 1.16; Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.16). Peter probably opted for the term to clarify that the milk he had in view

was the word of God. The “word” (*logos*), after all, was the means by which God gave life to believers. God’s “word” (*rhēma*) abides forever, and that word is identified as the gospel preached to the Petrine believers (1:25). We see a play on words with *logos* (“word”) and *logikos* (“rational” or “reasonable”). Thus, Peter uses *logikos* to define milk here so that the readers will understand that the milk by which they grow is nothing other than the word of God.⁴²⁷ The means by which God sanctifies believers is through the mind, through the continued proclamation of the word. Spiritual growth is not primarily mystical but rational and reasonable, and rational in the sense that it is informed and sustained by God’s word.

The purpose (*hina*) for desiring the milk of the word is now conveyed. By means of the word (*en autō*) they grow. The antecedent to *autō*, therefore, is the neuter noun “milk” (*gala*), which most naturally refers to the word, whether preached orally or written, as the means of growth for believers. Such growth “results in” salvation. The CSB and NIV translate the preposition *eis* as “in,” but it most likely denotes result here.⁴²⁸ Spiritual growth is necessary for eschatological salvation. Understanding “salvation” as an end-time reality fits with 1:5 and 1:9, as we argued in the commentary on those verses.⁴²⁹ Some commentators, however, make the mistake of saying that Peter refers to end-time salvation rather than spiritual maturity.⁴³⁰ This is a false dichotomy. Peter’s point is that spiritual growth is necessary for eschatological salvation. The evidence that one has been given life by the Father through the word is that believers continue to long for that word and become increasingly mature.

2:3 Believers are to long for the milk of God’s word since it is essential to obtain salvation on the last day. This longing is fitting “if you have tasted that the Lord is good.” The NIV turns the conditional clause into a fulfilled condition, “now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.”⁴³¹ Peter did not write “if” to sow doubts in the minds of the readers, but neither should “if” be confused with “since.” Or “now.”⁴³² Peter wants the readers to contemplate whether they have in fact experienced the kindness of the Lord, and he was confident

that the answer would be affirmative. Translating the term “if” by “now” or “since,” however, short-circuits the process, removing the contingency that the author wanted his readers to consider.

The words used here allude to Ps 34. This psalm was important to Peter because he cites it again in 3:10–12, quoting vv. 13–16 of the psalm (Ps 33 in the LXX).⁴³³ Here Peter alludes to v. 9 in the Septuagint. The selection of this psalm is intentional, and a number of echoes of this psalm reverberate throughout 1 Peter. We should note at the outset the theme of the psalm. When the righteous are afflicted and suffering, they can be confident that God will deliver them from all their troubles. Peter’s suffering readers could take great encouragement from the message of the psalm. Further, the psalm calls on the readers to hope in God in the midst of their troubles (33:9, 23 LXX), one of the central themes in 1 Peter.⁴³⁴ The superscription of the psalm was probably known to Peter’s readers, and it informs us that David wrote the psalm when he fled from Abimelech after he feigned insanity. It is irrelevant for our purposes whether one thinks the superscription is accurate since that is how the psalm was transmitted to the readers. Indeed, in the Septuagint version (33:5) David praises God for delivering him from all “his sojournings” (*paroikōn*).⁴³⁵ This fits beautifully with the theme of exile in 1 Peter, where the readers are “sojourners” (*paroikoi*, 1:17; 2:11; cf. 1:1). The blessing of God in 1 Pet 1:3 (*eulogētos*) is matched by the blessing of God in Ps 33:2 (*eulogēsō*).

Peter also emphasizes fearing the Lord (1:17; 2:17–18; 3:2, 14), and the psalmist often stresses the same (Ps 33:10, 12). In the next verse (1 Pet 2:4) Peter speaks of “coming” (*proserchomai*), which is the same verb used by the psalmist (Ps 33:6). Finally, both Peter and the psalmist say that those who trust and hope in the Lord, in contrast to unbelievers, will not be put to shame (1 Pet 2:6; 3:16; 4:16; cf. Ps 33:6). All of this indicates that Peter does not allude to Ps 34 casually but that the psalm’s themes made a powerful impact on him. Since Peter alludes to the psalm in this verse, we should not expect the exact wording of the psalm to be reproduced. Indeed, what is imperative in

the psalm is a conditional statement in Peter, and the words “and see” (*kai idete*) from the psalm are not included.⁴³⁶

We now come to the main idea of the verse. Believers should long for the Lord if indeed they have tasted or experienced his kindness. Longing to grow spiritually comes from a taste of the beauty of the Lord, an experience of his kindness and goodness. Those who pursue God ardently have tasted his sweetness. Christian growth for Peter is not a mere call to duty or an alien moralism. The desire to grow springs from an experience with the Lord’s kindness, an experience that leaves believers desiring more.⁴³⁷

2.3.3 The Living Stone and Living Stones (2:4–10)

⁴ *As you come to him, a living stone—rejected by people but chosen and honored by God—⁵ you yourselves, as living stones, a spiritual house, are being built to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For it stands in Scripture:*

*See, I lay a stone in Zion,
a chosen and honored cornerstone,
and the one who believes in him
will never be put to shame.*

⁷ *So honor will come to you who believe; but for the unbelieving,
The stone that the builders rejected—
this one has become the cornerstone,*

⁸ *and
A stone to stumble over,
and a rock to trip over.*

They stumble because they disobey the word; they were destined for this.

⁹ *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.* ¹⁰ *Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

2:4 Believers come to Christ as a living stone, as the foundation of the new temple. Even though people rejected him, God honored and vindicated him. The word coming, rendered “as you come” (*proserchomai*), could be understood as a participle that is an imperative,⁴³⁸ but it is probably temporal here, as the CSB renders it.⁴³⁹ In any case, faith manifests itself in coming to Christ for life. According to v. 4 the “Lord” of v. 3, who is clearly Yahweh in the OT context of Ps 34, is none other than Jesus Christ.⁴⁴⁰ The use of the OT is significant christologically since it demonstrates that what is true of Yahweh is also true of Jesus the Christ. Here Jesus Christ is included within the being of the one God.

The present paragraph challenges interpreters since it is stocked with OT allusions and citations. The first allusion emerges when Jesus is identified as the “living stone.” That Jesus is the stone is confirmed by the OT references that follow in vv. 6–8 (see the commentary on these verses).⁴⁴¹ Jesus is doubtless called the “living” stone because of his resurrection.⁴⁴² Peter probably draws this theme from Ps 118:22, where the stone rejected by the builders becomes the cornerstone. In Acts 4:11 Peter appeals to this same verse in Ps 118 to refer to Christ’s death and resurrection/exaltation. The argument in Acts 4:10–11 demonstrates the connection. The religious leaders despised Jesus by crucifying him, but God made him the cornerstone by raising him. Such a reading of Ps 118:22 stems from Jesus himself in the parable of the tenants (Matt 21:33–46 par.).⁴⁴³ The tenants slay the son to possess the inheritance—a clear reference to the crucifixion of Christ—fulfilling the prophecy that the builders would reject the cornerstone (Matt 21:42).⁴⁴⁴ Matthew implies, however, that the slaying of Jesus

is not the last word, for he becomes the cornerstone, which almost certainly points to his resurrection.

Peter continues to be informed by Ps 118, for as the cornerstone of the building was rejected by the builders (see v. 7 below), so also Jesus was rejected by human beings. Some scholars maintain that Peter refers to the general rejection of Jesus by people rather than specifically to his crucifixion.⁴⁴⁵ Perhaps it is better to say that the rejection of Jesus reached its climax in his execution. In Acts 4:10–11—where Peter also cites Ps 118—it seems that the rejection of Jesus as the cornerstone was fulfilled in his death, whereas his vindication or being honored by God occurred at the resurrection. The same emphasis on Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection is likely present here as well. The perfect tense of “rejected” (*apodedokimasmēnon*) supports the notion of a past action with ongoing results.⁴⁴⁶ In God’s sight Jesus was not “rejected” but “chosen” (*eklekton*) and “honored” (*entimon*). He is God’s chosen and honored stone, and since this is contrasted with his rejection by human beings, it probably alludes to the resurrection and exaltation of Christ. The life of Christ functions as a pattern for the Petrine Christians, for they too are despised by many but chosen and honored in God’s sight, destined for vindication after suffering.

2:5 Peter now draws the comparison between Christ as the “living stone” and believers as “living stones.” Believers are members of the Lord’s new temple and offer sacrifices pleasing to God through Christ. Believers are “living stones” because of their faith in the resurrected Christ. Jesus’s resurrection life is also theirs; they await their resurrection at the end of the age, but even now they have new life because they have come to Christ (v. 4). Nowhere else in the NT are believers called living stones, although elsewhere they are described as God’s temple or house (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19; Eph 2:19–22; Heb 3:6). The picture here is of a house in which believers constitute the building stones. The term “house” (*oikos*) alludes to the temple, which is commonly called a “house” in the OT (e.g., 2 Sam 7:13; 1 Kgs 3:2; 6; 8; etc.) and is also designated as a house in the NT (Matt 21:13; 23:38; John 2:16–17; Acts 7:47, 49). In particular, when the verb

“build” (*oikodomeō*) is combined with “house” (*oikos*) in the Septuagint, the temple is often in view.⁴⁴⁷ The house is “spiritual” (*pneumatikos*) because it is animated and indwelt by the Holy Spirit.⁴⁴⁸ Despite the hesitation of some scholars, Peter clearly identifies the church as God’s new temple.⁴⁴⁹ The physical temple pointed toward and anticipated God’s new temple,⁴⁵⁰ and now that the new temple has arrived, the old is superfluous.

The phrase “spiritual house” is probably appositional, and so the point of the text is not that believers “are being built into a spiritual house” but that they as living stones, as a spiritual house, are being built up.⁴⁵¹ The purpose of such building is that they function as a “holy priesthood” (*hierateuma hagion*).⁴⁵² We can summarize the verse as follows: you as a spiritual house are being built up “to be a holy priesthood.”⁴⁵³ Some might object that believers cannot be both the temple and the priests who minister in the temple, that the mixture of metaphors is intolerable. But the fulfillment in Christ transcends the types that anticipate it. Thus, we should not be surprised that believers are both priests and the temple.⁴⁵⁴ They are God’s dwelling place by the Spirit and his priests. No internal contradiction is involved since Peter does not refer to believers as priests serving in a literal temple. The spiritual nature of the house does not draw our attention to its immateriality but to a temple inhabited by the Holy Spirit.⁴⁵⁵

Before returning to the issue of the priesthood, we should note the NRSV (“like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house”) understands the verb *oikodomeisthe* as an imperative that enjoins believers to build themselves up as God’s people.⁴⁵⁶ The passive of the verb, however, is never rendered as an imperative in its seven occurrences in the NT, and in the forty-eight uses in the Septuagint it is imperative only on two occasions (Ezra 6:3; Ps 50:20), which suggests that we should take it as an indicative here.⁴⁵⁷ The indicative is also favored since Peter focuses on the blessings that belong to believers.⁴⁵⁸ Furthermore, the parallel statements in v. 9

support the idea that affirmations or declarations rather than commands are found here. The passive of the verb signifies that God is the one building the church (cf. Matt 16:18) so that it will be a “holy priesthood.” The notion of the church as a priesthood anticipates v. 9. Peter does not think of individuals functioning as priests before God.⁴⁵⁹ The church corporately is the Lord’s priesthood; Western believers tend to individualize the notion of priesthood rather than seeing the community emphasis.⁴⁶⁰ In the OT the priestly caste was limited to the tribe of Levi, and in that sense only a portion of Israel could carry out the priestly function (but see commentary on v. 9 below). All of God’s people are now his priests. Despite the emphasis on the corporate priesthood, Peter’s comments apply by implication to individuals as well.⁴⁶¹ That is, all believers have direct access to God by virtue of the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We must avoid, however, focusing on the individual because Protestants are prone to individualize the text in a way that blunts or even denies its corporate emphasis, and the text has been wrongly understood to teach that there is no need for church leaders or educated ministers.

The purpose of the holy priesthood is “to offer spiritual sacrifices.” The NIV does not as clearly indicate that we have a purpose clause here since it translates the infinitive as a participle (“offering”). The word “offer” (*anenenkai*) is regularly used to denote the offering of sacrifices in the OT.⁴⁶² “Spiritual sacrifices” (*pneumatikas thysias*) are required, meaning that they are sacrifices offered by virtue of the work of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁶³ Peter also implies that animal sacrifices are passé, although there is not an explicit polemic against such sacrifices.⁴⁶⁴ The provisional and temporary nature of animal sacrifices was a settled issue in the Petrine churches. What sacrifices were in Peter’s mind?⁴⁶⁵ The parallel with 2:9, where the royal priesthood proclaims God’s wonders, suggests to some that this is the primary function of the priesthood (see commentary on 2:9 for further discussion). The priestly calling of the church is understood from 2:9 to be evangelistic, a praising of God’s name so that people from all

over the world will join in worshiping him.⁴⁶⁶ Nevertheless, we should not limit the sacrifices here to any one item because it probably includes everything that is pleasing to God (cf. Rom 12:1; Heb 13:15–16).⁴⁶⁷ Peter speaks generally and comprehensively of all that believers do by the power of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁶⁸ Indeed, not any and every sacrifice is pleasing to God, but only those offered “through Jesus Christ.”

2:6 Peter cites Isa 28:16 to show from the OT that the Lord chose Jesus as the elect and vindicated cornerstone of the temple. At the same time, those who put their faith in Jesus will also be honored and will not experience eschatological shame. Verse 6 begins with a word in Greek that usually is translated “because” (*dioti*) since it provides a reason or ground for what precedes. The OT citations which follow provide an explanation or restatement of what precedes, and hence the CSB’s “for” is fitting.⁴⁶⁹ Peter uses the words “it stands in Scripture” to introduce Isa 28:16.⁴⁷⁰ In context Isa 28 is a message of judgment on Ephraim and leaders in Jerusalem for their disobedience and unbelief.⁴⁷¹ What Isaiah emphasizes throughout the book comes to the forefront here. Those who trust in the Lord will escape judgment. Isaiah encourages the people not to put their trust in foreign alliances or military strength (cf. Isa 30–31) but only the Lord. Those who do not trust in him will perish, but those who put their faith in him will triumph. The stone in Isaiah stands in contrast to the “shelter or refuge the rulers of Jerusalem have erected.”⁴⁷² In Isaiah the readers are to put their trust in Yahweh’s saving promises.⁴⁷³ It is possible in the original context that the stone refers to a Davidic king, to God’s covenant commitment to his people, and hence by extension Peter identifies the stone as Jesus the Messiah.⁴⁷⁴

Interestingly, the citation does not match either the MT or the Septuagint.⁴⁷⁵ Some maintain that the source of Peter’s citation comes from Paul, who also cites the Isaiah text in Rom 9:33.⁴⁷⁶ The Pauline quotation, however, differs rather significantly from Peter’s,

and so direct dependence is unlikely.⁴⁷⁷ The text is alluded to in 1QS 8:7–8, where the council of the community is God’s “precious cornerstone” and functions as the true temple of God. Nevertheless, the differences from Peter’s citation are again remarkable enough to rule out any literary dependence. Interestingly, however, Peter argues that what is true of Christ is also true of the community. Just as Christ is the “living stone,” so also the church is comprised of “living stones.” The Isaiah Targum understood the text messianically: “Behold, I will appoint in Zion a king, a strong king, powerful and terrible.”⁴⁷⁸ All we can say with confidence is that Isa 28:16 was viewed by a number of sources as having an eschatological fulfillment and that Peter and Paul both see it as fulfilled in Christ, suggesting, perhaps, a common source. Some identify this source as a testimony book, in which a collection of messianic prophecies was contained,⁴⁷⁹ but most scholars remain unpersuaded.⁴⁸⁰

The meaning of the citation is what is crucial for our purposes. God has “appointed” (*tithēmi*, see v. 8) Christ as a stone in Zion. The shift from the Septuagint “I lay” (*emballō*) to “I appoint” (*tithēmi*) places the focus on God’s initiative.⁴⁸¹ The Petrine use of “appoint” emphasizes God’s election and points forward to v. 8.⁴⁸² He is God’s elect and honored cornerstone,⁴⁸³ and the entire building (i.e., the church) takes its shape from him. The OT citation repeats the two terms “chosen” (*eklektion*) and “honored” (*entimon*) from v. 4, showing that Peter anticipated citing Isa 28:16 even in v. 4.

I also argued that in v. 4 there is an allusion to Christ’s resurrection. God made him the cornerstone of the building when he raised him from the dead, and thus the appointment focuses on Christ’s resurrection, which revealed that he was elected and honored by God. Some understand the word “cornerstone” (*akrogōniaion*) to refer to the top stone in a building or the keystone in an arch.⁴⁸⁴ This interpretation should be rejected since the reference to stumbling in v. 8 indicates that a stone on the ground is intended.⁴⁸⁵ Furthermore, the Septuagint makes clear that the reference is to the foundation

(*themelia*). We conclude by noting that the first part of the verse restates the idea from v. 4 that Christ was God's honored and chosen stone.

The reference to believing (*pisteuōn*) in him is another way of describing what it means to come (*proserchomenoi*) to him (see the commentary in v. 4). What Peter emphasizes is that the one who believes in Christ "will never be put to shame." Just as Christ is chosen and honored by God, and the latter is evidenced by the resurrection, so too believers will be vindicated on the last day. What is true of the Christ is also true of his people.⁴⁸⁶ They will not experience the embarrassment of judgment but the glory of approval.⁴⁸⁷ The phrase "will never be put to shame," therefore, is another way of saying they will be honored (*timē*, v. 7).⁴⁸⁸

2:7 Peter draws an inference (*oun*, translated "now" in NIV and "then" in NRSV) from vv. 6–8 for believers and unbelievers, emphasizing the honor awaiting believers and the judgment of unbelievers. Unfortunately, many English versions obscure the meaning of the verse by translating the word *timē* as "precious," which has sentimental associations for English readers. The CSB translates the verse well: "So honor will come to you who believe" (cf. ESV). By "honor," as we noted in the previous verse, Peter means final vindication on the day of judgment. This is confirmed by 1:7, where Peter refers to the eschatological honor that belongs to those who believe in Christ. Just as Christ was "honored" (*entimon*) by the Father (vv. 4, 6) at the resurrection, so those who trust in him will be honored on the last day, even though presently they are suffering. We should also note that Peter uses the verb for believing twice in the last two verses, reminding us again that the emphasis on "faith" in chap. 1 (vv. 5, 9) should be interpreted in terms of trusting God and not just faithfulness. Of course, the latter idea is present as well, but faithfulness flows from trust, and the two should not be reversed.

Conversely, those who disbelieve will face "shame" (v. 6) and dishonor (v. 7a) on the last day. The reason for this is that the stone that was disregarded by the builders has become the cornerstone of the building. The establishment of the cornerstone likely refers to the

resurrection of Jesus Christ (cf. Acts 4:11).⁴⁸⁹ He has been vindicated by God and is the stone from which the building takes shape. Peter cites Ps 118:22 again (see v. 6), and this psalm is cited often in the NT (cf. Matt 21:42; Mark 12:10–11; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11). The psalm in its original context describes the return of the king to the temple to give thanks after his victory over his enemies. The stone rejected in the historical context of the psalm was the Davidic king, and the builders were the foreign nations that rejected the rule of the anointed king of Israel. The enemies of Israel thereby assured their own destruction since the Davidic king was the stone by which Yahweh would carry out his plan in the world. Thus, the king destroys his enemies (Ps 118:10–14).

Both Jesus and Peter (Matt 21:42; Acts 4:11) apply the psalm in a surprising way. The builders who reject the anointed king are not only foreigners but also the religious leaders of Israel. The religious leaders believed they were erecting God's building, but they rejected the cornerstone for the entire edifice. By doing so they were behaving like the pagan nations of David's day and assured their own judgment, for God established Jesus as the cornerstone by virtue of his resurrection and hence vindicated him. The NIV 1984 (but see the NIV 2011) understands the stone here to be the "capstone" rather than the "cornerstone." The Greek wording is literally "head of the corner" (*kephalēn gōnias*). The word "head" here does not mean "top" but "end point, furthest extremity" (cf. 1 Kgs 8:8; 2 Chr 5:9).⁴⁹⁰ Moreover, we note again that the next verse speaks of people stumbling over the stone, suggesting a cornerstone that people trip over instead of a capstone (see comments on v. 6). In any case, the main point is clear. God has vindicated and honored Jesus (vv. 4, 6), even though people have rejected him (vv. 4, 7). Those who disbelieve in him will face judgment.

2:8 Verse 8 continues the thought from v. 7. We can summarize the verses as follows: Those who disbelieve stumble over the cornerstone, who is Christ. They stumble over Christ because they refuse to believe in him and obey him. People who stumble and disobey are responsible for their refusal to trust in Christ, and yet God has appointed—

without himself being morally responsible for the sin of unbelievers—that they will both disobey and stumble.

The stone that sits at the head of the corner is one over which the disbelieving stumble and fall.⁴⁹¹ Peter alludes to (rather than cites) Isa 8:14 here. In the context of Isaiah 8, Israel and Judah are called upon to fear and trust the Lord rather than fear other nations. Apparently, this section of Isaiah was important to Peter since he also alludes to Isa 8:12 in 1 Pet 3:14. He likely found it relevant to his readers because the churches in Asia Minor were tempted to fear those who mistreated and persecuted them. The allusion in this verse represents a literal translation of the MT and does not accord as closely with the Septuagint. Paul’s wording in Rom 9:33 is similar, but in Paul we have a mixed citation where Isa 28:16 and 8:14 are merged. The issue is raised again whether Peter used Paul as a source or they both drew from a common source, especially since both writers used Isa 8:14 and 28:16 together. It is doubtful that Peter used Paul as a literary source, but it is probably the case that these two texts were often used in early Christian preaching.

Peter explains why some stumble and fall over the cornerstone. They fall “because they disobey the word.” The “word” (*logō*) here is the gospel—the same word God uses as a seed to beget new life (cf. 1:23–25; cf. 3:1). The CSB rightly takes the participle disobeying (*apeithountes*) as causal, explaining why they stumble.⁴⁹² The word “disobey” here is complementary to the term “unbelieving” in v. 7. The two cannot be finally separated, although the latter is the root of the former since all disobedience flows from a failure to trust God. Their stumbling over the cornerstone is not accidental, as humans often trip unintentionally while walking. Rather, in this instance humans stumble because of rebellion, because they do not want to come to the living stone.

Peter adds a provocative comment, which he does not elaborate on, to conclude his comments about the disobedient, “they were destined for this.” The verb “destined” (*tithēmi*) often refers to what God has appointed to occur (Acts 1:7; 13:47; 20:28; 1 Cor 12:18, 28; 1 Thess 5:9; 1 Tim 2:7). In v. 6 we saw that God appointed Jesus as the

cornerstone, but here he speaks of the appointment of those who don't obey. Some scholars argue that Peter intends to say that God has appointed that those who disobey the message of the gospel of their own accord would stumble.⁴⁹³ Such an interpretation fits with the theme that human beings decide their fate, which Scripture clearly emphasizes.⁴⁹⁴ On the other hand, the interpretation proposed is prosaic and obvious, and it is unlikely that it captures the full meaning.⁴⁹⁵ Rather the word "this" (*ho*) refers to the entire thought that precedes.⁴⁹⁶ God has not only appointed that those who disobey the word would stumble and fall. He has also determined that they would disbelieve and stumble.⁴⁹⁷ The idea that calamity also comes from God is often taught in the OT. I will cite three representative examples since to modern people the idea is shocking: "Do not both adversity and good come from the mouth of the Most High?" (Lam 3:38). "If a ram's horn is blown in a city, aren't people afraid? If a disaster occurs in a city, hasn't the LORD done it?" (Amos 3:6). "I form light and create darkness, I make success and create disaster; I am the LORD, who does all these things" (Isa 45:7). The worldview of the Scriptures is that God is sovereignly in control of all things, from the decisions made by kings (Prov 21:1) to the throw of the dice (Prov 16:33; cf. Isa 46:9–11). Even the cruelest and most vicious act in history—the execution of Jesus of Nazareth—was predestined by God (Acts 2:23; 4:27–28).⁴⁹⁸

It is imperative, however, that we add immediately another element of the biblical worldview. Biblical writers never exempt human beings from responsibility; their choices are authentic, even though they believe God ordains all things (cf. Rom 9:14–23). Peter indicts those who crucified Christ, even though God predestined the execution (Acts 2:23). It seems fair to conclude that Peter indicts them because in killing the Christ they carried out their own desires. They were not coerced into crucifying Jesus against their wills. In putting him to death, they did just what they wanted to do. Similarly, Peter criticizes those who stumble over Christ the cornerstone for their unbelief and disobedience. He does not argue that their unbelief is free from guilt

because it was predestined. He has already emphasized that they chose not to obey him and that they refused to believe in him. Peter articulates a common theme in the Scriptures that human beings are responsible for their sin and sin willingly, and yet God controls all events in history. The Scriptures do not resolve how these two themes fit together philosophically, though today we would call it a “compatibilist” worldview. We must admit, however, that *how* this fits together is difficult to explain, and hence theologians have often fallen prey to the temptation to deny one or the other truth. Why does Peter emphasize the theme of God’s sovereignty here? He does so to comfort his readers, assuring them that the evil in the world is not sundered from God’s control.⁴⁹⁹ God still reigns, even over those who oppose him and the Petrine believers.⁵⁰⁰

2:9 Unbelievers face God’s judgment, but believers, those suffering for their faith, are God’s chosen ones, his royal priests, his special people, and they are called upon to voice God’s praises for their salvation. The “but” (*de*) beginning v. 9 is most naturally understood as a contrast to what immediately precedes.⁵⁰¹ As Thurén says, “A negative example adds the appreciation of the positive.”⁵⁰² God has appointed the disobedient to destruction, but on the contrary believers are a “chosen race” (*eklektion genos*). They belong to God’s people because they have been elected, chosen by him. As Horrell remarks, this is the only place in the NT where the words *genos*, *ethnos*, and *laos* appear together, and the only place where *ethnos* and *genos* are applied to the church.⁵⁰³ “The author here appropriates the key identity designations of Israel and uses them to describe the identity of the largely gentile communities of believers in Christ addressed in the letter.”⁵⁰⁴ We saw in the first verse of the letter that Peter introduces the theme of election to strengthen God’s sojourners, and he returns to it here. The closest parallel to what Peter says here is in Isa 43:20, a context in which the Lord promises to accomplish a second exodus for his people in bringing them out of Babylon.⁵⁰⁵ The word “*genos* refers to people descended from a common lineage,”⁵⁰⁶ referring “to

a recognizable ethnic group sharing both ancestry and custom.”⁵⁰⁷ In the LXX *genos* regularly denotes the Jewish people, but Peter now applies it to the church of Jesus Christ.⁵⁰⁸ According to Peter, God’s elected people are no longer coterminous with Israel but are those who trust in Jesus Christ, and thus this new people is composed of both Jews and Gentiles. From texts like this Christians began to conceive of themselves as a new race.⁵⁰⁹

Believers are also a “royal priesthood,” and Peter draws on Exod 19:6, using the exact words found there in identifying the church as a “royal priesthood” (*basileion hierteuma*).⁵¹⁰ In Exodus the title applies to Israel, with whom God enacted his covenant at Sinai. Israel’s priesthood was such that they were to mirror to the nations the glory of Yahweh so that all nations would see that no god rivals the Lord (cf. also Isa 61:6). Unfortunately, Israel mainly failed in this endeavor as the Assyrian (722 BC) and Babylonian (586 BC) exiles demonstrate. Israel was exiled because it failed to keep God’s law. Now God’s kingdom of priests consists of the church of Jesus Christ. The church is summoned to mediate God’s blessings to the nations as it proclaims the gospel. We should note the comparison and contrast here. Both Israel as a whole and the church of Jesus Christ are identified as a “royal priesthood.” There is no suggestion that only a portion of Israel served as priests in Exod 19. The difference is not the extent of the priesthood but its identity, for now the royal priesthood is the church of Jesus Christ (cf. Rev 1:6).⁵¹¹ As noted above, the priesthood here is corporate, and yet this does not rule out the truth that individuals serve priestly functions. Best seems to strike the right balance here: “Christians exercise priestly functions but always as members of a group who all exercise the same function.”⁵¹²

Peter also replicates the exact words of Exod 19:6 in identifying the church as a “holy nation” (*ethnos hagion*; cf. Exod 23:22 LXX). In the LXX *ethnos* often refers to the pagan nations outside Israel, but it can refer to Israel as well (Exod 19:6).⁵¹³ The church of Jesus is a people now set apart for the Lord, enjoying his special presence and

favor. The next phrase, “a people for his possession” (*eis peripoiēsin*), does not allude as clearly to any OT text. The term is used in Mal 3:17 of believers who respond to the Lord’s rebuke and live righteously, and so in contrast to the wicked, they constitute his possession, his special people. There is likely also an allusion to Isa 43:21. We noted above that the phrase “chosen race” may be drawn from Isa 43:20. The verb “I formed for myself” (*periepoiēsamen*) in 21 is the verbal form of the noun “possession” (*peripoiēsis*).⁵¹⁴ Again the privileges belonging to Israel now belong to the church of Jesus Christ. The church does not replace Israel, but it does fulfill the promises made to Israel; and all those, Jews and Gentiles, who belong to the restored Israel are part of the new people of God.⁵¹⁵

The purpose of the people of God is now explained. God has chosen them to be his people, established them as a royal priesthood, and appointed them as a holy nation to be his special possession so that they would “proclaim the praises of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” Peter again probably alludes to Isa 43:21, for there we are told that God formed Israel for himself so that “they would recount my praises” (NIV; *tas aretas mou diēgeisthai*).⁵¹⁶ It should be noted that Peter, like the Septuagint, uses the term “praises” (*aretas*) in the plural. As God formed Israel to praise him, now the church has been established to praise his wonders. God’s ultimate purpose in everything he does is designed to bring him praise (Isa 43:7). The declaration of God’s praises includes both worship and evangelism, spreading the good news of God’s saving wonders to all peoples.⁵¹⁷ They proclaim God’s praises for calling them “out of darkness into his marvelous light.” This is a description of their conversion, employing the language of Gen 1, where God utters the word and light springs into being (Gen 1:3–5), pushing back the darkness. Paul uses the same picture of conversion in 2 Cor 4:6, where God shines in the heart of his people giving them knowledge of his glory through Jesus Christ. Conversion is often depicted in the NT as a transfer from darkness to light (Acts 26:18; 2 Cor 4:6; Eph 5:8; 1 Thess 5:4, 5, 8).⁵¹⁸ We also have noted previously (see the

commentary on 1:15) that the calling described here is effectual. Just as God's word creates light, so God's call creates faith. Calling is not a mere invitation but is performative so that the words God speaks become a reality. The beauty and glory of the new life is conveyed by the image of light in contrast to darkness. Hence, Peter identifies the light as "marvelous" (cf. Ps 118:23).

2:10 Verse 10 returns to the status of the Petrine churches as God's people, and the great privilege of now being God's people is celebrated. Peter alludes to the words of Hos 2:23, and interestingly, Paul cites the same idea from Hosea in Rom 9:25–26, but Paul's wording differs from Peter's, and it is clear that no literary relationship exists between the citations. In Hosea, Israel is repudiated as God's people because of their sin, but God pledges to have mercy on them and form them again as his people. Such has been the experience of the church of Jesus Christ. The Petrine churches were composed mainly of Gentiles, living in darkness (2:9),⁵¹⁹ but now wondrously they are God's people. They did not deserve inclusion into God's people, but they have now received his mercy and rejoice at their inclusion. How can Peter cite a text about Jewish restoration for the inclusion of Gentiles? Carson says that Hosea is used typologically.⁵²⁰ Apostate Jews had become, so to speak Gentiles, cut off from God's covenant. The Gentiles, of course, were in the same position, and Peter appropriates the Hosea text to proclaim that the Lord has folded Gentiles into his people because of his great mercy. The promise of restoration in Hosea is not limited to ethnic Jews but applies to all peoples. The message of mercy that opened the letter at 1:3 now closes a major section of the letter in 2:10.⁵²¹ Peter reminds the readers again that they are recipients of God's grace, that the foundation for obeying the imperatives is God's mercy in Christ.

SECTION OUTLINE

3 Living as Exiles to Bring Glory to God in a Hostile World (2:11–4:11)

3.1 The Christian Life as a Battle and Witness (2:11–12)

3.2 Testifying to the Gospel in the Social Order (2:13–3:12)

3.2.1 Submit Yourselves to the Government (2:13–17)

3.2.2 Slaves, Submit Yourselves to Masters (2:18–25)

3.2.2.1 To Receive a Reward (2:18–20)

3.2.2.2 To Imitate Christ (2:21–25)

3.2.3 Wives, Submit to Husbands (3:1–6)

3.2.4 Husbands, Follow God’s Will with Your Wives (3:7)

3.2.5 Conclusion: Live a Godly Life (3:8–12)

3.3 Responding in a Godly Way to Suffering (3:13–4:11)

3.3.1 The Blessing of Suffering for Christ (3:13–17)

3.3.2 Christ’s Suffering as the Pathway to Exaltation (3:18–22)

3.3.3 Preparing to Suffer as Christ Did (4:1–6)

3.3.4 Living in Light of the End (4:7–11)

3 LIVING AS EXILES TO BRING GLORY TO GOD IN A HOSTILE WORLD (2:11–4:11)

A new section of the letter begins here, marked by “dear friends” (1 Pet 2:11; *agapētoi*) and “I urge” (*parakalō*).⁵²² The focus shifts from the relationship believers have with one another (1:13–2:10) to their relationship with the unbelieving world—an unbelieving world that is suspicious of and hostile to believers. In one sense the beginning of a new section is artificial because the foundation for the exhortations in 2:11–4:11 continues to be the gracious work of God by which he has bestowed upon believers new life and promised them an eschatological inheritance (1:3–12). The indicative of God’s grace and salvation also undergirds the imperatives that dominate 2:11–4:11. Still, a new emphasis is evident in 2:11–4:11 since Peter does not emphasize how believers should love one another as he does in 1:13–2:10 but turns toward how they should relate to outsiders.

An inclusio (or envelope structure) functions as the boundary for 2:11–4:11 since the text begins (2:12) and concludes with the theme of God’s glory (4:11). The repetition of these words suggests that the next major section of the letter commences in 4:12. That the section ends with 4:11 is also suggested by the words “dear friends” (*agapētoi*), which introduce a new section in 2:11 and then again in 4:12. The theme for 2:11–4:11 is explicated in 2:11–12. Believers should live a godly life as exiles, bring glory to God, and remove any grounds for criticism from unbelievers. According to the first major subsection, believers please God by living in a way that befits the gospel in the social order (2:13–3:12). Christians exemplify a godly lifestyle by deferring to those in authority (2:13, 17; 3:1), when they submit to governing authorities (2:13–17), when slaves submit to masters (2:18–25), and when wives submit to their husbands (3:1–6). The goal is to live in such a way that unbelievers will glorify God, and it is hoped that some will come to faith. Christ’s suffering is the supreme example to imitate (2:21–25) since his own suffering is the means by which human beings return to God. Another theme sounded in this section is that a godly life is necessary to receive an eternal reward. In the summary (3:8–12), Peter calls on his readers to live in a way that pleases God so that they will obtain life on the last day.

The next major subsection is found in 3:13–4:11. Dividing these verses into a coherent outline is more difficult. The subject of suffering comes to the forefront, and the focus turns to the eternal reward of believers. Those who endure suffering will receive an eschatological blessing from God. First Peter 3:8–12 functions as a transition from the previous subsection since the theme of reward is also prominent in that paragraph. In this new section Peter emphasizes that believers are blessed by God if they suffer for doing what is right (3:13–17). The suffering of believers leads Peter, as in 2:18–25, to the topic of Christ’s suffering. The suffering of Christ was the pathway to glory and the means by which he triumphed over evil powers (3:18–22). Peter implies that the same pattern is true in the life of believers—their suffering is the prelude to eschatological glory. But in the interval between suffering and glory, believers must prepare themselves to suffer and also make a clean break with sin (4:1–6). They will be

rewarded in the last day if they do so. Finally, they are to live daily in light of the *eschaton* (4:7–11), which means they must pursue a life devoted to prayer, vigilance, and ministering to others.

3.1 The Christian Life as a Battle and Witness (2:11–12)

¹¹ *Dear friends, I urge you as strangers and exiles to abstain from sinful desires that wage war against the soul.* ¹² *Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that when they slander you as evildoers, they will observe your good works and will glorify God on the day he visits.*

Peter now addresses believers as exiles in this world, directing his attention to their behavior in a hostile culture. He summons them to conquer evil desires with which they struggle. Christians must live exemplary lives with the kinds of good deeds that will make unbelievers take notice. Thus, they will fend off any suggestion that they are practicing evil. Even more important, the goal is to provoke unbelievers to glorify God in the day of visitation. Peter’s hope was that unbelievers would see that the lifestyle of believers is morally beautiful, and this admission will bring glory to God on the day of judgment. The good works of believers which are featured here fulfill the purpose for believers described in 1 Pet 2:9: they are “called . . . out of darkness” and “into his wonderful light” (1 Pet 2:9). Peter realizes that not all will be saved when they observe the lives of believers (cf. 3:16). Nevertheless, he summons believers to holiness with the hope that some unbelievers will be brought to faith as they see the transformed lives of believers.

2:11 As noted earlier a new section begins with “dear friends” (*agapētoi*; cf. 4:12) and “I urge” (*parakalō*). The translation “dear friends” is a bit misleading since the term *agapētoi* indicates that they are “beloved by God” and chosen to be his people.⁵²³ In this new section of the letter, the emphasis shifts to the relationship believers have with the world. Hence, as “strangers and exiles” (*paroikous kai parepidēmous*) they are called upon to conquer evil desires. Watson says that a stranger “is someone living as a resident outside the country of their birth and enjoying some of the same rights and

privileges as a full citizen,” and an exile “is someone passing through a country without intending to become a permanent resident.”⁵²⁴ Peter does not intend to distinguish sharply between the two terms (cf. 1:1, 17; cf. Eph 2:19; Heb 11:13) because he recalls here Abraham’s status as a sojourner. Abraham says he is a “stranger and [an] exile” (*paroikos kai parepidēmos*) in Gen 23:4 (LXX). Abraham utters these words after Sarah died, and he had no property where he could bury his wife. Similarly, the Petrine readers had no permanent home in this world. We see the same two words in Ps 38:13 (LXX), where the psalmist stresses the shortness of life, a theme that fits well with Peter’s claim that believers do not find this world to be their home.

We are reminded afresh that the words “strangers and exiles” should not be understood literally, as if they depict the actual political status of the readers.⁵²⁵ The language of strangers and exiles is appropriated theologically, signifying that the readers are *like* foreigners because of their allegiance to Jesus Christ. Achtemeier rightly observes, “It was precisely the precarious legal status of foreigners that provided the closest analogy to the kind of treatment Christians could expect from the hostile culture in which they lived.”⁵²⁶ But Achtemeier wrongly rejects the notion that Christians as exiles longed for their heavenly home, saying that they awaited the return of Christ instead.⁵²⁷ He introduces a false dichotomy since the heavenly inheritance of believers would be theirs when Christ appeared. Nor should the inheritance be conceived of as ethereal and immaterial. The future inheritance, as 2 Pet 3:13 informs us, is a new heaven and new earth (cf. Rev 21:1–22:5), a new universe that is transformed by God’s power. The author of Hebrews informs us that the patriarchs as exiles looked forward to the new world as well (Heb 11:13–16), to a heavenly city, a new country.

Peter now exhorts believers (*parakalō*) to live a certain way as strangers and exiles. Exhortations to godly living are often communicated in the NT with the verb “I urge” (cf. Rom 12:1; Eph 4:1; Phil 4:2; Phlm 10). Such exhortations are grounded in the redemptive work of Christ already accomplished for believers. The

infinitive “to abstain” (*apechesthai*) following “I urge” takes on an imperatival flavor (cf. Acts 15:20, 29; 1 Thess 4:3; 1 Tim 4:3).⁵²⁸ They are exhorted “to abstain from sinful desires,” or more literally “desires of the flesh” (*sarkikōn epithymiōn*). These are the natural human desires apart from the work of the Spirit.⁵²⁹

In 1 Peter the “flesh” (*sarx*) represents the weakness of human beings in this age (cf. 1:24; 3:18; 4:1–2). The verse is instructive because it informs us that those who have the Spirit are not exempt from selfish desires. Such desires cannot be confined to sexual sins or sins of the body like drunkenness. We have already seen in 2:1 that believers are warned against “social” sins like slander and envy. The depth of the struggle in which believers are engaged is explained by the words “which war against your soul.” Obviously the desires of the flesh that crop up in believers are strong if they are described in terms of warfare, as an enemy that attempts to conquer believers. Such desires must be resisted and conquered, and the image used implies that this is no easy matter.⁵³⁰ The Christian life is certainly not depicted as passive in which believers simply “let go and let God.” The “soul” here does not refer to the immaterial part of human beings.⁵³¹ The whole person is in view, showing that sinful desires, if they are allowed to triumph, ultimately destroy human beings.⁵³²

2:12 Believers are to live a godly life among pagans so that the slander of the latter will be contradicted by the good works of the believers, which will bring glory to God on the day of judgment. Verse 12 is connected to v. 11 by a participle that both CSB and NRSV translate as an imperative: “conduct yourselves.”⁵³³ The participle may be better rendered as instrumental (“by keeping your conduct good among the Gentiles,” *tēn anastrophēn hymōn en tois ethnēs in echontes kalēn*).⁵³⁴ If the latter is the case, it still has an imperatival sense by virtue of its relationship to the main verb. One of Peter’s favorite words for expressing the new life of believers is “conduct” (*anastrophē*).⁵³⁵ In 1:15 it refers to the holiness of life required of Christians and in 1:18 to the evil way of life from which they have

been delivered by Christ's death. It depicts the godly behavior of wives in 3:1–2 and the godly life of those suffering as believers in 3:16. The term is used broadly in Peter to designate the new way of life demanded of Christians. Such “good conduct” (RSV) will appear beautiful to “Gentiles” (*ethnesin*). Using the term “Gentiles” for pagans indicates that the terminology of Israel is now applied to the church of Jesus Christ since the readers are predominately Gentiles, not Jews.⁵³⁶ Hence, even though unbelievers are inclined to criticize Christians as those who do evil, they will be constrained by the godly lifestyle of believers to reconsider.⁵³⁷ And as T. Seland points out, the conduct and the words of believers had a missional intention, to bring others to faith.⁵³⁸

Some scholars think formal legal charges are in view when unbelievers allege that Christians practice evil.⁵³⁹ Thus, they see evidence in the verse for an empire-wide and formal persecution against Christians. It is more likely, however, that the language used here is general. Peter reflects on the widespread cultural opposition to the Christian way of life so that the charges here are not restricted to legal cases.⁵⁴⁰ Still, as noted earlier, in some instances the charges against believers were probably legal. Unbelievers viewed Christians with suspicion and hostility because the latter did not conform to their way of life (4:3–4). Since believers did not honor the typical gods of the community, they were naturally viewed as subversive and evil in that social context.

Peter does not summon believers to a verbal campaign of self-defense. He enjoins them to pursue virtue and goodness so that their goodness would be apparent. The transformation of their behavior will contradict false allegations circulating in society. Unbelievers, as a result, will glorify God because they see “your good deeds.”⁵⁴¹ The verb “see” is a participle here (*epopteuontes*) and should be understood as causal (“because they see your good deeds”).⁵⁴² The verb was used in mystery religions, but to see any such influence here falls prey to “parallelomania,” where scholars impose the meaning of

a term from one realm onto another.⁵⁴³ Some scholars think the good works here refer to the honors and public recognition granted by public officials for exemplary behavior, but the reference is not so specific and denotes instead the good works of believers that permeate every dimension of life.⁵⁴⁴

Peter almost certainly alludes to the words of Jesus recorded in Matt 5:16, “Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”⁵⁴⁵ Both Peter and Matthew draw a connection between “seeing” good deeds and the corresponding praise that is given to God as a result.⁵⁴⁶ But what does Peter mean by “glorify God on the day he visits”? The RSV translates the verse literally, “Glorify God on the day of visitation.” The “day of visitation” (*en hēmera episkopēs*) could refer to God’s judgment or his salvation.⁵⁴⁷ The issue is difficult and good arguments exist on both sides. Probably Peter refers to judgment, but first we should consider the evidence supporting the notion that the reference is to the salvation of Gentiles.

A number of reasons are set forth in defense of the notion that salvation is intended.⁵⁴⁸ God’s visitation can involve salvation when a temporal notion is included (cf. Exod 13:19; Isa 23:17). That God’s visitation is salvific in a temporal expression is clear from Sir 18:20, “Before judgment, examine yourself, and in the hour of visitation [*en hōra episkopēs*] you will find forgiveness.” Wisdom of Solomon 3:7 speaks of the salvation of the righteous similarly, “In the time of their visitation [*en kairō episkopēs*] they will shine forth, and will run like sparks through the stubble,” as does Wis 3:13, “For blessed is the barren woman who is undefiled, who has not entered into a sinful union; she will have fruit when God examines souls” (lit. “in the visitation of souls,” *en episkopē psychōn*).⁵⁴⁹ These examples show that the time of visitation can be salvific, but in every example cited above, salvation clearly belonged to those addressed *before* the visitation. The visitation did not bring salvation but revealed the salvation they already enjoyed. There is no indication in 1 Pet 2:12

that unbelievers are saved before God visits by virtue of the good works of believers.

In addition, the reference to glorifying God suggests to many that the salvation of Gentiles is in view. Often in the NT people glorify God or give him glory by believing (cf. Acts 13:48; Rom 4:20; 15:7, 9; 1 Cor 2:7; Eph 1:6, 12, 14; 2 Thess 3:1; Rev 5:12–13). Conversely, those who refuse to believe do not glorify God (Acts 12:23; Rom 1:21). We see the same contrast in Revelation between those who believe and glorify God (Rev 11:13) and those who refuse to repent and do not honor him (Rev 16:9). Peter exhorts believers to live noble lives because in doing so unbelievers will see their good works. Because they observe such works, some unbelievers, according to this interpretation, will repent and believe and therefore give glory to God on the last day.⁵⁵⁰ The use of the participle “see” (RSV, from the verb *epopteuō*) may also suggest that salvation is in view since the same term is used in 1 Pet 3:2, where the submission of wives is intended to lead to the salvation of unbelieving husbands. Unbelievers may revile Christians, but as they notice the goodness in their lives, some will repent and be saved, and as a result of their salvation, God will be glorified.

As noted above Peter may well be envisioning the salvation of opponents here, but it seems more likely that their final judgment is intended. One of the weaknesses of the salvific view is that it limits salvation to *some*, but it seems that the glory given to God here is not restricted to some. All unbelievers on the day of judgment will acknowledge the good works of believers and vindicate God’s justice in saving believers and in judging them. The NRSV adopts this interpretation, “They may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge.” The word group for “visitation” when combined with a temporal idea often refers to the judgment of the Lord, as we see in a number of texts (Isa 10:3; 24:22; 29:26; Jer 6:15; 10:15; cf. also Wis 14:11; 19:15; Sir 16:18; 23:24).⁵⁵¹ Egan argues that the close verbal similarity to Isa 10:3 in the LXX (“And what will you do in the day of visitation?” *kai ti poiēsousin en tē hēmera tēs episkopēs*) indicates that Peter draws on this text, probably by

memory, and the OT context suggests that final judgment (instead of salvation) is in view.⁵⁵²

Van Unnik is also persuaded that condemnation is in view.⁵⁵³ The day of visitation, he argues, refers to the eschatological day of judgment and cannot be understood as a reference to salvation that is experienced in this life before the final day. He points out that “glorifying” God is not restricted to salvation. Condemned Gentiles will glorify God on the last day (Ps 86:9). God’s glory is not limited to salvation but also is displayed in judgment (e.g., Exod 15:6; Num 14:21–22; 16:19; Isa 24:14–15; 33:10). In fact, when the Lord saves his people and judges the wicked, both events bring him glory. A decision between the two options is difficult, but the evidence tilts toward judgment rather than salvation.

3.2 Testifying to the Gospel in the Social Order (2:13–3:12)⁵⁵⁴

The focus in the household or station codes is on those who are at the lower end of the social scale, on those who were marginalized and mistreated. Green’s structure is instructive, which I reproduce exactly.⁵⁵⁵

- 2:13–17 instruction for everyone
- 2:18–20 instruction for slaves
- 2:21–25 the example of Christ
- 3:1–7 instruction for wives (and husbands)
- 3:8–12 instruction for everyone

Green shows that the example of Christ is central to the argument.

The household code is interpreted variously by scholars. The background to such codes in the past was attributed to Stoic sources. Many scholars argue that the codes can be traced back to Aristotle, in which mutual responsibilities required in relationships were explicated.⁵⁵⁶ The nearest parallels are in Hellenistic Judaism (Philo, *Decalogue* 165–67; *Hypothetica* 7.14; *Spec. Laws* 2.226–27; Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2.190–219; *Ps.-Phoc.* 175–227).⁵⁵⁷ Still, the

Petrine form is not clearly dependent on any particular source.⁵⁵⁸ Bauman-Martin shows that the household codes in the NT differ significantly from Stoicism and from Aristotle; they are closer to what we find in Hellenistic Judaism, but even in this case there are notable modifications.⁵⁵⁹ “Instead, the NT household codes seem to be independent variations of a distinct Christian parenetic discourse that focused on correct behavior within the Christian household.”⁵⁶⁰ And the household code in Peter stands out since in context it focuses on how one relates to unbelievers.⁵⁶¹

Scholars also debate how the household codes should be interpreted in 1 Peter.⁵⁶² Balch sees the code as apologetic, contending that Peter counsels believers to conform to the social roles expected in society so that unbelievers would not criticize their behavior.⁵⁶³ Elliott, on the other hand, suggests that the household code was not intended to answer the objections of unbelievers but was given to promote social cohesion within the Christian church.⁵⁶⁴ Believers are to live as exiles and thus should not conduct their lives to please other human beings but to please God. Bechtler argues there is some truth in both perspectives,⁵⁶⁵ which is probably correct.

At the same time, Horrell and T. Williams suggest a postcolonial reading where there is polite and cautious resistance to imperial authority.⁵⁶⁶ The letter does not paint the same negative picture of the empire that we find in the book of Revelation. On the other hand, clues in the letter point toward a cautious resistance. For instance, the ultimate loyalty of wives is to Christ, not to their husbands (3:1–6), which runs contrary to the pattern in the Greco-Roman world. The perspective of Horrell and Williams should be added to the mix, reminding us that the reality to which the texts points is complex and multifaceted.

3.2.1 Submit Yourselves to the Government (2:13–17).

¹³ *Submit to every human authority because of the Lord, whether to the emperor as the supreme authority* ¹⁴ *or to governors as those*

sent out by him to punish those who do what is evil and to praise those who do what is good. ¹⁵ *For it is God's will that you silence the ignorance of foolish people by doing good.* ¹⁶ *Submit as free people, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but as God's slaves.* ¹⁷ *Honor everyone. Love the brothers and sisters. Fear God. Honor the emperor.*

How should believers respond to the social structures of the day? Since God is their Lord, should they ignore human and governmental institutions? Peter argues that believers should submit to the emperor and governing authorities appointed by him, showing from this that Christians are not “politically and socially subversive.”⁵⁶⁷ They are to submit themselves to governing authorities because of their relationship to God, for in obeying the government they carry out God's will. Further, by doing good in the public square, they will contradict those who claim that believers practice evil. Peter does not see human authorities as ultimate. Christians obey governing authorities because such obedience is God's will. The supreme authority for Peter was not the emperor but God himself. Further, in v. 16 believers are to defer to authorities as those who are free in Christ and as slaves of God, and not from a subservient spirit. The readers are cautioned that their freedom should not become a pretext for evil. The section concludes with four imperatives in v. 17. Believers are to show respect and honor to all people, show a special affection for fellow believers, and fear only God while still honoring the emperor.

2:13 Believers are called upon to submit to governing authorities for the Lord's sake. The central theme of this section is found in the first word, “submit yourselves” (NIV; *hypotagēte*). Dubis rightly says that the form here is best understood as a middle, and thus believers are summoned to submit themselves voluntarily.⁵⁶⁸ The idea that believers should be subject to governing authorities is a standard part of NT ethical exhortations (cf. Rom 13:1, 5; Titus 3:1). The parallels to Rom 13:1–7 have led some scholars to see literary dependence, but the differences are as great as the similarities. For instance, Peter does not explicitly say authorities are ordained by God, and nothing is said

about paying taxes, both of which are prominent themes in Rom 13. The similarities probably are better explained in terms of common Christian teaching.

Some scholars understand the verb “submit” to refer to “deference” or “respect” rather than obedience.⁵⁶⁹ It is lexically difficult, however, to wash the concept of obedience out of the verb “submit themselves.”⁵⁷⁰ Indeed, in 1 Pet 3:5–6 Peter glides from the verb subordinate in v. 5 to “obeyed” in v. 6 without any hint of discomfort. The idea of willing subjection is evident in a number of texts: Jesus’s submission to his parents (Luke 2:51), refusal to submit to God’s law (Rom 8:7), refusal to submit to God’s righteousness (Rom 10:3), the church’s submission to Christ (Eph 5:24), the need to be subject to God (Jas 4:7), and the submission of younger ones to elders (1 Pet 5:5). Other examples could be adduced, but the main point is clear. Michaels and Achtemeier criticize the translation “submit” by implying that it involves “total submission”⁵⁷¹ and “unquestioning obedience to whatever anyone, including governing authorities, may command.”⁵⁷² Their interpretations confuse context with lexicography. Whether submission involves “unquestioning obedience” cannot be determined by the term but by context. The injunction to be subject does not rule out exceptions since God is the ultimate authority.⁵⁷³ The cautions of Achtemeier and Michaels remind us that the injunction can be overread as if a thoughtless or passive submission is required, as if those who are called upon to submit are merely automatons. Peter gives a command that represents a general truth, where he teaches what Christians should do in most situations when coming into contact with governing authorities. Believers should be inclined to carry out what governing authorities command. We will see, however, that the authority of rulers is not absolute. They do not infringe upon God’s lordship, and thus they should be disobeyed if they command Christians to contravene God’s will. And S. Smith rightly says that Peter “forbids Christians from drawing undue attention to themselves that can lead to martyrdom.”⁵⁷⁴

The injunction to submit oneself is not to “every human authority” (CSB, NIV) or “every human institution” (RSV, NRSV, NASB) but “to every human creature” (*pasē anthrōpinē ktisei*). The word “creature” refers to human beings or creation (Mark 16:15; Rom 1:25; Col 1:23; cf. also Jdt 16:14; Tob 8:5, 15). No basis exists for defining it as “human institution.”⁵⁷⁵ Some commentators therefore conclude that Peter exhorts believers to submit themselves to every human being.⁵⁷⁶ The interpretation offered fails to account for the context in which the command is given. Peter immediately defines “every human creature” with the phrases “whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority or to governors” (vv. 13–14). Peter reflects only upon governing authorities, not every single person.⁵⁷⁷ Yet we must also explain the reason these authorities are called “human creatures.” The reason is not hard to see. The emperor cult was popular in Asia Minor, and Christians doubtless felt social pressure to participate. Peter reminds his readers at the outset that rulers are merely creatures, created by God and existing under his lordship.⁵⁷⁸ A fine balance is maintained, however, in that believers still have a responsibility to submit to these authorities. Their submission, however, is not obsequious or mindless. Believers are to submit themselves “for the Lord’s sake” (*dia ton kyrion*), which is likely a reference to Jesus Christ.⁵⁷⁹ They carry out the injunctions of governing authorities ultimately because of their reverence for and obedience to the Lord. We have an implication here that the ruling powers should be resisted if commands were issued that violated the Lord’s will.

Seeing an allusion to the emperor is justified since the king (*basileus*) who has authority (*hyperechonti*) is almost surely a reference to the emperor (cf. John 19:15; Acts 17:7),⁵⁸⁰ an interpretation reflected in the NRSV, “For the Lord’s sake accept the authority of every human institution, whether of the emperor as supreme.” If another king is intended, whether David, Herod, or someone else, they are typically named or context specifies that the king of the Jews or Messiah is in mind.⁵⁸¹

2:14 The call to submission continues, and the role of government in restraining evil and praising virtue is highlighted. When Peter says “every human creature” (v. 13), he refers both to the emperor and governing authorities under the emperor. The word “governors” (*hēgomosin*) is not intended to be specific; it can include procurators, proconsuls, and officials who collect revenues.⁵⁸² Believers should submit not only to the highest authority (the emperor) but to all those who are in authority. When Peter speaks of governors as “sent out by him,” it is tempting to read this in light of Rom 13:1–7, where it is clear that God ordains ruling authorities.⁵⁸³ Such an interpretation is unlikely here since the nearest and hence natural antecedent is the word “emperor.”⁵⁸⁴ Governors, in other words, are commissioned by and under the authority of the emperor and are to be obeyed as his representatives.

The purpose of ruling authorities is then explained: punishing evildoers and praising those who do what is right.⁵⁸⁵ The reference to doing good and evil anticipates the citation of Ps 34 in 3:10–12 (cf. Ps 34:13–14, 16).⁵⁸⁶ Doing right here means that Christians behave as good citizens, that they do what is honorable in the world’s eyes.⁵⁸⁷ Peter is scarcely suggesting that rulers always fulfill such a purpose. He was aware from the OT that rulers may resist God and his will (e.g., Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar). The persecution of believers indicates that rulers may be involved unjustly in oppressing believers (cf. 3:14, 16; 4:14, 16). Furthermore, Peter and early Christians could hardly forget that Christ was unjustly condemned under Pontius Pilate or that James was put to death by Herod Agrippa (Acts 12:2), and Peter’s own life was in danger on the same occasion. Even the most oppressive governments, however, hold evil in check to some extent, preventing society from collapsing into complete anarchy.⁵⁸⁸ The ideas here are similar to Rom 13:3–4, although Peter does not identify the ruling authorities as God’s servant.

Some scholars think the praise bestowed by the government for those who do right refers to instances in which the Romans would

erect statues, grant privileges, or commend in other ways those who helped the community.⁵⁸⁹ The theory is unconvincing because we have no evidence that Peter encourages wealthy readers to engage in public benefaction. He addresses all believers and does not particularly focus on the well-to-do.⁵⁹⁰ Williams rightly raises serious objections about believers engaging in civic benefaction.⁵⁹¹ He points out that it is unlikely that the church would have the funds necessary to provide such gifts, and even if the funds were present, it is doubtful that Christians would be members of the elite and allowed to participate in such giving. Furthermore, such giving could lead to economic straits, and there are questions about whether Christians would even approve of some of the things the money was spent on (such as theaters and gladiator contests). The main point is that all believers should do what is right and strengthen the social fabric, and rulers help maintain order in society by commending good citizens.

2:15 Peter now explains why believers should submit, arguing that they should do so “because” (*hoti*, “for,” CSB) “it is God’s will,” and the foolish and ignorant will be silenced because of the virtue of believers. The word “thus” (*houtōs*) translated “that” by the CSB is crucial for unpacking the meaning of the verse. Literally the Greek reads, “Thus is the will of God.” The question that must be answered is what “thus” relates to. Most English versions render it as in the CSB, “For it is God’s will that you silence the ignorance of foolish people by doing good.” If “thus” is retrospective, the verse should be translated, including the main verb of v. 13, “Submit yourselves because thus [the command to submit] is the will of God, with the result that you will silence the ignorance of foolish people by doing good.” Achtemeier argues that the latter option is correct.⁵⁹² By carrying out the precepts of the government, Christians demonstrate that they are good citizens, not anarchists. In this way believers extinguish the criticisms of those who are ignorant and revile them.

It is more likely, however, that *houtōs* should be translated as follows: “Because the will of God is thus, namely, that you silence the ignorance of foolish people by doing good.”⁵⁹³ The participle “doing

good” (*agathopoiontes*) is instrumental, emphasizing how unbelievers are silenced.⁵⁹⁴ The silencing could take place in this life or eschatologically. A decision here is difficult. The previous verse seems to support a present silencing since governing authorities praise those who do what is good (1 Pet 2:14). On the other hand, the good works of believers are not invariably recognized as good in this life according to 1 Peter. Believers may do good and suffer (1 Pet 2:20; 3:6, 13, 17; 4:19). Hence, the silencing is probably eschatological.⁵⁹⁵ The ignorance of unbelievers is not innocent but culpable, rooted in their foolishness. To refer to unbelievers as foolish is no denigration of their intellectual capacities. Peter harkens back to Proverbs, where the foolish are morally debased. They are foolish because they do not fear the Lord and walk in his ways (Prov 1:7), and thus they have no excuse for their foolishness.⁵⁹⁶

We should note again that there is no conception of believers doing whatever a government enjoins. Indeed, Peter uses the same verb “doing good” (*agathopoieō*) in acknowledging that believers may suffer while practicing what is right (1 Pet 3:17). He does not envision society and governmental structures as always siding with believers or inevitably commending them for their good behavior. His point is that the good behavior of Christians will minimize slanderous attacks on believers, revealing that charges of moral debilitation have no basis. Opponents will be discovered to be animated by hatred, lacking any objective ground for their criticism of believers.

2:16 Believers are to submit as those who are free and not as those who are under subjection. They must not use their freedom as a pretext for evil. Peter is not merely concerned about the outward actions of believers but also the motivations that inform their submission. Three phrases explain the standpoint from which Christians should operate in submitting themselves to governing authorities. In each case the implied verb is “submit” from v. 13 rather than “live” as many modern versions (ESV, NIV, NRSV, NET) render it.⁵⁹⁷ The Greek text lacks a verb, and interpreters must supply it. First, they are to submit themselves “as free people” (*eleutheroi*).⁵⁹⁸

Believers have been ransomed by Christ's blood (1:18–19) and are no longer subject to the futile lifestyle characteristic of this world.⁵⁹⁹ Thus, the submission of believers is never servile or rendered out of weakness. J. Green rightly says that “subordination is thus an expression of freedom, not of coercion.”⁶⁰⁰

Second, as free people they are not to use their freedom as an excuse to indulge in evil. Genuine freedom liberates believers to do what is good. Those who use freedom as license for evil reveal that they are not truly free since a life of wickedness is the definition of slavery. Christians should never respond to the dictates of government slavishly, but they should obey out of strength and because of their freedom (cf. Matt 17:24–27). Third, believers should submit themselves “as God's slaves [*douloi*].”⁶⁰¹ Believers do not enjoy unrestricted freedom. Their freedom is exercised under God's authority. In fact, genuine freedom is experienced only by God's slaves. One is either a slave of sin or a slave of God (cf. Rom 6:15–23). True liberty, according to the NT, means freedom to do what is right. Thus, only those who are slaves of God are genuinely free. Believers are called upon to live under God's lordship, obeying the government as God's servants.

When we consider the freedom of believers and their subservience, which is ultimately to God alone, it is evident that the government does not enjoy *carte-blanche* authority. Peter does not envision Christians submitting themselves to government regardless of the circumstances, even if ruling authorities prescribe what is evil.⁶⁰² The ultimate loyalty of Christians is to God, not Caesar. They are liberated from fearing Caesar, and hence they do not feel compelled to do whatever he says. Believers are God's servants first, and thereby they have a criterion by which to assess the dictates of government. Ordinarily believers will keep the commands of ruling authorities, for in the normal course of life governments punish evil behavior and reward good conduct. The inclination and instinct of believers, then, will be to submit to governing authority. By living morally praiseworthy lives, they show that their ultimate authority is to God

instead of the emperor. At the same time, they don't engage in anarchy and a kind of enthusiasm that rejects any human structures. Nevertheless, if governments prescribe what is evil or demand that believers refuse to worship God, then believers as slaves of God must refuse to obey.

2:17 The section concludes with four commands. Two of the commands remind us of Prov 24:21, "Fear the LORD and the king" (NRSV), although Peter reserves fear for God alone.⁶⁰³ The command to "honor" (*timaō*) begins and concludes the list. Interestingly, the first imperative is in the aorist tense, and the remaining three are all present tense. Some have tried to explain this by seeing the first command as summarizing the remaining three,⁶⁰⁴ but it is unsatisfying to say that the command to fear God fits under the "all" (*pantas*) of "honor everyone."⁶⁰⁵ Peter does not place God on the same plane as the others mentioned in this verse since fearing God is fundamental and primary and thus cannot be equated with the honor due to all. Peter specifically distinguishes one's attitude toward God ("fear") from one's attitude toward the emperor ("honor"). The verbs "honor," "fear," and "love" should not be equated. It is preferable, then, to take each command separately, so that we have four distinct injunctions in the verse.⁶⁰⁶

What is the significance of the first command being in the aorist tense (*timēsate*) rather than the present tense? At first glance it is tempting to conclude that the following verbs "love" (*agapate*) and "fear" (*phobeisthe*) may have different tenses because of the nature of the verbs.⁶⁰⁷ That is, "love" and "fear" are ongoing attitudes. One could respond, of course, that the same is true of "honor." Most important, though, the verse concludes with the imperative "honor" (*timate*) in the present tense. Hence, any attempt to explain the variations in the tense by the meaning of the verbs fails since Peter used the same verb twice.⁶⁰⁸ Indeed, it is difficult to come up with any satisfying explanation for the variation because it is not evident why Peter would emphasize that the emperor should be honored in an ongoing way in contrast to all people. I conclude, therefore, that the

difference in tense is not interpretively significant and that all four imperatives are generalizations that apply to one's entire life.⁶⁰⁹

The first imperative is the call to “honor everyone.” Believers are to treat every person with dignity and respect since all human beings are created in God's image (Gen 1:26–27). Even sinners are to be accorded respect and honor as human beings. Interestingly, the same respect and honor that should be given to the emperor should be given to all human beings. Those with more power and dignity are not exalted over “ordinary” human beings. Michaels wrongly equates the verb “honor” with “submit,” but the meanings of the verbs are different since the verb “submit” is used of hierarchical relationships.⁶¹⁰

All human beings should be respected, but there is a special bond between fellow believers. Indeed, the union between fellow Christians is such that it is best described in terms of family, and thus we have the command to “love the brothers and sisters” (*agapate adelphotēta*). The word “brotherhood” (*adelphotēta*) is only found in Peter in the NT (here and 1 Pet 5:9). It appears nowhere in the Greek OT, although it is used seven times in the Maccabean writings (1 Macc 12:10, 17; 4 Macc 9:23; 10:3, 15; 13:19, 27). In the stresses and difficulties of life and the battle against fleshly desires (1 Pet 2:12), believers need to be reminded of the priority of love, of the need to love fellow members of the family.

The injunction to “fear God” is placed in contrast to honoring the “emperor.” Believers are to honor the king and show him respect because of his office, but they are not to fear him. Only God is to be feared (cf. 1:17), and there is a proper sense of dread and terror before the Holy One of Israel;⁶¹¹ God alone is to be worshiped, not the emperor.⁶¹² Peter may have been taking a swipe at the emperor cult here, and thus he does not argue that governing authorities are to be obeyed in everything.⁶¹³ Indeed, Peter is clear that his readers were not to fear other human beings (1 Pet 3:6, 14) and that only God should be feared as the sovereign Lord. Goppelt notes that fear belongs only to God “because God alone determines existence and

non-existence.”⁶¹⁴ We are reminded again that ultimate loyalty belongs to God, not to the emperor, nor to husbands (1 Pet 3:6). The imperatives conclude with a call to honor the emperor. The literal word here is “king” (*basilea*) instead of “emperor.” But as we noted in 2:13, the word “king” would certainly bring to mind the emperor to Peter’s readers. Believers should continue to respect and honor the emperor, even though they are free in the Lord. Their freedom should not become a pretext for sin, as if they were free from giving the emperor the respect the office deserved. Still, Peter also says that every person should be honored, which indicates that the emperor is not greater than any other person.⁶¹⁵

3.2.2 Slaves, Submit Yourselves to Masters (2:18–25)

¹⁸ Household slaves, submit to your masters with all reverence not only to the good and gentle ones but also to the cruel. ¹⁹ For it brings favor if, because of a consciousness of God, someone endures grief from suffering unjustly. ²⁰ For what credit is there if when you do wrong and are beaten, you endure it? But when you do what is good and suffer, if you endure it, this brings favor with God.

²¹ For you were called to this, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. ²² He did not commit sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth; ²³ when he was insulted, he did not insult in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten but entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. ²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree; so that, having died to sins, we might live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. ²⁵ For you were like sheep going astray, but you have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

Peter continues the household code by enjoining slaves to submit themselves to their masters, even if the masters are wicked people. We should not miss that the dignity of slaves is evident since Peter departs from the culture of his day by addressing slaves directly. This “shows

NT writers actually subverted cultural expectations by elevating the slave and the wife with unparalleled dignity.”⁶¹⁶ Still, Christians must not disrupt the social order of the household.⁶¹⁷ Aageson rightly says we need to consider the situation envisioned here where Christians had negligible cultural influence, and “as with virtually all persecuted minorities, the social sphere over which they had any direct control was largely internal.”⁶¹⁸ The exhortation is addressed to slaves, but slaves function as examples for all Petrine Christians, and so the principle enunciated applies to all believers.⁶¹⁹

The motivation for the exhortation is given in v. 19. Those who endure suffering from masters while doing what is good will be rewarded by God. Given the emphasis on the eschatological reward in 1 Peter, the “favor” in view here, is probably the end-time gift of salvation. Verse 20 explains v. 19 in more detail. Those slaves who endure punishment because they have sinned will not receive approval from God. Only those who do what is good and experience suffering will be rewarded by God. Peter begins v. 21 by reminding believers that they have been called to suffer, turning to Christ as an example to be imitated. The suffering of believers may be like Christ’s in that it will lead some unbelievers to repentance and conversion. The subsequent verses (vv. 22–25) are richly informed by the Servant Song of Isa 53. Verse 21 also calls attention to the distinctive nature of Christ’s suffering, for he suffered “for you,” implying his substitutionary work on the cross. It seems the exemplary quality of Christ’s suffering is emphasized in vv. 22–23, while his atonement for sinners is featured in vv. 24–25. According to vv. 22–23, Christ did not suffer for wrongdoing, since he was sinless. When he was criticized and threatened, he did not retaliate but entrusted himself and the whole situation into God’s hands. Verses 24–25 advance the argument in that they focus on the unique character of Christ’s suffering. His death was on behalf of his people so that he bore their sins on the cross. The purpose was to free people from sin so that they would live righteously. In v. 25 Peter reminds the readers that previously they were wandering from God like errant sheep, but now,

by virtue of Christ's death as the Suffering Servant, they have returned to him as their Shepherd and Overseer.

3.2.2.1 To Receive a Reward (2:18–20)

2:18 Peter begins by exhorting believers to submit themselves to the government (2:13–17). Now he turns to the responsibility of slaves to submit to masters, even masters who are cruel and unreasonable.⁶²⁰ People became slaves by being captured in wars, kidnapped, or born into a slave household. Those facing economic hardships might choose to sell themselves into slavery in order to survive. Many slaves lived miserably, particularly those who served in the mines. Other slaves, however, served as doctors, teachers, managers, musicians, and artisans, and could even own other slaves. It would not be shocking for slaves to be better educated than masters. Those who are familiar with slavery from the history of the United States must beware of imposing our historical experience on NT times since slavery in the Greco-Roman world was not based on race and American slave owners discouraged education of slaves. Still, slaves in the Greco-Roman world were under the control of their masters, and hence they had no independent existence.⁶²¹ They could suffer brutal mistreatment at the hands of their owners, and children born in slavery belonged to masters rather than the parents who gave them birth. Slaves had no legal rights, and masters could beat them, brand them, and abuse them physically and sexually. Harrill remarks: “Despite claims of some NT scholars, ancient slavery was not more humane than modern slavery.”⁶²² Slaves could purchase their freedom in the Greco-Roman world with the help of their masters, a procedure called manumission. Manumission, however, was available mainly for urban slaves, and most slaves had no hope of being manumitted.⁶²³

Peter addresses household slaves (*oiketai*) “because he is concerned specifically with the household unit.”⁶²⁴ Household slaves were also liable to terrible mistreatment, even if their lot was better than other slaves.⁶²⁵ Just as citizens are to submit themselves to the government,

so slaves are commanded to submit to their masters.⁶²⁶ Once again submission is commanded, and hence it is voluntary in nature. A word should be said here about the common NT admonitions that slaves should submit to masters (cf. Eph 6:5–9; Col 3:22–25; 1 Tim 6:1–2; Titus 2:9–10; Philemon). Modern people often ask why NT writers did not criticize the institution of slavery or advocate its overthrow. The latter was completely unrealistic for the fledgling NT church in the Roman Empire. The young churches would be fighting the consensus of the Greco-Roman world, and hence any such attempt would be doomed to futility. Feldmeier remarks, “Christians as a hated minority were certainly not in the position to make any proposals about this matter or to change anything in pagan society.”⁶²⁷ Why was there not criticism of the practice? Again, we must remember that NT documents address readers in the situation in which they lived. Railing against slavery would not be of any help to ordinary Christians, for, as noted, the dissolution of slavery was out of the question. Furthermore, NT writers were not social revolutionaries (cf. 1 Cor 7:17–24), and they would have incurred further persecution if they advocated overthrowing societal structures.⁶²⁸ Even though the evils of slavery are not addressed, it does not follow that they did not have social concerns. New Testament writers concentrate on the godly response of believers to mistreatment. Peter fits this paradigm nicely since he admonishes his readers to respond in a godly way to persecution and oppression.

If enough individuals are transformed, of course, society as a whole benefits and the Christian faith begins to have a leavening influence. We are keenly aware from history that Christians have too often failed to live righteously, but it is also the case that the Christian faith has been a force for good in Western civilization. History demonstrates the impact of Christian faith on social structures. One of the consequences, under Christian influence, was the eradication of slavery. Christians, of course, have inflicted evil on others throughout the centuries as well. As sinners we have also left a legacy that is disappointing. A realistic appraisal of history, however, includes both the evil and the good Christians have accomplished.

It is crucial to note that the NT nowhere commends slavery as a social structure. It nowhere roots it in the created order, as if slavery is an institution ordained by God. As Feldmeier says, “The letter does not in any way undertake to legitimate slavery.”⁶²⁹ The instructions Peter gave in a particular historical context cannot be replicated today (e.g., the institution of slavery) without considering the setting in which the commands were given and also how to apply such commands in our own cultural circumstances.⁶³⁰ The contrast with marriage is remarkable at this point. God ordained the institution of marriage, but slavery was invented by human beings. The NT *regulates* the institution of slavery as it exists in society, but it *does not commend* it per se. Hence, Peter’s words on slavery should not be interpreted as an endorsement for the system, even if he does not denounce the institution.

Most scholars think the participle “submitting” (*hypotassomenoi*) is imperatival here.⁶³¹ Others suggest that the participle depends on the imperatives in v. 17 and should be construed as instrumental.⁶³² The problem with this latter view, however, is that it is difficult to see *how* the participle could relate to all four imperatives in v. 17. It hardly makes sense to say, “Love the brotherhood by submitting to your masters,” especially when some of the masters, probably most of the masters, were pagans. Therefore, it is better to construe the participle as an independent imperative, in which slaves are enjoined to submit to their masters. The submission is to be carried out “with all reverence.” The Greek literally says “with all fear” (*en panti phobō*). The ESV’s “with all respect” and the NRSV’s “with all deference” suggest that a proper attitude toward the master is in view.⁶³³ But this interpretation is unlikely since in every instance in 1 Peter fear is directed toward God, not human beings (1 Pet 1:17; 3:2, 6, 14, 16).⁶³⁴ In fact, Peter speaks against fearing human beings in 3:6 and 3:14. The phrase “conscious of God” in 2:19 also constitutes evidence for the interpretation defended here. The reason slaves are to submit to masters is because of their relationship with God. Thus, we have evidence that masters are not to wield absolute authority over slaves.

If they commanded slaves to violate God's will, then slaves are obligated to disobey, even if they suffer because of their disobedience.⁶³⁵

Ordinarily, however, believing slaves will do what their masters dictate. Peter applies the injunction to submit to both good and kind masters and masters who are "cruel" (*skoliois*). The word "cruel" highlights the moral bankruptcy of some masters (cf. Acts 2:40; Phil 2:15).⁶³⁶ The evil of slavery is reflected in Seneca's criticism of harsh masters: "You may take (a slave) in chains and at your pleasure expose him to every test of endurance; but too great violence in the striker has often dislocated a joint, or left a sinew fastened in the very teeth it has broken. Anger has left many a man crippled, many disabled, even when it found its victim submissive" (*Ira* 3.27.3).⁶³⁷ Harrill argues, however, that "such calls to kindness toward slaves were not criticisms of the institution but of its abuse by arrogant masters not abiding by Stoic ideals. These statements calling for humane treatment of slaves analogous to modern calls against cruelty toward animals were articulated to strengthen the institution, not abolish it."⁶³⁸ Slaves were subject to overwork, to verbal and physical abuse, and to sexual service.⁶³⁹ Believers could not opt out of obeying masters who were wicked and disreputable. Peter is scarcely saying that Christian slaves should participate in evil or follow a corrupt master in an evil course of action. His point is that slaves cannot exempt themselves from doing what a master says, even if the master is wicked. Bauman-Martin suggests, in my view rightly, that Christian slaves would not consent to sex with masters and would experience severe punishment for resisting.⁶⁴⁰ Of course, in some instances masters would rape slaves, and in these cases slaves suffered evil at the hands of their masters.

2:19 In v. 18 slaves are called on to submit, and now Peter explains why ("for," *gar*) such submission should be practiced, promising them a future reward. Believers should submit themselves because such obedience brings "favor," but the question is what is meant by this term. The literal Greek word used is "grace" (*charis*). Before

answering the question on the meaning of the term “favor” (*charis*), we need to examine the meaning of the verse in context. It seems that v. 19 states the general principle, and v. 20 explains the principle in more detail. The principle articulated in v. 19 is that God rewards those who suffer unjustly. In v. 20 Peter explains more fully what he means, noting that those who are punished while doing wrong have no reason to congratulate themselves since they are simply receiving what they deserve. On the other hand, those who suffer while doing good and who endure such mistreatment will receive a reward from God. Verses 19–20 are marked by an *inclusio* since v. 19 begins with the statement “this is grace” (literal translation), and v. 20 concludes with “this is grace in God’s sight” (literal translation).⁶⁴¹ The inclusion instructs us to interpret the two verses together.

The injunction given to slaves becomes a model by which believers should respond to injustice, and thus what is said here is not applicable only to slaves.⁶⁴² In saying that Peter’s advice functions as a model for all believers, he is not denying that Christians should seek justice in society by working within the legal system of the country in which they reside. Indeed, Paul demanded an apology from the authorities in Philippi when they wrongly beat Silas and him (Acts 16:35–40). We should not conclude, then, that Christians must absorb injustice even if there is legal recourse to redress grievances. The admonition to slaves, however, becomes a model for believers when they face unjust suffering and the civil authorities stand on the side of injustice. Christians who have recourse to a justice system in which they can appeal legal decisions must beware that they do not fall prey to bitterness and rage when courts rule against them. Injustice may be perpetrated by the systems of justice. Such, after all, was the experience of Jesus himself, as 1 Pet 2:18–25 discloses.

We return to the question posed above. What is the “favor” (*charis*) in the lives of believers? It is “favor” (*charis*) if they endure pain while suffering unfairly. That such suffering comes because of their Christian faith is clear from the phrase “consciousness of God.” The word for “consciousness” (*syneidēsis*) usually refers to the “conscience” in the NT (e.g., Acts 23:1; 24:6; Rom 13:5; 1 Cor 8:7, 10, 12; 10:25, 27–29;

1 Tim 1:5, 19; 3:9), and it has this meaning in 1 Pet 3:16, 21.⁶⁴³ In these latter two instances the adjective “good” is used to show that the conscience is in view. But in the verse the word “God” (*theou*) follows the word “conscience.” The word “God” should be understood as an objective genitive, signifying “consciousness of God.”⁶⁴⁴ Slaves are commended, then, if they suffer pain because of their relationship with God, a relationship that causes them occasionally to deviate from what masters desire.⁶⁴⁵ So what is the main point Peter communicates? Slaves enduring unjust suffering because of their relationship with God will be rewarded by God. What reward did he have in mind? He probably was speaking of the reception of the future inheritance described in 1:3–5.

Some might think Peter simply says that such suffering is “evidence of God’s grace” in one’s life since the Greek word is *charis*, which is typically translated “grace” in the NT. Two pieces of evidence, however, indicate that Peter thinks of rewards here rather than evidence of grace.⁶⁴⁶ First, the word “credit” (*kleos*) is parallel to the word translated “favor” (*charis*) here, and *kleos* can be defined as “credit,” “fame,” or “glory” (cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 4.105, 115; 19.223; 1 Clem. 5:6; 54:3).⁶⁴⁷ It refers to the reward believers will inherit (cf. 1 Clem. 5:6), demonstrating that “favor” here is not “evidence of grace” but the divine favor, blessing, and reward given to believers on the last day.⁶⁴⁸ Second, the argument in v. 19 is similar to Luke 6:32–35, and Peter adapts that tradition here.⁶⁴⁹ Jesus in Luke declares that if people bestow love only on their friends, they are no different from unbelievers. What distinguishes believers from others is their love for enemies and sinners. Similarly, Peter insists that suffering for doing wrong deserves no credit, but if one suffers for doing what is right, a reward is fitting. Interestingly, three times in Luke the reward believers would receive for showing love is conveyed by the word *charis*, translated “credit” by the CSB (Luke 6:32–34). We see from this that the word usually translated as “grace” in the NT (*charis*) can also designate a “reward.” Indeed, in the conclusion of the paragraph

(Luke 6:35) Luke shifts from “credit” (*charis*) to “reward” (*misthos*), showing that the two terms are roughly synonymous in his discussion. Indeed, in the Matthean parallel (Matt 5:46) to Luke 6:32 the word “reward” (*misthos*) is used instead of the Lukan word *charis*, constituting another piece of evidence that *charis* means reward in Luke 6:32. To sum up, when Peter says it is “favor” (*charis*) for someone to endure suffering because of their relationship with God, his point is that those who suffer in such a way will receive a reward from God and that the reward in context is their eschatological inheritance—future salvation.

2:20 Verse 20 elaborates on v. 19, explaining (“for,” *gar*) in what circumstances believers will be rewarded and in what circumstances they will not. Peter begins with instances in which believers endure pain,⁶⁵⁰ but they do so because they have done what is wrong (*hamartanontes*) and as a consequence received beatings.⁶⁵¹ In such cases they will receive no reward from God since they are simply receiving what they deserve. On the other hand, if they endure suffering as a consequence of doing good (*agathopoiontes*)—a favorite word of 1 Peter (2:15; 3:6, 17; cf. 2:14; 3:11, 16; 4:19), then they will receive a reward (“favor,” *charis*) from God.

3.2.2.2 To Imitate Christ (2:21–25)

2:21 Believers are called upon to suffer as Christ suffered since in his suffering he functioned as an example for believers. Before we examine the meaning of the verse in more detail, we need to ask about the logical relationship between vv. 18–20 and v. 21, which begins with the words “for you were called to this.” The words “to this” (*eis touto*) point back to the believers’ suffering⁶⁵² even when they do what is right. The word “called” (*eklēthēte*), as we have seen elsewhere (see commentary on 1:15; 2:9), refers to God’s effectual call that results in the faith of believers.⁶⁵³ Believers are called to suffer to inherit their final reward (vv. 19–20).⁶⁵⁴ Suffering, in other words, is not a detour by which believers receive the inheritance to which they

were called. It is God's appointed means for receiving the inheritance.⁶⁵⁵

Why are believers called to suffer to receive their final reward? Peter answers that this was also the way appointed for Jesus, the Messiah ("because Christ also suffered for you").⁶⁵⁶ It is likely that the phrase Christ "suffered for you" (*epathen hyper hymōn*) refers to the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, especially since this is explicitly taught in v. 24 and in 3:18.⁶⁵⁷ By implication, Peter may have been suggesting the unique benefits of Christ's death. Achtemeier, however, doubts that this idea is intended since the word "also" (*kai*) demonstrates that the logic of the verse is as follows: Christ *also* suffered for you, as you now suffer for him.⁶⁵⁸

Supporting this interpretation are the words immediately following. Christ's suffering functions as an example to believers.⁶⁵⁹ They are to follow his pattern and endure suffering in this present age. The word "example" (*hypogrammon*) is used of children who trace over the letters of the alphabet in order to learn to write the letters correctly. Christ's suffering functions as an example for this purpose (*hina*), so that believers would "follow in his steps." As Christ's disciples, believers are to suffer as he did, enduring every pain and insult received because of their allegiance to the Master.

Achtemeier rightly detects the emphasis on following Christ in his suffering, which is emphasized particularly in vv. 22–23. Still, the significance of the "also" is preserved without embracing his interpretation. Believers are to suffer just as Christ suffered, but Peter recognizes that the suffering of Christ and believers is not comparable in every respect, in that Christ's substitutionary death is the sole basis of the relationship of believers with God (1:18–19; 2:24; 3:18).⁶⁶⁰ Further, he emphasizes that Christ was sinless (1:20; 2:22–23), something unmatched by any believer. Indeed, Christ's sinlessness is the basis upon which his death can function as a vicarious sacrifice for believers. The godly life of believers may win unbelievers to the faith, but Jesus's suffering and death are unique since he alone through his death atones for sin.

2:22 Peter now begins to elaborate on Jesus's exemplary suffering, depending significantly on Isa 53 in doing so.⁶⁶¹ In this verse Jesus's sinlessness is highlighted. The selection of Isa 53 is no accident since the focus in Isa 52:13–53:12 is the suffering of the Servant of the Lord. Isaiah 53 was firmly established in Christian tradition as a text that pointed to the suffering and exaltation of Jesus the Messiah (cf. Matt 20:28; Luke 22:37; Acts 3:13; Rom 4:25; 1 Cor 15:3; Phil 2:7). Peter cites here Isa 53:9, and the only variation is the substitution of the word “sin” (*hamartian*) for “lawlessness” (*anomian*). Perhaps the word “sin” is used to harmonize the allusion with v. 24, where Isa 53 is again cited.⁶⁶² In any case, the meaning is not affected. The distinctiveness of Jesus stands out since Peter is not merely saying that Jesus resisted sinning in suffering; he teaches that Jesus was sinless his entire life. Jesus's sinlessness is widely attested in the NT (Matt 27:4; John 7:48; 8:29, 46; 18:38; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15; 1 John 3:5). In any case, Peter's main purpose is to commend Jesus as an example. If Jesus as the Servant of the Lord did not sin or use guile, despite suffering intensely as the righteous one, then believers should follow his example and refrain from sinning or using deceit when they are mistreated as Christ's disciples.

2:23 Verse 23 emphasizes that the sinlessness of Jesus was not easily attained. He did not live apart from the hostility and hatred of the world in an isolated bubble where he brooked no opposition. Rather he faced insults and severe suffering. Probably Peter thinks of Jesus's entire ministry here but particularly his passion. We likely have an allusion to Isa 53:7, which describes the servant as one who suffers in silence like a lamb. Jesus's silence in suffering is the most remarkable evidence of his nonretaliatory spirit since the urge for revenge can be almost unbearable when mistreatment takes place.⁶⁶³ Further, in the ancient world people demonstrated their innocence by arguing passionately against accusers, and hence Jesus's silence reveals his confidence in God's vindication.⁶⁶⁴ Jesus's lifestyle matched his own teaching, where love for enemies and a spirit of nonretaliation were central (cf. Matt 5:38–48).⁶⁶⁵

The CSB captures the play on words of the first statement, “when he was insulted, he did not insult in return.” The NRSV renders the verse in a striking way, “When he was abused, he did not return abuse.” The same verbal root is used (*loidoroumenos* and *anteloidorei*), showing that Jesus did not indulge in retaliation. Second, Jesus did not engage in threats while suffering. Even when physical harm cannot be inflicted on tormentors, it is tempting to intimidate them with words of future judgment, but Jesus refrained from doing so. Both of the main verbs are imperfect, expressing ongoing action in past time, demonstrating that the spirit of nonretaliation informed Jesus’s entire life. What gave Jesus the strength to refrain from threatening and abusing those who mistreated him? He “entrusted himself to the one who judges justly.” The verb “entrusted” (*paredidou*) is again imperfect, expressing ongoing activity that characterized Jesus’s life and ministry and especially his passion. The CSB says that Jesus entrusted “himself,” but the Greek text has no object, so scholars debate whether Jesus entrusted himself, his cause, his passion, or his enemies.⁶⁶⁶ Since the object is unspecified, it would be a mistake to limit the object’s sphere. Jesus kept “handing over” (*paredidou*) to God every dimension of his life, including the fate of his enemies.⁶⁶⁷ In particular, he knew that God would judge rightly on the last day, both vindicating him and punishing his enemies if they refused to repent. The Scriptures nowhere teach that believers refrain from retaliation by putting on a brave face and stoically enduring suffering. Rather, believers triumph over evil because they trust that God will vindicate them and judge their enemies, putting everything right in the end (cf. Rom 12:19–20).⁶⁶⁸ Jesus functions as an example for his disciples, for they too are to trust God, believing that he will ultimately reward them (see 2:19–20) and punish their enemies.

Peter also probably alludes to Jeremiah’s plea for justice and for God’s judgment on his enemies in Jer 11:18–23. Jeremiah does not contradict the spirit of nonretaliation taught here, for it is precisely because Jeremiah left justice in God’s hands that he was enabled to turn from personal retaliation. Hence, Jesus, like Jeremiah, was God’s “gentle lamb” (Jer 11:18). The text in Jeremiah matches 1 Pet 2:23 in

emphasizing that God judges righteously (*krinōn dikaia*, Jer 11:20), showing that God's justice includes both the vindication of his servant and the punishment of his enemies (cf. Jer 11:21–23).

2:24 Now the distinctiveness of Jesus's suffering and death comes to the forefront. Believers are to follow Christ in his suffering, but his suffering is unique and atoning and, therefore, the basis of salvation for his followers. In the first clause Peter alludes to Isa 53. He actually alludes to three different verses in Isa 53, which can be translated from the Septuagint as follows: "He bears our sins" (*houtos tas hamartias hēmōn pherei*, Isa 53:4); "he will bear their sins" (*tas hamartias autōn autos avoisei*, Isa 53:11); "he bore the sins of many" (*autos hamartias pollōn anēnegken*). Compare this with 1 Pet 2:24: "He himself bore our sins" (*hos tas hamartias hēmōn autos anēnegken*). The word "our" in 1 Peter matches Isa 53:4; the word "himself" (*autos*), Isa 53:11;⁶⁶⁹ and the past tense "bore," Isa 53:12. It is clear from these allusions that Jesus's death is the means by which sins are forgiven. Often the word "bore" (*anapherō*) is used of "offering" sacrifices (Heb 7:27; 13:15; Jas 2:21; 1 Pet 2:5; cf. Gen 8:20; 22:2; Exod 24:5; 29:18). We ought not to derive from the expression here that the cross is an altar to which Jesus carried up our sins.⁶⁷⁰ Nor is it clear that the image of the scapegoat who was released in the wilderness is in mind (Lev 16).⁶⁷¹ In this instance the verb must mean "bore" rather than "offered" since the word "sins" is the object of the verb. The text does not say that "God offered Jesus" but that "Jesus bore our sins." Peter adds that our sins were borne in Christ's body "on the tree." Peter's use of the word "tree" (*xylon*; cf. also Acts 5:30; 10:39; Gal 3:13) instead of "cross" contains an allusion to Deut 21:23. The idea that Jesus was cursed for the salvation of his people is probably implicit. Since Christ died for the sins of the people, it is fair to deduce that his death was substitutionary (cf. 3:18).⁶⁷²

The purpose of Christ's death (*hina*) was not merely to provide forgiveness but to empower his people to "live for righteousness." Righteousness (*dikaioσynē*) is not forensic here, as is evident from its

connection with the verb “live” (*zēsōmen*).⁶⁷³ Living to righteousness becomes a reality by dying “to sins.” The participle “departing from” (*apogenomenoi*—translated “died”) indicates how believers can live righteously. Peter envisions departing from sins (cf. 4:1), a freedom that is purchased at Christ’s death (cf. 1:17–19 for a similar argument).⁶⁷⁴ The verse begins, then, with the basis upon which believers are forgiven: Christ’s atoning death. Peter then emphasizes the purpose of his death: so that believers will live a new kind of life.

The verse concludes with another allusion to Isa 53, here to v. 5. The wording is close to the Septuagint. The first-person plural verb has been changed to a second-person plural, and the relative pronoun “whose” (*hou*) has been substituted for “his” (*autou*).⁶⁷⁵ Believers are healed by Christ’s wounds, and the wounds probably refer by metonymy to his death, though it is just possible that every dimension of the suffering leading to death is involved, including scourging. The reference to wounds would speak to the situations of slaves who were threatened by physical abuse.⁶⁷⁶ In any case, it would be a mistake to limit what Peter says to Christ’s scourging. Was Peter referring to forgiveness of sins here or physical healing? Even though Isa 53:5 is used in Matt 8:17 in reference to Jesus’s healing ministry, we can be sure that forgiveness of sins is the subject here. Nothing else in the context points to physical healing.⁶⁷⁷ The first part of v. 24, which refers to Jesus’s bearing our sins, clearly points to forgiveness, and the content of v. 25 (see below) also implies forgiveness when it speaks of those who have returned to their shepherd and overseer.⁶⁷⁸

2:25 The “for” (*gar*) connecting vv. 24–25 indicates that the healing in v. 24 is from the punishment deserved for wandering in v. 25, demonstrating that the healing involves forgiveness of sins.⁶⁷⁹ The reference to wandering as sheep harkens back to Isa 53:6. The major difference is again the shift from the first plural to the second plural. The conversion of the readers is indicated by the word “you have . . . returned” (*epestraphēte*). Another allusion to Isaiah probably exists here since in 6:10 Isaiah speaks of those who “return and I will heal

them” (translated from the LXX, *epistrepsōsin kai iasomai autous*).⁶⁸⁰ There is also an allusion to Ezek 34:16, where Yahweh as the shepherd “will seek the lost and bring back the strays (*to planomenon epistrepsō*).” We also see a link with Ezek 34:23–24, where “my servant David” will be the shepherd of God’s people.

The combination of “return” and “heal” is another piece of evidence that the healing in view involves the forgiveness received at conversion. Believers are no longer lost sheep but “have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.” We are reminded again of the uniqueness of Jesus’s life and suffering. The moral goodness of the lives of believers should shine as an example to unbelievers (cf. 2:18–21) and in some cases will draw them to a saving knowledge of God. And yet all those who are now believers were once condemned before God. Only Christ lived a sinless life, atoning for sins by his substitutionary death. With the words “Shepherd and Overseer,” Peter reminds his readers that their ruler is not the emperor or slave owners but Christ himself. Christ is likely the shepherd here rather than the Father since only Christ is called a shepherd in the NT.⁶⁸¹

The word “Shepherd” designates the leader and ruler over the souls (i.e., whole persons) of those in the church. The emphasis is not on Christ’s tenderness, which often comes to our minds with the word “shepherd,” but his authority. This is confirmed by the word “Overseer” (*episkopos*). Elsewhere in the NT the term “overseer” refers to those who had authority in churches (Acts 20:28; Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:7). Here it refers to Christ as the ultimate “Overseer,” who rules over the church. Conversion involves returning to Jesus Christ as ruler and lord.

3.2.3 Wives, Submit to Husbands (3:1–6)

¹ *In the same way, wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, even if some disobey the word, they may be won over without a word by the way their wives live* ² *when they observe your pure, reverent lives.* ³ *Don’t let your beauty consist of outward things like elaborate hairstyles and wearing gold jewelry,* ⁴ *but rather what is*

inside the heart—the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God’s sight. ⁵ *For in the past, the holy women who put their hope in God also adorned themselves in this way, submitting to their own husbands,* ⁶ *just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. You have become her children when you do what is good and do not fear any intimidation.*

Peter concentrates in the household code on those who have less power in relationships, on those prone to suffer. For instance, masters are not addressed, and wives receive an exhortation of six verses, whereas husbands are addressed in one verse. The “weaker” member of the pair is probably addressed because their vulnerable stance is representative of the church as a whole. Just as slaves and wives lived under the rule of masters and husbands, so too the Petrine believers were subject to persecution from other members of their cultural circle and from governing authorities.⁶⁸²

Wives are enjoined to submit themselves, and it is evident from v. 1 that the wives of unbelievers are particularly in view, although it is likely that all wives are included.⁶⁸³ Peter hopes that submission and godly behavior would become the means by which unbelieving husbands would be converted to the Christian faith. In vv. 3–4 Peter gives advice typical for moralists in the Greco-Roman world. Wives should refrain from expensive attire and ostentatious and expensive hairstyles and jewelry. God desires inner beauty consisting of a gentle and quiet spirit. The exhortation to wives is supported in vv. 5–6 by an appeal to godly women of the OT era. Such women obeyed and respected their husbands and focused on inner adornment. Peter concludes by saying that the women of the Petrine community were truly daughters of Sarah if they pursued a life of goodness and conquered their fears.

3:1 Wives are instructed to submit to unbelieving husbands with the hope that their husbands will be converted through the godly conduct of their wives. Peter continues to address various segments of the church, concentrating on those with less power, and so now he turns to wives, introducing the discussion with the words “In the same

way” (*homoiōs*).⁶⁸⁴ The term does not suggest that the relationship between wives and husbands is like that of slaves and masters. Instead, it should be understood as “a connective” meaning no more than the conjunction “and.”⁶⁸⁵ The address is not to women in general but to wives as the words “your own husbands” (CSB and NASB, *tois idiois andrasin*) demonstrate. Wives are exhorted to submit themselves (*hypotassomenai*) to their husbands, just as citizens should submit to ruling authorities (2:13) and slaves to their masters (2:18).⁶⁸⁶ Voluntary submission is in view here.⁶⁸⁷ Husbands do not have the responsibility to ensure that wives submit to them, nor is any coercion from husbands contemplated. The participle “submitting yourselves” (translating literally) functions as an imperative here.⁶⁸⁸ It is difficult to see, against Achtemeier, how the participle could modify the imperatives in 2:17 since the latter verse is distant from the present verse.⁶⁸⁹ Peter does, however, continue in the vein of the instructions in 2:13–25.⁶⁹⁰

Peter’s words are addressed in particular to wives with unbelieving husbands—“even if some of them do not obey the word” (NRSV). Still, all wives are addressed, not only those with disobedient husbands, for the words “even if ” (*kai ei*) could possibly indicate that the majority of the husbands were believers.⁶⁹¹ The NIV wrongly translates with the words “do not believe” instead of “do not obey” (NRSV), but the verb in question (*apeitheō*) focuses on disobedience rather than unbelief.⁶⁹² In fact, it is a favorite term of Peter’s. First Peter 2:8 also refers to disobedience to the word; 4:17, to those who disobey the gospel; and 3:20, to those who disobeyed during the days of Noah. The “word” (*logos*) here, as in 2:8, refers to the gospel. All disobedience, of course, stems from unbelief, but the emphasis here is on the rebellion of husbands who refuse to adhere to the gospel. Again, the parallel to what is said about slaves is noteworthy, because just as slaves are to submit themselves to morally bankrupt masters (2:18), so Christian wives are called on to submit to unbelieving husbands.

Many commentators argue that Peter's advice to wives should be understood within the same framework as his counsel to slaves.⁶⁹³ In both cases he commends submission, but in neither instance does he endorse the patriarchal institution that enforces submission.⁶⁹⁴ Wives are to submit to unbelieving husbands because this is the means by which husbands can be "won over" (*kerdēthēsontai*) for the faith.⁶⁹⁵ Peter knew, according to this view, that it would be futile to try to overturn the social structure of his day, and his primary concern was the conversion of unbelieving husbands, not the pursuit of female rights.⁶⁹⁶ Hence, submission is commended for the sake of the mission of the church, but Peter, these scholars insist, did not actually sanction the idea that wives should submit to their husbands. He addresses a particular situation in which he explains how wives should relate to *unbelieving* husbands.

It is certainly the case that the wives of unbelieving husbands are addressed in these verses, and the primary objective is to win over husbands to the Christian faith. We also see a connection with the counsel given to slaves in that both wives and slaves were under authority, and these authorities were liable to oppress those under them. Peter engages in a play on words, saying that those who are disobeying "the word" (*logos*) may be converted "without a word" (*aneu logou*), by their wives' behavior. The phrase "without a word" means wives should refrain from badgering their husbands about their need for conversion. Peter envisions a situation where husbands have resisted the gospel proclaimed by their wives, and wives are exhorted to refrain from harrasing their husbands about their unbelief. Peter counsels a change of strategy where the primary influence on husbands will not be the speech of wives but their godly behavior. The word "behavior" (NIV; *anastrophē*) is a favorite of Peter's, summarizing the godly conduct required of believers (cf. 1:15; 2:12; 3:2, 16 and by contrast 1:18).

The question for us is whether wives should submit to husbands in today's world. Is Peter's advice limited to a missionary situation and a culture different from ours? Indeed, some would argue that in our

culture such advice would hinder the mission of the church rather than enhance it. Achtemeier summarizes well the view of women among the educated in the Greco-Roman world:

Dominant among the elite was the notion that the woman was by nature inferior to the man. Because she lacked the capacity for reason that the male had, she was ruled rather by her emotions, and was as a result given to poor judgment, immorality, intemperance, wickedness, avarice; she was untrustworthy, contentious, and as a result, it was her place to obey.⁶⁹⁷

What is remarkable about this list is that nowhere does Peter or the rest of the NT teach that women are inferior to men, that they are intellectually substandard, or that they are more prone to wickedness. Indeed, Peter emphasizes that wives are coheirs with husbands of eternal life (1 Pet 3:7), implying the fundamental equality of men and women. The equality of men and women is also proclaimed in Paul's affirmation in Gal 3:28. The NT was countercultural, therefore, in promoting the equality of women. Indeed, Jesus's treatment of women with dignity and respect was revolutionary, and hence his stance toward women was paradigmatic for the early church.

The question, therefore, is not whether women are equal with men, for the NT is clear on this matter. The issue is whether such equality is compatible with the call for wives to submit to husbands. One answer, as we have seen, is to argue that such submission represents an accommodation to ancient culture for the purpose of evangelism. Such a reading of the text is certainly possible, and it might even be preferable if the only text we had on this matter were in 1 Peter. When we read the Scriptures canonically, however, it is doubtful whether the accommodation view can be sustained. It is clear from Eph 5:22–33 that submission of wives to husbands is grounded in theology—in Christ's relationship with the church. It is not an accommodation to culture. The submission of wives to husbands mirrors the church's submission to Christ, and thus it should be accepted as a norm that transcends the culture of the first century.⁶⁹⁸

At the same time, we must use wisdom in applying the text to our day since we live in a different culture from Peter's readers. And it is also imperative to note a crucial difference between what is said about slavery and the admonition given to husbands and wives. Slavery, as argued above, is an evil institution developed by human beings, while marriage, on the other hand, was instituted by God at creation. It does not follow, therefore, that those who believe in the submission of wives would also endorse slavery. We must be careful to observe the distinctions between the two institutions so that we do not confuse the human practice of slavery with the institution of marriage that was ordained by God. Peter rejects, as we have seen, the notion that women are unequal to men. Nor is there any indication that he equates submission with inequality.⁶⁹⁹ The same Paul who trumpeted the equality of women in Gal 3:28 also commanded them to submit themselves to their husbands in Eph 5:22–33 (cf. Col 3:18; Titus 2:4–5).

Peter's words to women are remarkably similar in that he teaches the equality of women (v. 7) and counsels submission (v. 1). It seems fair to conclude that differences in role or function do not cancel out equality. Men and women are equally made in God's image (Gen 1:26–27), have equal access to salvation (Gal 3:28), and share the same destiny (1 Pet 3:7). The submission of wives, therefore, does not imply their inferiority. A different function does not suggest they are inferior ontologically.

3:2 Verse 2 elaborates on what is involved in bringing unbelieving husbands to faith. Wives should not focus on speaking words to their husbands in attempting to persuade them to believe. Husbands are apt to be impressed with the Christian faith "as they observe your pure conduct" (my translation). Peter commends "seeing" (*epopteusantes*) rather than "talking" as the means by which wives should influence their husbands.⁷⁰⁰ The same term for "seeing" also appears in 2:12, and in both verses Peter also used the word "conduct" or "behavior" (*anastrophēi*—the CSB turns it into a verb, "conduct yourselves"). Unbelieving husbands may be alienated by wives who constantly entreat them to become Christians. A better course is to live a faithful

Christian life, and as they see the transformation of their wives, they are more likely to be inclined to adopt the faith of their wives.

When Peter speaks of the “reverent lives” of wives, it should be noted that the word translated “reverent” is not actually an adjective. In Greek we have a prepositional phrase “in fear” (*en phobō*), so that a literal translation would be “as they observe your pure conduct in fear.” What should be emphasized here is that the fear is not directed to the husband, but as we saw in 2:18 (see commentary), “fear” in 1 Peter is always directed toward God.⁷⁰¹ Peter is not suggesting, therefore, that wives should fear their husbands (cf. 3:6), nor is he even suggesting that wives should respect their husbands (although Paul commends such in Eph 5:33). Instead, Peter’s point is that the good conduct of wives should stem from their relationship with God. Slaughter rightly says that wives do not submit in order to satisfy a husband’s vanity or to promote his reputation. Neither do they submit to show how godly they are, or to avoid conflict, or to impress the neighbors, or to manipulate their husbands, and not even because she thinks he is wise. She submits because of her relationship with and trust in God.⁷⁰²

We can also infer from this that the submission of wives is not absolute. If husbands require wives to disobey moral norms or follow another religion, then wives should disobey.⁷⁰³ The exception implied here would be extraordinarily important to Peter’s readers since wives were expected to adopt the religion of their husbands in the Greco-Roman world. Plutarch said: “A wife should not acquire her own friends, but should make her husband’s friends her own. The gods are the first and most significant friends. For this reason, it is proper for a wife to recognize only those gods whom her husband worships and to shut the door to superstitious cults and strange superstitions.”⁷⁰⁴ Certainly the Christian faith would have been considered a superstitious cult in Peter’s day. The wives Peter addresses, then, would have been considered socially radical since they adopted a different religion from their husbands.⁷⁰⁵ They are encouraged to submit to their husbands whenever possible, but there are limits to

their submission since they would not participate in worship of any other gods and would join together with other Christians who were not friends of her husband.⁷⁰⁶ “In a masterful move, Peter both upholds and subverts the social order.”⁷⁰⁷ “Wives subverted the authority of the *paterfamilias* by their independent conversions, attendance at Christian meetings, and neglect of their cult duties.”⁷⁰⁸ Parallels to the worship of other gods in the Greco-Roman world fails because if a woman worshiped Isis she could also worship the gods of her husband, but a woman who worshiped the one true God in Jesus Christ “would no longer participate in the crucial familial cults.”⁷⁰⁹ A wife who followed Peter’s instructions would stand out for refusing to take part in the many religious rituals practiced in Roman homes.⁷¹⁰ Even if it caused their husband’s displeasure, they should continue to be part of the church of Jesus Christ.

3:3 The NASB represents a literal translation of the verse, “Your adornment must not be merely [added for clarity] external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses.” The admonition here is similar to what we find in 1 Tim 2:9–10. We have an allusion here to Isa 3:18 where women of luxury are indicted as Isaiah threatens coming judgment.⁷¹¹ The women in the Petrine congregations must not dress with opulence and ostentation as the rich do who oppress the poor. Apparently, some in the congregations were wealthy enough to warrant receiving such instruction.⁷¹² We should also note that it was common in the Greco-Roman world to admonish women to dress modestly instead of ostentatiously or seductively.⁷¹³ Writers such as Seneca, Dio Chrysostom, Juvenal, Plutarch, Epictetus, Pliny the Younger, and Tacitus wrote about this matter (cf. also 1 En. 8:1–2; T. Reu. 5:1–5).⁷¹⁴ For instance, Juvenal writes, “There is nothing that a woman will not permit herself to do, nothing that she deems shameful, when she encircles her neck with green emeralds and fastens pearls to her elongated ears; there is nothing more intolerable than a wealthy woman” (*Satires*, 6.457–60). Juvenal goes on to say about the hairstyles of women, “So important

is the business of beautification; so numerous are the tiers and stories piled one upon another on her head” (*Satires*, 4.501–3). In Plutarch we find a negative assessment of outward adornment and then the statement, “It is not gold or precious stones or scarlet that makes her such [i.e., decorous], but whatever invests her with that something which betokens dignity, good behavior, and modesty” (*Mor., Conj. praec.* 141E). Seneca writes,

Unchastity, the greatest evil of our time, has never classed you with the great majority of women; jewels have not moved you, nor pearls; to your eyes the glitter of riches has not seemed the greatest boon of the human race; you, who were soundly trained in an old-fashioned and strict household, have not been perverted by the imitation of worse women that leads even the virtuous into pitfalls; . . . you have not defiled your face with paints and cosmetics; never have you fancied the kind of dress that exposed no greater nakedness by being removed. In you has been seen that peerless ornament, that fairest beauty on which time lays no hand, that chiefest glory which is modesty (*Helv.* 16:3–5).

What Peter writes here about adornment, therefore, would not come as a shock to his readers, nor would it seem socially out of step. His admonition was in accord with the standpoint of many within the Greco-Roman world. Peter does not prohibit women from wearing their hair nicely or from wearing any jewelry at all.⁷¹⁵ He prohibits them from spending an excessive amount of money on their outward adornment or from wearing clothing that is seductive.⁷¹⁶ The Greek literally forbids the wearing of clothing at all (“the putting on of garments,” *hē endysis himatiōn*). Obviously, Peter is not recommending that women wear nothing at all. His point is that they should not wear clothing that is exorbitantly expensive or immodest. Neither is there any contextual warrant for the notion that such adornment is forbidden because it was associated with idolatry, even though braiding of hair was featured in the cults of Isis and Artemis of Ephesus.⁷¹⁷

3:4 The adornment God desires is not external but internal. Wives should not focus on hairstyle, jewelry, and clothing but their relationship to God, on their “inner self” (“the hidden person of the heart” (ESV), *ho kryptos tēs kardias anthrōpos*). What matters to God is not what people look like on the outside but their godly character. An echo of 1 Sam 16:7 may be found here: “Humans do not see what the LORD sees, for humans see what is visible, but the LORD sees the heart.” Goppelt remarks, “‘The hidden person’ is not the inner side of the person, but the whole human being as it is determined from within.”⁷¹⁸ In other words, what a person is on the inside does not remain hidden (as if Peter thought about some private and interior Christian life hidden from the world) but manifests itself in the way wives behave in everyday life.

In particular, wives should strive for “a gentle and quiet spirit” inasmuch as these qualities are “imperishable” (*aphthartos*; cf. 1:4, 23), whereas clothing, jewelry, and braided hair are transitory and will fade away. A “gentle” (*praus*) spirit is incumbent upon not only women but all believers (cf. Matt 5:5; 11:29; see esp. 1 Pet 3:16). Quietness (*hēsychios*) is also required of women in 1 Tim 2:11 and is linked with submission. Gentleness and a “quiet spirit” evidence the kind of godly behavior that will attract husbands to the faith, and they contrast with a verbal witness, which unbelieving husbands tend to view as irritating. The word “which” may refer only to the word “spirit,”⁷¹⁹ but it likely includes the whole thought of v. 4.⁷²⁰ Peter emphasizes that a focus on internal adornment is not only attractive to husbands but is also “of great worth in God’s sight.” The words “great worth” translate a term (*polyteles*) that comes from the financial realm, indicating that such godly qualities are “costly” (cf. Mark 14:3; 1 Tim 2:9; Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2.191; *J.W.* 1.605). Peter likely uses this word to contrast these qualities from the expensive clothing and ornamentation desired by women in the Greco-Roman world. His use of the term is another indication that he opposed ostentatious clothing, hairstyles, and jewelry instead of forbidding such things altogether.

3:5 Verses 5–6 provide an example from holy women of the past to encourage the women of the Petrine churches to submit themselves to their husbands with a gentle and quiet spirit. These women are called “holy” (*hagiai*) because they lived in a way that was pleasing to God; they were set apart for his purposes (cf. Matt 27:52; Mark 8:38; Eph 3:5; 2 Pet 3:2).⁷²¹ The reference to Sarah suggests that the women in view were Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah, just as the patriarchs were Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.⁷²² The most important feature in the verse is that these women “put their hope in God” (*hai elpizousai eis theon*). This comment is instructive since it informs us that these women did not submit to their husbands because they believed their husbands were superior to them intellectually or spiritually. They submitted because they were confident that God would reward those who put their trust in him. A major theme of 1 Peter is sounded here, for eschatological hope brings consolation in persecution (1:3–9), and believers are to set their hope completely on the future revelation of Jesus Christ (1:13; cf. also 1:21; 3:15). Such hope characterized the lives of the women of old, as they continued to hope in God during the vicissitudes of human existence.⁷²³ These holy women “adorned themselves” (*ekosmoun heautas*) with the virtues of “a gentle and quiet spirit” (v. 4), and thus they showed that their focus was not on external “adornment” (v. 3, NASB, *kosmos*) but on that which is internal. The next phrase is wrongly translated by the NIV as an independent clause, “They submitted themselves to their own husbands.” The NRSV rightly sees that the participle is instrumental, explaining *how* the women adorned themselves, “by accepting the authority of their husbands.”⁷²⁴ We could translate the phrase: “by submitting themselves [*hypotassomenai*] to their own husbands.” They submitted themselves to their husbands with the gentle and quiet spirit extolled in v. 4.

3:6 Verse 6 becomes even more specific, for now Sarah, the wife of Abraham, is introduced as an example for the women of Peter’s day. We should notice the logical connection between v. 5 and v. 6. The holy women of old submitted to their husbands “just as” (*hōs*) Sarah

“obeyed” (*hypēkousen*) Abraham. The comparison demonstrates that the word “submit” includes the idea of obedience (cf. Luke 2:51; Rom 8:7; 10:3; 13:1; 1 Cor 14:34, etc.).⁷²⁵ Some object that obedience is an example but not a definition of submission.⁷²⁶ Surely submission includes more than obedience since the right spirit and attitude are also commended in v. 4. Still, obedience is included within the realm of submission. Submission cannot be restricted to being considerate or adapting to one’s husband.⁷²⁷

It is crucial to note that obedience and submission differ in various spheres. Peter is hardly suggesting that wives submit and obey in the same way as children since the relationship is between two adults. We see in Paul that mutuality characterizes the marriage relationship (1 Cor 7:3–5). Reading the whole marriage relationship only through the lens of submission distorts the relationship between husbands and wives set forth in the Scriptures. Nevertheless, what cannot be washed away is the responsibility of wives to follow their husbands’ leadership.

The example of Sarah’s obedience cited is when she called Abraham “lord” (*kyrios*). What is interesting is that the text alluded to is Gen 18:12, and it reflects an offhand comment by Sarah about the idea that she would become pregnant by Abraham.⁷²⁸ Some think Sarah’s remark is sarcastic and a jab at Abraham, but it is doubtful that Peter read her comment this way since he commends Sarah as an example. Sarah refers to Abraham with respect and dignity instead of merely calling him an old man (although she did note his age!). We see from this that even in casual situations Sarah respected Abraham’s leadership, revealing that her honor of him was part of the warp and woof of her life.⁷²⁹ Peter sees in the Genesis text a reflection of Sarah’s true character.⁷³⁰

Kiley and Spencer argue that Peter’s words here should be interpreted in light of Gen 12 and 20, where Sarah followed Abraham’s advice even when it placed her in an unfavorable situation.⁷³¹ Carter also sees a reference to these texts, arguing that

the advice Peter gives relates to a situation in which wives have no choice and there were no other options.⁷³² Jobes thinks the reference is to Gen 12, where Sarah acts to save Abraham's life by agreeing to become part of Pharaoh's harem.⁷³³ We can agree that Sarah's behavior in Gen 12 and 20 matches what Peter praises here, but the text clearly alludes to Gen 18:12, and a reference to Gen 12 and 20 is not certain.⁷³⁴ Jobes says there is no reference here to physical abuse, which was not sanctioned in Greco-Roman law, and Peter envisions verbal abuse and social ostracism.⁷³⁵ Reeder, on the other hand, points out that physical abuse was actually common and sometimes commended in the Greco-Roman world.⁷³⁶ It is crucial to realize that Peter addresses a social context where many women had no choice, and thus we should not draw the conclusion today that women today should submit by enduring abuse.⁷³⁷ Bauman-Martin also rightly points out that the author does not justify abuse: he "does not blame the victims or exculpate the oppressors."⁷³⁸

The wives in the Petrine community have become Sarah's daughters if they imitate her godly behavior. The past-tense verb "you have become" (*egenēthēte*) points to the time when the wives were converted, although some think Peter simply referred to the kind of character required of wives.⁷³⁹ But how should we understand the two participles that follow? The NIV (so also ESV) takes them as conditional, "if you do what is right and do not give way to fear."⁷⁴⁰ The NRSV introduces a temporal idea, though it is also implicitly conditional, "as long as you do what is good and never let fears alarm you" (so also CSB).⁷⁴¹ Some scholars reject a conditional idea, arguing that it does not fit with the idea of conversion in the past and violates the teaching that conversion is God's work.⁷⁴² The participles could be construed as instrumental, "You have become her children by doing good and not fearing."⁷⁴³ The conditional notion is most likely in context.⁷⁴⁴ A conditional element does not sit awkwardly with conversion in the past. In fact, many statements in

the NT note a past conversion and then a conditional statement follows (e.g., Rom 11:21–22; 1 Cor 6:9–11; Col 1:21–23; Heb 3:14). Peter follows the standard NT view that perseverance is needed to obtain eternal life (cf. 2 Pet 1:5–11).

Those who are Sarah’s children “do what is good” (*agathopoieō*).⁷⁴⁵ The term doing good (literally) is a favorite of Peter’s (2:15, 20; 3:17; cf. 2:14; 3:11, 16; 4:19), expressing the Christian character of believers. Not only should believers do good, but they should “not give way to fear” (NIV). An echo of Prov 3:25 is present here.⁷⁴⁶ “Don’t fear sudden danger or the ruin of the wicked when it comes.” Wives of unbelieving husbands would be prone to fear their husbands, who could treat them rather harshly and perhaps even violently because of their faith.⁷⁴⁷ Believers are exhorted to fear God (cf. 1:17; 2:17–18; 3:2), but any fear of human beings, even in persecution (3:16), is to be avoided.

The implication is that believing wives will not always behave in a way that pleases their husbands because at times their loyalty to God will transcend their duty to submit to their husbands. The anger of husbands may flame forth quickly.⁷⁴⁸ Peter addresses situations where women (and slaves for that matter) would face abuse, beating, and even rape, and would have no choice. In such horrific situations they are to refuse to retaliate, just as Jesus did (1 Pet 2:21–25).⁷⁴⁹ Wives (and slaves) are called upon to mirror Christ’s response to his own suffering. When they are mistreated, they are not to fear but hope in God, trusting that he will vindicate them on the last day. The response of women to oppression by unbelieving husbands is exemplary and paradigmatic for all believers, just as the behavior of slaves points to the way all believers should react to persecution. Since wives in the Greco-Roman world often had no choice in receiving abuse, we must recognize the difference between our horizon and the horizon of the text in applying Peter’s words today. Jobes says, “What counts as submission today may be quite different from what counted as submission in the first century, because social expectations differ over time and from place to place.”⁷⁵⁰ She goes on to say, “For

instance, spousal abuse, infidelity, or malicious neglect violates both biblical standards and the higher ideals of social expectations.”⁷⁵¹ Claire Smith comments,

What submission looks like in a marriage, I think looks different in each marriage. We are all different, marriages go through different stages, they mature, they have different challenges. But broadly speaking, a wife expresses her submission by respecting her husband and welcoming and accepting and honoring his distinctive responsibility to lead and care for her and for the family.⁷⁵²

3.2.4 Husbands, Follow God’s Will with Your Wives (3:7)

⁷ *Husbands, in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker partner, showing them honor as coheirs of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.*

Husbands are exhorted to treat their wives with knowledge, according to the will of God. Women are physically weaker, and the wise husband takes into consideration how his wife differs from him. Husbands should honor their wives because they are coheirs of the eschatological gift of life. Both husbands and wives can expect the same heavenly destiny. The seriousness of bestowing honor upon one’s wife is evident in that husbands who refuse to do so will find that their prayers are hindered.

3:7 Only one verse is addressed to husbands, presumably because Peter focuses on those who were liable to experience oppression from authorities (whether rulers, masters, or husbands) rather than those who actually exercised authority.⁷⁵³ As noted above, the conduct of the oppressed functions as an example for all the Petrine churches as they face persecution. In their own suffering they mirror the suffering of Christ. Still, husbands, as those who have greater social status in the ancient world, are also addressed. The words “in the same way” (*homoiōs*) do not suggest that husbands are to submit to wives, as people submit to rulers (2:13), slaves to masters (2:18), and wives to husbands (3:1). The connective is loose, indicating that a new group is addressed.⁷⁵⁴ The NT nowhere counsels husbands to submit to

wives, and such an idea is not implied here. Instead husbands are to (literally) “live with your wives in an understanding way” (*synoikountes kata gnōsin*).⁷⁵⁵

The participle *synoikountes* should be understood as an imperative.⁷⁵⁶ Most English versions translate the verse so that husbands are exhorted to be considerate and kind in their relationship with their wives.⁷⁵⁷ Such a reading is not incorrect, but it shifts the focus slightly away from the meaning of the text. I understand the phrase “according to knowledge” (*kata gnōsin*), like “in fear” (literal translation) in 3:2 and “consciousness of God” in 2:19, to refer to the relationship of husbands to God.⁷⁵⁸ Husbands, then, should live together with wives informed by the knowledge of God’s will, of what he demands them to do.⁷⁵⁹

The wife is described here as the “weaker vessel” (NASB 1977; *asthenesterō skeuei*).⁷⁶⁰ The word “vessel” can also refer to men (Acts 9:15; cf. Rom 9:21–23),⁷⁶¹ and the comparative form suggests that women are weaker than men.⁷⁶² In what sense are women “weaker”? Nothing else in the NT suggests that women are intellectually inferior,⁷⁶³ nor is it clear that women are weaker emotionally because the vulnerability of women in sharing their emotions and feelings demonstrates that they are more courageous and stronger than men emotionally in some respects. Nor does Peter suggest that women are morally or spiritually weaker than men.⁷⁶⁴ Such a view would suggest that men are actually better Christians than women, which is not taught elsewhere in the Scriptures, nor is it evident in history. The most obvious meaning, therefore, is that women are weaker than men in terms of sheer strength.⁷⁶⁵ We are reminded that “the physical weakness of women makes men the objects of fear. Men created fear in their women simply because of their physical strength.”⁷⁶⁶ Peter uses the word for “female” or “woman” (*gynaikeios*) rather than “wife.”⁷⁶⁷ He directs attention to what is uniquely feminine about women, pointing husbands to the

knowledge that God would require them to have of the female sex. Husbands, then, are forbidden implicitly here from abusing their wives.⁷⁶⁸

A husband who lives according to God's requirement shows "honor" (*timēn*) for his wife (and by extension to all women).⁷⁶⁹ The reason he does so is that women are "coheirs of the grace of life," showing that women are fundamentally equal with men.⁷⁷⁰ Bechtler says that husbands being admonished to honor their wives is unique in Greco-Roman literature.⁷⁷¹ The language of coheirs points toward the eschatological gift (cf. 1:4; 3:9) that both men and women who believe will receive on the last day.⁷⁷² Men should honor women because they share the same destiny—an eternal inheritance in God's kingdom.⁷⁷³ Any suggestion that women will receive a lesser reward is repudiated.⁷⁷⁴ The "life" in the phrase "grace of life" should be understood eschatologically (cf. 3:10), referring to the life that will be ours in the coming age.⁷⁷⁵ Husbands who ignore such a command will find that their prayers are hindered, which means that God will refuse to answer their prayers. God does not bless with his favor those who are in positions of authority and abuse those who are under them by mistreating them.⁷⁷⁶ Perhaps this verse anticipates v. 12, where the Lord attends to the prayers of the righteous but turns away from those who practice evil.

3.2.5 Conclusion: Living a Godly Life (3:8–12)⁷⁷⁷

⁸ *Finally, all of you be like-minded and sympathetic, love one another, and be compassionate and humble,* ⁹ *not paying back evil for evil or insult for insult but, on the contrary, giving a blessing, since you were called for this, so that you may inherit a blessing.*

¹⁰ *For the one who wants to love life
and to see good days,
let him keep his tongue from evil*

and his lips from speaking deceit,

*11 and let him turn away from evil
and do what is good.*

Let him seek peace and pursue it,

*12 because the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous
and his ears are open to their prayer.*

*But the face of the Lord is against
those who do what is evil.*

The conclusion for all of 2:11–3:7 is now drawn in these verses.⁷⁷⁸ Verse 8 is a chiasm summarizing appropriate relationships in the community, emphasizing particularly the need for brotherly and sisterly love.⁷⁷⁹ Verse 9 addresses how believers respond to those who inflict evil upon them. They are not to respond by inflicting evil in return but by praying that God will bless their tormentors since believers will inherit the eschatological blessing of eternal life. The OT citation commencing in v. 10 confirms that blessing others is necessary to receive eternal life, being linked to v. 9 by “for.” The life and good days of v. 10 are nothing other than eternal life and the future inheritance. Those who wish to enjoy such must refrain from speaking evil, make a clean break with evil in their lives, and live in the realm of goodness. They must be people who seek out peace and live peaceably. Verse 12 confirms the interpretation proposed. The Lord’s favor rests on those who are righteous, but he turns his face forever against those who practice evil.

3:8 The conclusion to all of 2:11–3:7 is introduced with the word “finally” (*telos*).⁷⁸⁰ Now the whole community is addressed as “all of you” (*pantes*). It seems that Peter addresses relationships within the church in v. 8 and relationships with unbelievers in v. 9, although certainty on this matter is impossible. The church should be marked by harmony, love, and humility.

In the Greek of v. 8, there are five adjectives without any verb.⁷⁸¹ Probably the implied imperative comes from the “to be” (*eimi*) verb, as we see in the CSB (so also NIV, NET).⁷⁸² When we look at all five words together, we see that obeying these exhortations would lead to smooth relationships within the church (and with outsiders in most cases). The call to harmony (*homophrones*) is common in the NT, even though this term only appears here (cf. Rom 15:5; 1 Cor 1:10; 2 Cor 13:11; Phil 2:1–2; 4:2). Presumably this admonition and others would be unnecessary if churches were not prone to suffer from division and dissension. Believers are also to be “sympathetic” (*sympatheis*), caring deeply about the needs, joys, and sorrows of others (cf. Rom 12:15; 1 Cor 12:26). The admonition to brotherly and sisterly love (*philadelphoi*) indicates that believers are addressed. The family love of believers for one another plays an important role in the letter (cf. 1:22; 2:17; 5:9 and 2:11; 4:12). Their common relationship with Christ inducts them into the same family, and one evidence of genuine Christian faith is a warm love for one another as brothers and sisters (cf. also Rom 12:10; 1 Thess 4:9; Heb 13:1; 2 Pet 1:7).

Believers are also to be full of compassion (*eusplanchnoi*) for those who are experiencing pain. In Eph 4:32 such compassion is rooted in the mercy experienced in the forgiveness of sins, and other passages show that it is one of the marks of the Christian life (cf. 2 Cor 6:12; 7:15; Phil 1:8; 2:1; Col 3:12; Phlm 7, 12, 20; 1 John 3:17). Finally, believers are also summoned to be “humble” (*tapeinophrones*).⁷⁸³ Humility means that others are considered more important than oneself (Phil 2:3–4) so that conceit and arrogance do not find a place in the community (cf. Acts 20:19; Rom 12:16; 2 Cor 10:1; Eph 4:2; Col 3:12; Jas 1:9; 4:6; 1 Pet 5:5). Humility was scorned in the Greco-Roman world, and hence the distinctiveness of Christian vision for the moral life emerges.⁷⁸⁴ It seems that there is an ABCB'A' pattern in this verse, so that the verse functions as a chiasm.⁷⁸⁵

A Harmony

B Sympathy

C Brotherly and Sisterly Love

B' Compassion

A' Humility

Harmony and humility belong together in that pride and self-assertion are the primary means to disrupt harmony. Sympathy and compassion are closely related and even hard to distinguish from each other. Brotherly and sisterly love is the middle term, showing that it is the most important of all the virtues and that the other virtues are embraced in the call to love one another as a family.

3:9 If v. 8 focuses on relationships among fellow believers, it seems that v. 9 directs attention to how believers should respond to unbelievers who mistreat them, one of the central themes of 1 Peter.⁷⁸⁶ On the other hand, it is possible that both believers and unbelievers are in view, and in any case the admonition remains the same. Those who inflict evil or hurl insults at believers should not be repaid in kind, as tempting as it might be to strike back. Instead of cursing others we should bless them. The use of the word “insult” (*loidoria*) harkens back to 1 Pet 2:23, where the verbal root of the same word is used. When Jesus was “insulted,” he did not respond in kind. As Peter summarizes fitting behavior for believers, Christ functions as the supreme example, showing that believers are called upon to live as Christ lived; he is their model and their inspiration.

The first part of the verse is similar to Paul’s injunction in Rom 12:17, “Do not repay anyone evil for evil.” Similar wording is found in 1 Thess 5:15, “See to it that no one repays evil for evil to anyone.” The Pauline formulation in 1 Cor 4:12 is similar to Peter’s: “When we are reviled, we bless” (*loidoroumenoi eulogoumen*). These admonitions are rooted in the teaching of Jesus himself.⁷⁸⁷ For example, in Luke 6:28–29 we find this exhortation: “Bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If anyone hits you on the cheek, offer the other also. And if anyone takes away your coat, don’t hold back your shirt either” (cf. Matt 5:38–42). Peter’s wording does not match the Pauline or Jesus tradition exactly, but it is closer to the Pauline than the Matthean or Lukan tradition. Perhaps Paul and Peter

drew upon the same Jesus tradition here.⁷⁸⁸ In the Greco-Roman world people would retaliate verbally to defend their honor, and, as Jobes points out, this fits “human nature” as well, and thus the nondefensive stance of Christians would stand out.⁷⁸⁹ And in not retaliating, Christians live in the way Jesus lived.

Instead of insulting others or responding in kind, believers are called on to bless others.⁷⁹⁰ By “blessing” Peter means that believers are to ask God to show his favor and grace upon those who have conferred injury upon them.⁷⁹¹ Jobes remarks, “For it is exactly when we are insulted and treated with malicious intent that we are most tempted to respond in kind by gossip, exaggerating the extent of the fault, or with outright slander.”⁷⁹² The reason believers should bless is now explained (“since,” *hoti*). They have been “called” to bless others. The words “for this” (*eis touto*) could point forward or backward.⁷⁹³ If they point forward, then the idea is that God has called believers to inherit the blessing of eternal life. More likely, though, as in 2:21, the pronoun “this” when attached to the verb “called” is retrospective.⁷⁹⁴ Believers have been called by God to bless others so that they would inherit the blessing of eternal life (cf. also Gal 5:13; Eph 4:1, 4; Col 3:15).

Peter’s logic may seem strange at first glance. Christians are called to bless so that (*hina*) they will inherit the blessing of eternal life.⁷⁹⁵ Is there the danger of works righteousness here, of suggesting that the blessing is obtained by the merit of believers?⁷⁹⁶ Peter has already explicitly taught that God has begotten believers to new life (1:3, 23) and that he will preserve them to the end (1:5). Now he stresses the behavior necessary for those who identify themselves as Christians. He continues in the same vein in the subsequent verses (3:10–12), where good behavior is deemed necessary to obtain eternal life. Nor is such teaching foreign to the rest of the NT since good works are often introduced as necessary for final salvation, although such works are the evidence, not the basis, of salvation (Rom 2:6–10, 27–29; 1 Cor

6:9–11; 2 Cor 5:10; Gal 5:19–21; 2 Pet 1:5–11; 1 John 2:3–6; Rev 20:11–15).

3:10 Those who desire an eschatological reward must turn from evil and pursue goodness. Peter cites in vv. 10–12 Ps 34:12–16 (LXX 33:13–17). We do not find an introductory formula, but the wording is clearly dependent on the Septuagint. The main difference is that Peter alters the text from the second-person singular to the third-person singular. It is difficult to know whether the change is intentional or cited from memory.⁷⁹⁷ It is also imperative to note that Ps 34 focuses on suffering and the Lord’s deliverance of those who are afflicted. Peter alluded to the same psalm in 2:3 and now returns to it. The psalm was not selected arbitrarily; it addresses the issue faced by Peter’s readers.⁷⁹⁸ The psalmist proclaims that the Lord rescues his own when they suffer and that he will judge the wicked. Meanwhile, the righteous display their trust and hope in the Lord by renouncing evil and pursuing what is good. It is not difficult to see that themes that are central in 1 Peter are evident in the psalm: the suffering of God’s people, their ultimate deliverance, the judgment of the wicked, and the notion that a godly life is evidence of hoping in God.

The most important feature for understanding the structure of the text is the “for” (*gar*) linking vv. 10–12 to v. 9. I summarize the logic of the text as follows:

You are called to bless so that you will inherit the blessing of eternal life. (v. 9)

For anyone who wishes to experience the life of the age to come must shun evil speech and do good to all in order to receive that blessing. (vv. 10–11)

For the Lord’s favor is on the righteous, but he will judge the wicked. (v. 12)

In the historical context of the psalm, “life” (*zōēn*) and “good days” (*hēmeras agathas*) refer to life and blessing in this world. But for Peter this language almost certainly refers to the *eschaton*, to end-time salvation.⁷⁹⁹ We have already seen in 1:4 that the “inheritance”

refers to eschatological salvation. The language of the psalm, therefore, is understood typologically in that the promise of life and good days in the land points toward and anticipates life in the world to come. Similarly, the language of 3:7 also demonstrates that Peter thought of the coming reward since “coheirs of the grace of life” signifies life in the future age. Perhaps a reference to *both* this life and the age to come is intended in that believers enjoy life and a living hope even in their present distress.⁸⁰⁰ Still, the accent is on the future reward.

A motivation is given for believers to bless those who persecute them and to live in a way that pursues peace. They are to refrain from speaking evil and from duplicity so that they will obtain the eschatological reward, eternal life itself. We must note again that such a theology is not works righteousness, nor does it compromise the theme that salvation is by grace. Peter believes that those who have received new life from God will live transformed lives and that such lives provide evidence (necessary evidence!) that they have been converted. Michaels rightly says that the blessing “is not earned by the performance of good works, it nevertheless belongs to those who demonstrate good works.”⁸⁰¹ To sum up, the good behavior enjoined in 2:11–3:7 is crucial for experiencing the eschatological inheritance of 1:3–9. That the tongue would refrain from speaking evil hearkens back to 3:9: “not paying back evil for evil.” And the exhortation to avoid “deceit” (*dolon*) reminds us of 2:1, where believers are enjoined to put aside “all deceit” (*panta dolon*).

3:11 The Christian life is not one of passivity for Peter. Believers must reject evil and pursue goodness. We have seen that Peter gives all the credit to God for the new life of Christians (1:3, 23). They have been begotten by the Father, and no one can take any credit for being born anew. Yet the priority of God’s grace can never be used to deny the need to take action. A life of goodness does not simply happen as believers meditate quietly in their rooms. Believers must make a conscious effort to “turn away (*ekklinatō*) from evil.”⁸⁰² They must devote themselves to “what is good,” and we have seen often in 1 Peter that goodness was especially prized by Peter (see commentary on

2:18). Peace can easily be disrupted, especially when others mistreat and even abuse us. Thus, believers must “seek” (*zētēsato*) and “pursue” (*diōxato*) peace. Such peace will only be preserved if believers do not insult and revile others, if they extend forgiveness to those who injure them.

3:12 The Lord will reward the righteous and punish those who are evil. Verse 12 differs from the OT citation only in the addition of “because” (*hoti*) to the text.⁸⁰³ Peter explains why good behavior is imperative. The reason is the same that we have already seen in v. 9 and in the relationship between v. 9 and vv. 10–11.⁸⁰⁴ Achtemeier wrongly—and surprisingly, given his recognition of the logic of the text—says that believers may be included in those who practice what is evil.⁸⁰⁵ But the point of the text is that the Lord’s favor is on those who live righteously.⁸⁰⁶ What holds the text together is the life and experience of Christ (2:21–25), and he is the Lord in Peter’s appropriation of Ps 34. In other words, he will bless them with the inheritance promised in vv. 7, 9 and with the future life of the age to come noted in v. 10. The hearing of their prayers (cf. v. 7) reveals that they are truly members of God’s people. Conversely, the Lord Jesus will turn away his face from those who practice evil, which means they will not obtain an eternal inheritance but final punishment. Indeed, in the next line of Ps 34, which Peter does not cite here, God will destroy the wicked. Peter’s omission of this line does not indicate that he diverges from the meaning of the psalm. What he includes has already made that point clear. We have now seen on numerous occasions that living a godly life is necessary for an eternal reward. Peter hardly suggests that believers will live perfectly and that such perfection is necessary to obtain an inheritance. But he does insist that a transformed life is necessary to obtain the inheritance.

3.3 Responding in a Godly Way to Suffering (3:13–4:11)

A new subsection of the text begins here, even though v. 12 is closely related to v. 13 (see below). In 2:13–3:12 the godly behavior necessary in various stations and realms of life is explicated. Peter now turns more directly to the call to suffer, maintaining that there is no

need to fear suffering since it is actually the pathway to blessing (3:13–17), just as suffering was the pathway to blessing and triumph for Christ (3:18–22). Thus, he calls on the readers to prepare themselves for suffering (4:1–6) since those who consent to suffer make a clean break with sin. Believers may be criticized by unbelievers in this life, but God will judge the latter, whereas he will vindicate believers on the last day. Indeed, the last day is coming soon (4:7–11). Therefore, believers should devote themselves to prayer, to love, and to mutual service by using their gifts. Thereby they will glorify God.

3.3.1 The Blessing of Suffering for Christ (3:13–17)

¹³ Who then will harm you if you are devoted to what is good? ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for righteousness, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear or be intimidated, ¹⁵ but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, ready at any time to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. ¹⁶ Yet do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that when you are accused, those who disparage your good conduct in Christ will be put to shame. ¹⁷ For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

Peter concludes v. 12 by promising that the Lord's favor is on the righteous, but he will punish evildoers. He draws an inference from v. 12 in v. 13. It follows, therefore, that no one can ultimately harm those who are zealous in doing good. The promise of the heavenly inheritance guarantees that the distresses of this life do not constitute the last word. Verse 14 restates the thesis of v. 13. Believers may be distressed by persecution now, but in actuality they are blessed and will enjoy the eschatological reward. Since no one can ultimately harm believers, they are exhorted in v. 15 not to fear. Those who enjoy blessing realize that any pain in this life is short-lived. Instead of fearing what unbelievers might do, believers are to set apart Christ as Lord in their hearts and to respond to those who ask them about their end-time hope with humility and the fear of the Lord. Their good conduct will be the basis for the eschatological shame of their

opponents if the latter do not repent. The proviso is (v. 17) that believers suffer for doing what is good instead of deserving censure because of evil behavior.

3:13 Even though I begin a new section here, this verse is closely linked to the preceding verses. The word *kai*, untranslated by the CSB, is usually translated “and” or “but.” In this instance, however, it is almost equivalent to “therefore.”⁸⁰⁷ Peter has just affirmed in v. 12 that the Lord will look with favor on the righteous, but he sets his face against those who practice evil, referring to the final judgment, where those who live righteously will be rewarded and the wicked will be judged.⁸⁰⁸ A rhetorical question stimulates the thinking of Peter’s readers. Who will inflict harm upon believers if they pursue what is good? The CSB is more helpful than the NIV (“Who is going to harm you?”) in that it clarifies explicitly (“Who . . . will harm you?”) that the future is in view. Some commentators understand Peter to speak of this life, and so the meaning is that people will ordinarily treat believers well if they practice righteousness.⁸⁰⁹ The logical connection between vv. 12 and 13 suggests that this interpretation is incorrect. Furthermore, the future tense of the participle (*ho kakōsōn*) probably refers to judgment day. The point of the rhetorical question, then, is that no one will harm believers on the day of judgment since God (as 3:10–12 teaches) will reward them for their faithfulness.⁸¹⁰

There is probably an allusion to Isa 50:9 here where the servant says, “In truth, the Lord GOD will help me; who will condemn me?”⁸¹¹ The link with the previous verses is also indicated in the last clause of the verse, “if you are devoted to what is good.” Godly behavior is also described as doing “good” in 3:11, which summarizes all that is required in 3:8–12. The word translated “devoted” could be translated “zealous” (*zēlōtai*), demonstrating an ardent pursuit of virtue, even in the face of persecution.⁸¹² Peter does not promise, then, that believers will escape rejection and harm in this world. Some understand Peter to say that usually the righteous will escape harm but occasionally they will encounter suffering.⁸¹³ This view should be

rejected since Peter does not suggest that sufferings are rare. Suffering stalks believers until this present evil age comes to an end. Instead, believers are assured that nothing can ultimately harm them if they continue to walk in God's paths, that the pain inflicted on them now is only temporary, and that they will be vindicated by God on the last day.⁸¹⁴ The thought is similar to Rom 8:31:⁸¹⁵ "What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us?" Paul is not saying believers face no opposition. His point is that no one can ultimately and finally triumph over believers since God will vindicate them on the last day.

3:14 Those who suffer will flourish, and thus there is no reason to fear. The conjunction "but" (*alla*) introducing v. 14 does not provide a contrast but a clarification of v. 13. Hence, it should be translated as "indeed."⁸¹⁶ The suffering of Christians might suggest that the assertion in v. 13 is false. Believers can be harmed, even killed, by opponents. Peter, however, does not conceive of the suffering of believers as contradicting the claim of v. 13. Those who suffer for the sake of righteousness, those who endure opposition because of their zeal for what is good, are "blessed" (*makarioi*; see also 4:14).⁸¹⁷ The blessing comes from God himself, showing that believers are beneficiaries when they are afflicted. In what sense are they blessed? Peter hardly means that sufferings are themselves pleasant, for then, obviously, they would not be sufferings. He almost certainly draws on the Jesus tradition here since Jesus himself taught in Matt 5:10–12 (cf. Luke 6:22–23) that those who suffer are happy because of the eschatological reward they will receive.⁸¹⁸ We can see now why the word "but" should be translated "indeed." The train of thought is as follows: "No one will be able to harm believers on the future day if they are zealous for good" (v. 13). Indeed, even present suffering is not a sign of punishment but of blessing both now and especially in the future, on the day when God rewards his people with eternal life.

Peter uses the optative form of the verb "suffer" (*paschoite*), which leads some scholars to conclude that suffering is unusual and a remote possibility for Christians.⁸¹⁹ Such an understanding of the verbal

form flies in the face of the context of the rest of 1 Peter, where it is evident that Christians in Asia Minor were facing suffering (cf. 1:6–7; 2:12, 19–21; 4:12–19; 5:9–10). Furthermore, such a view is difficult to square with the rest of Christian tradition, where suffering is part and parcel of the believer’s life.⁸²⁰ The purpose of the optative, then, is not to suggest that suffering is unlikely. Rather, the optative is used because suffering, though not a constant experience in the Christian life, is always a threat and could erupt at any time.⁸²¹ Peter does not teach that suffering is rare, only that it is not perpetual. The suffering envisioned is “for righteousness” (*dia dikaiosynēn*) and thus excludes troubles that come because of ignorance or sin (cf. 2:20; 4:15). Righteousness is another way of describing “the good” for which believers are zealous in 3:13.

Peter now draws two implications (in this verse and the next) from the fact that those who are suffering will flourish.⁸²² These two implications are the main point of the text and are expressed as imperatives. Since believers are blessed when they suffer, they should not fear what unbelievers can do to them. The CSB understands the first phrase differently, translating it, “Do not fear what they fear.”⁸²³ This rendering fits with the allusion to Isaiah, which will receive attention below. In the Petrine context, however, we probably have a reference to the fear that unbelievers could strike into the hearts of Christians.⁸²⁴ This interpretation is reflected in the NASB, “Do not fear their intimidation” or the NIV, “Do not fear their threats.” The second imperative, “Do not be frightened” (NIV) bears the same idea and simply restates the first imperative.⁸²⁵ The admonition fits with Peter’s emphasis on only fearing God. Fear of human beings, even of those who persecute, is forbidden. The reason fear is prohibited relates back to vv. 13–14a. Since no one can ultimately harm believers and since even their suffering is a sign of blessing, then it follows that they should not fear what others can do to them.

Peter alludes in this verse and the next to Isa 8:12–13. The text is reshaped to fit Petrine themes, although we again do not know if the

text was carefully altered or if it is cited from memory.⁸²⁶ Apparently the Isaiah text was important for Peter, for we saw in 1 Pet 2:8 that he appealed to Isa 8:14, in the texts collected on the stone. The context of Isa 7–8 is important. The southern kingdom of Judah was threatened by the northern kingdoms of Israel and Aram (the latter is approximately modern-day Syria). These two countries were threatening to remove Ahaz as king of Judah and to install a certain Tabeel as king in his stead. The threat filled Ahaz and Judah with terror (Isa 7:2), but Isaiah promised that the Lord would preserve Judah, that Israel and Aram would be vanquished by Assyria, and that the Lord would provide a sign to demonstrate the faithfulness of his word. Judah and Ahaz were to respond by trusting in the Lord's promise. In Isa 8:11–15 the Lord commands his people not to fear the plot hatched by Israel and Aram, which is what their contemporaries feared. They should only fear Yahweh, the God of Israel, and put their trust in him alone. Those who trust in him will find him to be a sanctuary, but those who fail to trust will stumble, fall, and be broken. Jobs notes the different application Peter makes because in Isaiah the people are exhorted not to give into the fear that others were succumbing to, but in Peter the readers should not fear what their opponents threaten.⁸²⁷ Still, there are significant parallels as well: just as Judah had enemies in the days of Ahaz, so the Petrine readers faced opponents in their day. Just as Judah was tempted to fear their foes, so the Petrine readers were liable to fear what their persecutors might do to them. Hence, the words of Isaiah still spoke to Peter's day. Believers are not to fear the suffering unbelievers might administer to them. They are to trust in the Lord, believing that he will vindicate his own.⁸²⁸

3:15 Peter states here the second implication from vv. 13–14a, continuing to allude to Isaiah 8. Negatively, believers are to refrain from fear. Positively, they are “sanctify Christ as Lord” in their “hearts” (NRSV). The differences from the Septuagint are more substantial than in v. 14. In Isa 8:13 the “LORD” (*kyrios*) is clearly Yahweh, but here Peter adds the word “Christ” (*Christon*).⁸²⁹ The

words “in your hearts” are also lacking in Isaiah. The move from Yahweh to Christ is common in the NT, reflecting the conviction that Jesus the Messiah deserves the same honor as Yahweh. We have seen this same move in understanding the the Lord in the OT to be Jesus in 1:24–25 (Isa 40) and 3:10–12 (Ps 34). In addition, Peter’s change reflects the situation his readers faced since they were persecuted because of their allegiance to Jesus Christ as Lord. Peter exhorts his readers to continue to treat Christ as the holy one, fearing him instead of those who are harming them. Christ is already Lord in any case, but believers demonstrate and acknowledge his lordship in their lives by honoring his name (cf. Matt 6:9).

Some scholars argue that the construction should be translated as “set apart the Lord, namely, Christ.”⁸³⁰ The meaning does not change dramatically if this interpretation is correct,⁸³¹ although more emphasis is placed on Christ’s identification as Lord, so that what Peter says about Yahweh in the OT is also attributed to Jesus Christ. Still, context suggests that we should interpret the construction as the NRSV does, “sanctify Christ as Lord.” Peter does not want to stress that Christ *is* Lord but that believers should set him apart and treat him *as Lord*.⁸³² The place where Christ is to be set apart as Lord is “in your hearts.” We should not understand the heart as our inner and private lives, which are inaccessible to others. The heart is the origin of human behavior (cf. 1:22; 3:4), and from it flows everything people do. Thus, setting apart Christ as Lord in the heart is not merely a private reality but will be evident to all when believers suffer for their faith. The inner and outer life are inseparable because what happens within will inevitably be displayed outwardly, especially when one suffers.

How the next sentence relates to the previous one is difficult to discern. The NIV understandably turns the adjective “prepared” (*hetoimoi*) into an imperative, “be prepared,” since something needs to be supplied to make the construction sensible. Technically speaking, perhaps, a participle (*ontes*) links this phrase to the main verb above (“set apart,” *hagiasate*).⁸³³ In any case, the adjective ends up

functioning like an imperative, and so the NIV is not far off. Believers are to be ready constantly to respond to those who ask about their faith. Peter emphasizes that they were to be prepared to provide a “defense” (*apologia*—rendered “answer” by NIV) to those who ask about the Christian faith. The word “defense” suggests to some scholars a reference to formal court cases in which believers responded to legal accusations (cf. Luke 12:11; 21:14; Acts 19:33; 22:1; 24:10; 25:8, 16; 6:1–2, 24; Phil 1:7, 16; 2 Tim 4:16).⁸³⁴ We have seen in the introduction that the persecution in 1 Peter was sporadic and informal and does not represent the kind of state-sponsored persecution present under Pliny the Younger and Trajan. Thus, the situation should not be restricted to legal situations.⁸³⁵ The breadth of the charges is supported by the words “everyone who asks you” (NIV; *panti tō aitounti hymas*), suggesting that believers respond to a wide variety of people, not exclusively court situations.⁸³⁶ Informal circumstances are also included when believers are asked spontaneously about their faith.⁸³⁷ On the other hand, legal situations are probably in view as well. Informal accusations could lead to formal persecution, and thus there isn’t an absolute either-or on this matter.⁸³⁸ Thus the admonition here also applies to legal settings, nor does it preclude the possibility that believers also faced legal charges.⁸³⁹

The exhortation here is instructive, for Peter assumes believers have solid intellectual grounds for believing the gospel. The truth of the gospel is a public truth that can be defended in the public arena. This does not mean, of course, that every Christian is to be a highly skilled apologist for the faith.⁸⁴⁰ It does mean that every believer should grasp the essentials of the faith and should have the ability to explain to others why they think the Christian faith is true. Achtemeier remarks that in this respect we have an interesting difference between the Christian faith and mystery religions since the latter required secrecy of their adherents.⁸⁴¹

Interestingly, Peter uses the word “hope” (*elpis*) rather than “faith” here. We have already seen in 1:21 (see commentary) that the two

words are closely linked. “Hope” is a central word for Peter, focusing on the eschatological inheritance awaiting believers (1:3; cf. 1:13).⁸⁴² The implication is that unbelievers will recognize by the way believers respond to difficulties that their hope is in God rather than in earthly circumstances. We could translate the phrase “the hope that is in you” (CSB) or “the hope among you” (*tēs en hymin elpidos*). Some scholars favor the latter, arguing that the focus is not on the individual but the hope shared by the whole community.⁸⁴³ Social scientific studies of the NT era have rightly emphasized the community in the ancient world. Modern Western culture is highly individualistic, and the emphasis on personal freedom sets us apart from our ancestors. Nevertheless, we must beware of an overreaction since early Christians taught that individuals must repent and believe and were responsible for their decisions (cf. Acts 2:37–38; 3:19; Rom 10:9, etc.). In this case the translation of the CSB, “the hope that is in you,” is to be preferred.⁸⁴⁴ The phrase is parallel to “in your hearts,” focusing attention on the inner life from which outward actions flow. The NT does not separate the inner from the outer, the private from the public, because whatever is on the inside is manifested on the outside. Here the hope that animates believers will become so evident that unbelievers will ask for an explanation.

3:16 When believers encounter a hostile world and are challenged concerning their faith, the temptation to respond harshly increases. Defending a position could easily be transmuted into attacking one’s opponents. Thus, Peter adds that the defense must be made “with gentleness and reverence” (NRSV; *meta prautētos kai phobou*). The NRSV translation is to be preferred over the CSB’s “with gentleness and respect.” The latter’s use of the word “respect” suggests that Christians should treat unbelievers in a fitting way when questioned, and obviously Peter would not disagree. We have seen throughout the commentary, however, that “fear” (translated “reverence” in the NRSV) is always directed toward God in 1 Peter (see the commentary on 2:18). Furthermore, “gentleness” or “humility” becomes a reality when creatures consider themselves in relation to God.⁸⁴⁵ Still, Peter

probably has in view gentleness toward other people and fear before God.⁸⁴⁶ Such fear and humility are required for wives as well (3:2, 4), suggesting again that the instruction for the wives functions as a pattern for all oppressed believers. Those who fear God and live in humility will treat their opponents with dignity and refrain from lashing out against them. The relation believers have with God enables them to respond rightly to unbelievers.

We also have another piece of evidence that suggests that the focus is on the relationship with God. The phrase “keeping a clear conscience” functions as an imperatival participle, even if it is technically instrumental. Again, Peter specifies what is involved when believers defend their faith. The words a “clear conscience” (*suneidēsin agathēn*, lit., “a good conscience”) refer to the relationship of believers to God. As Goppelt says, “They have the certainty of living by faith, without being perfect therein.”⁸⁴⁷ They live in God’s presence in all they do, and thus they must not resort to revenge, anger, or sin when they are called upon to defend their hope.

Why should believers live in fear and humility before God and maintain a good conscience? In a purpose clause (“so that,” *hina*) the intention is explicated, “so that” those who abuse the good conduct of believers will be shamed on the last day. We see here that the primary form of persecution in 1 Peter was probably not physical but social. The situation addressed is “when you are maligned” (NRSV; *en hō katalaleisthe*), or as the CSB says “disparage[d].”⁸⁴⁸ Unbelievers are “those who speak maliciously” (NIV; *ho epēreazontes*) about Christians. Such abuse would occur in ordinary life, but such criticism of believers could lead to formal court cases. Furthermore, when verbal opposition ratchets up, physical violence may not be far behind. What unbelievers criticize, shockingly, is the “good conduct” of believers, though, of course, unbelievers would not describe it as such. The word for “conduct” (*anastrophē*) is a favorite of Peter’s, often designating the kind of conduct that is pleasing to God (1:15; 3:1–2; by way of contrast 1:18, and see the verbal form in 1:17). That the behavior in view is distinctively Christian is clear by the prepositional phrase “in Christ” (*en Christō*). The “in Christ”

language pervades the Pauline letters, with the phrase appearing seventy-three times, and it is used outside Paul only in 1 Peter (cf. also 5:10, 14); but Peter does not develop the phrase in the same way as Paul, and here it is virtually equivalent to “Christian.”⁸⁴⁹

Peter’s concern is that Christians live righteous lives so that there is no legitimate ground for criticism from unbelievers. Indeed, believers are to live righteously so that those who abuse their good conduct will “be put to shame” (*kataischynthōsin*). Commentators are divided about whether unbelievers will feel ashamed during this life by recognizing the conduct of unbelievers or the shame is eschatological, referring to the humiliation experienced on the day of judgment.⁸⁵⁰ In support of the recognition of present shame, some say that unbelievers were expected to recognize the good conduct of believers now.⁸⁵¹ When Christians persist in doing good and refrain from revenge even when censured, unbelievers cannot help but notice the goodness of those who claim to be Christ’s.

The first option is certainly a possibility; neither was Peter denying that some will take notice of the good conduct of believers. Still, his focus here is on the end time, the day of judgment.⁸⁵² Three pieces of evidence support this interpretation. First, the verb “put to shame” in 1 Pet 2:6 clearly refers to day of judgment, and though the term does not always refer to the future, it often bears this meaning (Rom 5:5; 9:33; 10:11; 1 Cor 1:27). Second, and most important, believers are already abused and criticized for their good behavior in Christ. It is difficult to see how “more good behavior” would suddenly lead unbelievers to feel ashamed. Some non-Christians are persuaded, despite the godly conduct of Christians, that they are troublemakers. Peter calls on believers to continue to live righteously when threatened. Peter probably has in view unbelievers who are hardened toward believers, who have made up their minds (come what may) that Christians are socially dangerous. Thus, he exhorts his readers to continue to please God and live in a godly fashion so that on the day of judgment unbelievers will recognize that they were mistaken all along. Third, the language of 1 Pet 2:12 is parallel to 3:16 in a

number of respects: the call to good conduct, the maligning by unbelievers, and the need to continue to live righteously when oppressed. We have seen that there are good reasons to think in 1 Pet 2:12 that the righteous conduct of believers will bring glory to God when unbelievers are judged on the last day. Some unbelievers refuse to acknowledge the goodness of the lives of believers. On the last day, they will be put to shame by God himself and will be compelled to acknowledge that believers lived righteously.

3:17 The word “for” (*gar*) links v. 17 to the preceding. Scholars debate the meaning of the verse, and so we must pursue this issue before explaining how it relates to the preceding. Is the verse saying that it is better for Christians to suffer when they do good than it is for them to suffer for doing evil? Many commentators support this view.⁸⁵³ Others object that such an interpretation is prosaic and so obvious that it hardly needs to be said. Therefore they understand the verse eschatologically. It is better to suffer now for doing good than it is to suffer on the day of judgment for practicing evil.⁸⁵⁴

Supporting this latter view is the eschatological focus of the argument in 3:10–12 and in 3:16. Further, the wording is parallel in some respects to Mark 9:43, 45, 47. Despite some provocative arguments favoring the latter view, I think Peter is not referring to the final judgment in this verse, even though I agree that eschatology informs 3:10–12 and 3:16.⁸⁵⁵ Such an eschatological focus is not evident here. The parallels in Mark are hardly decisive since those verses explicitly refer to end-time judgment and salvation. The Petrine formulation lacks such eschatological language. Further, the idea expressed in this verse is also communicated in 4:15–16 (cf. 2:20). Such a sentiment may seem prosaic, but it may be said in response that Peter knew human nature, realizing that even Christians may be apt to explain all suffering as an indication of their righteousness, when some of it may be deserved and come to them because of their sins. Neither is the verse merely a secular sentiment since the suffering Peter envisions was for the good done because of one’s relationship with God. Further, nowhere else does Peter use the word “suffer” (*paschō*) to refer to eschatological judgment, but only to the

difficulties faced during the present evil age. We have noted in the above verses that the good conduct of believers is rooted in their relationship with God. Verse 17, then, explains that the opposition Christians receive must be for good behavior, not their shortcomings.

Another feature of v. 17 must be noted. The suffering of believers is attributed to the will of God (cf. 1:6).⁸⁵⁶ The optative of the verb “suffer” (*paschoi*) is used because Peter does not know the extent to which God wills the suffering of each believer. He realizes that some will experience more vilification and even bodily harm than others. Such opposition, however, is not outside God’s control.⁸⁵⁷ The suffering each believer endures represents God’s will for them. Peter does not deny the reality of Satan and his evil ragings in the persecution of the church (5:8), nor does he exempt from responsibility human beings who persecute the church (2:12; 3:16). Nevertheless, no one can ultimately touch God’s children apart from his permission.⁸⁵⁸ This is also the message of the book of Job. Satan could only inflict damage on Job with God’s acquiescence. Naturally God’s intentions and motives in allowing suffering are remarkably different from Satan’s, and thus God remains unalterably good in the process, while Satan is irremediably evil.

3.3.2 Christ’s Suffering as the Pathway to Exaltation (3:18–22)

¹⁸ For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, ¹⁹ in which he also went and made proclamation to the spirits in prison ²⁰ who in the past were disobedient, when God patiently waited in the days of Noah while the ark was being prepared. In it a few—that is, eight people—were saved through water. ²¹ Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you (not as the removal of dirt from the body, but the pledge of a good conscience toward God) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²² who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him.

In vv. 13–17 believers are to be full of confidence and refrain from fear because of the promise of their eschatological inheritance. Now in vv. 18–22 Peter shows that Christ also traveled the pathway from suffering to glory. Suffering, then, is not a sign of divine displeasure. Precisely the opposite. Those who suffer for Christ will be glorified as he was.⁸⁵⁹ The paragraph is a difficult one, but it has three main points. First, Christ suffered for the unrighteous to bring believers to God (v. 18). Second, by the power of the Spirit, he was raised from the dead and proclaimed victory over demonic spirits (vv. 18–19). Finally, he is now exalted on high as the resurrected and ascended Lord, subjecting all demonic powers to himself (v. 22). The main point, then, is that believers have no need to fear that evil will conquer them, for they share the same destiny as their Lord, whose suffering has secured victory over all hostile powers. Believers, then, are akin to Noah. They are a small, embattled minority in a hostile world, but they can be sure that, like Noah, their future is secure when the judgment comes. The basis of their assurance is their baptism since in baptism they have appealed to God to give them a good conscience on the basis of the work of the crucified (v. 18) and risen (v. 21) Lord Jesus Christ.

3:18 The main idea of the previous paragraph is that believers should not fear, even though unbelievers may inflict pain on them (3:14). Instead they should set apart Christ as Lord in their hearts and be prepared to respond to questions posed by unbelievers (3:15). The reason believers should not fear is that they will be rewarded and blessed by God for suffering (3:13–14). Hence, suffering is the pathway to glory. The word “for” (*hoti*) introducing v. 18 relates back to the constellation of ideas we have just traced from the previous paragraph. Believers should not become intimidated in suffering but continue to sanctify Christ as Lord because the suffering of Christ was also the means by which he was exalted. Just as suffering was the pathway to exaltation for Christ, so also suffering is the prelude to glory for believers. This paragraph, then, with all its interpretive difficulties, does not veer away from the situation of the readers. Rather, the emphasis on Christ’s victory reminds believers that the troubles of the present time are temporary, that victory is sure because

Christ has triumphed over evil powers.⁸⁶⁰ The theme of the text therefore is not the imitation of Christ, contrary to some scholars,⁸⁶¹ but his victory over evil, a victory believers will share since they belong to him.

Peter does not summon his readers to follow Christ in these particular verses. He encourages them by reminding them of Christ's victory over evil powers. Some scholars have postulated that Peter used traditional material in these verses.⁸⁶² There is little doubt that traditional themes are cited, but the text has too many unique features to be counted as traditional.⁸⁶³ And the syntax is too complicated to read a hymn or confessional formula behind the wording.

The subject in v. 18 turns toward the suffering of Christ, which brings people to God. Death did not triumph over Christ since he was raised from the dead. Many manuscripts read that Christ "died" (*apethanen*) rather than "suffered" (*epathen*).⁸⁶⁴ The word "suffered" is likely original because the statement that Christ "died" for sinners was part of the common Christian confession (cf. Rom 5:8; 1 Cor 15:3; 2 Cor 5:14; 1 Thess 5:10), and the term "suffer" is unusual by comparison.⁸⁶⁵ Further, Peter never uses the verb "died" elsewhere, but he uses the verb "suffer" eleven times. Indeed, the connection with the previous verse is strengthened, where the term "suffer" is also found. Peter reflects on the death of Christ here, but the term "suffer" establishes a connection with the experience of his readers. The term "also" reminds us once again (see the commentary on 2:21) that just as believers in Asia Minor were suffering, so also Christ suffered. Nevertheless, the uniqueness of Christ's suffering is also communicated, just as it was in 2:21. Christ's death was "for sins" (*peri hamartiōn*). This phrase probably is rooted in the Septuagint, where the singular noun "sin" with the preposition "concerning" (*peri*) refers often to the sin offering. Wright has demonstrated that it has this meaning in forty-four of its fifty-four occurrences in the Septuagint (cf. also Heb 10:6, 8; 13:11).⁸⁶⁶

The interpretation proposed here is strengthened by the phrase “once for all” (*hapax*). The suffering of Christ was unique and definitive in that he offered himself as a sin offering once for all time. The distinctiveness of Christ’s sacrifice is featured here, for even though believers suffer, they do not suffer for the sins of others, nor does their suffering constitute a sacrifice for the sins of others. Nor is Peter suggesting that the suffering of believers is the means by which unbelievers are brought near to God.

The uniqueness of Christ’s death continues to be emphasized since he suffered on the cross as “the righteous for the unrighteous.” The righteousness of Christ alludes to his sinlessness (cf. 2:22). His suffering therefore was undeserved. We saw in 2:21–23 that Jesus’s response to unjust suffering functions as an example for believers. Christ’s role as an example is also implied in this text since in the previous paragraph believers are also exhorted to do what is right even if they suffer. Nevertheless, the uniqueness of Christ’s suffering comes to the forefront here. That Christ was “righteous” (*dikaios*) is stressed elsewhere in the NT (Matt 27:19; Luke 23:47; Acts 3:14; 7:52; 1 John 2:1, 29; 3:7; cf. Isa 53:11). Since Christ suffered as the sinless one (1 John 2:1; 2 Cor 5:21), his suffering is unique. Indeed, only Christ suffered “for the unrighteous” (*hyper adikōn*). His death was vicarious and substitutionary and the basis upon which people become right with God.⁸⁶⁷

The reason Christ’s death is sufficient is precisely because he was sinless. He could not have died on behalf of his people if he himself were stained by sin. His perfect obedience, therefore, is the basis for the sufficiency of his death. Peter shares common Christian tradition when he speaks of Christ dying for the unrighteous. Paul describes it as Christ dying for sinners (Rom 5:8), adding elsewhere that he died for our sins (1 Cor 15:3). John says God’s Son was the satisfaction for sins (1 John 4:10). And we have seen already in 2:24 that Peter draws upon Isaiah 53 in teaching that Christ “bore our sins.”⁸⁶⁸ The uniqueness of his death is also communicated in the purpose of his sacrifice. He died “to bring you to God.”⁸⁶⁹

The word “bring” (*prosagagē*) communicates the notion that one has access to God (cf. the noun in Rom 5:2; Eph 2:18; 3:12 and the background in the LXX; e.g., Exod 19:4; 29:4; 40:12; Lev 8:24; 16:1; Num 8:9). Christ through his suffering died *for* the unrighteous, and the suffering of believers could not bring others to God. Indeed, Christ’s suffering is the means by which the Petrine Christians were themselves brought to God, showing that they were formerly unrighteous and sinners.

Intense controversy over the text begins with the next phrase and continues through v. 21. We will take the text a phrase at a time and try to sort out the meaning. We have a contrast between two phrases, “He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive by the Spirit.” The contrast between the body and S/spirit in the NT is common.⁸⁷⁰ The ESV renders the contrast differently, understanding the two dative nouns as datives of sphere, “being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit” (cf. also NIV, RSV, NRSV, NASB).⁸⁷¹

We could read the flesh-spirit contrast to say that Jesus was put to death in his body but lived in terms of his human spirit. Other scholars argue that the point is that Jesus was put to death in the realm of flesh but was brought to life in the spiritual realm (cf. HCSB).⁸⁷² Still another possibility is that the two dative nouns “flesh” and “spirit” (*sarki* and *pneumati*) are both datives of agency. According to this view Jesus was put to death *by* human beings (the flesh) and was brought to life *by* the Spirit. Before attempting to resolve this issue, we can make some progress by establishing what is clear in the text. A contrast exists here between the death and resurrection of Christ. The participle “being put to death” (ESV; *thanatōtheis*) obviously refers to the death of Christ, showing specifically *how* he suffered (cf. *epathen* earlier in the verse). The participle “being made alive” (literal translation; *zōopoiētheis*), on the other hand, refers to the resurrection of Christ. The verb refers to the resurrection in a number of texts in the NT (John 5:21; Rom 4:17; 8:11; 1 Cor 15:22, 36, 45; cf. also Eph 2:5; Col 2:13).⁸⁷³ Elsewhere in the NT the death and resurrection of Christ are also communicated

in the same text (cf. Rom 4:25; 8:34; 14:9; 1 Thess 4:14). We can be confident, therefore, that Peter does not envision Jesus merely living in the interval between his death and resurrection in terms of his human spirit. He refers here to Christ's resurrection from the dead.⁸⁷⁴

Most scholars try to explain the verse by understanding the dative nouns "flesh" and "spirit" in the same way. Either both nouns are understood to refer to the person of Christ, both his body and spirit, or both nouns are understood to refer to a realm, so that the realm of the flesh and the realm of the spirit are in view. Or both nouns are construed as datives of agency, so that Christ was killed in the body by the "flesh" (i.e., human beings), and he was raised by the Holy Spirit. We can eliminate the first option because the text speaks of the resurrection of Christ, not of his human spirit. The second interpretation is ruled out by v. 19 since it hardly makes sense to say that Jesus "went" (*poreutheis*) and preached to the imprisoned spirits in the spiritual realm as the risen one. It is doubtful that the singular "flesh" refers to human beings who put Jesus to death. The NIV's interpretation that it refers to Christ's body is much more probable. The deadlock can be broken if we recognize that the two dative nouns are not used in precisely the same way; the first is a dative of reference, and the second is a dative of agency. Christ was put to death with reference to or in the sphere of his body, but on the other hand he was made alive by the Spirit. Interestingly, the parallel in 1 Tim 3:16 should be interpreted similarly. Jesus "appeared in a body" (*en sarki*, lit., "in the flesh") and "was vindicated by the Spirit" (*en pneumatic*; cf. also Rom 1:3–4).⁸⁷⁵ The message for the readers is clear. Even though Jesus suffered death in terms of his body, the Spirit raised (cf. Rom 8:11) him from the dead. Similarly, those who belong to Christ, even though they will face suffering, will ultimately share in Christ's resurrection.

3:19 Here we encounter the mysterious text about Jesus preaching to the spirits in prison. Before examining the details of this verse, the main interpretations that have been proposed will be summarized.⁸⁷⁶ Luther wrote, "A wonderful text is this, and a more obscure passage perhaps than any other in the New Testament, so that I do not know

for a certainty just what Peter means.”⁸⁷⁷ It should be noted that the main features of the various views are sketched in for the sake of clarity, and the different nuances among those who share the same view are not explained. First, Augustine, and since him many others, understood the text to refer to Christ’s preaching through Noah to those who lived while Noah was building the ark.⁸⁷⁸ According to this view, Christ was not personally present but spoke by means of the Holy Spirit through Noah. The spirits were not literally in prison but refer to those who were snared in sin during Noah’s day. If this view is correct, any notion of Christ descending into hell is excluded. Second, some have understood Peter as referring to OT saints who died and were liberated by Christ between his death and resurrection.⁸⁷⁹ Third, others understand the imprisoned spirits to refer, as in 4:6, to the sinful human beings who perished during Noah’s flood.⁸⁸⁰ Christ in the interval between his death and resurrection descended to hell and preached to them, offering them the opportunity to repent and be saved.⁸⁸¹ Most of those who adopt such an interpretation infer from this that God will offer a second chance to all those in hell, especially to those who never heard the gospel. If salvation was offered to the wicked generation of Noah, surely it will also be extended to all sinners separated from God. Fourth, the majority view among scholars today is that the text describes Christ’s proclamation of victory and judgment over evil angels.⁸⁸² These evil angels, according to Gen 6:1–4, had sexual relations with women and were imprisoned because of their sin. The point of the passage, then, is not that Christ rescues OT saints or offers salvation to those who refused to repent during their lives on earth, but, as in 3:22, his victory over evil angelic powers.⁸⁸³

I believe the last option is correct and will attempt to explain why in what follows.⁸⁸⁴ In the discussion that follows, the second and third view will be combined since both teach that Christ liberated people from confinement between his death and resurrection. The idea that Christ spoke by means of the Spirit through Noah is unconvincing. It

does not explain adequately the participle (*poreutheis*) translated “went” in v. 19 and “has gone” in v. 22. The use of the same term is a major clue in how the passage should be interpreted. In v. 22 it is clear that Jesus’s “going” refers to his resurrection and ascension to God’s right hand, showing that a postresurrection event is intended.⁸⁸⁵ The word “went” seems out of place and strange for those who defend the Augustinian view, since Christ did not really go anywhere if he preached “through” Noah. There are instances in the NT where the word “went” (*poreuomai*) refers to the ascension of Christ (Acts 1:10–11; John 14:2, 3, 28; 16:7, 28), while it nowhere refers to his descent into the underworld, which is also a problem for those who think Peter refers to the realm of the dead. We also noticed in v. 18 a clear reference to the resurrection of Christ. The “going” in v. 19, therefore, most naturally refers to what is true of Christ’s resurrection body. It is obviously the case that Christ did not need his resurrection body to preach through Noah by means of the Spirit. Indeed, the reference to Christ “going” in v. 19 demonstrates the implausibility of the Noahic view since it is difficult to understand how Christ needs to “go anywhere” if he speaks only through the Holy Spirit. This piece of evidence alone shows that the Noahic interpretation is implausible.

Second, the word “spirits” (*pneumasin*) fits much more plausibly with a reference to angels than to human beings⁸⁸⁶ since “spirits” (*pneumata*) in the plural almost without exception in the NT refers to angels.⁸⁸⁷ The only place in which the term clearly refers to human beings is Heb 12:23, and in that instance the addition of the word “righteous” (*dikaiōn*) removes any doubt that human beings are in view. The normal use of the plural “spirits” points toward angels, not human beings.⁸⁸⁸ Further, the word “prison” (*phylakē*) is often used to denote the place where human beings are held on earth (e.g., Acts 5:19; 8:3; 2 Cor 6:5; 11:23), but the word is never used to denote the place of punishment for human beings after death.⁸⁸⁹ The term is used in Rev 20:7, however, for Satan’s confinement for one thousand years (cf. Rev 18:2). That the evil angels are imprisoned is clearly taught in Jewish tradition (1 En. 10:4; 15:8, 10; 18:12–14; 21:1–10;

67:7; 2 En. 7:1–3; 18:3; Jub. 5:6).⁸⁹⁰ Finally, it is difficult to see what relation preaching through Noah has to the present context. Nothing else in these verses suggests that the Petrine readers were also to preach to their contemporaries.

The view that Christ offered salvation to those who died in the flood suffers from some of the same weaknesses as the first. Such a view also reads the term “spirits” to refer to human beings, but we have seen that this is unlikely. The word “went” reveals that Jesus’s proclamation did not come when he was dead but as the risen Lord.⁸⁹¹ If the journey below is placed after the resurrection, at least Christ has a body with which to make the trip. The second chance interpretation has another fatal problem. It makes no sense contextually for Peter to be teaching that the wicked have a second chance in a letter in which he exhorts the righteous to persevere and to endure suffering.⁸⁹² Indeed, we have seen in many places throughout the commentary that eternal life is conditioned upon such perseverance. All motivation to endure would vanish if Peter now offers a second opportunity after death. The benefit of braving suffering is difficult to grasp if another opportunity to respond will be offered at death.

The best solution, therefore, is that the verse proclaims Christ’s victory over demonic spirits after his death and resurrection.⁸⁹³ The evidence supporting this view is impressive. First, as we have seen, the word “spirits” almost certainly refers to angels (evil angels in this context). Second, the notion that the spirits are imprisoned fits with what happens to angels in other contexts (e.g., Rev 20:7). Third, Gen 6:1–4 probably provides the reason for the spirits’ punishment: their sexual relations with women. Such an interpretation of Gen 6:1–4 is debated, of course, but it was standard in Jewish literature in Peter’s day (see 1 En. 6–19, 21, 86–88; 106:13–17; Jub. 4:15, 22; 5:1; CD 2:17–19; 1QapGen 2:1; T. Reu. 5:6–7; T. Naph. 3:5; Bar 56:10–14; cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 1.73).⁸⁹⁴ The impact of this tradition is explained further in my commentary on Jude 6 and 2 Pet 2:4.⁸⁹⁵ Some scholars doubt that Peter was influenced by such a tradition. Because of space

constraints I can make only a few comments. Whatever one's understanding of the literary relationship between Jude and 2 Peter 2, it is clear that the texts are similar. We know Jude was influenced by 1 Enoch (cf. Jude 14–15). Thus, it is to be expected that in v. 6 Jude relays an interpretation that matches the basic understanding of 1 Enoch, although he does not ratify every detail of Enoch's view. It is implausible that 2 Pet 2:4 should be interpreted differently from Jude 6 since the texts share the same tradition. Further, those who believe in the Petrine authorship of both 1 and 2 Peter, as I do, have all the more reason to think that 1 Pet 3:19 draws on the same tradition.

Finally, such a view of the text, as I already have argued, makes the best sense of 1 Pet 3:19 in its own context. The two uses of the participle (*poreutheis*) “went” in v. 19 and “has gone” in v. 22 most naturally refer to Jesus's exaltation. That it involves his exaltation is specifically taught in v. 22, where he is at God's right hand. Moreover, this interpretation understands the “spirits” of v. 19 to be another term for the “angels, authorities, and powers” in v. 22. In both cases evil angels are in view. Indeed, in both instances Christ's victory over them is featured. In v. 19 he proclaims his victory over them as the crucified and risen Lord, and in v. 22 he subjects them to himself as God's vice-regent. If this view is correct, we can eliminate the interpretation that Christ preached in the interval between his death and resurrection.⁸⁹⁶ Again we note that the words “spirits” and “prison” fit most naturally with Christ preaching victory over demonic powers after his resurrection. The greatest difficulty for such a view is the word “preached” (RSV; *ēkryxen*). Usually this term refers to the preaching of the gospel, and such a definition fits better with the first two interpretations than with this one.⁸⁹⁷ The word can be used, however, in a neutral sense (cf. Rom 2:21; Gal 5:11; Rev 5:2).⁸⁹⁸ Context is decisive in defining the meaning of terms. Usually in the NT what one “heralds” is the gospel, but in this instance victory over demonic powers is heralded.⁸⁹⁹ Such an understanding does not impose an alien meaning on the word, and it harmonizes with the emphasis on victory in this text (cf. Col 2:15). Further, this fits with

Enoch's role in 1 En. 12:4, where he goes and tells (*poreuou kai eipe*) the Watchers that they will be judged.⁹⁰⁰ Another objection that can be raised is, Why would Christ proclaim his victory over only the angels who sinned by having sexual relations with women? The question is excellent, although we must recognize that we cannot answer every question raised in difficult texts. It is possible, however, that the angels who sinned as recorded in Gen 6:1–4 represent all the evil angels. Still, the text does not answer this issue definitively, and so unanswered questions remain.

Virtually every element of the verse has been discussed except for the phrase “in which” (*en hō*).⁹⁰¹ The phrase could be construed as temporal⁹⁰² (cf. 2:12; 3:16⁹⁰³; see also 1:6 and 4:4, and the commentary on the phrase there).⁹⁰⁴ Or it could be construed as a general antecedent and be translated “wherein,” “thereby,” or “thus.”⁹⁰⁵ Others take the antecedent to be the neuter noun “spirit” (*pneumati*).⁹⁰⁶ This last view is the most likely. If one understands the spirit to refer to sphere, then Christ goes in the spiritual sphere, and this could even occur before his resurrection;⁹⁰⁷ but as Achtemeier observes, it is difficult to see how this understanding coheres with Christ going in his resurrection body. It is preferable to see the antecedent as “spirit” and to understand the dative clause as instrumental.⁹⁰⁸ According to this view, Christ by means of the Holy Spirit went and proclaimed victory over the imprisoned spirits.⁹⁰⁹ This interpretation explains the “also,” for the Spirit not only raised Christ but also empowered him to herald victory.⁹¹⁰

3:20 Verse 20 emphasizes the disobedience of the spirits in Noah's day and features God's patience before the ark was built. When the judgment came only eight were saved. The interpretation of v. 20 depends, of course, on how v. 19 is understood. I have already argued that the imprisoned spirits in v. 19 refer to the angels who sinned by having sexual relations with women in Gen 6:1–4. Such angels “in the past were disobedient.” The participle “disobeyed” (*apeithēsasín*, “were disobedient” in CSB) should be understood as causal,

explaining why the spirits were imprisoned.⁹¹¹ The disobedience, as Jude 6 and 2 Pet 2:4 also explain, is their transgression of boundaries God established, with the result that they engaged in sexual relations with women. Another confirmation of the proposed interpretation is the reference to Noah since the incident between the “sons of God” and the “daughters of men” (Gen 6:1–4 NASB) immediately precedes the flood narrative. Indeed, it is plausible to understand the sin in Gen 6:1–4 as the climax of sin, the enormity of sin now being great enough to justify the extermination of all humanity.

God’s patience fits with the reference to Noah and his preparation of the ark. The Lord could have wiped out the human race instantly and recommenced his plan with Noah. Instead, God demonstrated his patience while Noah built the ark, presumably giving human beings an opportunity to repent during this interval (cf. Rom 2:4; 3:25; Acts 14:16; 17:30). Some might object that God’s patience toward humans eliminates any reference to angels, but we need to recall that the angels sinned with human beings so that the fate of human beings and angels were intertwined in the one event. It is also possible that Peter reflects on God’s patience toward the angels as well (Gen 6:3) since there is no evidence that God immediately judged the angels for their sin. He allowed them to commit sin with women, and it seems that some time elapsed before he responded in judgment.⁹¹²

The judgment of the flood that destroyed all is prominent in the text, but so also is the salvation of the few. Peter emphasizes that only a “few” (*oligoi*) were saved (cf. Matt 7:14) from the flood. Indeed, the number of those who were rescued was only “eight.” The text literally reads “eight souls,” but we should understand the word “souls” (*psychai*), as elsewhere in Peter (1:9, 22; 2:11, 25; 4:19), to refer to human beings as whole persons, not to the immaterial substance.⁹¹³ Indeed, the latter view would not fit since the point of the story is that they did not perish in the flood, which would hardly call to mind the idea that only their “souls” were preserved. Some in the history of interpretation have been tempted to understand the word “eight” symbolically.⁹¹⁴ Any symbolic reading is mistaken in this instance

since Peter refers to the eight persons who survived the flood: Noah, his wife, their three sons, and their wives (see Gen 7:13; cf. also 6:18; 7:7). An application is intended, of course, for Petrine readers. They were also sojourners and exiles on earth, a small community beset by opponents who mistreated them.⁹¹⁵ They should not be discouraged by the smallness of their numbers but must remember that God now extends his patience to all, but the day of judgment is coming in which their opponents will be ashamed and they will be vindicated. Thus, the appeal to Noah and God's patience reminds them to persevere. If God protected Noah when he stood in opposition to the whole world, he will also save his people, even though they are now being persecuted.⁹¹⁶

A pattern or type between Noah's day and the experience of the Petrine readers is also established with reference to salvation. The eight saved in the ark were saved physically. Their physical preservation points toward the eschatological salvation that has now dawned in Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Pet 1:10–12). Indeed, even in Genesis the physical is bound up to some extent with the spiritual since those who perished in the flood were destroyed because of their sin, and Noah was preserved because he found favor with God (cf. Gen 6:8, 12–13, 18). The preposition used in Greek with the verb "were saved" (*diesōthēsan*) usually means "into" (*eis*). It is difficult to see, however, how it can retain that meaning here, for it does not make much sense to say that they were saved "into the ark." We should understand the preposition as the CSB does to refer to salvation "in" the ark.⁹¹⁷

Another preposition poses a problem interpretively. What did Peter mean when he said Noah and the eight "were saved through water" (*di' hydatos*)? If one takes the preposition as instrumental, then the water is the means by which Noah and his family were saved.⁹¹⁸ The objection to this interpretation is that the water was the instrument used to destroy the world, not the means by which Noah and his family were saved. Others understand the preposition in a general locative sense.⁹¹⁹ According to this view, Noah and his family were brought safely through the waters that threatened to submerge and

destroy them. In the OT water is often represented as a scourge that destroys (Pss 18:4; 42:7; 69:1–2, 14–15; 88:7; 144:7).⁹²⁰ The floodwaters represented God’s judgment and fury at sin, and hence Noah and his contemporaries were also rescued from the judgment of sin. We can say, then, that Noah was actually saved through water if we understand Peter to be saying the following: “Noah’s ‘salvation’ was brought about by the same act of judgment that destroyed the wicked. . . . The way God rescues the righteous is by destroying their enemies.”⁹²¹ The water, then, also separated Noah and his family from their wicked contemporaries, who perished in the flood, and hence they were spared from the corruption of the society in which they lived.⁹²² When the waters subsided, they entered a new world, so to speak, one that was cleansed from sin and prepared afresh for life.

3:21 From water Peter turns to baptism which saves believers through Christ’s resurrection. Baptism is not merely a physical act of washing but constitutes an appeal for a good conscience. The typological thrust of the text is now specifically stated, expressed by the verb “corresponds” (“symbolizes,” NIV), although in the Greek the word is an adjective that could be translated as “type” or “pattern” (*antitypon*; cf. Heb 9:24).⁹²³ The water that deluged the world in Noah’s day and through which Noah was saved functions as a model or pattern for Christian believers.⁹²⁴ But to what is the water related in the new covenant? The answer is baptism. In fact, we have the surprising statement that “baptism . . . now saves you.” Before examining that statement, we must consider in what way the floodwaters prefigure or correspond to baptism.⁹²⁵ The waters of the flood deluged the ancient world and were the agent of death.⁹²⁶ Similarly, baptism, which was by immersion during the time of the NT, occurs when one is plunged under the water. Anyone who is submerged underwater dies. Submersion under the water represents death, as Paul suggests in Rom 6:3–5. Jesus described his upcoming death in terms of baptism (Mark 10:38–39; Luke 12:50), indicating

that submersion under the water aptly portrays death.⁹²⁷ Just as the chaotic waters of the flood were the agent of destruction, so too the waters of baptism are waters of destruction. In NT theology, however (cf. Matt 3:16; Mark 10:38–39; Rom 6:3–5), believers survive the death-dealing baptismal waters because they are baptized with Christ, because they are united to him by faith. They are rescued from death through his resurrection (Rom 6:3–5; Col 2:12). Thus, we are not surprised to read in this verse that baptism saves “by the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (NIV). The waters of baptism, like the waters of the flood, demonstrate that destruction and judgment are at hand, but believers are rescued from these waters in that they are baptized with Christ, who has also emerged from the waters of death through his resurrection. Just as Noah was delivered through the stormy waters of the flood, believers have been saved through the stormy waters of baptism by virtue of Christ’s triumph over death. The word “now” refers to the present eschatological age of fulfillment. With the coming of Jesus Christ the age of salvation has arrived.⁹²⁸

It is clear from what has already been said, therefore, that Peter does not succumb to a mechanical view of baptism, as if the rite itself contains an inherent saving power. Such a sacramental view is far from his mind. The saving power of baptism is rooted in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.⁹²⁹ Peter adds another comment, however, to ward off any misunderstanding.⁹³⁰ He describes what occurs in baptism. Baptism is not “the removal of dirt from the body.” The NASB follows the Greek more closely here, “not the removal of dirt from the flesh,” so that we see that the term actually used is “flesh” (*sarx*) rather than “body” (*sōma*). The distinction is important since some commentators conclude from the use of the word “flesh” that Peter spoke in a moral rather than a physical sense.⁹³¹ According to this view, baptism does not involve the removal of moral filth or impurity (cf. Jas 1:21).⁹³² This interpretation should be rejected. Elsewhere baptism is connected with the cleansing and removal of sin (cf. Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3; Acts 2:38; Eph 5:26; Titus 3:5). It would be unusual if baptism did not represent cleansing from moral impurity.

Others understand the verse even more symbolically, thinking that the removal of the filth of the flesh refers to circumcision since uncircumcision can signify uncleanness (cf. Lev 19:23; Jer 4:4; 1 Sam 17:26, 36; Jer 9:26).⁹³³ Baptism, on these terms, is not equivalent to physical circumcision and should not be understood merely as a physical and external act. This reading makes sense, but the attempt to connect the expression with circumcision should be judged unsuccessful. The terms used are too remote to detect an allusion to circumcision. It is difficult to believe that Gentiles in Asia Minor would have seen a reference to circumcision, nor does Peter elsewhere in the letter evince interest in Jewish rituals.⁹³⁴ The simplest interpretation is to be preferred. Any notion that baptism is inherently saving is ruled out, for the water itself does not magically cleanse.⁹³⁵ Water removes dirt from the skin, but baptism does not save simply because someone has been submerged under the water.⁹³⁶ The statement about the removal of dirt is made so that believers will not understand baptism mechanically or superficially. They must attend to what is really happening in baptism.

The meaning of baptism, then, is explained in the contrasting clause. A common view is represented by the CSB: baptism is not removing dirt from the flesh but “the pledge of a good conscience.” The translation “pledge” (*eperōtēma*) is found in papyri where one pledged willingness to abide by a contract.⁹³⁷ The word translated “pledge” (*eperōtēma*) occurs only here in the NT and only once in the Septuagint (Dan 4:17). In the latter case it means something like “decree,” which does not make sense in our passage. The meaning of the noun, however, can also be derived from the verb (*eperōtaō*), which often has the meaning of “ask” or “request” in its fifty-six occurrences in the NT (e.g., Matt 12:10; 16:1; 17:10; 22:23, 35, 41, 46; 27:11; Mark 7:5; 9:21; Luke 2:46; 3:10; John 18:7; 1 Cor 14:35).⁹³⁸ If the meaning is derived from the verb, the translation “ask,” “request,” or “appeal” would fit, as in the NRSV: “an appeal to God for a good conscience” (cf. also ESV, RSV). The interpretation reflected in the CSB (“pledge”) can be supported by the usage of the

word in the papyri. In these instances the term can be used of stipulations found in contracts. One pledges or promises to abide by the terms of the contract and the stipulations found therein. Similarly, one can understand the text to refer to the promise or pledge made at baptism.⁹³⁹ If one adopts this view, the genitive word “conscience” could be understood as subjective or objective. If subjective, the phrase says that the promise or pledge to abide by baptismal vows flows from a good conscience.⁹⁴⁰ Most scholars who see a pledge, however, understand the word “conscience” to be an objective genitive. If this is the case, the person being baptized promises to maintain a good conscience at baptism.⁹⁴¹ The one baptized pledges to live for the glory of God. This interpretation is certainly possible, and it is difficult to be certain.

I think it is more likely, however, that the meaning of the noun is derived from the verb. I reach this decision on contextual grounds. In other words, both interpretations of the word *eperōtēma* are possible lexically, but the contractual meaning does not appear until the second century AD.⁹⁴² In context it seems more likely that baptism is associated with an appeal or request to God for a good conscience.⁹⁴³ Once again, the word “conscience” could be understood as a subjective genitive—an appeal to God arising from a good conscience. A subjective genitive does not work well, however, for then we cannot specify what the believer is praying for since he already has a good conscience.⁹⁴⁴ But if the genitive is objective, as I think it is, believers at baptism ask God—on the basis of the death and resurrection of Christ—to cleanse their consciences and forgive their sins.⁹⁴⁵ The idea, then, is similar to Heb 10:22, where believers are exhorted to draw near to God confidently because their “hearts” have been “sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience” (NIV; cf. Heb 10:2).⁹⁴⁶ The interpretation adopted here fits with the context of 1 Pet 3:18–22, where Peter emphasizes Christ’s death as the means by which believers are brought into God’s presence. Christ died for believers, the righteous for the unrighteous, and thus believers enter

into God's presence on the basis of God's grace. So too Peter does not focus on promises believers make when baptized but the saving work of Christ and his resurrection and his victory over evil powers. Believers at baptism can be confident on the basis of the work of the crucified and risen Lord that their appeal for a good conscience will be answered.

3:22 The resurrection of Jesus Christ brings us back to the center of this passage, the victory of Christ over his enemies. Peter picks up again the word "has gone" (*poreutheis*), emphasizing Jesus's ascension after his resurrection. The same term in v. 19, I argued, also refers to Jesus's triumph over demonic powers after his death and resurrection. The emphasis here is on Jesus's entrance into heaven and rule at God's right hand. The reference to the right hand recalls Ps 110:1, where David's Lord sits at Yahweh's right hand and rules. Jesus applied the psalm to himself in his teaching (cf. Matt 22:44; 26:64; Mark 12:36; 14:62; Luke 20:42–43; 22:69), and the influence of the psalm is pervasive in the rest of the NT (Acts 2:34–35; Rom 8:34; 1 Cor 15:25; Eph 1:20; Col 3:1; Heb 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12). Peter circles back to v. 19 emphasizing that angels, authorities, and powers are subjected to Jesus. All three words refer to angels (for "authorities" [*exousia*] see 1 Cor 15:24; Eph 1:21; 3:10; 6:12; Col 1:16; 2:15; and for "powers" [*dynamis*] see Rom 8:38; 1 Cor 15:24; Eph 1:21). Trying to discern the hierarchy of angels from the different words lands us in unprovable speculation. The point is that Jesus reigns over all the hostile angelic powers. Contextually it would make little sense to emphasize that Jesus ruled over good angels.⁹⁴⁷ The message for Peter's readers is clear. In their suffering Jesus still reigns and rules. He has not surrendered believers into the power of the evil forces even if they suffer until death. Jesus by his death and resurrection has triumphed over all demonic forces, and hence by implication believers will reign together with him.

3.3.3 Preparing to Suffer as Christ Did (4:1–6)

¹ *Therefore, since Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same understanding—because the one who suffers in the flesh*

is finished with sin—² in order to live the remaining time in the flesh no longer for human desires, but for God’s will. ³ For there has already been enough time spent in doing what the Gentiles choose to do: carrying on in unrestrained behavior, evil desires, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and lawless idolatry. ⁴ They are surprised that you don’t join them in the same flood of wild living—and they slander you. ⁵ They will give an account to the one who stands ready to judge the living and the dead. ⁶ For this reason the gospel was also preached to those who are now dead, so that, although they might be judged in the flesh according to human standards, they might live in the spirit according to God’s standards.

Peter draws a conclusion from the previous paragraph with the word “therefore.” He argued in 3:18–22 that the suffering of the Christ was the pathway to his victory and exaltation. Thus, just as Christ suffered in the flesh (by dying, as 3:18 indicates), so too believers should resolve to suffer since the decision to suffer indicates that they have ceased to let sin have dominion over them. Verse 2 supplies the purpose for the exhortation given in v. 1. Believers should resolve to suffer in order to live for the will of God during the rest of their lives. Peter remarks in v. 3 that they had already had more than ample time to live like the Gentiles, in a life of unrestrained licentiousness. Because the Petrine believers had broken with their pagan past (v. 4) and no longer pursued a dissolute life, their former friends were astonished and criticized both believers and their God. In v. 5 the readers are reminded that the abuse from unbelievers is not the last word. God, at the conclusion of history, will judge the living and the dead. Ultimately, the wicked will be recompensed for their evil lives and their mistreatment of believers. Peter implies from this that it would be irrational for believers to relapse into a pagan lifestyle, even though they currently faced hostility and criticism. At the end of the day, they will be vindicated, and the wicked will be judged, and so they should resist any temptation to apostatize and join the company of those who will be judged. In v. 6 Peter takes up another objection to the gospel he preached. Pagans probably dismissed the Christian

faith by pointing out that believers died in the same way as unbelievers. Peter explains that the gospel was proclaimed to believers while they were still alive so that they would live in the spirit in God's presence, even though some of them had since then experienced physical death. In other words, physical death is not the ultimate reality for believers. The gospel promises that they will be raised from the dead on the last day.

4:1 The word "therefore" draws a conclusion from the previous verses (3:18–22), which feature Christ's victory over hostile powers by virtue of his death and resurrection.⁹⁴⁸ The connection between the two sections is this: since Christ's suffering is the pathway to glory, believers should also prepare themselves to suffer, knowing that suffering is the prelude to an eschatological reward.⁹⁴⁹ The main point of the verse is that believers are to arm themselves (*hoplisasthe*) with the intention to suffer. The term "arm yourselves" has military connotations, and in other texts the Christian life is compared to a life of war (Rom 6:13; 13:12; 2 Cor 6:7; 10:4; Eph 6:11–17; 1 Thess 5:8). The martial language indicates that discipline and grit are needed to live the Christian life, particularly in view of the suffering believers encounter. Indeed, believers must arm themselves with the "understanding" that suffering is inevitable. The word translated "understanding" (*ennoia*) can be translated "intention" (NRSV) or "thought" (RSV). In most cases a translation like "insight," "thought" (cf. ESV), or "knowledge" suffices.⁹⁵⁰ The connection with "arm yourselves," however, indicates that the insight becomes an "intention," and so the latter probably is the best translation. Like soldiers preparing for battle, believers should prepare themselves for suffering.

The first clause in the verse explains the reason the Petrine readers should expect to suffer. Christ also "suffered in the flesh." The wording hearkens back to 3:18, where both the verb "suffered" (*paschō*) and the noun "flesh" (*sarx*) occur.⁹⁵¹ We have further evidence confirming the interpretation of v. 18 because the "flesh" of Christ refers here to his bodily suffering (cf. NIV). We noted in v. 18

that the verb “suffer” was a favorite of Peter’s, and in both texts he links the suffering of Christ to the suffering of his readers, acknowledging, at the same time, the distinctiveness of Christ’s suffering. Christ’s suffering here focuses on his death as in 3:18 and 2:21–24. Further, as in 2:21–23 Christ’s suffering is exemplary for believers, providing the pattern they should imitate.

The most difficult part of the verse is the last phrase, “because the one who suffers in the flesh is finished with sin.” Some scholars understand the word translated “because” (*hoti*) in the CSB as an explanation of the word “intention” (NRSV) instead of being causal.⁹⁵² But a causal meaning seems more likely syntactically.⁹⁵³ Fortunately, the meaning is not affected significantly either way since a reason is given for why believers should prepare themselves to suffer. Scholars debate, however, on what reason is supplied. Three different interpretations are possible.⁹⁵⁴ First, the one who suffered could be identified as Jesus Christ.⁹⁵⁵ The objection to this view is that Jesus never sinned (cf. 2:22; 3:18), so how could it be said that he had ceased from sin?⁹⁵⁶ This interpretation could still be defended if sin is understood in terms similar to Rom 6:8–10. By virtue of his death and resurrection, the power of sin was broken, and Christ ceased to have any relationship with sin. At the cross the sinless one took sin upon himself, but now that he has suffered, he no longer deals with sin. His triumph over it is complete. This interpretation fits with the notion that Christ severed any relationship with sin once for all at the cross. Nevertheless, this interpretation should be rejected. It is scarcely clear that the phrase “the one suffers in the flesh” refers to Christ. The subject is more likely believers, for the syntax of the text indicates that those who arm themselves are to be equated with those who suffer. Jobes points out that the discourse has moved from what Christ has done (3:18–22) to an exhortation for believers.⁹⁵⁷ The singular form here is generic and should not be pressed as if the reference were to a solitary individual. The need to posit Christ as the subject can be eliminated if we show that there are plausible ways of speaking of Christians as ceasing from sin without importing the idea that

believers are sinless. Both of the following interpretations fit this requirement.

Second, the one who suffers in the flesh refers to Christians, but it should be understood in terms similar to Rom 6:7, “a person who has died is freed from sin.” In Rom 6 believers died with Christ, via baptism, to the power of sin. Similarly, the verse here says that the dominion of sin has been broken in the lives of those who have died with Christ.⁹⁵⁸ The advantage of this interpretation is that it coheres with Paul and sensibly explains how believers cease from sin. Still, the interpretation should be rejected.⁹⁵⁹ We must beware of imposing the Pauline writings on 1 Peter, and the two contexts are different. It is apparent in Rom 6 that the believer dies with Christ, but no such language is used in 1 Peter. Even though Peter just referred to baptism (3:21), he doesn’t emphasize union with Christ’s death and resurrection in baptism as Paul does. Indeed, the word “suffered” in the last phrase of v. 1 cannot be equated with dying. As Elliott argues, Paul speaks metaphorically of dying with Christ whereas Peter has in mind actual suffering.⁹⁶⁰ We should note that the verb is “suffer” (*paschō*), not “die” (*apothēnskō*). The conception here is not that believers have died with Christ, though such a truth is clearly taught by Paul, but that they should follow Christ in their daily lives by consenting to suffering. Further, Peter does not use the word “sin” (*hamartia*) to designate a power, something that is common in Paul. The word “sin” in Peter is used of acts of sin (cf. 2:22, 24; 4:1, 8).⁹⁶¹

The third interpretation is most persuasive.⁹⁶² “The one who suffers in the flesh” refers to believers and relates back to the imperative to prepare themselves for unjust suffering.⁹⁶³ Peter explains why they should prepare themselves to suffer, seeing the commitment to suffer as evidence that they have broken with a life of sin.⁹⁶⁴ The point is not that believers who suffer have attained sinless perfection, as if they do not sin at all after suffering. What Peter emphasizes is that those who commit themselves to suffer, those who willingly endure scorn and mockery for their faith, show that they

have triumphed over sin. They have broken with sin because they have ceased to participate in the lawless activities of unbelievers and now endure the criticisms that have come from such a decision. The commitment to suffer reveals an intention to live a new life, a life that is not yet perfect but remarkably different from the lives of unbelievers in the Greco-Roman world.⁹⁶⁵

4:2 The CSB understands the clause in this verse to designate purpose (“in order to”), in contrast to the NIV, which takes it as a result clause (“as a result”). Seeing it as purpose is more likely.⁹⁶⁶ Christians should arm themselves with the intention to suffer so that they live the remainder of their lives doing God’s will instead of fulfilling the human lusts that dominated their lives before conversion. The purpose clause provides confirmation for the interpretation proposed for the last clause in v. 1. Believers are summoned to suffer in the sense that they are called to do God’s will and to turn away from a life of sin. Some scholars think the remaining time on earth is understood as the short time before the second coming of Christ rather than the rest of one’s life before death.⁹⁶⁷ But we need not choose between these two options since the text is not specific enough to warrant one view or the other.⁹⁶⁸ Peter realizes that some Christians would die before Christ returned, as v. 6 in this context demonstrates, while still anticipating the imminent return of Christ. Whatever the span of life God grants, believers are to live zealously for God as long as life endures.

4:3 The “for” (*gar*) introducing v. 3 explains why believers should live the rest of their lives for God’s will. They have already spent sufficient time (*arketos*) in the past carrying out “what the Gentiles want to do” (ESV, translated “pagans” by NIV).⁹⁶⁹ The use of the word “will” (*boulēma*), translated as “choose to do” in the CSB, establishes a contrast between vv. 2 and 3. Believers should live for the “will” (*thelēma*) of God (v. 2), but before their conversion they devoted themselves to the “will” (*boulēma*) of the Gentiles (v. 3). The use of the word “Gentiles” (*ethnē*) for unbelievers, without comment, indicates that Peter understands believers in Jesus Christ as part of

restored Israel, members of the new people of God (cf. 2:9–10). In saying that the time past is “enough” to have lived as unbelievers, we see there is no room now for any dalliance with the lifestyle of unbelievers.

The lifestyle of unbelievers is then sketched in with a vice list. Such vice lists are common in the NT (cf. Mark 7:22; Rom 13:13; 1 Cor 5:10–11; 6:9–10; 2 Cor 12:20; Gal 5:19–21; Eph 4:31; 5:3–5; Col 3:5, 8; Titus 3:3). The words “unrestrained behavior” (*aselgeiais*) and “evil desires” (*epithymiais*) may refer to sexual sin here (see Rom 13:13; 2 Cor 12:21; Gal 5:19; Eph 4:19 for the former and Rom 1:24; 1 Thess 4:5; 2 Pet 2:18 for the latter), but they could also be general terms for sin.⁹⁷⁰ The combination of sexual sin, drinking, and parties apparently was common in the Greco-Roman world, as it is today. The next three words all focus on drunkenness and carousing. The particular word for “drunkenness” (*oinophlygia*) occurs only here in the NT (but cf. Rom 13:13; Gal 5:21; Eph 5:18). Deuteronomy 21:20 uses a verbal form of the word to describe a drunkard (*oinophlygeō*). “Orgies” (*kōmoi*) are also condemned in Rom 13:13 and Gal 5:21, both of which also link it with drunkenness. Achtemeier says that the reference is to “festal gatherings, whether private and domestic or public and religious.”⁹⁷¹ The term for “carousing” (*potoi*) occurs only here in the NT (see also Prov 23:30; Josephus, *Ant.* 5.289), referring probably to “social drinking parties.”⁹⁷² It is evident that the readers lived a dissolute life before their conversion. The last item mentioned is their “lawless idolatry.” The reference to idolatry indicates that the readers were not Jews but Gentiles since overt idolatry did not characterize Jewish communities. The word “lawless” does not focus on lack of conformity to the law but to an unholy and profane lifestyle (cf. Acts 10:28; 2 Mac 6:5–6; 7:1; 10:34).⁹⁷³ In addition, the sins listed in v. 3, although not absent from Jewish people, were not typical among religiously devout Jews.⁹⁷⁴

4:4 The initial words of the text, not translated by the CSB (“in all this,” NASB; *en hō*) could be understood as inferential and translated “therefore” or perhaps it means “with reference to this.”⁹⁷⁵ Because

the Petrine readers no longer participate in the activities listed in v. 3, their neighbors “are surprised” (*xenizontai*) or “think it strange” that Christians have forsaken their past lifestyle. In this verse we are reminded in what sense Christians are sojourners and exiles. They do not share the values and aspirations of the surrounding society, not fitting into the social fabric. What surprises unbelievers is that Christians do not plunge (*syntrechontōn*)⁹⁷⁶ into or participate in their immoral way of living—“the . . . flood of wild living” (*tēs asōtias anachysin*) that characterized life in Asia Minor. The participle *blasphēmountes*, translated “and they slander you,” is connected by some commentators with v. 5, so that it provides the reason for the judgment pronounced.⁹⁷⁷ More likely the participle should be understood as designating the result or consequence of the first clause in v. 4.⁹⁷⁸ Pagans are surprised that believers do not participate in what they consider to be normal cultural activities; in response they criticize, defame, and verbally abuse believers and thereby the God they worship.⁹⁷⁹

This verse is important for understanding the nature of the persecution in 1 Peter. Peter says nothing about believers losing their lives. Instead, unbelievers were at first puzzled and then outraged by the failure of believers to participate in activities that were a normal part of Greco-Roman culture. We see such a reaction in Tacitus when he says Christians have a “hatred of the human race” (*Ann.* 15.44). Pagans would feel this way because idolatry was woven into almost every dimension of their lives, from life in the home to public festivals to religious observances and even social occasions.⁹⁸⁰ In the Western world we take for granted the segregation of private and public spheres, but public festivals, in which the gods were venerated, were considered a civic duty in the Greco-Roman world. In particular, veneration of the emperor was a mark of good citizenship, and deifying the emperor was especially pronounced in Asia Minor.⁹⁸¹ Those who failed to participate would be social outcasts, just as today many American citizens are suspicious of those who refuse to take the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. We can imagine that those who did

not fit in with the mores of society would be discriminated against in daily life and that they would be the object of abuse.

Identifying the specific lineaments of persecution in 1 Peter is important since modern readers in the West tend to restrict persecution to imprisonment, physical deprivation, torture, and execution. As noted, there is little evidence in 1 Peter for these things. The readers were mistreated by being socially ostracized, and they probably faced some discrimination in the courts and from Roman authorities. We should not overlook that criticism and social ostracism often lead to more severe action, that sharp words can easily turn into sharp swords. If Revelation was written around the mid 90s AD, it is evident that in Asia Minor at least some believers were losing their lives for their devotion to Christ. When 1 Peter wrote, however, the penalties were not yet that severe, although Peter wrote to prepare his readers for whatever might come.

4:5 As is so often the case in the letter, Peter turns the readers' eyes toward the *eschaton*. Unbelievers enjoyed the favor and privileges of Greco-Roman society. They may have been experiencing social advancement and the praise of their peers. They may have been the consummate "insiders," while the Petrine readers were on the outside. Present circumstances, however, are not the final reality. Those who live now "for human desires" (v. 2), those who live in debauchery and indulge in the "flood of wild living" (vv. 3–4) and revile believers (v. 4), will be judged by God on the last day. They will need to "give an account" to God. The phrase "give an account" (*apodōsousin logon*) is courtroom language (cf. Matt 12:36; Luke 16:2; Acts 19:40; Heb 13:17; cf. Rom 2:6; 2 Tim 4:8, 14; Rev 22:12), referring to the final judgment,⁹⁸² as is evident from the words "the living and the dead" (cf. 1 Thess 4:16–17; 1 Cor 15:52). It is hardly credible to define the "dead" here as the spiritually dead, for when combined with the word "living," it refers to all people who have ever lived. The judge in view could possibly be Christ (cf. Matt 25:31–46; Mark 8:38; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Rom 14:9; 2 Tim 4:1).⁹⁸³ It also is possible that the judge is God himself (cf. Rom 2:6; 3:6; 14:10) since in 1 Pet 1:17 and 2:23 God functions as the judge.⁹⁸⁴ Perhaps Christ is to be favored slightly

since he is typically designated as the judge of the living and the dead.⁹⁸⁵ The main point of the verse is affirmed in either instance. Believers should not succumb to the temptation to renounce their faith in order to enjoy the approbation of society. Such approval is short-lived, and those who mistreat believers now will be judged in the future. The final judgment of unbelievers is not mentioned to encourage vindictiveness or revenge (cf. 1 Pet 2:21–23). We need to remember that these words are addressed to believers, not unbelievers. Peter reminds *believers* of the final judgment, assuring them that their perseverance in the faith matters and that those who practice evil will be assessed and condemned on the final day. Thus, they must not align themselves with the oppressors to escape discrimination, for soon the tables will be turned.

4:6 Verse 6 is joined to the preceding by the word “for” (*gar*), and we will return in due course to how this verse relates to the preceding. The words “for this reason” (*eis touto*) do not point backward to v. 5 in this case (cf. 1 Pet 2:21; 3:9) but ahead to the purpose clause (“so that,” *hina*).⁹⁸⁶ The reason the gospel was preached to the dead is articulated in the last clause of the verse. Before we examine the purpose, we must investigate what Peter means by preaching the gospel to the dead. The CSB reads, “The gospel was also preached to those who are now dead.” The word “now” represents an interpretation of the text, one to which we will return. It should be noted at this juncture, however, that the word “now” is not in the Greek text. The CSB translators supply it in order to interpret the text. The NRSV supplies a more literal translation: “For this is the reason the gospel was proclaimed even to the dead.” The NRSV translation, which renders the original text well, raises a question: What is meant by the word “dead” (*nekrois*) here? Various answers have been given.⁹⁸⁷ Some scholars argue that the term means “spiritually dead” (cf. John 5:25; Eph 2:1, 5; Col 2:13).⁹⁸⁸ This interpretation avoids the problem of the gospel’s being proclaimed to people who are physically dead and fits with Paul’s notion that unbelievers are spiritually dead. The solution should be rejected, however, because

Peter nowhere used the term “dead” (*nekros*) to refer to spiritual death.⁹⁸⁹ Moreover, the word “dead” (*nekrous*) in the previous verse clearly refers to those who are physically dead.⁹⁹⁰ Peter provides no contextual clues that the meaning of the term shifts in this verse, although I will argue below that we have contextual clues supporting the notion that the word “judge” changes in meaning between vv. 5–6.

Others maintain that the verse speaks of the preaching of the gospel to those who have died physically. This interpretation is often connected with 1 Pet 3:19, where the spirits are understood to be human beings and the gospel was proclaimed to them after their death (see commentary on 3:19). According to this view, however, 4:6 elaborates on 3:19, for now all those who have died have the gospel proclaimed to them.⁹⁹¹ Some limit this to those who died before Christ’s coming; others to all those who died without hearing the gospel; and others to all those who have died without exception. The advantage of this latter interpretation is that it understands the “dead” in vv. 5–6 to refer to those who are physically dead so that there is no shift in meaning in the word “dead” between vv. 5–6. Nevertheless, this interpretation should be rejected for several reasons. First, we argued earlier that 1 Pet 3:19 does not refer to the preaching of the gospel but to the proclamation of triumph over demonic powers. Elliott rightly remarks, “The interest in a possible correspondence between 3:19 and 4:6 appears motivated more by dogmatic than by exegetical concerns; namely, a desire to find here a biblical expression of the universality of salvation.”⁹⁹² Second, the passive verb phrase in v. 6 “the gospel was also preached” (*euēngelisthē*) does not refer to preaching done *by Christ* but the preaching *of Christ* (cf. the passive verb from *kēryssō*, “announce, proclaim,” in 1 Cor 15:12; 2 Cor 1:19; 1 Tim 3:16).⁹⁹³ We should understand this to refer to preaching by human beings, therefore, not Christ himself. Thus, the verbal form provides no support for the preaching of the gospel by Christ after human beings have died.

Third, there is no basis in the text for limiting the dead to those who preceded the incarnation, to OT saints, or even to those who have not

had the opportunity to hear the gospel. We are left, then, with the notion that the gospel was preached to all of the dead after their demise. But this view should be rejected. The NT nowhere else envisions the possibility of repentance and salvation after death; quite the contrary (cf. Luke 16:26; Heb 9:27). Furthermore, if v. 6 refers to all the dead, it seems from the rest of the verse that all of the dead will be saved since the gospel was preached to the dead so that they should “live in the spirit according to God’s standards.” Nothing is said in this verse about any being condemned, but the notion that all will respond positively to the gospel is ruled out by the rest of the NT, where the final judgment of the wicked is taught consistently (e.g., Matt 25:31–46).

Fourth, there is an insuperable problem contextually with this interpretation. In the entire letter Peter exhorts his readers to endure persecution, knowing that they have the future reward of eternal life. Even in this paragraph he presents that argument, urging them to persevere because God will judge sinners (v. 5). It would make no sense if he were to shift gears suddenly and promise a second chance to those who have rejected the gospel during this life. If Peter were promising a second chance, the Petrine readers could not be faulted for concluding that they could deny the faith now and then embrace it after death. Apostasy, in any case, would not be final and ultimate since they would have another opportunity after death to believe the gospel. This interpretation should be rejected, then, because it veers away from the purpose of the entire letter and even contradicts the teaching of 4:1–6.⁹⁹⁴ Elliott rightly concludes that any notion of Christ’s universal redemption or of a second chance “to those who died before Christ . . . is thoroughly inconsistent with the theology, ethics, and aim of 1 Peter as a whole.”⁹⁹⁵

The interpretation that makes the best sense is reflected in the CSB (so also NIV).⁹⁹⁶ Peter considers the case of believers who had died physically.⁹⁹⁷ These people had heard and believed the gospel when they were alive but had subsequently died.⁹⁹⁸ Some unbelievers probably argued that the death of believers demonstrated that there

was no advantage in becoming a Christian since both Christians and unbelievers die. Peter indicates, however, that unbelievers do not understand the whole picture. Even though from a human perspective believers seem to gain no benefits from their faith since they die, from God's perspective (which is normative) they live according to the Spirit.⁹⁹⁹ Elliott understands the phrase a little more precisely so that the Gentiles did not merely observe the judgment on believers but, according to the context, with their slander "actively faulted the Christians according to their own God-opposed norms."¹⁰⁰⁰ In any case, death is not final for believers. They will be raised from the dead.¹⁰⁰¹

The contrast between the "flesh" and "spirit" here is parallel to 1 Pet 3:18 since Christ also died in terms of his flesh but was raised to life by the Holy Spirit. A similar destiny awaits believers. They die physically but will be raised to life by the Holy Spirit. I am suggesting, therefore, that Peter does not consider the intermediate state here but the resurrection of the dead. He uses the present tense because the future will certainly come to pass. Peter reminds his readers that even if they die physically, death is not ultimate. The resurrection awaits them.

It could be objected against the interpretation supported here that the "dead" in v. 6 is restricted only to the believing dead, when it is more natural to see all the dead as intended. But the limitation to believers is derived from the context, which refers to those who live according to God by means of the Spirit. The restriction of the dead to believers, then, is not an arbitrary imposition but is demanded by the verse. Another objection is similar, for if the interpretation I am proposing is correct, the judgment in v. 6 cannot be identical with the judgment in v. 5: v. 5 points to the condemnation of unbelievers, but the judgment in v. 6 refers to the death of *believers*. The difference between the two judgments is contextually grounded since v. 6 says that the judgment is "according to human standards" and that they will "live" according to God. If they live, it is evident that final condemnation is not in view and that the judgment in v. 6 does not

involve final condemnation as the judgment in v. 5 does.¹⁰⁰² Nor are we required to understand the datives “flesh” (*sarki*) and “spirit” (*pneumati*) identically.¹⁰⁰³ As I argued in 3:18, the datives can be construed differently. Here the “Spirit” is likely a reference to the Holy Spirit who raises believers from the dead. Believers died in the sphere of the flesh, but they will live by means of the Holy Spirit.

Wisdom of Solomon 3:1–6 offers an interesting parallel:¹⁰⁰⁴

But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment will ever touch them. In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died, and their departure was thought to be a disaster, and their going from us to be their destruction; but they are at peace. For though in the sight of others they were punished, their hope is full of immortality. Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good, because God tested them and found them worthy of himself; like gold in the furnace he tried them, and like a sacrificial burnt offering he accepted them.

The parallels should be noted: (1) the wicked think the death of the righteous is disaster and punishment; (2) the difficulties of the present are temporary; (3) believers have a future hope of life. The hope of the resurrection is explicit in Peter, while the author of Wisdom focuses more on immortality, which fits with the Hellenistic character of the writing.

3.3.4 Living in Light of the End (4:7–11)

⁷ *The end of all things is near; therefore, be alert and sober-minded for prayer.* ⁸ *Above all, maintain constant love for one another, since love covers a multitude of sins.* ⁹ *Be hospitable to one another without complaining.* ¹⁰ *Just as each one has received a gift, use it to serve others, as good stewards of the varied grace of God.* ¹¹ *If anyone speaks, let it be as one who speaks God’s words; if anyone serves, let it be from the strength God provides, so that God may be glorified through Jesus Christ in everything. To him be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.*

Verses 5–6 conclude with a reference to the final judgment, and Peter reprises that theme in v. 7a with a reminder that the end is near. He returns to the main theme of the previous paragraph. Since the end is near, believers should live according to God’s will. Practically, this means believers should be alert and sober for prayer, they should live in sacrificial love, and they should use their gifts, whether speaking or serving, to help others. Their aim and motivation in all they do is to see God glorified through Jesus Christ.

4:7 The previous paragraph ended with a reference to the final judgment (v. 5), death, and the resurrection (v. 6). Thus, it is not surprising that v. 7 opens with a reference to the end of history. The words “all things” (*pantōn*) could be translated “all people,” but in this context “all things” makes better sense, being placed at the beginning of the sentence for emphasis.¹⁰⁰⁵ The reason the end is near is that the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ have inaugurated the last days (cf. 1 Cor 10:11; 1 John 2:18). In the NT the theme that the end of history is imminent is often sounded (Rom 13:11–12; Phil 4:5; Heb 10:23–25; Jas 5:7–8; Rev 1:3; 22:10). All the following exhortations in this paragraph draw an inference from the coming of the end. See the “therefore” (*oun*) in the middle of v. 7. Because the end is near, believers should live in the following way.

We have a typical feature of NT eschatology here. Nowhere does the NT encourage the setting of dates or idle speculation. Eschatology is invariably used to encourage believers to live in a godly way (cf. Matt 24:36–25:46; Rom 13:11–14; 1 Cor 15:58; Phil 4:4–9; Thess 5:1–11; 2 Pet 3:11–16). Neither does the NT invite believers to withdraw from the world because the end is near and to gaze at the skies, hoping the Lord will return soon. The imminence of the end should function as a stimulus to action in this world. The knowledge that believers are sojourners and exiles, whose time is short, should galvanize them to make their lives count now.

We might expect a call for extraordinary behavior, thinking something unusual would be demanded in light of the arrival of the end. Peter exhorts his readers, however, to pursue virtues that are a normal part of NT paraenesis. Peter shifts in this paragraph from a

focus on relationship with outsiders (4:1–6) to how believers should relate to one another.¹⁰⁰⁶ The readers are summoned to “be alert and sober-minded.” The two verbs “be alert” (*sōphronēsate*) and “sober-minded” (*nēpsate*) are virtually synonymous and should be understood together. Indeed, the word “pray” (lit., “prayers,” *proseuchas*) is attached to both verbs.¹⁰⁰⁷ The nearness of the end has led some believers to lose their heads and act irrationally. On the contrary, believers should think sensibly as they contemplate the brevity of life in this world. Those who know the contours of history are able to assess the significance of the present. Their sensible and alert thinking is to be used for prayer, for entreating God to act in the time that remains.

The first resource for living out Christ’s victory in the Christian community is the believer’s prayer life. However, maintaining a vital prayer life is easier said than done, as most Christians know from experience. It is especially difficult to pray if others’ reactions to one’s faith are generating a hostility jeopardizing one’s social standing.¹⁰⁰⁸

The realization that God is bringing history to a close should provoke believers to depend on him, and this dependence is manifested in prayer since in prayer believers recognize that any good that occurs in the world is due to God’s grace.

4:8 The imminence of the end should also provoke believers to love. In the Greek the participle “having” (*echontes*), translated as “maintain” in the CSB (so also NRSV), is rendered by “keep” (ESV, NASB) and “hold” (RSV) in other translations. Many scholars understand the participle as an imperative, and this is reflected in the various translations.¹⁰⁰⁹ Achtemeier understands the participle as dependent on the imperatives in v. 7,¹⁰¹⁰ which is probably correct, although functionally the participle ends up being an imperative. Peter does not merely exhort believers to love one another in light of the *eschaton*.¹⁰¹¹ He says such love is “above all,” exhorting his readers to “constant love” (*agapēn ektenē*).¹⁰¹² The importance of such

constancy in love has already been underlined in 1 Pet 1:22, and the theme is broached again because love is central in the Christian life. Indeed, Jesus himself warned that love is apt to grow cold (Matt 24:12). Hence, the need to continue to stoke the fires of love so that it is displayed to others. The centrality of love is evident from 1 Cor 13:1–7, from the teaching of Jesus (Matt 22:34–40), and from Johannine teaching (e.g., John 13:34–35; 1 John 2:7–11). When believers contemplate how to spend their lives in light of the Lord’s coming, in their few days as exiles, they should remind themselves of the priority of love.

In the second half of the verse the reason love should be pursued is explicated, as the word “for” (*hoti*) indicates. The reason given is that love “covers a multitude of sins.”¹⁰¹³ The proverbial saying here also is found in Jas 5:20, although the future rather than the present tense is used in James. Two interpretations have been prominent. Does Peter mean that love covers over or atones for one’s own sins?¹⁰¹⁴ It could be argued that such teaching is also present in Luke 7:47 and Matt 6:14–15. This interpretation should be rejected. It is not clearly attested in the rest of the NT, nor are there grounds for seeing love as atoning for sin in 1 Peter. Instead, atonement and forgiveness are secured by Christ’s death on the cross (1:18–19; 2:24–25; 3:18). Nor do Luke 7:47 and Matt 6:14–15, rightly interpreted, teach that the love or forgiveness of believers somehow atones for their sins.¹⁰¹⁵

The second interpretation is preferable. When believers lavish love on others, the sins and offenses of others are overlooked.¹⁰¹⁶ Four arguments support this interpretation. First, it fits with the emphasis on mutuality in the immediate context. Love is directed to others, not oneself (v. 8). Genuine love is displayed to others through hospitality (v. 9), and gifts are employed to serve others, not oneself (v. 10). “Clearly, living in community with other believers for a sustained period of time—especially in a hostile society—gives plenty of opportunity for such ‘sins’ to occur that hurt members of the community, sow seeds of bad feelings, and fuel ongoing cycles of evil, deceit, hypocrisies, jealousies, and backbiting.”¹⁰¹⁷ Second, the

interpretation proposed here fits with Prov 10:12, which is alluded to here: “Hatred stirs up conflicts, but love covers all offenses.”¹⁰¹⁸ The clear meaning is that love covers the wrongs of others, while those who are full of hatred use the sins of others as a springboard to attack them. Third, although Jas 5:20 is also disputed, it is likely that the one who restores sinners from their errant ways covers over the sins of the one who went astray.¹⁰¹⁹ Fourth, elsewhere in the NT we find that love overlooks the sins of others (Matt 18:21–22; 1 Cor 13:4–7).

4:9 The theme of love continues in v. 9. We need to recall that these exhortations are all shaped by the nearness of the end (v. 7). No imperative or participle is actually present in the verse, but an imperative is surely implied and is reflected in all translations.¹⁰²⁰ Hospitality was one of the marks of the Christian community (cf. Rom 12:13; 1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:8; Heb 13:2). Hospitality was particularly crucial for the Christian mission in a day when lodging could not be afforded, and hence the advance of the mission depended on the willingness of believers to provide bed and board for those visiting (Matt 10:11, 40; Acts 16:15; 3 John 7–11).¹⁰²¹ The early church was aware that such hospitality could be abused (cf. Did. 11:3–6). Furthermore, hospitality was necessary in order for the church to meet in various homes (cf. Rom 16:3–5, 23; 1 Cor 16:19; Col 4:15; Phlm 2). Jobes remarks that the words “one another” show that hospitality here does not have to do with putting up outside visitors but having one another in homes for meals and fellowship.¹⁰²² Probably both outsiders (i.e., visiting Christians) and insiders (members of the church) are included. The words “without complaining” acknowledge that those who open their homes may grow tired of the service. Thus, they are exhorted to be hospitable gladly, not caving in to the temptation to begrudge their charity to others.

4:10 The theme of ministering to one another continues, but the emphasis shifts to gifts believers have received by God’s grace. The word “gift” (*charisma*) implies that the gifts believers have are the result of God’s grace, and the word “received” confirms this

judgment. Paul uses the term “gift” (*charisma*) often to designate spiritual gifts (Rom 12:6; 1 Cor 1:7; 12:4, 9, 28, 30–31; 1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6). Believers cannot boast about the gift they have, for doing so would contradict its gracious character, as if they somehow merit its bestowal. The gifts are manifestations of “the varied grace of God.” It is also implied that each believer has received at least one spiritual gift since “each one” (*hekastos*) is addressed. The notion that God grants charismatic gifts to each believer is also Pauline (1 Cor 12:7). God’s grace manifests itself “in its various forms” so that the diversity of gifts reveals the multifaceted character of God’s grace.

What is most important is the purpose of the gifts. Gifts are not given so that believers can congratulate themselves on their abilities. They are bestowed “to serve others.” The word used here can be translated “ministering” (*diakonountes*).¹⁰²³ The term “serving” can be used in a variety of ways—of providing meals (Matt 8:15; Mark 1:31; Luke 4:39; 10:40; 12:37; 17:8; John 12:2; Acts 6:2), of visiting those in prison (Matt 25:44; 2 Tim 1:18), of providing financial support (Luke 8:3; Rom 15:25; 2 Cor 8:19, 20), and in more general terms as well (Matt 20:28; Mark 10:45; Luke 22:26–27; John 12:26; Acts 19:22; 2 Cor 3:3; 1 Tim 3:10, 13; Phlm 13; Heb 6:10).¹⁰²⁴ The point is that spiritual gifts are given to serve and to help others, to strengthen others in the faith. They are bestowed for ministry, not to enhance self-esteem. Paul emphasizes the same theme, reminding believers that gifts are given to build up and edify others, not to edify oneself (1 Cor 12:7, 25–26; 14:1–19, 26; Eph 4:11–12). When believers use their gifts to strengthen others, they are functioning as “good stewards” (*kaloι oikonomoi*) of God’s grace. The word translated “stewards” could also be translated as “managers” (cf. Luke 12:42; 16:1, 3, 8; 1 Cor 4:1–2; cf. Gal 4:2; Titus 1:7), as long as it is clear that believers hold these gifts in trust since they are gifts of God. Spiritual gifts are not fundamentally a privilege but a responsibility, a call to be faithful to what God has bestowed.

4:11 The gifts are divided into two categories, speaking and serving gifts.¹⁰²⁵ It must be said immediately, from v. 10, that all gifts involve serving and edifying others, and Peter is not denying that

emphasis here. The gifts are explained functionally, observing that some involve speaking and others serve fellow believers in a variety of ways. In placing the gifts into the two categories of speaking and serving, all the spiritual gifts are included under these two classes. In his listing of the gifts, Paul provides more detail so that we have some idea which gifts would fall under speaking and which would fall under serving. The gifts of apostleship, prophecy, teaching, tongues, and exhortation are comprehended under speaking (Rom 12:6–7; 1 Cor 12:10, 28–30; Eph 4:11), whereas gifts like giving, leading, mercy, helps, healing, and miracles (Rom 12:8; 1 Cor 12:9–10, 28–30) fall under serving. It is not as if Peter does not know about the particular gifts. His purpose was to speak of them generally instead of discussing the gifts in particular.

Those who speak should endeavor to speak “God’s words.” The expression can also be translated “oracles of God” (RSV; *logia theou*). The “oracles of God” refer to the words God has given his people (cf. Acts 7:38; Rom 3:2; Heb 5:12). The phrase is rooted in the OT, where we have both “oracles of God” (LXX Num 24:4, 16; Ps 106:11 and “oracles of the LORD,” *logia kyriou*, LXX Pss 11:7; 17:31) and “your oracles” (LXX Pss 118:11, 103, 148, 158; 162; cf. Wis 16:11). Using speaking gifts to minister to others means that the one speaking speaks God’s words.¹⁰²⁶ How easy it is to think we can assist others with our own wisdom, but those who are entrusted with the ministry of speaking should be careful to speak God’s words, to be faithful to the gospel (cf. 1 Cor 4:1–2; 2 Tim 4:1–5). Peter writes so that those who speak will do so in accord with the gospel.

Those who minister and serve others must not rely on their own strength. They must minister with “the strength God provides,” relying on his power to carry out their tasks. Presumably they rely on his power through prayer. When those who speak utter God’s words rather than their own and when those who serve do so in God’s strength rather than their own, God through Jesus Christ receives the glory. God receives the glory because he is the one who has provided the wisdom and strength for ministry. The provider is always the one who is praised. If human beings are the source of wisdom and strength

for ministry, they deserve to be complimented. But if understanding and energy come from the Lord, he gets the glory as the one who empowers his people. We should note that God receives the glory “through Jesus Christ,” for the glory that redounds to God comes through the gospel the Petrine readers received (1:3, 10–12, 18–19; 2:21–25; 3:18). This gospel focuses on Jesus Christ as the crucified and risen Lord, and hence God is praised for what he has done in and through Jesus the Christ.

Peter concludes this section of the letter with a doxology, which some have seen as an indication that the letter ends here. Many letters, however, have doxologies before the conclusion (Rom 11:36; Gal 1:5; Eph 3:21; Phil 4:20; cf. Rev 1:6; 5:13; 7:12), although letters may indeed conclude with a doxology (Rom 16:25–27; 2 Pet 3:18; Jude 24–25). There is no basis, therefore, for thinking a doxology demonstrates that the letter concludes here. Instead the doxology signals the end of this major section of the letter, from 2:11–4:11. It is difficult to determine whether the doxology is addressed to God the Father or Jesus Christ. Supporting the latter is the fact that Jesus Christ is the nearest antecedent to “him.”¹⁰²⁷ On the other hand, most doxologies are addressed to the Father,¹⁰²⁸ and God is said to be the one who receives the glory earlier in the verse.¹⁰²⁹ Further, it seems strange to some to say that the glory is both “through” Christ and also “for” him (cf. 1 Clem. 20:12; 50:7). Still, we probably should understand the last phrase to refer to Jesus Christ since Christ is the nearest antecedent.¹⁰³⁰ Further, since the preceding clause speaks of glory belonging to God, it seems likely that here we have a reference to Jesus Christ. Nor is it difficult to think of the glory being effected “through” Jesus Christ and also being intended “for” him. We can think here of Rom 11:36, where “all things” are “through” God but they are also “for” him (cf. also Col 1:16). The goal of the Christian faith is that glory belongs to God and Christ, and here Peter also adds “power” (*kratos*; cf. also Rev 1:6). The word “amen” signifies an affirmation, indicating that the writer agrees with the sentiment expressed (cf. also Rom 11:36; 16:27; Gal 1:5; Phil 4:20; 1 Tim 1:17;

6:16; 2 Tim 4:8; Heb 13:21; 1 Pet 5:11; 2 Pet 3:18; Jude 25; Rev 1:6;
5:14; 7:12; 19:4).

SECTION OUTLINE

- 4 Persevering as Exiles in Suffering (4:12–5:11)
 - 4.1 Suffer Joyfully in Accord with God’s Will (4:12–19)
 - 4.2 Exhortations to Elders and the Community (5:1–11)
 - 4.2.1 Exhortations for Elders and Younger Ones (5:1–5)
 - 4.2.2 Closing Exhortations and Assurance (5:6–11)

4 PERSEVERING AS EXILES IN SUFFERING (4:12–5:11)

The readers are exhorted to suffer for righteousness and to refrain from evil, entrusting themselves to the will of God (4:12–19). In days of such suffering, the elders play a special role, serving selflessly as examples to the flock (5:1–5). The church, which also suffers, is called upon to clothe itself in humility with the realization that God loves them and cares for them, that he watches over all that is happening in their lives (5:6–7). At the same time, they must be vigilant and prepared for the devil’s attacks (which come through their suffering) and keep trusting God to the end (5:8–9). God who exercises sovereign dominion over all things will sustain and strengthen them to the end (5:10–11).

4.1 Suffer Joyfully in Accord with God’s Will (4:12–19)

¹² Dear friends, don’t be surprised when the fiery ordeal comes among you to test you as if something unusual were happening to you.

¹³ Instead, rejoice as you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may also rejoice with great joy when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴ If you are ridiculed for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. ¹⁵ Let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or a meddler. ¹⁶ But if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed but let him glorify God in having that name. ¹⁷ For the time has come for judgment to begin with God’s household, and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who disobey the gospel of God?

*18 And if a righteous person is saved with difficulty,
what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?*

*19 So then, let those who suffer according to God's will entrust
themselves to a faithful Creator while doing what is good.*

A new section of the letter commences with “dear friends” as Peter enjoins his readers not to be surprised at the fiery testing. The exhortation here shows that suffering may have been unexpected and was probably difficult for believers.¹⁰³¹ We have no evidence that fresh news reached Peter about the increase of suffering in Asia Minor.¹⁰³² The language used in this paragraph is not remarkably different from what we have seen already in 1:6–7.¹⁰³³ Peter reminds his readers that the “fiery ordeal” was for the purpose of testing and refining their faith, and thus they should not conceive of their suffering as something strange or unexpected. Instead of being surprised at their sufferings, they should rejoice and be glad (v. 13) since such suffering indicates that they will exult with remarkable joy when Jesus Christ is revealed in all his glory. Verse 14 explicates the purpose clause from v. 13. Being reproached for the sake of Christ is an indication that the readers are blessed since the Holy Spirit rests on believers.

In v. 15 Peter reverts to a theme we saw earlier (2:19–20; 3:17): the suffering of believers should be innocent so that they are not punished for doing evil. Rather they must suffer as those who are called Christians, that is, followers of Christ. For such suffering they should not be ashamed but glorify God by suffering with Jesus Christ. Verses 17–18 explain why believers were suffering. Suffering represents God's judgment of his house. By “house of God” here Peter means the church of Jesus Christ. Peter does not mean to say that God was punishing believers for their sins.¹⁰³⁴ Rather suffering purifies the church, and God uses it (cf. 4:1) to provoke believers to make a clean break with sin. The judgment begins with the church and purifies it, but if God purifies the church by his judgment, then his judgment of those who disobey the gospel will have terrible consequences. In v. 18

the same point is restated and explained. If the righteous are saved by means of a purifying suffering, if they need such a refining work, then the judgment of the ungodly and the sinner will be terrible indeed. Verse 19 functions as the conclusion to the entire paragraph. We learn from vv. 12 and 17–18 that the suffering that strikes believers is according to God’s will. It passes through his loving hands for the purification of believers. Thus, those who belong to God should entrust their lives to their “faithful Creator,” just as Jesus entrusted his life to God when he suffered (2:23). “Faithful Creator” signifies that God is sovereign and true. He is sovereign, and so no suffering occurs apart from his will. He is faithful, and so he will see to it that the suffering does not exceed what we can bear (cf. 1 Cor 10:13). Thus, believers should persist in doing good since entrusting themselves to God always manifests itself in a changed life, in the pursuit of goodness.

4:12 A new section of the letter begins here.¹⁰³⁵ This is evident because the previous section closes with a doxology, and the new section is introduced by “dear friends” (*agapētoi*) and an imperative as was the new section in 2:11.¹⁰³⁶ In addition, Peter again takes up the subject of suffering, tackling it from a fresh and final angle, giving another perspective on what has been discussed earlier. The view that Peter recently heard news of suffering and so penned this section should be rejected.¹⁰³⁷ There is no evidence that the suffering contemplated here was any more intense than that contemplated in 1:6–8. The readers are admonished not to “be surprised [*xenizesthe*] when the fiery ordeal comes among you.” If they were astonished at their suffering, they may have been tempted to deny the faith, concluding that God did not love them. An advance warning of suffering helps the readers to be prepared for suffering so that their faith is not threatened when difficulties arise.

Some interpret the “fiery ordeal” as designating actual physical persecution,¹⁰³⁸ but Peter says nothing different here from what has already been communicated in 1:6–7.¹⁰³⁹ We must beware of overreading the metaphor.¹⁰⁴⁰ Johnson demonstrates that the

metaphor should be interpreted in light of the OT background, particularly Prov 27:21; Ps 66:10; Zech 13:9; and Mal 3:1–4 (cf. also Wis 3:5; Sir 2:1–6).¹⁰⁴¹ The text in Ps 66:10 (65:10 LXX) is instructive, “For you, God, tested [*edokimasas*] us; you refined [*epyrōsas*] us as silver is refined.” Zechariah uses the verbs “refine” (*pyroō*) and “test” (*dokimazō*) in describing the Lord’s testing and refining of his people.¹⁰⁴² We know from 1 Pet 1:7 that Peter also spoke of testing (*dokimazō*) through fire, and in this verse the noun “fiery ordeal” (*pyrosis*), related to the verb *pyroō*, is used. Malachi 3:1–4 is especially important, for, although the wording does not match 1 Pet 4:12 as closely, the Lord in Malachi comes to his temple to purify his people. The echo is striking since Peter proceeds to say that God uses suffering as the means to purify his house (i.e., the church of God as his temple).¹⁰⁴³ Thus, Johnson rightly remarks that their sufferings are not a sign of God’s absence but his purifying presence. Their unbelieving contemporaries may be “surprised” (*xenizontai*, 4:4) that Christians are not participating in their evil, and yet believers should not be astonished (same verb) that suffering strikes them. They should not consider it as if “something unusual were happening.” Such suffering is to be expected because its purpose is “to test you” (*pros peirasmon*).¹⁰⁴⁴ Peter returns here to 1:6–7, where God allows suffering to refine the faith of believers.¹⁰⁴⁵ This notion is standard in NT paraenesis since God uses the trials of life to strengthen the character of believers and to make them fit for his presence (cf. Rom 5:3–5; Jas 1:2–4). The use of the word “test” (*peirasmon*) links this verse back to the same word translated “trials” (*peirasmois*) in 1:6.¹⁰⁴⁶

4:13 Verse 13 contrasts with v. 12, as is indicated by the word “but” (NRSV; *alla*) introducing the verse. Instead of being shocked that they were suffering, they should “rejoice” (*chairete*) at the privilege, to the degree that they “share in the sufferings of Christ.”¹⁰⁴⁷ The “sufferings of Christ” refer to sufferings that come because of their allegiance to Christ.¹⁰⁴⁸ Peter anticipates here what is explained in

the subsequent verses. Suffering for Christ is a cause for joy, but being mistreated because of one's own sins is nothing to brag about. The notion that suffering for Christ's sake is a cause for joy is reflected in Acts 5:41. The apostles "went out from the presence of the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to be treated shamefully on behalf of the Name."

Believers are to rejoice even now if they suffer for Christ's sake. The purpose clause (introduced by "so that," *hina*) points readers to a future joy. Believers should rejoice even now in suffering "so that you may also rejoice" in the future.¹⁰⁴⁹ Rejoicing in their present suffering is mandated so that believers will have joy in God's presence on the day of judgment. How believers respond to suffering, in other words, is an indication of whether they truly belong to God. The promise of future joy, in fact, energizes their joy now. The intensity of joy in the future is reflected in the two words that are used for joy, "rejoice and be glad" (RSV; *charēte agalliōmenoi*). The two terms used reflect the teaching of Jesus himself, in that he exhorts his disciples to "be glad and rejoice" (*chairete kai agalliaσthe*) when persecuted (Matt 5:12). This future joy will belong to believers "when his glory is revealed" (lit., "at the revelation of his glory," *en tē apokalypsei tēs doxēs autou*). The revelation of his glory certainly refers to the second coming of Christ. This is confirmed by 1:7, where, in a context that also discusses suffering and the final reward, reference is made to "the revelation of Jesus Christ" (*apokalypsei Iēsou Christou*). The same expression is used to describe the coming of Jesus Christ in 1:13. We also find the same phrase in the Pauline letters (1 Cor 1:7; 2 Thess 1:7). The readers should rejoice in their present sufferings so that they will be able to rejoice and exult forever when Christ returns.

4:14 In v. 13 believers are commanded to rejoice in their present sufferings, but v. 14 adds a distinct point, emphasizing that believers are blessed by God if they are insulted because of their allegiance to Jesus Christ. The sufferings of believers are described here as being "ridiculed for the name of Christ."¹⁰⁵⁰ The word "ridiculed" (*oneidizesthe*) is important and helps us understand the "fiery ordeal" (*pyrōsei*) in v. 12. The latter term might suggest that believers were

being put to death or experiencing some kind of physical torture for their faith. The readers must be prepared for such experiences. Still, the evidence of the letter does not support the idea that suffering had yet reached such an intense state. The opposition was mainly verbal at this stage.¹⁰⁵¹ They were “ridiculed” by others for their devotion to Christ.¹⁰⁵² We saw previously in 4:4 that they were abused by unbelievers for not participating in their former activities. Even the persecution in Rome under Nero (ca. AD 64) did not represent a concentrated, empire-wide campaign against Christians. It probably was a temporary response to the fire at Rome, designed to deflect responsibility from Nero (Tacitus, *Ann.* 15:44; Suetonius, *Vit.* 6.16.2). The correspondence of Pliny the Younger with the emperor Trajan (ca. AD 112–114) reveals that an official policy was not thoroughly worked out in responding to believers, although the Christian faith was certainly illegal and believers if charged would be put to death for confessing Christ. Trajan’s response demonstrates that believers were not to be sought out and punished (*Ep.* 10.96). We also see in the book of Revelation that some believers were being killed for their faith (cf. 2:13; 6:9–11; 13:7; 16:6; 17:6; 18:24; 19:2; 20:4), but even in this case the persecution probably did not represent an empire-wide and official persecution. What we have are sporadic instances of intense persecution that threatened believers.¹⁰⁵³

The main point of the verse emerges in the second clause. Those who are insulted as Christians are actually “blessed” (*makarioi*, cf. 3:14). They may be insulted by human beings, but they are flourishing despite their suffering. Peter recalls the words of Jesus here, for Matt 5:11 says, “You are blessed when people insult you” (NASB; *makarioi este hotan oneidisōsin hymas*). The words “blessed” (*makarioi*) and “insult” (*oneidisō*) are in both texts. Christians may be reproached by human beings, but they flourish because of God’s presence in their lives.

The last clause in v. 14 explains why believers are blessed, “because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.”¹⁰⁵⁴ The CSB smooths out the Greek syntax, which is awkward. It is possible that the clause

should be interpreted differently and could be paraphrased “for the eschatological glory promised in v. 13 and the Spirit of God rest upon you.”¹⁰⁵⁵ Achtemeier adduces a number of other examples in which the kind of construction found here (*to tēs doxēs*) would support this interpretation (LXX Lev 7:7; 1 Sam 6:4; Matt 21:21; 1 Cor 10:24; Jas 4:14; 2 Pet 2:22).¹⁰⁵⁶ Achtemeier’s interpretation also explains why the word “Spirit” (*pneuma*) is found only in the second phrase “the Spirit of God.” If this interpretation is correct, Peter’s point is that they are blessed because they now possess the glory that would be theirs at the end time and also that the eschatological gift of the Spirit rested upon them now.¹⁰⁵⁷

Davids, on the other hand, argues that the reference is to the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God, as translated in the CSB.¹⁰⁵⁸ First, he thinks the phrase “Spirit of God” is “stereotyped” and would not be broken up. Second, “glory” is placed first to contrast it with the ridicule of the first part of the verse. Finally, the use of the article to refer to glory would only work if we had a “stereotyped” phrase as in Matt 21:21; 1 Cor 10:24; Jas 4:14; 2 Pet 2:2. Davids maintains that such a stereotyped phrase is not evident here. A decision is difficult, but perhaps the view of Davids is to be preferred.

The wording of the verse harkens back to Isa 11:1–3, where the branch of Jesse, obviously Jesus himself for Peter, will be endowed with the Holy Spirit.¹⁰⁵⁹ The wording of v. 2 in the Septuagint is especially important. “The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him” (*anapausetai ep auton pneuma tou theou*), i.e., Jesse’s branch.¹⁰⁶⁰ The main difference is that Isaiah uses a future tense verb, while in Peter we have a present tense, probably to emphasize that the prophecy uttered in Isaiah has now been fulfilled and that the Spirit that was upon Jesus now also rests on Christians. Believers who suffer are blessed because they are now enjoying God’s favor, tasting even now the wonder of the glory to come and experiencing the promised Holy Spirit.¹⁰⁶¹

4:15 The “for” introducing v. 15, untranslated by the CSB, explains that believers’ joy and blessing are conditioned upon truly suffering as Christians.¹⁰⁶² Not all suffering qualifies one for blessing and joy since human beings also suffer when they do what is evil. The realism of Peter and of the early Christian movement manifests itself here. He knew how easily people can rationalize punishments that are deserved and explain them as “Christian” suffering. The admonition also reminds us that the early Christian churches were imperfect. Believers were still prone to sin, and thus they needed exhortations to encourage them to walk in godly pathways. The first two sins listed are blatant examples of falling short of God’s standards. Indeed, murder and stealing are not only sins but also crimes in society. We should not discern from this that believers in the Petrine churches were actually committing such crimes, nor is it clear from this that Christians were being taken to court.¹⁰⁶³ Blatant sins are listed for rhetorical reasons so that believers will distinguish between genuine Christian suffering and suffering that is a consequence of misbehavior.¹⁰⁶⁴ In any case, we see elsewhere in paraenesis prohibitions or warnings against murder (Matt 5:21; 19:18; Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20; Rom 1:29; 13:9; Jas 2:11; 4:2; Rev 9:21; 21:8; 22:15).

Stealing is also regularly condemned (Matt 19:18; Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20; Rom 2:21; 13:9; 1 Cor 6:10; Eph 4:28). The third sin is defined by the CSB as “evildoer” and the NIV as “criminal” (*kakopoios*). Peter uses the same word on two other occasions, and in both cases it refers to doing wrong in general and cannot be limited to criminal acts (1 Pet 2:12, 14). The verbal form also seems to bear this same meaning and is invariably contrasted with doing good (Mark 3:4; Luke 6:9; 1 Pet 3:17; 3 John 11). Thus, the term probably should be translated as the CSB does instead of the NIV.¹⁰⁶⁵ Some evidence suggests that the word could mean “sorcerer” or “magician,”¹⁰⁶⁶ but no evidence for this can be sustained from the Petrine usage, which regularly contrasts doing good in general with doing evil in general.

The fourth word represents one of the most difficult interpretive problems in the NT. This word, translated “meddler” (*allotriepiskopos*; so also NIV, ESV), occurs nowhere else in the NT, nowhere in the Septuagint, and nowhere in other Greek literature before 1 Peter. When we examine the word’s parts, we could define it as “watching over another’s affairs.” From this we can glean the interpretation that is represented in most English translations, “mischief-maker” (RSV, also NRSV), “busybody” (KJV, NKJV), “troublesome meddler” (NASB).¹⁰⁶⁷ Others have suggested that the term means “revolutionary” or “embezzler.”¹⁰⁶⁸ The latter, especially, is promoted by quite a few scholars. Certainty is impossible because of the lack of data, but some argue that “embezzler” makes the best sense contextually.¹⁰⁶⁹ They claim that meddling is annoying, but the context demands actions that are seriously wrong, and meddling does not fit in such a context. Warnings against defrauding others are found elsewhere in the NT (Mark 10:19; 1 Cor 6:7–8; 1 Tim 3:8; Titus 1:7; 1 Pet 5:2). Yet the words “even as” (*ē hōs*) preceding the word in question suggest that Peter thinks of something less serious than murder or thievery here.¹⁰⁷⁰ Peter realizes that most Christians will not be guilty of obvious sins like murder and stealing, and so he concludes by encouraging believers to refrain from annoying others.¹⁰⁷¹ If believers act like busybodies, they would be considered to be pests who deserve ostracism and mistreatment. Furthermore, Brown has shown that meddling in the ancient world was considered “a weighty social transgression.”¹⁰⁷² Meddling in the lives of others was not considered insignificant but another indication that Christians did not belong in society.

4:16 Verse 16 now examines the other side, instructing believers to suffer as believers and to bring glory to God in doing so. The word “if” as in v. 14 should not be translated as “since” or “when.” It is not as though Peter suggests that Christians may escape suffering. The condition is used so the readers will consider the condition, focusing on the reason for suffering, namely, if someone suffers as a “Christian.” Early believers did not typically call themselves

“Christians.” The name was first given to believers by outsiders in Antioch (Acts 11:26).¹⁰⁷³ Agrippa also used the term when Paul was making his defense in Caesarea (Acts 26:28). The usage here fits the paradigm since the label “Christian” is ascribed to believers by those looking at the community from the outside (cf. Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.44). The word “Christians” (*Christianoi*) means “followers of Christ,” just as “Herodians” (*Hērōdianoī*; Mark 3:6; 12:13) means “partisans of Herod the Great and his family.”¹⁰⁷⁴ The term “Christian” was originally a way of stigmatizing Christians, but believers accepted the name with pride, and eventually it became a standard title for believers.¹⁰⁷⁵

Even though we saw in v. 14 that the Christian faith was not officially illegal in Peter’s day, the threat of persecution was constant as Christians emerged as a distinct entity from Judaism. On the other hand, the term “Christian” does not indicate that being a Christian was necessarily a punishable offense per se when the letter was written. By the time Pliny the Younger wrote Trajan (ca. AD 112–14), those who were identified as Christians were put to death, but 1 Peter was written before the Neronian persecution. Horrell and Williams argue that what we have in 1 Peter is both official and unofficial persecution. Citizens may have reported Christians to the government, and as a consequence some believers may have been put to death.¹⁰⁷⁶ The argument depends in part on the date (AD 75–95) set for the letter. Still, such a situation, as Williams notes, could have been the case when Peter wrote as well, with the result that the persecution could have been both unofficial and official. This is not to say that there was an official imperial policy, and persecution was still sporadic and occasional.¹⁰⁷⁷ And Peter does not mention anyone being put to death, which makes such a view less likely. In any case, identification as a Christian could signify one’s guilt and rejection of the empire, and thus the acceptance of the name Christian could suggest rejection of imperial authority to unbelievers.¹⁰⁷⁸

The call to renounce shame focuses on actions that are shameful. Specifically, Christians would act shamefully by denying Christ before

unbelievers or by failing to persevere in the faith (cf. Mark 8:38; 2 Tim 1:8, 12, 16; 2:15). Thus, those who are ashamed would be guilty of apostasy.¹⁰⁷⁹ Hockey insightfully explores the significance of shame and honor here.¹⁰⁸⁰ Peter refuses “to allow this cultural framework [of the unbelieving world] to provide the standard for the believers’ behaviour and identity.”¹⁰⁸¹ Believers have “a new view of reality and brought a new framework of norms centred on God.”¹⁰⁸² “Consequently, the importance of the hostile other’s opinion is denied” which provides “emotional detachment from surrounding society.”¹⁰⁸³ Believers have another group (fellow believers and God) by which they are finding acceptance.¹⁰⁸⁴ If believers do not derive their honor from unbelieving society, the latter loses its power over them.¹⁰⁸⁵ She notes that shame drives behavior, and those who feel ashamed in society may abandon the faith.¹⁰⁸⁶ “It is the emotional refusal of shame that establishes an inner challenge to the pressure of societal norms.”¹⁰⁸⁷ “By refusing shame, the author exhorts his hearers to have a positive, godly self-assessment of their identity and behavior.”¹⁰⁸⁸ By way of contrast, believers glorify God by confessing and praising his name publicly (cf. Rom 15:6; 2 Cor 9:13). They glorify God in the name “Christian” by enduring such suffering with joy (v. 13), pleased that they are privileged to suffer because of their allegiance to Jesus Christ. The final phrase of the verse, “in that name” (NASB; *en tō onomati toutō*), could be a dative of sphere, but cause is probably best, especially given the parallel causal use in 1 Pet 4:14,¹⁰⁸⁹ signifying that believers suffer for the epithet “Christian.”¹⁰⁹⁰

4:17 The “for” (*hoti*) beginning this verse reaches back to the idea of suffering in vv. 15–16.¹⁰⁹¹ The suffering of believers is the beginning of God’s judgment from “God’s household” (*tou oikou tou theou*). The phrase “household of God” refers back to the OT, where God’s house is almost invariably his temple, although some think the

notion of family is present here.¹⁰⁹² It is possible that we have both conceptions here, but the focus is on the household as God's temple given the OT allusions. The OT background stems especially from Zech 13:9, Ezek 9, and Mal 3.¹⁰⁹³ In Ezek 9 the Lord judges sinners within Israel and begins from his sanctuary, the temple.¹⁰⁹⁴ The language of Ezek 9:6 is similar to Peter's in that the Lord said, "Begin at my sanctuary" (*apo tōn hagiōn mou arxasthe*), while Peter writes, "For the time has come for judgment to begin with God's household" (*arxasthai to krima apo tou oikou tou theou*; cf. Isa 10:11–12). The language is similar, but the theology is different since in Ezekiel rebellious sinners are destroyed, while in Peter the judgment does not involve the destruction of the godly but their refinement and purification.¹⁰⁹⁵

The background of Mal 3 is closer conceptually to Peter's message in this respect since the Lord will come to his temple and refine and purify his people, and then the offerings of his people will be acceptable (Mal 3:1–4). That the judgment in Peter does not involve destruction is clear from the parallel statement in v. 18, where the godly are "saved." We have already seen in 1:6–7 that the trials and difficulties of the righteous are designed to purify and refine believers so that they will receive their final reward (cf. also 4:12). Even though God's household is the temple in the OT, we see here that Peter, in concert with other NT writers (1 Cor 3:16; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:19; 1 Tim 3:15; Heb 3:6), conceives of the church, God's people, as his temple.¹⁰⁹⁶ Such a move is not surprising in Peter since he has already identified the church as God's temple (1 Pet 2:4–5), his priests, his chosen people, and his holy nation so that the church is restored Israel (1 Pet 2:9). In Ezek 9 the judgment literally begins at the temple, but now God's judgment begins not at a building but with his people. The judgment that begins with God's people purifies those who truly belong to God, and that purification comes through suffering, making believers morally fit for their inheritance.

The judgment here is the final judgment (cf. 1:17; 2:23; 4:5), but this judgment begins even now, in the present evil age.¹⁰⁹⁷ The

judgment “begins with us,” which means it commences with Christians. In the present age believers experience suffering, purifying them from sin. Peter argues from the lesser to the greater. If even those who are going to be saved are purified and judged by suffering, then the “outcome” (*telos*), i.e., the punishment, for those who reject the gospel will surely be greater. Unbelievers are described here as “those who disobey the gospel of God.” Peter could have written about judgment falling on those who disbelieved the gospel, but here he focuses on the failure to obey since all unbelief is also disobedience. On three other occasions those who will be judged (or are being judged) are described as disobeying (*apeitheō*, 1 Pet 2:8; 3:1, 20). In 2:8 and 3:1 such disobedience is described as disobedience to the word (*logos*), and the “word” in these texts is another expression for the gospel. Believers, on the other hand, are characterized by obedience (1:2, 14; 3:10–12; 4:3–4). Peter does not specify what judgment awaits unbelievers, but he already had indicated in 4:5 that they await final judgment. We should also observe that the order of Mal 3 is preserved here. When the Lord comes to his temple, he refines and purifies his people (3:1–4), but unrepentant sinners will be destroyed (3:5).

4:18 Verse 18 restates the truth of v. 17 in proverbial form, noting that the salvation of righteous with difficulty points to a more dire outcome for unbelievers. Proverbs 11:31 is virtually quoted from the Septuagint here. The Hebrew text is similar to the Septuagint in some respects, but it has the words “on earth” instead of “with difficulty” (*molis*), and thus the text form indicates that Peter draws from the Septuagint.¹⁰⁹⁸ The meaning of the proverb must be discerned from the context in which Peter uses it, and it clearly functions as a restatement of the previous idea in v. 17. The word *molis* can mean “scarcely” (Rom 5:7) or “with difficulty” (Acts 14:18; 27:7–8, 16), but context here favors the latter. Peter is not saying the righteous are scarcely saved, as if they were almost consigned to destruction and were just pulled from the flames. The difficulty envisioned is the suffering believers must endure in order to be saved. God saves his people by refining and purifying them through suffering. It is implied

here that salvation is eschatological, a gift believers will receive after enduring suffering (cf. 1:5, 9). If the godly are saved through the purification of suffering, then the judgment of the “ungodly and sinner” must be horrific indeed.¹⁰⁹⁹ The verb “will become” (*phaneitai*) refers to the eschatological judgment of unbelievers.¹¹⁰⁰ Peter writes to motivate believers to endure in suffering, and we have seen a similar argument in 4:3–6. Suffering may be difficult now, but by participating in the pain of following Christ, believers escape the condemnation coming upon the wicked.¹¹⁰¹

4:19 A conclusion from all of vv. 12–18 is now drawn.¹¹⁰² Those who suffer according to God’s will, those who are insulted in Christ’s name (v. 14), and those who suffer as Christians (vv. 15–16) should entrust themselves to God. The reference to God’s will here as in 3:17 indicates that all suffering passes through his hands (cf. 3:17), that nothing strikes a believer apart from God’s loving and sovereign control.¹¹⁰³ As Donelson says, the admonition to trust God “suggests that persecution has the power to bring into question the reliability of God.”¹¹⁰⁴ When suffering strikes, believers should “entrust themselves to a faithful Creator.” Christ modeled what Peter enjoins, for when he was suffering, he entrusted himself to God (1 Pet 2:23). We find the same word (*paratithēmi*) when Jesus entrusts his spirit to God at his death (Luke 23:46). In Acts the word is used when Paul entrusts his converts to God (Acts 14:23; 20:32), and in the Pastorals the word designates the entrusting of God’s truth to those who are faithful (1 Tim 1:18; 2 Tim 2:2). Similarly, believers should entrust their lives to God as Creator.¹¹⁰⁵ The reference to God as Creator (*ktistēs*) implies his sovereignty, for the Creator of the world is also sovereign over it.¹¹⁰⁶ Therefore believers can be confident that he will not allow them to suffer beyond their capacity and that he will provide the strength needed to endure. Such confidence can be theirs because he is a “faithful” Creator, faithful to his promises and faithful to his people, never abandoning them in their time of need, always vindicating the righteous and condemning the wicked (cf. 4:17–18).

The way believers will reveal that they are trusting in God is by continuing “to do good” (NIV; *agathopoia*).¹¹⁰⁷

4.2 Exhortations to Elders and the Community (5:1-11)

4.2.1 Exhortations for Elders and Younger Ones (5:1-5)

¹ I exhort the elders among you as a fellow elder and witness to the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory about to be revealed: ² Shepherd God’s flock among you, not overseeing out of compulsion but willingly, as God would have you; not out of greed for money but eagerly; ³ not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. ⁴ And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. ⁵ In the same way, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. All of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because

God resists the proud

but gives grace to the humble.

The elders are now addressed because as leaders they may face the brunt of persecution first. Perhaps there is even an echo of Ezek 9:6, where the judgment that commences in God’s temple begins with the elders.¹¹⁰⁸ Or it may be that the elders are addressed first simply because they are leaders of God’s flock.¹¹⁰⁹ Peter as a co-elder reminds the readers of the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow, suggesting the paradigmatic function of Christ’s sufferings. Three exhortations are given to the elders. They are to shepherd and oversee God’s flock, doing so because it is God’s will, not because they feel compelled to serve. Further, they are to be eager in fulfilling their task and should not serve for financial gain. Finally, they are to live as examples of the flock instead of using their authority to domineer the church. The motivation for the leadership of elders is explained in v. 4. When Jesus as the Chief Shepherd of the church returns, they will receive a glorious crown that never fades. If elders are to shepherd the church in a godly manner, the younger members of the congregation

are to submit themselves to the leadership of the elders. And every member of the church is to live in humility since God is opposed to the proud but grants grace to the humble.

5:1 The content shifts from suffering imposed from outsiders to matters within the community. The text actually begins with a conjunction (*oun*) that could be translated as “therefore,” “then,” or “so” (RSV).¹¹¹⁰ The CSB leaves it untranslated, probably because it is difficult to see how it relates to the preceding verses. We probably should explain the logical relationship as follows. The suffering and persecution faced by believers (4:12–19) puts a strain on the entire community. Both leaders and those who are younger must, in such a situation, respond appropriately to others in the church. More specifically, since judgment begins with God’s household (vv. 17–18), those in the church are exhorted to live in a way that pleases God so that they can avoid the judgment that will be imposed on the ungodly.¹¹¹¹

In vv. 1–4 Peter addresses the elders in the church.¹¹¹² The word “elders” (*presbyteroi*) is often used in the NT to refer to those who had leadership positions in the church.¹¹¹³ The church or churches in Jerusalem had elders (Acts 11:30; 15:2, 4, 6, 22–23; 16:4; 21:18).¹¹¹⁴ According to Acts 14:23 Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in every church visited during their first missionary journey. When a contingent of leaders visited Paul from Ephesus, they were called “elders” (Acts 20:17). The person who is sick and needs prayer is encouraged to summon the elders of the church for prayer and anointing according to James (Jas 5:14). The Pastoral Epistles show that elders functioned in Ephesus (1 Tim 5:17) and were to be appointed in Crete (Titus 1:5). Every piece of evidence we have shows that elders were widespread in the early church. They are mentioned by different authors: Luke, Paul, Peter, and James. They stretch over a wide region of the Greco-Roman world: from Jerusalem, Palestine, the whole of Asia Minor, and Crete. It is also likely that elders functioned as a plurality in the churches since the term is always plural, and Acts 14:23 says elders were appointed “for them in every church.” Further,

the elders who visited the sick in James were plural, but the elders who visited were almost certainly from one local church. Most scholars believe the term was borrowed from Jewish usage since the term “elders” is common in the OT and the Jewish tradition.¹¹¹⁵

In giving an exhortation to the elders, Peter refers to himself in a threefold way: (1) a fellow elder, (2) a witness of Christ’s sufferings, and (3) a sharer of the glory to come. We will take up each of these in order. The term “fellow elder” (*sympresbyteros*) occurs first here in Greek literature and probably was Peter’s coinage. Peter identified with the leaders of the churches by using the same title as theirs instead of appealing to the term “apostle” to emphasize his authority.¹¹¹⁶ We already noted that the leaders in the Jerusalem church were also called elders. Nevertheless, Peter’s authority shines through.¹¹¹⁷ He was the one giving instructions as a fellow elder, and it has already been noted that he was an apostle (1:1).¹¹¹⁸ Second, Peter reminds them that he was a witness of Christ’s sufferings. The reference to Christ’s sufferings is obviously intentional, for as the letter has made clear, suffering is the pathway to glory. Jesus Christ himself traveled the same road, and thus believers should not be surprised (4:12) if they are called to do the same. Scholars debate whether Peter claimed to be an eyewitness of Christ’s sufferings here. Some argue that the point is that he was a recipient of the early tradition that transmitted Christ’s sufferings so that Peter was not an actual witness since he fled the scene of Christ’s sufferings.¹¹¹⁹ Peter is not suggesting that he observed every moment when Christ suffered.¹¹²⁰ Peter did actually observe Christ in his ministry, saw the opposition mount against him, was present when he was arrested, and may have found his way to the cross after denying him. Even if he was not present at the crucifixion, he would have received the tradition very early from John the apostle, the Lord’s mother, and other witnesses.¹¹²¹

Lastly, Peter identifies himself again with the other elders, saying that he would also share “in the glory about to be revealed.” Some

scholars see here a reference to the transfiguration (cf. Matt 17:1–8 par.; 2 Pet 1:16–18), and others detect an allusion to the resurrection.¹¹²² Both of these explanations can be rejected since the reference here is to *future* glory, not something observed in the past. The glory to be revealed therefore is at the second coming of Christ.¹¹²³ Elsewhere in 1 Peter “glory” (*doxa*) is usually the future reward that either believers will receive or Christ received after his sufferings (1:7, 11, 21; 4:13–14; 5:4, 10). Words from the “revelation” word group also point toward the second coming of Christ in the letter (1:5, 7, 13). Two verses in particular show that revelation and glory refer to the future coming of Christ. In 1:7 the testing of faith “may result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” And in 4:13, “rejoice as you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may also rejoice with great joy when his glory is revealed.” Further, in 1:11 the “sufferings” of Christ precede the “glories” that follow, which matches the suffering and glory in 5:2. All of the parallels here make clear that the glory promised in 5:1 is the eschatological reward that will be given when Christ returns. Peter encourages the elders to follow Christ’s example, enduring suffering in the present so that they will receive the eschatological reward in the future.

5:2 The task of the elders is now explained. They are to function as shepherds of God’s flock. They are not to be like the shepherds indicted in Ezek 34, who treated their flock with “violence and cruelty” (34:4), who cared only for themselves (34:8). The words “God’s flock” remind the elders that the congregation does not belong to them. It is God’s church, and they are given the privilege and responsibility of shepherding it.¹¹²⁴ The verb *poimainō* (“shepherd”) is used in Acts 20:28 to describe the responsibility of elders in the church. We are also reminded of Jesus’s words to Peter in John 21:16, where Peter is exhorted to “shepherd my sheep.”¹¹²⁵ Luther rightly argues that we shepherd God’s flock by preaching the gospel.¹¹²⁶ The participle “overseeing” (*episkopountes*) specifies another function of the elders. As God’s shepherds and leaders they are to oversee the

church and superintend it.¹¹²⁷ We have a hint here that in the NT the offices of elder and overseer were the same. This conclusion is a matter of some debate in NT scholarship and has been seriously questioned in the work by Campbell.¹¹²⁸ Merkle establishes, however, that overseer and elder were indeed one office.¹¹²⁹ This is the most plausible way of reading the NT evidence. In Acts 20:17 Paul summons the elders (*presbyteroi*) of the Ephesian church, but in v. 28 they are identified as “overseers” (*episkopoi*), demonstrating that two different terms are used for one office.¹¹³⁰ Paul charges Titus to appoint “elders” in Titus 1:5, but in v. 7 he shifts to “overseer.” The “for” (ESV, NRSV; *gar*) connecting vv. 6–7 (but omitted in the CSB) suggests that a new office is not in view, and thus we should understand the singular “overseer” as generic in Titus. We should draw the same conclusion from 1 Timothy. The singular “overseer” of 1 Tim 3:2 is another way of describing the elders mentioned in 5:17 (cf. 1 Tim 3:1). In Phil 1:1 the officers of the church are listed as “overseers and deacons.” It is quite likely that these two offices could also be described as elders and deacons.

In the remainder of vv. 2–3, three contrasts are drawn explaining the way elders should not behave as opposed to the way they should conduct themselves. These instructions are always apropos, but they take on a particular urgency in a situation where the church faces persecution. The church needs godly leaders as it faces the stresses of persecution.¹¹³¹ First, those who serve as elders are not to serve under “compulsion” but with a wholehearted desire (*hekousiōs*), which is God’s will for them. A similar thought is found in 1 Tim 3:1, where the desire to be an overseer is commended, although we need to balance this with the instruction from James, who reminds us that teachers have a great responsibility and face a stricter judgment (Jas 3:1). Those who serve out of constraint will lose their joy, and the church will suffer as a consequence. Davids observes that elders would presumably work long hours and be the first targets of persecution, both of which could quench their desire to continue.¹¹³²

Second, elders must not take a leadership position “out of greed.” The danger exists that they will resort to dishonest gain and embezzle funds in some fashion. The same term is used in Titus 1:7 (*aischrokerdōs*), where Paul instructs Titus not to appoint elders who desire dishonest gain (cf. also 1 Tim 3:3). In the NT false teachers are often indicted because of their love of money (cf. 2 Cor 2:17; 11:7–15; 1 Tim 6:5–10; 2 Pet 2:3, 14–15; Jude 11). Genuine leaders, on the other hand, have an eagerness (*prothymōs*) in doing the work. The word “eagerly” here is another way of stating the word “willingly” (*hekousiōs*).¹¹³³ The leaders of God’s flock do not serve because they have to, as if it were simply another job, nor do they serve to skim off money for themselves.

5:3 The third contrast indicates that elders are not to use their positions of authority as an opportunity to oppress those under them. They are not to function as oppressors but as examples. The term “lording it over” (*katakyrieuō*) may allude to the teaching of Jesus, where he instructs his disciples not to imitate the Gentiles, who use their authority to rule over others and advance their own interests (Matt 20:25; Mark 10:42).¹¹³⁴ Followers of Jesus are to use their authority to serve, and in that way they imitate Jesus himself (Matt 20:28; Mark 10:45). The words “those entrusted to you” (*klērōn*) have been interpreted in various ways. Some argue that the meaning is that elders should not be dictatorial in assigning offices or positions to those below them in ministry or that they should not be autocratic when dealing with ministers who possess less power.¹¹³⁵ The CSB, however, is almost certainly correct here. Peter refers to God’s people here, not to those who are in positions of ministry.¹¹³⁶ We are uncertain whether the plural refers to the part of the congregation an elder superintends or the reference is to the various congregations from the different cities addressed in 1 Peter. In any case, the “flock” of v. 2 is the reference. Elders are not to enter the ministry so they can boss others around but so they can exemplify the character of Christ to those under their charge.

5:4 We have already seen in v. 1 that the instructions to elders are introduced with the notion of suffering and then glory, implying that those who serve well now will receive a great reward later. Peter does not call on leaders “to sacrifice” with no thought of reward. He reminds them that their labor for others will have a great reward and will bring remarkable joy.

Such a theme comes to the forefront specifically in v. 4. Jesus here is called “the chief Shepherd” (*archipoimenos*), a rare term that occurs nowhere else in the NT or in the Septuagint. The designation of Jesus as the chief Shepherd teaches leaders that they are fundamentally servants, not autocrats. We are reminded of 2:25 where Jesus is designated as “the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.” Positions of leadership are a responsibility, not a privilege by which they advance their own status. As shepherds they serve under the authority of the chief Shepherd, doing his will rather than theirs. The appearance of Christ refers, of course, to his second coming (cf. 1:7, 13; cf. also 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Col 3:4), reminding leaders that their positions of leadership are temporary. Clearly Peter preserves eschatological urgency. He does not focus on when leaders die but on the coming of the Lord. When the Lord comes, those elders who have served in accordance with the instructions in vv. 2–3 will receive a reward, “the unfading crown of glory.” The word translated “will receive” (*komieisthe*) is also used elsewhere to designate either reward or punishment on the last day (2 Cor 5:10; Eph 6:8; Col 3:25; Heb 10:36; 1 Pet 1:9), and thus “receive” “does not do full justice to this term” since there is the idea of “recompense.”¹¹³⁷ Peter contrasts the crown elders will receive with the leafy crowns bestowed in the Greco-Roman world. Such crowns were given after athletic victories or military conquests (Martial, *Epig.* 2.2; Pliny the Elder, *Nat.* 15.5; Dio Chrysostom, *Virt.* 8.15), but they faded as time elapsed, whereas the crown given by God (cf. 1 Pet 5:10) will never fade. The word “glory” is appositional to “crown.”¹¹³⁸ It is difficult to know if the crown is equivalent to eternal life itself or a special reward for elders. In the other “crown” (*stephanos*) texts the reward is entrance into life itself (cf. 1 Cor 9:25; 2 Tim 4:8; Jas 1:12; Rev 2:10; 3:11). The usage in the

rest of the NT slightly favors the latter notion. Elders can be confident they will receive the greatest reward conceivable when the *eschaton* arrives.

5:5 The text shifts from “elders” to those who are “younger” (*neōteroi*), perhaps echoing Ezek 9:6.¹¹³⁹ The use of the word “younger” might cause us to doubt that elders in the previous verses referred to a position of leadership, concluding instead that those who are advancing in age are described.¹¹⁴⁰ This interpretation is improbable since the descriptions of their activities in vv. 2–3 demonstrate they were leaders, and we saw that the term was commonly used to designate an office in the NT. It is also possible that the word “elders” shifts meaning in this verse so that in vv. 1–4 the reference is to those who are in an official position of authority, but now Peter turns to those who are older.¹¹⁴¹ This solution is possible, but it seems unlikely, for an interpretation that does not require a change in definition for the term “elders” should be preferred.¹¹⁴² And the verse is tied closely to the previous section with the term “in the same way” (*homoios*). We have seen in 3:1 and 3:7 that the words “in the same way” bind paragraphs together when complementary entities are addressed (e.g., husbands and wives).

Another possibility is to limit the “younger” to a part of the congregation. Perhaps the young are those who are young in faith, neophytes who have been recently baptized,¹¹⁴³ or perhaps as in Titus 2:6–8 those who are young are given a particular exhortation, especially since young people may tend to be more independent and less inclined to yield to those in authority.¹¹⁴⁴ The former notion is unlikely since the evidence is insufficient to indicate that the term “younger” refers to recent converts. Further, the argument depends on alleged parallels to the Qumran literature, and such parallels are not firmly established. Nor is it likely that we have a reference to young people recently appointed as elders.¹¹⁴⁵ It is possible that “younger” refers to the entire congregation, which is contrasted to the elders. If this interpretation is correct, the term “younger” is used because,

generally speaking, the remaining believers are younger in contrast to the elders.¹¹⁴⁶ The designation “younger” is a suitable “formal counterpart” to “elders.”¹¹⁴⁷

A decision is difficult. Perhaps the rest of the congregation is in view, but I incline to the notion that those who are literally younger are envisioned, perhaps because younger people would be more apt to act rebelliously. This view is suggested by the address to “all” (*pantes*) that follows the younger—introduced by “and” (NRSV; *de*—not translated by the CSB). The “and all” (NRSV) could imply that now the entire congregation is addressed instead of merely the “elders” and the “younger.” Dubis also points out that a reference to the young men fits with other texts where the young are mentioned.¹¹⁴⁸ Achtemeier appeals to 1 Clement to support the notion that the young refer to the whole congregation, but as Dubis observes, parallels from 1 Clem. 1:3 and 21:6 actually support the idea that the young in age are under consideration in 1 Peter since Clement distinguishes between the young and women. Dubis makes the same point from Ezek 9:6 as well, for there the young are distinguished from virgins and women, showing that the young are a distinct group.

The younger in particular, then, should submit themselves (*hypotagēte*) to the leadership of the elders. We have seen elsewhere that Peter understood submission as the responsibility of believers to those in positions of authority (cf. 2:13, 18; 3:1, 5). The purpose is not to encourage obedience no matter what leaders might say, for if leaders give counsel that contravenes God’s moral standards or violates the gospel, then they should not be followed. Nor is the verse suggesting that leaders are exempt from accountability before the congregation. We have already observed that elders are admonished not to use their authority as dictatorial rulers but are to serve those under their charge. Peter does not encourage unbridled use of power but emphasizes the right and loving use of authority.¹¹⁴⁹ Conversely, those who are under leadership should be inclined to follow and submit to their leaders. They should not be resisting the initiatives of leaders and complaining about the direction of the church.

Smooth relations in the church will be preserved if the entire congregation adorns itself with humility. When believers recognize that they are creatures and sinners, they are less apt to be offended by others. Humility is the oil that allows relationships in the church to run smoothly and lovingly. Pride gets upset when another does not follow our own suggestions. Peter grounds this admonition with a citation from Prov 3:34, which is also quoted in Jas 4:6. The citation is closer to the Septuagint than it is to the Hebrew text, but the meaning in both cases is essentially the same.¹¹⁵⁰ Humility is not servile and obsequious; it does not try “to impress” or intimidate others but places oneself under God’s authority and sovereignty.¹¹⁵¹

Believers should heed the injunction to be humble because God sets his face against the proud but lavishes his grace upon the humble. Those who submit to God’s sovereignty in humility will find that he will lift them up and reward them.

4.2.2 Closing Exhortations and Assurance (5:6–11)

⁶ *Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you at the proper time,* ⁷ *casting all your cares on him, because he cares about you.* ⁸ *Be sober-minded, be alert. Your adversary the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour.* ⁹ *Resist him, firm in the faith, knowing that the same kind of sufferings are being experienced by your fellow believers throughout the world.*

¹⁰ *The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, establish, strengthen, and support you after you have suffered a little while.* ¹¹ *To him be dominion forever. Amen.*

The paragraph division is somewhat artificial since the admonition in v. 6 is an inference from v. 5. Since God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble (v. 5), believers should humble themselves under God’s mighty and sovereign hand in their suffering. They are to humble themselves so that God will exalt them and give them the

reward of eternal life on the last day (v. 6). Humility also manifests itself in handing over our worries to God (v. 7a), and hence it follows that worry is a form of pride. Worry constitutes pride since it denies the care of a sovereign God, as if everything in life depends on us. The antidote to worry is believing in and resting in God's care for believers (v. 7b). Suffering does not only call for humility, but also believers are enjoined to be sober and alert (v. 8). Alertness is necessary because the devil is prowling about and using suffering to roar at believers, hoping to frighten them into apostasy and hence to destroy their faith. Because the devil is on the loose, believers must resist him, and such resistance is maintained by continuing strong in faith (v. 9). Believers should be encouraged when they realize that fellow believers throughout the world are experiencing the same suffering; their troubles are not unusual, and they are not alone. Peter concludes the paragraph in vv. 10–11 by reflecting on the grace and sovereignty of God, praying in v. 10 that the God who gives all grace and who effectually called believers to himself will give them strength to endure the sufferings of this age and that the sovereignty will belong to him forever.

5:6 The “therefore” in v. 6 demonstrates that the call to humility reaches back to v. 5. The logic of the verse is as follows. God resists the proud and pours his grace upon the humble; “therefore” believers should humble themselves.¹¹⁵² By humbling themselves they will experience God's grace since God bestows his favor on those who acknowledge their need of him. The humbling enjoined probably means they are to accept the suffering God has ordained instead of resisting and chafing against their circumstances while suffering.¹¹⁵³ The purification of God's house has begun (1 Pet 4:17) in their suffering.

The expression God's “mighty hand” (*krataian cheira*) is associated particularly with the Lord's delivering Israel out of Egypt (e.g., Exod 3:19; 32:11; Deut 4:34; 5:15; 6:21; 7:8, 19; 9:26; 11:2; 26:8; Dan 9:15). Just as the Lord delivered his people from Egypt, so he will vindicate his people suffering in Asia Minor. The image of a mighty hand emphasizes the power of God. Believers humble themselves

before a mighty God, the all-powerful one. Humility should not be seen as the ultimate goal here. Those who humble themselves before the Lord will be exalted. The theme that the humble will be exalted can be traced back to the teaching of Jesus (Matt 23:12; Luke 14:11; 18:14), and there is no reason to doubt that Peter recalls the teaching of his Lord here. The verse promises exaltation “at the proper time” (*en kairō*). Peter does not promise vindication and exaltation in this life. The point is not, against Grudem, that such vindication occurs occasionally in this life.¹¹⁵⁴ The time in view is the day of judgment and salvation, what Peter identifies as “the last time” (*en kairō eschatō*) in 1:5, or “the day of visitation” (ESV, RSV; *en hēmera episkopēs*) in 2:12.¹¹⁵⁵ That the exaltation takes place on the last day fits with the eschatological focus of 1 Peter and draws us back into the orbit of the first verses of the letter (1:3–12), where the salvation envisioned is an end-time salvation. The day of humiliation is limited to this world, but the readers will be lifted on high by God’s grace forever.

The words of Peter here are remarkably similar to Jas 4:10. Indeed, the parallels with James are striking in this section since both also cite Prov 3:34, as noted above (Jas 4:6; 1 Pet 5:5), and both also call on believers to resist the devil (Jas 4:7; 1 Pet 5:9). These commonalities have led some to think that James and 1 Peter draw on common tradition.¹¹⁵⁶ The use of common tradition is possible, but the evidence is by no means clear. James and 1 Peter have remarkably different purposes in the texts in question. James warns complacent believers, while Peter encourages those who are suffering. The content of Jas 4:6–10 and 1 Pet 5:5–9 also diverges in remarkable ways so that the texts when read side by side have notable similarities and notable differences. The themes of humiliation and exaltation are a staple of Christian tradition and thus do not clearly show dependence on a common tradition. The reference to resisting the devil probably is not distinctive enough to warrant the conclusion that the same source lies behind both Peter and James. If they did use the same tradition, Peter and James applied it in different ways.

5:7 The NIV begins v. 7 with a command, “cast all your anxiety.” The CSB (cf. NASB, ESV), however, rightly translates the participle “casting” (*epiripsantes*): “casting all your cares on him.” The participle should be understood as instrumental,¹¹⁵⁷ explaining *how* believers can humble themselves under God’s strong hand. Seeing the relationship between the main verb (“humble yourselves,” v. 6) and the participle (“casting all your cares on him”) is important because it shows that giving in to worry is an example of pride. The logical relationship between the two clauses is as follows: believers humble themselves *by casting* their worries on God. Conversely, if believers continue to worry, they are caving in to pride. How can anxiety and worry be criticized as pride? We can see that it might be a lack of faith, but does it make sense to identify worry as pride? Worry is a form of pride because when believers are filled with anxiety, they are convinced that they must solve all the problems in their lives in their own strength. The only god they trust in is themselves. When believers throw their worries upon God, they express their trust in his mighty hand, acknowledging that he is Lord and Sovereign over all of life. As Goppelt says, “Affliction either drives one into the arms of God or severs one from God.”¹¹⁵⁸

Peter writes this to a church afflicted by suffering and distress, and thus he realizes they faced anxiety.¹¹⁵⁹ As Jobes says,

Many anxieties result from professing faith in Christ in a polytheistic society that is hostile to the exclusive claims of the gospel. The loss of status and respect, loss of family standing, loss of friends, perhaps even loss of one’s livelihood, and in extreme cases, of one’s life—these are real possibilities for the Christians of Asia Minor.¹¹⁶⁰

Casting one’s worries on God would not bring comfort if he were unable to afford assistance in times of distress.¹¹⁶¹ Nor would anyone tell his worries to someone who is cruel or apathetic since those who hate us or are indifferent mock our worries by their lack of concern. Giving our anxiety to God makes excellent sense “because he

cares for you” (ESV). God is not indifferent, nor is he cruel. He has compassion on his children and will sustain them in every distress. Peter’s words remind us of Jesus’s exhortation to avoid anxiety (Matt 6:25–34), and perhaps we even have an allusion to Jesus’s teaching.¹¹⁶² More probably, the allusion is to Ps 55:22. Psalm 55 fits nicely with Peter’s theme since the psalmist implores God to help him because the wicked were attempting to destroy him, and even his close friend had turned against him. Verses 4–8 express the anguish and torment he felt in the midst of such opposition. We find the allusion in v. 22 (Ps 54:23 LXX), “Cast your cares on the Lord, and he will sustain you” (NIV; *epiripson epi kyrion tēn merimnan sou, kai autos se diathrepsei*).

5:8 As Peter draws the letter to a close, he gives final exhortations to his readers. With two aorist imperatives they are summoned to be vigilant: “Be sober-minded, be alert.” The admonition to sobriety (*nēpsate*) stems from the same verb used in 1:13 and 4:7, and both contexts address the need for alertness since the end is impending (cf. also 1 Thess 5:6, 8; 2 Tim 4:5). Similarly, the second imperative, translated “be alert” (*grēgorēsate*), is also used in eschatological contexts (Matt 24:42–43; 25:13; Mark 13:34–35, 37; Luke 12:37; 1 Thess 5:6; Rev 3:2–3; 16:15). The call for vigilance harkens back to the beginning of the letter (1:13) and functions as an inclusio. As Feldmeier says, “Whoever is drunk or sleeps has lost reference to reality, and has forfeited the ability to judge with respect to phenomena; such a one takes the imaginary at face value, is easy to deceive, and therefore is also helpless and vulnerable.”¹¹⁶³ When one ceases to be sober, one is “taken captive by the reality before its eyes that it loses God from view and therefore does not reckon with him anymore in the world, finally fading him out.”¹¹⁶⁴

Vigilance is needed because the devil is on the prowl. A number of manuscripts add the word “because” (*hoti*) to explain the relationship between the imperatives and the latter part of the verse. Even though the word “because” is secondary, it reveals an early and accurate interpretation of the verse. Believers must remain vigilant and alert until the end because the devil seeks to destroy their faith. The devil

inflicts persecution on believers so that they will deny Christ and lose their eschatological reward. Peter identifies the devil as an “enemy” (*antidikos*). The term is not used elsewhere for the devil, but the same idea is found in the word “Satan,” which means “adversary.” The word “devil” means “slanderer” or “accuser,” and we are reminded of his accusations against Job (Job 1:9–11; 2:4–5) and Joshua, the high priest, in the OT (Zech 3:1–2; cf. also Rev 12:10).

Peter portrays the devil as a roaring lion seeking to devour its prey.¹¹⁶⁵ The devil roars like a lion to induce fear in the people of God. In other words, persecution is the roar by which he tries to intimidate believers in the hope that they will capitulate at the prospect of suffering.¹¹⁶⁶ If believers deny their faith, then the devil has devoured them, bringing them back into his fold.¹¹⁶⁷ The contrast between God and the devil is striking. God tenderly cares for his children (5:6–7), inviting them to bring their worries to him so that he can sustain them. God promises to protect his flock (v. 2) in all their distress. The roaring lion includes the opposition of the populace in general and the Roman empire.¹¹⁶⁸ The devil’s aim is not to comfort but to terrify believers. He does not want to deliver them from fear but to devour their faith. Peter warns believers to be vigilant. The roaring of the devil is the crazed anger of a defeated enemy, and if they do not fear his ferocious bark, they will never be consumed by his bite. Feldmeier rightly notes that the devil only appears here in 1 Peter and all evil is not assigned to him. Instead Peter focuses elsewhere in the letter on human desires and evil.¹¹⁶⁹

5:9 Verse 9 continues the exhortation to stand against the devil. In v. 8 Peter calls for vigilance and alertness so that believers will not become anesthetized and be captured unawares by their enemy. In this verse believers are called to resist actively the devil. The word for “resist” (*antistēte*) is used of Elymas’s resistance to the gospel (Acts 13:10), of Paul’s opposition to Peter in Antioch (Gal 2:11), of Jannes’s and Jambres’s stance against Moses (2 Tim 3:8), and of Alexander the coppersmith’s response to Paul (2 Tim 4:5). Resistance, then, is not

passive but represents active engagement against a foe. Believers will not triumph over the devil if they remain docile.

The CSB renders the next line “firm in the faith.” In Greek there is no verb, and the word “firm” is an adjective, and thus it could be understood as if it were in apposition to the first clause, “You who are steadfast in faith should resist the devil.” It is much more likely, however, that the CSB is correct and that an imperative idea is implied in the text (so also NIV, NRSV, ESV).¹¹⁷⁰ Peter is not simply saying that believers are firm in their faith. He unpacks what resistance to the devil includes. The call to resistance does not summon believers to do Herculean acts on God’s behalf. Believers are not encouraged to gather all their resources to do great works for God. Resisting the devil means that believers remain firm in their faith, that is, in their trust in God.¹¹⁷¹ Believers triumph over the devil as they continue to trust God, believing that he truly cares for them and will sustain them until the end. Perseverance until the last day is accomplished from first to last by faith.

In the last clause of the verse, motivation for standing firm in the faith and resisting the devil is given. The NIV introduces this clause with the words “because you know that,” which encourages the readers by reminding them that believers elsewhere experience the same suffering.¹¹⁷² Believers in Asia Minor should not fear that they are singled out specially for suffering.¹¹⁷³ They are experiencing the same opposition Christians face throughout the world.¹¹⁷⁴ The “world” (*kosmos*) here does not refer to the world in enmity against God, as John regularly used the term.¹¹⁷⁵ Such an idea may be implied, but Peter’s point is that such sufferings are inflicted on believers throughout the Greco-Roman world.¹¹⁷⁶ Not everyone in the world faces such opposition; it is directed against those who believe in Jesus Christ. It is noted that the sufferings are experienced by “your brothers and sisters” (NRSV; *adelphotēti*). Everyone in the Christian family faces the same rejection and discrimination. It is a mark, indeed, of being part of the same family. As Goppelt says, their

sufferings “are not the personal misfortune of individuals, but belong to the essence of faith and are signs of its power against evil. Even more, they are signs that faith is sustained through grace.”¹¹⁷⁷

Here we have further evidence that the persecution in 1 Peter was not an officially enforced policy from Rome. No evidence exists that Nero (or Domitian for that matter) systematically and officially persecuted Christians. What Peter has in mind instead was the pattern of discrimination and abuse experienced by Christians in the Greco-Roman world.¹¹⁷⁸ Believers stood out as social outcasts because they would not participate in the activities devoted to foreign deities and refused to live as they did formerly (1 Pet 4:3–4). Their life as spiritual exiles explains why they were mistreated on an informal and regular basis throughout the empire, and as noted before, this probably led to some conflicts with governing authorities as well.

5:10 Verses 10–11 together constitute the conclusion to the body of the letter and contain the message of the letter as a whole.¹¹⁷⁹ The conjunction *de* loosely connects vv. 10–11 to vv. 6–8. It is likely that Peter now focuses on God’s strength as the means by which believers obtain their eternal reward. The one who called believers by his grace will also enable them to persevere until the end. He begins by designating God as “the God of all grace.” “Grace” is a favorite word of Peter (1:2, 13; 2:19, 20; 3:7; 4:10; 5:5, 12), and here it means that God is both the possessor and giver of all grace. The sufferings of believers are intense, but God’s grace is stronger still. This grace is expressed particularly in God’s calling of believers to eternal glory.¹¹⁸⁰ The word “called” (*kalesas*) has occurred previously in Peter (1:15; 2:9, 21; 3:9) with the same meaning it has here. We have another indication that as the letter concludes, crucial terms used previously are reprised to remind readers of the letter’s central themes. Here it should be said (see esp. 2:9) that “calling” refers to God’s effective work by which he inducts believers into a saving relationship with himself. That the calling is to salvation is clear since believers are called to God’s “eternal glory.” The eschatological character of the glory is apparent from earlier Petrine usage (1:7, 11, 21; 4:13; 5:1, 4).

The words “in Christ” could be understood as modifying the entire clause, “eternal glory,” or “called.”¹¹⁸¹ Each interpretation is possible, but on balance the latter is preferable.¹¹⁸² Peter emphasizes that God’s saving calling is effectual in and through Christ. The theme of calling to glory reminds the readers that end-time salvation is sure since God himself is the one who initiated and secured their salvation. As the rest of the verse will demonstrate, God will certainly complete what he has inaugurated. Their calling to glory is not questionable but sure.

Before glory arrives, however, believers must suffer. Still, the suffering is for “a little while” (*oligon*). The echo to 1:6 is noticeable where we find that believers “for a little while [*oligon*] . . . suffer various trials” (NRSV).¹¹⁸³ Saying that the suffering will last a short time does not mean it will only last for a brief interval during the earthly sojourn of believers.¹¹⁸⁴ The short time period refers to the entire interval before eternal glory commences. The sufferings of this life will seem as if they lasted a little while when compared to the eternal glory that endures forever (cf. 2 Cor 4:16–18).

Peter uses four different verbs to describe God’s promise for believers.¹¹⁸⁵ There is no need to distinguish carefully between the meanings of the verbs, for together they emphatically make the same point.¹¹⁸⁶ The God who has called believers to eternal glory will strengthen and fortify them so that they are able to endure until the end.¹¹⁸⁷ He will fulfill his promise to save and deliver them. The exhortations to vigilance and resistance in the letter are not intended to raise questions about whether believers will receive the eschatological promise. Peter instead conceives of the exhortations as means by which believers will persevere and receive the promise of salvation on the last day. The God who has given such promises also uses exhortations to provoke his people to be faithful until the end. The exhortations and promises, therefore, should not be played off against each other, as if the exhortations introduce an element of uncertainty to the promises. The exhortations are the means by which

God's promises are secured, and indeed God in his grace grants believers the strength to carry out the exhortations. Still, such grace can never be used to cancel out the need for responding to the exhortations.

5:11 After emphasizing the power of God's sustaining grace, even in the midst of suffering, it is not surprising that Peter concludes with a doxology. Some manuscripts add the word "glory" (*doxa*), but it should be rejected as secondary.¹¹⁸⁸ Rather, Peter emphasizes the sovereignty and power of God, and thus he uses the term "dominion" (*kratos*). The God who permits suffering in the lives of his children, and even allows the devil to rage at them (cf. Job 1–2), is the sovereign God and the God who cares (5:7). The "dominion" belongs to him forever. He wields a "mighty hand" (5:6) on behalf of his people. Thus, believers should be comforted, knowing they will triumph. The verb implied could be optative so that we have a prayer, "To him be the power"; but the parallel in 4:11 suggests that the indicative verb "is" (*estin*) is more likely. We should then translate "dominion belongs to him."¹¹⁸⁹ The doxology, as is typical, concludes with "Amen," signifying that Peter longed for the day when God's rule will be evident to all, that he anticipated the day when suffering is past and glory and peace and joy reign forever.

SECTION OUTLINE

5 Concluding Words (5:12–14)

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12 Through Silvanus, a faithful brother (as I consider him), I have written to you briefly in order to encourage you and to testify that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it! 13 She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings, as does Mark, my son. 14 Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

Verse 12 summarizes the letter as a whole. Peter wrote to exhort believers and to testify to God's grace, which consists of what God has done for believers in Christ. In 1 Peter the gracious work of God in Christ is emphasized in 1:1–12 and 2:4–10. God's foundational saving work is also explicated in the reference to the work of Christ in 1:18–19; 2:21–25; and 3:18–22, showing that the letter's imperatives and exhortations are based on the indicative of God's work in Christ. The summons to stand in the grace of God summarizes the message of the entire letter. Suffering is at hand, but believers are to stand in God's grace and resist apostasy. The letter concludes with a commendation of Silvanus, greetings from Peter's church in Rome, greetings from Mark, and the call to greet one another with a kiss of love. The final words are a benediction of peace for all believers.

5:12 The closing begins with a reference to Silvanus. Silas is mentioned often in Acts as Paul's partner in ministry (Acts 15:22, 27, 32, 40; 16:19, 25, 29; 17:4, 10, 14–15; 18:5). He most likely was the same person as the Silvanus mentioned in 2 Cor 1:19; 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1; and here in 1 Peter. A problem with the theory of pseudepigraphy arises here since those who adopt such a theory argue that Peter was not the real author, and so they also raise the question of whether Silvanus is a real person or simply a fictive device. Thus, Achtemeier concludes with the awkward solution that a real person is intended, but Silvanus was too old to carry out the task of taking the

letters to Asia Minor.¹¹⁹⁰ If the realism of the text is accepted, it is more economical to argue that Silvanus was a courier of the letter.¹¹⁹¹

Second, the CSB translation suggests that Silvanus helped author the letter. “Through Silvanus . . . I have written to you briefly.” A number of scholars have supported such a view, understanding Silvanus to be the amanuensis or secretary of 1 Peter.¹¹⁹² As we noted in the introduction, ascribing the letter to Silvanus possibly could solve the problem of the excellent Greek found in the letter. Others argue that the wording used here cannot and should not be used to defend the theory that Silvanus functioned as the amanuensis in 1 Peter.¹¹⁹³ Richards argues that the phrase to “write through someone” (*graphein dia tinōs*) does not identify the amanuensis but the letter carrier. On this reading, Peter informs the readers that Silvanus was the one designated to carry the letter to them. In some manuscripts Romans contains a subscription that says the letter was conveyed “through Phoebe” (*dia Phoibēs*). This certainly does not mean she served as the secretary since Rom 16:22 clearly demonstrates that Tertius filled that role (cf. Ign. *Rom.* 10:1; *Phld.* 11:2; *Smyrn.* 12:1; *Pol.* 8:1; Polycarp, *Phil.* 14:1). It is possible, on the other hand, that Silvanus was the secretary, contrary to this interpretation, since the text speaks of *writing* through him. In the same way, Silas and Barsabbas may have functioned as the scribes for the letter sent out from the the apostolic meeting in Jerusalem since the letter was written “through” Silas and Barsabbas (*grapsantes dia cheiros autōn*, Acts 15:23). If Silvanus served as a secretary, we do not know how much freedom he was given, but it is possible that he played a significant role in the letter’s composition. Silvanus may then have both the courier and the amanuensis, though, as I mentioned in the introduction, there may have been other couriers as well.

Peter also remarks that he “consider[s]” Silvanus as a “faithful brother.” We have here the typical commendation of a person who carries a letter (Rom 16:1–2; Eph 6:21–22; Col 4:7–8), although it is possible that he did not personally carry the letter to each destination.

Those who carried letters would also convey news from the letter writer and presumably could function as the first interpreter of the letter if the recipients had questions about its meaning. The words “I consider” (*logizomai*) represent Peter’s apostolic judgment on the matter of Silvanus’s credibility, indicating that Silvanus delivered the letter with Peter’s imprimatur (cf. Rom 3:28; 8:18; 2 Cor 11:5).¹¹⁹⁴

Peter follows convention in describing his letter as brief (e.g., Heb 13:22), identifying the purpose of the letter, saying that he wrote to encourage and bear witness to “the true grace of God.” The word “this” (*tautēn*) in the phrase “this is the true grace of God” refers to the letter as a whole and should not be traced back to a specific antecedent.¹¹⁹⁵ The grace of God has been manifested in Jesus the Christ, who suffered on the cross and then was exalted to glory. Similarly, Peter calls on his readers to suffer faithfully as Christians as a prelude to entering into glory. In the interval before the consummation of all things, believers are exhorted to “stand firm” in such grace.¹¹⁹⁶ Failure to stand constitutes apostasy, and those who apostatize will face destruction on the last day. Peter summarizes his message, therefore, as a call to stand in grace. The delicate balance between the indicative and imperative is preserved here. Grace has grasped every believer in Jesus Christ, and believers have been begotten by God’s grace (1:3). Still, they are to stand in the grace that has secured them. Grace does not cancel out the imperative but establishes it.¹¹⁹⁷ Believers must actively live out the new life granted to them.¹¹⁹⁸

5:13 The letter closes with greetings and a benediction, which is characteristic of letter closings. The greeting in v. 13 comes from the one who is chosen (*hē syneklektē*) in Babylon and from Mark. The notion of election functions as an *inclusio* framing the letter (cf. 1:1).¹¹⁹⁹ It is unlikely that the fellow elect should be identified as an individual woman.¹²⁰⁰ It is unlikely that readers in Asia Minor would know the identity of this unnamed woman. Some have even seen a reference to Peter’s wife, but this is improbable.¹²⁰¹ Early

manuscripts add the word “church,” and even though the addition is secondary, we see an early and accurate interpretation of the identity of the chosen woman.¹²⁰² The fellow elect one represents the church in Babylon, which sends her greeting to those who are elect sojourners from Asia Minor. Such an interpretation is confirmed by 2 John, where the church is described as “the elect lady and her children” (v. 1), and John closes by saying, “The children of your elect sister send you greetings” (v. 13). A reference to the church is also suggested by the teaching that the church is Christ’s bride (cf. Eph 5:22–33; Rev 19:7–9).

The interpretation proposed above is strengthened when we recognize that Peter wrote from the church in Babylon. There would be no need for Peter to specify his wife was in Babylon.¹²⁰³ The historical Babylon of the OT was a city in ruins, and so Peter could not have been referring to that city.¹²⁰⁴ Moreover, no evidence exists that Peter ministered in such a locale. Some scholars have noted a place called Babylon on the Nile Delta (cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 2.315), but it is doubtful that this military outpost is in view. Peter draws on OT tradition, where Babylon represents those opposed to God (cf. Isa 13–14; 46–47; Jer 50–51). In this instance, as in Revelation (17–18), Babylon designates Rome itself, the enemy of God.¹²⁰⁵ The mention of Babylon constitutes another reminder that believers are exiles in their present situation, and the allusion to exile under the dominion of Babylon constitutes a bookend between the beginning and end of the letter.¹²⁰⁶

The greeting from Mark comes from John Mark, who accompanied Paul on his first missionary journey.¹²⁰⁷ He subsequently left Paul and Barnabas, and Barnabas recruited him for further missionary work after Paul rejected him (cf. Acts 12:25; 13:4, 13; 15:35–39). Paul later spoke highly of Mark (Col 4:10; 2 Tim 4:11; Phlm 24). Peter, of course, would have known Mark from the earliest days of the early church, where meetings were held in the home of Mark’s mother (Acts 12:12). The early tradition that Mark wrote under Peter’s influence is also historically credible (see Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 2.15.1–2; 3.39.15;

6.25.5). Calling Mark his “son” is not literal but designates the fatherly love Peter had for the younger Mark.¹²⁰⁸ We have already seen that the closing is full of symbolic language, and the phrase should be read as symbolic here as well.

5:14 The injunction to “greet one another with a kiss of love” is similar to the Pauline letters, where the holy kiss is enjoined (Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Thess 5:26).¹²⁰⁹ Peter’s language differs since he spoke of “a kiss of love” instead of a “holy kiss.” The love between members should be comparable to the love that exists in a healthy family, although the greetings with a kiss were to be pure and unstained by any kind of sexual lust. The kiss of love shows that no ethnic group, no gender, no social class is better than another. Believers are united in Christ to one another. The letter concludes with a peace wish. Paul, in contrast, closes his letters with grace benedictions (e.g., Rom 16:20; 1 Cor 16:23; 2 Cor 13:14; Gal 6:18, etc.). The reference to peace recalls 1:2 and in that sense functions as yet another inclusio. The phrase “in Christ” simply means “Christian” here, with the result that Peter prayed that peace would be the portion for all those who are believers.¹²¹⁰ Closing the letter with a peace wish is significant. Believers in the Petrine churches were buffeted by trials and persecutions. The stress of life was significant. What believers need in such a situation is God’s peace and strength, a peace that will enable them to stand (5:12) amid the pressures of the present evil age. Such peace will fortify believers so they can endure opposition and persevere to the end so they will receive an eschatological reward.

2 PETER

INTRODUCTION OUTLINE

- 1 Authorship
 - 1.1 Arguments against Authenticity
 - 1.2 Arguments Defending Authenticity
 - 1.3 Pseudepigraphal Letters
 - 1.4 Testament Genre
- 2 Date and Destination
- 3 Opponents
- 4 Structure

INTRODUCTION

Peter's second letter teaches us that God's grace in Jesus Christ should not and must not be untethered from a life of virtue and godliness. Those grasped by God's grace reveal that they have the gift of life and participate in God's nature when they are transformed ethically. The errant teachers who threaten the churches show that their teachings are false by the evil that characterizes their lives. These teachers claimed that there was no future judgment, no future second coming of Christ, and thus there was no accountability for one's ethical life. Peter reminds us that there is a final judgment and that Jesus Christ is returning as our Lord and Savior. The second coming of Christ and the final judgment are not myths but are anchored in prophetic and apostolic teaching. The so-called delay of Christ's coming must not be misunderstood. The interval before his coming offers a chance for repentance and salvation, but the day of the Lord, the day of Christ, the day of judgment and salvation will certainly come. In the meantime, believers should grow in godliness, their lives should be morally beautiful, they should grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who live godly lives will be rescued from judgment and will enjoy the new world that is coming, the new creation.

Second Peter is often ignored because of its brevity and because scholars question its authenticity.¹²¹¹ For example, Käsemann

questions the book's value in a famous essay.¹²¹² Käsemann identifies the letter as "early Catholic" and criticizes it for departing from the center of the gospel—justification by faith. He dates it in the second century, arguing that the writer works from a canon of Scripture, perhaps even from a completed canon of Scripture. The church has become an institution that dispenses salvation, and doctrine is a fixed entity that is passed on by the apostles. The church is now the interpreter of tradition, and the Spirit is confined to churchly authority. The Spirit is subordinated to the letter so that doctrinal rigidity limits the freedom of the Spirit. The christology of the letter is superficial, fixed only on Christ's return but lacking any full-orbed view of Christ. The view of salvation is Hellenistic so that it is understood as an escape from the material world and sensual desires (1:4). Indeed, salvation is explained in ontological terms as participation in the divine nature, and this explains why Peter includes the account of the transfiguration. The focus has become anthropological—the piety of the individual person. A mechanical view of reward and punishment is substituted for the new obedience of the gospel. We have a new law, and life is grasped as a matter of religion.¹²¹³ Käsemann concludes his essay as follows:

What have we to say about a Church, which is so concerned to defend herself against heretics, that she no longer distinguishes between Spirit and letter; that she identifies the Gospel with her own tradition, and further, with a particular religious world-view; that she regulates exegesis according to her system of teaching authority and makes faith into a mere assent to the dogmas of orthodoxy?
1214

Klein's assessment is no more positive: "The author does a miserable job of presenting his case. . . . In spite of how vigorously he asserts himself he is basically helpless."¹²¹⁵ He proceeds to say that it is unfortunate the letter was even included in the canon. Dunn remarks that some of the writings of Luther and Wesley are equal to, or even better than, what we find in 2 Peter.¹²¹⁶

I will argue in this commentary that such assessments misread 2 Peter dramatically and that they contain a bias against tradition and orthodoxy. In our postmodern world we realize that all of us have presuppositions, that none of us has a God's-eye view of reality. The negative views of some relative to 2 Peter tell us more about these scholars than they tell us about 2 Peter. For instance, the commencement of the letter communicates powerfully the grace of God in Christ, a grace that is the foundation for and that actually secures new life in Christ. One would think from the scholarly comments mentioned above that grace is completely lacking in 2 Peter. When we actually read the letter, however, we see that it is the first theme introduced.¹²¹⁷

We must also recognize that 2 Peter does not include the whole of Petrine theology. The letter is, after all, comprised of only three short chapters. Still, one wonders if an extreme form of Lutheranism fails to see that life in the Spirit leads to a changed life, a life that is morally beautiful. Peter does not believe the salvation bestowed in Christ should be untethered from moral transformation. He writes to a situation in which antinomian opponents threatened the church, and thus he naturally stresses the life-changing work of Jesus Christ.

The eschatological enthusiasm of the early church still pulsates in 2 Peter. Peter continues to expect the return of Jesus Christ and does not anticipate settling down in the world for thousands of years. He acknowledges that the specific day of Christ's coming was not revealed and that the apparent delay should not trouble believers. Nor is there any basis for the view that Peter had a deficient christology. It will be argued in the commentary that in the first verse Peter identifies Jesus Christ as God.

The charge that 2 Peter collapses into traditionalism also veers off course. Again, such a claim appears to come from Protestants who worry that any vestige of tradition or "early catholicism" diverges from the gospel.¹²¹⁸ The Spirit and tradition are not necessarily at loggerheads. The Spirit may even inspire that which becomes tradition. In any case, Peter does not maintain that the church is the inspired interpreter of the tradition. Rather, he emphasizes that God's

revelation in Christ, particularly at the transfiguration, demonstrates that the apostles rightly interpreted the OT. Scriptures forecasting the day of the Lord refer to the judgment and salvation that will commence at Christ's coming.¹²¹⁹ Finally, we actually see Peter's creativity in the letter since he recasts his message in Hellenistic idiom to speak to his contemporaries. The letter does not represent a hardened traditionalism but the proclamation of the gospel to a new situation.

1 AUTHORSHIP

The burning historical question in 2 Peter is whether it is authentic, that is, was the letter truly written by Peter, the apostle of Jesus Christ? Many scholars are now convinced that the letter was not written by Peter. They identify it as a pseudonymous writing, composed in Peter's name to convey his authority to the next generation (or generations). In his outstanding commentary Bauckham readjusts this view by arguing that 2 Peter belongs to the testament genre.¹²²⁰ It was a "transparent fiction" written in Peter's name, representing a farewell discourse from Peter for the next generation. Bauckham's view differs from those who think the author intentionally deceives his readers by writing pseudonymously. According to Bauckham, it was evident to all that the letter was not genuinely from Peter.¹²²¹ We will begin by considering arguments against the letter's authenticity.

1.1 Arguments against Authenticity

Various arguments have been used to contest Petrine authorship, some of which are stronger than others. I will include a representative sampling of the arguments so that readers will understand clearly the nature of the debate.¹²²²

First, most scholars believe 2 Peter is dependent on Jude as a source.¹²²³ In many instances Jude is reckoned to be postapostolic. It follows, then, that 2 Peter could not have been written by Peter because if Jude was written after the time of the apostles and 2 Peter

used Jude, then Peter was deceased when 2 Peter was written. Others present a different argument. Even if Jude was written in apostolic times, they reject the idea that the apostle Peter would have used a nonapostolic writer like Jude as a source.

Second, the Hellenistic concepts and language used in the letter testify against Petrine authorship. The idea that a Galilean fisherman would use so many words and notions from Greek culture seems improbable, especially when 2 Peter is compared to 1 Peter, as the first letter does not betray the same Hellenistic flavor. Many scholars think 2 Peter is grandiose and bombastic when compared to 1 Peter. Some scholars who are persuaded that 1 Peter is genuine observe the differences between 1 and 2 Peter and confidently declare that 2 Peter is inauthentic. Second Peter has fifty-seven words that occur nowhere else in the NT, and thirty-two of these words do not appear in the Septuagint.¹²²⁴ Of these thirty-two words, fifteen of them are also used in other Jewish sources. Thirteen words occur only in 2 Peter, and the latter has more synonyms and triplets than 1 Peter. Indeed, when we compare 1 and 2 Peter, what stands out are the differences between them. The favorite terms of 2 Peter are not found in 1 Peter and vice versa. Bauckham notes that in 2 Peter we have terms like “knowledge” (*epignōsis*, 1:2–3, 8; 2:20), “godliness,” (*eusebeia* and *eusebēs*, 1:3, 6; 2:9; 3:11), “diligence” (*spoudazein* and *spoudē*, 1:5, 10, 15; 3:14), “way” (*hodos*, 2:2, 15, 21), “to establish” (*stērizēin*, *stērigmos*, and *astēriktos*, 1:12; 2:14; 3:16–17), “savior” (*sōter*) for Christ combined with “our Lord” (*kyrios hēmōn*, 1:8, 11, 14, 16; 3:18), and “divine” (*theios*, 1:3–4).¹²²⁵ None of these terms is found in 1 Peter, except for *stērizēin* in 1 Pet 5:10. Moreover, 2 Peter describes Jesus’s second coming as a “coming” (*parousia*), while 1 Peter prefers the term “revelation” (*apokalypsis*).

The Greek character of 2 Peter is indicated by the use of the word “goodness” (*aretē*, 1:3, 5), which is the typical term for virtue in Greek writings. The phrase “divine nature” (*theias physeōs*, 1:4) would be expected from a Greek philosopher, but we would expect Peter to speak of the Holy Spirit instead of using a philosophical phrase.¹²²⁶ Some scholars argue that the term “eyewitnesses”

(*epoptai*, 1:16) hails from the mystery religions, providing firm proof that Peter could not be the author.

Käsemann argues that the conception of evil is not in accord with the earliest Christian writings.¹²²⁷ Evil is attributed to material existence, and salvation becomes ours when liberated from the material world (1:4).¹²²⁸ He also contends that the view of Jesus Christ is inferior in the letter and that the eschatology advanced is not centered on Jesus Christ. Indeed, the delay of the parousia is seen as evidence of early catholicism, as proof that the imminent hope of the second coming was fading.

Third, a late date is postulated on the basis of the opponents. The false teachers are identified as second-century Gnostics who questioned the second coming of Christ, spiritualized the second coming, and led libertine lives.¹²²⁹

Fourth, the appeal to the Pauline letters as Scripture shows that they have been collected together and are now considered canonical (3:15–16).¹²³⁰ Any such collection or canonization, of course, was impossible in Peter's lifetime. Second Peter reveals that church authorities are now the interpreters of Scripture (1:20–21; cf. also 2:2).¹²³¹ Ecclesiastical officials now dispense and interpret acceptable doctrine to congregations.

Fifth, Bauckham there is commonality between 1–2 Clement, Shepherd of Hermas, and 2 Peter.¹²³² They all have their roots in Roman Christianity. In terms of date, most of them hail from the last part of the first century AD. Similarly, Peter should be located in that time frame.

Sixth, 2 Peter lacks external attestation in the second century, and even in the fourth century the letter was unknown by some and its canonicity questioned by others. All of this leads Kümmel to conclude that the letter was written between AD 125 and 150.¹²³³

We now turn to Bauckham and his testament thesis.¹²³⁴ Bauckham does not endorse many of the objections raised against Petrine authorship but agrees that the Hellenistic language casts significant

doubt on its authenticity. He does not, however, think the evidence necessitates dating it as late as is often proposed. Second Peter, according to Bauckham, is a testament or farewell speech. Thus, it is not addressed to all Christians everywhere but to a particular community struggling with specific problems. Testaments have two characteristics: they contain (1) ethical exhortations and (2) revelations of what will occur in the future.

Bauckham believes that 2 Peter fits the testament genre for several reasons. The first paragraph of the letter (1:3–11) summarizes Peter's ethical and religious teaching, and the content is characteristic of testaments intended for readers after the death of the writer. The wording of 1:12–15 resonates with farewell themes inasmuch as Peter instructs his readers in light of his imminent departure. The testament theme emerges clearly in 2:1–3 and 3:1–4, where the incursion of false teachers is predicted. In fact, such teachers were already present, showing that Peter is not the author. Their arrival, however, is described as future to preserve the testament genre. Bauckham notes that testaments need not be pseudepigraphal, though virtually all of them are fictional. In one instance we have a testamentary letter, and in that case the testament is also clearly pseudepigraphal (cf. 2 Bar. 78–86). Jewish readers recognized testaments as fictional, and Bauckham concludes that readers would have recognized 2 Peter similarly. Hence, one of the keys of Bauckham's view emerges. The letter would have been recognized as "transparent fiction." No one would have thought Peter actually wrote the letter. It was patently obvious that he did not. The shift from the future to the present tense is crucial for Bauckham's hypothesis since it reveals to the readers that the future predictions have already become a reality. Therefore, the use of the future is a literary device. Predictions are put into the mouth of Peter to demonstrate that the apostolic predictions are now being fulfilled.

Some have tried to explain the differences between 1 and 2 Peter on the basis of different secretaries being used. Bauckham rejects this solution, arguing that the differences between the two letters are too fundamental. Second Peter does not merely differ from Peter stylistically. Its theology and terminology reveal that a different person

stands behind the two letters.¹²³⁵ Indeed, Bauckham thinks the differences are so significant that we can rule out a member of the Petrine school or any theory that posits significant dependence on 1 Peter.¹²³⁶ The author is neither a disciple of Peter nor a second-century pseudepigrapher distantly removed from Peter. Instead, the author was one of Peter's colleagues who considered his own writings and message to be in harmony with Peter's. Since the author knew Paul's letters but did not use them in detail, we have further evidence to confirm a late-first-century date—before Paul's letters became the common property of the church.

Bauckham concludes that we should consider the letter as a testament written after Peter's death. The letter purports to be written by Peter—though the original readers would have recognized easily enough that Peter was not the genuine author. In the history of the church, the letter has often been accepted as authentic precisely because the literary genre has eluded us. In the early church the same phenomenon occurred. Gentiles failed to recognize the testamentary genre and hence assigned the letter to Peter.¹²³⁷ The authentic opening, "Simeon Peter" (*Symeōn Petros*), demonstrates that the author was acquainted with Peter, and he felt confident writing in Peter's name. This is apparent because he does not cite other Petrine writings. We should not dismiss the work as fraudulent but should understand that the author wanted to mediate apostolic teaching to a new generation.¹²³⁸

1.2 Arguments Defending Authenticity

If one were inclined to doubt the authenticity of any letter in the NT, it would be 2 Peter. Schlatter defended the authenticity of every epistle in the NT except for 2 Peter.¹²³⁹ Nevertheless, good reasons still exist to support the authenticity of 2 Peter. One is not sacrificing one's intellect in believing that 2 Peter is authentically Petrine. Indeed, Petrine authorship is still the most credible position for the following reasons.¹²⁴⁰

I begin with the most important evidence for the authenticity of 2 Peter—the internal evidence.¹²⁴¹ The book opens with the claim that it was written by Peter himself. Indeed, Peter uses a Hebraic form of his name “Simeon Peter” (*Symeōn Petros*, 1:1), which is a touch of authenticity, for this form only occurs elsewhere in Acts 15:14.¹²⁴² If the letter were pseudepigraphic, we would expect the author either to copy the form of address in 1 Peter or to employ one of the common expressions used to denote Peter in the NT.¹²⁴³ The fact that he chose an original form is a mark of genuineness—unless one adopts the view that the writer was consciously and cleverly trying to deceive his readers, but even this seems improbable since this form of Peter’s name is never used in the apostolic fathers or pseudepigraphic Petrine literature. Not only does the author claim to be Peter, but he also says that he will die soon (1:14). This is most naturally interpreted to say that Peter was older and realized his death was imminent. Such a statement is awkward and deceptive on the lips of a pseudonymous writer.

Even more powerful, perhaps, is the claim to be an eyewitness of the transfiguration (1:16–18). The truth of the second coming is anticipated in the event of the transfiguration. Peter emphasizes that he was present on the holy mountain, that he was not inventing what happened, that he was an eyewitness of what occurred, and that he also heard the words transmitted from heaven. It is difficult to see how a pseudepigraphal author could write such words with any credibility.¹²⁴⁴ A footnote would seem to be required by any other author to say: “Well, actually, I did not see or hear what happened on the mountain. I am speaking of what happened to Peter.” Those who support pseudonymity are hard pressed to explain how such statements are not fundamentally deceptive. Furthermore, why would a pseudepigrapher appeal to the transfiguration? Guthrie observes that the account is not used to verify further revelation, nor does it match precisely any of the Synoptic accounts.¹²⁴⁵ Thus, what we have here is an independent account of the event. Moreover, a pseudepigrapher

would likely have embellished the account, and yet such embellishment is lacking in 2 Peter.¹²⁴⁶

The evidence of the letter itself, noted above, constitutes historical evidence that Peter was the author. The reference to Paul as a “dear brother” (3:15) is also fitting for Peter. Writers in successive generations would not put themselves on the same plane as the apostle Paul.¹²⁴⁷ Peter recognizes that God granted Paul wisdom (3:15–16), and such a statement accords with Gal 2:9. The manner in which he refers to Paul is just the right touch if Peter himself was the author—respectful, and yet no sense of inferiority is communicated.¹²⁴⁸ We think by contrast of later writers, such as Ignatius, who make clear they are not on the same level as the apostles (cf. Ign. *Trall.* 3:3; *Rom.* 4:3). Finally, the letter claims to be the second one written by Peter (3:1). Wallace rightly remarks that the claim here does not fit with pseudepigraphy since the second letter does not depend in a clear fashion on 1 Peter.¹²⁴⁹ A forger would be disposed to borrow more extensively from 1 Peter, whereas the independence of 2 Peter reveals that the same author addresses a new situation.

We turn next to the external evidence for 2 Peter.¹²⁵⁰ It is admittedly not as strong as for other NT writings. The Muratorian Canon does not mention 2 Peter, but neither does it mention 1 Peter. The text of the Canon is incomplete in any case, and so definite conclusions should not be gleaned from its omission. Picirilli investigates allusions to 2 Peter in the apostolic fathers.¹²⁵¹ He concludes that there is a strong possibility that 2 Peter is alluded to (though Peter is not mentioned by name) in 1 Clement, 2 Clement, Barnabas, and the Shepherd of Hermas. He thinks such allusions may also exist in the Ignatian letters and Martyrdom of Polycarp. If the evidence Picirilli compiles is persuasive, then the letter was used in the second century and perhaps even in the first.¹²⁵² Green, however, says that the parallels in Ignatius, Polycarp, and Hermas are scarcely clear.¹²⁵³ Even if the allusions noted by Picirilli stand, they do not speak directly to the issue of authorship.¹²⁵⁴ On the other hand,

Picirilli remarks that the apostolic fathers cite the Pauline letters thirty-one times but never name him.¹²⁵⁵ Thus, the failure to name Peter is hardly decisive.

Entirely different solutions could be posited, of course. It could be argued that the similarities in the tradition demonstrate that the author of 2 Peter used some of the apostolic fathers. Others may posit a common source as the explanation for the similar material.¹²⁵⁶ Resolving this issue definitively is impossible, but in considering the cumulative case for Petrine authorship, it is also possible, and in my mind probable, that the apostolic fathers used 2 Peter. A few allusions seem likely. In Epistle of Barnabas there seems to be an allusion to 2 Pet 3:8 (Barn. 15:4).¹²⁵⁷ Second Clement 16:3 may also depend on 2 Pet 3:7, 10, 12.¹²⁵⁸ There is also good reason to think Justin Martyr alludes to 2 Pet 2:1 (*Dial.* 82:1).¹²⁵⁹ The citations in Hippolytus may also indicate that he used 2 Peter,¹²⁶⁰ and The Apocalypse of Peter also clearly draws on 2 Peter.¹²⁶¹

Origen notes that some doubted the authenticity of 2 Peter (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.25.11), but in his own writings he cites it six times, and we can conclude from this that the doubts of others were not compelling to him since he says Peter wrote two letters.¹²⁶² It is also likely that Irenaeus knew and used 2 Peter, though the matter is disputed.¹²⁶³ The phrase “with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day” (2 Pet 3:8) matches closely with the wording of Irenaeus (*Haer.* 5.23.2). It is instructive to note that what Irenaeus wrote is much closer to 2 Pet 3:10 than to Ps 90:4 (LXX).¹²⁶⁴ Eusebius also mentions that 2 Peter was disputed, but he adds, significantly, that most accepted it (*Hist. eccl.* 3.3.1, 4; 3.25.3–4). He does not place it in the spurious classification, though personally he has doubts about its canonicity. The matter is disputed, but it seems likely that Clement of Alexandria cites 2 Pet 2:19 and wrote a commentary on 2 Peter (*Hist. eccl.* 6.14.1).¹²⁶⁵ Such a commentary would indicate a high estimation of the letter and would

also cast doubt on a late forgery since it is unlikely that Clement would have no information about its pseudonymity if the letter were written in the second century.¹²⁶⁶

Jerome anticipates modern scholarship in suggesting two different secretaries for 1 and 2 Peter, acknowledging a difference in style (*Epist.* 120.11). It is also likely that Apocalypse of Peter was dependent upon 2 Peter.¹²⁶⁷ If so, 2 Peter was in circulation in the early part of the second century. Calvin's view on 2 Peter is interesting, indicating his careful critical judgment.¹²⁶⁸ He thinks the style is unlike 1 Peter and questions, therefore, whether Peter was genuinely the author. Still, he rejects pseudonymity since "it would have been a fiction unworthy of a minister of Christ, to have personated another individual."¹²⁶⁹ Hence, he suggests that a Petrine disciple wrote it for him since he was old and near death. It is clear from the above survey that scholars in previous eras were not oblivious to the differences between 1 and 2 Peter, and yet they still accepted the authenticity of the latter.

Other evidence also points to the authenticity of the letter: "2 Peter was recognized as fully canonical by the Canons of Laodicea and by the time of the church councils of Hippo and Carthage of the fourth century."¹²⁷⁰ Kruger goes on to say that these bodies rejected 1 Clement and Epistle of Barnabas, showing that they discriminated carefully between authoritative documents and those that were merely edifying. Textual evidence also points to the authenticity of 2 Peter since it is included in the Bodmer papyrus (P⁷²) from the third century and also in Codexes Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, and Alexandrinus.¹²⁷¹

Guthrie's interesting insight needs to be mixed into the discussion.¹²⁷² Other pseudo-Petrine literature circulated in the early church, creating confusion about what was authentically Petrine. The church went through a process by which it sifted the authentic from the spurious. When the decision was made, 2 Peter was accepted, but other alleged Petrine writings were rejected. The early church was not

inclined, therefore, to include a document just because it had Peter's name on it. Many other "Petrine" writings were excluded, but the church recognized the legitimacy of 2 Peter. Thus, the acceptance of 2 Peter witnesses to the discrimination of the church, to their conviction that this writing, in contrast to many other alleged Petrine writings, was authentic. Kruger rightly maintains that the conclusion of the early church should not be set aside easily.¹²⁷³

Scholars often point to the linguistic differences between 1–2 Peter, and the differences are not to be denied.¹²⁷⁴ And yet they can also be overemphasized. We have noted above that 2 Peter is called Hellenistic because he uses terms like "goodness" (*aretē*) and "eyewitnesses" (*epoptai*). And yet 1 Peter uses the term "goodness" as well, even if it is in the plural (1 Pet 2:9). And the verbal form of "eyewitnesses" (*epoptō*) is used in both Pet 2:12 and 3:2.¹²⁷⁵ We can agree that 2 Peter has a Hellenistic dress, but the question is whether the language used is unlikely for a Palestinian fisherman. We must remind ourselves that we should conceive of Peter as a businessman who engaged in commerce. When we add to this the fact that Galilee was influenced by Hellenism and Greek culture, it is not astonishing that he would be familiar with Greek philosophical terms.¹²⁷⁶ The terms he uses would not require a thorough study of Greek philosophy, nor does Peter use the terms in a technical sense. Peter may have used Hellenistic terms to speak to the culture of his day.¹²⁷⁷ Indeed, the matter of style is not simple. For instance, Gerdmar argues that 2 Peter "is characterised by a pervasive Semitic linguistic influence," contending that it is more "pronounced" than Jude,¹²⁷⁸ showing that the author is deeply indebted to the OT and Jewish haggadah, just as Jude is.¹²⁷⁹

Green observes that the differences between 1 and 2 Peter reflect the specific pastoral situations addressed in each.¹²⁸⁰ The different style may in part be explained by the problem addressed. We know, for example, that 2 Peter was written in response to false teachers who denied the second coming, while 1 Peter addressed a suffering church.

Moreover, it is possible that different secretaries were employed.¹²⁸¹ Perhaps Silas or someone else assisted Peter in composing 1 Peter (1 Pet 5:12), and there is no reason to doubt that another person may have played a similar role in 2 Peter.¹²⁸² We do not know how much freedom Peter granted to secretaries in the composition of the letter.

The style of the two letters is not identical, and yet arguments from style are hardly conclusive when the corpus is so small.¹²⁸³ Guthrie wisely remarks:

It is notoriously difficult to devise any certain criteria for the examination of style and this is particularly true where comparison is made between two short epistles. The area of comparison is so restricted that the results may well be misleading. Moreover, subjective impressions are likely to receive greater stress than is justified.¹²⁸⁴

Analyses of style lack a scientific foundation when we are dealing with just a few pages. Some differences between the two letters may be observed, and yet we must be cautious about drawing definite conclusions when our database is so limited. It has been noted, for example, that both letters repeat words for effect.¹²⁸⁵ In 2 Peter such words connect the various parts of the argument, revealing that the letter was composed thoughtfully. A number of scholars also have argued that 2 Peter deliberately adopts a more expansive and florid Asiatic style that was pleasing to the ear.¹²⁸⁶ And yet the letter also provides evidence of Semitic influence, and so one cannot argue that the expansive language rules out a Galilean author (cf. 2:2, 10, 12, 14, 22; 3:3). Wallace argues that the florid style and inferior Greek are evidence that Peter himself composed the letter, whereas 1 Peter was written by a secretary.¹²⁸⁷ Certainty on these matters is impossible, but an appeal to a different style does not rule out Petrine authorship.¹²⁸⁸ Furthermore, we should note that 2 Peter is similar to 1 Peter in some remarkable ways.¹²⁸⁹ The parallels may point to a

common author. At the very least they cast some doubt on those who insist that the letters cannot be from the same hand.

Some who doubt the authenticity of the letter view arguments defending its authenticity as special pleading. They object that, on the one hand, we say that perhaps different secretaries were used. And then we say, on the other hand, that the corpus of the two letters is too small to establish stylistic variation. Is it the case that conservatives tack this way and then that, searching desperately for any answer to preserve their preformed theory? It may seem that way, but, in reality, suggesting more than one answer to a problem often represents good scholarship. When we examine historical documents, we are not granted comprehensive knowledge of the circumstances in which the document was birthed. Hence, we must postulate probabilities, and in some cases, of course, more than one scenario is probable. Furthermore, in some instances the probable scenarios are not internally contradictory but constitute plausible answers to the problem posed. Suggesting more than one solution is not necessarily a resort to desperation but may be an indication of humility—a recognition that the evidence only takes us so far. And most significantly, the letter itself claims to have been written by Peter himself, and the self-claim of the letter should be accepted unless clear evidence exists to overturn such a judgment.

Others, as we have noted, think Peter cannot be genuine since it borrows from Jude. I refer readers to the introduction to Jude, where the literary relationship between Jude and 2 Peter is discussed. Some argue that neither letter is dependent on the other, at least in terms of documentary dependence.¹²⁹⁰ It is difficult to be sure, but I argue in the introduction to Jude that 2 Peter likely was familiar with Jude. Even in this instance the objection against Petrine authorship does not stand. First, it is just as possible that Jude drew from Peter.¹²⁹¹ If that is the case, the objection collapses. Second, even if Peter used Jude as a source, arguments against Petrine authorship are not conclusive.¹²⁹² In the introduction to Jude reasons are given for thinking that Jude is genuinely from the brother of Jesus and hence a late date is

unnecessary.¹²⁹³ The real objection is that Peter as an apostle would not have used a nonapostolic writing as a source. The reply to this is simple. How do we know that? We must beware of assuming what an apostle would do. Those from another century may think and act differently from us. Our standards of plagiarism must not be exported to other times and places. We know that Paul cited pagan poets (Acts 17:28; Titus 1:12), and Peter may well have quoted Jude if he found its content fitting. There is some evidence that early Christian creeds and hymns were used in other writings (e.g., Eph 5:14; 1 Tim 3:16), and there is no credible reason an author would refuse to cite at some length a source that was considered helpful. Furthermore, if Peter used Jude, he did not merely quote it but reshaped it for his own purposes.

The Hellenistic character of 2 Peter can be overemphasized, for he could simply have used terminology that spoke effectively to his readers. Modern-day evangelists and writers commonly follow the same procedure. The importance of knowledge is emphasized constantly in the NT. We think here of the letter to the Colossians, where knowledge of Christ is fundamental (Col 1:9–11, 28–2:8). Sharing in the divine nature is merely another way of speaking of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Green remarks that Peter used Greek terminology to communicate with his readers.¹²⁹⁴ Josephus and other writers speak of sharing in the divine nature, and the fundamental Jewishness of their writings is not thereby sacrificed.¹²⁹⁵ Käsemann's claim that the Christology is inferior is a stunning mistake because there are convincing grounds for claiming that Jesus Christ is called God himself in 1:2.¹²⁹⁶ The letter ends with an ascription of glory to Jesus Christ (3:18), and doxologies are usually directed to God instead of Jesus Christ (but cf. 2 Tim 4:18; Rev 1:5–6). One of Peter's favorite designations for Jesus Christ was Lord and Savior (cf. 1:1–2, 8, 11, 14, 16; 2:1, 20; 3:2, 18). Furthermore, Peter reported the words spoken to Jesus at the transfiguration, where as God's elect Son he is given honor and glory (1:17–18). Christ's work on the cross in purchasing human beings (2:1) and the cleansing of sins by Christ's death (1:9) are noted. Peter did not unpack his christology or a

theology of the cross, but evidence of a defective Christology is lacking.

Some scholars think the letter commends self-effort and thereby betrays early catholicism.¹²⁹⁷ But again they misinterpret the letter. All the virtues commended in Peter (1:5–11) are grounded in God's gracious work in Christ (1:3–4), in the gift of divine righteousness given by grace to believers (1:1). Unfortunately, some scholars dismiss as early catholic any NT letter that emphasizes moral norms or church structure. Such views demonstrate more about the critic than the NT. Typically these scholars have adopted a one-sided view of Paul, failing to see that grace in Paul grants power for a godly life, and their truncated view of Paul bleeds into how they read the rest of the NT. Peter does not sunder the connection between Christ's coming and ethics. Eschatology is one of the foundations for ethics. This is precisely what Paul argues as well in 1 Cor 15 (see the conclusion drawn from eschatology in 1 Cor 15:58). Or we can compare the eschatological grounding for the exhortations in Rom 13:11–14. The relationship between eschatology and ethics in Peter looks similar to Paul's view in his major epistles.

It is also said that the hope for the second coming is fading, but the case is unpersuasive.¹²⁹⁸ Even in 1–2 Thessalonians, which were written in the early 50s, questions arose about the resurrection and the Lord's coming. Moreover, Peter does not necessarily teach that a long time will elapse before the Lord comes. He simply asserts that the Lord does not reckon time as we do (3:8–10), that we should not dismiss the Lord's coming simply because it appears to be delayed. The eschatological hope is still lively since believers await entrance into God's kingdom (1:10–11), and thus they should not surrender the hope of Christ's coming, despite the scoffing of opponents. Furthermore, Charles rightly points out that an interval of time before the return of Christ is present in the teaching of Jesus himself.¹²⁹⁹ M. Green says that by the second century AD the delay of the parousia was not the subject of discussion, and so one can scarcely place Peter at a late date for this reason. Nor does the reference to the "fathers"

in 3:4 signal the decease of the apostolic generation.¹³⁰⁰ I point out in the commentary that the word “fathers” nowhere clearly refers to the first generation of Christians but invariably refers to the OT patriarchs.¹³⁰¹ Thus, the verse does not constitute evidence that Peter or the apostolic generation was deceased. Furthermore, it is noticeable that the saying about one day being as a thousand years is not used in a chiliastic sense in Peter.¹³⁰² If Peter were written in the second century, we might expect a millennial allusion, and the lack of such may point to the early date for the letter.

Many scholars think the high estimate of Paul’s letters is impossible for the genuine Peter (3:15–16) and suggests a collection or even canon of Paul’s letters that cannot be placed into Peter’s lifetime. The reader is again referred to the commentary on these verses, but it should be noted here that the verses do not clearly suggest a complete canon of Paul’s letters, nor do they indicate that Peter was acquainted with all of Paul’s letters. The verses show that some of Paul’s letters were preserved and that Peter was familiar with them. The authority he assigns to the Pauline letters harmonizes with Paul’s own estimate of his apostolic authority (cf. 1 Cor 2:16; 14:37; Col 4:16; 1 Thess 2:13; 5:27; 2 Thess 3:14).¹³⁰³ It may be the case that some of the churches in the Petrine circle had received Pauline letters. Or perhaps the churches had read some of the Pauline letters that were circulating (such as Colossians and Ephesians).¹³⁰⁴

The Tübingen view that Paul and Peter were fundamentally opposed to each other is not supported by the evidence of the NT and should be surrendered. Peter and Paul, of course, were not carbon copies of each other. They had different circles of ministry, and their confrontation at Antioch is famous in the annals of NT study (Gal 2:11–14). Too many scholars, however, impose their own reading upon this text, arguing, contrary to Paul’s explicit words, that Peter acted from conviction instead of hypocritically. Scholars are free, naturally, to suggest that the text deviates from what actually happened, but we should be clear that the theory of a permanent disruption between Peter and Paul is not supported by the earliest

evidence. Paul claims that he and the other apostles proclaimed the same gospel (1 Cor 15:11).

Finally, it is not evident from 2 Peter that interpretation of Scripture is reserved for church officials, contrary to Käsemann. Such a view misrepresents 1:20–21 because these verses do not restrict interpretation to church officials but teach that all interpretation must match the apostolic standard.¹³⁰⁵ Indeed, 2 Peter does not show any signs of a monarchical episcopate and the more developed church structure of the second century.¹³⁰⁶ Surely leaders existed in the Petrine churches addressed, but Peter says nothing about such leaders in the letter. Instead, his injunctions are directed to the congregation as a whole.¹³⁰⁷

1.3 Pseudepigraphal Letters

It should also be said that evidence for accepting pseudepigraphic letters as authoritative is not strong.¹³⁰⁸ Paul specifically criticizes false writings in his name in 2 Thess 2:2 and ensures the authenticity of the letter in 2 Thess 3:17.¹³⁰⁹ The author of Acts of Paul and Thecla was defrocked as bishop even though he wrote out of love for Paul (Tertullian, *Bapt.* 17).¹³¹⁰ In addition, the Gospel of Peter was rejected in AD 180 in Antioch because the author claimed to be Peter and was not. Serapion the bishop said, “For our part, brethren, we both receive Peter and the other apostles as Christ, but the writings which falsely bear their names we reject, as men of experience, knowing that such were not handed down to us” (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 6.12.1–6). Evidence that early Christians accepted pseudepigraphic documents as authoritative Scripture is completely lacking. Some argue that Acts of Paul and Thecla and Gospel of Peter were only rejected for deviant teaching, not for pseudepigraphy.¹³¹¹ But both of the texts say otherwise, specifically indicting the writers for falsely ascribing the writing to another.¹³¹² Bauckham sees a parallel in Hebrews where the theology derives from Paul but a disciple wrote it. The parallel is not apt because no author is named in

Hebrews.¹³¹³ The Muratorian Canon rejected the Letter to the Laodiceans and the Letter to the Alexandrians because they were suspected to be forgeries. Origen says that he rejects the Doctrine of Peter since it was “not included among the books of the Church and” it was “not a writing of Peter nor of any one else inspired by the Spirit of God.”¹³¹⁴ Many pseudonymous works in Jewish literature borrow the name of a famous person from the ancient past (Enoch, Moses, Solomon, etc.), but such documents were never included in the Jewish canon, even if some of the material in the book was considered to be valuable. Furthermore, it is difficult to see what would have motivated the author to use a pseudonym in 2 Peter. The letter does not advance any new or esoteric teaching, for pseudonymous writings often support novel teachings under the name of a respected person.¹³¹⁵

The practice of pseudonymity is defended in Meade’s *Pseudonymity and Canon*.¹³¹⁶ The fundamental problem with Meade is that he assumes pseudonymity was practiced and accepted. In that sense his work begs the question.¹³¹⁷ Meade argues that pseudonymous writers employed tradition and contemporarized it (*Vergegenwärtigung*) for a new generation. But Meade’s claim that naming the author is not intended to convey who wrote the book in question but only transmits the tradition of the alleged author is unpersuasive.¹³¹⁸ The lack of parallels for such a practice is striking, and no real explanation is given about why the practice was discontinued.¹³¹⁹

At this point we need to discuss the stimulating work of Donelson on the Pastoral Epistles.¹³²⁰ What Donelson says about the Pastorals also applies in principle to 2 Peter. Ultimately Donelson draws different conclusions from my own, but his perspective overlaps with mine in some significant ways. He argues that no evidence exists that pseudonymous letters were accepted as authoritative. Pseudonymity was practiced, however, and thus one was compelled to deceive to carry it off. People in the ancient world, according to Donelson, believed it was legitimate to deceive if the cause was important enough

to justify the lie.¹³²¹ Donelson remarks, “No one ever seems to have accepted a document as religiously and philosophically prescriptive which was known to be forged. I do not know a single example.”¹³²² Similarly, “We are forced to admit that in Christian circles pseudonymity was considered a dishonorable device and, if discovered, the document was rejected and the author, if known, was excoriated.”¹³²³ Writers used a “noble lie” because they believed that the end justified the means. Some may have written in the name of an apostle, believing they transmitted what apostles would say to a new generation. And yet “they were still consciously employing a lie which they knew was potentially damaging if discovered. Thus we cannot conclude that forgery was ever innocently or naively done.”¹³²⁴ Indeed, Donelson argues that the personal touches and allusions in the Pastoral Letters, and by the same token 2 Peter, were inserted deliberately to provide authenticity to the letters and are therefore an integral part of the author’s attempt to mislead his readers.¹³²⁵ Donelson concludes that NT writers employed pseudonymity, even though it was fundamentally deceptive, because they believed the end justified the means.

I am persuaded no canonical document is pseudonymous.¹³²⁶ And Donelson is correct that there is no evidence that pseudonymous documents were ever accepted as authoritative. He also rightly argues that pseudonymous letters involved an attempt to deceive. Aland’s view that pseudonymity was justified since the crucial matter for writers was the influence of the Spirit is not borne out by the evidence.¹³²⁷ As Guthrie remarks, if Aland is correct, then one wonders why any inspired documents name the author.¹³²⁸ It would seem to follow that all the documents were originally anonymous and later became pseudonymous since the original anonymity was designed to feature the work of the Spirit. Furthermore, no evidence exists that any pseudepigraphic letters were originally anonymous. Finally, Aland’s theory does not explain why a pseudonym was used if all that mattered was the Spirit’s inspiration. Naming a notable author

would be superfluous if the Spirit's authority is decisive. It is hard to escape the conclusion that pseudonyms were used to support the authority of what was written. But this demonstrates the implausibility of Aland's thesis. Apparently those who used pseudonyms did not merely appeal to the Spirit's inspiration. They also introduced a pseudonym to impress readers with the stature of the writer. We should note again that no one has yet shown that pseudonymous documents were embraced as authoritative and canonical.¹³²⁹ Employing pseudonymity contradicts the early Christian desire to be truthful.¹³³⁰

Others argue that "your apostles" in 3:2 indicates that the letter cannot be Petrine, since the apostles now belong to all the churches. We have an example here of two different ways of reading a text. "Your apostles" could indicate that the apostles now belong to all the churches. Such a conception, in my opinion, does not necessarily rule out apostolic authorship. The book of Acts, for instance, implies that the apostles functioned as leaders of all the churches (Acts 1:15–26; 15:6–35). And yet Peter probably does not have in mind the notion that all the apostles served the Petrine churches in 3:2. More likely, he refers to the particular apostles who had played a role in planting and nurturing the churches addressed. Peter, then, is not referring to the apostles as a whole, and so the verse cannot be used to point to an ecclesiastical structure that was allegedly established after Peter's death.

1.4 Testament Genre

We should examine briefly Bauckham's testament theory. His view is more acceptable to evangelicals because, according to him, Peter did not write to deceive. The testament genre was well established, and it was apparent to all that the letter was a "transparent fiction."¹³³¹ It should be said at the outset that Bauckham's view is possible. If we could establish that testaments were written in the name of another (pseudepigraphy), that the convention was recognized by all, and that such documents could be confirmed as canonical, then there would be

no objection. We would simply recognize a cultural practice that seems foreign to us today.

Unfortunately, however, Bauckham's theory fails. It does not necessarily fail because it contradicts the inspiration of Scripture, since there could have been a convention in which testaments were accepted as transparent fictions. Rather, it fails because hard evidence to support the theory is lacking. The most damaging piece of evidence against Bauckham's theory is this: If the testament genre and the accompanying pseudepigraphal device were transparent, it is curious that no intimation of this idea has come down to us historically.¹³³² No evidence exists that the early church accepted 2 Peter while recognizing its pseudepigraphal character. How could a "transparent fiction" vanish from the historical scene so that we have no evidence that anyone ever recognized it as such? Starr makes the following comment on Bauckham's thesis, "While this is appealing, the fiction which Bauckham asserts was transparent has in fact been opaque for every reader apart from his first generation of readers (who left no record other than their preservation of the text) and himself."¹³³³

Bauckham replies that the Jews would have recognized the device, but not Gentiles. This is curious indeed because evidence that the letter was written only to Jews is lacking. It is likely that 2 Peter was written mainly to Gentiles in the same way as 1 Peter.¹³³⁴ In any case, Bauckham's theory is still implausible. It is unlikely that the transparent fiction would vanish without a trace simply because of Gentile ignorance. We are faced otherwise with a document that is fundamentally deceptive, and the objections raised to such an idea above could be repeated here. Furthermore, if everyone knew that the writing was pseudonymous, what is the purpose of pseudonymity?¹³³⁵ The device seems superfluous.¹³³⁶

Nor is it clear that testaments must be fictional.¹³³⁷ One's views on a host of critical questions are involved here, and there is simply not space to defend every critical judgment at this juncture. Paul's speech in Acts 20:17–38 could be described as a last testament, and yet there is no reason to describe it as fictional. Similarly, the final testaments of

Jacob (Gen 49:1–28), Moses, and David in the OT need not be fictional.¹³³⁸ There are also good grounds for accepting the authenticity of Jesus’s farewell discourse in John 13–17 and Paul’s final words in 2 Timothy. It does not follow, then, that all farewell discourses were recognized as fictional. Nor is there any clear evidence that any work in the canon of Scripture is pseudepigraphic. Jewish testaments could be pseudepigraphal (e.g., Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs), but none of these were ever accepted as authoritative documents. They may have been considered to be edifying, but they were not approved as part of the sacred writings of Judaism.

Moreover, it is actually questionable whether 2 Peter is truly a testament.¹³³⁹ Perhaps it is, but such a notion was not clear to previous generations of scholars.¹³⁴⁰ Epistles which contain testaments are rare.¹³⁴¹ Second Peter 1:3–15 could be taken as final advice and instruction from a man whose death is imminent, but it fits better as a farewell speech instead of being a testament.¹³⁴² We should also note that 2 Peter is remarkably brief in terms of reviewing the past and predicting the future, which seems strange if the letter is a testament. In other words, there are not enough distinctive elements of the testament genre to make such an identification convincing.¹³⁴³ Mathews, after carefully analyzing the features of a farewell discourse and a testament, concludes that 2 Peter is not a testament since it lacks the characteristics of a testament including, among other things, a deathbed scene, the death and burial of the famous person (who is typically an ancient hero), and a third-person narrative.¹³⁴⁴ Indeed, Mathews questions whether the parallels Bauckham draws between 2 Peter and 1 Enoch and 2 Baruch succeed since the latter are farewell discourses and not letter-testaments.¹³⁴⁵

We would also expect if there were a testament that there would be a clear passing of the baton to future leaders or heirs, but such is missing here.¹³⁴⁶ Green also agrees that 2 Peter, “lacks the common contours of the testamentary genre. There is no deathbed scene and no final account of the ‘author’s’ burial.”¹³⁴⁷ Nor do ethical

exhortations, the imminent death of the writer, and a focus on eschatology demonstrate the presence of a testament.¹³⁴⁸ As Witherington says, we have these features in Phillipians and the latter is clearly not a testament.¹³⁴⁹

To sum up, the notion that 2 Peter was a testament and a transparent fiction is not persuasive. Nor is the evidence supporting pseudonymity convincing. Perhaps Guthrie is correct in suggesting that Peter was not received widely because of its limited circulation.¹³⁵⁰ Still, we have seen that the evidence for Peter's early reception is stronger than most scholars think, and the arguments for its authenticity are stronger than the contrary claims. I conclude that 2 Peter is authentic and that such a conclusion is more persuasive than competing theories.

2 DATE AND DESTINATION

The date of 2 Peter depends on authorship. If the letter is authentically Petrine, as I have argued, it should be dated shortly before Peter's death, anywhere from AD 60 to 68. If 2 Peter used Jude, then one would also be required to argue that Jude was composed before 2 Peter (see introduction to Jude). Moo argues that Peter died in AD 65 and dates it shortly before his death.¹³⁵¹ Guthrie thinks it was written after Paul's death in AD 68.¹³⁵² Robinson dates it earlier, from AD 60 to 62.¹³⁵³ Those who see the letter as authentic usually follow the tradition that Peter was at Rome at the end of his life (cf. *Ign. Rom.* 4:3; *1 Clem.* 5:4).¹³⁵⁴ Perhaps the Neronian persecution had even begun when the letter was written. For those who see the letter as pseudonymous, it is dated between AD 80 and 150. Bauckham, for example, dates the letter between AD 80 and 90, arguing that at least this much time had to pass to explain the scoffing because of the delay of the parousia.¹³⁵⁵ Kelly dates it between AD 100 and 110.¹³⁵⁶ Knowing where the letter was sent is even more difficult. If one understands the first letter to refer to 1 Peter (2 Pet 3:1), as I do, then the letter was sent to churches in Asia Minor,

churches that were mainly Gentile.¹³⁵⁷ If the first letter refers to a lost letter, it is much more difficult to establish a destination. It could still have been sent to Asia Minor, while other scholars suggest Egypt. If it was sent to Asia Minor, there are clues that Peter wrote to a church facing syncretism and that he used the language of their culture to address the church (or churches).¹³⁵⁸ I date the letter in the mid 60s and on the basis of 2 Pet 3:1 suggest it was sent to the same readers noted in 1 Peter (1 Pet 1:1).

3 OPPONENTS

Identifying the opponents in 2 Peter is also difficult.¹³⁵⁹ It is evident from 2:1–3, 14, 18 that they were from the church, claiming to be Christians. Peter views them as false teachers who had emerged from within the congregation.¹³⁶⁰ Apparently they initially gave evidence of being converted and subsequently began to live and teach in a way that revealed their apostasy. Their central teaching was eschatological skepticism, for they denied a future coming of Christ (1:16–18; 3:4–7) and along with it any future judgment (2:3–10). The adversaries should not be lumped with the opponents in Jude because in Jude the opponents came from the outside, but in Peter they stem from the inside; in 2 Peter the opponents denied the future coming of Christ, but we do not find the same conception in Jude; the troublemakers in Jude appealed to prophetic inspiration, but the opponents in 2 Peter were false teachers and did not claim prophetic authority.¹³⁶¹ The denial of a future judgment opened the door for a libertine lifestyle (2:1–3, 11–16). Or perhaps they began by living licentiously and then defended their lifestyle theologically by denying a future judgment. They probably used Paul's writings (3:15–16) in defense of their licentiousness, perhaps arguing that God's grace released believers from ethical obligation (cf. Rom 3:8; 5:20–6:1). In any case, they viewed their own agenda as the pathway to freedom (2:19). Their argument seems to have been rationalistic, contending that the world functions normally and regularly without any interruption. Perhaps they claimed that the apostles invented the idea of Christ's coming

(1:16) and also rejected the wording of prophetic texts that taught the parousia (1:20–21).¹³⁶²

Scholars have often identified the opponents as gnostics or proto-gnostics for the following reasons:¹³⁶³ (1) the emphasis on knowledge in 2 Peter was a response to the *gnosis* of the opponents; (2) the lifestyle of the adversaries demonstrated that they were gnostic libertines; (3) such a libertine lifestyle can perhaps be traced to a rejection of the material world; (4) similarly, their rejection of the last judgment may be linked to a refusal to believe in a bodily resurrection; (5) the interpretation of Paul reflects gnostic exegesis; (6) their denial of the Lord (2 Pet 2:1) may indicate a denial of his incarnation, showing a docetic theology; (7) they taught “myths” to their adherents (1:16).¹³⁶⁴

Identifying the opponents as gnostic in any form is increasingly and rightly questioned today.¹³⁶⁵ We can sketch quickly why the gnostic thesis is unpersuasive.¹³⁶⁶ We see no evidence of cosmological dualism in 2 Peter, nor is it clear that the false teachers propounded a realized eschatology or even that their ethical libertinism stemmed from such dualism. Peter says nothing about the resurrection, and so it is unclear that they rejected the “material” world. Indeed, it is possible that they embraced the material world, arguing that it is the only world we will ever experience. The word “myths” hardly points to Gnosticism in 1:16 since Peter does not even use the word “myths” to refer to the views of the opponents. Instead, the adversaries threw the word “myths” in the face of those supporting the parousia. In other words, Peter does not accuse the opponents of propounding myths. On the contrary, the false teachers charged the apostles with spreading myths.¹³⁶⁷ Gnosticism as we know emphasized knowledge for the elite, and it is evident that the word “knowledge” was important in 2 Peter. Peter’s use of the word “knowledge,” however, is not directed in any clear way against the adversaries. A licentious lifestyle is not unique to Gnosticism, and thus by itself it does not tell us anything about the worldview of the opponents. To conclude from 2 Pet 2:1 that the adversaries embraced Docetism misreads the verse since

nothing in particular is said about their Christology.¹³⁶⁸ In context (see commentary), the denial probably relates to their lifestyle, not a discernible Christological heresy. The gnostic hypothesis has survived on bits and pieces of evidence and the view that 2 Peter is a second-century document.¹³⁶⁹ It does not genuinely explain what 2 Peter says about the false teachers, representing an imposition of data collected elsewhere on 2 Peter. Nor, contrary to Käsemann, is there any evidence that the author of 2 Peter embraced Gnosticism.¹³⁷⁰ He expects a new heaven and a new earth, not deliverance from the material world. He does not dismiss the body per se in 1:4 but the lusts of this world that make people prize something more than God.

Neyrey, noticing parallels between Epicurean teaching and the worldview of the opponents, suggests that the opponents were either Epicureans or “scoffers.”¹³⁷¹ Epicureans denied God’s providential rule over the world, maintaining that the world operated without God’s intervention.¹³⁷² In such a world God would not pronounce judgment, nor would there be a parousia. Human beings are free to choose their own way, and after death the body returns to the elements from which it is composed. Hence, in the Epicurean worldview humans cannot look forward to a future judgment in which rights and wrongs would be recompensed (2 Pet 2:1, 3; 3:9). It is here that we could place the promise of freedom heralded by the opponents (2 Pet 2:19). Even though Epicurus himself did not espouse an immoral lifestyle, one could easily see how such a conclusion could be drawn from his teaching. Neyrey also sees an analogy to Epicurean thinking in the dismissal of the parousia as a myth since Epicureans often derided judgments in the future as mythical. Furthermore, they rejected prophecy since any definite predictions of the future would cancel out human freedom.

We can certainly see some areas of commonality between the opponents and Epicurean thought, but it is unlikely that the opponents were full-fledged Epicureans. It is difficult to see how the false teachers could be Christian in any sense of the word if they embraced Epicurean thought. Any notion of Jesus as the Christ would

be precluded by Epicureanism, and it is unclear that the opponents rejected Jesus as the Messiah. As G. Green says, “If they are Epicureans, we wonder what they are doing within the confines of a Christian gathering that has a decidedly theistic orientation.”¹³⁷³ Epicureans believed God was completely inactive in the world, but the opponents probably did not go to that extreme, insisting that there would not be a future judgment or second coming of Christ.¹³⁷⁴ And it seems that they affirmed God created the world (2 Pet 3:4), which Epicureans would deny.¹³⁷⁵ They could have maintained, therefore, that God was working in the world currently and only denied future cataclysms. The latter makes better sense of their claim to be Christians. The promise of freedom represents the kind of distortions we see in Pauline opponents, without any suggestion of Epicureanism.¹³⁷⁶ Neyrey illustrates some areas where the opponents’ thinking may have intersected with Epicureanism, but we would go too far to identify or even associate them with Epicureans.

Caulley argues that the opponents saw themselves as teachers who were prophets. The opponents, like Balaam, drew on prophecy to support their libertinism, eschatological skepticism, and defective christology. Peter contests their interpretation of prophecy (2 Pet 1:20) and classes them as false prophets like Balaam.¹³⁷⁷ Perhaps Caulley is correct, though Peter refrains from identifying the opponents as “false prophets” (2 Pet 2:1), nor does he label Balaam as a prophet when denouncing him.¹³⁷⁸

Instead of identifying the opponents precisely, we must be content with the limited information available to us regarding the false teachers.¹³⁷⁹ We know that they denied the parousia and that they were antinomians. Perhaps they drew upon Paul’s letters to justify their libertinism. Their denial of the future coming of Christ probably was linked with the rejection of the future judgment. New Testament scholars have a penchant for attaching a name and a full-fledged theology to opponents so that they can be classified precisely. But in this instance we are limited to a rather sketchy outline of the theology

of the false teachers. We face our distance from the original events here since the letter was written to Peter's churches, who knew the false teachers well.

4 STRUCTURE

The structure of the letter is reflected in the following outline. No compelling reasons have been offered to doubt the unity of the letter.¹³⁸⁰ Watson has analyzed the letter in terms of Greek rhetoric, seeing an Epistolary Prescript (1:1–2), an *Exordium* (1:3–15), the *Probatio* (1:6–3:13), and the *Peroratio* (3:14–18).¹³⁸¹ I note in Jude as well that Watson’s analysis reminds us that that letter was structured carefully, even though there are reasons to doubt that Jude or any NT letter writer followed the canons of Greek rhetoric. Watson’s case for 2 Peter is unpersuasive.¹³⁸² It is unclear that the analysis conforms to the letter as it is actually written. For instance, Watson identifies 2:10b–22 as a digression, and such a long digression calls into question whether the proposed analysis fits. It is more helpful to examine the structure of the letter as it unfolds so that we can avoid the error of imposing an alien structure on it. The problem with many rhetorical analyses of NT letters is that they tend to force the data to fit the proposed outline. At some points rhetorical analyses are helpful because NT writers were effective communicators, and thus they inevitably used elements of Greek rhetoric. Nevertheless, it is another thing to argue that the letters were consciously structured in accord with such rhetoric.¹³⁸³

OUTLINE OF 2 PETER

- 1 Greeting (1:1–2)
- 2 God’s Grace: The Foundation for a Life of Godliness (1:3–11)
 - 2.1 Divine Provision (1:3–4)
 - 2.2 Pursue a Godly Life Diligently (1:5–7)
 - 2.3 Godly Virtues Necessary for Entrance into the Kingdom (1:8–11)
- 3 Peter’s Apostolic Reminder (1:12–21)
 - 3.1 The Function of the Reminder: To Stir Them for Action (1:12–15)

- 3.2 The Truth of Jesus's Coming Is Based on Eyewitness Testimony (1:16–18)
- 3.3 The Truth of Jesus's Coming Is Based on the Prophetic Word (1:19–21)
- 4 The Arrival, Character, and Judgment of False Teachers (2:1–22)
 - 4.1 The Impact of False Teachers (2:1–3)
 - 4.2 The Certain Judgment of the Ungodly and the Preservation of the Godly (2:4–10a)
 - 4.3 False Teachers Judged for Their Rebellion and Sensuality (2:10b–16)
 - 4.4 The Adverse Impact of the False Teachers on Others (2:17–22)
- 5 Reminder: The Day of the Lord Will Come (3:1–18)
 - 5.1 Scoffers Doubt the Coming Day (3:1–7)
 - 5.2 The Lord's Timing Is Different from Ours (3:8–10)
 - 5.3 Living Righteously because of the Future Day (3:11–18)

COMMENTARY

SECTION OUTLINE

1 Greeting (1:1–2)

1 GREETING (1:1–2)

¹ *Simeon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ:*

To those who have received a faith equal to ours through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.

² *May grace and peace be multiplied to you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.*

As in most other NT letters, Peter begins by naming the sender, the recipients, and adding a greeting. The sender, “Simon Peter,” is identified in the first words of the letter and the recipients by the phrase “to those who . . . have received a faith as precious as ours” (NIV). The greeting is communicated in v. 2. Virtually all NT letters contain greetings that are weightier than what is typical in Greco-Roman culture. Peter not only identifies himself but explains why he is qualified to write to his readers. He is a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ. The recipients are described in terms of their faith in God, which is theirs by virtue of the righteousness of their God and Savior, Jesus Christ. Peter does not restrict himself to the usual “greetings” (*chairein*) of the Greco-Roman world but prays that God’s grace and peace would abound in their lives through the knowledge of God and the Lord Jesus. Some of the central themes of the letter appear in the greeting: the centrality of faith in the Christian life, the saving righteousness of God, the primacy of Jesus Christ, and the importance of knowing God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, the themes of grace and knowledge form an *inclusio* since the letter ends with an admonition to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ (3:18).

1:1 Peter identifies himself as a servant and apostle, greeting those who have received the same faith as he has. Such faith is theirs through the saving righteousness of their God and Savior, Jesus Christ. The first unusual feature in the verse appears in the first word in the letter. Peter does not use the usual Greek term “Simon” (*Simōn*) to describe himself (as in, e.g., Matt 4:18; 10:2; 16:16–17; 17:25; John 1:40, 42; Acts 10:5) but “Simeon” (*Simeōn*). The latter term is Semitic and would only be used in a Palestinian setting. The only other occasion in which Peter was called *Simeon* was at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:14), where James appeals to Peter’s testimony regarding Cornelius. The Palestinian flavor of the council may explain the use of the term. The name Simeon is also used of the person who pronounces a blessing on and prophesies about the infant Jesus (Luke 2:25, 34). The Semitic flavor of Luke 1–2 is acknowledged by virtually all. Luke also uses the name Simeon in Jesus’s genealogy (Luke 3:30), and one of the prophets bears the name Simeon (Acts 13:1; cf. also 1 Macc 2:65). The name Simeon is an indication of an early date since it was not used in the second century.¹³⁸⁴ Some scholars suggest that the pseudonymous author uses the Semitic name to communicate “verisimilitude.”¹³⁸⁵ If this theory is true, it is difficult to see how “the author” was not engaging in deception. Bauckham suggests that the writer may have been “an associate of Peter’s who belonged to Peter’s circle in Rome.”¹³⁸⁶ But it is improbable that someone in Rome would use Peter’s Semitic name. Indeed, the terms “Peter” and “apostle” in this verse show that the letter claims to be from Peter himself, the apostle of Jesus Christ. I conclude that the Semitic Simeon comes from Peter himself and that it represents an authentic touch from the apostle Peter.

Peter designates himself as a “servant and apostle of Jesus Christ.” The term “servant” (*doulos*) could also be translated “slave,” demonstrating that Peter was under the authority of Jesus Christ, that he submitted to his lordship, and that he had no inherent authority. It is also the case, however, that the term *doulos* suggests honor. Peter was honored as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the OT prominent men who served Yahweh were called his “servants”:

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exod 32:13; Deut 9:27); Moses (Deut 34:5; Josh 1:1–2; 1 Kgs 8:53, 56); Samuel (1 Sam 3:9–10), and David (1 Sam 17:32; 2 Sam 3:18; 7:5, 8, 19–21, 25–29).¹³⁸⁷ In the NT, Paul (Rom 1:1; Gal 1:10; Phil 1:1; Titus 1:1), James (Jas 1:1), and Jude (Jude 1) are also called *servants*. The term, then, not only suggests humility but the honor of serving Jesus Christ.¹³⁸⁸

Peter does not only identify himself as a slave but also an “apostle of Jesus Christ.” The term “apostle” in some contexts may refer to missionaries or messengers (Rom 16:7; 2 Cor 8:23; Phil 2:25), but neither of those meanings fits here. We have the technical use of the term here, of those whom Jesus Christ specially called and appointed to serve as apostles (Matt 10:1–11:1; Mark 3:13–19; cf. Acts 1:21–26). The authority of the apostles is communicated in 2 Pet 3:2 and in the high estimate of Paul (2 Pet 3:15–16). Peter, therefore, is not merely sharing his opinion in the letter. He writes as a commissioned servant of Jesus Christ, as his appointed apostle and delegate to counter the threat posed by false teachers (cf. Eph 2:20). As an apostle he shares authoritative and eyewitness teaching (1:16; 3:2).

Peter does not identify the recipients geographically, though they probably were mainly Gentiles,¹³⁸⁹ and the same audience as was addressed in 1 Peter (2 Pet 3:1). Peter describes them as receiving a faith that has equal privileges as “ours.” The word “received” (*lanchousin*) connotes the receiving of something by lot. Zechariah obtained by lot the privilege of offering incense in the temple (Luke 1:9). Roman soldiers cast lots to see who would get Jesus’s garment (John 19:24). Judas was appointed to serve in an apostolic ministry (Acts 1:17). Receiving something by lot here designates a gift one receives because of the grace of God. According to Peter, what was received was “faith” in God and Jesus Christ. Many scholars maintain that faith refers here to a body of teaching or doctrine (cf. Jude 3, 20).¹³⁹⁰ One would expect Peter, however, to speak of faith being “handed down” or “transmitted” rather than received if it refers to doctrine. Thus, Peter likely refers to personal and subjective faith in God and Jesus Christ.¹³⁹¹ Faith, which is necessary for salvation, is a

divine gift.¹³⁹² It cannot be produced by the mere will of human beings but must be received from God himself. He appointed, as it were by lot, that Peter's readers would receive such faith.

It is difficult to know whom Peter has in mind in speaking of "faith" as "equal to ours." The word "equal" (*isotimon*) signifies that they had equal privileges and honor as others. The translation "equal standing" in the RSV communicates more precisely what Peter intends than the NIV's "precious" since the latter focuses unduly on the emotional value of the gift. Josephus used the term to refer to civic equality (*Ant.* 12.119). Peter probably compares the privileges of the apostles with that of the readers.¹³⁹³ Others argue that Peter refers to the historical contrast between Jews and Gentiles.¹³⁹⁴ Etched in the mind of every Jew was their special place as God's chosen people. The inclusion of the Gentiles on an equal basis with the Jews was stunning to the early Jewish Christians (cf. Acts 10:1–11:18; Eph 2:11–3:13), a truth that sunk in slowly. Still, there is no clear indication that Jew-Gentile tensions inform 2 Peter, and thus Hillyer suggests the general point that all believers of all places, classes, and ethnic backgrounds share the same blessings.¹³⁹⁵ Certainty is difficult here, but it is likely that Peter refers to a blessing equal to the apostles.

Since Peter emphasizes the equality of privilege among believers, it is not surprising that many think the "righteousness of our God" (*dikaiosynē tou theou*) refers to God's fairness and equity in granting equal salvation.¹³⁹⁶ The term "righteousness" elsewhere in 2 Peter, it is pointed out, refers to his justice and fairness (2 Pet 2:5, 21; 3:13). The phrase "through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ" modifies the participle "received." The emphasis on God's grace and gift in the context (cf. 1:3–4) suggests that fairness is not the most natural meaning in context. The gift of faith given by God is not understood in the NT to be "fair" but entirely of grace. Thus, God's righteousness here does not denote his fairness but his saving righteousness.¹³⁹⁷ This accords with the OT, where God's righteousness is parallel to his "salvation" (Pss 22:31; 31:1; 35:24, 28; 40:10; Isa 42:6; 45:8, 13; 51:5–8; Mic 6:5; 7:9). The term

“righteousness” in 2 Pet 2:5, 21 and 3:13 is not necessarily limited to justice but may also include the notion of salvation (see the commentary under those verses). The faith received, then, is rooted in God’s saving righteousness, his free gift of salvation, which is in accord with his faithful love and mercy.¹³⁹⁸

The source of God’s saving righteousness is Jesus Christ. The Greek construction here is particularly interesting: “the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ” (*dikaiosynē tou theou hēmōn kai sōtēros Iēsou Christou*). The grammar clearly indicates that Jesus Christ is called “God” in this verse.¹³⁹⁹ The structure of the clause accords with the famous rule of Granville Sharp: when two singular nouns, which are not proper nouns, fall under the same article, they refer to the same entity.¹⁴⁰⁰ The phrase used here fits every part of this definition. If Peter wanted to distinguish Jesus Christ from the Father, he would have inserted an article before the noun “Savior.” The pronoun “our” also indicates that only one person is referred to here. Moreover, “Lord and Savior” in four parallel texts refers in every case to the same person, Jesus Christ (2 Pet 1:11; 2:20; 3:2, 18). The primary reason some scholars doubt this interpretation is that the NT writers rarely use “God” explicitly in reference to Jesus Christ.¹⁴⁰¹ Nonetheless, in a number of texts Jesus Christ is almost certainly identified as God (John 1:1, 18; 20:28; Rom 9:5; Titus 2:13; Heb 1:8),¹⁴⁰² although the intention is never to teach a form of modalism. To deny such a reading here would be to violate the clear sense of the grammar. Bigg rightly remarks, “Yet the first and sovereign duty of the commentator is to ascertain, and to guide himself by the grammatical sense.”¹⁴⁰³ The glory of Jesus Christ is emphasized as well at the conclusion of the letter in the doxology (3:18) so that the letter is bounded by the theme of Christ’s divinity.

Jesus Christ is both God and Savior. The term “Savior” is often used of divine rulers in the Caesar cult, but there is no evidence that Peter countered such views in the letter.¹⁴⁰⁴ Finally, Callan effectively argues that the attribution of “Lord” with reference to Jesus Christ

implies his deity since the same title also refers to God.¹⁴⁰⁵ Jesus Christ is acclaimed as Lord (1:2, 8, 11, 14, 16; 2:20; 3:18), and the Father is called “Lord” (2:9, 11; 3:8, 10, 12). Even though scholars debate whether the Father or Christ is called “Lord” in some of these verses (see commentary on the relevant verses), Callan’s point still stands since there is no doubt that both the Father and Christ are called “Lord.” He is also correct in suggesting that such a title for Christ points to Jesus’s divinity. Jesus’s role as Savior indicates Peter’s eschatological and apocalyptic worldview as Gerdmar points out. Jesus redeems his own (2 Pet 2:1), cleanses them from sin (2 Pet 1:9), and gives them grace to enter his kingdom (2 Pet 1:11).¹⁴⁰⁶

1:2 Peter prays that grace and peace will increase in the lives of his readers through knowing God and the Lord Jesus. The first words of the greeting are in exact agreement with 1 Pet 1:2. Peter infuses the greeting with Christian content by using the word “grace” (*charis*). The term is not perfunctory since we have already seen in v. 1 that God has granted faith to the readers through his saving righteousness. Verses 3–4 continue in this vein, reminding us that God has given his people everything they need so that they may be like him. The term “peace” represents a typical Jewish greeting, and the order may be significant. Those upon whom God has bestowed his grace experience his peace. Peter prays that God will multiply his grace and peace in the lives of the readers because he knows that their progress in the Christian life depends on God alone.

The greeting in 2 Peter does not merely conform to what is written in 1 Peter, which we would expect if the letter were pseudonymous. Peter adds a distinctive wrinkle, praying that God’s grace and peace will abound “through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.” English readers may wonder if Peter identifies Jesus as God as he did in v. 1. The answer is no. The construction is different since “Jesus” is a proper name, and therefore Sharp’s rule does not apply in this instance. God the Father and Jesus Christ as distinct persons are in view, which is typical in greetings (e.g., Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:3; 2 John 3). We see here that the Father and Jesus Christ

share the same divine identity, and yet there is a distinction of the persons.

The knowledge of God is personal and relational, but it also involves intellectual content.¹⁴⁰⁷ Biblical writers never divorce the head and the heart in terms of spiritual growth. Grace and peace abound when believers know more about God and come to know God in a deeper way in the crucible of experience. “Knowledge” was a key word for Peter. It is probable that the term *epignōsis* focuses on the inception of such knowledge at conversion (1:3, 8; 2:20).¹⁴⁰⁸ It is doubtful, though, that we should construct separate definitions for the two terms used for knowledge (*epignōsis* and *gnōsis*, 1:5, 6; 3:18).¹⁴⁰⁹ The two terms are closely related in Hos 4:6. Knowledge of God and Christ begins, of course, at conversion, but it is difficult to sustain the view that Peter confines *epignōsis* to conversion and *gnōsis* to postconversion growth.¹⁴¹⁰ It is common for Greek terms to overlap in meaning, and the prepositional prefix *epi* often adds nothing distinctive to a word. In this verse knowledge refers both to the knowledge of God obtained at conversion and to its increase in their lives. It follows, therefore, that we have an inclusio since the book ends with an exhortation to grow in grace and knowledge (*gnōsis*) of Jesus Christ.¹⁴¹¹

SECTION OUTLINE

- 2 God's Grace: The Foundation for a Life of Godliness (1:3–11)
 - 2.1 Divine Provision (1:3–4)
 - 2.2 Pursue a Godly Life Diligently (1:5–7)
 - 2.3 Godly Virtues Necessary for Entrance into the Kingdom (1:8–11)

2 GOD'S GRACE: THE FOUNDATION FOR A LIFE OF GODLINESS (1:3–11)

We see in this section that the grace and power of God and Christ have given believers everything needed for a godly life (vv. 3–4), and thus the virtues enjoined upon the readers are a result and consequence of God's grace (vv. 5–7). The practice of these virtues is essential, and those who live a godly life are ensured of entrance into the kingdom (vv. 8–11).

2.1 Divine Provision (1:3–4)

³ His divine power has given us everything required for life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. ⁴ By these he has given us very great and precious promises, so that through them you may share in the divine nature, escaping the corruption that is in the world because of evil desire.

The grammar of vv. 3–4 is complicated and difficult, and the CSB has smoothed it out for English readers.¹⁴¹² Verse 3 begins with the word *hōs* (“as”). Most likely the “as” clause that introduces vv. 3–4 introduces the exhortation that follows in vv. 5–7.¹⁴¹³ This yields good sense, for God's power and grace are the foundation for the call to a life of godliness in vv. 5–7. Others argue that the “as” in v. 3 loosely connects vv. 3–4 with v. 2. If this is the case, *hōs* could be translated as “seeing that” (cf. NASB).¹⁴¹⁴ The logical relationship between the verses if we follow this latter interpretation would be as follows. In v. 2 Peter prays that grace and peace would abound in the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ. Verse 3 explains the resources

believers have through knowing God. Those who know God have everything they need for life and godliness. A decision is difficult since the grammar is rather awkward. We probably should see vv. 3–4 as linked with vv. 5–7 because the salutation would be unusually long if vv. 3–4 were joined with vv. 1–2.¹⁴¹⁵ Furthermore, it seems to make the most sense to see vv. 3–4 as the presupposition for the exhortation in vv. 5–7.¹⁴¹⁶ The contents of vv. 3–4 are crucial in interpreting the imperatives that follow in vv. 5–7. Peter does not fall prey to moralism or synergism. The call to godliness is rooted in and secured by God’s grace; his gracious power supplies what he demands.¹⁴¹⁷

Unraveling the logic within vv. 3–4 is challenging. I understand the flow of thought as follows. Those who know God have everything they need for life and godliness, that is, they have everything they need for eternal life—the eschatological gift of life that has been inaugurated in the present age through the death and resurrection of Christ.¹⁴¹⁸ The reason they have everything they need for eternal life is explained in the last part of v. 3, namely, Christ has called believers by means of his moral excellence and glory. Christ’s call, as Peter understands it, is effective so that believers see the glory of Christ when they are called to salvation. When God calls or speaks, it is so, as when he said, “Let there be light” (Gen 1:3). The call of Christ, then, is effective and performative.

Understanding the connection between vv. 3 and 4 is, if anything, more difficult. Identifying the antecedent of the pronoun “these” (*hōn*) is the subject of debate. It probably refers to “his own glory and goodness” (v. 3). We could say that Christ has given precious and great promises to his people as they perceive his glory and moral beauty. The glory of Christ is not limited to his moral excellence, but his moral excellence and goodness are what Peter emphasizes. And through these promises (*toutōn* in Greek) believers participate even now in the divine nature since they have escaped the corruption that is in the world, a corruption that has its roots in evil desire. Peter is not saying, of course, that believers are sinless now. But in one sense believers have already escaped the corruption of the world and are like

God even now, but the process will not be completed until the day of the Lord. Only on the last day will believers be free from sin and fully like God.

1:3 Believers have been granted everything needed for life and godliness at conversion, through knowing the one who calls believers to his glory and excellence. When Peter speaks of “his divine power,” it is difficult to know whether he refers to God or Christ. Some commentators think Christ is in view since he is actually called God in v. 1.¹⁴¹⁹ Others think it is more likely that Peter would refer to the Father as the one possessing “divine power.”¹⁴²⁰ The immediate antecedent in v. 2 is Christ rather than God, and hence a reference to Christ would be natural. In addition, the word “power” (*dynamis*) is also used in v. 16, where it clearly refers to Christ, suggesting that the same conclusion should be drawn here. Even though Peter likely refers to Christ, the language is ambiguous and hence certainty is precluded.¹⁴²¹ The ambiguity in the text indicates that Peter does not clearly distinguish between God and Christ, which indicates that God and Christ were venerated equally.¹⁴²²

The same question arises with the word “called.” Does it refer to Christ or the Father? The NT typically attributes calling to God (cf. though Rom 1:6), and thus a reference to the Father is certainly fitting. If we understand “his divine power” to refer to Christ, then Christ is the immediate antecedent.¹⁴²³ A decision is again remarkably difficult. Perhaps it is slightly preferable, given the antecedent, to identify Christ as the one who calls.¹⁴²⁴ The ambiguity points to the divine nature of both the Father and Jesus Christ and forms part of the material from which the doctrine of the Trinity was formulated.

The main point of the first clause is that Christ has provided everything believers need for “life and godliness.”¹⁴²⁵ The word “us” refers to all believers, not merely the apostles or Jewish Christians. It is unlikely that Peter restricts what he says to any particular group of believers.¹⁴²⁶ When Peter refers to “life” (*zōen*), eternal life is

intended.¹⁴²⁷ Believers have eternal life even now and yet await the day when such life will be consummated at the eschaton. Godliness (*eusebeian*) is linked to life because the latter is not gained without the former.¹⁴²⁸ Eternal life is not merely the experience of bliss but also involves transformation so that believers are morally perfected and made like God.¹⁴²⁹ Thus, believers should live in a godly way even now, though perfection in godliness will not be ours until the day Christ returns. The word “godliness” anticipates 3:11, where the coming of the Lord should be an incentive to godliness (cf. 1:6). The teaching of the opponents is insidious because their denial of the Lord’s coming impedes the quest for godliness. Only those who are godly will experience eternal life, and thus it is fitting that Christ’s “divine power” is the source of godliness. Only God can make people godly.

The church must not conclude that godliness comes from their own inherent abilities since the gifts given to believers are rooted in the knowledge of Christ.¹⁴³⁰ Everything needed for eternal life is mediated through the knowledge of the Christ, who calls believers to himself. The word for “knowledge” is again *epignōsis* (cf. 1:2), referring to the encounter with Jesus Christ that began in conversion and continues thereafter. The focus is on conversion since Peter refers to Christ’s calling (*kalesantos*). English readers are apt to understand calling in terms of an invitation that can be accepted or rejected. Peter has something deeper in mind. Christ’s call is effective, awakening and creating faith. Calling has this meaning in Paul often (e.g., Rom 4:17; 8:30; 9:12, 24–26; 1 Cor 1:9; 7:15; Gal 1:6, 15; 5:8, 13; 1 Thess 2:12; 4:7; 5:24; 2 Thess 2:14; 1 Tim 6:12; 2 Tim 1:9), and we see the same in 1 Peter (1:15; 2:9, 21; 3:9; 5:10). First Peter 2:9 indicates that conversion is in view since God called believers out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Christ calls believers “by his own glory and goodness.”¹⁴³¹ “Glory” (*doxa*) here refers to Christ’s splendor and majesty as a divine being, not his “fame or honor.”¹⁴³² The word “goodness” (*aretē*) refers to the moral life of believers in 1:5. Peter uses the term (RSV

“excellence”) that was commonly used in Greek literature for moral virtue.¹⁴³³ When combined with “glory,” “goodness” refers to the divine moral excellence of Christ, focusing especially on the beauty of his goodness.¹⁴³⁴ Some scholars think Peter’s use of this term, along with “divine” (*theias*)—another term uncommon in the NT—indicates pseudonymity. Would a Palestinian fisherman write like this? But Peter also uses the term *aretē* in 1 Pet 2:9, and his use of Hellenistic terms reveals that he wanted to communicate in the idiom of his readers. This could merely indicate that Peter was not closeted off from the rest of the world and was familiar with Hellenistic culture.

The terms “glory” and “goodness” together point to the same reality.¹⁴³⁵ Those whom God saves are called by Christ, and this calling is accomplished through the knowledge of Christ’s divine moral excellence. In other words, when Christ calls people to himself, they perceive the beauty and loveliness of who he is. His character becomes exceedingly attractive to them, and they trust God for their salvation: “our calling was all Jesus’ doing.”¹⁴³⁶ One of the central themes of Peter’s letter emerges in this verse. Believers will be morally transformed, but the foundation for their transformation is God’s grace. Peter criticizes indirectly the false teachers of chapter 2 since their lives were marked by moral anarchy, but those whom Christ calls have seen Christ’s goodness and glory and will live a godly life. As Harink says, “It seems inconceivable . . . that someone who was once seized by and made a sharer in the overwhelming glory, excellence, and beauty of Christ would later abandon that *epignōsis*, that original and life-altering knowledge in which our own life is conformed to Christ’s, and trade it for something else.”¹⁴³⁷

1:4 The connection between vv. 3 and 4 is difficult to trace. The prepositional phrase “by these” (*di hōn*) joins the verses. What is the antecedent? Most scholars agree it is Christ’s “glory and goodness.”¹⁴³⁸ Believers inherit God’s promises as they come to know Christ, as they experience his moral excellence and glorious radiance in conversion. Great and precious promises have been given to believers through the gospel, a gospel that provides everything

believers need. What “promises” does Peter have in mind? Probably he has participation in “the divine nature” (1:4) particularly in mind. Such likeness to God will be the portion of believers fully when the Lord returns. And the word “promises” (*epangelmata*) directs our attention to the Lord’s coming since there is a verbal connection to 2 Pet 3. We learn from chap. 3 that the false teachers deny Christ’s future coming.¹⁴³⁹ They reject “the promise of his coming” (ESV, *hē epangelia tēs parousias autou*, 3:4). Even though the Lord’s “promise” seems slow (3:9), it will surely be fulfilled. It is when the Lord comes, after all, that believers will be conformed fully to the likeness of Christ (cf. 1 John 3:2). Peter probably anticipates here his later criticisms of the false teachers because by denying the coming of the Lord they undercut the gospel that promises moral perfection when Christ returns. If there is no future coming of Christ, their salvation does not include the promise of likeness to God, and the gospel is a sham.

God’s promises have been given to us “so that through them you may share in the divine nature.” The words “through them” (*dia toutōn*) almost certainly refer to God’s promises and the reality these promises guarantee.¹⁴⁴⁰ Again we see Peter’s preference for Hellenistic terms since he speaks of “the divine nature” (*theias physeōs*), presumably to address the cultural location of his readers.¹⁴⁴¹ The other use of “divine” (*theios*) in the NT is found in Acts 17:29, where Paul speaks to those in Athens influenced by Greek culture.¹⁴⁴² What Peter means is that believers will become like God.¹⁴⁴³ The notion of sharing in the divine nature has exerted a tremendous influence in Eastern Christianity, where the doctrine of *theiōsis* (i.e., deification) has been emphasized.¹⁴⁴⁴ Peter is not saying (nor does Eastern Christianity) that human beings will actually become divine or that they will share in the divine nature in every respect.¹⁴⁴⁵ As Frey says, believers do not participate in the divine essence, nor do they take on divine attributes and capabilities. The separation between God and human beings remains.¹⁴⁴⁶ Believers share in the divine nature in that they will be morally perfected; they

will share in the moral excellence that belongs to God (1:3).¹⁴⁴⁷ Believers will “participate” (*koinōnoi*) in the divine nature, but they will not become gods.¹⁴⁴⁸ This conclusion is borne out by Starr’s careful study, which investigates the terminology Peter uses with reference to his social world.¹⁴⁴⁹ He analyzes the language Peter uses here, comparing it with similar notions in the OT, Josephus, Philo, Plutarch, Stoicism, Pauline Christianity, and non-Pauline Christianity. He concludes from his comparative study that sharing in the divine nature does not mean “deified.” Instead Peter maintains that believers will share in the moral qualities of Christ.¹⁴⁵⁰

Do believers share in the divine nature now, or is such participation exclusively future? Certainly the process will reach its consummation in the future, for only then will all of God’s promises be fulfilled. Believers will not be morally perfected until Christ returns. Nevertheless, it is doubtful that Peter refers *only* to the future.¹⁴⁵¹ Even now believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit and are like God to some extent.¹⁴⁵² Believers begin to know God and to be changed by him at their conversion. The last clause in v. 4 supports this interpretation as well. The last clause is introduced by the word “escaping” (*apophygontes*). The logical relationship in the verse should be explained as follows: God has given saving promises to his people so that they will become like God. They will become like God and are becoming like God because they have escaped “the corruption that is in the world because of evil desire.” Some scholars argue that believers will escape the corruption of the world at death or when the Lord returns.¹⁴⁵³ It is more likely, however, that Peter operates with an already-but-not-yet schema. Believers have already escaped the world’s corruption in that they belong to God,¹⁴⁵⁴ but the full realization of liberation will be theirs on the day of resurrection.¹⁴⁵⁵ The parallel expression in 2 Pet 2:20 supports this interpretation. Peter, speaking of the lapse of the false teachers, says, “For if, having escaped the world’s impurity through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” The participle “escaped” is the same word

(*apophygontes*) and the same form (an aorist participle) as in 1:4. A different word for corruption is used—*phthora* (“corruption”) in 1:4 and *miasma* (“impurity”) in 2:20—but the idea is the same. Most important, they have previously escaped the impurity of the world in coming to know Jesus Christ in 2:20. We should interpret 1:4 similarly. Believers have already escaped the corruption of the world, but the completion of that process will occur on the day of the Lord.

The word “corruption” (*phthora*) refers to what is perishing because it is part of the present world order. The natural world is corrupted because of the sin of human beings (Rom 8:21). Foods are corruptible and pass through the body after being consumed (Col 2:22). Human bodies are corruptible in the sense that they die and are not immortal (1 Cor 15:42, 50). Those who sow to the flesh will experience corruption forever, while those who sow “to the Spirit will reap eternal life” (Gal 6:8). The false teachers are “slaves of corruption” (2 Pet 2:19), and they are compared to animals that will experience dissolution (2 Pet 2:12). The “corruption” in 2 Pet 1:4 could refer to death and the coming judgment. Those who believe in Jesus Christ have escaped that future judgment even now.¹⁴⁵⁶ Witherington stresses that the corruption is moral, and that the reference is to the past (conversion), not future freedom from death.¹⁴⁵⁷ The parallel with 2 Pet 2:20 suggests that moral corruption is the focus, and such corruption is rooted in evil desires. The root of corruption lies in desires for what is evil and wicked. In other words, the material world itself is not evil; what corrupts is the selfish desire that dominates human beings.¹⁴⁵⁸ Thus, there is no call to asceticism here. Those who have come to know Jesus Christ have had their desires transformed. Now they love goodness and holiness, whereas those ensnared in the world love what is evil.

2.2 Pursue a Godly Life Diligently (1:5–7)

⁵ *For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with goodness, goodness with knowledge,* ⁶ *knowledge with self-*

*control, self-control with endurance, endurance with godliness, 7
godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.*

The logical relationship between vv. 3–4 and vv. 5–7 is crucial. Verses 5–7 summon the readers to a life of virtue, but vv. 3–4 remind us that a life of godliness is rooted in and dependent on God’s grace. Believers should live in a way that pleases God *because* Christ has given them everything they need for life and godliness. The indicative of God’s gift precedes and undergirds the imperative that calls for human exertion. Peter does not lapse, therefore, into moralism since he grounds his exhortations in God’s merciful grace.

It is not the duty and obligation of the believer to grow in their own faith. Rather, the virtues are indications of their faith and growth in them comes about as a result of relying upon the promises of Jesus. Such a reliance is a faith that is rightly located in the righteousness of the one who is Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.¹⁴⁵⁹

The striking feature in these verses is the chain of eight virtues. It is doubtful, contrary to some commentators, that the number eight is selected because it is the perfect number.¹⁴⁶⁰ Nor should we conclude that there are only eight virtues to be pursued. We make a mistake in detecting any significance in the number of virtues listed. Peter uses a literary form called *sorites*, in which we have a step-by-step chain that culminates in a climax. We see an example of this in Wis 6:17–20(RSV):

The beginning of wisdom is the most sincere desire for instruction, and concern for instruction is love of her, and love of her is the keeping of her laws, and giving heed to her laws is assurance of immortality, and immortality brings one near to God; so the desire for wisdom leads to a kingdom.

An example that is even closer appears in the Mishnah:

Heedfulness leads to cleanliness, and cleanliness leads to purity, and purity leads to abstinence, and abstinence leads to holiness, and holiness leads to humility, and humility leads to the shunning of sin,

and the shunning of sin leads to saintliness, and saintliness leads to the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit leads to the resurrection of the dead. (m. Sotah 9:15)¹⁴⁶¹

When we examine the chain of virtues in 2 Peter, it is doubtful, however, that we should understand each virtue as actually building on the previous one.¹⁴⁶² Charles insists that there is a logical progression.¹⁴⁶³ He explains the order as follows: Faith is the root of all moral virtue, and such virtue is linked with what we do with our knowledge of God.¹⁴⁶⁴ If we use this knowledge well, we will exercise self-control. Such self-control will give us ability to endure difficulties. Endurance will then lead to godliness in our relationships, and these relationships will be governed by brotherly affection and Christian love.

Even in Charles's analysis he seems to intertwine virtue and knowledge by implying that the former is somehow dependent on the latter.¹⁴⁶⁵ It is difficult to see how goodness literally precedes knowledge. One could just as easily argue that we need knowledge in order to pursue what is good. Or, at the very least, we can conceive of how the two are mutually interrelated. Neither is it evident that one will only have self-control when one has knowledge. And is it clear that self-control must precede endurance? The ethical chain of virtues, therefore, is more likely a literary device, and it would be a mistake to read anything into the order in which the virtues are listed. It is not as if one virtue produces the next.¹⁴⁶⁶ Practically, the matter is important, for the other interpretation could possibly lead one to work on one virtue at a time, thinking that one virtue must be "mastered" before moving on to another. Such a view of the Christian life smacks of moralism and a Benjamin Franklin approach to virtue, where we concentrate for a period of time on a particular virtue. Such a view is an invitation to self-effort instead of dependence on God. There could be two exceptions to what has just been said. It does seem significant that the chain begins with faith and ends with love. Faith is the root of all the virtues, and love is the goal and climax of the

Christian life.¹⁴⁶⁷ Otherwise, we should not press the order of the virtues listed, nor should we think Peter encouraged his readers to work first on one virtue before moving to the next one.¹⁴⁶⁸

1:5 The phrase “for this very reason” links vv. 5–7 to vv. 3–4. Peter exhorts his readers to a godly life (vv. 5–7) because Christ has given them everything they need for such, and they possess magnificent promises of future glory. It would be a serious mistake, therefore, to dismiss the call to virtue as legalism or moralism. The exhortation to holiness is grounded in God’s work of salvation as it has been accomplished in Jesus Christ.¹⁴⁶⁹ As is typical in the NT, grace precedes demand. The priority of grace, however, does not cancel out strenuous moral effort. Believers are to “make every effort” or apply “all diligence” (NASB) in carrying out Peter’s commands. A godly character does not emerge from passivity or lassitude. As Luther says, “They should prove their faith by their good works.”¹⁴⁷⁰

The chain of virtues begins with “faith” (*pistis*).¹⁴⁷¹ Some commentators maintain that Peter refers to “the faith” here, so faith means Christian doctrine,¹⁴⁷² or loyalty and faithfulness.¹⁴⁷³ It has already been argued that “faith” in 1:1 refers to personal faith or trust.¹⁴⁷⁴ The same is likely here. Trusting God is the root from which all the other virtues spring. Those who rely on God and his promises begin to live a new way. Peter’s theology here is in accord with Paul’s, who said that faith expresses itself in love (Gal 5:6). All the godly virtues in the Christian life find their source in faith, in trusting God for everything, and the culmination and climax of such faith is love. We should note that some of the virtues featured here are common in Greco-Roman culture, providing another indication that Peter drew some connections with the social world of his readers.¹⁴⁷⁵

Believers are “to supplement to” (*epichorēgēsate*) their faith “goodness” (*aretē*). In Greek culture a benefactor (*chorēgos*) furnished what was necessary for choruses. Those who did such were known as generous and lavish benefactors.¹⁴⁷⁶ The word *aretē* can be translated as “moral excellence”¹⁴⁷⁷ and is used in 1:3 to designate

by what God has called believers. Christ's call, we argued, is effective. He creates the moral excellence he demands. Hence, it follows that the moral excellence of believers is attributed to God's grace. And yet NT writers never polarize divine sovereignty and human responsibility. Those whom God has effectively called to virtue are also to practice virtue with energy and intensity.

The term *aretē* is often used in Greek literature to describe those who are morally virtuous. Once again Peter uses a term that would speak to the culture of his readers (cf. Phil 4:8). Believers are not only to pursue moral excellence but also "knowledge" (*gnōsis*). The reference is probably to the knowledge of God's will and ways that are necessary for every Christian. Indeed, the letter concludes with an exhortation to "grow in the grace and knowledge" of Jesus Christ (2 Pet 3:18). "Goodness" (*aretē*) and "knowledge" were closely allied in Stoic thought, but the conception of knowledge here is distinct from the Stoic conception.¹⁴⁷⁸ True knowledge is rooted in God's grace.

1:6 Those who add knowledge to their lives should also ardently seek "self-control" (*enkrateia*). Paul identifies self-control as a fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:23; cf. 1 Cor 7:9; 9:25; Titus 1:8). Genuine knowledge can never exist apart from self-control (cf. 1 Pet 1:14). Self-restraint was one of the prized virtues in Hellenistic culture.¹⁴⁷⁹ A sideways glance is cast here at the false teachers since their lives are marked by dissolution and licentiousness.¹⁴⁸⁰ They are characterized by sensuality (2:2); inflamed by sinful desires (2:10); live for soft and comforting pleasures (2:13); consumed with adultery (2:14); and enslaved to corruption (2:19). Those who live a godly life exercise self-discipline and are able to restrain themselves so that they do not capitulate to sinful desires.

Believers should also add "endurance" (*hypomonē*) to self-restraint. The word "endurance" often describes the desired character of believers (Rom 5:3–4; 8:25; Col 1:11; 1 Thess 1:3–4; 1 Tim 6:11; 2 Tim 3:10; Titus 2:2; Heb 12:1; Jas 1:3–4; 5:11; Rev 2:2–3, 19). The need to persevere is particularly important in the situation Peter addresses since the opponents were threatening the church, attracting others to follow them (2:2), so that some who began in the way of the

gospel had since abandoned it (2:20–22). Moral restraint must be combined with endurance and steadfastness for those who hope to win the eschatological prize.

The readers are also called to “godliness” (*eusebeia*). Godliness has to do with reverence for God and also other authorities.¹⁴⁸¹ Another connection is forged with vv. 3–4 because believers have, by God’s grace, already been given everything they need “for life and godliness” (1:3). Here we see that the imperative stands on the indicative. Christ has given believers everything to be godly, and yet believers must pursue godliness. The term “godliness” refers to piety or, more simply, to living a life that is like God.¹⁴⁸² Believers should live in a holy and godly way since Jesus is going to return (2 Pet 3:11). The word “godliness” is especially common in the Pastoral Epistles for living the kind of life that pleases God (1 Tim 2:2; 3:16; 4:7–8; 6:3, 5–6, 11; 2 Tim 3:5; Titus 1:1). Once again it was a virtue prized in Hellenistic society, indicating that Peter appropriated and recast a cultural ideal in a Christian framework. Godliness includes one’s relation to both God and others.¹⁴⁸³

1:7 The last two virtues focus on love. It is fitting, as already noted, that love should climax the chain since love is the supreme Christian virtue. Peter exhorted his readers first to pursue “brotherly affection” (*philadelphia*). The term is used elsewhere in biblical paraenesis (Rom 12:10; 1 Thess 4:9; Heb 13:1; 1 Pet 1:22; cf. 1 Pet 3:8). The focus is on the love between fellow believers, on the family-like devotion that should characterize the Christian community. Here Peter uses a word that is distinctive of the Christian community in the sense that all believers are brothers and sisters.¹⁴⁸⁴ The opponents did not display such love (2:13–14, 17). The chain climaxes with Christian love, the supreme evidence that one is a believer.¹⁴⁸⁵ Paul affirms that love is the goal of Christian instruction (1 Tim 1:5). It is the most excellent way (1 Cor 12:31–13:13), the virtue that sums up all other virtues (Col 3:14). Anyone who loves will possess the other qualities Peter mentions. The false teachers are lacking in faith and love and hence are not genuine believers at all.

2.3 Godly Virtues Necessary for Entrance into the Kingdom (1:8–11)

⁸ *For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being useless or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.* ⁹ *The person who lacks these things is blind and shortsighted and has forgotten the cleansing from his past sins.* ¹⁰ *Therefore, brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election, because if you do these things you will never stumble.* ¹¹ *For in this way, entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly provided for you.*

The word “for” (*gar*) connects vv. 8–11 with vv. 5–7. If the virtues listed in vv. 5–7 are abounding in the lives of believers, their knowledge of Jesus Christ is fruitful and effective (v. 8). As Davids says, “Many Christians wish that their growth in Christ were a series of crises in which holiness and other virtues were suddenly infused into them. That is not 2 Peter’s point of view.”¹⁴⁸⁶ If godly qualities are lacking, people are blind, and they have forgotten about their forgiveness of sins (v. 9). What precisely is Peter saying in such statements? Verses 10–11 help us clarify the meaning. Believers are enjoined to confirm their calling and election *by practicing the virtues* described in vv. 5–7. It is only by practicing these virtues that the readers will avoid stumbling. That is, the readers will escape apostasy if they put into practice such godly qualities. In this way, that is, by living a godly life, they will enter into the eternal kingdom on the day of the Lord. It would be tempting for some who are familiar with Paul to dismiss this theology as a form of works righteousness. But Paul himself insists that those who practice the works of the flesh will not inherit God’s kingdom (Gal 5:21). He taught the unrighteous that they would be excluded from the kingdom (1 Cor 6:9–11). Moreover, Peter has not abandoned the fundamental character of God’s grace. We have already seen in 1:3–4 that everything needed for life and godliness has been given to us. Christ’s call is so powerful that we are promised that we will obtain glory and moral virtue. Even now believers have escaped the world’s corruption in the sense that their desires have been

changed, though the consummation of that process will only occur on the day of the Lord.

1:8 The word *tauta* is rightly rendered by the CSB as “these qualities,” pointing back to the chain of virtues in vv. 5–7. Peter says two things about these qualities. First, they must exist in the lives of his readers (*hyparchonta*). The CSB obscures this by translating the phrase “if you possess these qualities in increasing measure.” The NIV merges the two participles “existing” and “increasing” (*pleonazonta*). The NRSV keeps them distinct, “If these things are yours and are increasing among you.”¹⁴⁸⁷ The second requirement is evident already from what has just been said. The qualities must “abound” (KJV; *pleonazonta*) in believers. Most translations use the word “increasing,” and this rendering is certainly defensible. However, it could possibly suggest to us that we are able to calculate our improvement in godliness as each year passes, as if we become 5 percent more loving each year. What Peter wants to emphasize was not that precise. His point was that godly qualities must exist and abound in the lives of his readers. As Witherington says, these virtues are not “static qualities or permanent possessions.”¹⁴⁸⁸ Surprisingly, Bigg rejects the interpretation proposed here on the grounds that it would squelch the difference between *hyparchonta* and *pleonazonta*.¹⁴⁸⁹ But if *pleonazonta* means “abounding,” that is hardly the same thing as saying that certain qualities “exist” in one’s life. The latter idea says that the virtues are discernible in a person’s life, but the former means that they are overflowing. The two ideas are scarcely the same.

If the godly qualities of vv. 5–7 exist and abound in the lives of believers, they are neither “useless” (*argous*) nor “unfruitful” (*akarpous*) in their knowledge of Christ.¹⁴⁹⁰ Peter makes the point negatively. It could be restated as follows: When the virtues both exist and abound in believers, believers are effective and fruitful with respect to their saving knowledge of Christ. The word “useless” is used of idle workers who waste their day in the marketplace instead of working (Matt 20:3, 6). James says that faith without works is

“useless” (Jas 2:20). Being without fruit reminds us of the parable of the soils, where the seed sown among thorns is unfruitful because it is choked by the worries of the world and the deceitfulness of money (Matt 13:22; cf. Jude 12 and by contrast Col 1:10). Believers must practice godly virtues to receive the eschatological blessing of eternal life, and those who lack such virtues and are not abounding in them give no indication that they are believers. Or, as Fuchs and Reymond say, there is no virtue without knowledge, but also there is no knowledge without ethics.¹⁴⁹¹ The ineffectiveness and unfruitfulness relate to their “knowledge” (*epignōsis*) of the Lord Jesus Christ. Perhaps the opponents are particularly in view since their libertine lifestyle contradicts their profession of faith. Peter likely means that they give no evidence that their conversion is genuine.¹⁴⁹² At the same time, those growing in virtue will not travel the road of the false teachers.¹⁴⁹³

1:9 Verse 9 elaborates (*gar*, usually translated “for”; see NRSV, ESV) on v. 8. If the virtues (*tauta*) are lacking, such people are “blind” (*tuphlos*). The NIV reverses the order of the Greek in translating “nearsighted and blind,” but the Greek says “blind” and “shortsighted” (*myōpazōn*). This latter word is rare and has provoked some discussion. Some think the idea is that those who are nearsighted actually shut their eyes so they cannot see anything at all.¹⁴⁹⁴ If this is the case, then the second term emphasizes their decision to shut their eyes. Bauckham objects that people who are nearsighted screw their eyes nearly shut to see more clearly and are therefore not blind.¹⁴⁹⁵ Others suggest that the participle should be understood as “shortsighted,” that is, as clarifying in what sense people become blind.¹⁴⁹⁶ They are blind in that they fail to see what they should see. They have become so shortsighted that they have forgotten the most important reality of all. Green is probably right in saying that the term refers not to one who can see if he or she squints. Instead, it refers to a person “going blind.”¹⁴⁹⁷ In other words, the two terms are synonyms, and differences between them should not be pressed.¹⁴⁹⁸

Such a reading fits with the next clause, which says that such a person has “forgotten the cleansing from his past sins.” The cleansing (*katharismou*) from past sins refers to baptism, where the baptismal waters symbolize the washing away of sins and hence the forgiveness of sins.¹⁴⁹⁹ Moo thinks that forgiveness of sins is intended without any clear reference to baptism.¹⁵⁰⁰ There is no need to divorce forgiveness and baptism since in the early church virtually all converted believers were baptized immediately.¹⁵⁰¹ They would naturally recall their baptism when they thought about being “cleansed” from sin, and the water of baptism would remind them that they were cleansed from their sins through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (cf. Acts 22:16; 1 Cor 6:11; Eph 5:26; Titus 3:5). Such a view should not be confused with baptismal regeneration or later sacramental notions of baptism. The terminology used here is rooted in the cultic language of the OT (Lev 16:30; Job 7:21; Ps 51:2; cf. Sir 23:10; 38:10). Peter observes that those who are not practicing these virtues have forgotten their baptism and their forgiveness of sins. In other words, they are not living as forgiven sinners. They are behaving like unconverted people. In Peter’s theology the priority of grace is maintained since forgiveness of sins comes first, and a godly life is *evidence* that they are truly forgiven. If members of the church live immoral lives, they bear witness that forgiveness of sins means little to them. Those who treasure being forgiven live in a way that pleases God.¹⁵⁰²

1:10 The “therefore” (*dio*) links v. 10 to v. 9.¹⁵⁰³ Those who live ungodly lives show no evidence that they truly belong to God, that they have genuinely received forgiveness. Hence, Peter exhorts his readers to exercise diligence (*spoudasate*) to confirm their calling and election. Bigg wrongly concludes from the aorist that a single and definite action is intended.¹⁵⁰⁴ Recent study on the tenses calls such a conclusion into question. The aorist does not necessarily signify once-for-all action, and here it may be used to stress that decisive action must be taken, and yet it is a decisive action that must be repeated again and again in the Christian life. The word *spoudasate* (“make

every effort”) recalls *spoudēn* (“effort”) in v. 5. God’s grace should not lead to moral relaxation but intense effort.¹⁵⁰⁵ The word translated “confirm” (*bebaian*) is often a legal term in Greek literature, denoting that which is valid, ratified, or confirmed. In this instance believers are to certify their “calling and election” (*klēsin kai eklogēn*). These two words are close in meaning. Perhaps we should translate them as one—“elective call.” We saw in v. 3 that Christ’s call is effective; it creates faith. The effective call occurs when the gospel is preached. If Peter distinguishes between calling and election, the term “election” refers to God’s pretemporal decision to save some. In any case, the reference to “calling and election” highlights God’s grace as the one who saves.

The emphasis here, however, is not on what God has done but on the responsibility of human beings.¹⁵⁰⁶ Believers are “to confirm your calling and election.” Calvin understands this verse subjectively, saying that believers should satisfy themselves mentally about their calling and election.¹⁵⁰⁷ On this reading, Peter refers to believers’ subjective consciousness of their right standing before God. This interpretation is not entirely satisfying since we also have reference to an *objective* reality.¹⁵⁰⁸ Believers confirm their calling and election by concretely practicing the virtues detailed in vv. 5–7. Still, Calvin was not completely mistaken. Those who practice such virtues will also experience subjective assurance, but we should note that their objective obedience is the foundation for subjective assurance.¹⁵⁰⁹ Those who claim to be Christians may contradict such by their behavior, and this is evident in the lives of the false teachers discussed in chap. 2.¹⁵¹⁰

The “because” (*gar*) in v. 10b explains further the idea in v. 10a. When Peter says, “If you do these things you will never stumble,” the word *tauta* (“these things”) refers to the godly qualities of vv. 5–7.¹⁵¹¹ The word “stumble” or “fall” (ESV) (*ptaisēte*) could possibly mean “sin.”¹⁵¹² The verb clearly has this meaning in James (Jas 2:10; 3:2). And yet such a notion is difficult to defend in the Petrine context

both theologically and contextually. It is improbable that Peter believes Christians can actually live without sin. If so, he would contradict the Lord's Prayer, which enjoins Christians to ask for forgiveness regularly (Matt 6:12). Another meaning makes much better sense in context. Believers who confirm their call and election by living in a godly manner will not "stumble," that is, they will not forsake God, abandon him, and commit apostasy (cf. Rom 11:11; Jude 24).¹⁵¹³ Believers who abound in the qualities described in vv. 5–7 will never fall away from God. They are cultivating their relationship with him daily. Those seduced by the false teachers reveal that the problem is moral. They have forsaken goodness, allowed their wills to be captivated by evil, and are now easy prey for deception.

1:11 The words "for in this way" introduce verse 11. The "way," of course, is the pathway of virtue, the keeping of the qualities in vv. 5–7, which were mentioned again in v. 10. Those who have such virtues and abound in them will find that their entrance into the kingdom is "richly provided for." Some scholars suggest that Peter contemplates a reward above and beyond eternal life, but this view is mistaken since he speaks of "entrance" (ESV; *eisodos*) into the kingdom. This fits what Peter just said in v. 10, where those who practice the virtues are assured that they will never commit apostasy. Conversely, v. 11 says that those who continue in such godly qualities will enter into the kingdom.¹⁵¹⁴ Furthermore, the interpretation proposed here makes sense of the letter as a whole. Peter warns his readers, lest they succumb to the influence of the false teachers and abandon the church. In 2:20–22 those who have come to know the way of truth and turn back are like dogs that return to their vomit and pigs that revert to the mud pile. Peter is not concerned here about rewards but whether people will *enter* the kingdom at all, insisting that they cannot enter without living in a godly way. We should not describe this as salvation *by* works but salvation *with* works.¹⁵¹⁵ These are the works God accomplishes in his people. Describing the "eternal kingdom" as that of the Lord Jesus Christ is unusual.¹⁵¹⁶ Usually the kingdom is God's in the NT (but cf. Luke 22:30; John 18:36; Eph 5:5; Col 1:13; 2 Tim

4:1; Heb 1:8; Rev 11:15). The kingdom is clearly eschatological here, designating what believers will enter on the day of the Lord. Since the kingdom here is Christ's, he is the one who will provide entrance into the kingdom for believers.¹⁵¹⁷ Furthermore, believers will enjoy a "rich welcome" (NIV), and the word "rich" (*plousiōs*) suggests that the eschatological reward is gracious, that believers receive much more than they deserve.¹⁵¹⁸

SECTION OUTLINE

3 Peter's Apostolic Reminder (1:12–21)

3.1 The Function of the Reminder: To Stir Them for Action (1:12–15)

3.2 The Truth of Jesus's Coming Is Based on Eyewitness Testimony (1:16–18)

3.3 The Truth of Jesus's Coming Is Based on the Prophetic Word (1:19–21)

3 PETER'S APOSTOLIC REMINDER (1:12–21)

These verses function as Peter's apostolic reminder. Before Peter's death, he urges the readers to remember and act on his instructions since one's entrance into the kingdom is at stake (1:12–15). Peter then turns to the reason why they should trust his admonitions (1:16–21). Jesus's second coming should not be dismissed as a myth but is proleptically anticipated in his transfiguration of which Peter was an eyewitness. The meaning of the prophetic word is confirmed by the transfiguration, and the readers must give all their attention to this word which shines in the darkness. After all, both the prophecy and the interpretation of the prophecy come from God himself. He has spoken truly and clearly through the prophets of old, and the transfiguration assists us in discerning the meaning of the prophecies. They show that the day of the Lord will come, that Jesus will return again.

3.1 The Function of the Reminder: To Stir Them for Action (1:12–15)

¹² Therefore I will always remind you about these things, even though you know them and are established in the truth you now have.

¹³ I think it is right, as long as I am in this bodily tent, to wake you up with a reminder, ¹⁴ since I know that I will soon lay aside my tent, as our Lord Jesus Christ has indeed made clear to me. ¹⁵ And I will also make every effort so that you are able to recall these things at any time after my departure.

Some maintain the literary form of a farewell address or a testament is present here (see introduction).¹⁵¹⁹ Scholars have identified various elements in such farewell addresses. Neyrey sees five formal elements: (1) prediction of death, (2) prophecy of future crises, (3) exhortations to virtue, (4) a commission, and (5) the legacy of the author.¹⁵²⁰ In a general sense we could say that nearly every element is present in 2 Peter except a commission. Donelson says that 2 Peter doesn't fit usual testaments, although some elements of testaments are present, because in testaments there is (1) a gathering around the deathbed of the famous person; (2) the story of his death; (3) the final blessing; (4) the account of the famous person's life.¹⁵²¹ As we saw in the introduction, it is unclear whether 2 Peter should be characterized as a testament.

One element of testaments is that the person giving the address is dying and wants to pass on his teaching to those who remain behind. Farewell addresses like this are common in the Scriptures: the final words of Jacob (Gen 49:1–33), of Moses (Deut 33:1–29), of Joshua (Josh 24:1–28), of Jesus (John 13:1–17:26), and of Paul at Miletus (Acts 20:17–35). The testament genre was common in Second Temple Judaism as well, with books such as Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, Testament of Job, and Testament of Moses. The latter books are clearly pseudonymous, and some draw the same conclusion regarding 2 Peter. I would argue, however, that the canonical accounts all represent *authentic* testaments. Second Peter is analogous to testaments in that it was written so that the readers would be able to remember and apply Peter's teaching in the days after he had departed and was no longer with them. What we have here, therefore, is an apostolic reminder. In this sense, Peter occupies the same role as Moses, Joshua, and even Jesus. As an apostle of Jesus Christ, he reminds the church of the truth to which they should remain devoted. Peter, by appealing to his death and the words of Jesus, invokes his authority.

The “therefore” (*dio*, v. 12) points back to all of vv. 3–11.¹⁵²² Christ has given believers everything they need for life and godliness

and has called them by his powerful grace (vv. 3–4). Such grace serves as an incentive for a godly life of virtue (vv. 5–7), and a life of godliness is necessary for entering the eternal kingdom (vv. 8–11). Such a godly life is not the earning of salvation but still necessary for salvation. Peter feels constrained, therefore, to remind the readers (vv. 12–15) of his teaching because eternal life was at stake. False teachers had crept into the community (2:1), and Peter admonishes the church so that they would not forget the faithful teaching they heard when they first believed. The paragraph has one basic point: to remind believers to keep pursuing a virtuous life.

1:12 Peter begins by saying he wants to remind believers of “these things” (*toutōn*). Probably by “these things” he refers to all of vv. 3–11.¹⁵²³ But if that is the case, why does Peter use the future tense? Some scholars deduce from this that the reference is to future reminders and excludes 2 Peter. The construction is difficult, but perhaps we should conceive of Peter as he actually wrote or dictated the letter. What he had already written was in his mind, and what was still to come in the letter was also intended.¹⁵²⁴ Peter resolves to remind believers as long as life lasts, and the primary vehicle is the letter written, though future reminders were not necessarily excluded.

In one sense the readers do not need reminders because they already “know” and “are established in the truth.” The idea is similar to Jude 3, where the faith is described as transmitted once for all time to the saints. The readers should not be swayed by the false teachers because they already know the truth, and they are strengthened by it even now. The reference to “established” reminds readers of the power of the gospel.¹⁵²⁵ The truth they know cannot be limited to mental comprehension since the truth grasps and strengthens them; it grants them the power to live in a way that pleases God. The truth “has come” (NRSV; *parousē*) to them and belongs to them (cf. Col 1:5–6). The innovations suggested by the false teachers are superfluous and dangerous. The church has been taught and fortified by the gospel.

1:13 Peter now reflects on why he has a responsibility to remind the readers. As an authoritative apostle, he is called to prompt the church with the truth of the gospel as long as he lives. This responsibility is

incumbent upon him “as long as I am in this bodily tent.”¹⁵²⁶ Paul also compares our mortal bodies to a tent (2 Cor 5:1, 4). Some think a connection is drawn to the transfiguration, where Peter suggested building three tents (Matt 17:4), but the link does not fit the present context and is implausible.¹⁵²⁷ What the word “tent” signifies here, as in 2 Cor 5:1–10, is the weakness and inadequacy of the body. Reminding the readers is urgent because Peter’s body was mortal and he would soon die. We are not surprised, therefore, that the focus is on the function of reminders. Even though believers are already firmly established in the truth, they need to be stirred up or awakened (*diegeirein*) by reminders. The word “refresh” is too tame (NRSV, NIV). Reminders arouse and provoke believers, prompting them to prize the gospel afresh. Peter hopes his words will stab the believers awake so they will reject what the opponents taught. Believers know the gospel, and yet they must, in a sense, relearn it every day.

1:14 Peter’s urgency to remind the believers finds its rationale in the shortness of his life. He again refers to his body as a “tent,” stressing again its weakness and transience. Commentators debate whether the idea is that Peter would die “suddenly” or “soon” (*tachinē*). The rendering “soon” is contextually more likely.¹⁵²⁸ Unfortunately, we do not know the precise circumstances of Peter’s life when he wrote the letter, and so we cannot determine if some event in his life elicited this comment.

Peter refers to the words of the Lord Jesus to substantiate his claim. Scholars have investigated the source thoroughly.¹⁵²⁹ Some have detected a reference to John 13:36, but the prophecy here is rather vague. Others point to Apocalypse of Peter, where Jesus appears to Peter and commands him to die in Rome; still others, to the famous “Quo Vadis” story in Acts of Peter (ca. AD 180). In this account Peter meets Jesus as the former leaves Rome. Peter asks the Lord where he was going, and the Lord replies he is going to Rome to be crucified again. Peter responds by returning to Rome to be crucified. Others see a reference to the tradition in chapter 2 of the Epistle of Clement to James. The last three sources are all dated after 2 Peter and hence

cannot be the source of Peter's story if the letter is authentic. The "Quo Vadis" story is likely legendary. The reference could also be to an oral saying of Jesus not codified anywhere. But it is most likely that we have a reference to the oral tradition found in John 21:18–19, where Jesus informs Peter that his hands would be stretched out in a way he did not choose.¹⁵³⁰ Of course, an allusion to John 21:18–19 does not demand that 2 Peter was written after the Gospel of John because if Peter is the author of the letter, he recalls the prophecy uttered by the Lord Jesus, which John subsequently wrote down.¹⁵³¹ The prophecy itself does not say Peter would die "soon," but if Peter was now an older man, he knew the prophecy would come to pass soon.¹⁵³² Perhaps, if he was in Rome when the letter was written, he could have seen that events were now shaping up that would lead to his death. If the Neronian persecutions had begun, perhaps Peter thought the end of his life was near with the advent of intense persecution.

1:15 Verse 15 basically restates v. 12, though now Peter stresses that he will be diligent ("I will also make every effort," *spoudasō*) to remind believers before his departure. The future tense is again puzzling, but perhaps Bauckham is correct in saying that Peter thought of the future usefulness of what he wrote.¹⁵³³ Or it may be, as suggested in v. 12, that the remainder of the letter and the short time Peter had on earth were both in mind. We should note that in 2 Pet 2:1 the arrival of the false teachers is described in the future tense, but it is evident that they were already present. Another alternative is that the future tense was used to denote certainty. It seems most likely that Peter refers especially to his letter, which would continue to remind believers after Peter's death. Others argue that we have a reference here to the Gospel of Mark, which, according to tradition, was written by Mark as Peter's disciple.¹⁵³⁴ McNamara argues that we have evidence here that chapters 1 and 3 were not originally part of the same letter but circulated independently and were later combined into the same letter.¹⁵³⁵ Neither of these latter theories is persuasive. It is not evident in 2 Peter that we have any reference to

the Gospel of Mark, which was written after all by Mark and not Peter. Nor is there any compelling reason to maintain that chapters 1 and 3 originally circulated independently. No clear evidence of different documents patched together exists.¹⁵³⁶ Scholars now rightly emphasize that the letters were written as wholes and what we have here is an anticipation of what Peter communicates in 2 Pet 3:1–2. The word “departure” (*exodos*) is used elsewhere to refer to death (Wis 3:2; T. Naph. 1:1). It is far-fetched to see any allusion to the transfiguration simply because Jesus mentions his exodus in Luke 9:31. Such a reading superimposes the next paragraph in 2 Peter upon this one.

3.2 The Truth of Jesus’s Coming Is Based on Eyewitness Testimony (1:16–18)

16 For we did not follow cleverly contrived myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; instead, we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased!” 18 We ourselves heard this voice when it came from heaven while we were with him on the holy mountain.

In the previous paragraph (vv. 12–15) Peter resolves before his death to remind his readers of the truth of the gospel, focusing especially on the need to live virtuously so that they would enter the heavenly kingdom (vv. 5–11). The call to virtue is grounded in God’s saving work and grace and power. In vv. 16–21 he begins to respond to those who were deflecting his readers from their eternal reward.¹⁵³⁷ The false teachers doubted the future coming of Jesus Christ, apparently maintaining that life will go on as it always has (3:3–7). If there is no second coming or judgment, the emphasis on pursuing godliness diligently to receive an eternal reward collapses. Living a godly life is optional, to say the least, if one’s heavenly destiny is not involved. We see from v. 16 that the false teachers rejected the idea of a future coming of Jesus Christ as a fable.¹⁵³⁸ The truth of the coming of

Christ is defended in a surprising manner. Peter appeals to his eyewitness testimony of what occurred at the transfiguration. Apparently the transfiguration is a proleptic and prophetic indication of the glory and power of Christ that would be displayed at his future coming. Callan suggests that some may have argued that “Jesus’s earthly life was incompatible” with the second coming, and thus the transfiguration “might be an effective counterargument.”¹⁵³⁹ Peter combats the idea that the coming of Christ is a fable by appealing to history, to what was seen and heard, and the historical event of the transfiguration anticipates a later event in history—the coming of Jesus Christ. In other words, the transfiguration reveals to the apostles, it unveils in history, the glory of Christ in the age to come.¹⁵⁴⁰

1:16 The main verb in v. 16 is “we made known” (*egnōrisamen*), and “we” here stands for the apostles generally.¹⁵⁴¹ Peter is not claiming that he personally established the churches addressed. His point is that the churches were founded on apostolic tradition and teaching. These early Christians were instructed about “the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The terms *dynamis* (“power”) and *parousia* (“coming”) should be interpreted together.¹⁵⁴² They do not designate two different things but speak of the “powerful coming” of Jesus Christ. We have an echo here of Jesus’s “divine power” (1:3) and majesty so that those who are skeptical about his future coming also doubt Jesus’s power and majesty, calling into question his ability to save.¹⁵⁴³ When Jesus returns, he will return in power (cf. Matt 25:31; 2 Thess 1:7–10). The word *parousia* means “presence” (2 Cor 10:10; Phil 2:12), and a few scholars have seen a reference to Jesus’s incarnation here.¹⁵⁴⁴ But in the NT *parousia* becomes virtually a technical term for the arrival or future coming of Jesus Christ (Matt 24:3, 27, 37, 39; 1 Cor 15:23; 1 Thess 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23; 2 Thess 2:1, 8; Jas 5:7–8; 2 Pet 3:4, 12; 1 John 2:28).¹⁵⁴⁵ In the Hellenistic world the word is also used for the arrival of a ruler or a god.¹⁵⁴⁶ In

2 Pet 3:4, 12 the word is used of the Lord's coming, and thus we have a foreshadowing here of the refutation of the opponents in chap. 3.

What the apostles preached, then, was the powerful future coming of the Lord. On the final day it will be decided who will enter Christ's eternal kingdom (1:11), which is reserved only for those who have lived godly lives (1:5–10). Peter informs them with two contrasting participles about the nature of the apostolic knowledge that was conveyed to them. He told them what it was *not* and then what it *was*. First, the apostles “did not follow cleverly contrived myths.” We should note first of all that Peter does not describe the teaching of his opponents as “myths.” On the contrary, the false teachers insisted that the apostolic teaching was a myth, in particular the notion that Jesus Christ would return.¹⁵⁴⁷ They likely appealed to the stability of the world, arguing against sudden interventions, holding to the constancy of the natural order. The word “myth” was often used in Greek culture to convey stories about the Greek gods. Such stories were not literally true but conveyed a message instructive for contemporaries.¹⁵⁴⁸

The term “myth,” however, could also designate something that is a “fable.” In Greek literature the word is also used with that meaning. For instance, Strabo says,

For our accounts of other people keep a distinction between the mythical and the historical elements; for the things that are ancient and false and monstrous are called myths, but history wishes for the truth, whether ancient or recent, and contains no monstrous element, or else only rarely. (Strabo 11.5.3)¹⁵⁴⁹

In the latter instance myths stand for teachings or stories that have no basis in reality and are fantasies. Such stories have no value whatsoever. Paul likely uses the term with this meaning in describing the false teachers in the Pastoral Epistles (1 Tim 1:4; 4:7; 2 Tim 4:4; Titus 1:14). The false teachers in 2 Peter describe the apostolic teaching as mythical in this derogatory sense. The adjectival participle *sesophismenois* (“cleverly contrived”) supports this interpretation. They see no kernel of truth in the preaching of the second coming of

Christ but ridicule it as a fable. Some suggest the opponents were influenced by an Epicurean type of teaching that rejected any notion of God's providence or of punishment after death.¹⁵⁵⁰ Others believe they may have held to some form of overrealized eschatology, like the opponents in the Pastoral Epistles (2 Tim 2:18), so that they concluded there was no future resurrection; the only resurrection is spiritual.¹⁵⁵¹ As I argued in the introduction, the Epicurean hypothesis is too specific in identifying the opponents; it is also not clear that the false teachers argued for a realized eschatology.¹⁵⁵² In any case, we do know that they ridiculed the notion that Jesus would come again.

Peter insists, however, that the apostles did not trade in myths. On the contrary, they were “eyewitnesses of his majesty.” The apostolic teaching is anchored in history. Presumably, Peter could have replied that it is irrelevant whether Jesus would return physically. What matters is the spiritual truth that God controls the future. But Peter was concerned about historical facticity. The Christian faith teaches that the Lord's coming will occur in the space-time order of this world and cannot be reduced to a “spiritual” truth sundered from history. The word “eyewitnesses” (*epoptai*) could derive from Hellenistic religion, especially the mystery religions. If so, Peter uses a term familiar to his hearers, although it is likely the term did not carry such specific associations for his readers.¹⁵⁵³ The use of the verb in 1 Pet 2:12 and 3:2 indicates that a technical sense should not be given to the verb. Green rightly says that Peter uses the term contrary to how it was used in the mystery religions since he refers to a historical and observable event, not to “initiation into the mysteries.”¹⁵⁵⁴ The word “majesty” (*megaleiotēs*) in this context points to the deity of Jesus Christ (cf. 1:1; of God—Luke 9:43; Jer 40:9 LXX; 1 Esd 4:40), though the term “majesty” does not necessarily signify deity (1 Esd 1:4).¹⁵⁵⁵ We learn from the next verse that the majesty of Christ was observed at the transfiguration.

1:17 The syntax of this verse is difficult since we have an ungrammatical construction. The CSB clarifies the Greek for English

readers. The emphasis of the verse is on God's imprimatur of approval upon his Son. The Son received honor and glory from the Father. Callan says that such honor and glory are an indication of Christ's divinity.¹⁵⁵⁶ The Father signified his approval with a divine voice that came from heaven itself (cf. Dan 4:31; Rev 11:12; 16:1).¹⁵⁵⁷ The words spoken demonstrated that God was pleased with his Son, Jesus. Peter likely mentions that God is "Father" because God declared that Jesus is his "Son." "God is called Father here because the sentence goes on to stress Jesus' sonship in the words of the heavenly voice."¹⁵⁵⁸ Peter describes God here as "the Majestic Glory" (*tēs megaloprepous doxēs*), pointing to his unique beauty and sovereignty as the creator and ruler of the world. Sirach speaks of "the glory of his voice" (Sir 17:3). In v. 17 the Greek word for "majestic" differs from the word used for Christ in v. 17, but the idea is the same. Peter implies that the majesty of the one and only God was shared by his Son. Furthermore, the glory that belongs to God also belongs to Jesus since the Son received glory from the Father, the one who is majestic in glory.¹⁵⁵⁹

It is obvious that Peter refers to the transfiguration, which was a theophany that occurred on a mountain, as did the theophanies on Sinai or Horeb (Exod 19–20; 34; 1 Kgs 19:8–18). Neyrey thinks the transfiguration is used differently from the Synoptics, where it "authorizes his way to Jerusalem, his cross and vindication."¹⁵⁶⁰ A different use of the tradition can be acknowledged, although in both the Synoptics and 2 Peter the transfiguration authorizes Jesus as God's Son. In any case, Peter focuses on Jesus's "vindication" at the second coming, on his glory that will be revealed to all. Some scholars think the terms "honor and glory" denote one concept, like "power and coming" in v. 16.¹⁵⁶¹ Such an interpretation is certainly possible, but the reference to the transfiguration suggests a distinction.¹⁵⁶² Glory refers to the transformation of his face and clothing (cf. Luke 9:29, 32), and honor to the words of commendation that came from heaven. The words uttered are also found in Matt 17:5; Mark 9:7;

Luke 9:35,¹⁵⁶³ although Peter's words here do not correspond exactly with any of them. The CSB translates Matt 17:5 and 2 Pet 1:17 exactly the same, but there are some minor differences between the accounts in Greek. For example, "this is" (*houtos estin*) is placed first in the sentence in Matthew, Peter has *eis hon* instead of Matthew's *en hō*, and only Peter has *egō*. Mark and Luke do not have the statement about God's being well pleased, and so they differ more significantly from 2 Peter.¹⁵⁶⁴ Some scholars argue that Peter's tradition is independent here.¹⁵⁶⁵ Such a view is not surprising if Peter was truly the author. He could remember the event without consulting any other sources. On the other hand, the differences between the Petrine and Matthean accounts are relatively insignificant, and Miller makes a good case for Petrine dependence upon Matthew.¹⁵⁶⁶ Still, it is also possible that Peter recalled the event from memory.¹⁵⁶⁷ The minor differences do not cast doubt on the historical authenticity of any of the accounts since authors select what part of the event is significant for their purposes. Thus, Peter omits "Listen to him," which is in all the Synoptic accounts, since he was not emphasizing that Jesus is superior to the law and the prophets. What Peter features is the honor and glory given to Jesus at the transfiguration because such honor and glory look forward to and will be replicated at the second coming.

The words spoken at the transfiguration also recall Jesus's baptism, where he was anointed for ministry and commissioned as God's Son (Matt 3:17 par.). The acclamation of sonship recalls Ps 2:7 ("You are my Son; today I have become your Father"), where the Davidic king is acclaimed and appointed as Yahweh's anointed. Likewise, an allusion to Isa 42:1 is also present ("This is my servant; I strengthen him, this is my chosen one; I delight in him"). Peter recalls the words spoken on the mountain, and these words are remembered because of their theological import. Jesus is the Servant-Son par excellence who fulfills the promises to David and the prophecies about the Servant of the Lord. He is the Son in a way David was not, for he also shares in God's majesty (1:16). To say that God is "well pleased" (*eudokēsa*)

with Jesus denotes God's electing pleasure (cf. Luke 12:32; 1 Cor 1:21; Gal 1:15; see also the noun *eudokia* in Matt 11:26; Luke 10:21; Eph 1:5, 9).¹⁵⁶⁸

The transfiguration seems at first glance to be a strange event to verify the truth of Christ's future coming. We should note, however, that in all three of the Synoptic Gospels the transfiguration immediately follows the declaration that God's kingdom will come with power, suggesting that the transfiguration represents and anticipates Christ's powerful coming (Matt 16:28–17:13; Mark 9:1–13; Luke 9:27–36). The transfiguration, then, is a manifestation of the coming of the kingdom. Peter recalls the event because it anticipates Christ's glory when he returns.¹⁵⁶⁹ Moreover, the eyewitness character of the event demonstrates that Peter was not dreaming or propounding some myth. He saw Jesus transformed and heard God's words.¹⁵⁷⁰

1:18 Peter confirms again that he heard the divine voice while he was on the holy mountain. Bauckham's view that the author wrote a transparent fiction in Peter's name as a testament is difficult to square with these verses.¹⁵⁷¹ The author emphasizes that he was an eyewitness and actually heard what was said on the mountain. If Bauckham is correct, it was clear to the readers that Peter himself did not write this. Evidence that this is a transparent fiction is lacking in church history since readers in the early centuries did not detect the literary device Bauckham thinks is apparent.¹⁵⁷² A more natural reading takes the text at face value. Peter himself claimed to have seen and heard these things. The only other credible option is that the author wrote to deceive his readers, trying to pass himself off as Peter. As I argue in the introduction, Peter himself either wrote what we find here or transmitted the account through a secretary, speaking of his own experience.

Some scholars think a late date is indicated by the words "holy mountain," showing that the place on which the transfiguration occurred is now venerated. Interestingly, Sinai is never called the "holy mountain." And if the purpose was to venerate the mount of

transfiguration, it is curious that its location eludes us. Venerating specific places was the result of later church history. Instead, Bauckham is correct in seeing an allusion to Ps 2:6, where the king is appointed “on Zion, my holy mountain.”¹⁵⁷³ This is strengthened by the allusion to Ps 2:7 in v. 17. The main purpose, however, is to locate the event in history. Peter does not refer to an ethereal or ineffable event. The mountain on which Jesus was glorified and where God spoke really exists, and it is holy because God revealed himself there.¹⁵⁷⁴

Some scholars have suggested that the transfiguration is actually an account of the resurrection that has been inserted into a different place in the Gospel narratives. Stein has soundly debunked this theory.¹⁵⁷⁵ We also have noted above that the transfiguration in all three Synoptic Gospels is associated with the coming of the kingdom in power. Even in the Synoptic Gospels the purpose of the transfiguration cannot be restricted to a temporary glorification of Jesus. While Jesus goes to the cross, God reveals the future glory that will belong to Jesus, a prophecy of what is to come. This glory will be manifested publicly at his future coming, and so Peter rightly appeals to it to defend the powerful coming of the Lord Jesus.

3.3 The Truth of Jesus’s Coming Is Based on the Prophetic Word (1:19–21)

19 We also have the prophetic word strongly confirmed, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. 20 Above all, you know this: No prophecy of Scripture comes from the prophet’s own interpretation, 21 because no prophecy ever came by the will of man; instead, men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Peter reminds (cf. 1:12–15) the readers in vv. 16–18 that the powerful coming of Jesus Christ is not a myth but a certain reality since it is rooted in his own eyewitness testimony. He saw the Lord’s glory when Jesus was transfigured before him, and he heard divine

words that pronounced Jesus as the Son of God's good pleasure. The transfiguration anticipates the second coming since it unveils the glory that will belong to Jesus at his coming. In vv. 19–21 Peter employs a second argument supporting the future coming of the Lord. The interpretation of the prophetic word (i.e., the OT Scriptures), confirmed at the transfiguration, verifies that the Lord will come in salvation and judgment. The “we” in v. 19a focuses on Peter and the apostles as in the previous verses. Verse 19b contains the main point of the argument: Since the transfiguration indicates the proper interpretation and verification of the prophetic word, believers should pay careful attention to that word because it is like a lamp illuminating the darkness. Believers will need that word for direction until the day of the Lord comes. When Jesus returns, the prophetic word will be fulfilled since he will illumine our hearts with his light, and the prophetic word will be eclipsed forever by the living Word. The logical relationship between vv. 19 and 20 is that we must pay attention to the prophetic word and use it as the criterion of our thinking because both the prophecy and its interpretation come from God himself. The reason for this is stated in v. 21. Prophecy is not rooted in the will of human beings, but people spoke from God as they were inspired by the Holy Spirit.

1:19 The “we” in the text centers on the apostles, as is the case in vv. 16–18. This is confirmed by the contrast between “we” and “you” in the verse because the apostles had the sure prophetic word to which the church needs to pay attention.¹⁵⁷⁶ What does Peter mean by “the prophetic word” (*ton prophētikon logon*)? Neyrey argues that the prophetic word is the transfiguration itself.¹⁵⁷⁷ This is attractive in that it joins vv. 16–18 and 19–21 closely together. An insuperable difficulty arises, however, that makes this interpretation unlikely. The prophetic word almost certainly refers to the OT Scriptures, not to an event in Jesus's life or to any other text that is now codified in the NT.¹⁵⁷⁸ Verses 20–21 support this view in that they refer to “prophecy of Scripture.” The word “Scripture” (*graphē*) reveals that *writings* are in view, not an event like the transfiguration.

Some scholars conclude that the OT Scriptures as a whole are in view here, and this makes sense given the reference to prophecy in the next verse.¹⁵⁷⁹ Such an interpretation, however, does not account as well for the emphasis on prophecy in the text, and so it is preferable to see a reference to OT prophecies related to the day of judgment and salvation, that is, the day of the Lord.¹⁵⁸⁰ Caulley's work is instructive at this juncture, in that he identifies the prophetic word with Isa 42 and Ps 2, and there are allusions to both of these texts in the wording of the divine voice—"This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Ps 2:7; Isa 42:1).¹⁵⁸¹ He remarks that both of these chapters also contain the theme of judgment and hence would refute the eschatological skepticism of the opponents.¹⁵⁸² Caulley unduly limits the prophetic word to these two texts; the reference is probably to OT prophetic texts as a whole.¹⁵⁸³ But Caulley's interpretation helps us see that the prophetic word of Scripture confirms what Peter saw in the transfiguration because the transfiguration verifies the OT Scripture, which teaches a future coming of Christ for judgment and salvation. The transfiguration and the OT prophecies are a dual confirmation of Christ's future coming.

Another difficult question relates to the meaning of the term *bebaioteron* ("strongly confirmed" or "more fully confirmed" [ESV, NRSV]). Some suggest that the written prophecies of the OT are more certain than an event like the transfiguration because the transfiguration was subjectively experienced.¹⁵⁸⁴ It is difficult to believe that Peter would say this. According to this interpretation, Peter would potentially be pitting the transfiguration against the Scriptures, arguing that the latter are more certain than the former. But this would subvert the argument in vv. 16–18 because Peter then would be suggesting that his appeal to the transfiguration is not convincing, that he needed something better, namely, the OT Scriptures. But vv. 16–18 demonstrate that Peter believes that the transfiguration was decisive proof for his view, not questionable in the least. He is not suggesting its deficiency in contrast to the OT

Scriptures but simply gives another argument for the validity of his view.

Another possibility is that the word *bebaioteron* should be translated as “most reliable”¹⁵⁸⁵ or “very certain”¹⁵⁸⁶ or “completely reliable” (NIV). On this view Peter does not forge a comparison at all. He declares that believers have a word from God that is entirely reliable. Peter does not suggest, then, that the prophetic word is more reliable than the transfiguration, but he declares that we can say with certainty that the prophetic word of the OT refers to the coming of Christ.

A third interpretation—similar to the second—is most convincing: the transfiguration renders more certain the interpretation of the prophetic word.¹⁵⁸⁷ As Harink says, “*The transfiguration is God’s own exegesis of the prophetic word.*”¹⁵⁸⁸ The word *bebaioteron* should be taken in context as signifying a comparison so that the transfiguration provides confirmation of the interpretation of the prophetic word.¹⁵⁸⁹ The transfiguration, then, is not conceived as more or less reliable than the prophetic word. It provides a *confirmatory interpretation* of that word, and this interpretation was granted to Peter and the other apostles. The transfiguration shows that the promise of the Lord’s coming should be taken to refer to a future historical event and cannot be dismissed as a “spiritual” truth.¹⁵⁹⁰

Verses 16–19a, then, function as the ground or reason for v. 19b. Since believers have in the OT Scriptures a prophetic word that is confirmed by the transfiguration, they should pay close attention to the word and heed what it says. The readers are to pay attention to the prophetic word, as it has been apostolically interpreted. Caulley remarks, “By virtue of their witness to the transfiguration, and specifically to the divine voice, the apostles have confirmation of the prophetic word in its affirmation of Jesus as exalted Son of God who will return in judgment.”¹⁵⁹¹ The prophetic word functions as a light, a common image. “Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path” (Ps 119:105; cf. Prov 6:23; Wis 18:4). In this case, the

prophetic word illumines people with the truth about the end of history. The false teachers had deviated from the truth.

The last clauses in v. 19 inform the readers how long they will need to pay heed to prophetic Scriptures. The prophetic word points forward to the day of the Lord, and obviously it will not be needed when “the day dawns.” The day here is almost certainly the day of the Lord. In the OT the day of the Lord is a day of judgment and salvation, when those who oppose God will be punished and those who love him will be delivered (Isa 13:6, 9; Ezek 13:5; 30:3; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14; Amos 5:18, 20; Obad 15; Zeph 1:7, 14; Mal 4:5). In the OT there are *days* of the Lord in history, when he defeats his enemies and vindicates his own. Such *days* of the Lord foreshadow *the final day* of the Lord, when the Lord will consummate his purposes (cf. Acts 2:20; 2 Cor 1:14; 1 Thess 5:2; 2 Thess 2:2). In the NT the day of the Lord is also the day of Christ (2 Cor 1:14; Phil 1:6, 10; 2:16). It is clear in 2 Peter that this day is the eschatological day, when the present world order ceases (2 Pet 3:10, 12). The opponents denied that there would be any day of the Lord, but the prophetic word as confirmed by the transfiguration promises it will come.

The day of the Lord is also described as the time when “the morning star rises in your hearts.” The “morning star” (*phōsphoros*) was a name for Venus in the ancient world.¹⁵⁹² The reference here is almost certainly to the coming of Jesus Christ. Peter alludes to Num 24:17, “A star will come from Jacob, and a scepter will rise from Israel.”¹⁵⁹³ Balaam, who uttered this prophecy, goes on to say that God’s enemies will be crushed, which fits the eschatological dimension of the context in 2 Peter and the judgment awaiting Peter’s opponents. We read here that the morning star “rises,” while Num 24:17 in the Septuagint says a “star will arise” (*astron anatelei*) from Jacob (cf. Rev 22:16; T. Levi 18:3; T. Jud. 24:1–5; 1QM 11:6–7; CD 7:18–20). An allusion to Isa 60:1 is also present, which summons Israel to “arise” since their “light has come” and the Lord’s “glory . . . shines” (*anatetalken*) on them. Isaiah looks forward to the day of Israel’s salvation, which Peter would see as fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Some have detected an inconsistency within v. 19 since Venus as the morning star appears before the dawn,¹⁵⁹⁴ but we should not press the language into such a firm mold. Peter clearly sees the day of the Lord and the coming of the Lord as one event. It also seems strange that he speaks of the morning star that “rises in your hearts.” How could Jesus Christ arise in one’s heart?¹⁵⁹⁵ The objective event and the subjective experience seem to be confused. Bigg says it refers to the joy that will be ours when the Lord returns.¹⁵⁹⁶ The language of illumination in the verse suggests another interpretation. When Jesus comes, we will not need the prophetic word to shine in a dark place—this sinful world. Then our hearts will be enlightened by the Morning Star himself, and that to which prophecy points will have arrived.¹⁵⁹⁷ It is not incompatible to speak of an eschatological event and its interior impact.¹⁵⁹⁸ Caulley rightly emphasizes that the knowledge of God that shines on us in conversion (2 Cor 4:6) will reach its consummation at the second coming.¹⁵⁹⁹

1:20 This verse can be interpreted in two plausible ways, and hence as interpreters we must discern which of the two is most probable.¹⁶⁰⁰ In either case v. 20 provides a reason for the admonition to pay heed to the word in v. 19. Before introducing the two different views, a word should be said about the term “interpretation” (*epilysis*). Despite the suggestions by some, the term almost certainly refers to “interpretation” (cf. Mark 4:34). In Aquila’s Septuagint, both the noun and the verb are used of Joseph interpreting dreams (Gen 40:8; 41:8, 12; cf. also Josephus, *Ant.* 8.167; Herm. *Sim.* 5:3:1–2). We are now prepared to examine the two main approaches to the verse.

The first view has its most sophisticated defender in Bauckham.¹⁶⁰¹ In this instance Peter *responds* to the opponents who claimed that the prophets misinterpreted their revelations from God. Peter insists that the revelation and the interpretation are of one piece. Both the revelation and the interpretation of what is revealed originate from God. What the prophet wrote after receiving the vision/dream from

the Lord is not his own interpretation, but God's. Thus, the written prophecy is not the prophet's own interpretation.¹⁶⁰² A genuine prophetic word does not simply consist of the content of the dream but an accurate interpretation of what the dream says. Citations from Philo are adduced to defend this view, "for a prophet does not utter anything whatever of his own, but is only an interpreter, another Being suggesting to him all that he utters, while he is speaking under inspiration" (*Spec. Laws* 4:49). And, "for a prophet says nothing of his own, but everything which he says is strange and prompted by some one else" (*Heir* 1:259). The same could be said about visions (cf. Jer 1:11–14; Dan 7:2; 8:1; Amos 7:1; Zech 1:8–11). The Lord grants both the revelation and the interpretation of the revelation, and we have an anticipation of chap. 3 and the prophecies about Jesus's coming. According to this reading, Peter does not criticize the opponents here but *defends* himself against some of their charges.¹⁶⁰³ Criticism of the opponents commences in chap. 2.

The second view understands Peter to be criticizing the opponents who interpreted prophecy to support their own view.¹⁶⁰⁴ In doing so they resisted the proper interpretation given by the apostles. The opponents interpreted the Scriptures in such a way that the return of Christ was denied, and they proceeded to argue that history will go on as it always has (cf. 2 Pet 3:4–7).¹⁶⁰⁵ The two interpretations have some elements in common, but the first reading is more likely. Criticism of the opponents begins in chap. 2, and in 1:16–21 Peter *defends* his view. Peter's argument, then, is that the readers must pay attention to the prophetic word since the OT prophecies and the interpretation of those prophecies stem from God. The account of the transfiguration confirms the meaning of the prophetic oracles.

1:21 Verse 21 provides the ground for the statement in v. 20. The meaning of v. 20, then, is that the interpretation by the prophets does not come from them but ultimately has a divine source since prophecy comes from God. In this verse, then, Peter brings together two themes: both the origin of prophecy and its prophetic interpretation stem from God himself. Peter states the main point in v. 21 both negatively and

positively. Negatively, prophecy does not originate in the will of human beings (see Jer 14:14; 23:16; Ezek 13:3). By definition, prophecy is a divine work and cannot be attributed to the ingenuity or native gifts of human beings. Positively, prophecy hails from God himself. Peter states it baldly, “Men spoke from God.” Human beings spoke with their own personalities and literary styles; thus, inspiration does not involve a dictation theory of inspiration. The words the prophets spoke, however, ultimately came from God. They were inspired, or “carried along by the Holy Spirit.” Thus, Peter defends the accuracy of the prophecies in the Scriptures. Note that v. 20 speaks of “prophecy of Scripture,” and so Peter’s words point to what is written down.

We have significant biblical support here for what B. B. Warfield called *concursum*. Both human beings and God were fully involved in the process of inspiration.¹⁶⁰⁶ The personality and gifts of the human authors were not squelched or suppressed. We can detect their different literary styles even today. And yet the words they spoke do not cancel out the truth that they spoke the word of God. *Concursum* means that both God and human beings contributed to the prophetic word. Ultimately, however, and most significantly, these human words are God’s words. The prophets were “carried along by the Holy Spirit.” The verb for “carry” is used twice in this verse (the aorist passive *ēnechthē*, “came,” and the present passive participle *pheromenoi*, “were carried along”). The verb is also used twice in participial form in vv. 17–18 (translated “came” in the CSB) to designate the divine voice that came from God during the transfiguration. In Acts 27:15, 17 the term is used to refer to a ship carried by the wind (cf. Acts 2:2; John 3:8). Perhaps we cannot press the analogy of the prophets being carried as a ship’s sails are caught up by the wind. But the word certainly conveys the idea that the prophets were inspired by the Holy Spirit in what they spoke and what they wrote. Peter, of course, refers only to the prophets here, but by extension we are justified in concluding that what Peter says about the prophets is also true of the NT canon. NT writers also spoke from God and were carried along by the Holy Spirit. Evangelical theology

rightly infers from this that the Scriptures are authoritative, infallible, and inerrant since God's words must be true.

SECTION OUTLINE

- 4 The Arrival, Character, and Judgment of False Teachers (2:1–22)
 - 4.1 The Impact of False Teachers (2:1–3)
 - 4.2 The Certain Judgment of the Ungodly and the Preservation of the Godly (2:4–10a)
 - 4.3 False Teachers Judged for Their Rebellion and Sensuality (2:10b–16)
 - 4.4 The Adverse Impact of the False Teachers on Others (2:17–22)

4 THE ARRIVAL, CHARACTER, AND JUDGMENT OF FALSE TEACHERS (2:1–22)

Peter has spoken of genuine prophets (1:20–21), and now he turns to the problem in the churches: false teachers who have undermined the truth (2:1–3). These teachers will not triumph ultimately, for God will judge them, and at the same time he will guard and protect the righteous until the end (2:4–10). The reasons for the judgment of the teachers are given in 2:10–16: they are rebellious, avaricious, and licentious. Unfortunately, others have been captured by their teaching and their profligate lifestyle, but those who are ensnared by sin are not free but slaves (2:17–22). Their relapse unveils their true character—they are actually unclean dogs and pigs.

4.1 The Impact of False Teachers (2:1–3)

¹ There were indeed false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, and will bring swift destruction on themselves. ² Many will follow their depraved ways, and the way of truth will be maligned because of them. ³ They will exploit you in their greed with made-up stories. Their condemnation, pronounced long ago, is not idle, and their destruction does not sleep.

It now becomes evident why the readers need to be reminded about the importance of a godly life and why they need to maintain the truth of Jesus's future coming. False teachers had arisen within the church

who denied the latter and rejected the former. If there is no future coming of the Lord, the foundation for ethics vanishes, and the way is opened for a dissolute lifestyle. The words in chapter 1 do not represent an abstract thesis on Christian growth. Peter urgently responds to a threat, to false teaching that was inevitably accompanied by an evil lifestyle.

The connection between the end of chap. 1 and the beginning of chap. 2 is prophecy. Peter concludes the first chapter by emphasizing that his readers should pay heed to the prophetic word as their source of illumination and teaching. The prophetic Scriptures should be trusted because both the revelation and its interpretation are from God since the Holy Spirit inspired the prophets. Now in chap. 2 he remarks that not all prophets are from God. As the OT amply demonstrates, false prophets also existed among God's people. Indeed, it was prophesied that false teachers would also arise in the church. The prediction about the arrival of false teachers, according to Peter, has now been fulfilled. Errant teachers were in the midst of God's people, introducing teachings that would lead people to eternal destruction. Those who denied the Lord Jesus Christ by both their behavior and teaching would suffer judgment, despite the fact that as their master he bought them and made them his servants. Denying the Lord comes with a penalty—swift destruction. As Witherington says about the false teachers, “The irony here is that they are denying the coming of judgment, which is the very deed which will make them liable to judgment.”¹⁶⁰⁷ Verses 2–3 sketch in the influence of the false teachers. Many were attracted to their antinomian sensual teaching and their dissolute lifestyle. The false teachers were motivated by covetousness, exploiting others with their rhetorical artistry. Nonetheless, though judgment seemed far off, it would come. They would not escape forever.

2:1 Peter emphasizes in 1:19–21 that his readers should apply themselves to the prophetic word since the prophetic Scriptures are wholly from God both in terms of the various prophecies and the interpretation of the prophecies. His readers must not draw the conclusion that everyone who claims to be a prophet speaks God's

words. False prophets were in Israel as well. Many OT texts warn Israel about the danger of false prophets (Deut 13:1–5; 1 Kgs 22:5–28; Isa 9:15; 28:7–8; 29:9–12; Jer 2:8, 26; 5:31; 14:13–15; 23:9–40; 27:9–18; 28:1–29:8; Ezek 13:1–23; Mic 3:5–12; Zeph 3:4). The pattern has not changed, though surprisingly the opponents are described as “false teachers” instead of “false prophets.” Justin Martyr, probably depending on Peter, uses similar words: “And just as there were false prophets contemporaneous with your holy prophets, so are there now many false teachers amongst us” (*Dial.* 82:1).¹⁶⁰⁸ The appellation “teachers” may stem from their refusal to be called prophets, perhaps because they rejected any notion of prophetic inspiration at all.¹⁶⁰⁹ They were like the false prophets of old in that they were promulgating a message contrary to God’s truth. Bauckham nicely summarizes three characteristics of false prophets: (1) they lack divine authority, (2) they promise the people peace when God threatens judgment, and (3) they will certainly be judged by God.¹⁶¹⁰ Each of these applies to the false teachers in 2 Peter. In particular, they denied divine judgment since they did not foresee the culmination of history with the coming of Jesus Christ. As Harink says, “The undoing of the faith is usually an ‘inside job,’ one by (post-) Christian teachers who assert the authority of their own supposed enlightened and liberated opinions over against the prophetic and apostolic word of Scripture.”¹⁶¹¹

Why does Peter use the future tense in vv. 1–3 with reference to false teachers? Some interpret this to say false teachers had not yet arrived in the church.¹⁶¹² They were wreaking havoc elsewhere, and Peter warns that they will arrive soon. But this is not persuasive because the rest of the letter plainly demonstrates that the opponents were already affecting the church. In 2:13 they are described as eating in the love feasts held in the churches. The present tense is used in 2:17 and in 3:5, indicating that the opponents were already present.¹⁶¹³ The adversaries are also described with the aorist tense in 2:15, “They have gone astray” (*eplanēthēsan*), but this should not be interpreted to

say that the opponents had departed. Thus, the adversaries were already on the scene and continued to threaten the church.

Others explain the future tense as a device in a pseudonymous letter. The predictions made by Peter and the other apostles were fulfilled after the death of the apostles.¹⁶¹⁴ This theory is only convincing to those who think the letter is pseudonymous, and it has already been argued in the introduction that there are good reasons to accept its authenticity. Peter more likely alludes to prophecies uttered in the early church, predicting the coming of false prophets (cf. Matt 24:11, 24; Mark 13:22; cf. also Deut 13:2–6).¹⁶¹⁵ He reminds his hearers that the advent of the false teachers was foreknown beforehand and thus God reigns even in such perilous times. In 1 Tim 4:1 and 2 Tim 3:1 the future tense is also used to predict the arrival of opponents, though it is evident their false teaching was already subverting the churches addressed.

The verb *pareisagō* is interpreted by the NIV in a negative sense, “They will secretly introduce destructive heresies.” The verb does not necessarily have a negative connotation, and we could follow the CSB: “They will bring in destructive heresies.” Nonetheless, the context suggests a nefarious purpose so that the NIV reading is preferable.¹⁶¹⁶ A parallel term in Gal 2:4 has a similar sense: “But because of false believers secretly brought in [*pareisaktous*], who slipped in to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus” (NRSV). Similarly, Jude (v. 4) refers to opponents who “have come in by stealth” (*pareiseduēsan*). The difference between Peter and Jude is significant. In the latter instance the opponents came from outside and were intruders and interlopers. In Peter’s case it seems that the resistance sprang up from within the church and surreptitiously introduced false teaching.¹⁶¹⁷

The word translated “heresies” (*haireseis*) is also disputed. The singular form of the noun may refer to a sect, without any suggestion of false teaching. For instance, Acts refers to the sects of the Sadducees (5:17) and Pharisees (15:5; 26:5). Josephus also uses the term for various Jewish sects, such as the Essenes, Pharisees, and Sadducees,

and perhaps Zealots (*Life* 12; *J.W.* 2.118; *Ant.* 13.171, 293). In Acts the term is used to describe the Christian “sect,” and it does not clearly mean “heresy” in these texts, though the accounts in Acts indicate that serious questions were being raised about the messianic sect (24:5, 14; 28:22). The word can also refer to factions or dissensions in a church (Gal 5:20; 1 Cor 11:18). Thus the reference may not be to doctrinal heresy but the introduction of factions into the church. On the other hand, the word *hairesis* clearly refers to false teaching by the beginning of the second century when Ignatius wrote his letters (*Eph.* 6:2; *Trall.* 6:1). In the Petrine framework, in accord with the CSB, the context supports the idea that false teaching is in view. The opponents are called “false teachers,” and thus it makes sense to say that they introduced “false teaching,” that is, heresies, into the church.¹⁶¹⁸ They insinuated themselves into the church and under the cover of the church’s blessing were introducing wrong doctrines. These doctrines are “destructive heresies.” The word “destructive” indicates that they led to destruction or eschatological punishment presumably because they encouraged people to lead immoral lives.¹⁶¹⁹

The root problem with these false teachers is conveyed in the phrase “even denying the Master who bought them.” The Greek word *despotēs* (“Master”) is not the usual one for “Lord,” designating earthly masters of slaves in several texts (1 Tim 6:1–2; Titus 2:9; 1 Pet 2:18) and emphasizing God’s lordship in others (Luke 2:29; Acts 4:24; 2 Tim 2:21; Jude 4; Rev 6:10; cf. Gen 15:2, 8; Isa 1:24; 3:1; 10:33). This verse may be the only text in the NT where the term refers to Jesus Christ, though Jude 4 may be another instance. A reference to Jesus Christ is likely in the phrase “who bought them” (cf. Rev 5:9). The verb for “bought” (*agorazō*) is part of the redemption word group in the NT.¹⁶²⁰ Jesus as Lord bought them as his slaves, purchasing them through his atoning death on the cross. Peter would not speak of the false teachers as bought by the death of the Lord if they were pagan outsiders. The expression indicates that the false teachers were part of the church Peter addresses, that they professed faith in Jesus

Christ. At one time they were loyal servants of Jesus Christ, but now they denied the Lord who spilled his blood for them.

The language of denial alludes to Jesus's words, "Whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven" (Matt 10:33 NRSV). Those who deny Jesus will experience eschatological judgment when he denies them forever before his Father. From the remainder of 2 Peter it is evident that the denial of Jesus's lordship was practical, in that they rejected his moral authority over their lives. It is harder to discern whether specific Christological errors were part of the denial.¹⁶²¹ Probably the denial of the second coming of Christ should be included here, for in doing so they in effect rejected his lordship (cf. 2 Pet 3:4–7).¹⁶²² Those who introduce false teaching and deny the Lord Jesus Christ will bring "swift destruction on themselves."¹⁶²³ Peter uses the same word for "destruction" (*apōleia*) that was appended to the word "heresies" in this verse. The word is a common one in the NT for the eschatological punishment to come. We already noted that those who deny Jesus will be denied before the Father. Peter clarifies here that the false teachers were not guilty of minor defections but that judgment awaited them if they did not repent. The word "swift" (*tachinēn*) could also be translated "sudden."¹⁶²⁴ Probably the word means soon rather than sudden. Bauckham rightly remarks that Peter does not repudiate an imminent eschatology, even though he refuses to calculate when the end would arrive.¹⁶²⁵ They will be judged when the event they deny will ever occur—the return of Christ—takes place.

In the history of theology, two related issues have arisen in the interpretation of this verse. Does Peter teach that believers can commit apostasy and lose their salvation? Furthermore, does he teach what is called "unlimited atonement," that is, the idea that Christ died for all people, but only those who believe in Christ receive the benefit of the atonement that was offered to all? We should reject the interpretation defended by the famous Puritan John Owen who argues that the "buying" done by Christ was nonsoteriological so that Peter does not even have spiritual salvation in mind.¹⁶²⁶ The problem with this view

is that the NT nowhere else uses the word for redemption in association with Christ in a nonsoteriological sense (cf. 1 Cor 6:20; 7:23; 1 Pet 1:18–19; Rev 5:9; 14:3–4).¹⁶²⁷ The interpretation suffers from special pleading since redemption is invariably soteriological.

We should note that many scholars who defend “unlimited atonement” also think believers cannot lose their salvation. But a problem also arises for their interpretation. The verse seems to say that eschatological judgment will be the destiny of those bought by the Lord, by those members of the church who confessed Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The verse does not refer to people in general who are the *potential* beneficiaries of Christ’s death. It speaks of false teachers as members of the church who had now rejected the gospel they first embraced. The entire discussion on limited atonement in this verse cannot be segregated from the issue of whether believers can truly apostatize. That is an issue we will face again in this chapter since Peter refers to those who “have left the straight way” (NIV 2:15), of those who have escaped the clutches of the world through knowing Christ but have subsequently been entangled and conquered by the world again (2:20), of those who have known the way of righteousness but have now turned from it (2:21). The issue raised by these verses will be discussed in 2:17–22. We must see, however, that 2:1 raises fundamentally the same question.

The easiest solution, in some ways, would be to take the verse straightforwardly. Some who submit to Christ’s lordship subsequently deny him and are therefore damned forever.¹⁶²⁸ This is now the view of most commentators, and it has the virtue of providing a lucid and uncomplicated understanding of the text. At one level the proposed interpretation is correct. Some members of the Christian community had departed from the Christian faith. The issue is whether those who are genuinely Christians can commit apostasy. Peter teaches elsewhere that believers are effectually called by Christ’s own glory and excellence (2 Pet 1:3), and 1 Pet 1:5 clearly says that those who belong to God will be preserved by his power through faith so that they will possess eschatological salvation.¹⁶²⁹ When we add to this many other texts that teach that those whom God has called will never

perish (e.g., Rom 8:28–39; 1 Cor 1:8–9; Phil 1:6; 1 Thess 5:23–24), it suggests that we should consider another interpretation. I suggest that Peter uses phenomenological language. In other words, he describes the false teachers as believers because they made a profession of faith and gave every *appearance* initially of being genuine believers. Peter does not refer to those who were outside the community of faith but to those who were part of the church and perhaps even leaders among God’s people. Their subsequent denial of Jesus Christ reveals that they did not truly belong to God, even though they professed faith. They were bought by Jesus Christ in the sense that they gave every indication initially of genuine faith. In every church there are members who appear to be believers and who should be accepted as believers according to the judgment of charity. As time elapses and difficulties arise, it becomes apparent that there are wolves in the flock (Acts 20:29–30), that some who confess Jesus as Lord reveal by their disobedience that he *never* knew them (Matt 7:21–23; cf. 1 John 2:19), that they are like the seed sown on rocky or thorny ground that initially bears fruit but dries up and dies when hard times come (Matt 13:20–22).

2:2 Peter turns to the impact the false teachers have on others and the consequence of that influence. Their influence was significant, and other believers did not immediately recognize their lack of authenticity. Instead “many” will become devoted to them, following their unethical example.¹⁶³⁰ The word translated “depraved ways” (*aselgeiais*) often refers to sexual sin in the NT (Rom 13:13; 2 Cor 12:21; Gal 5:19; Eph 4:19; probably 1 Pet 4:3; Jude 4; cf. Wis 14:26).¹⁶³¹ The same is likely true here as well. What attracts people to these false teachers is that they advocate a licentious lifestyle, and therefore many people are only too glad to follow their example.¹⁶³²

The infection from the false teachers spreads to others, but it does not stop there. The unbelieving world sees the impact on the church and responds by maligning and ridiculing “the way of truth.” “The way of truth” is a reference to the gospel. The term “way” (*hodos*) was popular in the early church. According to Acts the early Christian movement was designated “the Way” (Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14,

22). The gospel is also described as “the way of salvation” (Acts 16:17), “the way of the Lord” (Acts 18:25), and “the way of God” (Acts 18:26). Peter says that the false teachers “have left the straight way . . . to follow the way of Balaam” (2 Pet 2:15 NIV). We read in 2:21 that it “would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness.” The language of the two ways was also prominent in the writings that succeeded the NT (e.g., Barn.18:1–21:9; Did. 1:1–6:3). We see here that the gospel, which is designated as the way of truth, would be maligned because of the impact of the false teachers. When unbelievers see the influence of the opponents in the lives of their followers, they will conclude that the way of truth is a way of error, concluding that any message that leads to dissolute behavior cannot be from God. Paul indicts the Jews similarly in Rom 2:24, quoting Isa 52:5. The Gentiles maligned God’s name because of the disobedience of the Jews. Christian slaves were to honor their masters so that God’s name and Christian teaching would not be criticized (1 Tim 6:1). Young believing wives were to live in a godly way so that people would not revile God’s word (Titus 2:5; cf. also 1 Thess 4:12; 1 Pet 2:12, 15; 3:16).

2:3 We saw in v. 2 that the false teachers would captivate many, thereby bringing censure on the gospel. Peter pounces on their central motive in v. 3. They were not disinterested teachers of truth, impartially and sacrificially seeking to help others. They were motivated by greed, a desire for the comforts of this life. The word translated “exploit” (*emporeuomai*) often refers to engaging in business in Greek literature (cf. Jas 4:13). The CSB rightly renders it “exploit” here since it is associated with the words “in their greed.” These teachers were not selling a product to help their hearers but were hawking defective goods (morally speaking) for their own financial advantage. As 2:14 says, “they are experts in greed” (NIV).

We have seen two characteristics of the false teachers in vv. 2–3. They were sexually licentious and motivated by greed. These two vices often appear in the lives of false teachers. Peter says that they would exploit others “with made-up stories.” The phrase can also be translated fabricated words (*plastois logois*). The reference is probably to their teaching about the future, in which they denied the coming of

the Lord and the future judgment (3:3–7). The false teachers charged the apostles with devising myths to support the Lord’s coming (1:16), but the opponents themselves distorted the truth.¹⁶³³ Such teaching paves the way for an immoral lifestyle that the false teachers allege will face no consequences.

What people think about judgment, of course, does not necessarily square up with reality. Peter assures his readers that the judgment would come. The Lord planned a long time ago that they would be judged (cf. Jude 4), and the “condemnation” threatened “is not idle” (*ouk argei*). The false teachers should not conclude from the elapse of a long period of time that the judgment would never come (3:3–4). The next line expresses the same truth in a complementary way. To say that their destruction is not sleeping is to say that it will certainly come.¹⁶³⁴ The Lord will, so to speak, wake up and act against them. The word for “destruction” (*apōleia*) is a common word to denote the Lord’s judgment of the wicked. The “fabricated words” will be exposed in all their hollowness on that day judgment.

4.2 The Certain Judgment of the Ungodly and the Preservation of the Godly (2:4–10a)

⁴ For if God didn’t spare the angels who sinned but cast them into hell and delivered them in chains of utter darkness to be kept for judgment; ⁵ and if he didn’t spare the ancient world, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others, when he brought the flood on the world of the ungodly; ⁶ and if he reduced the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes and condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is coming to the ungodly; ⁷ and if he rescued righteous Lot, distressed by the depraved behavior of the immoral ⁸ (for as that righteous man lived among them day by day, his righteous soul was tormented by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)—⁹ then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of

judgment, ¹⁰especially those who follow the polluting desires of the flesh and despise authority.

Verse 3b is transitional, and thus some commentators link it with this section; but since the verse is transitional, it fits well with either paragraph.¹⁶³⁵ The logic of vv. 1–3 functions like this: The false teachers both lived wickedly and disseminated their wickedness to others (vv. 1–3a); *therefore* God will certainly judge them (v. 3b). The theme of God’s judgment in v. 3b also informs vv. 4–10. God’s future judgment of the wicked is certain (v. 3b) because God has consistently judged the wicked throughout history. Three examples of the judgment of the wicked are adduced: (1) the judgment of the angels of Gen 6:1–4, (2) the destruction of the world during the time of the flood, and (3) the razing of Sodom and Gomorrah. We know the false teachers in 2 Peter were skeptical about the Lord’s coming and thus about the future judgment (3:3–7). Three representative and typological examples of God’s judgment demonstrate that God’s character has not changed. Previous judgments in history point toward and anticipate the final judgment, which is the climax of all other judgments. In the summary of Jude 5–7 the Jewish tradition on which both Jude and 2 Peter drew is sketched in, and readers should consult the discussion there for important antecedents to Peter’s thought.

The parallels with Jude (vv. 5–7) are significant, although Peter departs from Jude in terms of exact wording. Peter and Jude both include the judgment on angels and Sodom and Gomorrah. Peter, however, also includes a reference to the flood, while Jude draws attention to the judgment of Israel after their liberation from Egypt. Jude does not present the incidents in canonical order, placing Israel at the beginning of his list. Peter, on the other hand, follows the canonical order in describing the judgment of the angels, the flood during Noah’s day, and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Can we detect any reason for the difference? We know from 2 Pet 3:6 that the flood functions as a particularly vivid example and type of God’s future judgment. Nothing prepared the people of Noah’s day for such a calamity. It was unexpected, and Peter suggests that Noah was

mocked by his contemporaries for proclaiming its imminence. The completeness of the destruction also prefigures the final judgment. Only Noah and his family were left. The rest of the world was swept away. Recalling the flood is apt indeed in the situation addressed by 2 Peter since the false teachers denied future judgment and ridiculed believers who continued to believe in the future coming of Christ.

Peter weaves in another theme lacking in Jude, namely, the preservation of the righteous, in which Noah and Lot are presented as key examples. The future judgment not only consists of the condemnation of the wicked but also includes the vindication of the righteous, whom God preserves and sustains in the midst of difficulties. Perhaps Peter includes this theme because the faithful were a small minority in the church, needing encouragement with the onslaught of the false teachers. The false teachers had emerged from within the church (2:1), in contrast to Jude, where the opponents were intruders from the outside (Jude 4). Believers are encouraged with the grace of God because if God strengthened Noah and Lot in situations where evil dominated, then he would also preserve the believers who were confronting the deception posed by false teachers.

We should also notice the structure of the text. Peter begins with a protasis, an “if” clause in v. 4, and the apodosis (a “then” clause) is delayed until v. 9. He gives a series of three examples of God’s judgment and two examples of his preservation in vv. 4–8, leading up to his conclusion in v. 9.¹⁶³⁶ The structure of the text helps us see clearly Peter’s main themes: the judgment of the wicked and the preservation of the godly. We can set forth the text like this:

If God judged the angels (v. 4) and	
if he judged the flood generation (v. 5)	while at the same time sparing Noah (v. 5)
and if he judged Sodom and Gomorrah	while at the same time preserving (v. 6) Lot (vv. 7–8)
then it follows that the Lord will preserve the godly in the midst of their trials (drawing this conclusion from the examples of Noah and Lot)	

and it also follows that the Lord will punish the ungodly on the day of judgment (drawing this conclusion from the three examples of the

angels, the flood, and Sodom and Gomorrah, v. 9).

2:4 The “for” (*gar*) links v. 4 with v. 3b and introduces the first of three examples illustrating God’s judgment in the past and guaranteeing it for the future. Hence, the judgment functions typologically. The first judgment relates to the angels whom God did not spare when they sinned. Peter differs from Jude in emphasizing the judgment without specifying the angels’ sin.¹⁶³⁷ Some scholars in the history of interpretation have identified this as the prehistoric fall of angels. It is doubtful, however, that Peter refers to such here, even if that theme is found elsewhere in the Scriptures. Instead, Peter follows Jewish tradition at this point by referring to the sin angels committed with women in Gen 6:1–4 (1 En. 6–19, 21, 86–88; 106:13–17; Jub. 4:15, 22; 5:1; CD 2:17–19; 1QapGen 2:1; T. Reu. 5:6–7; T. Naph. 3:5; 2 Bar. 56:10–14; cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 1.73).¹⁶³⁸

In the discussion on Jude 5, I discuss in more detail the Jewish tradition that identifies the sons of God in Gen 6:1–4 with angels, and I also briefly explain there why such a view is a plausible reading of Gen 6. The sin committed by angels was sexual intercourse with the daughters of men. Four reasons support the view that Peter thought of angels who committed sexual sin in Gen 6:1–4. First, this interpretation, as the texts above indicate, was widespread in Jewish tradition. Peter’s readers would naturally have understood the account in terms of such a tradition unless Peter indicated clearly that he was departing from the common understanding of his day. Peter gives no indication, however, that he differs from the tradition. Second, such an understanding would not be difficult for Peter’s readers. The Greeks also had the story of the Titans, which is similar in some respects to Gen 6:1–4 (Hesiod, *Theogony* [713–35]). Josephus (*Ant.* 1.73; cf. *Jdt* 16:6) identifies the Titans from the Greek world with the angels of Genesis 6, although I am not arguing that Peter makes such an identification. Third, Jude almost certainly understands the story of Gen 6:1–4 to refer to angels who sinned, given that he was influenced by 1 Enoch, and the account is more prominent in 1 Enoch than any other work. It is unlikely that Peter veered off in another direction from Jude because regardless of the question of literary dependence,

Jude and 2 Peter obviously both drew from common tradition in some form. Fourth, I have argued that 1 Pet 3:19–20 draws on this tradition as well.

The second half of the verse conveys the judgment experienced by the angels. The CSB says that the angels were sent to “hell.” But Peter does not use the word *gehenna* here, the usual word for “hell,” but the Greek verbal participle *tartarōsas*, from which we get our word “Tartarus.” Tartarus in Greek literature refers to the underworld, and here we have another indication that Peter communicates with his readers in terms of their own idiom.¹⁶³⁹ Philo speaks of those “being hurled down to Tartarus and profound darkness” (*Rewards* 152). The Sibylline Oracles refer to “broad Tartarus and the repulsive recesses of Gehenna” (Sib. Or. 4:186). The word “hell” is misleading if it suggests final punishment since the verse makes clear that the climactic judgment still awaits the angels.¹⁶⁴⁰ Nor does the use of the term indicate that Peter was familiar with Greek literature since he simply employs the common currency of the day, and thus we should not conclude that Peter was necessarily familiar with Greek classics from the use of this word. Indeed, the word is used by other Jewish writers and is even found in the Septuagint (Job 40:20; 41:24; Prov 3:16; cf. 1 En. 20:2; Sib. Or. 2:303; 4:186; Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2.240; Philo, *Rewards*, 152; *Embassy*, 103).¹⁶⁴¹

The angels confined to Tartarus were confined to “chains of utter darkness.” A significant textual variant exists here between the Greek words *sirois* and *seirais*. Nestle-Aland²⁸ prefers the latter, which could be translated “chains” or “cords.” This reading is reflected in the NRSV, which says God “committed them to chains of deepest darkness” (cf. KJV, NKJV, HCSB).¹⁶⁴² The NIV 1984 (in contrast to the NIV 2011) translation favors *sirois*, translating it as “dungeons” (cf. RSV, NASB). The textual evidence is evenly divided, and so internal evidence probably is more important. Some scholars think Peter substitutes a more elegant term for Jude’s *desmois* (“chains”).¹⁶⁴³ But it is more likely that scribes conformed Peter’s wording to Jude’s since the texts are parallel, and seeing *sirois* (“pits”)

they altered it to *seirais* (“chains”).¹⁶⁴⁴ In any case, the term Tartarus suggests that the angels are both confined and restrained because of their sin. The language of confinement could be interpreted literally, as if the angels are restricted to a physical locality. More likely the language is symbolic, conveying the idea that the angels who sinned are now restrained in some way because of their sin, that God has now limited their sphere of operation.¹⁶⁴⁵ The last phrase in the verse, “kept for judgment,” conveys a similar idea. The future judgment of these angels is certain, and presently they are being restrained by God for their punishment on the eschatological day. In the case of the angels, then, the punishment has two dimensions—the restriction imposed immediately as a result of their sin and the punishment they will receive on the day of the Lord’s return.

2:5 The second example of judgment is the flood that deluged the world in the time of Noah (Gen 6:5–7:24).¹⁶⁴⁶ The words “didn’t spare” are repeated from v. 4, emphasizing that the judgment was a reality and at the same time eliminating any hope that God might show mercy and relent from judging the world. Peter also refers to the judgment of the flood in 3:6, countering the false teachers who denied the second coming. It is evident, therefore, that the deluge was crucial for Peter’s argument against the opponents since it provided concrete evidence that God judges sin so that the flood functions as a type of the future judgment.¹⁶⁴⁷ One of the reasons the flood functions well as a type is that it includes the whole world, and Peter uses the word “world” (*kosmos*) twice in the verse. The universality of the judgment in Noah’s day functions well as a preview of the universal judgment at the end of the age. No one will be spared, or, more precisely, none of the “ungodly” (*asebōn*) will escape. The reference to the ungodly indicates that the focus is on the *people* who were destroyed.

Peter does not restrict himself to the judgment of the wicked but also includes the preservation of the righteous. God is the one who preserved and “protected” (*ephylaxen*) Noah from the judgment. Peter’s lesson for his readers is evident. God will protect those who resist the enticements of the false teachers with the result that the

faithful will be vindicated by God. Noah was not alone in his righteousness but was preserved along with seven others—his wife, his three sons, and their wives. The Greek text actually uses the word “eighth” (*ogdoon*), which is conveyed in the KJV translation he “saved Noah the eighth *person*.”¹⁶⁴⁸ Why did Peter use the word “eighth”?¹⁶⁴⁹

In early church writings the number eight was considered the number of perfection since Jesus was raised on the eighth day—Sunday.¹⁶⁵⁰ Hence, it may be that Noah is portrayed here as the beginning of a new creation after the flood, and similarly believers are a new creation in Christ. It is unclear, however, that any NT writer used the number eight symbolically, nor does the context indicate such a use here.¹⁶⁵¹ In 1 Pet 3:20 we see that the number eight was used to convey the idea that God’s people, though few in number, were saved by God during the flood. Since we have the same author and even the same subject, a similar conclusion should be drawn here. Even if the righteous are completely outnumbered, they will prevail because God is faithful to his people.

We are also told that Noah was “a preacher of righteousness.” The description here elicits interest because the OT never informs us that Noah preached to his contemporaries. The idea that Noah entreated his generation to repent, however, is common in Jewish tradition (Josephus, *Ant.* 1.74; Jub. 7:20–39; Sib. Or. 1:128–29, 150–98; cf. 1 Clem. 7:6; 9:4). We read in Josephus, “But Noah, indignant at their conduct and viewing their counsels with displeasure, urged them to come to a better frame of mind and amend their ways” (*Ant.* 1.74). That Noah proclaimed God’s righteousness is a fair deduction from the OT itself since it is unlikely that he did not share with his contemporaries why he was building the ark. The verse is marked by duality. God did not spare the ancient world, but he protected Noah. He destroyed many people but saved a few. Noah was preserved as “a preacher of *righteousness*,” but “the world of the *ungodly*” was devastated. Most commentators understand “righteousness” to refer to God’s justice in judging the ungodly,¹⁶⁵² and certainly Noah

proclaimed such a standard. But we have already noted that Jewish tradition also taught that Noah preached repentance. I think such an idea is implicit in “righteousness” as well. In emphasizing God’s righteous judgment of sinners, Noah also invited the people of his age to repent and to enjoy God’s forgiveness.¹⁶⁵³ This fits with what Peter says about God’s righteousness in 1:1, which is a gift received by believers. Those who enjoy God’s saving righteousness repent of their sins and turn to God, acknowledging his righteous judgment against them. The ungodly refuse to hear God’s word of judgment against them, insisting, as Noah’s contemporaries did, that any notion of a future condemnation is laughable. Similarly, the false teachers in the Petrine churches rejected a future judgment, maintaining that the world will continue to follow the same course (3:4). In doing so they abandoned God’s righteous standards and refused to accept his salvation.

2:6 The third example of God’s judgment focuses on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Unlike Jude (v. 7), Peter does not identify the sin of the cities but directs attention to their judgment.¹⁶⁵⁴ Probably there was no need to highlight the sin since it was well known both from the Scriptures and postbiblical tradition.¹⁶⁵⁵ In any case, Peter emphasizes the result of God’s judgment in that the cities were “reduced . . . to ashes” (*teprōsas*). The OT itself does not say the cities were burned to ashes, although it is a fair deduction from the fire that leveled the cities (Gen 19:23–29). It was likely a common idea that the cities turned to ashes since Philo attests this idea (*Drunkenness* 223; *Moses* 2.56). Perhaps Peter attends to this phenomenon since it functions as hard evidence in his day that the cities were indeed destroyed. We see the same theme in postbiblical tradition. “Evidence of their wickedness still remains: a continually smoking wasteland, plants bearing fruit that does not ripen” (Wis 10:7). Josephus declares:

In fact, vestiges of the divine fire and faint traces of five cities are still visible. Still, too, may one see ashes reproduced in the fruits, which from their outward appearance would be thought edible, but on being plucked with the hand dissolve into smoke and ashes. So

far are the legends about the land of Sodom borne out by ocular evidence. (*J.W.* 4.484–85)¹⁶⁵⁶

Philo made similar remarks: “Even to this day there are seen in Syria monuments of the unprecedented destruction that fell upon them, in the ruins, and ashes, and sulphur, and smoke, and the dusky flame which still is sent up from the ground as of a fire smouldering beneath” (*Moses* 2.56).

Peter anticipates chapter 3 in emphasizing judgment by water in the case of the flood and judgment by fire in the case of Sodom and Gomorrah (cf. 3:6–7).¹⁶⁵⁷ It is difficult to know whether the word *katastrophē* is part of the original text. It is omitted in the NIV, but it appears in the CSB, “condemned . . . to extinction” (cf. also KJV, RSV, ESV, NRSV).¹⁶⁵⁸ Once again the textual evidence is finely balanced.¹⁶⁵⁹ I suspect Metzger’s suggestion that some scribes overlooked the word *katastrophē* since the next word “condemned” (*katekrinen*) begins with the same letters (*kat*) is correct.¹⁶⁶⁰ The inclusion of the word fits with Peter’s emphasis on the *results* of the judgment. Perhaps Peter alludes here to the Septuagint since Gen 19:29 says that God sent Lot away from the middle of “the destruction” (NET; *tēs katastrophēs*).

Jude emphasizes that the judgment of the cities forecasts the fiery nature of the future judgment, but Peter stresses that God appointed the cities as an example for the ungodly still to come. The words translated “making them” probably designate God’s appointment since the verb *tithēmi* often has this sense in the NT (Matt 22:14 par.; Acts 1:7; 13:47; 20:28; Rom 4:17; 1 Cor 12:18, 28; 1 Thess 5:9; 1 Tim 2:7; 2 Tim 1:11; Heb 1:2; 1 Pet 2:8), and it makes good sense here since Peter emphasizes that God appointed the cities’ judgment to provide a picture of what is to come for the ungodly. The judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah is not merely a historical curiosity but functions as a type of what God will do in the future, though we have an example of typological escalation since the judgment Peter previews is not just physical but eternal.¹⁶⁶¹ It anticipates the

condemnation of the false teachers of Peter's day and those who succumbed to the influence of these teachers. The word "example" (*hypodeigma*; cf. Jude's *deigma* in v. 6) is rightly translated "example" here instead of "pattern" or "model" (cf. Heb 8:5; 9:23).¹⁶⁶² The word clearly means "example" in a number of texts (John 13:15; Heb 4:11; Jas 5:10), and the latter makes better sense in the context of 2 Peter.

The verse closes with another difficult textual problem. The CSB translates "an example of what is coming to the ungodly" (*hypodeigma mellontōn asebesin*).¹⁶⁶³ Alternatively, the Greek could be rendered "an example for those who will live in an ungodly way" (*hypodeigma mellontōn asebein*).¹⁶⁶⁴ Once again the textual evidence is evenly divided, so making a decision on external grounds is difficult. The reading in the CSB is preferred on internal grounds because it is slightly more likely that Peter would emphasize the *judgment to come* rather than the *ungodly who will come*. The former theme fits with the entire letter, where the certainty of the second coming and as a corollary the future judgment are taught.

2:7 Not everyone was destroyed at Sodom and Gomorrah. Just as Noah and his family were preserved during the flood, so God delivered Lot from the judgment executed on Sodom and Gomorrah. Many readers of Genesis have wondered why Peter describes Lot as righteous since Lot agreed to live in Sodom, was hesitant to leave the city, and got drunk with the result that his daughters had sexual relations with him (see Gen 19). Writers in the postbiblical tradition, on the other hand, thought of Lot as righteous (e.g., Wis 10:6). First Clement 11:1 confirms such an interpretation: "Because of his hospitality and godliness Lot was saved from Sodom, when the entire region was judged by fire and brimstone."

Peter does not violate the meaning of the OT.¹⁶⁶⁵ Abraham prayed in Gen 18 that the Lord would preserve Sodom if there were even ten righteous people within it. The Lord more than answered Abraham's prayer since he rescued from the city the one person who was righteous.¹⁶⁶⁶ The "Judge of the whole earth" does not destroy "the

righteous with the wicked” (Gen 18:25). The narrator of Genesis, by recording the rescue of Lot, intimates that he was righteous.¹⁶⁶⁷ And other hints are in the narrative as well. Only Lot showed the angels hospitality when they arrived in the city (Gen 19:1–3). Lot remonstrated with the men who wanted to have sexual relations with the visitors, when he could have spared himself trouble by handing over the angels to the crowd (Gen 19:5–9). Modern readers, of course, are struck that he offered his daughters, and clearly Lot was not without fault, and like all believers today his life in some respects fell shamefully and woefully short of God’s standards. Nonetheless, ancient readers would have saluted his courage in trying to protect those who were in his house, a matter of great danger when the whole city was at his doorstep. Indeed, Lot’s godliness was all the more remarkable given the context in which he lived. We are prone, at least those of us who live in safety and comfort, to criticize Lot, but most of us have never been even close to death in a conflict with others. Nor have any of us ever lived in a city like Sodom with no friends to strengthen us in the faith. Lot wavered and doubted and sinned, but Peter addresses readers who also were wavering because of the appearance of false teachers. Green reminds us of Lot’s reprehensible actions and that he was not wholly righteous.¹⁶⁶⁸ Certainly Lot was a man of significant faults, and we should not read Peter as if he denies it. His point should not be interpreted to say that Lot was *completely righteous and without fault*. Still, just as Peter was confident that the believers he addressed would resist the opponents, so too Lot *was different* from the rest of Sodom. That is why the Lord rescued him. Peter informs us that Lot was oppressed by living in Sodom, that their ungodly conduct took a toll on him psychologically. The word translated “depraved” by the CSB renders the Greek word *aselgeia*, which often designates sexual sin (note the NASB “sensual conduct”).¹⁶⁶⁹

2:8 The oppression Lot experienced is expanded on in v. 8, which is connected to v. 7 by “for” (*gar*). Verse 8 elaborates on Lot’s distress from v. 7, repeating that Lot was “righteous” (*dikaios*), standing in stark contrast to the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. The

emphasis on his righteousness is also communicated by the phrase “his righteous soul.” One indication of righteousness is torment and distress over those who live unrighteously, and the main point of this verse is that Lot was anguished about the lives of his fellow citizens. Since he lived in the midst of them, he experienced daily the distress of their “lawless deeds.” How was he aware on a regular basis of the antinomian lifestyle of such sinners? Peter informs us that he was confronted with their evil by what he saw and heard. These words are included because they also reflect the situation of the readers who live among those who pursue evil.¹⁶⁷⁰

2:9 The long protasis, beginning with the “if” in 2:4, finally reaches its conclusion in this verse. Having given three examples of divine judgment (angels, flood, and Sodom and Gomorrah) and two of divine preservation (Noah and Lot), Peter now draws the threads together and presents a conclusion from the particular examples. The conclusion has two distinct parts. First, the Lord knows how to preserve the godly in their trials. Second, he knows how to keep the unrighteous for the future day of judgment. We will examine both of these points in order. The word “rescue” (*rhyesthai*) picks up the same verb that was used with reference to Lot in v. 7, and it overlaps in meaning with “protected” (*ephylaxen*) with reference to Noah in v. 5. The CSB uses the plural “trials,” but the external evidence supports the singular “trial” (*peirasmou*), though the singular is generic and thus includes the idea of many trials. The word *peirasmou* could be rendered “temptation” (cf. Jas 1:13–14), but in this context the focus is not on internal inclinations to sin (as in James) but on external situations that are difficult and could lead to sin.

In this instance the difficulty came from the false teachers. The line between the English “temptation” and “trials” is a slender one since they represent the same Greek word. The external situation (“trials”) may become the occasion in which believers are “tempted” internally, so perhaps we should not press the difference between the two.¹⁶⁷¹ There probably is an allusion to the Lord’s Prayer, in which believers are urged to pray that the Lord would deliver them from temptation (Matt 6:13; cf. Luke 11:4; Matt 26:41). The danger in a time of trial is

apostasy (Luke 8:13; 22:28). God is faithful and promises to keep his people in such circumstances (1 Cor 10:13; Rev 3:10; cf. Sir 33:1). Thus, some scholars detect a reference to the test of faith that will conclude history.¹⁶⁷² We should not separate the final test, however, from the tests oppressing Peter's readers at the time the letter was written because any trial becomes an occasion in which one's faithfulness to the Lord is tested. Thus Moo rightly says that "trial" refers to "all those challenges to faith that Christians experience in this world."¹⁶⁷³ Still, the rescue in view here ultimately refers to the day of judgment (cf. Matt 6:13).¹⁶⁷⁴

Peter could be understood as saying that believers will not have to experience times of trial, in the sense that God will exempt them from facing any trials at all, but such a reading is clearly mistaken. Both Noah and Lot lived in the midst of the wicked and were confronted by a great majority of evil people. Similarly, Peter's readers were oppressed and tormented (like Lot) by the false teachers of their day. Peter does not promise that such teachers would be removed immediately. Nor does he indicate that true believers never sin. His point is the godly and righteous will be prevented from committing apostasy. God will guard them so that in the end they will not forsake him. We should not read this to say that the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trial but some actually fall anyway. Instead, all the godly *will be preserved* by the Lord. He will keep them from apostasy, just as he guarded Noah and Lot so that they did not depart from him.

The second point stems from the three examples of judgment in history: if the Lord judged the angels who sinned, the flood generation, and Sodom and Gomorrah, he will also "keep the unrighteous . . . for the day of judgment." The angels, the flood generation, and Sodom and Gomorrah were not judged immediately. They pursued their sin for some time before the fateful day of judgment. Thus, Peter's readers should not be discouraged or wonder if God is faithful simply because the false teachers were prospering. God granted them time to repent before the end arrives (3:9). For those who do not repent, the eschatological judgment is certain.

The one difficulty here is the present participle *kolazomenous*. The present participle might suggest that the wicked are being punished even now.¹⁶⁷⁵ This would fit with the example of angels who are confined before their future punishment (2:4). Luke 16:23–24 also seems to teach intermediate punishment (cf. 1 En. 22:10–11; 4 Ezra 7:79–87). The NIV 1984 adopts this interpretation by translating the participle as a present reality: the Lord keeps “the unrighteous for the day of judgment *while continuing their punishment*” (emphasis added). The wicked, on this view, suffer punishment even now while awaiting the judgment of the final day. Though this interpretation is possible, present participles do not necessarily denote present time (cf. 2 Pet 3:11).¹⁶⁷⁶ Context is the decisive criterion. I think it is unlikely that Peter depicts the present judgment of the wicked. The false teachers in the letter gave every appearance of current prosperity.¹⁶⁷⁷ They may have influenced some for this reason, mocking the coming of the Lord without suffering any ill consequences. Thus, it seems more likely that Peter reminds his readers of the final judgment, the day when the opponents will experience condemnation.¹⁶⁷⁸

2:10a The paragraph ends with two reasons that explain why the future judgment is fitting. The “polluting desires of the flesh” probably refers to sexual sin.¹⁶⁷⁹ We have already seen a reference to their sexual sin in 2:2. The sin of the angels (2:4) and Sodom and Gomorrah (2:6) included sexual deviation, and 2:7 indicates that Lot was oppressed in part by their sensual perversity. Since the opponents repudiated any future judgment, they lived dissolute lives sexually, without any thought of a reckoning on the last day.¹⁶⁸⁰ The second sin of the teachers is that they “despise authority,” which is close to Jude’s statement that they “reject authority” (v. 8). The word for “authority” here is *kyriotēs*. Some see a reference to angels (Eph 1:21; Col 1:16), but the singular indicates that angels are not intended. Even less likely is the idea that the reference is human authorities, whether leaders in the churches or governmental officials.¹⁶⁸¹ Possibly the reference is to God’s lordship, but a reference to Christ’s lordship is

more likely since the Lord in v. 9 is Christ and the Lord bought them in v. 1.¹⁶⁸² Probably the focus is on Christ's sovereignty and authority that is rejected by the adversaries, but by refusing to submit to Christ, they reveal their insubordination and rebelliousness in general.¹⁶⁸³ These people will not submit to anyone, being supremely confident of their convictions and intellectual ability.

4.3 False Teachers Judged for Their Rebellion and Sensuality (2:10b–16)

Bold, arrogant people! They are not afraid to slander the glorious ones; ¹¹ however, angels, who are greater in might and power, do not bring a slanderous charge against them before the Lord. ¹² But these people, like irrational animals—creatures of instinct born to be caught and destroyed—slander what they do not understand, and in their destruction they too will be destroyed. ¹³ They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done. They consider it a pleasure to carouse in broad daylight. They are spots and blemishes, delighting in their deceptions while they feast with you. ¹⁴ They have eyes full of adultery that never stop looking for sin. They seduce unstable people and have hearts trained in greed. Children under a curse! ¹⁵ They have gone astray by abandoning the straight path and have followed the path of Balaam, the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of wickedness ¹⁶ but received a rebuke for his lawlessness: A speechless donkey spoke with a human voice and restrained the prophet's madness.

Verse 10a functions as a transition to these verses, and two *reasons* for the judgment declared in vv. 4–9 are identified: the sexual sin and rebelliousness of the false teachers. Moo is correct in suggesting that vv. 10b–16 unpack these two themes in reverse order—the arrogance of the teachers in vv. 10b–13a and their sensuality in vv. 13b–16.¹⁶⁸⁴ Actually, we should specify a third reason for the judgment: their greed for money. All three of these themes are mentioned in vv. 1–3, where the teachers denied the Lord who purchased them (v. 1),

seduced others with their sensual teaching (v. 2), and exploited others with their covetousness (v. 3). The focus on the same three sins in 2:10–16 demonstrates that the argument of 2:1–16 falls into an A B A' pattern.

A The sins of the false teachers recounted: 2:1–3

B Therefore the teachers will be judged: 2:4–10

A' The sins of the false teachers elaborated: 2:10–16

The detailing of the false teachers' sins provides reasons the judgment of 2:4–10 is justified. Neither should we collapse 2:1–3 and 2:10b–16 as if the arguments are identical in every respect. Second Peter 2:1–3 focuses on the adverse affect the false teachers have on others, while 2:10b–16 focuses on the evil of the teachers without noting their influence on others. Verses 10b–16 are more graphic and descriptive so that the readers have no doubt of the evil of the false teachers.

The verses are also effective rhetorically, something that is more difficult to detect in English. The argument of vv. 10–12 is carried along by the words *blasphēmoutēs* (“slander,” v. 10), *blasphēmon* (“slandorous,” v. 11), and *blasphēmoutēs* (“slander,” v. 12). In v. 12 words of destruction are featured: *phthoran* (“destroyed”), *phthora* (“destruction”), *phtharēsontai* (“destroyed”). In v. 13 we see another play on words, which the CSB captures nicely, *adikoumenoi misthon adikias* (“They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done”). The next line contains alliteration: *hēdonen hēgoumenoi tēn en hēmera* (“consider it a pleasure. . . in broad daylight”). The word *tryphēn* (“carouse”) has a cognate later in the verse, *entryphōntes* (“reveling,” v. 13 NIV). The exact same phrase *misthon adikias* is used in vv. 13, 15 (“wages of wickedness”), but the duplication is missed by the CSB in v. 15 because it aptly translates the expression in v. 13 with a play on words in English, demonstrating that it is impossible for any English translation to communicate every nuance of the text. Finally, in v. 16 the term *paraphronian* (“madness”) probably plays off the term *paranomias* (“lawlessness”).

2:10b The rebelliousness of the false teachers is communicated with the two terms: “Bold” (*tolmētai*) and “arrogant” (*authadeis*).¹⁶⁸⁵ The two words overlap in meaning—the former occurring in both Philo (*Joseph*, 222) and Josephus (*J.W.* 3.475), while the latter is a bit more common in the literature (Gen 49:3, 7; Prov 21:24; Titus 1:7; cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 1.189; 4.263; 1 Clem. 1:1). Together they could be translated “boldly arrogant.”¹⁶⁸⁶ The false teachers were blessed with an extraordinary confidence, but unfortunately this confidence was not leavened with wisdom or humility.

The arrogance of the false teachers is reflected in that they were “not afraid to slander the glorious ones.” “They do not tremble” (ESV; *tremousin*) in abusing those who are glorious (*doxas*). The word “glorious” could refer to human beings—either church leaders or civil authorities (cf. Ps 149:8; Isa 3:5; 23:8; Nah 3:10; 1QpHab 4:2; 4QpNah 2:9; 3:9; 4:4; 1QM 14:11).¹⁶⁸⁷ It seems more likely that angels are designated as glorious beings (Exod 15:11 LXX; T. Jud. 25:2; T. Levi 18:5; 1QH^a 10:8), as in the NIV (“celestial beings”). We might also think that the reference is to good angels since describing evil angels as “glories” seems inappropriate.¹⁶⁸⁸ Nevertheless, the context suggests that evil angels are indeed in view, as will be argued from the next verse.¹⁶⁸⁹

2:11 Verse 11 functions as a contrast with v. 10. The false teachers, as suggested above, had no fear in reviling evil angels. But good angels, on the other hand, even though they are “greater in might and power” than evil angels, did not venture to utter a negative judgment from the Lord against the evil angels. The verse could be construed differently. We could read it to say that angels who are “greater in might and power” than the false teachers do not presume to pronounce a reviling judgment against these false teachers before the Lord. But this latter interpretation is improbable for several reasons.¹⁶⁹⁰ First, it is obvious that angels are stronger than false teachers, and so this scarcely needs to be said in this instance. Conversely, we can understand why Peter might want to say good

angels are superior in strength to evil angels since the latter share angelic status. Second, the idea of angels pronouncing a judgment against the false teachers does not seem to fit well in the context. Why would the angels have any role in a judgment against the false teachers? Nothing in the context prepares us for this notion. Indeed, the Scriptures teach that human beings will judge angels, not vice versa (1 Cor 6:3). Third, the most natural antecedent from v. 10 is “glories.” It seems most sensible if we are told that angels are stronger than the glories just mentioned at the end of v. 10 instead of the antecedent being the false teachers who sneer at the glories. Fourth, the parallel from Jude points us in the same direction. There Michael did not dare to pronounce judgment against the devil on his own authority. Similarly, Peter argues along the same lines, though he broadens the point. Good angels do not venture to announce judgment over evil angels. They leave such judgment to the Lord. Finally, an interesting, though inexact, parallel exists in 1 En. 9, where human beings lament the evil brought on them by fallen angels. The good angels in response do not act directly to assist humans but commend the matter to the Lord.¹⁶⁹¹

In conclusion, the false teachers did not fear demonic powers. Peter called them “glories,” not because they were good but simply because God himself created them, even though subsequently they fell into sin. Perhaps the teachers did not tremble before them because they disbelieved in their existence. This would fit nicely with the skeptical worldview they adopted about the coming of the Lord (3:3–7). Or they may have ridiculed any idea that human beings should be frightened about the power of spiritual beings. Bauckham and Moo suggest that the teachers ridiculed the notion that their sins would make them the prey of evil angels.¹⁶⁹² By way of contrast, good angels did not even declare God’s judgment against evil angels. They leave it with the Lord. The prepositional phrase in Greek may mean “before the Lord” (CSB, ESV).¹⁶⁹³ In this case, however, the more fitting translation is “from the Lord” (NIV, NRSV). Other versions render it “from the Lord” (NIV, NRSV). On this reading, the angels

do not venture to declare a judgment from the Lord, but they entrust the fate of demons to the Lord's judgment.

2:12 The false teachers prided themselves on their insight and wisdom, thinking that not trembling before evil angels was one manifestation of their understanding (v. 10b). In contrast (*de*, “but”) to their high estimate of themselves, Peter compares them to “irrational animals” (*aloga zōa*).¹⁶⁹⁴ The irrationality of the teachers is emphasized in the phrase “creatures of instinct” (*zōa . . . physika*).¹⁶⁹⁵ Like animals, the opponents operated on desires and feelings instead of reason. Peter considers the fate of animals that are hunted. They are born to be captured and destroyed by human beings. The false teachers were comparable to animals since the latter are bereft of rationality. The teachers believed they were reasonable, but they displayed their foolishness in criticizing what they did not comprehend. The phrase *en hois* is translated by the CSB as “what,” referring to the things the opponents did not comprehend. Bauckham suggests that *en hois* refers to the “glories” of v. 10 so that Peter continues to emphasize their incomprehension of demonic powers.¹⁶⁹⁶ This interpretation is also reflected in the NLT 1996, “They laugh at the terrifying powers they know so little about.” The proposed interpretation is too circumscribed. The *autōn* (“their”) in v. 11 is the last reference to the “glories,” and it is distant from *en hois*. Furthermore, we would expect an accusative if the reference were to angels, and *en hois* is used elsewhere in a general sense (e.g., Phil 4:11; 2 Tim 3:14). In saying that the adversaries reviled what they did not comprehend, demons, of course, are included. The statement is general, however, and applies to other matters as well.

The verse concludes by identifying the fate of the opponents with the fate of animals. The CSB translates, “in their destruction they too will be destroyed.” The NRSV conveys the meaning similarly, “When those creatures are destroyed, they also will be destroyed,”¹⁶⁹⁷ though the CSB is to be preferred since the point isn't that animals and the false teachers are destroyed at the same time. Bauckham understands the verse differently, arguing that the false teachers would

be destroyed and judged when demons perish.¹⁶⁹⁸ He understands the pronoun “their” (*autōn*) to refer back to *hois*, which in turn he relates to the noun “glories” (*doxas*). We have already seen, however, that the reference can’t be confined to demons. Furthermore, the most natural antecedent of “their” (*autōn*) is “beasts” (KJV; *zōa*), not the angelic glories. So the CSB and NRSV are on target. The false teachers would experience destruction, just as animals are eventually captured and destroyed.¹⁶⁹⁹

Two credible allusions are in Ps 49. Psalm 49:12 says, “But despite his assets, mankind will not last; he is like the animals that perish.” And Ps 49:20 asserts the same truth, “Mankind, with his assets but without understanding, is like the animals that perish.” The fate of hunted animals is a picture of the fate of the wicked. When we analyze the destiny of animals and the false teachers more closely, we see that the CSB is preferable to the NRSV on another point. It is possible that the verse means that the opponents will perish “when” (NRSV) animals do. But this is an unlikely reading since Peter thinks of the final judgment, which has not yet occurred and will not happen until the second coming. The CSB captures the sense of the verse in comparing the fate of the teachers and animals. Their destiny is similar (destruction), but the fate of animals occurs at death and the judgment of those practicing evil occurs on the last day.¹⁷⁰⁰ Believers “share in the divine nature” (1:4), but the opponents by their behavior share the nature of animals; believers will obtain eternal salvation, but the opponents will face the same fate as animals.¹⁷⁰¹

2:13 Verse 12 concludes with an assertion that the opponents will face judgment and destruction. A string of participles and adjectives explain why they will be judged—the CSB smooths out the Greek here by turning the grammar here into sentences. Peter begins with a wordplay, “They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done” (*adikoumenoi misthon adikias*). The phrase could be translated “being harmed for an unrighteous wage.” It is difficult to make sense of the phrase, and we are not surprised to learn that a number of manuscripts read “receiving” (*komioumenoi*) instead of “being

injured” (*adikoumenoi*).¹⁷⁰² The variant reading is attractive because it clarifies the phrase’s meaning. Nevertheless, the reading represented in the CSB is to be preferred as the difficult reading, and scribes who changed the text failed to see the play on words.¹⁷⁰³ We could understand Peter to say that the teachers would not enjoy the profits gained by their evil actions.¹⁷⁰⁴ But the pun suggests another interpretation. Peter says in a colorful way that the teachers will reap what they sow.¹⁷⁰⁵ As Callan says, “Those who do wrong will have wrong done to them.”¹⁷⁰⁶ Those who live unrighteously will be injured by God at the last judgment. We have here the standard Jewish teaching that judgment is according to works, that people will get what they deserve.

The theme of sensuality emerges in the next clause. The opponents were so consumed by and fascinated with evil that they could not even wait until dark, the time when evil is typically practiced (cf. Rom 13:12–13). Ecclesiastes 10:16 says, “Woe to you, land, when your king is a youth and your princes feast in the morning.” Similarly, we read in Isa 5:11, “Woe to those who rise early in the morning in pursuit of beer, who linger into the evening, inflamed by wine.” They make evil an all-day affair and even used the daytime, the period when ordinary people work, to indulge in their pleasures (see also T. Mos. 7:4).

As members of the church, the opponents were “spots and blemishes” (*spiloi kai mōmoi*). Jude says the intruders are “dangerous reefs” (*spilades*, Jude 12) in the congregation, whereas Peter emphasizes that they stain and defile the church. In contrast to these false teachers, Peter exhorts his readers in the conclusion of the letter to be “without spot (*aspiloi*) or blemish (*amōmētoi*)” (2 Pet 3:14). The false teachers, on the other hand, have a passion for pleasure. Peter frames “spots and blemishes” (2:13) with “carouse” (*tryphēn*) on one side and “reveling” (NIV; *entryphōntes*) on the other. The NIV translates the phrase as “reveling in their pleasures while they feast with you,” while the CSB renders it, “delighting in their deceptions while they feast with you.” The CSB zeroes in on the word

“deceptions” (*apatais*). The word “deceptions” is somewhat surprising in Peter, especially when we compare Peter with Jude since the latter refers to “dangerous reefs at your love feasts” (*agapais*, Jude 12). Both Peter and Jude refer to what was happening at meals since they both immediately speak of eating with other believers (*syneuōchoumenoi*).¹⁷⁰⁷ A number of manuscripts in Peter, in fact, have the term “love feasts” instead of “deceptions.” The insertion of “love feasts” in some manuscripts is clearly an example of assimilation from Jude. Peter engages in wordplay in that the behavior of the teachers was not worthy of the appellation “love feasts.” Thus, he identifies their participation at the meals as deceitful since they were using their participation in the community as a pretext for sin. When they ate together with other believers, presumably in meals that culminate in the Lord’s Supper, they were deceitfully pursuing their own pleasures rather than seeking the good of others.

2:14 As we come to v. 14, further reasons the teachers deserve judgment, which support the main clause in 2:12, “they too will be destroyed,” are given. The indictment turns to sensuality, and rampant sensuality at banquets was well known in the Greco-Roman world.¹⁷⁰⁸ The CSB translates the first clause, “eyes full of adultery,” but the Greek literally reads, “having eyes full of an adulteress” (*moichalidos*). Because the reading is unusual, one manuscript substitutes “adultery” (*moicheias*). Other manuscripts introduce a word that occurs nowhere else and whose meaning is unknown (*moichalias*). Peter’s language is vivid and arresting. These people looked at all women, considering them as a potential candidate for adultery. How different from Job, who covenanted not to look lustfully at virgins (Job 31:1; cf. Matt 5:28).¹⁷⁰⁹ There was a pun in Greek literature that a man with no shame does not have “maidens” (*koras*) in his eyes but “harlots” (*pornas*, Plutarch, *Mor.* 528E). The next clause, they never “stop looking for sin,” probably zeroes in on their lust for other women, though perhaps their greed for material things is also included.

The adverse affect the teachers had on others is expressed in the words “they seduce unstable people.” The word “seduce” (*deleazō*)

hails from the world of fishing and hunting, where bait is used to snare unsuspecting prey (cf. Jas 1:14). In v. 18 the word occurs again to indicate the influence of the false teachers on others. Here we are told that the “unstable” (*astēriktous*) were seduced. The related verb appears in 1:12, referring to those “established (*estērigmenous*) in the truth.” In 3:16 we are warned that the “unstable” (*astēriktoi*) distorted Paul’s writings and the rest of the Scriptures. Since this verse directs our attention to sexual sin and greed, perhaps the teachers enticed people to sin by promising them that they could live for sexual pleasure and the material comforts of this life without any thought of judgment. Such a theology seemed too good to pass up for the unstable, and they swallowed the bait eagerly.

The sins of the false teachers take center stage in the next phrase, though Peter shifts from sexual sin to covetousness. They were “trained in greed.” The word translated “trained” comes from the Greek term *gegymnasmenēn*, from which we derive our word “gymnasium” (cf. 1 Tim 4:7; Heb 5:12; 12:11; cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 3.15). Gymnasiums “were centers founded for the physical training of young citizens, which then became venues for mental as well as physical education, serving as secondary schools in the community.”¹⁷¹⁰ The false teachers devoted energy and practice to greed, and it became a fully developed habit. Having listed such sins, Peter returns to the consequence of such behavior. They were “children under a curse.”¹⁷¹¹ In other words, they were under God’s curse.¹⁷¹² The theme of judgment resurfaces since this is the reality the teachers denied, and Peter wants to stab his readers awake so they would take it seriously and repudiate the teachers.

2:15 Those who were the cursed children were like Israel of old, in that they were, at least formally, part of the people of God.¹⁷¹³ They have left “the straight path” and wandered astray. Leaving the way implies that they were once part of the people of God (cf. 2:1, 20–21).¹⁷¹⁴ They had gone astray like Israel of old. We have already commented on the importance of “the way” in v. 2, and the word is used twice in this verse, although the CSB translates the term as

“path” on both occasions. We noted in v. 2 the tradition of the two ways, the way of righteousness and the way of wickedness (cf. Prov 2:15). No other ways exist, and those who have strayed from “the straight path” are now following a new way, “the path of Balaam.”¹⁷¹⁵

Balaam is a curious character in the OT, and the interpretation of Num 22–24 is difficult enough that some think he was portrayed in a positive light in those chapters. This interpretation, however, does not read Num 22–24 with a keen enough eye and also ignores the rest of the canonical witness. In fact, Peter detects one of the key features of the narrative in v. 16. Balaam’s donkey protected Balaam from death and rebuked him (Num 22:21–35). The donkey’s speaking to Balaam indicates that Balaam had less insight into what God was doing than his animals.¹⁷¹⁶ The narrator in Numbers suggests that Balaam’s intentions when he traveled to curse Israel were impure, that he desired financial reward (Num 21:15–20). The point of the story is that the Lord sovereignly spoke through Balaam to bless Israel, even though the prophet desired to curse God’s people (cf. Deut 23:4–5; Josh 24:9–10; Neh 13:2; cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 4.118–22; Philo, *Moses* 1.277, 281, 283, 286; *Migration* 114).¹⁷¹⁷ The account in Numbers testifies to Balaam’s true character since he was slain fighting against Israel (Num 31:8), and the sexual sin at Baal Peor in which the Midianites snared Israel was attributed to Balaam’s advice (Num 31:16; cf. Rev 2:14; Josephus, *Ant.* 4.129–30; Philo, *Moses* 1.295–300).¹⁷¹⁸

Surprisingly, Peter does designate Balaam as the “son of Bezer” (NIV) or “son of Beor” (ESV, NASB, RSV, NKJV), who was actually his father (Num 22:5; 24:3, 15). Instead Peter writes “son of Bosor” (rightly CSB, KJV, NRSV, HCSB). The attribution perplexes us because the name appears nowhere else. Some commentators assume Peter made a mistake.¹⁷¹⁹ We have already noted, however, Peter’s penchant for playing on words. He continues to do so here. The word “Bosor” likely derives from a pun on the word “flesh” (*basar*) in Hebrew,¹⁷²⁰ or less likely it designates the place from which he

came.¹⁷²¹ Balaam was not a man of the Spirit but a man of the flesh. Fornberg suggests that the “sexual licentiousness” of Balaam is in view here in accord with Num 25 and 31.¹⁷²² The false teachers, like Balaam, were not leading God’s people in the righteous way but in the way of the flesh.¹⁷²³ I have already noted that Balaam was motivated by greed, and the verse closes with this charge: he “loved the wages of wickedness.” The phrase *misthon adikias* was previously used in v. 13. Balaam loved money and a desire for material gain governed and motivated his prophetic ministry. Similarly, the false teachers were driven by greed (2:3, 14). A soft life can only be pursued if one has the requisite finances. The false teachers, like Balaam, were unprincipled purveyors of teachings that would ensure their own comfort and security.¹⁷²⁴

2:16 Peter features the most humorous dimension of Balaam’s story . “Peter appears to be setting up the deeply ironic contrast between the dumb ass, who speaks rationally, and the prophet Balaam, who is mad or irrational.”¹⁷²⁵ While he was traveling to meet Balak, under the cloak of false piety and motivated by greed, the donkey instead of Balaam perceived the threat from God’s angel (Num 22:21–35). Some commentators remark that the donkey did not really rebuke Balaam but simply complained about his beatings. This observation fails to read the story at a deep enough level. The donkey’s complaints were a rebuke because he perceived the spiritual reality (the threat of death), while Balaam, the prophet, was oblivious to the danger. The prophet who presumably read the entrails of animals to prophesy was bested by one of his own animals, who discerned the things of God better than he. We have another play on words in the words “lawlessness” (*paranomias*) and “madness” (*paraphronian*). Balaam, of course, was not literally insane. But anyone who pursues “lawlessness” is out of his mind since unrighteousness always leads to judgment. The only sane way to respond to the teachers is to reject their lawless course because every reader of biblical tradition knows what finally happened to Balaam. He was ignominiously slain while fighting against Israel

(Num 31:8). A similar destiny, i.e., judgment, awaited the teachers, and hence Peter's readers should repudiate their teaching.

4.4 The Adverse Impact of the False Teachers on Others (2:17–22)

¹⁷ These people are springs without water, mists driven by a storm. The gloom of darkness has been reserved for them. ¹⁸ For by uttering boastful, empty words, they seduce, with fleshly desires and debauchery, people who have barely escaped from those who live in error. ¹⁹ They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption, since people are enslaved to whatever defeats them. ²⁰ For if, having escaped the world's impurity through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in these things and defeated, the last state is worse for them than the first. ²¹ For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than, after knowing it, to turn back from the holy command delivered to them. ²² It has happened to them according to the true proverb: A dog returns to its own vomit, and, "a washed sow returns to wallowing in the mud."

The emphasis shifts from the character of the false teachers to their effect on others. Peter begins by emphasizing their deception. The false teachers promised water to those who were thirsty, but instead they left them parched and desiccated. Hence, their judgment (v. 17c) is just. Verses 18–19 explain more specifically how they seduced recent converts. We are told three things: (1) They spoke with assertive confidence that induced the weak to think the teachers knew what they were talking about. (2) They appealed to sinful human desires, arguing that it made no difference at all if we indulge our sexual appetites to the full. (3) They maintained that their teaching was the pathway to freedom. Peter (v. 19) sees the promise of freedom as highly ironic since the teachers themselves were captivated by sin. It is difficult to know if Peter refers to the teachers or those seduced by them in vv. 20–22. In either case he explains that apostasy is dangerous because if one embraces the gospel and turns back, it is harder to reclaim one for the faith. The last state has become worse

than the first. It is better not to have known the righteous way than it is to repudiate it because those who have known it will not be inclined to consider the truth again. Those who have fallen reveal themselves to be like dogs and pigs. Their true nature emerges in that they return to vomit or the mud pile. Peter warns his readers, therefore, that they should not travel the road of those who had been seduced since it is a road that descends steeply and quickly, and climbing upwards again is virtually impossible because those who have descended no longer desire to return.

2:17 Peter now turns to the effect the false teachers had on others, especially recent converts to the gospel. The language continues to be close to Jude's. Peter writes of "springs without water," while Jude referred to "clouds without rain" (Jude 12 NIV). The idea in both instances is similar. In the intense heat of the Middle East, a spring would be a haven for the thirsty travelers. They would experience frustration and disappointment upon seeing that the spring that promised water was dried up. Peter reflects on the teaching of the false teachers. They promised satisfaction for thirsty souls, but in the end they left people parched and in need. We think here of the parallel in Jer 2:13, "They have abandoned me, the fountain of living water, and dug cisterns for themselves—cracked cisterns that cannot hold water." Water elsewhere refers to teaching that sustains one's spiritual life (cf. Prov 10:11; 13:14; 14:27; Sir 24:23–31).¹⁷²⁶ Green rightly remarks, "Heterodoxy is all very novel in the classroom; it is extremely unsatisfying in the parish."¹⁷²⁷

For Jude the rainless clouds were driven along by the wind, while Peter reflected on "mists driven by a storm." The "mists" (*homichlai*) could signify a storm in which vision is obscured.¹⁷²⁸ On this reading the false teachers sowed confusion by their teaching.¹⁷²⁹ Most commentators, however, see the expression as parallel to the first one in the verse. The mists promise water that is so desperately needed in a dry climate, but the wind sweeps through and drives the hazy mists away, leaving the land parched.¹⁷³⁰ In both instances the teachers did not deliver on what they promised. They pledged harmony and

produced dissonance. Peter then returns to the theme of judgment. False teaching was not a light matter. “The gloom of darkness has been reserved” for those who propagate error.¹⁷³¹ Peter continues to press home the future judgment of the teachers. Commentators often remark that the imagery of darkness being reserved does not fit with the imagery of waterless springs and hazy mists. The language of mists, however, may fit rather well with darkness since a heavy mist can obscure vision.¹⁷³² Even if the imagery is inconsistent, authors often mix metaphors, and so we should not be surprised if that is what Peter does here.¹⁷³³

2:18 The main clause in v. 18 should be featured: “they seduce, with fleshly desires and debauchery, people who have barely escaped from those who live in error.” The false teachers were seducing recent believers so that the latter renounced their devotion to the gospel. The “for” (*gar*) gives another reason the teachers would be consigned to the gloom of darkness (v. 17b), namely, because they maximized their evil by enveloping others in their evil ways. The teachers were waterless springs because they did not lead people to truth but into error.¹⁷³⁴ Instead of providing people with the water of life, they gave them “cracked cisterns that cannot hold water” (Jer 2:13). Instead of giving them an inclination for the truth, they gave recent converts a delight for error. The word “seduce” (*deleazousin*) repeats the same term used in 2:14. We noted there its association with bait for hunting and fishing. The English verb “entice” expresses aptly the meaning of the term. The false teachers were as misleading and seductive as the hunter who attempts to catch his prey.

A textual issue emerges with the word *oligōs*, translated “barely” in the CSB. This term refers to those who have recently or “barely” (ESV, NAB, CEV; “scarcely,” NJB) escaped from error. Many manuscripts say “really” (*ontōs*) instead of *oligōs* (NKJV), and when these words are in caps, as they are in the earliest manuscripts, it would be difficult to distinguish them. We can be almost certain, however, that *oligōs* is original.¹⁷³⁵ The term “recently” is supported by both the Alexandrian and Western text types. Furthermore, the word *oligōs* is

used rarely in Greek literature, and so scribes could have mistakenly inserted a more common term. Contextually, “recently” or “barely” makes better sense, but the translation “recently” is preferable. The false teachers influenced recent converts who were still unstable in their faith. Conversely, it seems improbable that Peter would say they seduced those who “really escaped from those living in error.”¹⁷³⁶ Another textual variant intrudes in the verse. Should we read the present tense “people . . . escaping” (NIV; *apopheugontas*) or the aorist (*apophygontas*)? The external evidence favors the former, and scribes would be likely to insert an aorist tense instead of the present since in two other instances Peter uses the aorist form *apophygontes* (1:4; 2:20). The present tense combined with *oligōs* focuses on the recency of the events narrated. The NIV captures nicely the nuance. They were “just escaping from those who live in error.” It is likely, then, that Peter is not saying that they “barely” escaped the clutches of the world but that they had recently escaped it. Those living in “error” (*planē*) are unbelievers (cf. Rom 1:27; Eph 4:14; 1 Thess 2:3; 2 Thess 2:11; Jas 5:20; 2 Pet 3:17; 1 John 4:6; Jude 11). The false teachers were crafty. They targeted those who were unstable and liable to be taken in by their schemes.

The two modifying clauses are both instrumental, explaining *how* the teachers baited their hook to lure away recent converts. First, they entice others “by uttering boastful, empty words.” And second, they lead people astray “by appealing to the lustful desires of the flesh” (NIV). Thus, the false teachers enticed recent converts in two ways: (1) with boastful speech and (2) with invitations to indulge the flesh. Bigg expresses aptly the significance of the two phrases: “Grandiose sophistry is the hook, filthy lust is the bait, with which these men catch those whom the Lord had delivered or was delivering.”¹⁷³⁷ We will look at each of the phrases in more detail. Their speech apparently was full of confidence (*hyperonka*), which Peter considers to be nothing other than arrogant vanity. Those who are weak are often susceptible to the assertive confidence of others, even if such confidence flows from arrogance and sin. Ultimately their arrogant speech is futile (*mataiotēs*) since anything that deviates from the truth

is destined to fail. The words of the teachers breathe confidence, but in the end they will rue their own prescriptions.

The NIV translation “by appealing to the lustful desires of the flesh” masks some of the difficulties in the phrase. A more literal translation is: “They entice with desires of the flesh, sensualities.” The word “sensualities” (*aselgeiais*) is awkward in Greek. We would expect a genitive instead of a dative, and some scribes made this substitution, but there is no doubt Peter used the dative. We could translate the noun as an adjective, “sensual desires,” or, more likely, we should take it as appositional, “desires of the flesh—sensual ones.” The word *aselgeiais* identifies what kind of fleshly desires Peter has in mind, and the term typically refers to sexual sin.¹⁷³⁸ Peter has already used the word twice in chap. 2 (vv. 2, 7), and we noted in both instances that sexual sin was in view. The teachers lured recent converts by teaching that no judgment was forthcoming (3:3–7). And if there was no judgment, it follows that morality is irrelevant. People could live however they wished since judgment is an illusion. The door was opened, then, to sexual sin at every level.

2:19 The participial clause in this verse gives the third means by which the teachers seduced those who had recently joined the church. The CSB uses a main clause, “they promise them freedom,” for what is a participle in Greek, “promising them freedom.” Certainly this participial clause is related to the previous one. They promised freedom, particularly by removing moral restraints—especially, it seems, in the realm of sexuality. Such teaching may have arisen through a distortion of Paul’s gospel of freedom, since we know from 3:15–16 that some were perverting his teaching.¹⁷³⁹ Freedom from any moral constraints also fits nicely with the notion that there would be no future judgment.¹⁷⁴⁰ Their promise of freedom is highly ironic since the teachers were “slaves of corruption.” Peter, by way of contrast, was a “slave of Jesus Christ” (1:1, lit. translation). Some think the word “corruption” should not be restricted to moral corruption since it also includes the notion of destruction, as we saw in 2:12.¹⁷⁴¹ Moral depravity and eschatological destruction, of

course, are logically related. And yet it seems doubtful that the latter idea is included here. The collocation of the word “slaves” (*douloi*) with “corruption” suggests that Peter here indicts the teachers for their moral corruption.¹⁷⁴² Seeing a reference to destruction introduces more complexity in the phrase than is warranted. In any case, the teachers were hardly free when they could not liberate themselves from sin. Those who cannot look at a woman without contemplating adultery and have hearts exercised and trained in greed are truly slaves (2:14). The freedom they promised others was an illusion.

The verse closes with an explanation of why they were slaves: “People are enslaved to whatever defeats them.” Some commentators think the proverbial saying should be translated, “For a man becomes the slave of him who overpowers him.”¹⁷⁴³ Even though the proverb originally derives from the slave trade, its proverbial nature suggests that the neuter “whatever” is fitting.¹⁷⁴⁴ If people cannot overcome their habits and sins, they are slaves to such things. How could the teachers proclaim a message of freedom when they were unable to extricate themselves from sin? Their lifestyle contradicted their message.

2:20 The first question we need to pose for vv. 20–22 is whether Peter refers to the false teachers or the recent converts they were enticing. Reasons favoring a reference to recent converts who had been seduced are as follows.¹⁷⁴⁵ (1) The “for” (*gar*) introducing v. 20 could refer to v. 18, explaining the consequences of being snared by the opponents. (2) The repetition of the same word, “escaped” (*apopheugontas*) and “escaped” (*apophygontes*) in vv. 18, 20, indicates that recent converts are the subject. In v. 18 they escaped from those entrapped in error, while in v. 20 they escaped from “the world’s impurity.” (3) Kelly argues that vv. 20–21 are a warning to those about to succumb, while Peter holds out no hope for the false teachers, concluding that they will never return to the faith.¹⁷⁴⁶

Most are convinced the false teachers are in view.¹⁷⁴⁷ (1) The chapter as a whole is directed against the opponents, and hence these

verses address them as well (2) The word for “defeated” is repeated in vv. 19 and 20. In v. 19 it is clearly the false teachers who were “defeated” (*hēttētai*) by evil, and the same word (“defeated,” *hēttōntai*) in v. 20 is, therefore, most naturally applied to them as well. (3) The teachers had definitely committed apostasy, which these verses portray, but Peter hopes those recently seduced could still be rescued.¹⁷⁴⁸

A decision is difficult precisely because the text is vague. Perhaps it is mistaken to opt for either view because what Peter says applies to both the false teachers and to all those who were seduced by them and who renounced the Christian faith.¹⁷⁴⁹ Kelly is incorrect when he says the text is a warning. Peter describes what “has happened” (*symbēbēken*, v. 22) to some who had abandoned the church. In another sense, however, we should construe the text as a warning. The fate of those who had apostatized stands as a warning to those wavering under the influence of the teachers. Peter wants his readers to see that those who commit apostasy are unlikely to return to the truth. The decision before the readers is of great consequence, and those who are wavering must see that final judgment is at stake. Still, the verses before us refer to those who had become entangled in the ways of the world after having escaped from its pollutions, of those who had turned away from the holy commandment, of those who had returned to their old ways, like dogs and pigs return to vomit and dirt. At the conclusion of this section, I will comment about whether these verses teach that believers can lose their salvation.

Verse 20 refers to conversion, noting those who had “*escaped* the world’s impurity through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”¹⁷⁵⁰ We saw in v. 18 that those “who have just *escaped* from those who live in error” (NRSV) refers to some who had recently turned away from sin. Similarly, in 2 Pet 1:4 the same term is used of conversion, of those who “having *escaped* the corruption in the world caused by evil desires” (NIV). In v. 20 conversion means one turns from “the world’s impurity” or “defilements of the world” (NRSV). This experience is parallel to escaping the error of unbelief in v. 18 and of escaping the lust of the world in 1:4, and thus impurity here

refers to “moral depravity.”¹⁷⁵¹ Conversion is also signaled when the text speaks of “knowledge” (*epignōsis*). This term is one of Peter’s favorites: grace and peace come through knowing God and Jesus Christ (1:2). Those who know God have everything they need for a godly life (1:3; cf. 1:8). Here Peter focuses on knowledge of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. We see again two Greek nouns that are joined by one article (*tou*), indicating that Jesus is both Lord and Savior and that those entering into the church confess him as such (cf. 1:2).

Although these “believers” had escaped the world’s defilements, they had returned again to its snares. They had been “defeated” (*hēttōntai*) by its power and “entangled” again by its delights. The gospel they initially confessed they now repudiated. The Lord and Savior they embraced they now rejected. The world they had escaped recaptured them afresh. Peter concludes from this that their last state is worse than their former one. The former state, of course, refers to their lives before conversion, when they were still enthralled by the desires of the world. The last state may designate their recent rejection of the Christian faith or their final destruction if one thinks Peter surrenders any hope that they will be saved.¹⁷⁵² Why was the last state worse than the first? If the last state refers to their turning away from the faith, it was worse because those who had experienced the Christian faith and then rejected it were unlikely to return to it again. They would not likely grant a fresh hearing to the gospel, concluding that they had already been through that phase. Peter employs a number of proverbs in this section, and here he seems to draw on a proverb uttered by Jesus.¹⁷⁵³ Jesus told a parable of an evil spirit evicted from a man that wanders looking for a dwelling place. Finding none, it returns to its original habitation, but seven other spirits join it in reclaiming the lost possession (Matt 12:43–45). He concludes, “The last state of that person is worse than the first” (Matt 12:45 NRSV). This aphorism applies nicely to those who had acknowledged Jesus as their Lord and Savior and have since rejected him.

2:21 Verse 21 explains why (*gar*, “for”) the last state is worse than the first. Peter uses a proverbial statement with the “better than”

formula (cf. e.g., Matt 5:29–30; 18:6, 8–9; 1 Cor 7:9; 1 Pet 3:17). The verb “known” (*epiginōskō*) links back to the noun of the previous verse (*epignōsei*, “knowledge”) and refers to entrance into the Christian church. Such entrance is described as knowing “the way of righteousness” (*tēn hodon tēs dikaiosynēs*). The way of righteousness is the moral life demanded of those who belong to God (cf. Prov 8:20; 12:28; 16:31; Matt 21:32).¹⁷⁵⁴ We saw in the first verse of the letter that righteousness denotes God’s saving power, and for Peter this saving power leads to a transformed life. The emphasis here is on the righteous life lived by believers. Noah was a preacher of this righteousness (2:5), and righteousness will characterize the new heaven and new earth (3:13). The “holy command” is another way of describing “the way of righteousness.” The Christian life can be viewed in singular terms as a command to live a new quality of life.¹⁷⁵⁵ This commandment was “delivered to them” (*paradotheisēs*), the same term Jude uses for the faith handed down once and for all to the saints (Jude 3). Peter emphasizes by this term the reliability and faithfulness of the tradition, as he does in the word “holy,” where we see that the commandment came from God himself.¹⁷⁵⁶ Nonetheless, these people had turned away from and repudiated what they once embraced. We can say again that it would have been better for them not to have known righteousness because it is so difficult or even impossible to reclaim apostates.

2:22 Verse 22 is a closing proverb reflecting on those who had apostatized. The singular “proverb” suggests that both proverbs are to be interpreted together as making *one* point. We need to recall in reading this that both dogs (Exod 22:31; 1 Kgs 14:11; 16:4; Matt 7:6; 15:26, 31; Luke 16:21; Phil 3:2; Rev 22:15) and pigs (Lev 11:7; Deut 14:8) were unclean animals for the Jews.¹⁷⁵⁷ Dogs often roamed in packs, scavenged from garbage, and were definitely not considered lovely pets. The proverb regarding dogs hails from Prov 26:11, “As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his foolishness.” The point of the proverb is easy to see. Dogs return to what is disgusting and unclean, sniffing even at their own vomit. Similarly, those who have

renounced the Christian faith have returned to what is disgusting, finding it more attractive than the “way of righteousness” and “the holy command.”

The origin of the second proverb is unknown. A common view is that it stems from Heraclitus,¹⁷⁵⁸ but others suggest that it derives from *The Story of Ahikar* (aka *Abiqar*).¹⁷⁵⁹ In the Syriac the latter reads, “You were to me, my son, like a swine which had had a bath, and when it saw a slimy pit, went down and bathed in it.”¹⁷⁶⁰ We must admit that we do not know with certainty the origin of the second proverb used in 2 Peter. Some, seeing a connection to Heraclitus and noting that the participle “returns” (*epistrepsas*) is not repeated in the second line (the CSB supplies the verb “returns”), think the point of the proverb is that pigs delight to wash in the mud.¹⁷⁶¹ But the primary issue for interpreting the saying is the present context, and in proverbs the second verb is often omitted but clearly implied. That is the case here. Hence, most commentators rightly understand the second line to be parallel with the first. Pigs, after washing themselves clean, spy the mud and wallow in it. Similarly, those who confess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and then deny him are like pigs who are washed clean and then return to their original filth. We probably should not overread the proverb and see an allusion to baptism in the original washing since it refers to the washing of a pig.¹⁷⁶² The references to dogs and pigs link back to v. 12 where the opponents are called “irrational animals.”¹⁷⁶³

What do these verses say about apostasy? Can a genuine believer forsake his or her salvation? We can certainly see why most commentators draw such a conclusion after reading these verses since they are not merely a warning about apostasy but reflect on those who have abandoned the church, who were previously members of it.¹⁷⁶⁴ They remind us that walking the aisle, making a profession of faith, making a decision for Christ, or Christian baptism do not ensure a future destiny in the eternal kingdom. Perseverance is the mark of genuineness, as Peter teaches throughout the letter. Only those who

continue to live a life of godliness will receive the reward of eternal life (1:5–11). Those who teach that genuine Christians can and do apostatize are taking these verses seriously, and sometimes believers who deny such a possibility brush them off without serious reflection.¹⁷⁶⁵

Nevertheless, I think it is a mistake to conclude that genuine believers can apostatize. The God who calls believers will see to it that they will reach their destination.¹⁷⁶⁶ Furthermore, we saw in 1 Pet 1:5, from the same author (see the commentary there) that God guards believers so that they will *certainly*, not probably, obtain eschatological salvation. Peter does not contradict himself, teaching in one place that believers can fall away and in another that they cannot. Some might try to explain the tension by saying that Peter is not actually saying these people were headed for eternal destruction, and he spoke only of the loss of rewards. This view flies in the face of the entire argument in chap. 2, and the contents of the entire letter. We have seen in many individual verses that eschatological judgment is promised to those who fall away. For example, three times in 2:1–3 Peter uses the word “destruction” (*apōleia*), a term that regularly denotes eschatological condemnation in the NT. The judgment of the flood and Sodom and Gomorrah are types of eternal judgment, not merely the loss of rewards, while Noah and Lot are a type of those who were preserved under adversity (2:5–9). The term “destroyed” in 2:12 also signifies the last judgment and eschatological corruption. In the same way the errorists are compared to Balaam, who wandered from the truth, a man who did not merely lose rewards but faced eternal judgment (2:15–16). Finally, it does not make much sense to say the last state is worse than the first (2:20), and it is better not to have known God’s righteous way if the people described will ultimately be saved. If they will experience salvation, then the last stage *is better than the first* since previously they were bound for hell, and now they are destined for heaven. Furthermore, *it is better to know the righteous way* if one will experience eschatological life, even though one will lose one’s rewards. Such statements signify that Peter

does not merely criticize the loss of rewards. Heaven and hell are at stake in this instance.

The best solution is to say that 2 Peter uses phenomenological language. In other words, Peter uses the language of “Christians” to describe those who fell away because they gave every appearance of being Christians. They confessed Christ as Lord and Savior, were baptized, and joined the church. But the false teachers and some of those they seduced, though still present physically in the church, were no longer considered to be genuine believers by Peter. Nonetheless, he used “Christian” language to describe them, precisely because of their participation in the church, because they gave some evidence initially of genuine faith. Those who had apostatized revealed that they were never truly part of the people of God since remaining true to the faith is one sign that one truly belongs to God. The words of 1 John apply well to what has happened in 2 Peter: “They went out from us, but they did not belong to us; for if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us. However, they went out so that it might be made clear that none of them belongs to us” (1 John 2:19). Peter points in the same direction in the illustration of the dog and pig. In the final analysis, those who fell away never really changed their nature.¹⁷⁶⁷ They remained dogs and pigs inside.¹⁷⁶⁸ As Hafemann argues at some length their nature was the cause of their actions.¹⁷⁶⁹ They may have washed up on the outside and appeared to be different, but fundamentally they were dogs and pigs. In other words, they were always unclean; they only seemed to have changed. Perseverance, therefore, is the test of authenticity. Some scholars declare that apostasy is taught here,¹⁷⁷⁰ but they do not offer any theological reflection on the question. Addressing only one text on a matter is inadequate for those who believe Scripture presents a unified and coherent word. We must also proffer some explanation how one text fits with others that appear to go in another direction. Scholars, in any case, will continue to disagree on whether believers can apostatize, but it is hoped that all will agree that believers must

persevere to the end to be saved.¹⁷⁷¹ In this respect there is a remarkable agreement between Arminians and Calvinists.

SECTION OUTLINE

5 Reminder: The Day of the Lord Will Come (3:1–18)

5.1 Scoffers Doubt the Coming Day (3:1–7)

5.2 The Lord's Timing Is Different from Ours (3:8–10)

5.3 Living Righteously because of the Future Day (3:11–18)

5 REMINDER: THE DAY OF THE LORD WILL COME (3:1–18)

The teaching of the false prophets is now challenged. They claimed that there would be no return of the Lord since creation is marked by regularity without disruption, but Peter's readers must remember that the prophets and apostles predicted such scoffers would arrive (3:1–4). All should recall God's action in the world (3:5–7): (1) he created the world; (2) destroyed it in flood; and (3) will judge the world by fire on the day of judgment. The so-called delay of the Lord's coming does not negate the promise of his return. Indeed, we must remember that the Lord doesn't reckon time as we do, that one day is like a thousand years, and the Lord is giving more time for people to repent (3:8–9). Still, the day of judgment is coming, the day when the present creation will pass away (3:10). Believers should live holy and blameless lives as they await the coming new creation (3:11–16), remembering (in accord with Paul's writings) that the Lord's patience opens up the possibility of salvation for those who have gone astray. Finally, the readers must not be led astray by the false teachers but grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus to the end (3:17–18).

5.1 Scoffers Doubt the Coming Day (3:1–7)

¹ *Dear friends, this is now the second letter I have written to you; in both letters, I want to stir up your sincere understanding by way of reminder,* ² *so that you recall the words previously spoken by the holy prophets and the command of our Lord and Savior given through your apostles.* ³ *Above all, be aware of this: Scoffers will come in the last days scoffing and following their own evil desires,* ⁴ *saying, "Where is his 'coming' that he promised? Ever since our ancestors fell asleep, all things continue as they have been since the beginning of*

creation.”⁵ *They deliberately overlook this: By the word of God the heavens came into being long ago and the earth was brought about from water and through water.*⁶ *Through these the world of that time perished when it was flooded.*⁷ *By the same word, the present heavens and earth are stored up for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.*

A new section is clearly marked in terms of both content and structure. Peter’s long discussion on the false teachers (chap. 2) concludes, and he turns afresh to his readers. Hafemann argues that 3:1–7 is an inference drawn from 2:17–22, certifying that judgment is coming.¹⁷⁷² The new section is introduced with the affectionate words “dear friends” (*agapētoi*), better rendered “beloved.” The purpose of the second letter is to arouse the readers from lethargic thinking and to remind them of the words of the OT prophets and the command, that is, the moral requirements of Jesus Christ—as these commands have been transmitted by the apostles. The particular reason the readers were to remember such teachings is explained in vv. 3–4. Peter reminds them that the arrival of scoffers in these last days was prophesied. Thus, their immoral lifestyle and their rejection of the Lord’s coming should occasion no surprise. The arrival of the false teachers fulfilled predictions that must come to pass before the Lord returns.

The opponents rejected the second coming, arguing that from the beginning of time (i.e., since the time of the patriarchs) history continues without cosmic interventions from God. Peter has a three-pronged argument against this view in vv. 5–7. First, the creation of the world represents God’s intervention, showing that there was not absolute continuity and regularity in history. The opponents failed to see the implications of their own view because by appealing to creation they concurred that there was a beginning, a time when God brought the world into being. Second, the opponents might object that God set the world in motion but did not intervene cosmologically thereafter. But such a view does not account for the flood, which involved a cataclysm for the entire world. Third, history will end with

a great conflagration, when the present heavens and earth will be burned and the ungodly judged.¹⁷⁷³

3:1 The words “dear friends” mark a transition in the letter. The CSB translation is too weak since the term is “beloved” (ESV, NRSV, *agapētoi*, cf. also 3:14, 17). “Beloved” signifies that the readers were the recipients of God’s saving love and perhaps also communicates Peter’s tender concern for his readers. We have Peter’s second letter to the readers. Scholars have postulated at least four different possibilities regarding the first letter. (1) Some think 2 Peter is not a unity, that its present composition stitches together more than one letter. McNamara, for example, argues that chap. 1 is the first letter and chap. 3 is subsequent to the letter composed in chap. 1.¹⁷⁷⁴ There is no textual evidence, however, for any partition theory in 2 Peter. The letter has come down to us as a unity. The transition in chap. 3 to a new subject is not surprising in a letter; in fact, chap. 3 continues to refer to the opponents criticized in chap. 2. (2) Other scholars have suggested that the first letter was Jude and the second one is 2 Peter.¹⁷⁷⁵ Such a view would hardly be apparent to the readers since Peter wrote *in his name*, while Jude wrote under his.¹⁷⁷⁶ How could the readers possibly recognize both letters as Peter’s when they have different names on them? Furthermore, it is difficult to explain, if this theory is correct, why Peter would change the wording of Jude. (3) More plausible is the idea that Peter wrote another letter that has since been lost.¹⁷⁷⁷ We know that Paul wrote letters that were lost (cf. 1 Cor 5:9), and most scholars believe he wrote a severe letter that also has been lost (2 Cor 7:8). Furthermore, Paul wrote a letter to the Laodiceans (Col 4:16) that has perished. Peter may have written other letters that have not survived as well.¹⁷⁷⁸ This theory is certainly possible, and it may be the best answer. It appeals, however, to correspondence that has never been found and isn’t mentioned elsewhere. Hence, I think the fourth option is preferable. (4) Peter refers to 1 Peter. This is still the majority view among commentators.¹⁷⁷⁹

The main objection to this view is the content of 1 Peter. Peter seems to have known his readers well in 2 Peter, but the same kind of knowledge is not apparent in 1 Peter. This argument is not particularly compelling. In fact, the degree of Peter's experience with the readers is not readily apparent from either letter. A more significant objection is that 1 Peter does not seem to be a call for "sincere understanding." But perhaps we have failed to see the parallel with 1 Peter here. In his first exhortation to his readers he says, "Therefore, with your minds ready for action, be sober-minded and set your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 1:13). Peter uses the same word for "mind" (*dianoia*) as we find in 2 Pet 3:1. In addition, it is evident from the commentary on 1 Peter that eschatology is central for the entire book, and the adversaries in 2 Peter denied the eschatological judgment and the coming of the Lord. In 1 Peter the readers are exhorted to fix their hope on the eschatological coming of Christ. Indeed, all of the exhortations in 1 Peter flow from 1:3–12, where eschatology takes center stage. So we could summarize the argument of 1 Peter in such a way that he encourages his readers to right thinking in light of the *eschaton*. The parallels between 1 and 2 Peter are closer than many scholars concede. I conclude that 1 Peter is the letter referred to here.¹⁷⁸⁰

Peter returns to the theme of 1:12–15, namely, that he wrote to arouse the readers' "sincere understanding" by means of reminders. By using the adjective "sincere" (*eilikrinē*), Peter signifies the "simplicity of their understanding and does not want to see it sullied in any way by the persuasion of the heretics and their error."¹⁷⁸¹ Believers need reminders about the truths they already know and accept because such reminders, though including the mind, address the whole person. The reminder is intended to grip the whole person so that we are possessed again by the gospel and its truth, so that we are energized to live for the glory of God.

3:2 In v. 2 Peter specifies what he wanted them to remember. The CSB translates well the connection between vv. 1–2, "I want to stir [you] up . . . that you recall the words." Peter desires to stimulate their thinking so that they would recall what they were previously taught

and not fall prey to the new-fangled ideas of the false teachers. More specifically, he wants them to remember the words of the prophets and the apostles. Jude (v. 17) writes in a similar way but omits any mention of the prophets. Peter reaches back to the conclusion of chapter 1. There he appeals to apostolic (1:16–18) and prophetic (1:19–21) testimony to verify the future coming of the Lord. He circles back to the prophets and the apostles, reversing the order here, and picking up his argument from the end of chap. 1. We saw in chap. 2 the false path and teaching promulgated by the opponents, which they are enjoined to avoid. Here the readers are reminded of the authoritative teaching of the prophets and the apostles so that their instruction, especially about the culmination of history, would not be forgotten. The parallel with 1:16–21 and the order in which prophets and apostles occur indicate that OT prophets are in view here, not NT prophets.¹⁷⁸² What words from the OT prophets does Peter have in mind? In light of 2 Peter as a whole, he likely refers to those prophecies about the end of history, the day of judgment and salvation.¹⁷⁸³ The OT prophets often spoke of the day of the Lord, and because of the arrival of that day, they exhorted readers to live godly lives. We have an indication here that the OT is fulfilled in the NT and that there is an organic unity between the Testaments (cf. 1 Pet 1:10–12).

The syntax of the part of the verse relating to the apostles is difficult in Greek. Genitives are piled up, but they are not easy to disentangle so that the Greek is rather rough. The CSB smooths out the text and captures its meaning well: “The command of our Lord and Savior given through your apostles.”¹⁷⁸⁴ We see, then, that the commands deriving from the apostles represent the words of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.¹⁷⁸⁵ The point is that the words of Jesus Christ had been transmitted by the apostles. The word “command” (*entolēs*; cf. 2:21) probably is collective, using a singular to denote the moral norms incumbent on believers.¹⁷⁸⁶ The moral standard for believers, according to Peter, is summed up in the teaching of Jesus Christ himself. The false teachers, on the other hand, were notorious for their

dissolute lifestyle. The terms “Lord and Savior” (*tou kyriou kai sōtēros*) have one Greek article, indicating (cf. 1:1) that the same person, Jesus Christ, is in view.

The phrase “your apostles” has elicited discussion. Some scholars argue that this is clear evidence the letter is not by Peter.¹⁷⁸⁷ The author, according to this view, saw all of the apostles as belonging to the church addressed. It is unlikely, however, that the phrase should be read in such a way. Second Peter is not a general letter that lacks specific recipients. Peter addresses the particular circumstances of his readers. The phrase “your apostles,” therefore, represents the particular apostles who evangelized and taught the churches receiving this letter.¹⁷⁸⁸ Neither does Peter necessarily exclude himself from their number. He may have been included in the plural “apostles.”

3:3 Verses 3–4 explain why the readers need to remember the words of the prophets and the commands of the apostles. The nominative participle “knowing” (ESV, NKJV; *ginōskontes*, CSB “be aware of this”) is awkward in Greek since we expect an accusative.¹⁷⁸⁹ It probably should be understood as giving a reason the readers should remember what they were taught. They should have known, after all, that the arrival of scoffers was prophesied. The presence of those who doubt the coming of Christ indicates his coming is near.¹⁷⁹⁰

The phrase “the last days” (*eschatōn tōn hēmerōn*) is rather common in the Scriptures (LXX Gen 49:1; Isa 2:2; Jer 23:20; 25:19; 37:24; Ezek 38:16; Dan 2:28; Hos 3:5; Mic 4:1; Acts 2:17; 2 Tim 3:1; Heb 1:2; Jas 5:3; cf. Jude 18). New Testament writers teach that the last days had arrived in the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (see esp. Acts 2:17; Heb 1:2). Thus, there is no suggestion that the prophecy recorded here was still unfulfilled. Peter believes it was fulfilled in the false teachers who had arrived in the churches he addresses. We see the same phenomenon in 1 Tim 4:1–5; 2 Tim 3:1–9; and Jude 18. Paul predicted false shepherds would arise among the flock (Acts 20:29–30), and Jesus also said that false prophets would emerge (Matt 24:3–4, 11).¹⁷⁹¹ The future form does not rule out Petrine authorship of the letter, nor does it constitute a clear hint that

the letter was not written by Peter. The words “scoffers . . . scoffing” represent the Greek (*en empaigmonē empaiktai*), and the construction is a Semitism (cf. Luke 22:15). The reference to their scoffing elicits the negative things said about the teachers in chap. 2. The focus on their own desires reminds us of the criticism of the false teachers in chap. 2. The false teachers were not constrained by moral standards but lived to satisfy their own selfish desires. Thus, before we hear the content of their teaching in v. 4, we are prepared to dismiss their perspective since the false teachers were scoffers and licentious.¹⁷⁹²

3:4 The content of the scoffers’ teaching is now recorded. “Where is his ‘coming’ that he promised?” The term “coming” (*parousia*) refers to the future coming of Jesus Christ (see commentary under 1:16). Expressions with the phrase “where is” reflect skepticism about the content contained in the question. Jeremiah’s critics mocked him by saying: “Where is the word of the Lord? Let it now be fulfilled!” (Jer 17:15 NIV). The Israelites in Malachi’s day fatigued the Lord when they said, “Where is the God of justice?” (Mal 2:17; cf. also Pss 79:10; 115:2; Joel 2:17; Mic 7:10). Their skepticism parallels God’s people in Ezekiel’s day who doubted that the judgment promised would come, saying, “The days go by and every vision comes to nothing” (Ezek 12:22 NIV).

Verse 4b records the reason (“for,” omitted by CSB) they doubted the future coming of Christ. They argued that since the death of the patriarchs, God had not intervened in the world. Indeed, from the beginning of creation, the world has progressed with an order and regularity that forbids us to look for something dramatic like a future coming of Christ.

We have summarized the basic meaning of the verse, but controversy exists over some of the details. The CSB rightly translates the Greek phrase *aph hēs* temporally (“ever since,” cf. Luke 7:45; Acts 20:18; 24:11). The CSB says the fathers “fell asleep” (*ekoimēthēsan*). The word “sleep” is a metaphor for death, and Moo rightly maintains that the term is reserved only for believers who die (Matt 27:52; John 11:11–12; Acts 7:60; 13:36; 1 Cor 7:39; 11:30; 15:6, 18, 20, 51; 1 Thess 4:13–15). This is an indication that the metaphor was not a

dead one, that it signaled to the readers not soul sleep but the notion that death is temporary.¹⁷⁹³

A crucial word in this verse is “ancestors” (*pateres*). Many commentators argue that it refers to Christian believers of the first generations, and if this is the case, then the author could not be Peter since he was a member of the first generation.¹⁷⁹⁴ But there is a decisive objection against this interpretation.¹⁷⁹⁵ The plural “ancestors” never refers to the first generations of Christians in the NT, but it *always* refers to the patriarchs of the OT (e.g., Matt 23:30, 32; Luke 1:55, 72; 6:23, 26; 11:47; John 4:20; 6:31, 49, 58; 7:22; Acts 3:13, 25; 5:30; 7:2, 11–12, 15, 19, 32, 38–39, 44–45, 51–52; 13:17, 32, 36; 15:10; 22:1, 14; 26:6; 28:25; Rom 11:28; 15:8; 1 Cor 10:1; Heb 1:1; 3:9; 8:9).¹⁷⁹⁶ Furthermore, there are hundreds of verses in the OT where “ancestors” refers to the patriarchs. Another piece of evidence points toward a reference to the OT patriarchs. The term “ancestors” overlaps with the phrase “since the beginning of creation.”¹⁷⁹⁷ The two phrases are not synonymous of course. But both phrases point to the regularity of life for a long time, whether from the time God created the world or from the time the patriarchs walked the earth.

Bauckham argues that Peter refers to the first Christian generation but admits that defining the “ancestors” as the first Christian generation “is unattested elsewhere” and that “2 Peter seems to be unique in the literature of the first two Christian centuries in referring to the first Christian generation as ‘the fathers.’”¹⁷⁹⁸ I would respond by saying that these comments demonstrate that his view flies in the face of the lexical evidence and strengthens the idea that Peter refers to the OT patriarchs.¹⁷⁹⁹

Bauckham objects that the opponents could not have said that all things remain from the time of the patriarchs since Jesus Christ’s arrival fulfills many OT prophecies.¹⁸⁰⁰ Thus, they must have said that all things have remained the same since the coming of Christ. The objection is not compelling.¹⁸⁰¹ First, we must beware of

overconfidence in sketching in what the false teachers said. Unfortunately, our knowledge of them, despite the contents of 2 Peter, is scanty. Second, the opponents may have accepted the fulfillment of prophecy but argued for continuity in this world. They saw fulfillments *soteriologically* while denying that there had ever been any changes *cosmologically*. Third, the phrase “since the beginning of creation” indicates that their argument did reach back past the first generation of Christians to the beginning of the world. This confirms the suggestion that they argued against cosmological changes.

In saying that “all things continue as they have been since the beginning of creation,” Peter paraphrases the cosmological worldview of the teachers.¹⁸⁰² Soteriological prophecies may have been fulfilled in Jesus Christ, but the physical world had been stable from the time the world was created. Scholars sometimes have seen in the view of the scoffers the Aristotelian view that the world is eternal.¹⁸⁰³ This is certainly possible.¹⁸⁰⁴ Adams argues that the issue is not God’s intervention or involvement in the world, and the reference to the flood shows that the issue is whether the world will be destroyed.¹⁸⁰⁵ Adams, following Bigg, thinks the scoffers in accord with Aristotle and Plato believed the cosmos was immutable and indestructible, and thus there could be no parousia because there can be no “cosmic catastrophe.”¹⁸⁰⁶ Adams may be correct, and embracing his view would not change the overall argument here significantly, although the reference to creation in 3:4 suggests that God’s intervention in the world was also contested or at least neglected in their thinking.

3:5 The basic meaning of this verse is clear, but the details are murky because the syntax is complicated and unclear. We will begin, therefore, by summarizing how the verse contributes to the argument. Peter gives three arguments against the scoffers, refuting their notion that God does not intervene in the world. His first argument shows an internal flaw in the scoffers’ worldview. They claimed continuity since creation, but the creation of the world itself represents divine intervention. In reading Gen 1, it is apparent that the world was chaotic (Gen 1:2) before God made it habitable for human life. The

present stability of the world can be traced back to God's intervention, and thus there is no reason to doubt that he will intervene again.

Now some of the details in the verse will be examined. The first phrase, "They deliberately overlook this" (*lanthanei gar autous touto thelontas*), stresses the self-will of the mockers if we follow the CSB. The translation proposed by the CSB (cf. also ESV, KJV, NKJV, RSV, NRSV), however, is unlikely. Syntactically, it makes more sense if the word "this" (*touto*) is the object of *thelontas*. The term *thelō* can be translated "maintain."¹⁸⁰⁷ The translation of the NASB reflects this interpretation, "For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice." The word *thelontas* signifies that the false teachers "have ignored or willfully passed over" the truth.¹⁸⁰⁸ The word "this" refers to the contents of v. 4, showing that they forgot or neglected something crucial when they maintained that God does not intervene cosmologically. Peter emphasizes in vv. 1–2 that his readers should remember God's words transmitted by the prophets and apostles. Now we are told that one of the major problems with the scoffers was that they forgot some important truths in defending their own view.

Peter probably teaches in this verse that the heavens came into existence long ago and that the earth coheres by God's word. Such an interpretation is attractive syntactically since in reading the Greek we could place the word "heavens" with the verb "came into being" (*ēsan*) and "earth" with the participle "brought about" (*synestōsa*). The CSB represents this view, "By the word of God the heavens came into being long ago and the earth was brought about from water and through water."¹⁸⁰⁹ The initial creation of the universe is in view, showing that God has intervened in the world. Even though the scoffers apparently concurred with creation (see v. 4), they had not drawn the right conclusions from it. The world God created was initially watery chaos, unformed and undeveloped (Gen 1:2). Human life could not have existed if the world was left in its chaotic state. The world, however, was "brought about" (*synestōsa*), that is, it took shape, "by the word of God." Colossians 1:17 is a parallel text in some respects since there we are told that "all things hold together" (*synestēken*) in Christ. The physical universe is preserved and

maintained by Christ himself (cf. Heb 1:3). Peter emphasizes here that the original creation was formed and took shape by God's word. Dependence on Genesis is obvious since created realities come into being through what "God said" (Gen 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 29). The theme is common elsewhere in the OT as well. "The heavens were made by the word of the LORD, and all the stars, by the breath of his mouth" (Ps 33:6; cf. Prov 8:27–29; Heb 11:3; and in the postbiblical tradition, Sir 39:17; Wis 9:1; 4 Ezra 6:38, 43).

What is most puzzling about the verse is the statement that the world "was brought about from water and through water." We could interpret this as if Peter were reflecting on the basic stuff out of which the world is made, as if, like Thales, he were saying that water is the basic element in the world.¹⁸¹⁰ We need to remind ourselves, however, that Peter draws on Gen 1 and is not giving a philosophical answer regarding the "stuff" of the universe.¹⁸¹¹ We have already noted that in Gen 1 a watery chaos covers the earth, making life impossible for human beings. In creating the world, God separated the waters by making the expanse of the sky so that the waters were above and below the expanse (Gen 1:6–8). Furthermore, the waters on earth were collected so that dry ground would also exist (Gen 1:9–10). Thus, when Peter says the world was created "from water" (*ex hydatos*), he probably has in mind the emergence of the earth and sky from these waters. Discerning what he meant by the world being formed "through water" (*di hydatos*) is more difficult. Some think he refers to the rain by which the earth is sustained.¹⁸¹² The subject, however, is the creation of the world, not how it keeps going, and so we should reject this idea. Others understand *dia* locally so that the idea is that the world was formed in the midst of the waters.¹⁸¹³ This is a possibility but represents an unusual definition for the preposition. We should settle, then, for the third option, which is that God used the water as an instrument in shaping and forming the world.¹⁸¹⁴

3:6 Peter shifts to his second argument supporting God's intervention in and judgment of the world. If at creation God introduced stability into the world by separating the waters, during

the flood the chaos returned. For the waters were unleashed and the world was destroyed. The false teachers could hardly maintain that the world is marked by regularity without judgment, when a flood destroyed human beings. Once again the syntax is puzzling. We begin with the phrase *di' hōn*, translated “through these” in the CSB. The two singular uses of the word “water” in v. 6 function as the antecedent of the plural pronoun according to the NIV.¹⁸¹⁵ Carson argues that two sources of water (from the depths of the earth and the from skies) account for the flood (Gen 7:11), which explains the plural pronoun.¹⁸¹⁶ Reicke suggests that the antecedent is “the heavens and the earth.”¹⁸¹⁷ Against this, it is not evident how the world could be destroyed by the heavens and the earth, unless one sees these as the repository of water. The allusion is so indirect, however, that one doubts whether the readers would make the connection.

The most common solution is that the plural relative pronoun refers to water and to the word of God, both of which are mentioned in v. 5.¹⁸¹⁸ The same agents that brought order to the world—water and God’s word—were also responsible for its destruction. The flood, according to Peter, was not merely a natural disaster. It was God’s judgment on the world, appointed by his word and effected through water. Some scholars understand “world” (*kosmos*) here to refer to the heavens and the earth so that the parallel between the future destruction of the heavens and earth is maintained here.¹⁸¹⁹ But this is doubtful for a few reasons. First, the shift of words from “heavens . . . and earth” (v. 5) to “world” (v. 6) is significant. The world as a referent is less inclusive than the heavens and earth. Second, the argument constructed is analogous, not exact. The claim is not that the destruction in the flood is the same in scope as the future judgment by fire. The point is that the judgment at the flood was comprehensive enough to include the world and anticipated an even greater judgment to come. Third, we have already seen in 2:5 that “the ancient world” (*archaiou kosmou*) and the “world of the ungodly” (*kosmō asebon*) refer to the human beings destroyed by the flood. Bauckham is likely correct that “world” here refers to a judgment that affects more than

people,¹⁸²⁰ but it does not follow that it includes the heavens. A judgment of the earth is “cosmic” enough.

3:7 Verse 7 contains Peter’s third argument regarding the regularity of the world which reminds the readers of God’s judgment. God intervened at creation (v. 5), judged the world the flood (v. 6), and he will intervene and destroy the world in the future. The future catastrophe will be like the original creation in that it will include the heavens and the earth. Furthermore, it will parallel God’s work in creation and flood in that it will be accomplished by his word. The instrument of destruction is different in one respect. Instead of using water, God will employ fire. Water cannot be the instrument since God pledged not to destroy the world by means of it again (Gen 9:11–17). The reference to fire is surprising since nowhere else are we told that the world will be destroyed by fire. Some detect Stoic or Iranian influence, but if there is any dependence, it is indirect. Stoicism expected the world conflagration to be repeated again and again. Peter expects the end to come once.¹⁸²¹ Furthermore, the OT itself associates fire with judgment, sometimes at the end of history (Deut 32:22; Ps 97:3; Isa 30:30; 66:15–16; Ezek 38:22; Amos 7:4; Zeph 1:18; Mal 4:1).¹⁸²²

We should note that the fiery judgments in the OT refer to the judgment of people, not the cosmos. And yet that the world would be destroyed by fire is found in the postbiblical tradition (1QH^a 3:29–36; Sib. Or. 3:54–90, 4:173–92; 5:211–13, 531; Apoc. Adam 49:3; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.70). The future destruction of the world was inseparable, in Peter’s mind, from judgment. That day, recalling the day of the Lord of the OT, will be a day of judgment. It will also involve the day of “destruction of the ungodly.” The false teachers, unless they repent, would realize too late that the judgment was no myth and that God does intervene in the world.

5.2 The Lord’s Timing Is Different from Ours (3:8–10)

⁸ *Dear friends, don’t overlook this one fact: With the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.* ⁹ *The*

Lord does not delay his promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance.

10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief; on that day the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, the elements will burn and be dissolved, and the earth and the works on it will be disclosed.

The importance of remembering continues in the present paragraph. In vv. 1–2 the readers were exhorted to remember the words of the prophets and the commands of the apostles. Such remembrance was crucial because scoffers had emerged who doubted the future coming of Jesus Christ. Indeed, these scoffers had forgotten (v. 5) and not perceived the significance of God’s works in history. They had forgotten these things because they had strayed from God and repudiated the truth. Peter fears that they could influence his readers. But he is also concerned that the faithful might forget (v. 8) important truths, not because they were rebelling but simply because the false teachers might sow confusion in their minds. Thus, he gives them two further arguments about the coming of the Lord. First, the apparent failure of the Lord to appear within a certain time frame should not dampen their faith. The Lord does not reckon time as we do (v. 8). A thousand years is like one day to him. What seems like a long time to us is not long to him. The fact that he has not arrived, therefore, says nothing about whether he will come in the future. Second, the Lord is not slow in fulfilling his promise to return (v. 9). He delays his coming to give opportunity for all to repent. Finally, in v. 10 Peter reiterates with confidence that the day of the Lord will arrive. It will come suddenly, and when it does, the world as we know it will be dissolved.

3:8 The next section of the letter is marked by “dear friends” (*agapētoi*), as in 3:1, 14, 17. For the significance of this term see the comments under 3:1. The verb “don’t overlook” (*lanthanō*) is repeated from v. 5. There we saw that the opponents had failed to see the implications of God’s work at creation. The world has not always been marked by regularity and order. God in his creative work shaped the chaotic world so that it was habitable for human beings (Gen 1:2).

Thus, the readers must not neglect a critical truth about God, a truth they were liable to forget since they were under pressure from the teachers, who likely argued that too much time had elapsed for the promise of Christ's return to be credible.

Peter reminds them of the truth that “with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.”¹⁸²³ Peter alludes to Ps 90:4, where the psalmist declares, “For in your sight a thousand years are like yesterday that passes by, like a few hours of the night.” In Ps 90 the eternity of God is contrasted with the temporality of human beings (cf. also Sir 18:9–11; 2 Bar. 48:12–13). The lives of human beings are short and marked by frailty, but God does not weaken or fail with the passage of time. In one sense the marking of time is irrelevant to God because he transcends it. Peter applies this insight to the coming of the Lord. If the passing of time does not diminish God in any way and if he transcends time so that its passing does not affect his being, then believers should not be concerned about the so-called delay of Christ's coming. The passing of a thousand years, after all, is like the passing of a single day to him. Bigg nicely captures the idea: “The desire of the Psalmist is to contrast the eternity of God with the short span of human life. What St. Peter wishes is to contrast the eternity of God with the impatience of human expectations.”¹⁸²⁴ Peter does not deny the imminence of Christ's coming here.¹⁸²⁵ He does not assert that Christ's coming will be delayed for a long period of time. We see from 3:12 that he expects Christ to return soon. But Peter, like all the NT writers, does not prescribe when Christ would return or set a certain date. He preserves the tension between the imminence of Christ's coming and the uncertainty about when he will come.¹⁸²⁶

The phrase also could be interpreted literally to say a day with the Lord is a thousand years. This interpretation was occasionally used in interpreting Genesis to say that human history would last six days (i.e., six thousand years), which would culminate in the millennium (the last thousand years—cf. Barn. 15:4; Irenaeus, *Haer.* 5.28.3). Such an interpretation fails on two grounds. First, the text does not say that

one day with the Lord is a thousand years. It says one day with the Lord is *like* a thousand years.¹⁸²⁷ This is a comparison, an analogy. Second, the proposed interpretation does not make sense in context. Peter would then have been saying that the day of judgment lasts one thousand years, which is a rather strange notion. Finally, such an interpretation does not fit well with Peter's response to the false teachers.¹⁸²⁸ Even though the Lord has not returned yet, one should not conclude from this that he will never arrive.¹⁸²⁹ The Lord does not reckon time as humans do.¹⁸³⁰ What seems agonizingly long to us is a whisker of time to him.

3:9 The first part of v. 9 draws an implication from v. 8. If God does not reckon or indeed experience time as we do, then it follows that he is not slow about keeping his promise (cf. Hab 2:3). The promise (*epangelia*), of course, hearkens back to v. 4 and refers to the promise of the Lord's coming. God, that is, the Father, is not dilatory in fulfilling the promise uttered about his Son's coming. The Son will come as promised, but the apparent slowness should not be misunderstood. The phrase "as some understand delay" could possibly refer to those in the churches wavering under the influence of the false teachers.¹⁸³¹ More likely the reference is to the false teachers themselves, referring to them negatively as "some" who lack an understanding of God's ways.¹⁸³² The verse may be highly ironic. The false teachers used God's patience as an argument against God, when it should lead them to repentance.¹⁸³³

Peter explains why the coming is delayed. God is patient with his people. Notice that the verse says "patient with you" (*eis hymas*). The reason for his patience is then explicated. He is "not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance." The idea that God is patient so that people will repent is common in the Scriptures (Joel 2:12–13; Rom 2:4). That he is "slow to anger" is a refrain repeated often (Exod 34:6; Num 14:18; Neh 9:17; Pss 86:15; 103:8; 145:8; Joel 2:13; Jonah 3:10; 4:2; Nah 1:3), but he will not delay forever (see esp. Sir 35:18). We should note at the outset that perishing (*apolesthai*) refers to

eternal judgment, as is typical with the term. Repentance (*metanoia*), correspondingly, involves the repentance necessary for eternal life. Peter does not merely discuss rewards that some would receive if they lived faithfully. He considers whether people will be saved from God's wrath.

We must also ask who is in view in the "any" (*tinas*) the Lord does not want to perish and the "all" (*pantas*) invited to repent. Perhaps all people without exception are contemplated. Some understand 1 Tim 2:4 similarly, God "wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."¹⁸³⁴ We do not have space to comment on the text in 1 Timothy here, but we should note that debate exists over the meaning of "everyone" (*pantas anthrōpos*) in 1 Tim 2:4 as well. Or we can think of Ezek 18:32: "For I take no pleasure in anyone's death.' This is the declaration of the Lord GOD. 'So repent and live!'" (cf. also 18:23). In this latter instance God's regret over the perishing of anyone is clear. Nevertheless, we have to ask whether the verse in 2 Peter has the same meaning as the texts in Ezekiel. If it does, how does this fit with the teaching that God has ordained and decreed that only some will be saved? Many scholars, of course, doubt that Scripture teaches that God ordains that only some will be saved, but in my judgment the Scriptures clearly teach such an idea (cf. John 6:37, 44–45, 65; 10:16, 26; Acts 13:48; Rom 8:29–30; 9:1–23; Eph 1:4–5, 11, etc.).¹⁸³⁵ Space does not permit a full answer to this question, but an answer that has a long pedigree in church history suffices. We must distinguish between two different senses in God's will.¹⁸³⁶ There is a decretive will of God and a desired will of God. God desires the salvation of all in one sense but does not ultimately ordain that all will be saved. Some think this approach is double-talk and outright nonsense. Again, space forbids us from answering this question in detail, but Piper has convincingly argued this view.¹⁸³⁷ He demonstrates that such distinctions in God's will are not the result of philosophical sleight of hand but careful biblical exegesis.

Having said all this, 2 Pet 3:9 may not relate to this issue directly anyway. The "any" and "all" in the verse may be an expansion of

“you” (*hymas*) earlier in the verse.¹⁸³⁸ Peter does not reflect, according to this view, on the fate of all people in the world without exception. He considers those in the church who wavered under the influence of the false teachers. God desires every one of them to repent. Even if this solution is correct, it does not solve the issue theologically since Peter reflects on God’s will of command instead of his will of decree here. That is, he does not teach that all of those in the church whom God desires to repent will actually repent. Even if the verse is restricted to those influenced by the false teachers, Peter refers to what God desires, not to what he ordains.

At the end of the day, restricting “any” to church members is not the most satisfying solution in this text. By extension we should understand 2 Pet 3:9 in the same way as Ezek 18:32. It refers to God’s desire that all without exception be saved. It follows, then, that we have a reference to the desired will of God instead of the decreed will of God. God has not ordained that all will be saved since many will perish.¹⁸³⁹ Still, God genuinely desires that all will be saved, even if he has not ultimately decreed that all will be saved. Some think such a solution strays from exegesis, but such a view is rooted in biblical exegesis in that the Scriptures themselves, if accepted as a harmonious whole, compel us to make such distinctions. Such complexity is not surprising since God is an infinite and complex being, one who exceeds our understanding. In other words, such exegesis is not a rationalistic expedient but an acknowledgment of the mystery and depth of God’s revelation.¹⁸⁴⁰ Neither dimension of the biblical text should be denied. God genuinely desires that every person repent and turn to him. We should not retreat to God’s decreed will to nullify and negate what the text says. Nor should we use this verse to cancel out God’s ordained will. Better to live with the tension and mystery of the text than to swallow it up in a philosophical system that pretends to understand all of God’s ways. God’s patience and his love are not illusions, but neither do they remove his sovereignty.

3:10 Peter does not want to give the impression that there was any hesitation about the coming of the Lord.¹⁸⁴¹ Thus, he declares that

“the day of the Lord will come.” The verb “will come” (*hēxei*) is first in the Greek text, emphasizing that the day will certainly arrive. The day of the Lord is familiar from the OT, where it often is used to refer to God’s judgment and salvation. In the OT such days occur in history, but ultimately the day of the Lord points to the final day, when God will definitively judge his enemies and vindicate the righteous.¹⁸⁴² In the NT the day of the Lord also is the day of Christ (1 Cor 1:8; 2 Cor 1:14; Phil 1:6, 10; 2:16). Peter emphasizes that the day of the Lord will arrive “like a thief.” He draws on tradition here, and we know from 3:15–16 that he was familiar with the Pauline Letters. In 1 Thess 5:2 Paul informs his readers, “For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.” Indeed, the Lord will come, according to 1 Thess 5:3, when people least expect it, thinking they are safe from all harm. Paul most likely derives his image from the historical Jesus since Jesus warned his hearers to be ready for his coming, noting that he would arrive when people were not anticipating his coming, as a thief breaks in at night (Matt 24:42–44; cf. Rev 3:3; 16:15). Thus, Peter’s idea may come from Jesus rather than Paul, or perhaps it stems from both Jesus and Paul. The image of the day coming like a thief is significant in Peter since the readers will not be ready for the Lord’s coming if they are convinced by the false teachers. Circumstances and the passing of time may suggest to their minds that the day will not arrive. The false teachers scorned the notion of a sudden irruption in history and a day of judgment. The day of the Lord, however, will arrive suddenly, and no definite signs of its coming are listed. The signs that precede it, apparently, are ambiguous enough to lead to other conclusions.

Three things will occur when the day arrives, and all of them together indicate that the physical world as we know it will be destroyed. It is much more difficult, however, to understand the details. We will look at each in turn. First, we are told that the heavens “will pass away with a loud noise.” The “heavens” reverts back to vv. 5 and 7, where in tandem with the earth it refers to all that God has created in the universe. The words “loud noise” (*rhoizēdon*) refer to a rushing sound, whether the whizzing of an arrow, the rush

of wings, or the hissing of snakes.¹⁸⁴³ In this context we should think of the crackling sound of fire, destroying the heavens. Bauckham thinks it could possibly refer to “the thunder of the divine voice,”¹⁸⁴⁴ but the term seems to be associated with physical phenomena. Jesus himself, using the same verb we find here, *parerchomai* (“pass away”), says that heaven and earth will “pass away” (Matt 5:18; 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 16:17; 21:33). Isaiah 34:4 describes the sky being rolled up like a scroll, and John in Revelation picks up this picture (Rev 6:14; cf. also Heb 1:10–12).

The second part of the picture is that “the elements will burn and be dissolved.” The word “elements” (*stoicheia*) refers to the building blocks or basic stuff of which things are made. It can refer to the ABCs or the notes of a musical scale or often to the (presumed) basic elements of the world—earth, air, fire, and water. In post NT times the term also began to refer to spiritual beings, and scholars debate whether Paul uses the term with such a meaning in Gal 4:3, 9 and Col 2:8, 20. In Heb 5:12 it refers to the basic elements or teachings of the Christian faith. At least three different interpretations have been proposed for the meaning here. First, the “elements” may be angels or spirits that rule over the natural world.¹⁸⁴⁵ This view has not been accepted by many commentators since it does not fit well in the context. Peter refers to the dissolution of the physical universe, betraying no interest in whether spiritual powers inhabit stars or planets. Second, he may refer to the heavenly bodies, that is, the sun, moon, and stars.¹⁸⁴⁶ This meaning for the term is attested in the second century.¹⁸⁴⁷ Bauckham thinks Peter may have been depending on a text from the Septuagint, which says that “all the powers of the heavens will melt.”¹⁸⁴⁸ This is certainly a possible reading of the text, and it fits the context well.

Third, “elements” refers to the stuff from which the physical things in the world are made. I think this view is the most likely since it represents the common meaning of the term “elements.”¹⁸⁴⁹ Such a meaning also seems to be attested in the Sibylline Oracles (3:80–81; cf.

2:206–7; 8:337–39). Some wonder if this fits since Peter proceeds to speak of the earth and the works done in the earth as “found” (lit. translation). We will discuss the meaning of this controversial and difficult word below. Here the focus is on the consequences of the destruction of the heavens and the elements of the world. When they are burned up, the result is that the earth and all the works performed on the earth will be, as the CSB says, “disclosed.” Verse 12 supports the notion that the heavens and elements together comprehend all that exists.¹⁸⁵⁰ Together they will be destroyed by fire. It is difficult to know if Peter thought of the purification and renovation of this world by fire or if he had in mind the complete destruction of this present world and the creation of a new one, and we will return to this matter in the discussion of subsequent verses.

The last phrase in the verse is the most difficult, which the CSB translates, “and the earth and the works on it will be disclosed.” A literal translation is, “And the earth and the works in it shall be found.” But what does it mean to say the earth and its works “shall be found” (*heurethēsetai*)? Some scholars despair of finding any meaning.¹⁸⁵¹ We are not surprised to discover that textual variations and even conjectural emendations exist, as scholars try to discern the meaning of this last phrase. We can say immediately that the external evidence decisively favors “shall be found,” but alternates have been pursued because, as Metzger notes, the text as it reads “seems to be devoid of meaning.”¹⁸⁵² We will canvass other options to note the difficulty.

1. One version (Sahidic) adds the negative so that the text reads that the earth and its works “shall not be found.” This yields better sense but lacks adequate textual support.¹⁸⁵³
2. An early papyrus (P⁷²) adds the word “destroyed” (*luomena*), so that the verse says that the earth and its works will be destroyed.¹⁸⁵⁴ Again the meaning is clear, and one wonders why it is, therefore, so poorly attested. A scribe more likely inserted a form of the verb *luō* (“destroy”) to clarify the text.

3. The majority text reads “shall be burned” (*katakaēsetai*), and this reading is found in many English versions, “The earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (KJV; cf. also NKJV, RSV, NASB). If this reading were original, it is difficult to see how “will be found” would have been substituted.
4. Another text (C) reads “will vanish” (*aphanisthēsontai*). The meager external evidence betrays that it is a scribe’s conjecture.
5. Scholars also have conjectured a number of possibilities, suggesting the verbs “will run” (*rhyēsetai*, Westcott/Hort), “will run together” (*syrryēsetai*, Naber), “will be burned in fire” (*ekpyrōthēsetai*, Olivier), “will be taken away” (*arthēsetai*, Mayor),¹⁸⁵⁵ and “will be judged” (*krithēsetai*, Nestle). Other suggestions have been made, but none have commended widespread support.

We return to the most likely idea, which is that Peter wrote “will be found,” and we must try to discover what he meant by it. Kelly thinks we must understand the text as a question, “And the earth and the works it contains—will they be found?”¹⁸⁵⁶ It is hardly evident, however, that a question is intended, and hence this solution must be rejected. Fornberg sees a reference to what was created by God, including all that is in heaven and on earth.¹⁸⁵⁷ It is not evident, however, what it means for such to be found, and thus we are not surprised to see that Fornberg amends the text. More promising is the notion that human beings will be found before God at the judgment.¹⁸⁵⁸ This reflects the the meaning of the phrase “will be disclosed” (CSB, NIV, and NRSV). The word “found” in Hebrew (*māṣā*) has judicial overtones (Exod 22:8; Deut 22:28; Ezra 10:18), and the Greek word “found” (*heuriskō*) is used to depict one’s relationship before God in legal settings (Sir 44:17, 20; Dan 5:27, Theodotion; cf. Acts 5:39; 24:5; 1 Cor 4:2; 15:15; Gal 2:17; Phil 3:9; 1 Pet 1:7; Rev 5:4). We also are told whether someone is found out as a sinner or righteous before God (1 Sam 25:28; 26:18; 1 Kgs 1:52; Ps 17:3; Jer 2:34; 50:20; Ezek 28:15; Zeph 3:13; Mal 2:6). Bauckham

rightly says that the verb could be construed as roughly synonymous with “will be made manifest” (*phanerōthēsetai* and *phanera genēsetai* —Mark 4:22; John 3:21; 1 Cor 3:13; 14:25; Eph 5:13).¹⁸⁵⁹

Perhaps 2 Clem. 16:3 represents an early interpretation of 2 Peter: “But you know that the day of judgment is already coming as a blazing furnace, and some of the heavens will dissolve, and the whole earth will be like lead melting in a fire, and then the works of men, the secret and the public will appear [*phanēsetai*].” If Clement was alluding to 2 Peter, which seems likely, he understood it as referring to divine judgment.¹⁸⁶⁰ The phrase refers, then, to the consequence of the burning of the heavens and the earth in the first part of v. 10. The earth and the works performed in it will be laid bare before God, and so the CSB translation effectively communicates the notion of divine judgment in the divine passive verb “will be found.” We should observe that in v. 7 the same pattern exists. The heavens and earth will be burned, and judgment will come upon the ungodly. The problem with this interpretation is that “earth” (*gē*) in the context is physical and does not refer to human beings. But Bauckham rightly interprets the verse, suggesting that “it can easily mean the physical earth as the scene of human history, the earth as the dwelling place of humanity.”¹⁸⁶¹ It seems that this is the most satisfying way to explicate this remarkably difficult phrase.

Wolters understands the term in light of “the day of judgment,” which is portrayed “as a smelting process from which the world will emerge purified.”¹⁸⁶² The world that emerges from the fiery judgment will be one purified by fire.¹⁸⁶³ As background he posits Mal 3:2–4, where the Levites will be purified and refined on the day of the Lord (cf. also Mal 4:1–2). Thus, he understands “to be found” to refer to the eschatological world that survives the smelting process. The advantage of this interpretation is its explanation of the meaning of the word “earth.” It is less clear, however, how this interpretation integrates well with the term “works.” Nor does the Malachi background provide evidence for his interpretation since it does not refer to the purification of the cosmos but the refining of human

beings. Furthermore, Wolters's view does not explain as adequately the parallel in 2 Pet 3:14. Therefore Bauckham's interpretation should be preferred. The works human beings have done on earth will be disclosed and revealed.

5.3 Living Righteously because of the Future Day (3:11–18)

¹¹ Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, it is clear what sort of people you should be in holy conduct and godliness ¹² as you wait for the day of God and hasten its coming. Because of that day, the heavens will be dissolved with fire and the elements will melt with heat. ¹³ But based on his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.

¹⁴ Therefore, dear friends, while you wait for these things, make every effort to be found without spot or blemish in his sight, at peace.

¹⁵ Also, regard the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our dear brother Paul has written to you according to the wisdom given to him.

¹⁶ He speaks about these things in all his letters. There are some matters that are hard to understand. The untaught and unstable will twist them to their own destruction, as they also do with the rest of the Scriptures.

¹⁷ Therefore, dear friends, since you know this in advance, be on your guard, so that you are not led away by the error of lawless people and fall from your own stable position. ¹⁸ But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity.

The section here could be split into three sections (3:11–13, 14–16, 17–18). I have chosen to combine them for thematic reasons. The end is coming, and the present heavens and earth will be destroyed (3:7, 10, 11a). Since this world is temporary, the readers are exhorted to live godly lives (v. 11). Not only should they look forward to that day, but they can also hasten its arrival (v. 12). And Peter reminds them about the fiery dissolution of this world (v. 12b). The language used

suggests a purification of the present world, for a new heavens and earth are coming, and righteousness will dwell in that world (v. 13). The false teachers will be excluded from the new creation, and only those who heed Peter's message will be included. Recognition that a new world is coming leads naturally to the exhortation to be diligent (cf. 1:5–7) and to be spotless and blameless and at peace with God on the day of judgment (v. 14). The exhortation here is parallel to the one in v. 11, and both are grounded on the eschatological promise.

Eschatology and ethics are firmly wedded together in 2 Peter. The apparent delay of the Lord's coming represents his forbearance and patience toward those who need to repent. Peter's teaching here accords with what Paul himself taught in his letters, where the latter exhorted people to holiness and salvation in light of the end of history (cf. Rom 13:11–14). Apparently some were misusing and distorting Paul's writings, probably to advance an antinomian and licentious agenda. Such misunderstandings were not innocent mistakes, nor did they relate to inconsequential matters. Those who distort Paul's writings (and other Scriptures) to support license are destined for destruction, that is, eternal judgment. Thinking of those who twist Paul's writings and other Scriptures leads Peter to an exhortation that aptly sums up the entire letter. We could understand the "Therefore" (*oun*) in v. 17 to introduce an inference from all of 1:1–3:16. Given all that Peter has written, the readers should be on their guard and alert. Since those who neglect his teaching will be destroyed (3:16) and since only those who are holy will experience God's saving peace (3:14), the readers must be alert and prepared to fend off such teachers (3:17). Otherwise, they could be carried away from their firm standing in Christ by the false teachers and commit apostasy. At the end of the letter, as at the beginning, Peter writes so that his readers will not turn away from the truth. The antidote to apostasy is not merely negative, that is, resisting the influence of the false teachers, but also positive. The readers are to grow in grace, just as Peter prayed that grace would be multiplied for them in 1:2. And they were also to grow in their knowledge of Jesus Christ. We have seen throughout this letter how important knowledge is (1:3), and believers will stay true to the gospel only if they continue to grow in their knowledge of Jesus Christ. Peter

concludes with a doxology to Jesus Christ, praying that the glory will be his forever.

3:11 The NIV rightly understands the participle as giving a reason believers should live in a godly way (“Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way”). The Greek participle *luomenōn* is present tense (“being dissolved”) instead of future (“will be dissolved”). Some commentators conclude from this that the world is in the process of dissolution even now, culminating in its final destruction.¹⁸⁶⁴ It is more likely, however, that the CSB is correct and the present participle designates the future (cf. also Matt 26:25; Luke 1:35; John 17:20; Acts 21:2–3).¹⁸⁶⁵ The destruction described is total and complete, involving a burning of the present elements of the world. Any wearing down of the world now is trivial and unnoticeable in comparison, and thus the future dissolution of the world is intended. The destruction Peter speaks of refers to vv. 7 and 10. In the former verse the heavens and earth are “stored up for fire.” In the latter verse we are told that “the heavens will pass away” and that the elements of the world will be destroyed by burning.

The destruction of the world is not relayed to satisfy curiosity. Knowing the outcome of this world should motivate believers to live a new quality of life. The Greek literally reads “in holy behaviors and reverence” (*en hagiis anastrophais kai eusebeiais*). A similar call to holy “conduct” (*anastrophē*) occurs in 1 Pet 1:15. The importance of godliness in 2 Peter is emphasized from the outset of the letter 1:3, 6–7, and Peter stresses that God “has given us everything required for life and godliness.” The plural of the terms for “behavior” and “godliness” is unusual and may emphasize numerous acts of goodness. Or perhaps the plurals are used abstractly and should not be pressed. The meaning of the verse is not greatly affected in either case.

3:12 The focus on the future continues. Godly lives are related to and grounded in eschatology. Those who disregard the future cosmos will not live well in the present one. Hence, believers live in a way that pleases God as they “wait for” (*prosdokōntos*) and “hasten” (*speudontos*) the coming of God’s day. The term “wait for”

(*prosdokaō*) occurs three times in the space of three verses (3:12–14), designating the eager expectation believers should have for the coming of Christ and the fulfillment of God’s future promises. The term elsewhere signifies an eschatological hope (Matt 11:3; Luke 7:29–30; cf. 2 Macc 7:14; 12:44). We are surprised to see Peter speak of the coming of “the day of God” since that expression is unusual in the NT (Rev 16:14; cf. Jer 46:10). The word “coming” (*parousia*) in 1:16 and 3:4 refers to the coming of Christ, but the day of God refers to the day of the Father, not the Son. Nonetheless, the coming of God’s day is inseparable from the future coming of Christ. When Christ comes, the day of God will commence, this world will be destroyed, and a new one will be instituted. Peter therefore continues to direct his readers to the coming of Christ.

We may be surprised about the notion of hastening the day of God. The collocation of “day of the Lord” and “day of God” with the coming of Christ implies Christ’s deity.¹⁸⁶⁶ Some understand this to say that we should be diligent to prepare for the day,¹⁸⁶⁷ but this is not the most natural sense of the verb (cf. Luke 2:16; 19:5–6; Acts 20:16; 22:18). Peter clearly teaches that believers can advance or hasten the arrival of God’s day by living godly lives.¹⁸⁶⁸ We think here of the prayer, “Your kingdom come” (Matt 6:10). Surely the idea is that our prayer has some impact on when the kingdom arrives. Such an idea was current in Judaism as well since some rabbis taught that God would fulfill his promises if Israel would repent (cf. b. Sanh. 98a).¹⁸⁶⁹ Acts 3:19–21 appears to teach a similar idea.¹⁸⁷⁰ God would send his Christ and restore all things if Israel repented fully. But does not such an idea threaten divine sovereignty, his control over history? Was Peter suggesting that God himself does not know when the end will be, since he does not know if his people will live in a godly way? We can dismiss the idea that the future is obscured from God because if that were true, how could we know that history would ever end? After two thousand years of history, how could we be sure that Christians would ever live righteously enough to bring about God’s day? Divine sovereignty is not threatened since God himself

foreknows what his people will do.¹⁸⁷¹ Indeed, he even foreordains what we will do (e.g., Prov 16:33; Isa 46:9–11; Lam 3:37–38; Eph 1:11). Nevertheless, God’s sovereignty over history must never cancel out the call to live godly lives and the teaching that our prayers and godliness can speed his coming. We must not fall prey to rationalism that either squeezes out divine sovereignty or ignores human responsibility. Both of these must be held in tension, and here the accent falls on what human beings do to hasten the day of God. God uses means to accomplish his purposes.

Peter returns to what will occur when God’s day arrives, saying that “the heavens will be dissolved with fire.”¹⁸⁷² In v. 7 the heavens are said to be reserved for fire, and in v. 10 they will pass away with crashing noise. I argued that the roar designates a crackling fire, and so what v. 12 says coheres with v. 10. The heavens will be destroyed by a great conflagration. The elements of the world (earth, air, fire, and water—as we argued in v. 10) “will melt with heat.” The description is similar to v. 10, which predicts the elements will be destroyed by burning. The verb “melt” (*tēketai*) is in the present tense in Greek, but a future event is contemplated here. Isaiah 63:19–64:1 (LXX) portrays the mountains melting when the Lord manifests himself (cf. Mic 1:4). An interesting parallel emerges in Isa 34:4, “All the powers of the heavens will melt” (*takēsontai pasai hai dynameis tōn ouranon*).¹⁸⁷³ The command to live holy lives is framed by the assertion that the present world will be destroyed by fire. The false teachers had badly miscalculated. Unfortunately, they would know they had gone astray when it was too late.

3:13 Believers, of course, are not merely waiting for the destruction of the present world. Such destruction, however, is critical to Peter’s argument because it is bound up with the judgment of the ungodly (3:7). Nevertheless, if the future offered only destruction, believers would be miserable indeed. The day of God, the day of the Lord (i.e., the coming of Christ) involves both judgment and salvation. This salvation is not merely spiritual, an ethereal out-of-body experience with God. God promises a new world for believers, a transformed world, a new heavens and a new earth. Thus, the Petrine view should

be distinguished from Stoicism that does not look forward to a new world.¹⁸⁷⁴

The word “promise” is important for Peter, focusing especially on the coming of Christ (3:4, 9; cf. also 1:4). The coming of Christ is inseparable from the arrival of the day of God and the new heavens and new earth. The promise of a new heavens and new earth reaches back to Isaiah (65:17; 66:22), and postbiblical literature writers also reflect on the new creation God will establish (Jub. 1:29; 1 En. 45:4–5; 72:1; 91:16; Sib. Or. 5:211–213; 2 Bar. 32:6; 44:12; 57:2; 4 Ezra 7:25). In Peter, therefore, we see two themes juxtaposed. On one hand, the old world will be destroyed, and on the other, there will be a new heavens and new earth—a new universe created by God.¹⁸⁷⁵ Revelation teaches us that the new heavens and new earth will become a reality with the coming of the new Jerusalem (Rev 21:1–22:5). At the same time we are told that “every island fled, and the mountains disappeared” (Rev 16:20). And, “Earth and heaven fled from his presence, and no place was found for them” (Rev 20:11). The first verse of Rev 21 brings both themes together, “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more” (Rev 21:1; cf. Matt 19:28). Does Peter teach that the old heavens and earth will be annihilated and that God will create something brand-new?¹⁸⁷⁶ Or is the idea that God will purify the old world and create out of the same elements a new one?¹⁸⁷⁷ It is difficult to be sure, and we would do well to be cautious in postulating how God will fulfill his promises. Thiede points out that the debate is old, with Justin Martyr and Minucius Felix endorsing annihilation, whereas Irenaeus and Origen argued for purification and renovation.¹⁸⁷⁸ In either case, it seems we can fairly say that the future world is physical, that a new universe will be born. Harink rightly reminds us that there is mystery about the new world coming since it is qualitatively different from the world we live in now.¹⁸⁷⁹ Still, I incline to the notion that the world will be purified instead of seeing an annihilation and a restart. In this respect, the new world is like the resurrection of our bodies, where there is both

continuity and discontinuity. Believers are “look[ing] forward” (NIV; *prosdokōmen*) to this world, to the day of God (3:12), to the fulfillment of God’s promises.

In that future world righteousness will dwell (cf. Isa 32:16 LXX).¹⁸⁸⁰ The righteousness here is God’s righteousness (cf. 1:1), which fills the future world with his glory and beauty. Peter has clarified throughout the letter that only the righteous will participate in that world. The antinomian teachers will be excluded, as will all their disciples. Only those who heed Peter’s message will inherit the promises and enjoy the new world. We should remind ourselves that no notion of works righteousness is involved here, since God himself has transformed those who live righteously (1:3–4). They do what is right as a consequence of God’s gracious work in their lives.

3:14 The arrival of the new heavens and new earth is the hope of believers, awaited eagerly (*prosdokaō*) by all who truly know God. Then God’s righteousness will be all in all (cf. 1 Cor 15:28). Verse 14 is stitched to v. 13 by the repetition of the verb “wait for” (*prosdokaō*). It is the new heavens and earth that believers long for, the realization of God’s righteousness. The false teachers, of course, repudiated the idea of such a future world. Once again, as in vv. 11–13, the eschatological future becomes the basis for ethical exhortation. Indeed, the exhortation in v. 14 restates in different terms the summons to a godly life in v. 11, and in both instances the exhortation flows from God’s promise that the present world will be destroyed and a new world is coming. The teachers’ libertine lifestyle and ethic were inseparable from their eschatology. They rejected the future coming of Christ and therefore lived however they pleased. Peter realizes that his readers must have assurance that Christ would return if they were going to live in a way that pleases God. His argument is not pragmatic. That is, he does not invent the idea of a future judgment to foster ethical living now. On the contrary, the day of the Lord, consisting of both judgment and salvation, was bedrock reality for him. On the basis of this reality, believers are exhorted to godliness.

As we come to the end of the letter, many themes from its beginning reappear. Here Peter summons his readers to diligence—“make every

effort” (*spoudasate*) in light of the destruction and renovation of the heavens and earth. We are reminded of 1:5, where believers are “to make every effort” (*spoudēn pasan pareisenenkantes*) in pursuing the virtues detailed in 1:5–7. And in 1:10 Peter writes, “make every effort [*spoudasate*] to confirm your calling and election.” In 3:14 the verb “make every effort” (*spoudasate*) is the exact form we find in 1:10. Nor has the subject changed. Diligently pursuing godly virtues is necessary for the final reward, that is, eternal life (cf. 1:5–11). Similarly, in 3:14 diligence in godliness is requisite for enjoying the new heavens and new earth. In this verse diligence is to be exercised to live a “spotless and blameless” life before God. The words “without spot” (*aspiloi*) and “without blemish” (*amōmētoi*) contrast with the opponents, who were “spots” (*spiloi*) and “blemishes” (*mōmoi*) in the church (2:13).¹⁸⁸¹ When we examine texts where a similar idea is found (Eph 1:4; 5:27; Phil 2:15; Col 1:22; Jude 24; Rev 14:5), it is apparent that being “without spot or blemish” is necessary for eternal life. We should not confuse such a call with moral perfection, at least in this life. The NT does teach, however, that those who belong to God’s people will live in a godly way and that they will be perfected on the last day. The false teachers, in other words, will not be saved on the last day since their blemished lives will condemn them. Indeed, the terminology “be found” (*eurethēnai*) is judicial, anticipating the judgment before God (see esp. 2 Pet 3:10; cf. 1 Cor 4:2; 15:15; Gal 2:17; Phil 3:9; 1 Pet 1:7; Rev 5:4). Thus, there is little doubt that believers need to be “without spot or blemish” to be saved.

Evangelicals are disposed to emphasize at this point the imputed righteousness of Christ as the basis of our righteousness, and, of course, Christ’s righteousness is the basis for all our righteousness. We should simply observe, however, that this is not what Peter emphasizes here. In this context spotless and blameless *behavior* of believers is required to inherit the eternal reward. Thereby we will “be found” to be “at peace” in his presence. Peace (*eirēnē*) designates being right with God, entering into his presence with joy rather than experiencing his wrath.¹⁸⁸²

3:15 On the one hand, believers should not fall prey to laxity, thinking that there will be no judgment and that they can live however they wish. They must live spotless and blameless lives to receive the reward of eternal life. They must diligently pursue godliness and resist the libertinism of the false teachers. On the other hand, those who are straying from God are not automatically excluded from eternal life. God does not count up good works, as it were. Those who repent and turn to him will receive his mercy and reward, be it ever so late in their lives. Thus Peter says, “Regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.” We should consider the Lord’s patience, that is, his delay in coming, as an opportunity to repent and be saved.¹⁸⁸³ The CSB does not preserve the connection with 3:9 translating the verb *hēgountai* as “understand” instead of “Regard” (NRSV, NASB) or “count” (RSV). The RSV is helpful because it preserves the echo of 3:9, “The Lord is not slow about his promise as some count slowness, but is forbearing toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.” In both instances the RSV renders the verb *hēgeomai* as “count.” Furthermore, the central idea in each verse is similar. The adversaries in 3:9 counted the failure of the Lord to come as slowness, so slow that they thought he would never arrive. And yet what they called slowness grants people the opportunity to repent. That thought is reiterated in 3:15. The alleged “slowness” of the Lord is really his patience, granting time for sinners to repent and to experience his favor. When the requisite number of sinners repents—and only God knows that number—then the end will arrive (cf. 3:12).

In the midst of such exhortations Peter suddenly and surprisingly brings Paul into the picture. The reference to Paul here has been the subject of much controversy, but let’s first note the main idea communicated. The logic of vv. 14–15 can be summed up as follows: Because you are waiting for God to destroy the present world and to form a new one, you should do two things. First, be diligent to live godly lives so that you will receive your eternal reward. Second, consider the Lord’s patience, or apparent delay in coming, as an opportunity for salvation. Paul also teaches both of these notions. Why does Peter emphasize that Paul also taught these two truths?

Presumably because the opponents had seized on Paul's writings to advance their own agenda. Some scholars think they distorted Paul's writings (v. 16) by appealing to statements about a spiritual resurrection to support an overrealized eschatology (Eph 2:5–6; Col 2:12; 3:1; 2 Tim 2:17–18).¹⁸⁸⁴ Such a scenario is a possibility, but evidence is lacking that the opponents promulgated an overrealized eschatology.¹⁸⁸⁵ More likely the opponents latched on to Paul's statements about freedom from law to advance libertinism (cf. Rom 3:20, 28; 4:15; 5:20; 7:5, 7; 1 Cor 15:56; Gal 5:1).¹⁸⁸⁶ This fits with the licentiousness of the false teachers, which is amply attested in 2 Peter. It also accords with the context since Peter emphasizes that Paul also taught that believers must live in a godly way to experience God's promise and that in the interval before Christ's coming God grants people an opportunity to repent. We may also have an allusion to Rom 2:4 (cf. Rom 3:25–26; 9:22), which features God's patience with sinners.¹⁸⁸⁷

Peter refers to Paul, then, to reclaim him and to explain that Paul was not on the side of the opponents. He was Peter's "dear brother," that is, coworker in the gospel and fellow believer. The "our," then, designates Paul as fellow worker with other apostles, not as a fellow believer with all other Christians.¹⁸⁸⁸ Peter does not identify Paul as an enemy but as a collaborator and friend.¹⁸⁸⁹ Paul's letters, says Peter, are a manifestation of divine wisdom. Paul himself often emphasizes that God gave him his apostolic calling (Rom 12:3; 15:15; 1 Cor 3:10; Gal 2:9; Eph 3:2, 7; Col 1:25). The word "given" (*dotheisan*) is a divine passive, emphasizing that Paul's ability was not to be traced to his native gifts but God's grace.¹⁸⁹⁰

Another question that arises is what it means to say that Paul wrote "to you." Many scholars take this as evidence that Peter and Paul had both died and that the letters of Paul were now the common property of all the churches. But if 2 Peter is an authentic letter, as I have argued in the introduction, then Peter refers to letters that Paul actually wrote to the churches in Asia Minor.¹⁸⁹¹ Or, possibly, some

of Paul's letters had been circulated so that readers had access to them. There is insufficient evidence to conclude that the full corpus of Pauline letters had been collected.¹⁸⁹² Given the content of vv. 14–15, scholars have tried to discern what letters the readers might have had access to. If the letters were written to Asia Minor, Ephesians and Colossians are possibilities, but certainty is impossible on this matter. Paul encouraged a wider distribution of his letters in Col 4:16, and thus it is possible that they had received some of his other letters. Moreover, the necessity of living a godly life and God's patience is widespread enough to include several Pauline letters.

3:16 Verse 16 continues the discussion on Paul's letters with the remark that Paul spoke "about these things," that is, of the importance of holiness (v. 14) and the patience of the Lord. The reference to "all his letters" indicates that Peter saw both these themes in all the Pauline letters with which he was acquainted. We would be overreading the text to deduce from "all his letters" that a Pauline corpus of letters was officially established or even that Peter was personally familiar with all of Paul's letters.¹⁸⁹³ How many letters are in view is impossible to say, but it is obvious that Peter knew a number of Pauline letters. This indicates that at an early stage the Pauline letters were valued enough to be read on a fairly wide scale, although any notion of a canon of letters is anachronistic at this stage.

The Pauline letters arose as a subject only because the false teachers—and perhaps their converts—were distorting them. This explains why Peter says that some things are "hard to understand" in them. The term *dysnoētos* is used of matters that are difficult to interpret.¹⁸⁹⁴ Such misinterpretation, however, is inexcusable. The "untaught" and "unstable" twist the Scriptures, but it is clear that such ignorance and instability were not merely due to lack of instruction. Elsewhere Peter speaks of believers as "established" (*estērigmenous*) in the truth (1:12). Furthermore, the teachers entice "the unstable" (*astēriktous*, 2:14). Now we are told that the "unstable" (*astēriktoi*) distort the Pauline writings.¹⁸⁹⁵ Their culpability is evident since Peter goes on to say that they distort the

Scriptures “to their own destruction.” “Destruction” (*apōleia*) is a typical term for eschatological punishment. The verbal and noun form of the term are used often in 2 Peter to designate God’s judgment on the wicked (2:1, 3; 3:6–7, 9). Their errant use of Paul’s writings will land them in hell—hardly an innocent peccadillo. Bauckham says, “It was therefore not a question of minor doctrinal errors, but of using their misinterpretations to justify immorality, for it is 2 Peter’s consistent teaching that eschatological judgment . . . is coming on the false teachers because of their ungodly lives.”¹⁸⁹⁶ Those who were twisting and distorting Paul’s writings lacked the humility to learn from others, but they were perverting what Paul wrote to justify their licentious lifestyles.¹⁸⁹⁷ Luther plausibly suggests that they were abusing Paul’s teaching on justification by faith and freedom from the law to enjoy a life of moral laxity.¹⁸⁹⁸ It is reasonable to think that James responds to a similar problem, to a distortion of Paul’s teaching about justification by faith in Jas 2:14–26. We know from Paul’s own letters that occasionally what he wrote was misconstrued. The famous lost letter to Corinth noted in 1 Cor 5:9–11 was misinterpreted by the Corinthians so that they thought Paul excluded all contact with unbelievers. Perhaps the Corinthians also misunderstood Pauline teaching on the law and cited one of his own formulations (“all things are lawful”) in a way he did not intend (1 Cor 6:12; 10:23 RSV).

When the false teachers misused Paul’s writings, they were hardly innovative. They distorted “the rest of the Scriptures” (*tas loipas graphas*) as well. What is particularly interesting is that Paul’s writings appear to be identified as Scripture. One could dissent by arguing that “the rest” (*loipas*) refer to writings that are in a different category from Paul’s. But this view cannot be sustained since the Greek word “the rest” refers to others of the same kind. This is evident where “the rest” (*loipos*) functions as an adjective. In each instance the term refers to others of the same kind: “the rest of the virgins” (Matt 25:11), “the rest of the apostles” (Acts 2:37), “the other churches” (2 Cor 12:13 NIV), “the rest of the Jews” (Gal 2:13; cf. also Rom 1:13; Cor 9:5; Phil 4:3). Peter clearly identifies Paul’s writing as Scripture.¹⁸⁹⁹ And

yet it may be objected that calling something “Scripture” does not necessarily place it on the same level of authority as the OT Scriptures.¹⁹⁰⁰ But the term “Scripture” (*graphē*) occurs fifty times in the NT and invariably refers to the OT Scriptures, even in Jas 4:5.¹⁹⁰¹ Thus, we have good grounds for concluding that Peter classes Paul’s writings as Scripture, on the same level as the OT Scriptures.¹⁹⁰² Elsewhere Peter sees OT prophets and NT apostles as exercising equal authority (1:16–21; 3:2). Many think such a statement about Paul’s writings reveals that 2 Peter is a postapostolic document, that the Peter who was rebuked by Paul (Gal 2:11–14) would never identify Paul’s writings as Scripture. Furthermore, the statement could indicate that a completed corpus of Paul’s writings had been collected, something impossibly early for Peter’s lifetime.

Substantive responses can be given to each of the objections raised. First, NT scholars overinterpret the significance of Gal 2:11–14. Many subscribe to the view that Peter and Paul went separate ways after the incident at Antioch and that Paul was divided from the Jerusalem apostles henceforth. I am not suggesting that Peter and Paul were carbon copies of each other, but the differences between them are overestimated.¹⁹⁰³ Galatians 2:11–14 does not suggest that Paul and Peter adopted different theologies.¹⁹⁰⁴ The text says Peter acted hypocritically, meaning that he agreed with Paul and acted contrary to his own convictions—because he feared what other Jews might think and do. Many NT scholars, of course, disagree with this assessment, but we ought to note that they depart from the text at this juncture and insert their guess about what Peter really thought.

Second, the book of Acts—whose historical accuracy is doubted by some (perhaps many)—does not portray Paul as if he had severed ties with Jerusalem. When he returned to Jerusalem in Acts 21, he was well received according to Luke. Again, many scholars doubt the credibility of Luke’s account, but they lack textual evidence for their theories.¹⁹⁰⁵ Third, the recounting of one disagreement between Peter and Paul should not become the lens by which we interpret their entire relationship. Other evidence exists in the Pauline letters and

Petrine corpus (including here) that their relationship was one of mutual admiration and respect (Gal 1:18; 2:1–10; 1 Cor 15:1–11).

Fourth, I have already observed that a reference to Paul's letters does not indicate that an entire corpus was collected or that his letters were part of a canon of Scripture.¹⁹⁰⁶ Paul himself declares that his words are authoritative (cf. 1 Cor 14:37), and this is evident because he enjoins public reading of his letters in the churches (Col 4:16; 1 Thess 5:27). Presumably from the strong words in 2 Peter, Peter sees Paul's letter(s) as authoritative as well. I conclude that Peter identifies the Pauline writings as authoritative for the churches and places them on the same level as the OT Scriptures. The implications for what belongs in the NT canon and for the authority of the Pauline writings today are, of course, immense, but Paul's letters could also be recognized as authoritative before they were collected together. Finally, the fact that Peter addresses Paul as "brother" implies a partnership and equality with him that is not apparent in later church writers. Guthrie points out that the apostolic fathers speak of Paul in more exalted terms (e.g., "the blessed Paul").¹⁹⁰⁷ The appellation "brother" is a genuine touch from the hand of Peter himself. In addition, Peter implies that Paul was not easy to understand even for himself. Such an admission would not be likely from a later writer.¹⁹⁰⁸

3:17 Verses 17–18 could be divided from the previous verses, for the "therefore" (*oun*) introducing them really functions as the conclusion of the entire letter. The two imperatives in these verses summarize the entire letter well. On the one hand, the readers must "be on your guard" (*phylassesthe*) so they do not fall prey to the false teachers and lose their eschatological reward. On the other hand, they will only remain vigilant if they "grow (*auxanete*) in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." The "you" (*hymeis*) in v. 17 is emphatic, and "dear friends" (*agapētoi*) signals a new section.

They are to be on their guard because they know in advance (*proginōskontes*) the danger at hand since the false teachers were predicted (2:1).¹⁹⁰⁹ Bigg maintains that the participle "knowing this

beforehand” (ESV) is synonymous with “knowing this first of all” (ESV; *touto prōton ginōskontes*; 1:20; 3:3).¹⁹¹⁰ But the meanings are different.¹⁹¹¹ In the latter case the idea is that something is of primary importance, while in the former the idea is that they know in advance what is coming. The advance warning for the readers comes from the OT, the teaching of the apostles (3:2), and what Peter has written in his letter.¹⁹¹² Thus the readers have no excuse for falling away—any plea of ignorance would be rejected. All that Peter has written, all his warnings, were so they would be vigilant. Elsewhere in the NT we are told that the Lord will guard and protect (*phylassō*) those who are his, ensuring that they will not fall away irretrievably (2 Thess 3:3; Jude 24). Such promises, however, never cancel out the injunction to watch ourselves so that we do not apostatize. Here Peter relays the latter. He desires his readers to be on guard “so that” they “are not led away by the error of lawless people” to prevent them from “fall[ing] from your own stable position.”

The word “fall” (*ekpesēte*) refers to apostasy (cf. Rom 11:11, 22; 14:4; 1 Cor 10:12; Heb 4:11; Rev 2:5), to departing from the Christian faith. Peter clarifies in the entire letter that those who fall away, like the teachers, are destined for eternal destruction. Believers maintain their secure position, in other words, by heeding warnings, not by ignoring them. Experienced mountain climbers ensure their safety by studying their climb, taking necessary precautions, and knowing their climbing partners. Paying attention to warnings does not quench confidence but is the means to it. So also Peter does not put a damper on the assurance of his readers. He knows that assurance becomes a reality by heeding warnings. Those who are on their guard will not fall from their secure position, while those who are careless are apt to slip away because they ignore warning signals. We should add here that any who finally do turn aside and fall away reveal that they were never part of the people of God (1 Cor 11:19; 1 John 2:19). But Peter’s purpose in a warning is not to handle that question. The warning is prophylactic and prospective, not a retrospective analysis of those who have departed.

The CSB turns the participle “led away” into a finite verb, so that it is parallel with the verb “fall.” The relationship between the two verbs is captured better if we translate the Greek as follows, “Be on your guard so that you do not fall away by being led away by the error of lawless people.” The participle “led away” (*synapachthentes*) delineates how the readers could possibly apostatize. They might be swept away by the influence of the false teachers. The verb translated “led away” is used in Gal 2:13 to describe how Barnabas was swayed by Peter and those from James and ceased eating with Gentiles in Antioch. Peter warns that the “error” (*planē*) of lawless false teachers could affect his readers (cf. 2:18). It is difficult to discern whether “error” here is active or passive; perhaps it is both. If passive, it would denote their false doctrine. If active, it would refer to the promulgation of that false teaching to others. The parallel to Sodom in 2:7 has already suggested that the adversaries were “lawless” (*athesmos*).

3:18 Peter now turns from the negative to the positive. It is insufficient to be prepared to ward off the false teaching of the opponents. Believers will only persevere to the end and receive their eternal reward if they “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” The nouns “grace” and “knowledge” could be construed as parallel so that they are both connected to Jesus Christ. Christ could be understood to be the source of both grace and knowledge.¹⁹¹³ Or Jesus Christ could be the source of grace in the first instance and the object of knowledge in the second. The third option is the most likely; grace is not connected to Jesus Christ in the sentence.¹⁹¹⁴ The first admonition is simply to “grow in grace.” At the inception of the book the grace of God in Jesus Christ was primary. His grace is expressed in his saving righteousness that granted faith to believers (1:1), and Peter prays that grace will be multiplied in the lives of believers (1:2). Furthermore, his grace has granted believers everything they need to live a godly life (1:3–4) so that they will experience in full God’s saving promises. Grace is the foundation of the lives of believers and is entirely God’s gift, and yet believers are exhorted to grow in it, to be nurtured in it, and to be

strengthened by it. Grace is not a static reality. Believers are to grow in it until the day they die. Otherwise they might be carried away by the lawlessness of the false teachers.

Second, believers are to grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is clearly an objective genitive here; he is the one believers know. Again a theme that has been prominent in the entire letter is echoed at the end. In 1:2 grace and peace will be amplified in knowing Jesus Christ as God and Savior. Everything needed for life and godliness is available through knowing God (1:3). Growing in knowledge is necessary for living the Christian life (1:5–6). Only those who progress in godly virtues reveal that their knowledge of Jesus Christ is fruitful (1:8). Conversely, those who renounce Christ after coming to know him are worse off than those who never professed faith in Christ (2:20–21). Growing in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, then, is not optional. It is essential for eternal life, and Peter fittingly places this theme at the letter's conclusion.

Doxologies clearly directed to Jesus Christ seldom occur in the NT, though 2 Tim 4:18 and Rev 1:5–6 are doxologies to Christ. A doxology to Christ constitutes another way the letter is framed, for we already saw in 1:2 that Peter identifies Jesus Christ as God and Savior. Doxologies, of course, are only directed to God himself, and so the doxology communicates Jesus Christ's deity.¹⁹¹⁵ Glory should be attributed to Christ because the salvation and perseverance of believers are ultimately his work, and the one who does the work deserves the glory. We are reminded of the transfiguration, where glory and honor are given Jesus Christ (1:17). Peter does not call on believers to exercise self-effort and be saved. God grants grace so believers can grow in the knowledge of himself. The glory belongs to Jesus Christ both in the present age and forever. The phrase "to the day of eternity" is unusual (cf. Sir 18:10), but it designates the age to come. The false teachers denied that such an age would arrive, but Peter reminds his readers that it will surely come, and the age to come will be characterized by glory to Jesus Christ forever and ever. It is difficult to know whether "Amen," found at the end of this verse in many translations, is original. The external evidence clearly supports

its inclusion, but some manuscripts (such as Vaticanus) omit it. Scribes would tend to insert “amen” after a doxology, but they would not be disposed to omit “amen” if it were originally present in the text.¹⁹¹⁶ I incline, therefore, to the view that “amen” is secondary and a later insertion.

JUDE

INTRODUCTION OUTLINE

- 1 Authorship
- 2 Recipients and Date
- 3 Opponents
- 4 Relation to 2 Peter
- 5 Structure

INTRODUCTION

Rowston begins an article on Jude with the sentence, “The most neglected book in the NT is probably the book of Jude.”¹⁹¹⁷ His assessment may be accurate, although 2 John and 3 John are close competitors. Jude is often overlooked because of its brevity, consisting of only twenty-five verses. The book is also neglected because of its strangeness, in that it quotes 1 Enoch and alludes to The Testament of Moses. Some wonder how a canonical book can cite writings that are not canonical. Furthermore, the message of Jude is alien to many in today’s world since Jude emphasizes that the Lord will certainly judge evil intruders who are attempting to corrupt the church.¹⁹¹⁸ The message of judgment strikes many in our world as intolerant, unloving, and contrary to the message of love proclaimed elsewhere in the NT.¹⁹¹⁹ Nevertheless, this short letter should not be ignored. Some of the most beautiful statements about God’s sustaining grace are found in Jude (vv. 1, 24–25), and they shine with a greater brilliance when contrasted with the false teachers who had departed from the Christian faith.

We can also say that the message of judgment is especially relevant to people today, for our churches are prone to sentimentality, suffer from moral breakdown, and too often fail to pronounce a definitive word of judgment because of an inadequate definition of love. Jude’s letter reminds us that errant teaching and dissolute living have dire consequences. Thus, we should not relegate his words to a crabby

temperament that threatens with judgment those he dislikes but see his words as a warning to beloved believers (vv. 3, 17) so that they will escape a deadly peril. Jude was written so that believers would contend for the faith that was transmitted to them (v. 3) and so that they would not abandon God's love at a crucial time in the life of their church. Such a message must still be proclaimed today since moral degradation is the pathway to destruction.

1 AUTHORSHIP

The author of the letter is named in the first verse, "Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James."¹⁹²⁰ The James mentioned here is almost certainly James the brother of Jesus.¹⁹²¹ It follows, then, that Jude was the brother of this James and also the brother of Jesus Christ.¹⁹²² The designation points to a Jude who is well known and to a James who is well known. The author feels no need to identify himself further, suggesting a well-established reputation in the community. If we examine others with the name "Jude" in early Christianity, no other candidate fits the authorship of this letter as well. "Judas of James" (*Ioudas Iakōbou*) is listed as one of the twelve apostles (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13). Bede and Calvin believed he was the author of this letter.¹⁹²³ "Judas of James," however, should not be read as "Judas brother of James" but "Judas son of James" (CSB, NIV, ESV, NRSV), and so the apostle Jude is not a likely candidate.¹⁹²⁴ Furthermore, we would expect in this case that Jude would call himself an apostle.

Another possibility is that Jude was "Judas called Barsabbas" (Acts 15:22, 27, 32). There is no indication, however, that "Judas called Barsabbas" was the brother of the James who is so prominent in Acts. Nevertheless, Ellis suggests that he is the author of the letter, arguing that the word "brother" (*adelphos*) does not refer to a relative but to a coworker in the gospel.¹⁹²⁵ Ellis's proposal is stimulating, but it is doubtful that the word "brother" refers to coworkers in the gospel. Contrary to Ellis, the term does not denote a ministry position but refers either to genealogical relationships or inclusion in God's family.

When we read the NT letters, it is clear that the term “brother” typically refers to a fellow believer, not to a partner in ministry (e.g., Rom 14:10, 13, 15, 21; 16:23; 1 Cor 5:4; 6:5–6; 7:12, 14–15; 8:11; Jas 1:9; 2:5; 4:11; 1 John 2:9–11; 3:10).

Philemon is an interesting test case. His participation in ministry (Phlm 1) is indicated by the term “coworker” (*synergos*), not the term “brother” (NASB; *adelphos*). So too in Jude the designation “brother of James” does not itself demonstrate that Jude was in a formal ministry but that Jude was the physical brother of James. Hence, the notion that Judas Barsabbas was the author of the letter should be rejected.

Other theories are even more speculative and unlikely. Some scholars find some plausibility in the view that Jude in the epistle refers to the apostle Thomas since Thomas was likely a surname instead of a personal name.¹⁹²⁶ This view is based on Syrian tradition where we have the name “Judas Thomas” or Judas “the twin.” Several pieces of evidence render this view improbable.¹⁹²⁷ We would expect the author of the Epistle of Jude to identify himself as “Thomas” or “the twin” if “Judas Thomas” were the author since these designations identify Thomas in the Syrian traditions. Without such identification any reference to Thomas is scarcely evident. Thus, we are not surprised to learn that no one in the early church identified Thomas as the author of the letter. The view also founders because we would expect the author to identify himself as an apostle. Finally, if the author desired to identify himself with Thomas, it would be confusing for him to identify himself as the brother of James since there is no evidence that Thomas identified himself as James’s brother.

Another theory is suggested by Streeter, who opts for a late date and identifies the author as “Judas of James,” the third bishop of Jerusalem (Apos. Con. 7:46).¹⁹²⁸ He can only sustain this theory by arguing that “brother” is a later insertion to the text, a desperate expedient to fortify his theory. Moffatt thinks both Jude and James are unknown, but such a theory suffers from the difficulty of explaining why Jude would call himself the brother of James when it was

customary to refer to oneself as the son of someone.¹⁹²⁹ It makes better sense to say that Jude called himself James's brother because James was well known as the brother of Jesus.

More credible than Moffatt's suggestion is that the letter is deliberately pseudonymous and that the author wanted to pass himself off as Jude the brother of James.¹⁹³⁰ The theory of pseudonymity, however, does not furnish a convincing explanation for attributing the work to Jude since the latter was not well known in early Christianity.¹⁹³¹ We would expect a pseudonymous writer to invest his writing with dignity by choosing someone other than the rather obscure Jude as the author. Nevertheless, some think Jude was honored and well known in Palestinian Christianity.¹⁹³² But if one desired to select a famous person in Palestine, James would have been a better candidate, for even the author of Jude locates himself in relation to James. Furthermore, a pseudonymous author, if he desired to impress readers with his credentials, would have introduced himself as "Jude the brother of Jesus."¹⁹³³ The writer does not try to impress the reader with Jude's relationship to Jesus but simply states his relation to James. It is most likely, then, that the author was genuinely Jude the brother of James, both of whom were brothers of Jesus Christ.¹⁹³⁴

Unfortunately, our knowledge of Jude is scanty, which, as we noted, argues for the letter's authenticity. He was one of the four brothers of Jesus (Matt 13:55; Mark 6:3).¹⁹³⁵ The order of the names varies in the two accounts, though James is named first in both texts. Perhaps we are justified in concluding that James was older than Jude, although he could have been listed first because of his reputation. The evidence we have suggests that Jude did not believe Jesus was the Messiah during the latter's ministry (Mark 3:21, 31; John 7:5). He likely became a believer after the resurrection since Acts 1:14 says the Lord's brothers were part of the prayer meetings prior to Pentecost. We learn from 1 Cor 9:5 that the Lord's brothers were itinerant

missionaries, and Jude probably was included here. His missionary work would explain his writing authoritatively to the church.

Hegesippus (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.19.1–20.8) provides a fascinating account in which two grandsons of Jude were brought before the emperor Domitian (AD 81–96) and questioned about their loyalty since they were from the royal family of David. They were released when they explained that they were farmers, waiting for the kingdom to come in the next world. The accuracy of the account is debated, and we will not linger over that question here. But it is plausible that Jude had grandsons during the era of Domitian, suggesting perhaps that Jude was dead by the time the incident occurred. Such an observation does not rule out necessarily the writing of Jude during the reign of Domitian since he could have composed the letter during the first part of Domitian's reign, and Jude's grandsons may have been hailed before the emperor during the last years of his lifetime.

Many scholars cast doubt on the authenticity of Jude because the Greek in the letter seems too polished to come from a rural Jew like Jude.¹⁹³⁶ A number of studies have shown, however, that Greek was common in Palestine, especially in Galilee. The influence of Hellenistic culture on Palestine was significant during the NT era. Moreover, if Jude traveled as a missionary, he could have acquired greater facility in Greek to foster his ministry.¹⁹³⁷ Palestinians probably had a greater ability in the Greek language than many NT scholars have conceded, and so assigning the letter to Jude is not improbable. As Bauckham says about Jude: "It could easily be among the earliest of the NT documents, as well as being rare and valuable firsthand evidence of the character of the Christian devotion and developing theology of those original Palestinian circles in which Jesus' own relatives were leaders."¹⁹³⁸

It is also argued that the letter is pseudonymous because the apostolic age is considered to be a past era (v. 17), and a body of doctrine is established (v. 3).¹⁹³⁹ As we argue in v. 17, it is unnecessary to conclude that the writings of the apostolic age were

collected together or that all the apostles had died when Jude wrote.¹⁹⁴⁰ Indeed, v. 18 could mean that the apostles actually wrote personally to those addressed by Jude.¹⁹⁴¹ Furthermore, predictions of future apostasy belong to the earliest oral stage of Christian preaching (Acts 20:29–30). Nor does the reference to the faith transmitted to the saints once for all necessarily point to a late date. The transmission of tradition is important in the Pauline letters acknowledged to be authentic (Rom 6:17; 1 Cor 11:23–26; 15:1–4).¹⁹⁴² Hebrews also teaches that the revelation given in the last days through Christ is definitive and final (Heb 1:2).

The external evidence for Jude is strong, given that the letter is brief and circumscribed in purpose.¹⁹⁴³ Some scholars have detected references to Jude in some of the apostolic fathers, but the allusions are not considered by most to be clear enough to be definite. Jude is attested as Scripture by the Muratorian Canon (ca. AD 200). Tertullian (*Cult. fem.* i. 3) refers to it, and Clement of Alexandria wrote a commentary on it (see Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* vi.14.1). Later Jude came to be doubted by some. Origen accepted it but suggested that others questioned its authority (*Comm. Matt.* x.17). Eusebius relays that some questioned it (*Hist. eccl.* vi.13.6; 14.1). Apparently, Jude was questioned because of the citation of 1 Enoch (so Jerome, *Vir. ill.* iv). The earliest external evidence, then, witnesses to the letter's authenticity.¹⁹⁴⁴ It probably was only doubted later because of the use of pseudepigraphical books,¹⁹⁴⁵ which is an indirect support of its authenticity since an author concerned about the appearance of authenticity would not have cited them. Jude should be judged as authentic, and perhaps he made use of a secretary in writing the letter.¹⁹⁴⁶

2 RECIPIENTS AND DATE

Locating the recipients and assigning a date to Jude is difficult. Unfortunately, we have little evidence on which to base decisions, so the recipients and date are typically decided on the basis of other conclusions, such as whether the letter is authentic, its relationship to

2 Peter, its early catholic character, and the identity of the opponents. Dates for Jude between AD 50 and 160 have been proposed.¹⁹⁴⁷ I have argued that the letter is authentic, so a second-century date is ruled out. Some identify the opponents as gnostics and assign a late date. But it is unlikely that the opponents were gnostics since the evidence for Gnosticism in the letter is scanty, and full-fledged Gnosticism is restricted to the second century.¹⁹⁴⁸ More promising is the relationship between Jude and 2 Peter. I will argue that Jude precedes 2 Peter. If this is the case, 2 Peter furnishes little assistance in determining the date, though dependence upon 2 Peter would mean that the letter could not have been written until the mid 60s at the earliest.¹⁹⁴⁹ Most scholars who see dependence, however, claim that 2 Peter used Jude. In any case, the interpretation of the letter is not affected dramatically whether we date the letter in the 60s or the 80s. It seems most likely that a date in the early 60s is closest to the truth.

Labeling Jude as a form of early catholicism is unconvincing.¹⁹⁵⁰ The notion that some writings in the NT reflect early catholicism suffers from historical anachronism and the forcing of evidence to fit a thesis. Scholars are still prone to read debates in later church history in some form into the NT. Even if one were to agree that early catholicism was budding during the NT era, no sprouts are evident in Jude. A vigorous hope for the Lord's return animates the letter (vv. 1, 14, 21, 24), which is contrary to so-called early catholicism where the church settles down for a long stay in the world. Nor is there any evidence of the institutionalization of offices in Jude, a reputed indication of early catholicism. Jude nowhere appeals to church leaders or a monarchical bishop to suppress the opponents. Some detect evidence of early catholicism in the emphasis on preserving the faith that was handed down once for all (vv. 3, 20). Often NT scholars think any reference to a body of codified belief has the odor of early catholicism. On the contrary, the importance of orthodoxy informs even the earliest letters (cf. Rom 6:17; 1 Cor 15:1–11; Gal 1:23; 1 Thess 4:1–2). In any case, Jude does not have in mind an articulated and detailed confession or a fully developed catechetical instrument.

He refers here to the gospel, a gospel that includes doctrinal content and definition. Of course, the gospel includes the demand to live a godly life, and it is precisely here that the opponents disagreed.

Most scholars believe the recipients had some kind of Jewish background, given Jude's predilection for Jewish apocalyptic tradition (1 Enoch and Testament of Moses).¹⁹⁵¹ Indeed, the use of apocalyptic literature is another indication that Jude wrote the letter.¹⁹⁵² It is possible that Gentiles attracted to Judaism were in view since Jewish antinomianism was not a common phenomenon, and the intruders were clearly licentious in their lifestyle.¹⁹⁵³ Still, the emphasis on Jewish traditions points to Jewish rather than Gentile readers. It is also possible that we have a mixed audience composed of both Jews and Gentiles.¹⁹⁵⁴ Suggestions for a destination include Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, and Egypt.¹⁹⁵⁵ We have no way of knowing the letter's destination. Nothing in the interpretation of the letter is based on its destination, nor do we know whether Jude wrote to one church or churches. Perhaps an urban setting in Palestine is the best option.¹⁹⁵⁶ In the commentary I will refer to Jude's "church," but I do not mean to imply thereby that only one church is addressed. The terminology is used to avoid the awkwardness of oscillating between "church" and "churches" in the commentary.

3 OPPONENTS

Historically Jude has been classified as one of the catholic epistles. The designation is misleading since Jude was written to a particular situation, to counter opponents who introduced destructive teaching to the church. Jude did not write a letter in which he summed up his theology or sketched in his view of the Christian life. He addresses specific circumstances to assist the church in its response to intruders who had invaded the church.¹⁹⁵⁷ The opponents likely came from the outside since they are said to have "have come in by stealth" (v. 4).¹⁹⁵⁸ From this we can rightly call them "intruders" or "interlopers" or "infiltrators."¹⁹⁵⁹ Jude does not give us a detailed

portrait of the adversaries. Instead he compares them to notorious sinners from the OT, claiming that they were especially wicked.¹⁹⁶⁰

In the history of scholarship the opponents have typically been identified as gnostics¹⁹⁶¹ or as representing a form of incipient Gnosticism.¹⁹⁶² Some draw on the background of the gnostic systems of the second century, seeing a libertine form of Gnosticism in the adversaries. According to this view, the adversaries rejected the moral order of the creation, distinguished between pneumatics and psychics (v. 19), were individualistic (v. 12), and reviled angelic powers (v. 8). Kelly is more guarded, seeing the heretics as involved in “the opening shots in the fateful struggle between the Church and Gnosticism.”¹⁹⁶³ He sees “Gnostic colouring” in their libertinism and suspects they embraced Christological heresy.¹⁹⁶⁴ Their inclination to Gnosticism manifests itself in their reception of revelations by dreams (v. 8) and in their regard for themselves as pneumatics (v. 19). On the other hand, according to Kelly, no evidence exists for a polemic against an inferior God who created this world. So the Gnosticism found here cannot be equated with the developed systems of the second century.

The gnostic thesis is still advocated by some, such as Seethaler.¹⁹⁶⁵ He sees a mixture of traditional beliefs and gnostic conceptions. The opponents in Jude were libertines (vv. 4, 18). Verse 19, in which the opponents are said to be “worldly” (*psychikoi*) and are charged with not having the Spirit, indicates the use of technical terms from Gnosticism. The reference to dreaming (v. 8) shows that the opponents received gnostic revelatory dreams and visions. Their reviling of angelic powers (v. 8) demonstrates a rejection of the material world created by God since such powers helped create the physical world. Jude’s mention of Cain (v. 11) indicates they were part of the gnostic Cainite sect that lived in a libertine way. Their rebellion signals their rejection of any church hierarchy (v. 11).

Alternatively, Sellin rejects any gnostic identification of the opponents.¹⁹⁶⁶ He thinks instead that they were pneumatics. They

claimed moral autonomy and did not promote an immoral lifestyle. Nor, says Sellin, did they espouse the doctrine of the demiurge. Instead, the heresy is close to what we see in Col 2. As ecstatic visionaries (v. 8) the opponents received heavenly visions, and thus they despised angels because they thought of themselves as part of the spiritual elite. Jude does not criticize them, according to Sellin, for sexual sin as is commonly argued in vv. 6–7. Instead, the problem with the opponents was that they transcended their proper sphere. The angels in v. 7 are not criticized for sexual sin but for leaving the realm of heaven and coming to earth. So too the opponents through ecstatic visions tried to transcend the sphere of this world and thus participate in the heavenly world. The opponents claimed to be spiritual, but they were like animals in that they did not have spiritual knowledge (v. 10). The “clothing” stained by the flesh (v. 23 NIV) does not refer to sexual sin but identifies the teachers as wandering charismatics. Hence, Sellin thinks the opponents were neither gnostic nor libertine, but under the influence of hyper-Pauline antinomians they emphasized grace and the Spirit, seeing themselves as pneumatics who were exalted above angels.¹⁹⁶⁷

It will be argued here that both the gnostic and pneumatic theses are incorrect. Those who see an incipient form of Gnosticism are more careful than those who espouse full-fledged Gnosticism, but even in this case the terminology is unfortunate since it leads readers to see some kind of linear development between the teaching of Jude and later gnostic systems. It is unclear, however, that there is any genealogical relationship between the opponents in Jude and later gnostic teaching. We exceed the evidence, then, in seeing some sort of continuity between the opponents in Jude and later Gnosticism. The pneumatic identification is fascinating, but I will argue instead that the evidence of the letter supports the notion that the opponents were libertine. We must beware of the danger of labeling the opponents and then concluding that we understand their position.¹⁹⁶⁸ Unfortunately, our grasp of the opponents is partial since we are restricted to what Jude says about them. Thurén maintains that we cannot identify the opponents historically since stock language was

used to vilify opponents, and hence the descriptions employed are not objective.¹⁹⁶⁹ Thurén is correct in saying that Jude uses emotive and strong language to denounce the adversaries.¹⁹⁷⁰ Furthermore, the difficulty of identifying the opponents precisely is evident by the various theories promulgated by scholars. Nevertheless, Thurén's thesis is questionable in that he suggests that Jude's accusations do not represent the intruders. If this is the case, it is doubtful that Jude's letter would have convinced the recipients.¹⁹⁷¹ The preservation of the letter indicates that the recipients found it to be persuasive and useful. The letter was effective because it genuinely identifies the nature of the opposition. In our postmodern world we know that no one inhabits "neutral space." We all view reality from a certain perspective. For those who subscribe to the inspiration and authority of Scripture, Jude's posture on the adversaries represents God's view of their beliefs and actions. We will proceed, then, by noting from the text itself what we can know about the opponents, commenting as we go on the weaknesses of the gnostic and pneumatic hypotheses.

Bateman argues that the opponents were Zealots who were trying to seduce Judeans, including Christians, in their cause against Rome in the 60s.¹⁹⁷² The alleged reconstruction is unconvincing for several reasons. First, if the thesis were correct, we would expect some kind of statement about the relationship with Rome (cf. Rom 13:1–7; Titus 3:1; 1 Pet 2:13–17; Rev 13:1–18), but nothing is said about political or revolutionary issues. Second, Bateman shows that there was immorality among the Zealots, but the situation is different from Jude since the opponents in the letter *advocated* libertinism, and there is no evidence that the Zealots *promoted* freedom from the law. Third, the opponents were in the church (v. 4) and were even sharing love feasts with them (v. 12). There is no evidence that Zealots belonged to Christian communities. Indeed, such participation is historically implausible since participation in the new sect (which was admitting Gentiles who were not observing the law) would be improbable for any adherent of the Zealots. I do not know of any evidence of Jewish Christian participation in the Zealot movement. Fourth, space is

lacking to interact with details of Bateman's reconstruction, but the question of parallelomania arises.¹⁹⁷³ Bateman adduces various statements from various time periods and authors to reconstruct the situation, but the alleged parallels do not constitute sufficient evidence for his reading of the situation. In the end he falls prey to the kind of mirror reading that Barclay criticizes in his famous article.¹⁹⁷⁴

The most remarkable feature is the libertinism of the opponents.¹⁹⁷⁵ Jude's favorite designation for them is "godless" (*aseb* word group, vv. 4, 15, 18). For instance, they rejected the lordship of Christ and lived licentiously (*aselgeia*, v. 4), and the latter is almost certainly a reference to sexual sin. Contrary to Sellin, vv. 6–7 clearly show that the adversaries indulged in sexual sin (see commentary below). Nor does the reference to the defiled garment in v. 23 signify that they were wandering charismatics, though Knight may be correct in identifying them as wandering prophets.¹⁹⁷⁶ It is much more probable that this is another reference to libertine behavior. Since the emphasis is on their immoral lifestyle, it is likely that they did not deny any specific doctrine about Jesus Christ. There is no evidence, for example, that they promulgated a gnostic Christology. They denied Christ's lordship by the way they lived, by their antinomian lifestyle.

Verse 8 suggests that they defended their "ethics" by appealing to revelations or dreams from the Lord,¹⁹⁷⁷ and the reference to shepherding themselves in v. 12 suggests they were teachers.¹⁹⁷⁸ It seems, then, that their charter for the Christian life had a charismatic foundation.¹⁹⁷⁹ Apparently they were blessed with high self-esteem since they confidently criticized angels (vv. 8, 10), but it is unclear that they claimed to be exalted above angels by virtue of their visions. They probably reviled angels because angels as mediators of the law upheld moral norms, the very norms shunned by the opponents.¹⁹⁸⁰ Nor should we follow Sellin when he forces the opponents of Jude into the mold of the "philosophy" opposed in Colossians.¹⁹⁸¹ One of their chief characteristics seems to have been a stubborn self-

righteousness and inflexibility to any correction. Hence, they are said to reject Christ's lordship over their lives (v. 8; cf. v. 4), and their rebellion is compared to Korah's (v. 11).¹⁹⁸² They are deceptive in that they do not produce what they promise (v. 12), showing kindness to people only to gain their favor, which means they wanted financial support (v. 16). Their lives are splendid examples of "doing it my way" (vv. 12, 16, 18). Like most people who live for themselves, they were deeply unhappy, grumbling and complaining about circumstances that disappointed them (v. 16). The fruit of their lives was disgusting, compared to the slimy foam that washes up on the seashore or to planets that wander off course (v. 13). After describing the opponents in such terms, Jude's conclusion is not surprising. These intruders in the community are divisive. Not only are they divisive, but they are also plainly unbelievers, people who do not have the Spirit (v. 19).¹⁹⁸³

It is sometimes said that Jude only denounces his opponents and does not refute them. Such a judgment fails to perceive what Jude does in the letter. He exposes the moral rootlessness and utter godlessness of the intruders. By revealing their character, Jude strips them of any authority in the congregation. No thinking Christian would follow people who are fundamentally selfish. Jude does not merely revile them. He unveils who they truly were, removing any grounds for their influence in the church. Too often scholars center on the wrong "theology" of opponents and fail to recognize that criticizing the morality of opponents constitutes significant grounds for dismissing them.

The actual content of the letter also indicates that we do not have any solid evidence for identifying the intruders as gnostic. The reference to their licentious lifestyle at first glance could support the gnostic thesis. But this is hardly sufficient evidence to call opponents gnostic since antinomianism is hardly limited to Gnosticism. Missing is gnostic cosmology, Christology, and a clear denigration of the material world. Therefore, no inductive grounds exist for identifying the opponents with the second century. Everything found in the letter fits well into a first-century setting, before the more developed tenets

of Gnosticism appeared. Indeed, it even exceeds the evidence to label the heresy “incipient Gnosticism,” since there is no real evidence of any gnostic influence.

4 RELATION TO 2 PETER

We begin by listing the parallels between Jude and 2 Peter so we can see them for ourselves.

JUDE	2 PETER
4 For some people . . . have come in by stealth; they are ungodly, turning the grace of our God into sensuality and denying Jesus Christ, our only Master and Lord.	2:1 There will be false teachers among you. They will bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them
4 For some people, who were designated for this judgment long ago,	2:3 Their condemnation, pronounced long ago, is not idle, and their destruction does not sleep.
6 and the angels who did not keep their own position but abandoned their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains in deep darkness for the judgment on the great day.	2:4 For if God didn't spare the angels who sinned but cast them into hell and delivered them in chains of utter darkness to be kept for judgment;
7 Likewise, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns committed sexual immorality and perversions, and serve as an example by undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.	2:6 if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes and condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is coming to the ungodly;
8 these people—relying on their dreams—defile their flesh, reject authority, and slander glorious ones.	2:10 especially those who follow the polluting desires of the flesh and despise authority. Bold, arrogant people! They are not afraid to slander the glorious ones;
9 Yet when Michael the archangel was disputing with the devil in an argument about Moses's body, he did not dare utter a slanderous condemnation against him but said, “The Lord rebuke you!”	2:11 angels, who are greater in might and power, do not bring a slanderous charge against them before the Lord.
10 But these people blaspheme anything they do not understand. And what they do understand by instinct—like irrational animals—by these things they are destroyed.	2:12 But these people, like irrational animals—creatures of instinct born to be caught and destroyed—slander what they do not understand, and in their destruction they too will be destroyed.

11 they have . . . plunged into Balaam's error for profit.	2:15 They have gone astray by abandoning the straight path and have followed the path of Balaam, the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of wickedness
12 These people are dangerous reefs at your love feasts as they eat with you without reverence.	2:13 They are spots and blemishes, delighting in their deceptions while they feast with you.
12 They are waterless clouds	2:17 These people are springs without water
13 for whom the blackness of darkness is reserved forever.	2:17 The gloom of darkness has been reserved for them.
16 their mouths utter arrogant words,	2:18 For by uttering boastful, empty words
17-18 But you, dear friends, remember what was predicted by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. They told you, "In the end time there will be scoffers living according to their own ungodly desires."	3:2-3 so that you recall the words previously spoken by the holy prophets and the command of our Lord and Savior given through your apostles. Above all, be aware of this: Scoffers will come in the last days scoffing and following their own evil desires,

One of the most vexing issues when interpreting Jude and 2 Peter is how to explain the relationship between them. In a number of verses, the two letters have remarkable parallels. The parallels would be even clearer if cited in Greek, but in this commentary the CSB is quoted in the table above for the sake of English readers. Scholars have disputed how to explain the parallels that exist between the two letters.¹⁹⁸⁴ Three plausible explanations have been offered: (1) Second Peter is dependent on Jude; (2) Jude is dependent on 2 Peter;¹⁹⁸⁵ and (3) they are both dependent on either a written or oral source, or perhaps a combination thereof. Most scholars now believe that 2 Peter depends on Jude, questioning whether Jude would have written his letter otherwise, since he restates much of 2 Peter.¹⁹⁸⁶ On the other hand, a significant number of scholars still argue that Jude drew on 2 Peter. Wallace has an interesting defense of this thesis.¹⁹⁸⁷ He argues that most scholars opt for the posteriority of 2 Peter because they assume its inauthenticity. In addition, the rougher grammar and style of 2 Peter suggest that Jude smoothed out and improved Peter's writing. Wallace says that a distinct motive for Jude still exists since the

fundamental purpose differs from 2 Peter, and the most important verses (20–23) are not contained in 2 Peter.¹⁹⁸⁸ Mathews, in the same vein, argues that Jude improves the roughness of Peter and that the smoothing out of Peter's grammar by Jude is analogous to what we see in the synoptic tradition.¹⁹⁸⁹

Each of these theories is plausible. We should not, for instance, rule out the notion that both writers drew on a common source.¹⁹⁹⁰ It is improbable that the letters are completely independent. A shared written tradition would account for the similar wording and themes. Some of the themes touched on are rather unusual (the reviling of angels), suggesting that the authors were not drawing on the common stock of Christian preaching. We should note that the two letters rarely agree in the exact words used, and often the same themes are developed in different ways.¹⁹⁹¹ Still, the common-source theory should be rejected because the simpler hypothesis should be preferred, and the simpler hypothesis is that one of the authors used the writing of the other. And yet it should be acknowledged that scholars are often too confident in declaring that some form of *literary* dependence exists.¹⁹⁹² It is also possible that both drew from shared oral tradition. Nevertheless, the most probable solution, in my judgment, is that Peter used Jude. Wallace makes a good case for the priority of 2 Peter, but I remain unconvinced for several reasons. First, as I argue in the introduction to 2 Peter, the priority of Jude does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that 2 Peter is inauthentic. Second, smoothing out grammar does not clearly or necessarily indicate a later date. Third, the parallel with the Synoptic Gospels is not persuasive since 2 Peter and Jude rarely have exactly the same words, which is common in the Synoptics. Finally, although Jude and 2 Peter are not identical, there does not seem to be enough distinctive material in Jude if he had 2 Peter before him. Evangelicals have occasionally worried that literary dependence would call into question inspiration and authority. But inspiration does not rule out the use of sources as if only direct messages from God are inspired. We can approach the issue of literary dependence by asking what view is the most plausible and best

supported by the evidence. Since the matter cannot be resolved definitively, though I incline to 2 Peter using Jude, I will not base my interpretation on any theory. Finally, we should reject the notion that Jude should be included in a Petrine school, which has been advocated by both Soards and Ward.¹⁹⁹³ The letters are distinct enough to warrant separate treatment.¹⁹⁹⁴

5 STRUCTURE

The epistle of Jude is a vigorous and pointed piece of writing.¹⁹⁹⁵ Davids points out some distinctives of Jude as a letter: no location for recipients is named; no thanksgiving; the common elements in letter closings are missing (greetings, summary, health wish, purpose statement), and we find only a benediction.¹⁹⁹⁶ Robinson makes a good case that the letter should be characterized as Jewish invective, in which “the form” of the invective is Greco-Roman, but “the content” of the invective is Jewish.¹⁹⁹⁷ Scholars have often remarked that the Greek is good with an effective use of imagery.¹⁹⁹⁸ The letter bears the marks of a careful and disciplined structure, even though it was directed to specific circumstances in the life of the church.¹⁹⁹⁹ Watson, in a ground-breaking study, argues that Jude used Greek rhetoric in structuring the letter.²⁰⁰⁰ Many letters in the NT are now being analyzed and explained on the basis of Greek rhetoric.²⁰⁰¹ Watson outlines the letter as follows.²⁰⁰²

- I. Epistolary Prescript (1–2)
- II. *Exordium* (3)
- III. *Narratio* (4)
- IV. *Probatio* (5–16)
 - A. First Proof (5–10)
 - B. Second Proof (11–13)
 - C. Third Proof (14–16)

V. *Peroratio* (17–23)

VI. Doxology (24–25)

Contrary to Watson, it is doubtful that Jude consciously imitates the rhetorical handbooks in composing the letter.²⁰⁰³ Nor is Watson's analysis convincing at every point, since he sees a more detailed pattern of rhetoric than is plausible. Wolthuis rightly suggests, in an invented dialogue between Jude and Cicero, that a writer may follow some of the canons of rhetoric without consciously intending to do so.²⁰⁰⁴ G. Green, citing Seneca, Cicero, Demetrius, and an edited edition of Aristotle's letters, notes that "they distinguished between rhetorical discourse and letters."²⁰⁰⁵ Letters were more like conversations instead of following the pattern of public rhetoric.²⁰⁰⁶ Still, Watson's analysis is helpful in understanding the structure of Jude's composition, even though it is doubtful that Jude wrote according to the pattern of Greek rhetoric.²⁰⁰⁷

Many writers throughout history have used features of Greek rhetoric and have known nothing about it since such rhetoric includes commonsense rules that many skillful writers have followed. The rules of rhetoric were designed for *speeches*, not *letters*, and hence we must be careful about imposing the pattern of the former on the latter.²⁰⁰⁸ Furthermore, it is interesting that the early church fathers who were familiar with Greek rhetoric did not identify the NT epistles as such.²⁰⁰⁹ Thus, the rhetorical character of the letter should be supplemented with the epistolary features evident in the epistle. Nevertheless, Watson's understanding of Jude provides a helpful inroad into its structure. Describing the letter as a piece of deliberative rhetoric helps us see that Jude's design was to persuade the readers to reject the opponents and remain faithful to the tradition transmitted to them. Jude does not write dispassionately. His aim was to persuade the church to adopt his point of view.

The "epistolary prescript" (vv. 1–2) also does not fit with analyzing the letter rhetorically. The prescript (vv. 1–2) is understood better in terms of an epistolary analysis of the letter, in which there are three

elements: sender, recipients, and greeting. Some of the themes expressed in the rest of the letter are mentioned in these verses, indicating that Jude composed the letter carefully and with a unified purpose.²⁰¹⁰

Jude reminds the readers that they share a common salvation, alerting them to the need for vigilance in contending for the faith, disposing them to be receptive to what followed. Watson identifies v. 4 as *narratio*, which explains more concretely the introduction in v. 3. The reason the church must contend for the faith is that intruders were troubling the church. The danger of the opponents is brought to center stage here. Watson remarks that the “three qualities of brevity, clarity, and plausibility should especially characterize the *narratio*.”²⁰¹¹ The content of v. 4 certainly fits this description, where Jude introduces his readers to the opponents, pronounces judgment upon them, and sketches in their vices. Unfortunately, however, Watson’s analysis suggests that vv. 3–4 are to be separated from each other (see further below), when in reality the verses are bound tightly together. In epistolary terms vv. 3–4 function as the “body opening” of the letter.

Verses 5–16 provide the evidence (Watson’s *probatio*) for what is said in v. 4. In v. 4 Jude points out that intruders had infiltrated the church and that their intrusion was no idle matter since they were ungodly. In vv. 5–16 Jude demonstrates that the thesis in v. 4 is indeed the case. The beginning of a new section is marked by a “disclosure formula” in v. 5, “Now I want to remind you.” Watson divides the proof section into three subsections: vv. 5–10, 11–13, and 14–16. These suggested subsections are helpful, but the particular structure of the verses is better explained by Bauckham, who notes the midrashic character of Jude’s writing. Three examples of God’s judgment in the past are relayed in vv. 5–7, and in vv. 8–10 Jude clarifies that the opponents deserved judgment as well because of their lifestyle. In v. 11 the opponents are compared to three men who went astray in the past: Cain, Balaam, and Korah. Verses 12–13 clarify that the character of the opponents placed them in the same category as these infamous figures. Jude closes this section with the prophecy of Enoch, which

promises judgment on the ungodly (vv. 14–15). Once again Jude correlates the lives of the adversaries with those who will experience judgment (v. 16). We should notice that the examples of prophecy are always linked to the false teachers of Jude’s day by the word “these” (*houtoi*; vv. 8, 10, 12, 16 cf. Gal 4:24; 2 Tim 3:8).²⁰¹²

Judgment on Israel, angels, and Sodom and Gomorrah	vv. 5–7	“In the same way these people”	v. 8
Michael did not rebuke the devil	v. 9	“But these people” (10)	v. 10
Cain, Balaam, Korah	v. 11	“These people” (12)	v. 12
Enoch’s proclamation of judgment	vv. 14–15	“These people” (16)	v. 16
Predictions of apostles	vv. 17–18	“These people”	v. 19

Jude regularly applies OT types and texts to the interlopers who had invaded the church (vv. 8, 12, 16). Some have labeled this technique as midrash,²⁰¹³ and it is evident that if one uses the term *midrash* in this loose sense (see further below), then identifying his approach as midrashic is suitable.²⁰¹⁴ However, though Jude was steeped in the OT and Jewish tradition,²⁰¹⁵ his method of using the OT is not precisely the same thing as Jewish midrash.²⁰¹⁶

Verses 17–23 function as the *peroratio* according to Watson. The peroration summarizes the main themes of the letter and makes an emotional appeal for the author’s case. Watson sees vv. 17–19 functioning as the summation where the words of the apostles are recalled and then sees v. 20 as introducing the body closing. In my outline I delineate three sections here: (1) vv. 17–19 focus on the outside threat of the false teachers, which was predicted by the apostles; (2) vv. 20–21 summon the readers to focus on their own spiritual lives, reminding them that they must not stray from God; (3) vv. 22–23 encourage the readers to reach out to those affected by the false teachers, warning them not to become ensnared in the process.

Verses 17–18 contain an apostolic prophecy, where Jude recounts that the apostles predicted the rise of mockers. In v. 19 the term “these” (*houtoi*) is again used to connect the prediction of the apostles with the false teachers. Jude clarifies that “these” false teachers were those whom the apostles foretold would arise.

The letter closes with an epistolary feature, a doxology (vv. 24–25). Missing is any grace benediction or greetings to individuals. The emphasis on God and Jesus Christ and their ability to keep believers until the end reminds us of the first two verses of the letter. The doxology, then, forms an inclusio.

My outline is rather similar to Watson’s in some respects, and it is instructive to compare Bauckham’s structure with Watson’s analysis. Bauckham sees the theme of the letter in vv. 3–4, in which v. 3 constitutes the appeal to the readers and v. 4 the background or reason for the appeal. The background is explicated in vv. 5–19, while the theme is unpacked in vv. 20–23. He notes that the catchwords that occur support the connections between the two sections.²⁰¹⁷ Bauckham concludes from this that vv. 20–23 are not a “postscript” but “the climax of the letter to which all the rest leads up.”²⁰¹⁸ The most significant difference between Bauckham and Watson is the former divides the text at v. 20, whereas Watson posits a break at v. 17. It seems that the latter is more persuasive since the words “dear friends” mark out a new section.

Bauckham also argues that we should beware of identifying vv. 5–19 as a denunciation of opponents. We have here a scripturally shaped argument that criticizes the opponents for their libertinism, not their false doctrine.²⁰¹⁹ Bauckham cautions that we must remember that Jude addresses believers about the opponents and does not confront the adversaries directly.²⁰²⁰ Perhaps Jude would have spoken differently if he addressed the adversaries directly. Furthermore, we must remember that criticism was much more direct in the ancient world than is common in Western culture.

One of the disadvantages of Watson’s focus on Greek rhetoric is that the Jewish character of the letter is slighted. Both Ellis and Bauckham

rightly perceive that Jewish practices shape Jude’s hermeneutic. Ellis identifies vv. 5–19 as midrash, although he does not use the term in the technical sense found in the rabbinic midrashim. Bauckham finds Ellis’s work persuasive in many respects as well.²⁰²¹ According to his analysis we have citations (vv. 5–7, 9, 11, 14–15, 18) and then a commentary on the text (vv. 8, 10, 12–13, 16, 19). Both Ellis and Bauckham recognize that Jude often summarizes or refers to OT texts without actually quoting from them (5–7, 9, 14–15), although v. 18 constitutes a prophecy from the apostles. Both scholars see a relationship to the pesharim of Qumran, but they also acknowledge the differences. What is remarkable in Jude is his regular use of “these” (*houtoi*) to comment on the text to which he refers. Verb tenses also change so that the texts referred to are found in the past or future, but the interpretation is in the present tense.²⁰²² Bauckham’s outline of the letter is as follows.²⁰²³

- 1–2 Address and Greeting
- 3–4 Occasion and Theme of the Letter
 - A The Appeal (summary, 3)
 - B The Background to the Appeal (summary, 4)
- 5–19 B¹ The Background to the Appeal:
 - A Midrash on the Prophecies of the Doom of the Ungodly
 - 5–7 (a) Three OT types
 - 8–10 *plus* interpretation
 - 9 (a¹) Michael and the Devil
 - 11 (b) Three More OT Types
 - 12–13 *plus* interpretation
 - 14–15 (c) The Prophecy of Enoch
 - 16 *plus* interpretation
 - 17–18 (d) The Prophecy of the Apostles

19 *plus* interpretation

20–23 A¹ The Appeal (reiterated)

24–25 Closing Doxology

We conclude this section by considering two chiasmic outlines of Jude and the outline of A. Robinson. The most impressive work has been done by Wendland, as we will see shortly. Wendland argues that Bauckham's structure is to be preferred over Watson's.²⁰²⁴ He notes that it has a symmetry lacking in Watson's treatment. Furthermore, vv. 3–4 are separated in Watson's scheme, whereas they are tightly bound together in Bauckham's outline. Verses 3–4 together seem to constitute the theme of the letter, and this is not evident in Watson's analysis. Finally, Bauckham provides a more detailed explanation than Watson of the relationship between OT examples and Jude's application of them to the opponents.

We begin with the chiasmic structure of Osburn.²⁰²⁵

A Greeting (1–2)

 B Introduction (3–4)

 C Literary Warnings: Rebellion = Fate (5–7)

 C' Link Rebellion = Fate of Eschatological Enemies of God to Rebellion = Fate of Intruders (8–16)

 D Apostolic Warnings (17–19)

 B' Concluding Appeal. Specifics of "Contend" in Verse 4 (20–23)

 A' Doxology (24–25)

Osburn's analysis has the advantage of simplicity, but it suffers from at least two defects. First, the outline is rather general and does not explain concretely specific features of the text. Second, the intrusion of point D also seems rather awkward.

Another helpful outline comes from A. Robinson in her study of invective in the letter.²⁰²⁶

1. Greeting 1–2
2. Purpose 3–4
(Inclusio with 4 and 15)
3. Comparison and Past Examples 5–10
4. Reproof 11–13
5. Enoch’s Prophecy 14–16
6. Prophetic Reminder 17–19
7. Instructions to the Beloved 20–23
8. Doxology 24–25

The outline is instructive, but it does not show as clearly how the letter fits together as a whole.

Wendland presents a chiasmic structure of the letter, and his outline seems to fit the contents of the letter well. I present an abbreviated outline of his structure below.²⁰²⁷

- A Epistolary Introduction: Participants and Threefold Characterization of Receptors (1)
- B Salutation—Threefold Benediction (2)
- C Purpose Introduced—Appeal (3)
- D Motivation, First Mention—False Teachers (4)
- E Reminder—Warning from OT Times (5–7)
- F Description—Heretics: 3 Attributes (8)
- G Extracanonical example (Ancient)—Michael (9)
- H Description—Heretics: 3 Attributes (10)
- I Woe Oracle: 3 Archetypes from OT (11)
- H’ Description—Heretics: 6 Attributes (12–13)
- G’ Extracanonical Prediction (Ancient)—Enoch (14–15)

- F' Description—Heretics: 3 Attributes (16)
- E' Reminder—Warning from NT Times (17–18)
- D' Motivation, Final Mention—False Teachers (19)
- C' Purpose Elaborated—Appeal (20–21)
- B' Commission—a Threefold Assignment (22–23)
- A' Epistolary Conclusion (24–25)

Scholars often overplay chiasmic schemes, and I admit it is improbable that chiasmic schemes exist in long pieces of literature, especially if they are detailed. Perhaps Jude himself did not consciously write chiasmically, and hence too much should not be made of the presence of such in interpretation. Still, Wendland's analysis is impressive and does not appear to force the evidence. He shows that the letter fits together nicely. Furthermore, his analysis shows that Jude begins and ends on a positive note, and so the letter should not be appraised as a negative tract but as a positive encouragement for the readers.

OUTLINE OF JUDE

- 1 Greeting (1–2)
- 2 The Purpose for Writing (3–4)
- 3 Judgment of the Intruders (5–16)
 - 3.1 God's Judgment (5–10)
 - 3.2 Woe Oracle (11–13)
 - 3.3 Enoch's Prophecy (14–16)
- 4 Exhortations to Believers (17–25)
 - 4.1 Remember the Apostolic Predictions (17–19)
 - 4.2 Keep Yourselves in God's Love (20–21)
 - 4.3 Show Mercy to Those Affected by Opponents (22–23)
 - 4.4 Doxology (24–25)

COMMENTARY

SECTION OUTLINE

- 1 Greeting (1–2)

1 GREETING (1–2)

¹ *Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James:*

To those who are the called, loved by God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ.

² *May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.*

Most ancient letters begin with the sender, the recipients, and a greeting. In the epistle of Jude, the sender and recipients are identified in v. 1, and the greeting is found in v. 2. In most Greco-Roman letters the sender, recipients, and greeting are stated concisely. Acts 23:26 serves as a good example of the brevity of a typical greeting, “Claudius Lysias, to the most excellent governor Felix: Greetings.” What distinguishes Jude, in particular, and NT epistles in general, from such Greco-Roman letters is the theological substance of their greetings. Jude does not give a perfunctory or customary hello. He invests the greeting with the content of the gospel, anticipating central themes of the letter from the outset. More specifically, we know from the rest of the letter that interlopers had intruded into the church, threatening the faith of believers. Jude reminds his readers that the God who set his love upon them also called them and Jesus Christ will keep them in the faith to the end.

¹ We shall consider here (1) the sender, (2) the recipients, and (3) the greeting. The sender is identified as “Jude” (*Ioudas*). We saw in the introduction that a number of people with the name of Jude have been suggested as the author. I argued there that the view, which identifies Jude as the brother of Jesus Christ, is the most persuasive (cf. Matt 13:55 par.).²⁰²⁸ Jude identifies himself as “a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James.” The term Jude uses is not *diakonos*, which can also mean “servant,” but *doulos* (“slave”). He does not commence the letter by emphasizing the privilege of his brotherly relationship to Jesus Christ but his submission to Christ’s lordship. In this sense Jude was like every other Christian. And yet the term *doulos* also designates the honor of serving as Jesus Christ’s slave. Those called to special service in the OT were identified as the servants (*doulos*) of the Lord: Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, and the prophets (Josh 14:7; 24:29; 2 Kgs 17:23; Ps 89:4, 20).²⁰²⁹ In the NT era Paul, Peter, and James also called themselves servants of God and Jesus Christ (Rom

1:1; Gal 1:10; Phil 1:1; Titus 1:1; Jas 1:1; 2 Pet 1:1). With the same term Jude expresses his humility (since he was Jesus Christ's slave) and his authority (since he was an honored servant of the Lord as were those in the OT era).

Jude was not only the slave of Jesus Christ, but he was also James's brother.²⁰³⁰ As we maintained in the introduction, this phrase identifies Jude clearly to the readers. Since James needed no further introduction, he probably was James, the brother of the Lord. James, like the rest of the Lord's brothers, did not believe in Jesus during the days of his earthly ministry (cf. Mark 3:21, 31–35; John 7:2–5). James presumably came to faith when Jesus Christ appeared to him after his resurrection (1 Cor 15:7), and he came to prominence as the leader of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18). Paul identifies him as one of the pillars of the church (Gal 2:9; cf. Gal 1:19; 2:12). It is likely that the epistle that bears the name of James was written by James, the brother of the Lord.²⁰³¹ Why does Jude describe himself as James's brother instead of the Lord's brother? Kelly thinks the failure to mention that he was the Lord's brother is an indication of pseudonymity.²⁰³² This misreads Jude's intention. Neither James nor Jude identified himself as the Lord's brother (Jas 1:1) because their relationship with the Lord was one of slave to master, not brother to brother. Jude eschews saying he was the Lord's brother because of his humility, and yet it would be a mistake to conclude that the only purpose was to communicate his humility. The reference to James as his brother is also honorific, designating by implication Jude's authority.²⁰³³ Neyrey rightly emphasizes the honor and status derived from Jude's blood relationship with an important person like James.²⁰³⁴ Jude does not merely transmit his opinion in this letter. He writes authoritatively as Jesus Christ's servant and as the brother of James.

We have seen that the self-designation used communicates Jude's authority, but he does not identify himself as an apostle. We can compare this to 2 Pet 1:1, where Peter calls himself a servant (*doulos*) and apostle (*apostolos*) of Jesus Christ. Jude refers to the apostles in v.

17, “Remember what was predicted by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Some scholars believe Jude separated himself from the apostles in this verse. But Jude 17 does not in and of itself demonstrate that Jude was not an apostle. The comparison with 2 Peter is instructive. We have already seen that Peter designates himself as an apostle in 2 Pet 1:1, and yet in 2 Pet 3:2 he says, I want you to “recall the words previously spoken by the holy prophets and the command of our Lord and Savior given through your apostles.” The language is remarkably similar to Jude’s, and yet Peter’s words do not exclude him from the apostolic circle. We cannot conclude from Jude 17 alone that Jude was not an apostle, but there are other reasons for doubting that Jude was an apostle. What is important to note is that Jude, contrary to Peter, does not identify himself as an apostle in the introduction to the letter. His authority stems from his being a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James.

After identifying himself as the author, Jude addresses the recipients of the letter. Perhaps we should note first what he does not say. Many letters in the NT specify the church or churches addressed so that we know the geographical destination of the letter (e.g., Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:1–2; Gal 1:2; 1 Pet 1:1). Jude, however, does not identify the recipients, and therefore it has been called one of the catholic epistles. It is likely, however, that Jude was addressed to a specific church or churches since he spoke against interlopers troubling the church (see introduction).²⁰³⁵ Even though we cannot locate with certainty the letter’s destination, it is clear that Jude addresses particular circumstances in the church.

Jude identifies his readers as the “called” (*klētois*). Two attributive participles modify the term “called,” and these participles are translated as “loved” and “kept” in the CSB. We will begin with the term “called.” English readers, when asked to define the word “called,” might give the definition “invited,” but this misunderstands what Jude intends. The term “called” does not merely mean that God invites believers to be his own.²⁰³⁶ Those whom God calls are powerfully and inevitably brought to faith in Jesus Christ through the proclamation of the gospel. The call of God is extended only to some

and is always successful so that all those who are called become believers. Such an understanding of “called” is clearly attested in the Pauline writings (Rom 1:1, 6–7; 8:28, 30; 1 Cor 1:1–2, 9, 24; Gal 1:15; 1 Thess 2:12; 5:24; 2 Thess 2:14; 2 Tim 1:9; cf. 1 Pet 2:9; 5:10; 2 Pet 1:3; Rev 17:14). Why does Jude emphasize such an idea here? Intruders threatened the faith of the church. Jude, in the course of his letter, will give sharp warnings to his readers. Such warnings, however, could give the impression that the focus is on human effort and endurance. Jude, by stressing God’s supernatural calling, reminds the readers of the efficacy of God’s grace.

Those who are called are described as those “who are loved by God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ.”²⁰³⁷ The KJV and NKJV reflect a different textual tradition in the first phrase and read “sanctified by God the Father” rather than “loved by God the Father.” The KJV tradition depends on the majority text, but the best textual tradition supports “loved” rather than “sanctified.” The variant reading in the KJV signals the difficulty of Jude’s expression. Some scholars and translations understand the first participle phrase (*en theō patri ēgapēmenois*) to say “beloved in God the Father” (RSV, NASB, NRSV).²⁰³⁸ Such a rendering is attractive because often the verb “love” (*agapaō*) is linked with the preposition “by” (*hypo*) if agency is intended. The preposition *en*, on this reading, suggests the sphere in which God’s love is exercised. This interpretation is certainly possible, but I think it is unlikely because the participle “loved” is passive, and God is the agent of the passive verb.²⁰³⁹ Thus, it seems that the CSB rightly captures the meaning here. Believers have been loved by God the Father, and his effective love is the reason they belong to the people of God.

A translation difficulty also arises with the phrase “kept for Jesus Christ.” The consensus among commentators and most modern translators is that the phrase should be translated “kept for Jesus Christ,” that is, kept until the day of redemption for Jesus Christ (cf. RSV, NASB, NRSV). The syntax is again difficult, making certainty impossible. Those who support this rendering argue that if the agency of Jesus Christ were in view, we would expect the preposition “by” to

be inserted with either the words *en* or *hypo*. Furthermore, it makes sense to say that Jude emphasized God the Father as the one who both loves and keeps (cf. v. 24). Finally, such an interpretation fits with the eschatological flavor of the text, emphasizing that believers are preserved “for Jesus Christ” until the final judgment.²⁰⁴⁰ Despite the arguments supporting “kept for Jesus Christ,” the interpretation proposed by the NIV 1984 (“kept by Jesus Christ”) is preferable. According to this view, the words “Jesus Christ” (*Iēsou Christou*) denote agency.²⁰⁴¹ If Jesus Christ is the agent, the two clauses are symmetrical: “loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ.” Seeing the dative as one of agency is reasonable and fits with Wallace’s own description of a dative of agency:²⁰⁴² (1) the dative noun must be personal; (2) the person specified by the dative must be portrayed as exercising volition; (3) a perfect passive verb is present; and (4) the agent of the passive verb can also function as the subject of an active verb, while the dative of means normally cannot.²⁰⁴³ The construction here fits all these requirements. The dative is personal (Jesus Christ), he exercises volition, we have a perfect passive (participle), and the agent also could function as the subject (Jesus Christ). We see here that Jesus Christ shares the same identity and status as God the Father: the Father loves and Jesus Christ keeps; they both engage in divine functions.

Whatever interpretation one adopts, the main emphasis of the two participial clauses is clear. Those whom God has called to himself are loved by him and kept until the day of salvation. The grace of God that called believers to faith will sustain them until the end. The emphasis on God’s grace does not cancel out human responsibility. In v. 21 the readers are exhorted, “Keep yourselves in the love of God.” God’s grace does not promote human passivity and laxity. It should stir the readers to concerted action. Nevertheless, the ultimate reason believers will persevere against the inroads of the intruders is the grace of God by which he set his love upon believers, called them to be his people, and pledged to preserve them until the end.²⁰⁴⁴

When Jude speaks of those who are “loved” (*ēgapēmenoīs*), he refers to the love God bestows on his elect. Often in the Scriptures God’s love and calling are closely associated (cf. Isa 41:8–9; Hos 11:1). By identifying his recipients as loved ones, the privileges of Israel as God’s people now belong to believers in Jesus Christ (Deut 32:15; Ps 28:6; Isa 44:2). Indeed, Israel was “called” by God to be his people (Isa 41:9; 42:6; 48:12, 15; 49:1; 54:6; Hos 11:1). Now the chosen people of God are those who trust in Jesus Christ.²⁰⁴⁵ Davids rightly says that we see from this that those who belong to Jesus Christ are “renewed Israel,” the restored Israel, the true people of God.²⁰⁴⁶ Neyrey reads into these designations the contrast between honor and shame, arguing that “God has deemed them worthy of his benefaction.”²⁰⁴⁷ An overemphasis on the social-scientific approach emerges here because Jude highlights *God’s grace*, not the worthiness or honor of the readers.

2 A greeting, as noted above, is typical in Greco-Roman letters, and a greeting that includes mercy and peace is found in 2 Bar. 78:3. Jude’s greeting is distinctive in that he prays for mercy, peace, and love to be multiplied for his readers. Jude’s love for triplets appears in this verse as well: mercy, peace, and love.²⁰⁴⁸ Remarkably, grace is omitted from the prayer wish. Virtually every other NT letter that contains a greeting mentions grace (but cf. Jas 1:1). Too much should not be made of this since mercy includes the idea of grace. Paul’s letters usually convey the twofold prayer wish of grace and peace (Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:3; Eph 1:2; Phlm 2; Col 1:2; 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:2; Titus 1:4), although in both letters to Timothy he prays for grace, mercy, and peace (1 Tim 1:2; 2 Tim 1:2). Both Petrine letters pray for grace and peace *to be multiplied* to the readers (1 Pet 1:2; 2 Pet 1:2). Fuchs and Reymond rightly maintain that the order is significant in Jude.²⁰⁴⁹ Mercy and pardon are the foundation of one’s relationship to God. Such forgiveness leads to peace with God, which in turn manifests itself in love.

It is notable that the source of mercy, peace, and love is not specified, although God is surely in view (cf. also 1 Pet 1:2; 2 Pet

1:2).²⁰⁵⁰ The prayer wish anticipates themes developed in the rest of the letter. Jude prays for mercy because his readers would resist the opponents only by God's mercy and because they also needed to experience God's mercy so they could extend the same to others (vv. 22–23). They needed peace because the interlopers caused division (v. 19) and introduced strife and grumbling wherever they went (vv. 10, 16). They needed love because the intruders cared only for themselves and abused the purpose of the love feasts (v. 12). Jude prays that mercy, peace, and love would be multiplied because an abundance of these qualities was needed at a stressful time in the church's life. He also prays because he knows that God alone can produce these graces in the lives of his people.

SECTION OUTLINE

2 The Purpose of Writing (3–4)

2 THE PURPOSE OF WRITING (3–4)

³ *Dear friends, although I was eager to write you about the salvation we share, I found it necessary to write, appealing to you to contend for the faith that was delivered to the saints once for all.* ⁴ *For some people, who were designated for this judgment long ago, have come in by stealth; they are ungodly, turning the grace of our God into sensuality and denying Jesus Christ, our only Master and Lord.*

The transition to the purpose of the letter, and in this case the “body opening” of the letter, commences in v. 3 with a disclosure formula.²⁰⁵¹ The marker introducing the body is the term “dear friends” which likely emphasizes that the readers are loved by God. The same term is found in vv. 17 and 20, emphasizing again that believers are specially loved by God. In v. 1 the readers are said to be loved by God the Father, v. 2 concludes with a prayer wish for love to be multiplied, and we noted that the adversaries were indicted for their lack of love in the rest of the letter. The purpose of the letter is communicated in v. 3. The readers are to contend for the faith that was transmitted to them. Verse 4 provides the reason the admonition

in v. 3 is needed. Intruders had entered into the church and threatened the purity of its faith and life as a community.

3 Jude explains the circumstances that led to his writing. He writes so that the readers would strive for the faith that was handed down to the saints. Scholars debate the meaning of the first clause of the sentence. The difference in interpretation can be observed by contrasting the CSB with the NRSV. The CSB translates the first clause “although I was eager to write you about the salvation we share.” The NRSV renders it “while eagerly preparing to write to you about the salvation we share” (cf. also KJV, NKJV, NASB). The interpretive issue rests on our understanding of the participle *poioumenos* (“making”). Should it be understood as a concessive participle (“although” per the CSB) or as temporal (“while” per the NRSV)? What is the difference between the two interpretations? If we follow the CSB, Jude explains that he wished to write *another letter* about the salvation believers share. He was prevented from doing so, however, by the sudden intrusion of the opponents, and thus he had to write a different letter, one that took issue with the adversaries who had infiltrated the church. If we follow the NRSV, Jude’s attack on the opponents represents the letter about salvation that he desired to write. Jude was not hindered from writing a letter about salvation by the intrusion of the opponents because the letter we have is the letter about salvation he intended to write.

A decision on this matter is remarkably difficult. I slightly and tentatively incline to the CSB rendering. A number of arguments have been set forth in defense of both views, but most of the arguments adduced are inconclusive.²⁰⁵² What slightly inclines me to the CSB translation are the words “I find it necessary to write” (*anagkēn eschon grapsai*—“I felt compelled to write,” NIV). These words seem to indicate a change of plan, a sudden interruption of Jude’s intended course of action. The first clause seems superfluous if the reading proposed by the NRSV is correct. Jude could simply have written, “I had necessity to write to you about our common salvation, urging you to strive for the faith that was once delivered to the saints.” It is not the change in the verb tense of “write,” then, that supports the CSB

reading. What supports it is the repetition of the term “write.” Confirming the interpretation presented here is the content of v. 4 since Jude explains that the intrusion of adversaries precipitated the writing of the letter.

Jude was eager to write about “the salvation we share.” Kelly argues that Jude diverged from both Paul and 1 Peter since salvation is conceived of as a present possession in Jude instead of an eschatological reality.²⁰⁵³ This judgment misreads Jude.²⁰⁵⁴ The example of Israel being “saved” (*sōsas*) out of Egypt demonstrates that salvation involves perseverance until the end (v. 5).²⁰⁵⁵ The exhortation to keep themselves in God’s love is given because only those who do so will experience “eternal life” on the last day (v. 21). We have already seen that the letter begins and ends with promises of preservation (vv. 1, 24–25), indicating that the “not yet” of Christian experience informed Jude’s worldview. Finally, even Paul speaks of salvation as a present gift since the end time has invaded the present time (Eph 2:5, 8). Referring to salvation as a present possession does not nullify or contradict its eschatological character. Salvation in Jude, as in Paul, was both an end-time gift and a present reality since the eschatological gift has invaded this present evil age.

The purpose for the letter is conveyed in the exhortation “to contend for the faith that was delivered to the saints once for all.”²⁰⁵⁶ The word group from which “contend” (*epagōnizesthai*) comes may designate a military (John 18:36; Eph 6:12; 2 Macc 8:16) or athletic context (1 Cor 9:25; 2 Tim 4:7; Heb 12:1). The metaphor often cannot be pressed, and in such cases the word refers to a struggle or intense effort (Rom 15:30; Phil 1:30; Col 1:29; 2:1; 4:12; 1 Tim 6:12).²⁰⁵⁷ Jude exhorts his readers to strive intensely to preserve the faith handed down to the saints.²⁰⁵⁸ Sirach contains an interesting parallel: “Strive [*agōnisai*] even to death for the truth and the Lord God will fight for you” (Sir 4:28 RSV).²⁰⁵⁹

The term “delivered” (*paradotheisē* along with the noun *paradosis*) is commonly used for the transmission of tradition (e.g., Mark 7:13; 1 Cor 11:2, 23; 15:3; Gal 1:14; Col 2:8; 2 Thess 2:15; 3:6). Whether the

tradition is laudable or lamentable must be derived from the context. Jude obviously uses the term in a positive sense. There is also little doubt that the tradition was handed down from the apostles to “the saints,” that is, to Christian believers.²⁰⁶⁰ That the apostles were the source of the tradition is suggested by v. 17, “Remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ” (NASB). Of course, in vv. 17–18 a specific prophecy of the apostles is communicated, but such a prediction is part of the apostolic tradition that must be guarded.

The tradition believers must strive to preserve is designated as “the faith” (*tē pistei*). Faith in this context does not refer to trusting God, as Paul typically uses the term. In this context “faith” refers to the traditional teaching that was to be safeguarded.²⁰⁶¹ Even in Paul “faith” may refer to the message of the gospel (Gal 1:23; Eph 4:5; Col 1:23; 1 Tim 3:9; 4:1; 6:10, 12?, 21; 2 Tim 3:8?; 4:7?; cf. Acts 6:7; 13:8).²⁰⁶² Jude returns to the theme near the conclusion to the letter, saying believers must “build yourselves up in your most holy faith” (v. 20).

Some scholars have dated Jude late, labeling it “early catholic” because they are convinced that an emphasis on doctrinal preservation smacks of later church history. Of course, this same objection is raised to call into question the authenticity of the Pastoral Epistles. Bauckham rightly defends the genuineness of such a statement by Jude himself, the brother of Jesus.²⁰⁶³ He also rightly remarks that the focus is on the gospel rather than the detailed doctrinal formulas of later church history. And yet we must also acknowledge that the gospel itself involves doctrines that must be confessed. We have an early recognition here that the touchstone for the Christian faith is in the teaching of the apostles and that any deviation from their teaching is unorthodox (cf. Acts 2:42; Jude 17, 20).²⁰⁶⁴ Jude does not merely say that the faith was handed down, and the CSB rightly translates *hapax* to say “once for all” handed down. No supplements or corrections will be tolerated. The gospel of Jesus Christ has received its full explication through the apostles. The author of Hebrews draws

a similar conclusion, declaring that God has spoken definitively and conclusively through his Son in the last days (Heb 1:2). From statements like these early Christians rightly concluded that the canon of Scripture should be restricted to those early writings that explicated the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.²⁰⁶⁵

4 Now Jude explains (note the “for” in the CSB) why his readers must strive to guard the faith that was handed down. Intruders had crept into the church, and they were disturbing the congregation to such an extent that Jude felt compelled (v. 3) to respond. These intruders deserved judgment because of their ungodliness by which they distorted God’s grace in Christ. Jude describes them as “some people,” which many commentators feel is a slightly disparaging reference to the interlopers.²⁰⁶⁶ The verbal form used of the opponents (they “have come in by stealth”) is certainly derogatory.²⁰⁶⁷ The verb implies that the adversaries had hidden their true character and motives. It also indicates that they were outsiders, perhaps wandering prophets or teachers.²⁰⁶⁸ They were surreptitious and crafty, pretending to be godly members of the Christian church. Paul, similarly, criticizes the Judaizers who had infiltrated the ranks of the church to spy out and destroy the liberty of those committed to the gospel (Gal 2:3–5). Similarly, Peter indicts opponents who secretly introduced destructive heresies (2 Pet 2:1).²⁰⁶⁹

Jude proceeds to tell us four things about these intruders: (1) their judgment was predicted long ago, (2) they are ungodly, (3) they turn grace into an opportunity for license, and (4) they deny the Lord Jesus Christ. We should notice that the first statement tells us the opponents will be judged by God, and then items two through four inform us why they will be judged by God, namely, for their ungodly behavior.

Jude begins by saying that they were “designated for this judgment long ago.” We could translate the Greek: “They were written about in advance long ago for this judgment.” What Jude specifically means has been the subject of considerable debate, but we can begin with the general meaning of the statement. The judgment that these intruders

will face was prescribed (*progegrammenoi*) long ago. Jude reminds his readers at the outset that these adversaries had not taken God by surprise. Their judgment was ordained from the beginning, and it followed as a corollary that God knew they would appear on the scene (cf. vv. 14, 17).²⁰⁷⁰ We think here of Prov 16:4, “The LORD has prepared everything for his purpose—even the wicked for the day of disaster.”²⁰⁷¹ The reference to judgment indicates that the adversaries would not triumph. God will dispose of them ceremoniously and finally on the day of judgment. Jude encourages his readers to persevere in the faith by assuring them that the intruders will ultimately fail and be judged by God.

At this juncture we need to examine the details of the phrase. What was Jude thinking when he said their judgment was prescribed long ago? Some think the reference is to the judgment of the false teachers predicted in 2 Pet 2:1–3:4. If Jude is not dependent on 2 Peter, this interpretation fails. Furthermore, it seems unlikely, unless we adopt a late date for Jude, that he would refer to 2 Peter as something written “long ago.” Some scholars maintain that *palai* does not always refer to ancient history, and thus a long interval is not demanded.²⁰⁷² But the association of *palai* with the verb *progegrammenoi* suggests that prophecies from long ago were being fulfilled in Jude’s day (cf. Isa 37:26; 48:5, 7; Matt 11:21; Heb 1:1), including those following in vv. 5–7.²⁰⁷³

Others detect a reference here to the future judgment of opponents recorded in heavenly books.²⁰⁷⁴ Bauckham rightly points out that the evidence for this view is not persuasive and that most of the texts used to support this notion are wrongly interpreted.²⁰⁷⁵ Perhaps Jude refers to the arrival and judgment of the opponents prophesied by Enoch, foreshadowing the reference to Enoch in vv. 14–15. Osburn suggests that 1 En. 67:10 is in view:²⁰⁷⁶ “So the judgment shall come upon them, because they believe in the debauchery of their bodies and deny the spirit of the Lord.”²⁰⁷⁷ It is unclear, however, that this particular verse in 1 Enoch is in view. Jude likely thinks of the OT

since the judgment was anticipated, at least typologically, by the examples in vv. 5–7 and v. 11. Still, we should not exclude 1 Enoch since the judgment of the ungodly was forecast by both the OT and Enoch’s prophecy in vv. 14–16.²⁰⁷⁸ The judgment of the ungodly is certain because that is the way God has always worked in history, as the examples in vv. 5–7 and v. 11 show. Green thinks the main point here is “the official and public condemnation of the heretics.”²⁰⁷⁹ If we understand vv. 5–16 to be one section, the judgments in vv. 5–7 and 14–16 constitute an *inclusio*, emphasizing that the opponents will be condemned. The middle section of the epistle, in other words, fleshes out the prescribed judgment mentioned in v. 4.

The judgment in Jude, then, refers to the judgment that was foreseen by God. The phrase “this judgment” (*touto to krima*) is puzzling since nothing in the previous context clearly refers to the judgment. Some have argued that the judgment alludes to 2 Pet 2:2,²⁰⁸⁰ but again this solution is satisfactory only if Jude used 2 Peter, which is doubtful. Others have suggested that the judgment refers to the opponents being ungodly, licentious, and denying Christ’s lordship. But these sins do not constitute judgment but the *reason for* the judgment, and so we can reject this option as well. “This” (*touto*) could refer back to some word or concept, and yet there is no mention of judgment in the preceding verses.²⁰⁸¹ It is best, therefore, to understand “this judgment” as anticipatory of the judgment explicated in vv. 5–16.²⁰⁸² Verses 5–16 refer to the texts from the OT and 1 Enoch that promise judgment for the wicked.

The remaining portion of v. 4 gives three reasons for the judgment: (1) ungodliness, (2) licentiousness, and (3) denial of Jesus’s lordship. Jude often uses words from the godless word group (*aseb-* in Greek). We find terms from the word group three times in the citation from 1 Enoch in v. 15 and also in v. 18. Of course, the concept informs Jude’s depiction of the intruders in all of vv. 5–16. We see again, then, that v. 4 functions as a preview of what is to come. To be “godless” is to commit the fundamental sin of living apart from the one true God (e.g., Pss 1:1; 37:38; 51:13; Prov 1:32; Rom 1:18; 2 Pet 2:5–6; 3:7).

The godless live as if God does not exist so they do not honor him as their Lord and Master.²⁰⁸³

The second reason for judgment is that the interlopers subverted God's grace and lived licentiously. The word "sensuality" (*aselgeia*) often denotes sexual sin (Wis 14:26; Rom 13:13; 2 Cor 12:21; Gal 5:19; Eph 4:19) or gross debauchery in more general terms (2 Macc 2:26; Mark 7:22; 1 Pet 4:3; 2 Pet 2:2, 7, 18).²⁰⁸⁴ The context of the letter as a whole suggests that sexual sin is intended.²⁰⁸⁵ The foundational character of v. 4 manifests itself again since sexual sin is featured as the reason for the judgment of the angels and Sodom and Gomorrah (vv. 6–7). Jude also has sexual deviance in mind as well when he speaks of defiling the flesh in v. 8 (cf. also vv. 13, 16 possibly).

The third reason for judgment concludes the verse. The interlopers denied Jesus Christ as their Sovereign and Lord. Some scholars think the Father is designated by "Master" (*despotēn*) and Jesus Christ by "Lord" (*kyrion*). Since both titles are under the same Greek article (*ton*), they both refer to the same person, which is most likely Jesus Christ.²⁰⁸⁶ If 2 Peter and Jude have the same referent in view, then we have further evidence that both Jude and Peter (cf. 2 Pet 2:1) refer to Jesus Christ as "Master" (*despotēs*). Against this view it is argued that elsewhere *despotēs* only refers to the Father (Luke 2:29; Acts 4:24; Rev 6:10; cf. also 1 Clem. 59:4; 61:1–2; Did. 10:3).²⁰⁸⁷ Certainty eludes us, but the parallel to 2 Pet 2:1 suggests a reference to Jesus Christ.²⁰⁸⁸ Bauckham notes that the term used here (*despotēs*) is an indication that the christology of Jude hails from Palestinian circles.²⁰⁸⁹ Furthermore, the terms "Master" and "Lord" do not point to two different functions for Jesus Christ. Both of them together focus on the lordship of Jesus Christ.²⁰⁹⁰

Indeed, as Bauckham argues, it appears that the phrase suggests the divinity of Jesus Christ (cf. the similar phrase in Josephus, *Ant.* 18.23). How were the opponents denying Jesus Christ as their Master and Lord? Scholars in the past, seeing Jude as countering some form of

Gnosticism, attempted to identify doctrinal deviations in the Christology of the intruders.²⁰⁹¹ We now know that the developed Gnosticism of the second century AD was not present when the NT was written, although some antecedents to what was later called Gnosticism certainly existed. In any case we search in vain in Jude for any criticism of the opponents' doctrine of Christ. In comparison, John attacks the christology of his opponents on several occasions (1 John 2:22–23; 4:2–3; 5:1, 6–8; 2 John 7). It is likely, then, that Jude saw a denial of the sovereignty and lordship of Jesus Christ in the way the opponents lived.²⁰⁹² Their evil lifestyle constituted a denial of Christ's lordship. A similar sentiment is reflected elsewhere in the NT (Matt 7:21–23; Titus 1:16). Verses 5–16 also reveal how the readers denied Christ's lordship, in that they had given their lives over to evil. More specific examples of a rejection of lordship are also present. We see how the angels violated their apportioned place, rebelled, and committed sin (v. 6). Similarly, the intruders rejected lordship and reviled glories (v. 8). The opponents were like Korah in that they were guilty of rebellion (v. 11).

SECTION OUTLINE

- 3 Judgment of the Intruders (5–16)
 - 3.1 God’s Judgment (5–10)
 - 3.1.1 Three Historical Examples of God’s Judgment (5–7)
 - 3.1.2 Application to Adversaries: Three Sins Warranting Judgment (8–10)
 - 3.2 Woe Oracle (11–13)
 - 3.2.1 Three Types (11)
 - 3.2.2 Application to Adversaries (12–13)
 - 3.3 Enoch’s Prophecy (14–16)
 - 3.3.1 The Prophecy: Judgment on the Ungodly (14–15)
 - 3.3.2 Application to Adversaries (16)

3 JUDGMENT OF THE INTRUDERS (5–16)

Verses 5–16 unpack v. 4, demonstrating that the assertions made there correspond to reality. The section is bracketed by an *inclusio* in that the theme of judgment opens (vv. 5–7) and closes (vv. 14–16) the argument. The certainty of judgment is illustrated with three OT examples (vv. 5–7): the punishment of Israel, the angels, and Sodom and Gomorrah. The section concludes with Enoch’s prophecy that the Lord will judge the ungodly (vv. 14–15), which Jude applies to his opponents. Verses 8–13 constitute the middle of the section. Verses 8–10 are linked back to vv. 5–7 in that they show that the intruders deserved judgment because of their sins. The woe in v. 11 functions as the inference of what is stated in 8–10. The pronouncement of woe, however, is also supported by vv. 11b–13 since the adversaries would face condemnation because they followed the paths of Cain, Balaam, and Korah. Verses 12–13 demonstrate that the woe oracle pronounced in v. 11 rightly applies to the opponents, providing further reasons for the judgment, using highly colorful language to castigate them for their ungodly ways.

3.1 God’s Judgment (5–10)

3.1.1 Three Historical Examples of God’s Judgment (5–7)

⁵ Now I want to remind you, although you came to know all these things once and for all, that Jesus saved a people out of Egypt and later destroyed those who did not believe; ⁶ and the angels who did not keep their own position but abandoned their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains in deep darkness for the judgment on the great day. ⁷ Likewise, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns committed sexual immorality and perversions, and serve as an example by undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.

In v. 4 the judgment of the intruders is said to have been prescribed long ago. Verses 5–7 function as typological warnings, presenting examples of judgment from the history of Israel, the angels, and Sodom and Gomorrah.²⁰⁹³ All three illustrate “natural rebellion.”²⁰⁹⁴ Jude’s preference for triads emerges again. The order is not chronological, for then Israel would be last. Probably Jude begins with Israel because they were God’s people, the objects of his favor and redemption, and yet they experienced his judgment when they sinned. The parallel to the Christian community is obvious since they too experienced God’s favor but were liable to his judgment if they strayed from him.²⁰⁹⁵ Perhaps Sodom and Gomorrah are inserted last because the severity of the judgment stands as a warning to the church or churches Jude addressed. Emblazoned on their consciousness are the consequences of persisting in sin.

The examples cited here are often found in Jewish tradition (cf. Sir 16:7–10; 3 Macc 2:4–7; T. Naph. 3:4–5; Jub. 20:2–7; CD 2:17–3:12; m. Sanh. 10:3; see also Luke 17:26–29). The parallels are instructive. Sirach notes the judgment of the giants (v. 7), which would be offspring of the angels in Gen 6:1–4, the judgment of Lot’s neighbors for their ignorance (v. 8), and of Israel in the wilderness (v. 10). Third Maccabees 2 does not mention the judgment of Israel in the wilderness but describes the judgment of the giants at the flood (v. 4) and of Sodom and Gomorrah with sulfur and fire because of their arrogance and vices. Testament of Naphtali also omits a reference to Israel but pronounces judgment on Sodom for abandoning the order

of nature and of the Watchers of Gen 6 for committing the same sin (T. Naph. 3:4–5). Jubilees proclaims God’s judgment on the giants and Sodomites because of their fornication and impurity, also omitting the judgment of Israel (Jub. 20:5–6). The Damascus Document of the Dead Sea Scrolls indicts the Watchers and the wilderness generation for their stubbornness and failure to keep God’s commands but omits any reference to Sodom and Gomorrah (CD 2:17–3:12). The Mishnah says there is no portion in the world to come for the flood generation, Sodom, and the wilderness generation (m. Sanh. 10:3), although a rabbinic debate on whether the wilderness generation will be saved is immediately noted.

From the evidence cited above, we see that the tradition of appealing to the three examples of judgment was common in Jewish circles. Second Peter similarly pronounces judgment on the angels who sinned and Sodom and Gomorrah and leaves out the judgment of Israel. The variety in wording in the literature and the flexibility of the theme (e.g., Israel is often left out) points to an oral tradition, in which the theme of judgment was impressed on hearers through these three examples. Of course, the tradition also was written down in the documents before us, but evidence of literary dependence is lacking in the use of the tradition. I conclude that Jude was not dependent on any single source but drew on traditions well known in Judaism.

5 The new section begins with a disclosure formula, “Now I want to remind you,” signifying the beginning of a new section that describes the judgment of the wilderness generation. Disclosure formulas are common in other letters as well (Rom 1:13; 11:25; 1 Cor 8:1; 10:1; 12:1; 2 Cor 1:8; Gal 1:11; Phil 1:12; 1 Thess 4:13), and here it functions as the transition to the next section of the letter.²⁰⁹⁶ Jude begins by reminding the readers of the judgment of Israel. The placement of the word “once and for all” (*hapax*) is textually uncertain. Some witnesses place it after “Lord” or “Jesus” with the result that there is a parallelism between the Lord saving Israel out of Egypt the “first” time and then destroying them the “second” time.²⁰⁹⁷ The textual evidence slightly favors placing the word *hapax* with the first clause (with the word “knowing—“to know all these

things once and for all”), in that it is the harder reading, so that the clause would read as the CSB translates it, “Now I want to remind you, although you came to know all these things once and for all.”²⁰⁹⁸ On this reading, a connection is forged between Jude’s readers knowing “all things once for all,” and “the faith that was delivered to the saints once for all” (v. 3). Jude reminds them of the gospel message they already knew because it was preached to them when they heard the gospel. Thus, Jude is not claiming that his readers had comprehensive knowledge of everything but that they knew the gospel in contrast to the opponents. Knowing the truth of the gospel, of course, does not mean reminders are superfluous. Reminders are needed so believers experience afresh the power of the gospel. Jude reminds them because they were prone to forget the truth they had already embraced.

Jude begins his reminder with the triad of judgments the Lord had inflicted in the past, beginning with the judgment of Israel.²⁰⁹⁹ Another textual problem exists, for many manuscripts read “Jesus” instead of “Lord.” Indeed, the external evidence suggests that “Jesus” rather than “Lord” is the correct reading.²¹⁰⁰ Most scholars doubt that the reference could be to Jesus on internal grounds, arguing that God led Israel out of Egypt and destroyed the wicked angels.²¹⁰¹ A reference to Jesus, however, is not as strange as some suggest.²¹⁰² Paul saw Christ as present with Israel in the wilderness (1 Cor 10:4, 9), and so it is possible that Jude believed Jesus delivered Israel out of Egypt. Moreover, since 1 En. 69:26–29 describes the Son of Man as sitting in judgment over the bound angels, it is not unlikely, as Osburn notes, that the same could be applied to Jesus Christ.²¹⁰³

Even if Fossum is wrong about Jesus being the angel of the Lord, NT writers identify Jesus Christ with Yahweh in the OT. John says that Isaiah saw the glory of Jesus Christ (John 12:41), referring to the throne room vision of Isa 6. Isaiah declares that every knee will bow to Yahweh and confess allegiance to him (Isa 45:23), but Paul applies this text to Jesus Christ (Phil 2:10–11). Thus, it is not unusual for Jude to attribute the destruction of Israel, the angels, and Sodom and

Gomorrhah to Jesus. New Testament writers regularly teach that Jesus shares the same identity and functions as God. On the other hand, it is more natural to think of the Father delivering Israel from Egypt and of the Father judging the angels who sinned in Gen 6. Some think the reading “Jesus” is unlikely since elsewhere Jude always refers to “Jesus Christ” (vv. 1 [2 times], 4, 17, 21, 25). Still, the letter is brief and there is not enough evidence to prescribe how Jude refers to Jesus. “Jesus” seems to be the superior external reading. It is possible, however, that the inclusion of “Jesus” in some manuscripts could be due to scribal confusion of the *nomina sacra*. If a mistake arose in the *nomina sacra*, then there could still be a reference to Jesus as “Lord” since he is identified as Lord throughout the letter (Jude 4, 8, 9, 14, 17, 21, 25).²¹⁰⁴ It is difficult to be certain, but on balance a reference to Jesus is preferable.

Israel was “saved” (*sōsas*) out of Egypt by virtue of the exodus (Exod 6–14). But after liberating them from their bondage, Jesus “later destroyed those who did not believe.” The word “second time” (*deuteron*) is rightly translated “later” by the CSB since the word emphasizes what occurred after Israel’s liberation.²¹⁰⁵ Jude has in mind the events of Num 14, where the spies returned with their disbelieving report (except for Caleb and Joshua), and the people disbelieved God’s promises and were judged so that they were prevented from entering the land for forty years. Two words in particular link this verse to Num 14. Jude says that Israel “did not believe” (*pisteuō*), and the same term is used to depict Israel’s unbelief in Num 14:11 (*ou pisteuousin*). Jude also says that Jesus “destroyed” (*apōlesen*) those who disbelieved, and the Lord threatens destruction (*apolō*) in Num 14:12.²¹⁰⁶

The main point Jude makes is clear. No person in the believing community can presume on God’s grace, thinking that an initial decision to follow Christ or baptism ensures future salvation regardless of how one responds to false teachers. Israel’s apostasy warns all those who think an initial commitment secures their future destiny without ongoing obedience. Those who are God’s people demonstrate the genuineness of their salvation by persevering to the

end. The warnings are one of the means by which God preserves his people until the end. Those who ignore such warnings neglect the means God has appointed for obtaining eschatological salvation. Nor should such a perspective be considered a form of works righteousness. Jude pinpoints the reason Israel was judged. They failed to “believe” in God. The call to perseverance is not a summons to something above and beyond faith. God summons his people to believe in his promises to the end of their lives. Christians never get beyond the need to believe and trust, and all apostasy stems from a failure to trust in God’s saving promises in Christ, just as the wilderness generation disbelieved that God would truly bring them into the land of Canaan, thinking instead that he had maliciously doomed them to die in the wilderness.

Another theological question is raised by what Jude says about Israel. The text says that Jesus destroyed those whom he saved out of Egypt. This would seem to indicate that some of those who are genuinely saved may actually commit apostasy and forsake their salvation. Some might object that the judgment was not eternal but temporal. But the use of the same tradition in 1 Cor 10:1–12 and Heb 3:7–4:13 indicates that the NT writers appropriated the tradition to address matters of final salvation.²¹⁰⁷ As Hebrews says, those who sin will not enter into God’s heavenly “rest,” which is another term for life in the age to come. Jude warns similarly, as the next two examples demonstrate. Both angels and those in Sodom and Gomorrah were damned forever (vv. 6–7). It is possible, of course, that the judgment of Israel in the wilderness is merely a temporal and physical judgment.²¹⁰⁸ Even if the judgment of Israel was exclusively physical and temporal, Jude appropriates the story typologically as a threat of final judgment, as we see in both 1 Cor 10 and Heb 3–4.

Some might conclude, then, that believers may forsake their salvation, pointing to the wilderness generation for support. This conclusion is mistaken, even though it may first appear convincing. We must discern here the difference between a type and its fulfillment. The analogy drawn between Israel and the church of Jesus Christ does not stand at every point. We need to recall that Israel was both a

political entity and also the people of God. The Lord was not merely calling out for himself a people, but he was also calling into existence a nation. It follows, therefore, that not every circumcised member of Israel was circumcised in heart (Deut 10:16; 30:6; Jer 4:4). Jude constructs an analogy between the saving of Israel out of Egypt (a physical act) and God's saving act in Jesus Christ, but we ought not necessarily conclude from the parallel that the Israelites liberated from Egypt were circumcised in heart, that they were regenerate. Indeed, those who sinned and were punished in the wilderness demonstrated that they did not belong to the Lord, that they did not have circumcised hearts in the first place (see Deut 29:4). We should not, then, construct a strict correspondence between the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt and the spiritual salvation of believers. Am I reading my theology into Jude? Some might think so. But I would contend that Jude himself promised that those whom God has called will be preserved to the end (vv. 1, 24–25). Jude preserves the tension between warnings that are necessary for perseverance until the end and God's grace that ensures that those who belong to him will experience eschatological salvation.

There is also a sense in which the situation of Israel and Jude's readers is likely the same. The Israelites destroyed in the wilderness probably believed they were truly part of God's people. Their disobedience demonstrated otherwise. Similarly, some in Jude's community may have thought they were genuinely part of God's people, but Jude insists that continued faithfulness is the only way to demonstrate this. Those who "apostatize" reveal that they were not members of God's people (cf. 1 John 2:19). Responses to warnings reveal, retrospectively, who belongs to the people of God.

6 The second example of judgment addresses the angels who sinned. We have already noted that Jewish tradition links together the sin of angels in Gen 6:1–4, the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the punishment of the wilderness generation. We can be almost certain that Jude refers here to the sin of the angels in Gen 6:1–4.²¹⁰⁹ The sin the angels committed, according to the Jewish tradition, was sexual intercourse with the daughters of men. Apparently Jude

understands Gen 6:1–4 in the same way. Three reasons support such a conclusion. First, Jewish tradition consistently understood Gen 6:1–4 in this way (1 En. 6–19; 21; 86–88; 106:13–17; Jub. 4:15, 22; 5:1; CD 2:17–19; 1QapGen 2:1; T. Reu. 5:6–7; T. Naph. 3:5; 2 Bar. 56:10–14; cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 1.73). Second, we know from vv. 14–15 that Jude was influenced by 1 Enoch, and 1 Enoch goes into great detail about the sin and punishment of these angels. Jude almost certainly would need to explain to his readers that he departed from the customary Jewish view of Gen 6:1–4 if he disagreed with Jewish tradition, especially since we know that both Jude and his readers were familiar with 1 Enoch, which records in some detail the sexual sin of the angels. The brevity of the verse in Jude supports the idea that he concurs with Jewish tradition. Third, the text forges a parallel between the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah and the angels (“Likewise,” v. 7; *hōs* and *ton homoion tropon toutois*). The implication is that sexual sin was prominent in both instances.²¹¹⁰

Before providing more detail on Jewish tradition, it would be helpful to explain what Jude claims in v. 6. He charges the angels with not keeping “their own position.” The Greek word here is *archēn*, signifying the domain or rule or sphere of influence given to the angels. The angels abandoned “their proper dwelling” (*to idion oikētērion*), transgressing proper bounds. The language is rather vague. What Jude means, however, is that they left their proper sphere, came to the earth, assumed male bodies, and had sexual relations with women. Jude uses the language of retaliation here. Since the angels “did not keep” (*mē tērēsantas*) their proper sphere, Jesus “has kept” (*tetērēken*) them “in deep darkness.”²¹¹¹ Abandoning what is right has consequences because justice is not forgotten. These angels experience punishment even now in that they are “kept in eternal chains.” We might think that literal chains are in view, but Hillyer rightly remarks: “We are not intended to imagine a literal dungeon in which fallen angels are fettered. Rather, Jude was vividly depicting the misery of their conditions. Free spirits and celestial powers, as once they were, are now shackled and impotent. Shining ones, once enjoying the marvelous light of God’s glorious presence,

are now plunged in profound darkness.”²¹¹² Their current imprisonment, however, is not their final punishment. They are being preserved even now for the judgment on the day of the Lord. Now they are imprisoned, but they still await their final and definitive judgment on the last day.²¹¹³ The main point is that those who transgress and sin will experience judgment. The angels did not escape unscathed when they violated what was fitting. Neither will the opponents sin with impunity, and hence Jude encourages the church to resist their teaching.²¹¹⁴

At this juncture I will sketch in briefly the Jewish tradition so that we sense how pervasive it was. In T. Naph. 3:4–5 the angels of Gen 6:1–4 are designated as “Watchers,” and they are said to have “departed from nature’s order” and thus are cursed with the flood. According to T. Reu. 5:6–7 women charmed the Watchers with their beauty so that the Watchers lusted after them. The Watchers transformed themselves into males and gave birth to giants (cf. 1QapGen 2:1). Jubilees also teaches that the Watchers sinned with the daughters of men by mingling with them sexually (Jub. 4:22). The angels of the Lord saw the beauty of the daughters, took them to be their wives, the offspring were giants, and because of such wickedness, the Lord brought the flood (Jub. 5:1–11). The Damascus Document is brief in its rendition of the story. The Watchers fell because they did not keep God’s commands. The tradition of giants as offspring is preserved since their sons are said to be like cedar trees and their bodies are comparable to mountains (CD 2:17–19). God sent the flood as a result of such sin.

The tradition, as we said, is most extensive in 1 Enoch. The angels desired the daughters of men (6:1–2) and took them as wives, who in turn gave birth to giants (7:1–2; 9:7–9; 106:14–15, 17). As a result of their sin, God threatened to send a flood (10:2). The evil of the angels is clear when the author says they “fornicated” with women (10:11). Some of the language used bears remarkable parallels to Jude. The angel Raphael is ordered to

“bind Azaz’el hand and foot (and) throw him into the darkness!” And he made a hole in the desert which was in Duda’el and cast him there; he threw on top of him rugged and sharp rocks. And he covered his face in order that he may not see light; and in order that he may be sent into the fire on the great day of judgment. (10:4–6)²¹¹⁵

Jude also teaches that the angels who sinned were bound in darkness and await the day of judgment. That those who sinned will experience a temporary judgment before the final judgment is clearly communicated in 1 En. 10:12–13:

Bind them for seventy generations underneath the rocks of the ground until the day of their judgment and of their consummation, until the eternal judgment is concluded. In those days they will lead them into the bottom of the fire—and in torment—in the prison (where) they will be locked up forever. (cf. 13:2)²¹¹⁶

Similarly, the Watchers are told, “You will not be able to ascend into heaven unto all eternity, but you shall remain inside the earth, imprisoned all the days of eternity” (14:5; cf. 21:1–4, 10; 88:1, 3). The idea that the Watchers abandoned their proper sphere, emphasized in Jude, is communicated in 1 Enoch as well (along with a concise summary of the event): “For what reason have you abandoned the high, holy, and eternal heaven; and slept with women and defiled yourselves with the daughters of the people, taking wives, acting like the children of the earth, and begetting giant sons?” (15:3). Jude follows the tradition in pronouncing judgment on angels who violated their proper sphere.

We must be careful, however, to avoid saying that Jude necessarily agreed with everything found in 1 Enoch or Jewish tradition in general. His own reference to the tradition is terse and avoids the kind of speculation we find in 1 En. 6–8.²¹¹⁷ Nor does Jude display any interest in the specific names of angels. A general appropriation of a tradition is not the same thing as accepting every detail of the tradition. We must remember that 1 Enoch is the most detailed account, and elsewhere in Jewish tradition the story is communicated

with brevity. We must beware of reading more into Jude than is warranted. Still, I think it is clear that Jude believed angels had sexual relations with women and that God judged the angels for violating their ordained sphere.

The story is certainly bizarre to modern readers. Unfortunately, Gen 6:1–4 is the subject of considerable debate, and no consensus has been realized about its meaning. Many interpreters are convinced that the “sons of god” were not angels but divine beings or humans.²¹¹⁸ This is not the place to conduct an exegesis of such a disputed text. I would only like to register my opinion that Jude interprets Gen 6:1–4 correctly. In my judgment the “sons of god” (*bənê hā’ēlōhîm*) of Gen 6:1–4 are most plausibly identified as angels. The “sons of God” are clearly angels in Job (1:6; 2:1; 38:7). One of the Qumran manuscripts of Deut 32:8, following the Septuagint, also reads “sons of god” (*bene elohim*), which the Septuagint renders *angelōn theou* (“angels of God”). It is possible, of course, that Jude alludes to a traditional story without believing it was historical, but this is problematic since he considers the judgment of Israel in the wilderness and Sodom and Gomorrah historical events. We must beware of a rationalistic worldview that dismisses such strange events as impossible.

The objection most raise is that angels are asexual (Matt 22:30). Actually, Matthew does not say angels do not have sexuality but that they neither marry nor are given in marriage. There is no evidence that angels reproduce or engage in sexual intercourse. But when angels come to earth, they often come as human beings; and presumably the human form is genuine, not a charade, so that the sexuality of angels when they appear on earth is genuine. We remember in Gen 18 when the three angels visit Abraham that they appear as men and he feeds them, and they eat the food just as human beings do, showing that their bodies were real. Nor is it plausible that Jude derived the account from Hesiod’s account of the Titans in his *Theogony* (713–35), especially since it is clear that he was familiar with the book of 1 Enoch and Jewish tradition. It is instructive, however, that many cultures have the story of the sexual union of angels and human beings. I would suggest that such accounts are distortions of an event

that once occurred, an event that is accurately recorded in Gen 6:1–4. Nevertheless, the presence of such a story in so many cultures functions as evidence of a historical event that occurred. Do sexual unions between angels and human beings still happen today? I think the point of the imprisonment of angels and the flood narrative is that God now hinders any such unions from taking place.

7 The third example of judgment is the punishment of Sodom and Gomorrah. Jude was familiar with Jewish tradition, as we have seen, but he also knew well the biblical story from Gen 19.²¹¹⁹ “The surrounding towns” were Admah, Zeboiim, and Zoar, though Zoar was spared the disaster (cf. Deut 29:23; Hos 11:8; Gen 19:19–22). The word “likewise”²¹²⁰ (*ton homoion tropon toutois*) establishes a parallel between the sexual immorality of the angels and the sexual immorality of Sodom.²¹²¹ Sexual sin was not the only sin for which Sodom and Gomorrah were punished. Ezekiel remarks they were also punished for their pride and lack of concern for the poor (Ezek 16:49). Sirach and 3 Maccabees mention their arrogance, and the latter also mentions “injustice” (Sir 16:8; 3 Macc 2:5). Josephus criticizes Sodom for its pride and hatred of foreigners (*Ant.* 1.194).

Some scholars, however, underestimate the extent to which homosexuality is included in condemnations of Sodom.²¹²² The sin of homosexuality is featured prominently in the account in Genesis in that the men of Sodom desired to have sexual relations (“know” in Hebrew) with the angels who visited Lot (Gen 19:5–8).²¹²³ Bauckham neglects evidence from Josephus that Sodom also was punished for same-sex sin (*Ant.* 1.200–201). Philo specifically traces their sin to homosexuality, although he indicts the cities for general moral debauchery as well (T. Ab. 134–36; T. Mos. 2.58). Same-sex sin is certainly in view in Testament of Naphtali, where Israel is exhorted to avoid the sin of Sodom, which “departed from the order of nature” (3:4).²¹²⁴ Testament of Levi lists the sexual sins of Israel in a downward spiral and concludes with “your sexual relations will become like Sodom and Gomorrah” (14:6), suggesting the degradation of homosexuality. In Ezekiel the “abomination” (ESV;

toevah) is surely a reference to sexual deviation (Ezek 16:50), although he does not specify the sin committed since the story was well known. Similarly, the author of Jubilees argues that Sodom and Gomorrah were judged for their fornication and impurity (Jub. 16:5; 20:5–6). Sexual promiscuity like that of Sodom is predicted by Benjamin (T. Benj. 9:1). Jude also focuses on the sexual sin of Sodom and Gomorrah: they “committed sexual immorality and perversions.” The CSB uses the word “perversions” in Jude 7, but the Greek literally says that they “went after other flesh” (*apelthousai opisō sarkos heteras*).²¹²⁵

What comparison is drawn to v. 6 here? Is Jude saying that Sodom was like the angels in Gen 6:1–4 in the sense that they also wanted sexual relations with angels?²¹²⁶ If so, the sin criticized is not necessarily homosexuality but the violation of the separation established between human beings and angels. It is unlikely, however, that Jude makes this specific point. The most important evidence against the proposed interpretation is that the men in Sodom *did not know that the guests they desired to have sexual relations with were angels*.²¹²⁷ Their sin consisted in their same-sex intentions and in their brutal disregard for the rights of visitors to the city.²¹²⁸ Furthermore, it would be strange to designate a desire for angels as a desire for “other flesh” (*sarkos heteras*). The term more naturally refers to sexual desire for those of the same sex. For various reasons some are attempting today to question the view that homosexuality receives an unqualified negative verdict in the Scriptures. Such attempts have been singularly unsuccessful. The biblical writers and the Jewish tradition unanimously condemn same-sex relations as evil.²¹²⁹

Jude introduces the example of Sodom and Gomorrah because their punishment functions as an “example” (*deigma*) of what God will do to the opponents in the future. The historical punishment of Sodom and Gomorrah functions as a type of the final judgment, which is not merely a judgment in history but eternal judgment. Third Maccabees drives home the same point: the consumption of the cities with fire

and sulphur made them an “example” (*paradeigma*) for those to come (3 Macc 2:5). Jude characterizes the punishment endured as “eternal fire” (*pyros aiōniou*). This fire functions as an example because it typifies or anticipates what is to come for all who reject God. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is not merely a historical curiosity; it functions typologically as a prophecy of what is in store for the rebellious. The narrative stresses the devastation of the Lord’s raining fire and brimstone upon the cities (Gen 19:24–28). The brimstone, salt, and desolation function as a warning for Israel and the church elsewhere in the Scriptures (Deut 29:23; Jer 49:17–18; cf. Isa 34:9–10; Ezek 38:22; Rev 14:10–11; 19:3; 20:10). Jewish tradition particularly emphasizes that one could still see the horrible consequences of what occurred in the area south of the Dead Sea. “Evidence of their wickedness still remains: a continually smoking wasteland, plants bearing fruit that does not ripen” (Wis 10:7 RSV). Josephus says: “In fact, vestiges of the divine fire and faint traces of five cities are still visible. Still, too, may one see ashes reproduced in the fruits, which from their outward appearance would be thought edible, but on being plucked with the hand dissolve into smoke and ashes. So far are the legends about the land of Sodom borne out by ocular evidence” (*J.W.* 4.484–85).²¹³⁰ Philo makes similar remarks (*Abraham* 141), saying: “Even to this day there are seen in Syria monuments of the unprecedented destruction that fell upon them, in the ruins, and ashes, and sulphur, and smoke, and the dusky flame which still is sent up from the ground as of a fire smouldering beneath” (*Moses* 2.56).²¹³¹

We must also beware of overinterpreting the examples Jude presented of judgment in the past. Jude is not suggesting the opponents had had sexual intercourse with angelic beings (v. 6). Nor is he necessarily implying that they engaged in homosexual activity. He emphasizes that those who sin are judged, not that the opponents had committed the same sins as their predecessors. It is likely, however, that the intruders were guilty of sexual sin, as we will see in subsequent verses.

3.1.2 Application to Adversaries: Three Sins Warranting Judgment (8–10)

⁸ *In the same way these people—relying on their dreams—defile their flesh, reject authority, and slander glorious ones.* ⁹ *Yet when Michael the archangel was disputing with the devil in an argument about Moses’s body, he did not dare utter a slanderous condemnation against him but said, “The Lord rebuke you!”* ¹⁰ *But these people blaspheme anything they do not understand. And what they do understand by instinct—like irrational animals—by these things they are destroyed.*

After presenting three examples of God’s judgment in history, we might expect Jude to say that the opponents would be judged as well. Instead of proclaiming their judgment, however, he declares their sins, providing a basis for their future judgment. The paragraph is connected with the preceding, as the words “in the same way” (v. 8) demonstrate. Rendering the word “likewise” (*homoiōs*) “in the same way,” however, is slightly misleading in that it may suggest that the intruders committed the exact sins of those judged in vv. 5–7. I have already argued that Jude does not intend in vv. 5–7 to say that the opponents were necessarily guilty of same-sex sins or that they had sexual relations with angels. The connection between the two paragraphs is looser. A general analogy exists between the sins of those judged in vv. 5–7 and Jude’s opponents. Jude’s delight for triads emerges again since the three sins for which the opponents will be judged in v. 8 are sexual sin, rejection of God or Christ’s lordship, and reviling of angels.²¹³²

The connection between the sins itemized in v. 8 and the preceding paragraph is interesting to trace.²¹³³ Sodom (v. 7) certainly committed all three sins since its inhabitants violated sexual norms, mistreated angels (though they did not know they were angels), and repudiated God’s lordship. The angels in v. 6 also rejected God’s sovereignty over themselves and transgressed sexual standards, but there is no evidence that they reviled other angels. Israel in the

wilderness (v. 5) obviously rebelled against God's rule over them by refusing to obey his command to enter into the land of promise (Num 14), and they committed sexual sin with the Midianites (Num 25:1–9). Evidence that they blasphemed angels, however, is lacking unless one sees a repudiation of angels in their transgression of the law, but the connection in this latter instance is scarcely clear. We can conclude then that the connection between vv. 5–7 and vv. 8–10 is general rather than exact.

Having traced the connection of vv. 8–10 to vv. 5–7, we should summarize the argument of vv. 8–10. The three sins for which the opponents deserve judgment are listed in v. 8. Michael's debate with the devil regarding the body of Moses introduces a contrast in v. 9. The intruders criticized angelic powers, but Michael, by contrast, did not even revile the devil and left the judgment of the devil to God. The breathtaking presumption of the adversaries is therefore featured. The opponents, says Jude, mocked arrogantly even though they lacked any understanding of what they criticized. The one thing they did understand was the power of physical appetites and sexual sin; they plunged right in by giving in to such desires, and they will be destroyed in the judgment on account of them.

8 Jude now explains in vv. 8–10 why the interlopers deserve the same judgment as those described in vv. 5–7, introducing his indictments with the words, "In the same way these people." We have already noted that three sins are featured in v. 8: sexual sin, denial of God's lordship, and blasphemy of glorious angels. The CSB translates the participle *enypniazomenoi* as "relying on their dreams." The dreams of the opponents are the basis for their moral obtuseness.²¹³⁴ They appealed to their dreams as a source of revelation, as a justification for their lifestyle. Others understand Jude as criticizing the interlopers as ignorant, hypnotized, or dreamers,²¹³⁵ but it is more likely that the opponents justified their moral laxity by appealing to dreams they believed functioned as divine approval and revelation for their behavior.²¹³⁶ The Scriptures, of course, do not rule out all dreams (cf. Joel 2:28; Matt 1:20; Acts 2:17), and yet false prophets

also appealed to dreams and were criticized roundly for their delusions (Deut 13:1, 3, 5; Isa 56:9–12; Jer 23:25–32).²¹³⁷

The intruders, then, appealed to dreams to justify their sexual licentiousness. The CSB translates the phrase “defile their flesh” (*sarka . . . miainousin*). The word “defile” (*mianiō*) often designates sexual sin in the OT (e.g., Gen 34:4, 13, 27; Lev 18:24, 27–28; Job 31:11; Jer 3:2; Hos 5:3; 6:10; cf. Pss. Sol. 2:13; 1 En. 9:8; 10:11; 12:4; 15:3–4). It also fits with what Jude says about the angels and Sodom and Gomorrah in vv. 6–7.²¹³⁸ The phrase “defile their flesh” to describe sexual sin is present in other sources (Sib. Or. 2:279; Herm. *Mand.* 29:9; *Sim.* 60:2). Naturally the opponents did not think they were defiling the flesh. Presumably, they appealed to their dreams to say that their sexual freedom was from God himself, that they transcended moral norms.²¹³⁹ Jude is concerned because such defilement and impurity could spread like a contagion.²¹⁴⁰

Second, the opponents also “reject authority.” One could see a reference here to the rejection of human authorities, whether to church or governmental leaders. But the term *kyriotēs* never has this meaning in the Septuagint or the NT, and we would expect a plural if human authorities were intended. Alternatively, the reference could be to angelic powers (Eph 1:21; Col 1:16; cf. 2 En. 20:1).²¹⁴¹ But once again a plural would be more likely, and since the next phrase likely refers to angels, Jude probably has in mind the lordship of God and/or Christ (cf. Herm. *Sim.* 56:1; 59:1; Did. 4:1).²¹⁴² The sin here is comparable to v. 4, where the opponents denied Jesus Christ as their Master and Lord. Again, a specific doctrinal deviation probably is not intended. They denied the lordship of God or Christ by the way they lived.²¹⁴³

Third, the intruders “slander glorious ones.” The reference could be to human beings, with the result that honorable people are intended (cf. Pss 149:8; 23:8; Nah 3:10; 1QpHab 4:2; 4QpNah 2:9; 3:9; 4:4; 1QM 14:11).²¹⁴⁴ And yet the plural Hebrew term *nikbādîm* is never rendered by the term *doxai* in the OT. The notion that angels are

glorious beings is plausible (Exod 15:11 LXX; T. Jud. 25:2; T. Levi 18:5; 1QH^a 10:8).²¹⁴⁵ This interpretation fits best with v. 9, where Michael's struggle with the devil is recounted, and Michael desists from reviling the devil.²¹⁴⁶ The identity of the "glorious ones" is difficult to pin down.

Some argue that a reference to good angels makes more sense since it seems that Jude would not be worried about scorn heaped on evil angels.²¹⁴⁷ Furthermore, the word "glories" (*doxas*, translated "glorious ones") never refers to demons. Why were the angels receiving scorn from the opponents on this reading? Some have suggested that the opponents were gnostics who criticized the angels for their part in the creation of the material world. But this interpretation stands only if Jude is an anti-gnostic polemic, and the evidence for such a theory is lacking. Perhaps the opponents held to a form of overrealized eschatology and disparaged angels because they knew believers would judge them (1 Cor 6:3). Another possibility is that angels were reviled because they would play a major role on the day of judgment.²¹⁴⁸ Alternatively, the angels were criticized as mediators of the law of Moses (Gal 3:19; Acts 7:38, 53; Heb 2:2; cf. Jub. 1:27–29; Josephus, *Ant.* 15.136),²¹⁴⁹ which would fit with the antinomian character of the opponents. The angels mediated the law and preserved the orders and structures of the world, and the opponents desired to live free of restraints.²¹⁵⁰

There are good arguments supporting a reference to good angels, but the parallel with v. 9, where Michael refuses to pronounce judgment on the devil, suggests that Jude refers to *evil angels* in v. 8.²¹⁵¹ Furthermore, I argued in 2 Pet 2:10 "the glorious ones" refers to evil angels, and thus we can't say that the term never refers to evil angels. Jude probably doesn't go a different way from Peter on this matter, especially since the two chapters are so similar. Admittedly, certainty eludes us, and the other reading may be correct. If Jude refers to evil angels, the argument runs as follows: The intruders insult demons, but the archangel, Michael, did not even presume to

blaspheme the devil himself but left judgment to God. If Michael as an angel with high authority did not even presume to judge Satan, how can the opponents be so filled with pride that they insult demons, who have a certain glory, even though they subsequently sinned?

9 Verse 9 is also remarkably difficult, and so at the outset we should state its main point. The opponents insulted glorious angels, but Michael was so humble he did not presume to condemn the devil but asked the Lord to rebuke him. The term “archangel” designates Michael’s authority and prominence. In Dan 10:13, 21 he is designated as a “prince” (*archōn*) and as “the great prince” (*ho archōn ho megas*, Theodotion) in Dan 12:1.²¹⁵² In Revelation he leads the battle against the dragon and the evil angels (Rev 12:7). His prominence continues in other Jewish literature (1QM 9:16; 1 En. 9:1; 10:11; 20:5; 24:6).²¹⁵³

Even though the OT says the Lord buried Moses (Deut 34:6), speculation arose over his burial since no human being observed the burial place. Philo said,

He [Moses] was buried without any one being present so as to know of his tomb, because in fact he was entombed not by mortal hands, but by immortal powers, so that he was not placed in the tomb of his forefathers, having met with particular grace which no man ever saw. (*Moses*, 2.291)

The puzzling element in Jude is the reference to the argument over the body of Moses between Michael and the devil. The terms used suggest a legal dispute over Moses’s body. By establishing Moses’s guilt, the devil would deprive him of the right of an honorable burial and presumably claim ownership over his body. Michael had every right, it would seem, to criticize the devil since the devil was wicked and his motives were evil, but Michael did not presume to criticize the devil and utter a “slandorous condemnation” (*krisin blasphēmias*) against him.²¹⁵⁴

The words Michael pronounced, “The Lord rebuke you!,” allude to Zech 3:2.²¹⁵⁵ The OT context in Zechariah is significant since the story represents another incident in which Satan attempted to

establish the guilt of one of Yahweh's servants. Joshua, the high priest, was in the Lord's presence, but Satan accused him before the Lord (Zech 3:1). Satan accused Joshua before the Lord since his "filthy clothes" represented his sin (Zech 3:3-4). But Yahweh pronounced a judgment against Satan in saying, "The LORD rebuke you" (Zech 3:2). God's word brings forgiveness, illustrated by the clean garments with which Joshua was clothed. As Kee has shown, the Lord was not merely reprimanding Satan as if the story concludes with a verbal rebuke.²¹⁵⁶ Rather, the Lord's verdict was effective, sealing Satan's defeat in the courtroom and declaring Joshua's vindication. Those whom the Lord has chosen are vindicated in his sight (Zech 3:2, 4-5).

Michael's words in Jude, similarly, do not merely indicate a desire for the Lord to reprimand Satan verbally for bringing an accusation against Moses, as if Satan would receive only a verbal "dressing down." The Lord's rebuke would function as an effective response to Satan's accusation so that Moses would be vindicated, and his vindication would secure his proper burial. The devil probably claimed authority over Moses's body because of Moses's sin in killing the Egyptian. Michael did not deny that Moses sinned or defend his behavior. He appealed to the Lord's rebuke with the confidence that Moses would receive forgiveness by God's word, with the result that God would remove his defilement (cf. Zech 3:3-5).

Where did Jude derive this story? Unfortunately, the account is not extant in any writing that has been preserved. Traditions of the account have come down to us, and these traditions are carefully sifted by Bauckham in an excursus.²¹⁵⁷ The story is reputed to come from a book titled Assumption of Moses. The relationship between Assumption of Moses and Testament of Moses is keenly debated. In his thorough study Bauckham thinks there are two separate traditions in these two different works.²¹⁵⁸ The issue need not be resolved by this commentary since we no longer possess the original version of the story.²¹⁵⁹ Bauckham weaves together various later sources, concluding that the devil contested Moses's "right to an honorable burial," charging him with the murder of the Egyptian.²¹⁶⁰ Michael

asked the Lord to rebuke the devil, and the devil fled so that Michael could complete the burial.²¹⁶¹

Muddiman questions Bauckham's reconstruction of the story, particularly because Bauckham relies on late evidence.²¹⁶² Muddiman notes, among other objections, that there is no reference to Moses's assumption in the texts Bauckham draws on. Nor do we find any Jewish evidence that the debate was over Moses's murder of the Egyptian and his honorable burial. Stokes, upon sifting the evidence, thinks the dispute was not over Moses's burial but his ascent into heaven.²¹⁶³ Certainty on the entire matter is impossible, and there are parts of Bauckham's reconstruction that are unlikely, though it seems plausible that the devil contested Moses's right to an honorable burial since he killed the Egyptian.

Based in part on his reconstruction of the encounter between Michael and the devil, Bauckham also rejects the common view that Michael refused to slander the devil.²¹⁶⁴ He maintains instead that *the devil slandered Moses* because Moses murdered the Egyptian in the story Jude drew on. The key to grasping what Jude intends, suggests Bauckham, comes from a knowledge of the tradition appropriated. Thus, the point of the story, according to Bauckham, is not that Michael refused to slander the devil.²¹⁶⁵ Michael, according to Bauckham, did not presume to respond to the devil's accusation against Moses, appealing to the Lord's judgment, not his own authority as the leader of angels, to counter Satan.

Bauckham's suggestion is intriguing, but it is not the most natural way to understand the verse.²¹⁶⁶ In saying that Michael did not presume to bring "a slanderous condemnation," it seems most likely that this is a judgment *against the devil* in the sense that Michael did not presume, though he seemed to have every right to do so, to speak against the devil. Although Bauckham's interpretation is ingenious and possible, it seems to be a less natural way of reading the text. The verse, then, has a simple contrast. Michael did not dare to pronounce a condemning judgment upon the devil. He left the judgment of Satan in God's hands, asking God to finally judge him. Such a reading of the

verse fits as well with our understanding of 2 Pet 2:10–11,²¹⁶⁷ and Bauckham’s view depends on his reconstruction of the event, which is based on late sources, and his reconstruction is disputed.²¹⁶⁸

Jude’s reference to a noncanonical book is puzzling for many Christians today. Did he believe the account was historically accurate, or did he cite it to make a point?²¹⁶⁹ It is difficult to be certain, but it seems likely that Jude believed the story was rooted in history. He gives no indication elsewhere that the traditions cited are not historical. But does that lead to the conclusion that the canon of Scripture should be expanded, or did Jude think Assumption of Moses was inspired? These are vexing questions, but we should not draw the conclusion that the citation from a book means the entire book is inspired. Paul cites Greek poets and sayings without suggesting that the entire work was authoritative Scripture (Acts 17:28; 1 Cor 15:33; Titus 1:12). Jude does not intend to put a canonical stamp on Assumption of Moses simply because he cited it. He viewed this story as true or helpful, or he believed it was an illustration of the truth he desired to teach.

10 Michael fully understood the devil’s wickedness, and yet he did not presume to utter judgment against him, asking the Lord to judge him. Yet the opponents abuse “anything they do not understand.” The word *blasphēmousin* (v. 10, translated “blaspheme” by the CSB but “slander” and “slandorous condemnation” in vv. 8–9) links the three verses together.²¹⁷⁰ When Jude says that these people slandered what they did not comprehend, he again has in mind the angels of v. 8.²¹⁷¹ But the word “anything” (*hosa*) shows that their abusive language should not be limited to reviling angels but refers to spiritual matters in general.²¹⁷² The intruders believed they understood heavenly things, but they were far out of their depth. The one thing they did understand, however, was the power of physical appetites. Their physical desires urged them on daily, and like irrational animals they were driven by sexual instinct rather than reason.²¹⁷³ Jude’s language is highly ironic here, for presumably the intruders claimed a

knowledge of heavenly matters, but their comprehension of truth did not exceed that of animals. We have a preview of the claim (v. 19) that they were not indwelt by the Spirit.²¹⁷⁴ Indeed, by following their instincts, they will be “destroyed” (*phtheirontai*). The destruction envisioned is not temporal (cf. 1 Cor 3:13; 2 Pet 2:12). The reference is to their eternal judgment, when they will pay the consequences for being enslaved to their sinful desires, the only thing these people understood well.²¹⁷⁵

3.2 Woe Oracle (11–13)

The text begins with a woe oracle that threatens judgment on those who imitate the ways of Cain, Balaam, and Korah. The woe oracle, however, does not only point forward. It also reaches back to vv. 8–10 and functions as the conclusion of those verses. Hence, we see that the main proposition in vv. 8–13 is the pronouncement of woe upon the false teachers. The remainder of vv. 8–10 and 11–13 documents the reasons for the pronouncement of woe.

In vv. 12–13 Jude again uses a triad, seeing these three men as types of the opponents infiltrating the church. Jude applies the woe oracle to the adversaries using the word “these” (*houtoi*). In this way he brings the three dangers of the adversaries to the attention of the readers. They were hidden reefs in the love feasts; that is, the danger they posed was not immediately apparent, and thus they were as perilous as rocks that cause shipwreck when a ship is seeking harbor. They ate together with other church members shamelessly, fearing no judgment. Finally, they were leaders who did not shepherd the flock but only themselves, showing that they were bogus shepherds. Jude closes this section with four illustrations drawn from nature that depict the character of the opponents. Four different spheres of the natural world illustrate Jude’s point: the clouds of the sky, the agricultural produce of the earth, the stormy sea, and the planets of the stellar regions. In the first two realms Jude criticizes the teachers for not producing what they promised. They were long on words and short on substance. The last two illustrations demonstrate that the

opponents were shamefully evil, revealing that they were deserving of judgment.

3.2.1 Three Types (11)

11 Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, have plunged into Balaam's error for profit, and have perished in Korah's rebellion.

11 Woe oracles are common in the OT prophets (Isa 5:8, 11; Amos 5:18; Mic 2:1; Nah 3:1; Hab 2:9, 15, etc.), and they are also prominent in the teaching of Jesus, especially Matthew 23 (vv. 13, 15, 16, 23, 25, 27, 29 par.).²¹⁷⁶ Jude, following the example of others, gives the reason for the woe oracle (“for they have gone”; cf. Matt 23:13, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29 par.). The opponents are threatened with judgment because they fit the type of evil persons in the OT, and the three named are Cain, Balaam, and Korah.²¹⁷⁷ They are mentioned together because of their evil influence on others, which is also the reason the false teachers are dangerous.²¹⁷⁸ Bede identifies the sin of Cain as envy, of Balaam as greed, and of Korah as rebellion.²¹⁷⁹ All three verbs are in the aorist tense, and yet the verbs do not denote past time in this context. Perhaps the aorists denote timeless action, signifying that each example functions as a type. In the last instance the aorist “have perished” (*apōlonto*) seems to function as a prophetic aorist, communicating the certainty of the future destruction of the opponents.

Jude begins with Cain since his sin is found in the earliest part of the Scriptures (Gen 4), saying that the intruders “have gone the way of Cain.”²¹⁸⁰ Cain's sin, of course, was murder (Gen 4:8; 1 John 3:12). Jude is scarcely suggesting that the opponents were actually murdering others. Nor is it any more convincing to conclude that the adversaries were like Cain in the sense that they murdered the souls of others.²¹⁸¹ Even more speculative is Reicke's suggestion that the antinomian behavior of the opponents precipitated persecution that resulted in the martyrdom of believers.²¹⁸² Instead, Cain was included in that he is an example of a person who chose wickedness

over goodness, who gave way to hatred.²¹⁸³ When God confronted him about his evil sacrifice (Gen 4:6–8), Cain grew angry and killed his brother instead of repenting. Cain became, therefore, an example of sin and envy in subsequent literature (1 John 3:12; 1 Clem. 4:7; T. Benj. 7:5). Philo portrays him as a man enslaved to self-love (*Worse* 32, 78). In the Targums Pseudo-Jonathan and Neofiti, Cain says, “There is no Judgment, there is no Judge, there is no other world, there is no gift of good reward for the just and no punishment for the wicked.”²¹⁸⁴ Reese says that Cain did not “master the urges of anger and prideful revenge.”²¹⁸⁵ Bauckham infers from this tradition that Cain is represented by Jude as a heretic and a false teacher,²¹⁸⁶ and perhaps false teaching is in mind. The opponents had followed in Cain’s way, the path of evil, the way of hatred.²¹⁸⁷

The second of the three bad examples is Balaam, “They have plunged into Balaam’s error for profit.” Interpreting the OT account about Balaam is challenging. Some even believe that he is portrayed as a good character in Num 22–24, while being criticized elsewhere in the OT. Such a reading should be rejected because there are clues that point to Balaam’s greed in Num 22–24. Furthermore, such an interpretation fails to read Numbers and the rest of the OT as a canonical unity. The careful reader must explain why Balaam’s donkey protected Balaam from death and rebuked him (Num 22:21–35). The narrator suggests that Balaam’s intentions in going were impure, that he desired financial reward (Num 21:15–20). The point of the story in Numbers is that the Lord sovereignly spoke through Balaam to bless Israel, even though Balaam desired to curse God’s people (cf. Deut 23:4–5; Josh 24:9–10; Neh 13:2; cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 4.118–22; Philo, *Moses* 1.277, 281, 283, 286; *Migration* 114). The account in Numbers testifies to Balaam’s true character since he was slain fighting against Israel (Num 31:8), and the sexual sin at Baal Peor in which the Midianites snared Israel is attributed to Balaam’s advice (Num 31:16; cf. Rev 2:14; Josephus, *Ant.* 4.129–30; Philo, *Moses* 1.295–300). Pseudo-Philo portrays Balaam’s advice as follows in, “Pick out the beautiful women who are among us and in Midian, and station them

naked and adorned with gold and precious stones before them. And when they see them and lie with them, they will sin against their Lord and fall into your hands” (*Bib. Ant.* 18.13).²¹⁸⁸

Jude sees a parallel between Balaam and the opponents, for like Balaam “they plunged into . . . error” for the sake of money. The parallel with Balaam suggests that the opponents were false teachers, probably wandering prophets who spoke to make money.²¹⁸⁹ Balaam’s error relates to his teaching.²¹⁹⁰ The active sense is nicely captured by Louw and Nida, “They gave themselves completely to the kind of deception that Balaam practiced for the sake of money.”²¹⁹¹ In their teaching the opponents propagated error in order to make money, and yet at the same time they were deceived enough to believe their own error. Some have said that the error the teachers “rushed” (NIV) into was sexual sin, but it does not make sense to say that they committed sexual sin for the sake of money.²¹⁹² It probably is the case, however, that their teaching included the idea of sexual license.

The last type harkens back to Korah and his rebellion (Num 16; cf. Ps 106:16–18; Sir 45:18–19; cf. 1 Clem. 51:1–4).²¹⁹³ Once again we have a hint that the opponents were leaders since Korah had a priestly position but resented the authority of Moses and Aaron over him. Bauckham thinks the intruders were antinomians and spoke against the Mosaic law.²¹⁹⁴ Others think the “rebellion” (*antilogia*) suggests opposition to leaders in the church.²¹⁹⁵ The rebelliousness of the teachers against authority is mentioned elsewhere in the letter (vv. 4, 8, 12).²¹⁹⁶ But Moo is probably right in concluding that we should not be overly specific, seeing a general reference to the “rebellious, antinomian attitude” of the teachers.²¹⁹⁷ Korah is listed last instead of in canonical order, probably to emphasize the judgment in store for the opponents. Just as Korah and his followers were swallowed up suddenly by the earth, so too the false teachers will perish in a severe judgment.²¹⁹⁸ This fits with the observation that the three verbs in the verse progress in gravity (“gone,” “plunged,” and “perished”) and

climax with the verb “perished” (*apollymi*).²¹⁹⁹ We should note the connection to v. 5, where Israel in the wilderness was also “destroyed” (*apollymi*) because of failure to believe.

3.2.2 Application to Adversaries (12–13)

¹² *These people are dangerous reefs at your love feasts as they eat with you without reverence. They are shepherds who only look after themselves. They are waterless clouds carried along by winds; trees in late autumn—fruitless, twice dead and uprooted.* ¹³ *They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shameful deeds; wandering stars for whom the blackness of darkness is reserved forever.*

12 Jude proceeds to apply the woe oracle further to the adversaries with the typical “these” (*houtoi*), warning his readers by using various illustrations to describe the depravity of the interlopers.²²⁰⁰ First, these people were “hidden reefs” (ESV, NASB) at love feasts.²²⁰¹ The NIV (so also NRSV) translates the word as “blemishes” instead of “hidden reefs.” “Blemishes” is a possible translation. In that case the word *spilades* is related to the word *spilos*, which means “stain” or “spot,” and some commentators think this reading is correct.²²⁰² The parallel text in 2 Pet 2:13 clearly refers to the opponents as stains or blemishes. Nevertheless, a different term is used here in Jude, *spilas* instead of *spilos*, and this word is commonly used in Greek literature for rocks; only in later literature does it mean “stains.”²²⁰³ Since the word means “rocks” here, the idea is that the false teachers were like hidden reefs concealed from ships trying to make safe harbor.²²⁰⁴ Jude says they are “hidden reefs” in your “love feasts” (*agapais*).²²⁰⁵ During love feasts the early Christians shared a meal together that probably was consummated by the celebration of the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor 11:17–34; Acts 2:42, 46; cf. Ign. *Smyrn.* 8:2).²²⁰⁶ Such feasts were a powerful symbol of the love that flowed among believers. Jude warns his readers that all was not what it seemed. Some of those in the love feasts were dangerous hypocrites, pretending to be full of love

but hiding their dangerous teaching and lifestyle that threatened the church.

Second, in such feasts they were “eating with you without the slightest qualm” (NIV).²²⁰⁷ They felt no pang of conscience in participating in such meals, even though their lives were not characterized by love. Bigg thinks they excluded others from their part of the table or even had separate love feasts.²²⁰⁸ This is not the most natural way to read the Greek since *syneuōchoumenoi* means “eating together with,” not eating in a separate venue. Instead, the opponents were apparently part of the church, but Jude creates a separation between authentic believers and the opponents.²²⁰⁹

Third, the opponents were “shepherds who feed only themselves” (NIV). The words here reflect Ezek 34:2: “Woe to the shepherds of Israel, who have been feeding themselves! Shouldn’t the shepherds feed their flock?” Or, as Ezek 34:8 says, “My shepherds do not search for my flock, and . . . the shepherds feed themselves rather than my flock.” The reference to shepherds indicates that the opponents were leaders, claiming they had the ability to guide and lead God’s people.²²¹⁰ Still, they had no concern for anyone but themselves. They did not exert effort and care for the flock but instead used their positions of leadership to establish a comfortable life for themselves.

The verse concludes with four illustrations from the natural world.²²¹¹ The illustrations draw from every area in the natural world: clouds in the sky, trees on land, waves in the water, and stars in the upper atmosphere.²²¹² Jude begins with an illustration from the atmosphere. The intruders “are waterless clouds carried along by winds.” Palestine is a dry climate, tremendously dependent on rains at crucial times to sustain life. When rain is desperately needed and thick clouds appear, the anticipation of and hope for rain climaxes. If no rain falls, bitter disappointment ensues. The intruders were like such clouds. They promised much but delivered little. Jude may have been alluding to the proverb, “The one who boasts about a gift that does not exist is like clouds and wind without rain” (Prov 25:14).²²¹³ We

probably should not read any significance into the idea that the adversaries were driven by the wind, as if the wind symbolizes the devil or others who influence the opponents. The idea is that the opponents were like clouds that hover overhead with the prospect of rain and then are blown away without providing water. So too the false teachers promised to slake the thirst of those who heard them but left them parched.

The second illustration hails from the realm of agriculture.²²¹⁴ The intruders were also “trees in late autumn” that did not bear fruit. The word “autumn” (*phthinopōrina*) does not suggest the tree previously had fruit that had already been picked since it was late autumn. Rather, it was late autumn and the tree still had not borne any fruit.²²¹⁵ Some trees may bear their fruit late, but the time for waiting had passed, and now the hope for any fruit was extinguished. In saying they were “twice dead,” the point may be that the opponents were dead before their so-called conversion and had died again by virtue of their apostasy.²²¹⁶ Or he may have been referring to their second death, in which they will die eternally.²²¹⁷ I suggest, however, that the expression is emphatic, a way of saying they were “totally dead.” They are also “uprooted.” They were dead in that they bore no fruit, and they were also dead because they had been pulled up from the ground after bearing no fruit.²²¹⁸ No one, of course, expects fruit from uprooted trees, and no hope of fruit can be expected from the opponents. Jude mixes metaphors to convey the intruders’ spiritual poverty.²²¹⁹

13 The opponents are compared here to “wild waves of the sea” and “wandering stars,” revealing their shameful life and their unreliability. In the previous verse we saw that the opponents were lifeless and fruitless. Here an illustration from the sea is used to depict the opponents. In saying the opponents were “wild waves . . . foaming up their shameful deeds,” the focus is on their evil works. Not only did they lack good works, but they specialized in evil ones. The expression reminds us that they are like “irrational animals” (v. 10)

and “worldly” (v. 19).²²²⁰ The word “wild” signifies lack of self control.²²²¹ Their behavior is likened to the grimy foam coating a beach, leaving a sticky residue of shame behind. A difficult textual issue arises because the external textual evidence is evenly divided between the words *epaphrizonta* and *apaphrizonta*. Flink is probably right in saying the matter should be resolved on internal grounds since the external evidence is rather evenly divided and that internal evidence supports the latter.²²²² The difference between the two terms is as follows. Jude may be saying the interlopers foam their own shame but the readers are exempt from it (*epaphrizonta*), or more likely the shame they are foaming has the potential of spilling into (*apaphrizonta*) the lives of the readers. Flink rightly says that the last idea seems to fit the context.²²²³ As Bateman says, “These godless leaders generate disorder, confusion, and unbecoming behavior.”²²²⁴ Probably both their speech and actions are in view.²²²⁵ The OT probably was in Jude’s mind, “The wicked are like the tossing sea, which cannot rest, whose waves cast up mire and mud” (Isa 57:20).²²²⁶

The last illustration comes from the realm of space, where the planets reside, which “were thought to be stars that were wandering from their courses, although by Jude’s time it was a case of a name sticking even after astronomers realized that the planets were regular in their movements.”²²²⁷ The CSB translates “wandering stars,” which is certainly possible, but it is even more likely that wandering planets are intended. The planets illustrate what it meant to stray off course, and thus they were unreliable to guide people.²²²⁸ The opponents are likened to such planets in that they had wandered (*planētai*) from the straight way to the way of evil. Davids thinks we have a reference to the Watchers of 1 Enoch who are described as stars that stray from God’s ways.²²²⁹ He gives two examples from 1 Enoch. “And the stars which roll over upon the fire, they are the ones which have transgressed the commandments of God from the beginning of their rising because they did not arrive punctually” (1 En.

18:15). “These are among the stars of heaven which have transgressed the commandments of the Lord and are bound in this place until the completion of ten million years, (according) to the number of their sins” (1 En. 21:6). The parallels are possible but not patently clear. It seems just as likely that Jude latches onto a common metaphor for wandering. Robinson says the opponents are “likened to an irregular unpredictable entity with a powerful (and often negative) influence on the lives of those around them.”²²³⁰ A verbal connection to the “error” (*planē*) of Balaam is also suggested.

Jude concludes vv. 12–13 with a promise of judgment. God has reserved the gloomy darkness for those who live in an evil manner (cf. 2 Pet 2:17). They will not experience the light of day but the darkness of God’s wrath. We should note the parallel to v. 6, where deep darkness is also the fate of evil angels (*zophon tetērēken* in v. 6 and *zophos . . . tetērētai* in v. 13).²²³¹ Often the future judgment focuses on the fire reserved for the disobedient, though the theme of darkness is also common (Matt 8:12; 22:13; 25:30; cf. Tob 14:10; 1 En. 46:6; 63:6; Pss. Sol. 14:9; 15:10). Both themes together indicate that fire and darkness are metaphors of the future judgment since fire and darkness can hardly coexist. The future punishment of the wicked is not described literally, but the images indicate that it will be terrible.

3.3 Enoch’s Prophecy (14–16)

Jude returns to a theme introduced in v. 4, namely, that the judgment of the false teachers was prescribed by God. The prophecy of Enoch demonstrates that the opponents were destined for judgment from the beginning. They had no hope of ultimately triumphing. The content of the prophecy comprises vv. 14–15. Enoch predicted long ago that the Lord would come and judge all those who lived ungodly lives. Their ungodliness reveals itself in both their works and their words. Jude used his characteristic “these” (*houtoi*) in v. 16, explaining that the opponents of his day were the object of Enoch’s prophecy. The sins named in v. 16 reveal that they were the ungodly persons anticipated by Enoch.

3.3.1 The Prophecy: Judgment on the Ungodly (14–15)

¹⁴ *It was about these that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied: "Look! The Lord comes with tens of thousands of his holy ones* ¹⁵ *to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly concerning all the ungodly acts that they have done in an ungodly way, and concerning all the harsh things ungodly sinners have said against him."*

14 Enoch prophesied that the Lord would come with his thousands of angels and judge the ungodly. Before we discuss the content of the prophecy in more detail, we will discuss its source since the surprising element to most readers is not what the prophecy says but the source referenced. First Enoch is not considered to be canonical Scripture by any mainstream religious group, whether we think of Judaism, Roman Catholicism, the Greek or Russian Orthodox, or Protestantism.²²³² It is regarded as canonical in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

Jude's citation of 1 Enoch suggests to some that Jude believed 1 Enoch was part of inspired Scripture and an inspired book.²²³³ Some church fathers concluded from this that 1 Enoch itself was inspired (Clement of Alexandria, *Ecl.* 3; Tertullian, *Cult. fem.* 1:3),²²³⁴ though this judgment never persuaded the church at large.²²³⁵ Origen seems to have started out with a high view of 1 Enoch, but he expressed more and more reservations about the book as time passed, noting that its inclusion in the canon "was a minority Christian position."²²³⁶ Some even rejected Jude as canonical because of the citation from 1 Enoch, but Jerome defends Jude as canonical (cf. Jerome, *Vir. ill.* 4). Jerome compares the citation 1 Enoch to the citation of Greek poets. Athanasius and Augustine rejected 1 Enoch as canonical, although a minority in the history of the church have judged it to be canonical.²²³⁷ Doubts about 1 Enoch were fueled in the church by the recognition that the Jews rejected the book from their authoritative writings.²²³⁸ Some have defended Jude's citation by saying that Jude cited an oral tradition from the original Enoch and that this tradition found its way into the pseudepigraphical book.²²³⁹

Others have suggested that Jude believed 1 Enoch was canonical and perhaps even superior to the publicly available Scriptures.²²⁴⁰ Reicke claims that Jude believed 1 Enoch was inspired and even more important than the OT prophets.²²⁴¹

The issue is not easy to resolve, but the following observations may be useful. It is difficult, though not impossible, to see how Jude could have been citing an actual oral tradition from the historical Enoch since the book of Enoch was in circulation in Jude's day and was well known in Jewish circles. Jude derives the citation from the book of 1 Enoch, and the latter is clearly pseudepigraphical. We would be faced with having to say that Jude knew that *this specific quotation* from 1 Enoch derived from the historical Enoch.²²⁴² It is better to conclude that Jude quoted the pseudepigraphical 1 Enoch and that he also believed that the portion he quoted represented God's truth. Jude's wording does not demand that he thought we have an authentic oracle from the historical Enoch.

We also should not conclude that the entire book is part of the canon of Scripture (rightly Augustine, *City of God* 15.23).²²⁴³ Jude probably cited a part of 1 Enoch that he considered to be a genuine prophecy.²²⁴⁴ Perhaps he referred to Enoch because the adversaries treasured the work, and thereby he used their own ammunition against them.²²⁴⁵ Vögtle suggests that the opponents rejected Christian tradition about Christ's coming and hence Jude cites the prophecy from Enoch.²²⁴⁶ Indeed, the content of the prophecy is not remarkable, assuring the readers that the Lord will truly judge the ungodly.²²⁴⁷

Citing a quotation from another source does not indicate that the entire work is inspired, even if the saying drawn upon is true. For instance, Paul quotes Aratus (*Phaenomena* 5) in Acts 17:28, and he does not intend to teach that the entire work was inspired Scripture. Similarly, he quotes Epimenides in Titus 1:12 without any notion that he accepted the truth of the whole work. Green argues that Jude viewed the text from 1 Enoch as authoritative, observing that Paul

speaks of “their very own prophets,” but Jude says Enoch “prophesied” (*proephēteusen*).²²⁴⁸ The verb “prophesy” (*propheteuō*) is used elsewhere to designate canonical Scripture (Matt 15:7; 1 Pet 1:10). But the verb also is used to say that a certain utterance or saying is from God. For example, Caiaphas prophesied regarding the fate of Jesus even though he was an unbeliever (John 11:51). Zechariah prophesied when the Spirit filled him at the Baptist’s birth (Luke 1:67). Women prophesied when the believing church gathered as well (1 Cor 11:4–5; cf. Acts 19:6; Rev 11:3). A prophecy may derive from God without drawing the conclusion that the entire book belongs to canonical Scripture. We cannot necessarily draw the conclusion from the words “Enoch prophesied” that the work was considered Scripture. It would have been more telling if Jude had used the phrase “it is written” with reference to 1 Enoch. Jude draws from a part of the work that he considered true. Bauckham rightly says, “It need not imply that he regarded the book as canonical Scripture. At Qumran, for example, the Enoch literature and other apocryphal works were evidently valued without being included in the canon of Scripture.”²²⁴⁹

The word *kai*, “also” (omitted by the CSB), could connect to either “prophesied” or “these.” If the latter, Jude says that Enoch prophesied to his own generation and also to those of Jude’s day. More likely, however, the conjunction attaches to the verb, and in that case the CSB’s omission is insignificant exegetically. The term *toutois* could be rendered “to these,” but the dative probably is a dative of reference, so that it means “with reference to these,” or as the CSB renders it “about these.”²²⁵⁰

When Jude says that Enoch was “the seventh from Adam,” he counts inclusively, beginning with Adam: Adam, Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch. Perhaps the number “seven” also is symbolic, designating completion and perfection. Does this indicate that Jude believed the quotation came from the historical Enoch?²²⁵¹ Such a conclusion is possible but seems unlikely. That Enoch was the seventh from Adam is stated explicitly only in the book of 1 Enoch

(60:8; 93:3; cf. Jub. 7:39), and perhaps Jude draws on this text.²²⁵² It had to be widely known that the book itself was not written by the historical Enoch. Perhaps Jude designates the book he cites by calling Enoch the seventh from Adam. Or perhaps Jude includes Enoch as the seventh from Adam to remind readers that Enoch lived before the flood in an ungodly society that was being replicated in his own day.²²⁵³ The historical Enoch fascinated Jews during the Second Temple period since he did not die but was translated into God's presence (Gen 5:23–24). Hebrews confirms that Gen 5:23–24 was interpreted as saying that Enoch did not die (Heb 11:5; cf. Sir 44:16; 49:14). Jewish writers concluded from this that heavenly secrets were conveyed to Enoch, and it is not surprising that he is an agent of revelation in Jewish literature.

Scholars have attempted to discern the text Jude used in his citation of 1 Enoch, and it is clear that he quotes from 1 En. 1:9.²²⁵⁴ For this verse we have the original Aramaic and Greek, Ethiopian, and Latin versions. Bauckham carefully compares Jude's citation with the texts we have.²²⁵⁵ Some believe Jude cited the Greek version from memory.²²⁵⁶ Dehandschutter suggests that Jude used "a third form of the Greek text of Enoch."²²⁵⁷ Others think Jude was aware of the Greek version but supplied his own translation from the Aramaic,²²⁵⁸ but this conclusion is contested and not certain.²²⁵⁹ English readers can compare and contrast the differences with Jude by noting Isaac's translation of 1 En. 1:9: "Behold, he will arrive with ten million of the holy ones in order to execute judgment upon all. He will destroy the wicked ones and censure all flesh on account of everything that they have done, that which the sinners and wicked ones committed against him."²²⁶⁰ The most interesting divergence in Jude's quotation is the insertion of *kyrios* ("Lord"). The term "Lord" is not in any of the other versions, representing Jude's Christological interpretation of the judgment.²²⁶¹ In applying a text that referred to God's judgment to Christ, Jude follows the precedent of other NT writers (cf. 1 Thess 3:13; 2 Thess 1:7; Rev 19:13, 15; 22:12).

The verb *ēlthen* is aorist but is rightly translated by the NIV as a future (“is coming”) and is equivalent to a “prophetic perfect.”²²⁶² Jude refers here of the second coming of Christ.²²⁶³ The “holy ones” with whom he will come are his angels.²²⁶⁴ The coming of Christ is patterned after God’s theophany on Sinai, where he “came with ten thousand holy ones” (Deut 33:2).²²⁶⁵ Zechariah looked forward to the day when “the LORD my God will come and all the holy ones with him” (Zech 14:5). That angels will accompany Jesus at his coming is clearly taught elsewhere in the NT (Matt 16:27; 25:31; Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26; 1 Thess 3:13; 2 Thess 1:7). The attendance of the angels at his coming indicates the event will be stunning and majestic.

15 The purpose of the Lord’s coming is now explained.²²⁶⁶ He is coming to judge those who have opposed him and to reprove (“convict,” CSB) those who live and speak in an ungodly way. The “all” (*pantōn*) who will be judged refers only to unbelievers.²²⁶⁷ Jude emphasizes that no unbelieving person will escape the judgment. He will “convict all the ungodly” (*pantas tous asebeis*). The NA²⁸ supports the reading “every soul” (*pasan psychēn*). A decision is difficult, and good arguments can be given on either side, but the Ethiopic tradition and majority text incline to the translation of the CSB.²²⁶⁸ Another connection to v. 4 exists in that the judgment is due to the “ungodliness” of the opponents. Indeed, Jude uses three different terms from the “ungodly” word group in this verse. The false teachers lived their lives in disregard of God, as if he were not the sovereign and mighty God who deserves praise and honor and obedience.

The judgment is specifically attributed to two matters—the evil works and words of the false teachers. We should note that the judgment includes “all the ungodly acts that they have done.” No evil action is exempted; nothing wicked is erased from God’s database. Those who have rejected God demonstrate such by the way they live. Second, the judgment also is executed because of the “harsh things ungodly sinners have said.” Their harsh words stem from rebellion

against God because they are “said against him.” Some parallels to 1 Enoch are instructive. Enoch said to the wicked, “You have not done the commandments of the Lord, but you have transgressed and spoken slanderously grave and harsh words with your impure mouths against his greatness” (1 En. 5:4).²²⁶⁹ The parallel to Jude is close in the Greek of 1 En. 5:4, where the expression *sklērous logous* (“harsh words”) is used. A similar idea appears in 1 En. 101:3, “You utter bold and hard words [*megala kai sklēra*] against his righteousness.”²²⁷⁰ Similarly, judgment is pronounced against “those who speak with their mouth unbecoming words against the Lord and utter hard words concerning his glory” (1 En. 27:2).²²⁷¹

3.3.2 Application to Adversaries (16)

16 These people are discontented grumblers, living according to their desires; their mouths utter arrogant words, flattering people for their own advantage.

16 The “these” (*houtoi*) opening v. 16 applies the Enoch citation to Jude’s opponents, indicating that the adversaries were predicted by Enoch. Jude now explains why their judgment is deserved. Verse 15 grounds their judgment on both their ungodly actions and words, while v. 16 emphasizes their ungodly speech and arrogance. The opponents were like Israel in the wilderness in that they were “grumblers” (*gongystai*) who complain against the Lord (cf. Exod 16:7–9, 12; 17:3; Num 11:1; 14:23; 16:41; 17:5, 10; Ps 105:25; Sir 46:7),²²⁷² and thus Jude circles back to v. 5 where he recounts the judgment of the wilderness generation.²²⁷³ The succeeding word “faultfinders” (NIV) communicates the same truth.²²⁷⁴ The false teachers were not joyous and loving but critical and quick to detect the weaknesses of others. Commentators debate about the object of grumbling. Some perceive complaints against the restrictions of the law.²²⁷⁵ Others think the intruders were gnostic,²²⁷⁶ detecting grumbling against being imprisoned in a physical body. Kelly, however, is likely correct in saying that their grumblings were against

God himself.²²⁷⁷ We have no evidence for reading the text in a more specific way.

They pursued pleasure by seeking to fulfill their own desires rather than thinking about how they could strengthen others. It is unclear that the “desires” here are sexual. Jude probably uses the term in a general sense to describe their sinful passions, including perhaps the ideas of sexual sin and greed.²²⁷⁸ The NIV may be correct in rendering the next phrase “they boast about themselves,” but the CSB’s rendering “their mouths utter arrogant words” is preferable. Both translations reveal that the false teachers were arrogant, but their arrogance was not so much in their boasting about themselves as in their rebellion against God himself (cf. vv. 9–10). The Greek expression used here (*lalei hyperonka*, “he speaks arrogant things”) is also found in Theodotion’s translation of the Septuagint (Dan 11:36), reflecting Antiochus Epiphanes’s blasphemy against God (*lalēsei hyperonka*, “he will speak arrogant things”; cf. Dan 7:8, 20).²²⁷⁹ Finally, the opponents indulged in flattery for their own advantage. The advantage is almost surely financial (cf. 11). They fawned over others so that people would reward them with the comforts of this life with the aim of pursuing their own lusts.²²⁸⁰ The word translated “living” (*poreuomai*) forms a link to v. 11 and anticipates v. 18.²²⁸¹ The Greek expression “flattering people” (*thamazontes prosōpa*) stems from a Hebrew idiom “lifting up the face” that occurs in the OT (Gen 19:21; Lev 19:15; Deut 10:17; 28:50; 2 Chr 19:7; Job 13:10; Prov 18:5; 24:23; cf. in Greek, Jas 2:1). The expression denotes showing partiality, which is consistently forbidden in the OT.

SECTION OUTLINE

- 4 Exhortations to Believers (17–25)
 - 4.1 Remember the Apostolic Predictions (17–19)
 - 4.1.1 The Apostolic Word (17–18)
 - 4.1.2 Application to Adversaries (19)
 - 4.2 Keep Yourselves in God’s Love (20–21)
 - 4.3 Show Mercy to Those Affected by Opponents (22–23)
 - 4.4 Doxology (24–25)

4 EXHORTATIONS TO BELIEVERS (17–25)

A new section commences with v. 17, and it is marked in the text with the term *agapētoi* (“beloved”), rendered “dear friends” by the CSB. The same term “beloved” commences the body opening of the letter in v. 3. Bauckham argues that a new section does not begin here since Jude continues to warn his readers about the false teachers.²²⁸² Discerning where new sections begin can be difficult, and Bauckham rightly sees that Jude continues to admonish the church about the opponents. Nevertheless, we probably are justified in seeing a new section here.²²⁸³ The emphasis shifts from “these” (*houtoi*) to “you” (*hymeis*, v. 17).²²⁸⁴ We should also note that Jude turns from the certain judgment of the opponents—the theme of vv. 5–16—to a reminder to his readers that their intrusion was predicted. Watson identifies this portion of the letter as a *peroratio*, where Jude summarizes the main argument of the letter and drives home his conclusions so that the letter turns from criticizing the opponents to encouraging and exhorting the readers.

Verses 17–23 should be divided into three subsections. First, Jude summons the readers to remember the predictions of the apostles (vv. 17–19). The apostles predicted that scoffers would arrive and that they would be preoccupied with their own selfish desires. The church therefore should not be surprised at their intrusion into the congregation but should be prepared to fend off the insidious presence of the interlopers. Second, believers should remain in God’s love (vv. 20–21). It is insufficient for believers to attack the false teachers. They

must take positive steps to continue in their love for God, or their own love for God will slowly wither away. Love for God cannot thrive when believers devote all their attention to the deficiencies of others. They must continue to cultivate their own spiritual lives. The believers are to build themselves up in the faith, pray in the Holy Spirit, and wait eagerly for the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jude does not leave his congregation in suspense about how to keep themselves in God's love. He provides concrete instruction so that they would know how to do so.

Third, Jude considers how believers should treat those influenced by the false teachers (vv. 22–23). Believers are to extend mercy to those wavering under the influence of the opponents and be patient with those struggling with doubts. Those who could be delivered from the intruders are to be snatched out of the fire, rescued from the impending peril. Those who were healthy, however, should keep a close watch on themselves and show mercy with fear. Those who get close to a fire may get burned, and so Jude admonishes his readers to balance mercy with fear and caution lest they get caught in a whirlpool that sucks them into the evil perpetrated by the intruders. The three main segments of this section, then, focus on three different audiences. First, readers should pay attention to the prophecies the apostles made about *the false teachers* (vv. 17–19). Second, readers must not neglect *their own* spiritual growth but concentrate on how to preserve their own love for God (vv. 20–21). Third, readers must show mercy to *those affected* by the false teachers, helping as many as possible to escape from imminent danger.

4.1 Remember the Apostolic Predictions (17–19)

4.1.1 The Apostolic Word (17–18)

¹⁷ *But you, dear friends, remember what was predicted by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.* ¹⁸ *They told you, “In the end time there will be scoffers living according to their own ungodly desires.”*

As stated above, a new section commences with the words “dear friends” (*agapētoi*) and the emphatic “you” (*hymeis*) of v. 17. Jude

calls on his readers to remember the predictions of the apostles since they anticipated that scoffers would arrive in the last days and that these mockers would pursue their ungodly desires. Jude's preference for the term "these" (*houtoi*) surfaces in v. 19, and Jude shows, as he did in v. 16 with the prophecy of Enoch, that the prophecy of the apostles was directed against the present opponents. In other words, the end-time prophecy was fulfilled currently in the situation Jude addresses. Thus, we should not understand the apostolic prophecies to relate to an era far in the future, distant from Jude's own concerns.

17 The term "dear friends" signals that believers are specially objects of God's love (*agapētoi*). What the readers must do is "remember" the words the apostles previously spoke to them. Remembering in the Scriptures does not involve mere mental recollection, as when we remember a person's name we had temporarily forgotten. Remembering means that one takes to heart the words spoken so that they are imprinted on one's life (cf. v. 5). The prophecies Jude refers to are those of the apostles. By "apostles" he does not refer to missionaries or messengers, though the term can bear that meaning (Rom 16:7; 2 Cor 8:23; Phil 2:25). Rather, Jude has in mind those who served as the foundation of the church (Eph 2:20), the authoritative interpreters and witnesses of the gospel (cf. 1 Cor 15:1–11).²²⁸⁵ In this group belong the Twelve, the apostle Paul, and perhaps Barnabas (Acts 14:4) and James, the brother of Jesus (Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; Gal 1:19; 2:9; 1 Cor 15:7). Here Jude's words are closely matched by 2 Pet 3:2. Peter directs attention to those who denied the second coming of Jesus Christ, but Jude's warning is more general. The apostles anticipated scoffers who would live to carry out their own desires.

Some scholars maintain that Jude could not have been written by Jude the brother of Jesus since he refers to the apostles, conceiving of them as a collected group, which means that the era of the apostles had ended.²²⁸⁶ What Jude says about the apostles, however, does not require that the prophecies of all the apostles were collected, nor does it suggest that the apostles had died.²²⁸⁷ Jude merely says that the apostles uttered predictions about false teachers who would arise.

These apostolic warnings were probably oral, so a written record of them is unnecessary.²²⁸⁸ Several texts indicate such warnings were part of the common stock of early Christian preaching (even if they were not accessible in written form for Jude). In Acts 20:29–30 Paul says: “I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Men will rise up even from your own number and distort the truth to lure the disciples into following them.” We see from Matthew that the apostles transmitted Jesus’s warning about false prophets (Matt 7:15–20). Paul has similar cautions in both 1 Tim 4:1–5 and 2 Tim 3:1–5. For Jude to relay such words, then, does not require the death of the apostles because such warnings were part of the common stock of apostolic tradition, probably from the beginning of the apostolic ministry.

Nor does the verb “told” (an imperfect *elegon* in Greek, “they were saying,” v. 18) demonstrate that the instructions were from long ago. Bauckham rightly observes that we need to be careful about pressing too far the distinction between the imperfect and the aorist.²²⁸⁹ Moreover, Paul uses imperfect verbs to describe his previous instruction of the Thessalonians, even though he had evangelized them in the recent past (cf. 1 Thess 3:4; 2 Thess 2:5; 3:10). Nor does this verse necessarily separate Jude from the apostles, though he does not claim to be an apostle (v. 1). Peter used a similar expression to denote the predictions of the apostles (2 Pet 3:2) even though he was an apostle. The exhortation to remember the predictions of the apostles does not, therefore, necessarily exclude Jude from the apostolic office. Still, there is no other evidence that Jude claimed to be an apostle.

18 Jude conceives of the apostles’ words as directed to his hearers and not as intended for some far-off generation, for he said their admonitions were for “you” (*hymin*, italics added). The reference to “the end time” does not contradict the fact that the prophecies were directed to Jude’s readers. New Testament Christians believed the last days had dawned with the coming of Jesus Christ and with his death and resurrection. The author of Hebrews declares that “in these last days” God “has spoken to us by his Son” (Heb 1:2; cf. Acts 2:17; 1 Pet 1:20), indicating that the last days had arrived.²²⁹⁰ Similarly, in

both 1 Tim 4:1 and 2 Tim 3:1 the entrance of false teachers takes place “in later times” and “in the last days” respectively. In both cases Paul understands these predictions to be fulfilled in the false teaching troubling the Ephesian church. We should see a connection to verse 4 in Jude, where we find that the arrival and judgment of the intruders was prescribed. We have seen that the OT prophesied such false teachers, and now Jude says that the apostles anticipated their coming as well.

The content of the prophecy, according to Jude, is rather vague. The apostles predicted that scoffers would arrive and that they would follow their own desires.²²⁹¹ Jude clearly has the intruders in mind since their scoffing was clear in their rejection of Christ’s/God’s lordship (v. 8). To say that they pursued their own desires repeats almost exactly the indictment of the intruders in v. 16, but Jude adds a nuance here. Their desire was to do what was ungodly. The CSB translates *tōn asebeiōn* as a descriptive genitive “ungodly desires.” This is certainly a possibility. More likely, however, the term should be construed as an objective genitive, “desires for ungodly actions.”²²⁹² Again the word “ungodly” appears, one of Jude’s favorite terms for the opponents (vv. 4, 15, 16).

4.1.2 Application to Adversaries (19)

¹⁹ *These people create divisions and are worldly, not having the Spirit.*

¹⁹ Jude now connects and applies the prophecy of the apostles to his own readers with the term “these” (*houtoi*). The opponents in the readers’ church were predicted by the apostles. Jude is not suggesting that the apostles were only thinking of one particular church. The apostles prophesied that the church in general would experience the entrance of false teachers. We see another triad in Jude’s description of the opponents. First, the opponents were those who “create divisions.” The term *hoi apodiorizontes* could mean the intruders made distinctions between people. Some they classified as spiritual and some as unspiritual. Kelly sees support for this notion in the next phrase,

where Jude called the intruders “worldly” (*psychikoi*).²²⁹³ He thinks Jude turns back on the adversaries the language they themselves used. Such an interpretation fits with a gnostic view of the opposition since gnostics were famous for classifying some as spiritual and some as “soulish.” Although such an interpretation is possible, it is more likely that Jude indicts the false teachers for causing divisions.²²⁹⁴ The NRSV reflects this interpretation, “It is these worldly people, devoid of the Spirit, who are causing divisions.”²²⁹⁵ Some in the congregation were under the influence of the teachers, and Jude writes the letter (v. 3) to counteract their influence. They had wormed themselves into the love feasts (v. 12) and were causing all kinds of problems in the community, just as Balaam acted against Israel and Korah against Moses and Aaron (v. 11).

The opponents were also “worldly.” The word *psychikoi* can also be translated “natural ones.” What Jude means by this is best explained by the next phrase: they “do not have the Spirit” (NIV).²²⁹⁶ To be “natural” means that one does not have the Holy Spirit. We know from Rom 8:9 that the presence of the Spirit is the mark of a Christian. Those who lack the Holy Spirit do not belong to God. Therefore, Jude excludes the opponents from the Christian community. They were worldly people, not spiritual, and thus they were not genuine Christians since they did not have the Holy Spirit. Believers, on the other hand, pray “in the Holy Spirit” (v. 20). Jude’s words remind us of Paul, who said that the “natural person” (ESV; *psychikos*) does not welcome the things of the Spirit, precisely because they don’t have the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:14). James also says that the wisdom of the world is “earthly, unspiritual [*psychikē*], demonic” (Jas 3:15). The opponents in Jude fall into the same category. They caused divisions because they did not belong to God, because they lacked the Holy Spirit.

The readers should not have been surprised by the intrusion of the opponents. The apostles foresaw what would happen. Foreseeing their arrival should strengthen the faith of the church since it confirms the truth of the faith that was once and for all given to them (v. 3). No

false teaching, no threat from the outside can be considered a genuine threat to the truth since it has all been foreseen and predicted. God never promised that the church would progress in the world without enemies from within or without. People are apt to think that God's blessing means the people of God would exist in a blissful state with no conflict. On the contrary, the apostles foretold that opponents would come, and they had arrived. They were evident by their words and their works. It should be clear to all, therefore, that they were not part of the people of God. The church should recognize them, reject their teaching, and reach out to those wavering under their influence.

4.2 Keep Yourselves in God's Love (20–21)

²⁰ But you, dear friends, as you build yourselves up in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, ²¹ keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting expectantly for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ for eternal life.

The exhortation to believers continues in these verses, and a slight change of emphasis is indicated by the same phrase as opened v. 17, "But you, dear friends." In this instance Jude does not introduce a major new section but turns from emphasizing the intrusion of the opponents (vv. 17–19) to positive exhortations to believers. He recognizes that the readers would not continue to be devoted to the faith if they concentrated only on resisting the opponents, as important as that was. The readers must also grow in the Christian faith themselves and keep themselves in the sphere of God's love. The NRSV sees four different independent commands here: "build yourselves up," "pray," "keep," and "look forward to." The CSB seems to see the participles as temporal in translating the first participle "as you build yourselves up in your most holy faith." The NIV is the most helpful here, translating the participles in v. 20 as instrumental, "by building yourselves up . . . and praying" (v. 20). The participle in v. 21 is taken as temporal by the NIV: "as you wait." We find only one imperative in vv. 20–21: the word "keep" (*tērēsate*) in v. 21. The other three verbs are all participles: building yourselves up (*epoikodomountes*), praying (*proseuchomenoi*), and waiting

(*prosdechomenoi*). The first two participles should be understood as instrumental participles, describing *how* we keep ourselves in God's love, and the last participle is best understood as temporal.²²⁹⁷ If this view is correct, then we have another example of a triad in Jude. He gives two means by which readers keep themselves in God's love: (1) by building themselves up in their faith, and (2) by praying in the Spirit. Finally, they also are to keep themselves in God's love while they wait eagerly for the return of Jesus Christ. Two other features of these verses should be noted. When we think of triads, the implicit Trinitarianism of the text should be observed. Jude refers to praying in *the Holy Spirit*, the love of *God*, and the mercy of *our Lord, Jesus Christ* (cf. v. 1). From texts like these the church in the coming centuries hammered out the doctrine of the Trinity. Still another triplet emerges, at least conceptually, since Jude refers to faith, love, and the concept of hope in the return of the Lord.

20 As indicated above, I understand the two participles in this verse, "building yourselves up upon" and "praying," as instrumental participles modifying the imperative "keep" (*tērēsate*) in v. 21. Thus, Jude gives two means by which believers preserve themselves in God's love. The instrumental participles take on an imperatival force in relationship to the main imperative "keep." Believers are to continue in God's love by building themselves up "in your most holy faith." The words "in your most holy faith" could be construed to say build yourselves up "by means of your most holy faith."²²⁹⁸ Or, conversely, the idea may be to build yourselves up "on your most holy faith" (KJV, NASB, RSV, NRSV).²²⁹⁹ The latter interpretation is more likely. Jude uses the metaphor of building something on a foundation. The foundation in this instance is "your most holy faith." Believers are to build on the faith's foundation in order to preserve themselves in God's love.²³⁰⁰ Reese rightly observes that building up is not limited to the leaders but is the task of the entire congregation.²³⁰¹

The metaphor of building on the foundation is used elsewhere in the NT. Paul says the only foundation for the church is Jesus Christ, and

people must build on that foundation rightly to receive a reward (1 Cor 3:10–15). The foundation upon which the church is built in Eph 2:20 is “the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.” Peter describes believers as “living stones” and “a spiritual house” (1 Pet 2:5).²³⁰² What Jude says here does not contradict Paul but represents a fresh use of the metaphor. The “most holy faith” upon which the church is built is the gospel of Jesus Christ, and this faith has Jesus Christ as its center.²³⁰³ “Faith” here refers to the body of teachings, the doctrine—the gospel—of Jesus Christ.²³⁰⁴ This fits with v. 3, where believers are exhorted “to contend for the faith that was delivered to the saints once for all.” The first way believers remain in God’s love is by continuing to grow in their understanding of the gospel, the teachings that were handed down to them at their conversion. This faith is “most holy” because it comes from the holy God, and we see growth occurs as believers grow in their understanding of God’s word and of Christian truth. Jude does not think growth happens mystically or mysteriously. Instead, believers experience God’s love as their understanding of the faith increases. Affection for God increases not through bypassing the mind but by means of it.

The second means by which believers remain in God’s love is by “praying in the Holy Spirit.” Some commentators think this describes speaking in tongues, but this is doubtful.²³⁰⁵ More likely the prayer in the Spirit is the ordinary prayer that should be part of the warp and the woof of the Christian life.²³⁰⁶ A striking parallel is found in Eph 6:18, “Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request.” The context in Ephesians clarifies that speaking in tongues is not primarily in view. Requests for the furtherance of God’s will and resistance to the devil’s attack are the focus. Similarly, in Jude the injunction to pray should be understood broadly. Believers cannot keep themselves in God’s love without depending on him by petitioning him in prayer. Love for God cannot be sustained without a relationship with him, and such a relationship is nurtured by prayer.

21 The central command of the two verses now appears: “Keep yourselves in the love of God” (v. 21). Is Jude exhorting believers to maintain their love *for* God, an objective genitive? Or is he saying that they should keep themselves in the place where they experience God’s love for them, a subjective genitive? A decision is difficult. Probably we are faced with a false alternative. Our love for God depends on his love for us. Thus, the two cannot and should not be rigidly separated.²³⁰⁷ It is interesting to note that in v. 1 believers are said to be loved by God and kept by Christ. There God’s love for believers receives the emphasis, the love by which he called us to be his people. But here Jude exhorts believers to keep themselves in God’s love, focusing on human responsibility. They must keep themselves in God’s love to avoid apostasy, so as not to be corrupted by the opponents. We have already seen that being preserved in God’s love will only be a reality if believers continue to grow in their understanding of the Christian faith and if they regularly pray. Ultimately, believers, as I argued in v. 1, are kept by Jesus Christ (*Iēsou Christou tetērēmenois*). Or, as v. 24 says, God is the one “able to keep (*phylaxai*) you from falling” (NRSV). Those who trust in Christ remain in the faith because of the preserving work of God the Father. Nevertheless, the promise that God will keep his own does not nullify the responsibility of believers to persevere in the faith. God keeps his own, and yet believers must keep themselves in God’s love. Jude represents well the biblical tension between divine sovereignty and human responsibility. On the one hand, believers only avoid apostasy because of the grace of God. On the other hand, the grace of God does not cancel out the need for believers to exert all their energy to remain in God’s love. We should also see that the command should not be interpreted individualistically only, though surely individuals are to heed the command here. Still, keeping ourselves in God’s love is a community project; it becomes a reality as believers care for one another.²³⁰⁸

The third participle related to keeping themselves in God’s love is “waiting expectantly (*prosdechomenoi*) for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The word “waiting,” as noted above, is temporal and eschatological, focusing on the coming of the Lord. For instance, we

see the same verb in Joseph of Arimathea awaiting God's kingdom (Mark 15:43), and Simeon and Anna waiting for God's redeeming purposes to be fulfilled (Luke 2:25, 38). In Titus 2:13 believers are to await the hope of the Lord's return. Since believers are to wait for Christ's mercy, they will receive it at the coming of the Lord. We are reminded that Jude prays for mercy to be multiplied for his readers in v. 2. The preposition *eis* should be construed as one of result, so "resulting in eternal life" is more precise than the CSB's "for eternal life," though the word "for" may have the sense of result.²³⁰⁹ Some commentators understand the phrase "for eternal life" to modify "keep yourselves in the love of God."²³¹⁰ The prepositional phrase, however, is closer to the participle, suggesting that the CSB reading is correct. Jude conceives of eternal life here, then, as something that will be received on the last day, as something believers will enjoy at the coming of the Lord.

Referring to Christ's mercy is unusual in the NT. Why does Jude speak here of mercy? Probably because believers need mercy (not justice) on the last day when they meet Jesus Christ (cf. Matt 5:7; 2 Tim 1:18).²³¹¹ We have an indication here that grace is the basis upon which believers receive eternal life. Jude clearly teaches that believers must remain in God's love until the end and avoid apostasy. He does not believe, however, that believers will be perfect in this world, and therefore they will need Christ's mercy on the last day. We see, then, that believers remain in God's love by waiting for Christ's return. Apparently, Christians cannot remain in God's love if they immerse themselves in this world and cease to long for their future perfection before God (vv. 24–25). One of the means by which we continue in our love for God is if we continue to long for the day when Jesus Christ will show us his mercy, when he will grant us the gift of eternal life, and we will be perfected forever. Those who take their eyes off their future hope will find that their love for God slowly evaporates, and it will be evident that their real love is for the present evil age.

4.3 Show Mercy to Those Affected by the Opponents (22–23)

22 *Have mercy on those who waver;* 23 *save others by snatching them from the fire; have mercy on others but with fear, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.*

Before vv. 22–23 can be interpreted, we must establish the text, and, unfortunately, determining the original text is difficult since the textual tradition has a number of diverse readings. The most striking feature of the textual tradition is that some witnesses divide the text into two clauses, while other witnesses divide it into three.²³¹² The earliest text, \mathfrak{P}^{72} , divides the text into two clauses and can be translated as follows, “Snatch some from the fire, and show mercy to those disputing (or ‘doubting’) with fear.”²³¹³ Vaticanus (B) also splits the text into two groups: “And those to whom you show mercy when they dispute (or doubt); save them by snatching them from the fire. For others you must have mercy with fear” (cf. NEB). The uncial C inserts the verb “reprove” or “convict” (*elenchete*) instead of “have mercy” (*eleate*) and reads as follows, “Reprove those who are disputing, and save others by snatching them from the fire.” The majority text (see K, L, P, S) also divides the text into two.²³¹⁴ It is rendered by the NKJV, “And on some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire” (cf. KJV).

The other noticeable feature here is that the term *diakrinō* (“doubt,” “dispute,” or “distinguish”) is in the majority text a nominative plural (*diakrinomenoi*) instead of an accusative plural as in all the other witnesses (*diakrinomenous*). Since it is nominative in the majority text tradition, it must signify the action of those who are showing mercy, and it probably means that one must make distinctions between those who need mercy and those in a more perilous state who must be snatched from the fire. The three-clause text is supported especially by A and \aleph . Codex Alexandrinus (A) can be translated, “Reprove those who are disputing; save others by snatching them from the fire; on others have mercy with fear.” The major difference from Sinaiticus (\aleph) is that the first verb is “reprove” (*elenchete*) rather than “have mercy” (*eleate*). The text of Sinaiticus is represented by the CSB, “Have mercy on those who waver; save others by snatching them from the fire; have

mercy on others but with fear, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.”

If we begin with smaller matters first, the imperative “have mercy” (*eleate* or *eleeite* in the texts) should be preferred to “reprove” (*elenchete*). The former is supported by the wider textual tradition, and the latter was likely introduced by scribes to facilitate a progression from severity (reproving) to mercy. The majority text, as noted, has the nominative “making a distinction” (*diakrinomenoi*) instead of the accusative *diakrinomenous* (“doubting” or “disputing”). But the latter is almost surely original, and the nominative probably was inserted to agree with the other two nominative participles in the text—“snatching” (*harpazontes*) and “hating” (*misountes*).

Certainty on whether the text should be divided into two or three clauses cannot be attained. I believe, however, that the text as it is translated in the CSB probably is original.²³¹⁵ The two-phrase form of the text is more easily accounted for if there was originally a triad rather than vice versa. Ross argues that the third reading does not fit as “an expansion of any of the shorter ones, and there would have been no motive for complicating an already obscure passage by adding a third clause.”²³¹⁶ Stylistically, however, such a decision fits with Jude’s fondness for triads.²³¹⁷ The tripartite arrangement of the text is also supported by external evidence, especially the Alexandrian family. Metzger probably is correct in concluding that Vaticanus (B), although accidentally introducing an error in the text, actually supports Sinaiticus (²³¹⁸.(x

Before we examine the two verses more carefully, we should summarize the verses as a whole and their place in the argument. In vv. 17–19 Jude reminds his readers that the apostles predicted the opponents would arrive. Their presence did not constitute a surprise nor, ultimately, a threat to the faith once for all handed down to the saints. Then in vv. 20–21 he gives positive exhortations to believers. They must not think the faith will be preserved simply by attacking the false teachers and revealing their errors. The readers must be

attentive to their own relationship with God. They must remain in God's love by growing in their understanding of the faith, by praying fervently in the Holy Spirit, as they wait eagerly for Jesus to return. We come to the third stage of the argument in vv. 22–23. Verses 17–19 focus on the opponents; vv. 20–21 on the readers. Now Jude explains to the readers how they should respond to those who had been affected by the false teachers and less likely how they should treat the false teachers themselves. The exhortation is threefold.²³¹⁹ First, those who were wavering under the influence of the false teachers should not be rejected or ignored because they are having doubts.²³²⁰ By showing mercy to them as they struggle with doubts, such people could be reclaimed. Second, others were close to being captured by the teaching and behavior of the opponents. Believers must not give up on them. Their lives could still be salvaged, and they could be snatched from the fire that threatened to destroy them. Third, others had already been defiled by the false teachers. Perhaps Jude refers here to the false teachers themselves, although this seems less likely. Probably Jude speaks of those who had fallen into the libertinism of the false teachers.²³²¹ Even in this case mercy should still be extended. But the readers should be extremely careful, avoiding the danger of being stained by the sin of these opponents.

An alternative reading is possible, and a decision between the two interpretations is remarkably difficult. Allen argues that all three clauses refer to the same group of people and not to three distinct groups.²³²² On this reading it is possible Jude counsels his readers to have mercy on those disputing, which means he still holds out hope for some of the false teachers. Jude envisions a situation where some of the false teachers can be snatched from the fire. On the other hand, the readers need to be careful because in showing mercy to the disputatious they might themselves fall into the same sin as the false teachers. They are encouraged to show mercy but to beware of being defiled themselves.

Understanding the admonition to be directed to the same group and seeing hope for the false teachers is attractive and could be correct.

Still, seeing three distinct groups, as the CSB translates it, is preferable. None of the parallels Allen lists match the threefold pattern found in Jude 22–23. The parallel he adduces in Jude 10 is not close enough to warrant the interpretation he proposes for Jude 22–23. The decisive problem with Allen’s reading is expressed by Wasserman, “in classic and Hellenistic usage, the οὐς μὲν . . . οὐς δὲ . . . οὐς δὲ structure unequivocally denotes some sort of sub-division of groups.”²³²³ We would need decisive reasons to overturn the grammar, especially since both readings make sense of the text. Also, it is questionable that Jude holds out hope for the repentance of the false teachers. It seems more likely that he sees hope for those influenced by them. Everything else in the letter indicates that Jude thinks the opponents are destined for judgment.

22 Jude’s preference for triads shows up again as he gives three exhortations to his readers. He begins by saying “have mercy on those who waver.” Should *diakrinō* be rendered “waver” (CSB, NRSV), i.e., “doubt” (NIV, ESV), or “dispute,” or even as “making a distinction” per the NKJV? The meaning dispute is supported by the usual meaning of the verb in Hellenistic Greek up until the time of the NT,²³²⁴ by the use of the term “dispute” in Jude 9, and by the context of the letter, which confronts disputers, not doubters.²³²⁵ Birdsall argues that it means mercy should be extended to “those who are under judgment.”²³²⁶ On the other hand, it is possible that the reference is to doubting since the word *diakrinō*, contrary to Spitaler, has that meaning in some texts. It almost certainly means “doubt” in texts where the verb *diakrinō* functions as the antonym to trust or faith (Matt 21:21; Mark 11:23; Rom 4:20; 14:23; Jas 1:6). A number of scholars argue that doubting and wavering make the best sense when we have the middle voice.²³²⁷ Furthermore, it makes good sense that some were wavering and doubting because of the influence of the intruders, and Jude counsels that believers should show mercy to those doubting.²³²⁸

If one reads the text like Spitaler, we have a chiasm here.²³²⁹

A “to these disputers extend mercy;

B some save by snatching them from the fire;

A´ but to these extend mercy, in fear hating also the flesh-stained garment.”²³³⁰

On this reading, as discussed above, three different groups are not addressed. In every instance the address is to the same group—the opponents. Despite the strong polemic in the book, the false teachers are not irretrievable. Their error calls for mercy with the hope that some will be saved. At the same time, believers must fear so that they are not contaminated by the teachers with the result that they themselves fall into error.²³³¹

A reference to wavering or doubting fits the structure of the Greek text as was pointed out above. Jude begins with those who were least affected by the intruders. They were affected to the extent that they were beginning to doubt whether the opponents were correct or the faith they received at the inception of their Christian life was normative (v. 3). It is tempting to dismiss those struggling with doubts, to lose patience with them and move on to something else. Jude encourages those who were strong to show mercy and kindness to those wavering with doubts, to reclaim them with gentleness (cf. 2 Tim 2:25).

23 Others in the church were in even greater danger. They had fallen under the spell of the intruders to a significant extent. Perhaps they had begun to embrace some of the latter’s theology and were beginning to live in an antinomian manner. The “fire” here refers to future judgment in hell (cf. v. 7; cf. Matt 3:10, 12; 5:22; 2 Thess 1:7; Heb 10:27; Rev 20:14–15).²³³² Jude does not say the opponents were already in the fire. They were to be snatched from the fire that would consume them unless they repented. Jude, as in v. 9, alludes to Zech 3:2. Joshua, the high priest, is described as “a burning stick snatched from the fire” (Zech 3:2; cf. Amos 4:11). The context of Zech 3 clarifies that Joshua was destined for the fire because of his sin illustrated by his filthy garments (Zech 3:3–5).²³³³ And thus Jude

holds out hope for mercy for those who were about to fall prey to the wiles of false teachers.²³³⁴

The removal of his filthy clothes and being endowed with clean ones symbolizes the forgiveness of sins (Zech 3:3–5). God’s grace snatched Joshua from the impending fire by cleansing him of his sin. Jude exhorts his readers to play a similar role in the lives of those influenced by the opponents. The readers are to “save others *by snatching* them from the fire” (italics added). The main verb is “save,” and the participle “snatching” depicts how they are to save those entranced by the opponents. The image suggests that some have nearly been seduced by false teachers. And yet there is still hope that they can be reclaimed, rescued from the judgment to come and restored to a right relationship with God.

Still another group of people are even more influenced by the false teachers. Believers should “have mercy” even on those deeply ensnared in sin. They were not to despise them or abhor those stained by sin. And yet their mercy should be mingled with fear and hatred, knowing that sin had stained and defiled these people in a remarkable way. Some commentators think the fear here refers to the fear of God instead of the fear of contamination.²³³⁵ But contamination seems to be more fitting since Jude proceeds to speak of detesting “even the garment defiled by the flesh.”²³³⁶ If one gets too close, even the clothing will defile those attempting to show mercy.²³³⁷ Bede says we must be on guard so that we are not “more kind or more stern than justice requires.”²³³⁸ Jude uses the image of defiled clothing, drawing on Zech 3:3–4, which speaks of the “filthy clothes” on Joshua.²³³⁹ Joshua’s soiled garments portrayed his sin (cf. Zech 3:5),²³⁴⁰ and similarly the clothing defiled by the flesh illustrates the sin of those in Jude’s community.²³⁴¹

Kelly thinks the flesh here is close to the Pauline view where it represents the principle of sin.²³⁴² The Hebrew word for “filthy” (Zech 3:4) is the word for excrement (Deut 23:14; 2 Kgs 18:27; Prov 30:12; Isa 36:12; Ezek 4:12), and it may be that Jude draws a

connection between such excrement and the stained tunic (*chitōn*), which was the inner garment. Such a picture shocks the readers with how polluting and corrupting sin is. Believers are to beware lest their mercy is transposed into acceptance so that they become defiled by the sin of those they are trying to help. Jude may have been thinking of Jewish purity laws where one would become unclean by coming into contact with something that was unclean. In contrast, believers will be presented before God “without blemish” (v. 24) on the last day, with every stain removed. Perhaps mercy is demonstrated especially through prayer in cases like these. The text constructs a nice balance between showing love and mercy and maintaining standards of purity and righteousness. Showing love for the sinner does not exclude an intense hatred for the corruption brought about by sin. Furthermore, believers need to beware of getting too entangled with some who sin, lest the sinner influence them rather than vice versa.

4.4 Doxology (24–25)

²⁴ Now to him who is able to protect you from stumbling and to make you stand in the presence of his glory, without blemish and with great joy, ²⁵ to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, power, and authority before all time, now and forever. Amen.

Many letters close with a benediction (e.g., 1 Cor 16:23–24; 2 Cor 13:13; Gal 6:18; Heb 13:25; 1 Pet 5:14), but Jude concludes with a doxology, which is fitting for a sermon or in a liturgical setting. The doxology reminds readers of the heart and soul of the Christian life. All glory and majesty and power belong to God. He will be praised forever and ever by believers in Jesus Christ. In particular, Jude reminds his readers that God is able and willing to keep them from succumbing to apostasy. The false teachers threatened, but those who truly belong to the Lord will not capitulate. They will continue to be faithful until the end. Their faithfulness until the end, however, is not due to their own nobility or inner strength. God himself keeps his own from falling away. He grants the ability to stand before God blameless and joyful on the last day.

24 The doxology in Jude follows a form common in other NT doxologies. (1) God, the person who deserves the praise, is addressed in the dative case (Rom 16:25; Eph 3:20; 2 Pet 3:18); (2) glory and honor are ascribed to God (Rom 16:27; Eph 3:21; 2 Pet 3:18); (3) the endless duration of God's praise is featured (Rom 16:27; Eph 3:21; 2 Pet 3:18); and (4) a concluding "amen" is incorporated (Rom 16:27; Eph 3:21; 2 Pet 3:18). Jude shares all four of these elements, indicating that we have a common liturgical form here. Doxologies with a different form exist elsewhere in the NT (Rom 11:36; Gal 1:5; Phil 4:20; 1 Tim 1:17; 6:16; 2 Tim 4:18). Jude follows the fourfold format set forth above. (1) Like Rom 16:25 and Eph 3:20, the doxology begins by referring to God as "now to him who is able" (*tō de dynamenō*). (2) The glory ascribed to God is expanded by Jude in v. 25, where "glory, majesty, power, and authority" are ascribed to him. (3) God's honor, majesty, and power are eternal, for they are "before all time, now and forever." We should note here the triad of past, present, and future.²³⁴³ (4) Finally, Jude concludes with the customary "Amen."

When Jude speaks of God's ability to keep believers from falling, he does not merely mean that believers *might* be kept from falling. The idea is that God *will* keep them from falling by his grace.²³⁴⁴ The word for "protect" (*phylaxai*) is not the same term used earlier in the letter (cf. *tēreō*, vv. 1, 6, 13, 21), but the concept is the same. The promise that God will preserve believers from apostasy does not cancel out the exhortation of v. 21, "Keep yourselves in the love of God." Ultimately, however, believers obey this admonition because God will strengthen them to do so. He gives us the grace so that we desire to keep ourselves in God's love.

The preservation from "stumbling" (*aptaistous*) does not refer to sinlessness in this context.²³⁴⁵ The verb "stumble" (*ptaiō*) designates sin in some contexts (Jas 2:10; 3:1). In Rom 11:11, however, the verb "stumble" refers to whether the Jews have stumbled irrevocably so that they will be lost forever. Paul answers that question with an emphatic no. Peter uses the verbal form of this word in reference to apostasy in 2 Pet 1:10, and Jude does the same here. God does not

promise that true believers will never sin. He promises that he will preserve us from committing apostasy, from abandoning the faith once and for all.²³⁴⁶ That this is what Jude meant is confirmed by the next clause, “to make you stand in the presence of his glory, without blemish and with great joy.” Elsewhere in the NT the term “stand” refers to eschatological vindication at God’s throne on the last day (Rom 14:4; 1 Cor 10:12; cf. Eph 6:11, 13, 14). God is the one who will keep believers from committing apostasy so that they will be able to stand before God “with great joy” on the day of the Lord. Believers will experience joy, and their joy will bring honor to God as their patron and protector on the last day.²³⁴⁷

On the day of the Lord, believers will be “without blemish” (*amōmous*). The term “without blemish” is used of OT sacrifices (Exod 29:1, 38; Lev 1:3, 10; 3:1, 6; 4:3; Num 6:14; Ezek 43:22–23, 25), of Jesus as a perfect sacrifice (Heb 9:14; 1 Pet 1:19), and of believers on the day of judgment (Eph 1:4; 5:27; Col 1:22). Jude uses the term in the last sense and with the same meaning. He is not suggesting that believers will be perfect in this life. The Lord will make his own, who have not abandoned him, blameless on the last day. God will complete his saving work on that day.

25 The one who is able to keep believers from falling is identified as “the only God our Savior.” Some manuscripts add the term “wise,” but the evidence for its inclusion is not strong, and scribes probably added it under the influence of Rom 16:27. In saying that God is the “only God,” Jude does not counteract any form of Gnosticism.²³⁴⁸ He shares the common Jewish worldview that there is only one God, over against the polytheism of the Gentile world. In the NT, Jesus Christ usually is designated as the Savior.²³⁴⁹ In some texts, however, God is said to be the Savior (Luke 1:47; 1 Tim 1:1; 2:3; 4:10; Titus 1:3; 2:10; 3:4), which represents the OT as well (e.g., Deut 32:15; Pss 24:5; 25:5; 27:9; 65:5). The idea of God’s being the Savior fits well in a context in which false teachers threaten the church and believers need rescue from their clutches. The verse could be construed to say “God our Savior through Jesus Christ.”²³⁵⁰ M. Green argues that the

glory could not be through Jesus Christ “before all time,” and therefore Jude must have been ascribing glory to God “through” Jesus Christ. Comparable texts, however, suggest that Jude taught that glory, majesty, power, and authority are “through Jesus Christ” (Rom 7:25; 16:27; 2 Cor 1:20; Col 3:17; 1 Pet 4:11). An optative verb represented by “be” in the CSB might seem to be fitting, expressing a prayer wish. A prayer wish, however, does not fit with “before all ages” (NIV). Believers cannot pray that God would be glorified and honored before time began since that period of history has ended, and no human being even existed during much of the past. An indicative verb like “are” is more fitting. Glory, majesty, power, and authority always belong to God for all of history. “Glory” signifies the honor, resplendence, and beauty ascribed to God for his saving work.

Neyrey says that glory “refers to the public reputation or fame of someone.”²³⁵¹ And he emphasizes that such glory must be “publicly expressed and acclaimed.” Since God does the protecting, saving, and preserving, he receives all the glory, acclamation, and praise. “Majesty” denotes his greatness, and he is worthy of honor given his exalted position. Kelly nicely captures its meaning with the phrase “His awful transcendence.”²³⁵² The idea that God is majestic hails from the OT (Deut 32:3; 1 Chr 29:11; Pss 144:3, 6; 150:2; Dan 2:20; cf. Tob 13:4). “Power” and “authority” are terms that are rather close in meaning. They indicate that God is sovereign and in control.²³⁵³ The direction of all things is in his hand (1 Tim 6:16; Rev 4:11; 5:13; 19:1). Glory, majesty, power, and authority have always belonged to God, before the world began, and will be his forever and ever. Because of who God is and what he has done, the praise and power are his forever. Readers rest secure in this truth, and Jude does as well, signifying it by saying “Amen.”

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¹ A resurgence of interest in Peter is traced by J. H. Elliott, “The Rehabilitation of an Exegetical Step-Child: 1 Peter in Recent Research,” *JBL* 95 (1976): 243–54. For a lucid and brief survey of scholarship on 1 Peter up until 1980, see D. Sylva, “1 Peter Studies: The State of the Discipline,” *BTB* 10 (1980): 155–63. For an excellent summary of the history of research up to the late 1990s, see S. R. Bechtler, *Following in His Steps: Suffering, Community, and Christology in 1 Peter*, SBLDS 162 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 1–22. For a survey of scholarship into the early 2000s, see M. Dubis, “Research on 1 Peter: A Survey of Scholarly Literature Since 1985,” *CurBR* 4 (2006): 199–239.

² For a fascinating and instructive canonical reading of the Catholic Epistles, see D. R. Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles: The Formation of the Catholic Epistles as a Canonical Collection* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2016). See also D. R. Nienhuis and R. W. Wall, *Reading the Epistles of James, Peter, John & Jude as Scripture: The Shaping and Shape of a Canonical Collection* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013).

³ For a concise summary of the arguments against Petrine authorship, see W. G. Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, rev. ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1975), 423–24; cf. also N. Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, EKKNT, 2nd ed. (Zürich: Benziger/Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1986), 43–47. Kümmel says it is “undoubtedly a pseudonymous writing” (p. 424). For more recent rejections of Petrine authorship, see J. H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 120–30; L. R. Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 7–8; R. Feldmeier, *The First Letter of Peter: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, trans. P. H. Davids (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2008), 32–39; T. B. Williams, *Persecution in 1 Peter: Differentiating and Contextualizing Early Christian Suffering*, NovTSup 145 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 22–32 (leans against).

⁴ F. W. Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter: The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1947), 27–28; L. Goppelt, *A Commentary on I Peter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 50; P. J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter*, Her (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 4–5. Beare argues from Acts 4:13 that the historical Peter was illiterate.

⁵ E.g., Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 6–7.

⁶ So Beare, *First Peter*, 25–26.

⁷ In a study comparing Ephesians and 1 Peter, C. L. Mitton concludes that the author of 1 Peter knew Ephesians and depended on it at some points (“The Relationship between 1 Peter and Ephesians,” *JTS* 1 [1950]: 67–73). K. Shimada analyzes the evidence adduced by Mitton and concludes that he has not proved his case (“Is I Peter Dependent on Ephesians? A Critique of C. L. Mitton,” *AJBI* 17 [1991]: 77–106). Shimada conducts a similar study on whether 1 Peter is dependent on Romans, maintaining again that dependence cannot be established (87–137). See also the discussion of the matter in Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 15–19; Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 47–51; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 37–41. The commonalities between the two may be explained in terms of shared traditions. For a collection of Shimada’s essays on 1 Peter see his *Studies on First Peter* (Tokyo: Kyo Bun Kwan, 1998). A work that argues for 1 Peter’s independence from the Pauline letters is J. Herzer, *Petrus oder Paulus? Studien über das Verhältnis des ersten Petrusbriefes zur paulinischen Tradition*, WUNT 103 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998). T. B. Williams argues that the criteria used to establish an intertextual relationship with other sources has by definition excluded the possibility of Petrine dependence on other sources. He sets forth some promising criteria for analyzing the whole question, which should be taken into account as scholars continue to pursue 1 Peter’s

relationship to other writings (“Intertextuality and Methodological Bias: Prolegomena to the Evaluation of Source Materials in 1 Peter,” *JSNT* 39 [2016]: 167–87).

⁸ For an excellent survey of scholarship relative to persecution in 1 Peter, see T. B. Williams, “Suffering from a Critical Oversight: The Persecutions of 1 Peter within Modern Scholarship,” *CurBR* 10 (2012): 275–92.

⁹ See *Ep.* 10.96–97. Cf. J. Knox, “Pliny and 1 Peter: A Note on 1 Pet. iv.14–16 and iii.15,” *JBL* 72 (1953): 187–89; F. G. Downing, “Pliny’s Prosecutions of Christians: Revelation and 1 Peter,” *JSNT* 34 (1988): 105–23.

¹⁰ The discussion reveals that there was not an official policy relative to Christians, but since Pliny executed those who confessed to be Christians, we see that Pliny was following precedent in putting Christians to death. See T. B. Williams, *Persecution in 1 Peter: Differentiating and Contextualizing Early Christian Suffering*, NovT Sup 145 (Leiden: Brill, 2012): 203–7.

¹¹ E.g., Beare says, “There can be no possible doubt that ‘Peter’ is a pseudonym” (*First Peter*, 25). Cf. E. J. Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter: A Literary and Theological Commentary*, RNT (Macon: Smith & Helwys, 2000), 9–10; D. P. Senior, *1 Peter*, SP (Collegeville: Michael Glazier, 2003), 5.

¹² Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 39–42.

¹³ Plato, *Republic* 389b–c; Cicero, *Brutus* 11.42; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 7.9.53.2; Chrysostom, *Paenit.* 49.331; Origen, *In Jer.* 19.15. These references derive from Achtemeier.

¹⁴ L. R. Donelson, *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument in the Pastoral Epistles* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1986), 11.

¹⁵ Cf. Beare, *First Peter*, 29.

¹⁶ E.g., E. Best, *1 Peter*, NCB (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 32–36, 64–65; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 48–53, 368–71; J. H. Elliott, “Peter, Silvanus and Mark in 1 Peter and Acts: Sociological-Exegetical Perspectives on a Petrine Group in Rome,” in *Wort in der Zeit: Neutestamentlichen Studien: Festgabe für Karl Heinrich Rengstorf zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. W. Haubeck and M. Bachmann (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 250–67; R. P. Martin, “1 Peter,” in *The Theology of the Letters of James, Peter, and Jude* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 92.

¹⁷ See the criticisms of D. G. Horrell, “The Product of a Petrine Circle? A Reassessment of the Origin and Character of 1 Peter,” *JSNT* 86 (2002): 29–60. Horrell claims that the letter represents a consolidation in Rome of early Christian traditions. See also his updated version: D. G. Horrell, *Becoming Christian: Essays on 1 Peter and the Making of Christian Identity*, LNTS 394 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 7–44.

¹⁸ E.g., J. H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 270–80; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 127–30.

¹⁹ Elliott thinks the significance of the three named people persists even if they are all fictional (*Home for the Homeless*, 279–80). It is difficult, however, to see how this could be the case since now the personal references are loosed from any historical anchor. Hence, we have no reason to think the readers would think of the historical work of these three persons if the reference to them is sundered from history.

²⁰ Cf. K. H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 5–19; C. L. Winbery, “Introduction to the First Letter of Peter,” *SwJT* 25 (1982): 8–14; W. J. Dalton, “‘So That Your Faith May Also Be Your Hope in God’ (1 Peter 1:21),” in *Reconciliation and Hope: New Testament Essays on*

Atonement and Eschatology Presented to L. L. Morris on His Sixtieth Birthday, ed. R. Banks (Exeter: Paternoster, 1974), 262–66; D. F. Watson, *First Peter*, PCNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 3–5.

²¹ R. H. Gundry supports Petrine authorship by arguing that the letter often evinces a dependence on the words of Christ in the gospel tradition, particularly appealing to texts where Peter is a major character in the story (see “‘Verba Christi’ in *1 Peter: Their Implications concerning the Authorship of 1 Peter and the Authenticity of the Gospel Tradition*,” *NTS* 13 [1967]: 336–50; and “Further *Verba* on *Verba Christi* in First Peter,” *Bib* 55 [1974]: 211–32). Gundry’s evidence is severely questioned by E. Best, who argues that in most instances dependence on gospel traditions is not clearly established in 1 Peter (see “1 Peter and the Gospel Tradition,” *NTS* 16 [1970]: 95–113). For a view similar to Gundry’s, see G. Maier, “Jesustradition im 1. Petrusbrief,” in *Gospel Perspectives: The Jesus Tradition outside the Gospels*, vol. 5, ed. D. Wenham (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984), 85–128. In my judgment the evidence warrants a view somewhere between Gundry and Best, for Peter uses gospel traditions more than Best grants but less than Gundry claims. I am not persuaded that the references to gospel traditions are sufficient as a further argument for Petrine authorship.

²² See esp. T. L. Wilder, *Pseudonymity, the New Testament, and Deception: An Inquiry into Intention and Reception* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2004).

²³ See Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.12.3; Tertullian, *Bapt.* 17.

²⁴ Cyril, *Cat.* 4.36.

²⁵ Donelson, *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument*, 11.

²⁶ One of my students, Matt Perman, suggested to me this objection in a discussion on the text.

²⁷ Cf. the comments of D. Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 4th ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1990), 777–79; T. L. Wilder, “Pseudonymity and the New Testament,” in *Interpreting the New Testament: Essays on Methods and Issues*, ed. D. A. Black and D. S. Dockery (Nashville: B&H, 2001), 301.

²⁸ See also the convincing article by D. A. Carson, “Pseudonymity and Pseudepigraphy,” in *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000), 857–64.

²⁹ See n. 21 above.

³⁰ On this point see also Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 765.

³¹ E.g., E. G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 10–11, 27; C. E. B. Cranfield, *I & II Peter and Jude: Introduction and Commentary*, TBC (London: SCM, 1960), 13–16, 18; B. Reicke, *The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude*, AB (Garden City: Doubleday, 1964), 69–71; Torrey Seland, *Strangers in the Light: Philonic Perspectives on Christian Identity in 1 Peter*, BIS 76 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 22–28. Kelly comes close to embracing Petrine authorship but declares himself uncertain. J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude*, Thornapple Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 32–33.

³² For a helpful discussion on the role of the amanuensis, see E. R. Richards, *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul*, WUNT 24/2 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1991); Richards, *Paul and First-Century Letter Writing: Secretaries, Composition and Collection* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004).

³³ J. R. Michaels rightly says, “The assumption that Peter had professional help in the composition of this letter by no means requires that the name of his amanuensis be known” (*1 Peter*, WBC [Waco: Word, 1998], lxii). Similarly, Davids remarks that the “hypothesis does not

depend upon the scribe's being Silvanus" (P. H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990], 6, n. 4). Grudem makes this mistake, arguing that Silvanus is the bearer rather than the scribe of the letter (W. Grudem, *The First Epistle of Peter*, TNTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988], 23–24). He concludes that since Silvanus is not explicitly identified as the scribe, Peter must have written the letter himself. This cannot be proven given the present state of the evidence. The possibility remains that Silvanus or someone else functioned as the scribe. D. B. Wallace makes the same point, arguing that the difference in style between the two letters almost requires an amanuensis; he then suggests that either Silvanus or Luke may have served as such ("First Peter: Introduction, Argument, and Outline," at <https://bible.org/seriespage/21-first-peter-introduction-argument-and-outline>). Wallace's claim that the cultivated Greek almost demands another writer exceeds the evidence since, despite all the claims and counterclaim, we actually do not know for certain the ability Peter had in Greek.

³⁴ Rightly Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 767–68.

³⁵ In this regard see the remarks of F. Neugebauer, "Zur Deutung und Bedeutung des 1. Petrusbriefes," *NTS* 26 (1980): 72.

³⁶ Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 31.

³⁷ M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period* (London: SCM Press, 1974).

³⁸ S. E. Porter, "Greek of the New Testament," *DNTB*, 430–31.

³⁹ J. N. Sevenster, *Do You Know Greek? How Much Greek Could the First Jewish Christians Have Known?*, NovTSup 19 (Leiden: Brill, 1968). For similar arguments see J. M. Fitzmyer, "The Languages of Palestine in the First Century AD," *CBQ* 32 (1970): 507–18. Much of the evidence is from the second to fourth century AD, but it is likely that there was cultural continuity in the use of the language, and hence the later dates are not decisive against the thesis argued for here.

⁴⁰ A. Gerdmar (*Rethinking the Judaism-Hellenism Dichotomy: A Historiographical Case Study of Second Peter and Jude*, ConBNT 36 [Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2001], 265–69) questions Sevenster's arguments. Even if Sevenster exaggerates some of his arguments, it seems that knowledge of Greek was prevalent.

⁴¹ Rightly Dalton, "Your Hope in God," 263; Grudem, *1 Peter*, 26; Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 764.

⁴² Cf. J. W. C. Wand, "The Lessons of First Peter: A Survey of Interpretation," *Int* 9 (1955): 391.

⁴³ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 7.

⁴⁴ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 7. See her detailed argument on 325–38.

⁴⁵ Others have objected that Peter would not have written to Pauline churches, but Guthrie rightly remarks that it is not evident that the churches addressed were established personally by Paul. Furthermore, even if they were planted by Paul (which is doubtful), Peter may have written these churches after Paul's death (see Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 773–74). Furthermore, it is possible that more than one apostle ministered to some of the same churches.

⁴⁶ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 11–13. I am not denying that Peter knew some of the Pauline letters, for that is evident from 2 Pet 3:15–16.

⁴⁷ Elliott remarks that "the theory of a Petrine dependence upon Paul must now be rejected in favor of a common Petrine and Pauline use of a broadly varied (liturgical, parenetic, and catechetical) tradition" ("Rehabilitation of 1 Peter," 247).

48 So Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 775–76.

49 See the survey in Dubis, “Research in 1 Peter,” 209–10.

50 Jobes, *1 Peter*, 14.

51 Rightly Davids, *First Peter*, 9.

52 See the excellent discussion in Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 793–95. Cf. also Elliott, *1 Peter*, 131–34.

53 Michaels follows Ramsey in suggesting a later date for Peter and its possible authenticity (after the Neronian persecution but before the reign of Domitian [*1 Peter*, lxii–lxv]). His arguments for a later date are not compelling (see comments of Davids, *First Peter*, 10, n. 12). He argues that the submissive attitude toward the state does not fit with either the Neronian persecution or the era when Domitian mistreated believers (lxiii). Such an argument is unpersuasive, for it ignores that persecution and mistreatment were always hovering like storm clouds over the church. Such mistreatment did not alter the exhortation to be submissive to governing authorities. Achtemeier rightly says, “Long after severe persecutions had in fact broken out, Christians persisted in expressing their loyalty to the emperor and praying for the continued existence of the Roman state” (*1 Peter*, 46).

54 A. T. Hanson, “Salvation Proclaimed: I. 1 Peter 3.18–22,” *ExpTim* 93 (1982): 101; Beare, *First Peter*, 9–19 (AD 111–12).

55 Kümmel, AD 90–95 (*Introduction to the New Testament*, 425); Elliott, AD 75–92 (“Peter, Silvanus and Mark,” 254; *Home for the Homeless*, 87; cf. Senior, *1 Peter*, 7–8); Elliott now says AD 73–92 (Elliott, *1 Peter*, 134–38); D. L. Balch (*Let Wives Be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter*, SBLMS 26 [Chico: Scholars Press, 1981], 133–34) follows Goppelt (*1 Peter*, 45–47) in narrowing the date to AD 65–80; Achtemeier, AD 80–100 (*1 Peter*, 50); R. Martin, AD 75–85 (“1 Peter,” 94); Donelson, AD 80s or 90s (*I and II Peter and Jude*, 14); Bechtler, AD 75–105 (*Following in His Steps*, 52); Feldmeier, AD 81–90 (*First Peter*, 39–40); D. G. Horrell, AD 75–95 (*The Epistles of Peter and Jude*, EC [Peterborough: Epworth, 1998], 10).

56 Elliott presents ten arguments for a Roman origin, acknowledging that not all of them are equally persuasive (“Peter, Silvanus and Mark,” 253, n. 9).

57 The reference to Babylon in 5:13 is not strong evidence for a post-AD 70 date as Michaels alleges (*1 Peter*, lxiii; rightly Davids, *First Peter*, 11, n. 13). The term was natural for one familiar with the OT. Nor, contra Michaels, does the reference to the congregation in Babylon suggest a different time frame in which there was a unified Christian community instead of house churches. The reference to the church in Babylon tells us nothing about how many congregations there were in Rome, nor does it preclude the existence of a multitude of house churches.

58 Selwyn, AD 63 or early 64 (*First Peter*, 56–63); N. Hillyer dates it in AD 63 before the outbreak of persecution (*1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, NIBC [Peabody: Hendrickson, 1992], 3). Kelly (*Peter and Jude*, 30) and Cranfield (*I & II Peter and Jude*, 17) opt for AD 63 or 64; Guthrie, AD 62–64 (*New Testament Introduction*, 786–88); Wallace, AD 64 (“First Peter: Introduction, Argument, and Outline”); Grudem (*1 Peter*, 37) and Reicke (*The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude*, 71–72) suggest AD 64 before Peter’s death; Watson, AD 64–68 (*First Peter*, 5–6). Subsequent to persecution: J. A. T. Robinson, ca. AD 65 (*Redating the New Testament* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976], 161).

59 So Michaels, *1 Peter*, xlvii; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 63–64. Beare thinks the letter was written from Asia Minor and that the reference to Babylon is part of the pseudonymous dress of the letter (though he agrees that Babylon signifies Rome [*First Peter*, 31], but, according to Achtemeier,

Beare later changed his view [*1 Peter*, 64, n. 657]). In support of Rome, see Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 33–34. Goppelt (*I Peter*, 48) and Feldmeier (*First Peter*, 40–42) see the letter as hailing from Rome, even though they do not accept Petrine authorship.

⁶⁰ P. L. Tite suggests that the letter may not have been genuinely addressed to readers in five different provinces so that the reference to the five locales may be metaphorical (*Compositional Transitions in 1 Peter: An Analysis of the Letter-Opening* [San Francisco: International Scholars Publications, 1997], 30). In my judgment there is no reason to doubt that Peter genuinely addresses readers in the locales named since the metaphorical significance of listing five different locales is not evident.

⁶¹ So Goppelt, *I Peter*, 3–4; Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 60; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 3.

⁶² So F. J. A. Hort, *The First Epistle of St Peter: I.1–II.17* (New York: Macmillan, 1898), 167–84; C. Hemer, “The Address of 1 Peter,” *ExpTim* 89 (1978): 239–43; Grudem, *1 Peter*, 37–38; Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 784; R. Martin, “1 Peter,” 87. Alternatively, Beare suggests that Pontus and Bithynia commence and conclude the list since the persecution was particularly fierce there, and the author was especially concerned about the church in these areas (*First Peter*, 22–24).

⁶³ Seland, *Strangers in the Light*, 28–37.

⁶⁴ See e.g., Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 28–36; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 5–10; Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 80–81; Davids, *First Peter*, 10; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 98–101; Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 24–33; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 8–11; Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, 11–13. W. L. Schutter, however, thinks that legal proceedings are still in view (*Hermeneutic and Composition in 1 Peter*, WUNT 2/30 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989], 14–17).

⁶⁵ For their contribution, see below.

⁶⁶ So Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.44. Cf. Suetonius, *Vit.* 6.16.

⁶⁷ Cf. Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 4.

⁶⁸ See Suetonius, *Vit.* 8.3.2; 10.2–3; 11–12; Tacitus, *Ann.* 6.29; *Agric.* 3.44. For hostility against Christians see Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.18.4–19.1; 4.26.9; 1 Clem. 1:1.

⁶⁹ See Suetonius, *Vit.* 8.13.2.

⁷⁰ Cf. D. Warden, “Imperial Persecution and the Dating of 1 Peter and Revelation,” *JETS* 34 (1991): 203–12; W. C. van Unnik, “The Teaching of Good Works in 1 Peter,” *NTS* 2 (1954): 102; Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, 52–56; Goppelt, *I Peter*, 29; Grudem, *First Peter*, 31.

⁷¹ I am assuming here that Revelation was written during Domitian’s reign, but it is possible that it was written under Nero.

⁷² F. V. Filson says that placing Peter within Trajan’s reign is unlikely since there were some martyrs under Pliny, but there is no evidence of martyrdom in 1 Peter, (“Partakers with Christ: Suffering in First Peter,” *Int* 9 [1955]: 404). The same observation applies to Domitian’s reign, especially if we date Revelation to the period of Domitian’s rule. J. Knox’s attempt to link the charges specifically with Pliny and Trajan’s correspondence must be judged as unsuccessful (“Pliny and 1 Peter: A Note on 1 Pet 4:14–16 and 3:15,” *JBL* 72 [1953]: 187–89). Rightly Elliott, *1 Peter*, 792–93.

⁷³ E.g., Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 2.

⁷⁴ So Filson, “Partakers,” 403.

75 Reicke maintains that Peter wrote the letter to counsel readers against resisting the government so that they would not engage in any activities that would overturn the government (*Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude*, 72–73). Such a reading of 1 Peter is improbable. See the critique by C. F. Sleeper, “Political Responsibility according to I Peter,” *NovT* 10 (1968): 270–86.

76 Horrell, *Becoming Christian*, 183–209. Horrell’s own reconstruction depends on the date he establishes for the letter (AD 75–95), but it seems likely that unofficial complaints leading to official persecution could and did occur in the early 60s as well.

77 T. Williams, *Persecution in 1 Peter*, 179–236.

78 T. Williams, *Persecution in 1 Peter*, 240–58.

79 Horrell, *Becoming Christian*, 183–209; T. Williams, *Persecution in 1 Peter*, 179–297. See also Watson, *First Peter*, 9.

80 See also Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 49. This point confirms that dating the letter in the time of Pliny and Trajan (ca. AD 112–14) is unlikely.

81 T. B. Williams, *Good Works in 1 Peter: Negotiating Social Conflict and Christian Identity in the Greco-Roman World*, WUNT 337 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 235–37.

82 T. Williams, *Persecution in 1 Peter*, 300–316.

83 Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 84–85.

84 Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 6.

85 M. Goodman, *Mission and Conversion: Proselytizing in the Religious History of the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 105.

86 Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 7.

87 E.g., Andreas in *James, 1–2 Peter, 1–3 John, Jude*, ACCS (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000), 66; J. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 25. For current defenses, see A. S. Sykes, “The Function of ‘Peter’ in I Peter,” *ScrB* 27 (1997): 8–21; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 94–97, 721.

88 B. Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians*, vol. II: *A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1–2 Peter* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007), 22–37.

89 So Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 4; Best, *1 Peter*, 19; Davids, *First Peter*, 8–9; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 50–51; Winbery, “Introduction to First Peter,” 6; Michaels, *1 Peter*, xlv–xlvi; Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, 9; Joel B. Green, *1 Peter*, THNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 5–6. Selwyn says the readers were mixed (*First Peter*, 42–44). Bechtler argues the letter addresses Gentiles only (*Following in His Steps*, 61–63). S. McKnight notes that the readers may have been Godfearers (*1 Peter*, NIVAC [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996], 24). Horrell suggests that the readers were mainly Gentiles but there were probably some Jews and perhaps Godfearers as well (*Becoming Christian*, 120–22), and P. T. Egan says Jews are included in the churches addressed (*Ecclesiology and the Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter* [Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2016], 32–34).

90 W. C. van Unnik argues that the readers were former God-fearers and proselytes who converted to the Christian faith (“Christianity according to I Peter,” and “The Redemption in I Peter I.18–19 and the Problem of the First Epistle of Peter,” in *Sparsa Collecta: The Collected Essays of W. C. van Unnik. Part Two: I Peter, Canon, Corpus Hellenisticum, Generalia*, *NovTSup* 30 [Leiden: Brill, 1980], 114–16 and 30–82). It is difficult to believe that all the readers in the various provinces addressed fit the paradigm. Further, clear evidence that Peter addresses Godfearers exclusively is

lacking. Van Unnik relies on arcane and opaque terms to link 1 Peter to proselytes. Kümmel rightly says that identifying the readers as Godfearers “is an arbitrary assumption” (*Introduction to the New Testament*, 418), although we should not exclude the idea that some of the readers were Godfearers. T. Seland argues that the readers were not actually former proselytes but that Peter used metaphors drawn from the social world of proselytes to communicate to his readers (“*πάροικος καὶ παρεπίδημος: Proselyte Characterizations in 1 Peter?*” *BBR* 11 [2001]: 239–68).

⁹¹ Michaels suggests that the letter may reflect Gal 2:7–10, where Peter’s ministry is to preach the gospel to the Jews. Even though the letter was addressed to Gentiles, “its genre is that of a diaspora letter to Israel” (*1 Peter*, xlvii; see also p. xlviii). The theory proposed by Michaels is implausible. We have no evidence that Peter reflects on Gal 2:7–10. It is much more likely that the agreement in Gal 2:7–10 was never intended to ban Peter from participating in the Gentile mission (cf. Wallace, “First Peter: Introduction, Argument, and Outline”). Also, Davids rightly questions “whether the diaspora letter to Israel formed a distinct genre” (*First Peter*, 14). Davids is probably correct, but in defense of seeing the letter as a diaspora letter, see L. Doering, “First Peter as Early Christian Diaspora Letter,” in *The Catholic Epistles and Apostolic Tradition*, ed. K.-W. Niebuhr and R. W. Wall (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009), 215–36; Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 31–32.

⁹² D. A. Carson cautions that the description does not necessarily rule out Jewish readers as well (“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], 1019).

⁹³ Sykes’s claim that the readers were Jewish breaks down in his analysis of 1 Pet 4:3–4. He claims that Peter identifies the behavior of the persecutors, not the former lifestyle of the recipients (“The Function of ‘Peter’ in 1 Peter,” 13). The text, however, indicates that *both* the behavior of the persecutors *and* the former lifestyle of the recipients are in view. Sykes’s view also fails in that he argues that describing the persecutors as Gentile is a rhetorical stratagem (p. 15). The other evidence in the letter, however, indicates that the recipients are Gentiles. Hence, no need exists to pit the rhetorical situation against the actual circumstances addressed.

⁹⁴ So T. Williams, *Persecution in 1 Peter*, 92–93.

⁹⁵ T. Williams, *Persecution in 1 Peter*, 94–95.

⁹⁶ T. Williams, *Persecution in 1 Peter*, 95.

⁹⁷ See also F. Schröger, *Gemeinde im 1. Petrusbrief: Untersuchungen zum Selbstverständnis einer christlichen Gemeinde an der Wende vom 1. zum 2. Jahrhundert* (Katholische Theologie 1: Passau: Passavia Universitätsverlag, 1981). Mbuvi understands exile to be the controlling metaphor in the letter. A. M. Mbuvi, *Temple, Exile and Identity in 1 Peter*, LNTS 345 (London: T&T Clark, 2007), esp. 22–46, but against this see Egan, *Ecclesiology and the Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 12.

⁹⁸ Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 37–49, 129–32; *1 Peter*, 100–102. So also B. L. Campbell, *Honor, Shame, and the Rhetoric of 1 Peter*, SBLDS 160 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 21–22; McKnight, *1 Peter*, 25, 48–51.

⁹⁹ Bechtler argues that Elliott misreads the evidence, conflating the view that *πάροικοι* were both geographically displaced and noncitizens. In the LXX the *πάροικοι* were aliens geographically, but in Hellenistic literature, when used as a technical term, it designated those who were noncitizens. Hence, says Bechtler, many of the *πάροικοι* were natives of their region but were not part of the political process. Still, Bechtler concedes that the issue is difficult since the term is not always used technically (*Following in His Steps*, 70–74).

100 Bechtler points out that Elliott is also faced with a problem in that *παρεπίδημοί* is taken literally by the latter in 2:11 when adjoined with *πάροικοι*, but the term seems to be understood metaphorically in 1:1 (*Following in His Steps*, 75). Now Elliott has taken the improbable step of arguing that the author begins by addressing some of the readers as literal aliens and then “enlarges” the concept so that it also applies metaphorically to all the readers (*1 Peter*, 102). Such a reading is remarkably complex, leading us to question why it is necessary to see a literal referent in the terms at all.

101 So Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 78–81.

102 M. Chin, “A Heavenly Home for the Homeless: Aliens and Strangers in 1 Peter,” *TynBul* 42 (1991): 96–112. For a critique of Elliott, see R. Feldmeier, *Die Christen als Fremde: Die Metapher der Fremde in der antiken Welt, im Urchristentum und im 1. Petrusbrief*, WUNT 64 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), 203–10. Feldmeier remarks that the OT background sits awkwardly with Elliott’s view (see esp. 208). Feldmeier examines the terms *παρεπίδημοί* and *πάροικοι* in Hellenistic and Jewish literature, including its usage in the MT, the LXX, the apocrypha, pseudepigrapha, Qumran, and Philo. He also discusses the term in other NT literature. Feldmeier devotes special attention to *παρεπίδημοί*, arguing that its placement in the prescript and in 2:11 herald its significance. He thinks Peter emphasized the nonentity of the readers in the world in which they lived. We can accept Feldmeier’s conclusion here, although he goes too far in rejecting any notion of a heavenly homeland by contrast, but he ends up saying the same thing conceptually in emphasizing an eschatological inheritance (Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 15). The theme of a future inheritance is fundamental in 1:3–9 and, indeed, in the whole of 1 Peter. Feldmeier rightly says that their foreignness does not designate a negation of the world but stems from their relationship to God (*First Peter*, 14).

103 Horrell, *Becoming Christian*, 117.

104 J. W. Pryor, “First Peter and the New Covenant (II),” *RTR* 45 (1986): 45; cf. also T. W. Martin, *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*, SBLDS 131 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 142.

105 T. Williams, *Persecution in 1 Peter*, 100, n. 22.

106 In his sociological study Bechtler argues that the fundamental issue in the letter is the issue of honor that faced the readers in their daily lives (*Following in His Steps*, 20; cf. also p. 103). “The essential problem, I shall argue, is that, in a society preoccupied with accumulation and loss of honor, the honor of the Petrine addressees is constantly at risk in their interactions with outsiders—interactions whose effects on the intended readers are characterized by the letter as ‘suffering’” (p. 39). I am not convinced that honor is the essential issue, but it certainly plays an important role.

107 Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 75–77. The same point is made regarding Peter’s use of the term *ἐκλεκτοί*. Originally it referred to Jews who were chosen by God, but Peter now appropriates the term and uses it to refer to believing Gentiles (pp. 77–78). See also T. Williams, *Persecution in 1 Peter*, 100–101.

108 Achtemeier rightly argues that the evidence does not permit us to identify the readers with any particular social class, particularly the poor. Rather, the evidence we have indicates that the readers come from a broad and diverse social background (*1 Peter*, 55–57).

109 T. Williams, *Persecution in 1 Peter*, 102.

110 See T. Williams, *Persecution in 1 Peter*, 102–3. Contrary to Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, 9.

111 See Jobes, *1 Peter*, 24–41. So also D. A. Carson, “1 Peter,” 1015–16.

112 The arguments here come from Horrell, *Becoming Christian*, 115–16.

113 So Horrell, *Becoming Christian*, 118–20; T. Williams, *Persecution in 1 Peter*, 67–74.

114 See T. Williams, *Persecution in 1 Peter*, 27, n. 62.

115 Horrell, *Becoming Christian*, 123.

116 Horrell, *Becoming Christian*, 100–32. See also the careful study of T. Williams, *Persecution in 1 Peter*, 104–27, although I would dissent from his view that the elders necessarily designate those with wealth.

117 D. L. Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter*, SBLMS 26 (Chico: Scholars Press, 1981).

118 J. H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981). Balch and Elliott engage in a dialogue with each other in a volume titled *Perspectives on 1 Peter*; see J. H. Elliott, “1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy: A Discussion with David Balch,” *Perspectives on 1 Peter* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1986), 61–78; D. L. Balch, “Hellenization/Acculturation in 1 Peter,” Elliott, 79–101. C. H. Talbert splits the difference, seeing some truth in the view of both Elliott and Balch (“Once Again: The Plan of 1 Peter,” *Perspective on 1 Peter*, 146–48). Elliott continues to maintain that there is no indication in the letter of assimilation to secular values, whereas Balch persists in seeing such a theme. P. Achtemeier sides with Elliott, although he rejects Elliott’s view that the readers are political exiles (“Newborn Babies and Living Stones: Literal and Figurative in 1 Peter,” in *To Touch the Text: Biblical and Related Studies: J. A. Fitzmyer Festschrift*, ed. M. P. Horgan and P. J. Kobelsk [New York: Crossroad, 1988], 218–22). B. L. Campbell suggests that the term “cultural adaptation” is preferable to “cultural assimilation” or “acculturation” (*Honor, Shame, and the Rhetoric of 1 Peter*, SBLDS 160 [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998], 126, n. 91). T. Williams (*Good Works in 1 Peter*, 18–19) points out that acculturation has to do with the interaction of *two different cultures*, but the recipients in 1 Peter were *from the same culture as those who disbelieved*. P. A. Holloway, using social psychology, argues that the author consoles the readers through disidentification (1:13–2:10), behavior compensation (2:11–3:12), and attributional ambiguity (3:13–4:11) (*Coping with Prejudice: 1 Peter in Social-Psychological Perspective*, WUNT 244 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009]). In other words, Holloway maintains that the Balch-Elliott debate is not an either-or since more than one coping strategy for prejudice is used.

119 J. W. Pryor, “First Peter and the New Covenant (II),” *RTR* 45 (1986): 47.

120 Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 104, n. 196. Bechtler asserts that the author of 1 Peter argues that believers are “neither fully within society nor completely removed from it” (p. 118).

121 Horrell, *Becoming Christian*, 211–38; T. Williams, *Good Works in 1 Peter*.

122 T. W. Martin, *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*, 3–39. See also the summary by Martin’s student P. L. Tite, who argues that Martin’s work is the best to date (*Compositional Transitions in 1 Peter*, 3–18). See Tite’s adjustments on pp. 91–94. J. R. Slaughter laments that not enough work has been done on the structure of 1 Peter (“The Importance of Literary Argument for Understanding 1 Peter,” *BSac* 152 [1995]: 72). Further work has been done since Slaughter wrote,

although he himself does not set forth a detailed defense for his understanding of the letter (pp. 72–91).

123 J. de Waal Dryden, *Theology and Ethics in 1 Peter: Paraenetic Strategies for Christian Character Formation*, WUNT 2/209 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 5–8, 15–53, and passim.

124 M.-E. Boismard, *Quatre hymnes baptismales dans la première Épître de Pierre*, LD 30 (Paris: Cerf, 1961).

125 Rightly T. W. Martin, *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*, 83; Davids, *First Peter*, 12; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 32.

126 Selwyn, *First Peter*, 365–466.

127 E. Lohse, “Parenesis and Kerygma in 1 Peter,” in *Perspectives on 1 Peter* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1986), 41.

128 Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 4; so also Elliott, *1 Peter*, 29.

129 W. Bornemann sees a baptismal sermon in the letter and identifies Ps 34 as the text for the homily (“Der erste Petrusbrief—eine Taufrede des Silvanus?” *ZNW* 19 [1919]: 143–65). O. S. Brooks identifies the letter as a baptismal sermon in which converts are given instructions on how to live the Christian life (“1 Peter 3:21—the Clue to the Literary Structure of the Epistle,” *NovT* 16 [1974]: 290–305).

130 H. Windisch, *Die katholischen Briefe*, HNT (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1951), 156–62; cf. Jobes, *1 Peter*, 54.

131 F. L. Cross, *1 Peter: A Paschal Liturgy* (London: Mowbray, 1954). For a devastating and compelling critique of Cross, see T. C. G. Thornton, “1 Peter, a Paschal Liturgy?” *JTS* 12 (1961): 14–26. Cf. also R. P. Martin, “The Composition of 1 Peter in Recent Study,” *VE* 1 (1962): 36–40. T. W. Martin trenchantly remarks: “Indeed, constructing fanciful historical scenarios is a favorite method of these analytical traditions, but this method is unsatisfactory because of the subjective nature of the scenario. It is best to deal seriously with the text and avoid these fanciful reconstructions” (*Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*, 33). Martin labels the views of Preisker and Cross as “sheer fantasy” (p. 36).

132 So D. Hill, “On Suffering and Baptism in 1 Peter,” *NovT* 18 (1976): 186. He also rightly remarks that “the baptismal theme [is] quite subsidiary, almost incidental, to the main purpose and meaning of 1 Peter” (p. 185). He goes on to say: “The baptismal tone of the letter is due, not to its being substantially a baptismal homily, or the liturgy of a just-completed rite, but to the fact that a Christian’s baptism is the point of transition from an ancient, inherited system of religious practice (1:18) to a new faith and a consequent way of life that is marked by a totally new moral attitude and bearing.” Cf. also his comments on p. 189. See also Lohse, “Parenesis and Kerygma in 1 Peter,” 39–40.

133 See C. F. D. Moule, “The Nature and Purpose of 1 Peter,” *NTS* 3 (1956–57): 1–11. Even Moule, in my judgment, is too prone to see allusions to baptism in the letter.

134 E.g., Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 15–20; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 15–18; Michaels, *1 Peter*, xxxix; Davids, *First Peter*, 12; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 58–62.

135 E.g. Windisch-Preisker, *Die katholischen Briefe*, 76–77; Cranfield, *I & II Peter and Jude*, 11–13; Beare, *First Peter*, 6–9. For the history of interpretation on this matter, see T. Williams, *Persecution in 1 Peter*, 339–49.

136 Moule argues that the letter was sent to different communities, one that was actually suffering and another that faced potential suffering so that the letter was composed of two different parts originally, with 1:1–4:11 and 5:12–14 to the former group and 1:1–2:10 and 5:12–14 to the latter (“Purpose of I Peter,” 7). He thinks the letter was later unified. J. W. C. Wand suggests that 4:12–5:11 may have been written when fresh news of impending persecution reached Peter (*The General Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, WC [London: Methuen, 1934], 3). The structure of the letter, however, suggests a more unified composition and intention from the beginning.

137 K. Shimada carefully compares the style of the alleged composite documents, concluding that there are no stylistic grounds for partition (“Is I Peter a Composite Writing? A Stylistic Approach to the Two-Document Hypothesis,” *AJBI* 11 [1985]: 95–114).

138 For arguments against partition and a careful analysis and outline of the letter’s contents, see W. J. Dalton, *Christ’s Proclamation to the Spirits: A Study of 1 Peter 3:18–4:6*, AnBib 23 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1965), 72–86.

139 Rightly Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 35–38; Winbery, “Introduction to First Peter,” 7; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 53–54; Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 29–30.

140 Schutter, *Hermeneutic and Composition in I Peter*, 85–100.

141 In support of the notion that we have apocalyptic discourse in 1 Peter, see R. L. Webb, “Intertexture and Rhetorical Strategy in First Peter’s Apocalyptic Discourse: A Study in Sociorhetorical Interpretation,” in *Reading First Peter with New Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of First Peter*, ed. R. L. Webb and B. Bauman-Martin, LNTS 364 (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 72–110.

142 See, e.g., the discussion in Egan, *Ecclesiology and the Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 24–25.

143 T. W. Martin, *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*, 68–134, 144–60. See also his essay, “The Rehabilitation of a Rhetorical Step-Child: First Peter and Classical Rhetorical Criticism,” in *Reading First Peter with New Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of First Peter*, ed. R. L. Webb and B. Bauman-Martin, LNTS 364 (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 41–71.

144 For an insightful review of Martin’s work, see J. R. Michaels, *JBL* 112 (1993): 358–60.

145 Jobes, *1 Peter*, 55. J. Green says that the controlling metaphor is not the diaspora but life in Christ (“Living as Exiles: The Church in the Diaspora in 1 Peter,” in *Holiness and Ecclesiology in the New Testament*, ed. K. E. Brower and A. Johnson [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007], 316–17).

146 Campbell, *Honor, Shame, and the Rhetoric of 1 Peter*, 26.

147 Cf. D. G. Horrell, *1 Peter*, New Testament Guides (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 18.

148 See, e.g., S. E. Porter, “Saul of Tarsus and His Letters,” in *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period, 330 B.C.–A.D. 400*, ed. S. E. Porter (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 562–67; D. Stamps, “Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation,” in *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference*, ed. S. E. Porter and T. H. Olbricht (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1993), 193–210; J. A. D. Weima, “What Does Aristotle Have to Do with Paul? An Evaluation of Rhetorical Criticism,” *CTJ* 32 (1997): 458–68.

149 Wallace argues that Peter wrote the letter after Paul’s death. The fact that Paul’s sometime opponent, Peter, wrote the letter would encourage the readers, assuring them that Paul’s gospel was truly legitimate (“First Peter: Introduction, Argument, and Outline”). The suggestion is stimulating, but evidence is lacking to support this specific reconstruction. Nothing

is said about Paul's death, nor is there any indication that Peter wrote to reassure the readers of the legitimacy of the Pauline gospel.

¹⁵⁰ P. J. Achtemeier, "Newborn Babies and Living Stones," 235. Achtemeier argues that the controlling metaphor in the letter is the new people of God (pp. 222–31). The theme is important, but it is difficult to see one controlling metaphor in the epistle.

¹⁵¹ See here the insightful study of Holloway, *Coping with Prejudice*. Holloway explores the nature of prejudice and the strategies in 1 Peter to cope with and counter such prejudice.

¹⁵² For a discourse analysis of the letter, see H. J. B. Combrink, "The Structure of 1 Peter," *Neot* 9 (1975): 34–63. Combrink's analysis is suggestive and insightful at many points. It seems unlikely, however, that the third and fourth sections of the letter comprise 3:13–4:19 and 5:1–11 respectively. Both the content and the marker ἀγαπητοί suggest a new section begins in 4:12. Nor is the presence of οὖν sufficient to indicate the beginning of a new section in 5:1.

¹⁵³ J. J. J. van Rensburg analyzes the letter as follows: 1:1–2 functions as the heading. The letter opening is comprised of 1:3–12. The letter body is composed of four inferences drawn from 1:3–12. The four subsections are 1:13–25; 2:1–10; 2:11–4:19; 5:1–11; and 5:12–14 is the conclusion (see "The Use of Intersentence Relational Particles and Asyndeton in 1 Peter," *Neot* 24 [1990]: 298).

¹⁵⁴ J. W. Thompson identifies 1 Peter as a "persuasive sermon" ("The Rhetoric of 1 Peter," *ResQ* 36 [1994]: 237–50). Certainly, the letter aims to persuade, but it is less clear that it is homiletical, although it is certainly paraenetic.

¹⁵⁵ For an understanding of the structure the letter that is similar to mine, see L. Thurén, *The Rhetorical Strategy of 1 Peter with Special Regard to Ambiguous Expressions* (Åbo: Åbo Academy Press, 1990), 92. Thurén identifies the letter as epideictic (pp. 73, 96–98), but it is unclear that such an identification is demonstrable. Thurén maintains that Peter addresses two different types of implied audiences in his letter—both those who were tempted to assimilate with the secular society ("passive response") and those who were tempted to remove themselves from that society ("active response"). Thurén believes that the dual audience explains the ambiguous participles in the letter, concluding that the participles were intended as indicatives for some of the readers and imperatives for others. In a later work he expands his database to include all of 1 Peter, but he has not changed his view of the letter (see *Argument and Theology in 1 Peter: The Origins of Christian Paraenesis*, LNTS 114 [Sheffield: Academic Press, 1995]). Thurén's thesis is a creative attempt to bridge the debate between Elliott and Balch. Unfortunately, the theory hangs on a mirror reading that cannot be sustained from 1 Peter. We have no clear evidence that two different types of audiences are addressed. Tite rightly criticizes Thurén for basing his view on a speculative and unsubstantiated reading of the background (*Compositional Transitions in 1 Peter*, pp. 22–23, n. 41; cf. also Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 116). Tite also criticizes Thurén for relying on modern rhetorical theory instead of ancient rhetorical theory, arguing that the latter should base his study on a careful rhetorical analysis of the entire text that comports with the rhetorical schema of ancient texts. For similar criticisms of Thurén, see Campbell, *Honor, Shame, and the Rhetoric of 1 Peter*, 23–24. Snyder argues that disagreement among scholars about whether participles are imperatives does not substantiate the view that they are ambiguous ("Participles and Imperatives in 1 Peter," 189, n. 10). Thurén's rhetorical analysis and his study of modern rhetoric and argumentation are helpful in understanding the argument of 1 Peter, even though his work contains flaws that weaken his overall thesis. See his discussion on pp. 61–85.

¹⁵⁶ D. W. Kendall, "The Literary and Theological Function of 1 Peter 1:3–12," in *Perspectives on 1 Peter* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1986), 103–20; so also van Rensburg, "The Use of

Intersentence Relational Particles and Asyndeton in 1 Peter,” 294–96.

157 Kendall, “The Literary and Theological Function of 1 Peter 1:3–12,” 115.

158 C. H. Talbert, “Once Again: The Plan of 1 Peter,” in *Perspectives on 1 Peter* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1986), 141–51.

159 Talbert, “The Plan of 1 Peter,” 142–43.

160 W. Grudem, *The First Epistle of Peter*, TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 47.

161 M. Dubis, *1 Peter: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, BHGNT (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2010), 2.

162 P. J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter*, Her (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 81; K. H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 67, 75; M. Williams, *The Doctrine of Salvation in the First Letter of Peter*, SNTSMS 149 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 47, G. W. Forbes, *1 Peter*, EGGNT (Nashville: B&H, 2014), 12.

163 Rightly T. Lea, “1 Peter—Outline and Exposition,” *SwJT* 25 (1982): 20.

164 J. W. Pryor suggests that exodus theology informs all of 1 Peter in that his readers who experienced deliverance through Christ as the Passover Lamb (1:18–19) are now facing trials as sojourners in the wilderness, awaiting their inheritance in the land of promise (“First Peter and the New Covenant (II),” *RTR* 45 [1986]: 46).

165 R. Feldmeier, *The First Letter of Peter: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, trans. P. H. Davids (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2008), 53.

166 See Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 82.

167 L. Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 64, 66. See his detailed discussion, including the self-perception of the Qumran community (pp. 68–70). S. R. Bechtler confirms that the readers are exiles because they are chosen by God (*Following in His Steps: Suffering, Community, and Christology in 1 Peter*, SBLDS 162 [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998], 137).

168 J. R. Michaels, *1 Peter*, WBC (Waco: Word, 1998), 7–8. Against Jobes (*1 Peter*, 62), who thinks being a foreigner relates exclusively to their relationship with unbelievers.

169 J. H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 122–23, 127. B. Bauman-Martin, using postcolonial theory, argues that 1 Peter is supersessionist in relation to Israel (appropriating Jewish identity) and conceives of the marginalizing of the church as a sign of status and thus superiority (“Speaking Jewish: Postcolonial Aliens and Strangers in First Peter,” in *Reading First Peter with New Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of First Peter*, ed. R. L. Webb and B. Bauman-Martin, LNTS 364 [London: T&T Clark, 2007], 143–77). Bauman-Martin thinks that appropriating the language of Israel sets a “dangerous precedent” (p. 163) and ends up being imperialistic. She says 1 Peter would not be colonial if it did not claim to be totalizing and recognized that ethnic Israel also belonged to the people of God. Bauman’s claim that Israel “no longer exists” in 1 Peter (p. 175) is questionable since the purpose of the letter is not to detail the relation of church to Israel. Presumably we do not have a comprehensive theology in the letter, and we have to be careful about drawing conclusions where 1 Peter is silent. On the other hand, Bauman-Martin rightly sees that the church is conceived of as the new Israel and as the true people of God over against Jews and Gentiles who do not believe. We see here that there is ultimately no neutral standpoint in reading the biblical text. Bauman-Martin privileges her own postcolonial and inclusive reading

over what Peter teaches, presumably because she thinks it is more just and loving than what we find in 1 Peter. In doing so, her own metanarrative—using postcolonial theory—becomes the basis for assessing 1 Peter, but whether her own worldview is on target is disputable. For those who think 1 Peter represents the Word of God, which is authoritative and true, Bauman-Martin’s reading will fail to persuade. In any case, human beings have to make choices about which perspectives are privileged.

170 J. Green, “Living as Exiles: The Church in the Diaspora in 1 Peter,” in *Holiness and Ecclesiology in the New Testament*, ed. K. E. Brower and A. Johnson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 317.

171 For further discussion of election in 1 Peter, see A. P. Joseph, *A Narratological Reading of 1 Peter*, LNTS 440 (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 69–93.

172 T. Seland argues that the terms “exiles” and “strangers” are metaphorical and that the readers are described as if they were former proselytes. See “*παροίκος καὶ παρεπιδήμιος*: Proselyte Characterizations in 1 Peter?,” *BBR* 11 (2001): 239–68. But Seland does not clearly establish that the terms “exiles” and “strangers” are intended to refer to proselytes. He shows that this may be the case, but this is different from establishing his thesis. Indeed, the connections are too loose and tenuous to buttress his interpretation since Peter does not clearly refer to proselytes anywhere in the letter. See also Jobes, who says that Seland relies too heavily on Philo (*1 Peter*, 65).

173 S. T. J. Smith rightly points out that being dispersed in the NT does not designate a punishment for sin as it did in the OT (*Strangers to Family: Diaspora and 1 Peter’s Invention of God’s Household* [Waco: Baylor University Press, 2016], 20–26).

174 Some think the dispersion is the central metaphor in the letter. See T. W. Martin, *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter* (SBLDS; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992); S. T. J. Smith, *Strangers to Family: Diaspora and 1 Peter’s Invention of God’s Household* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2016). K. D. Liebengood mistakenly thinks dispersion does not describe the present state of the readers (*Eschatology in 1 Peter: Considering the Influence of Zechariah 9–14*, SNTSMS 157 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012], 156–60). It is doubtful, however, that dispersion is the central metaphor in the letter.

175 So Michaels, *1 Peter*, 4; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 85.

176 J. H. Elliott believes that the reference is to provinces (*1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB [New York: Doubleday, 2000], 84). His view that the letters are addressed particularly to rural communities cannot be demonstrated (p. 90).

177 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 85.

178 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 85.

179 F. J. A. Hort, *The First Epistle of St Peter: I.1–II.17* (New York: Macmillan, 1898), 167–84; C. Hemer, “The Address of 1 Peter,” *ExpTim* 89 (1978): 239–43; cf. also Michaels, *1 Peter*, 9; P. H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 47; J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude*, Thornapple Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 42; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 91.

180 D. Sylva, “1 Peter Studies: The State of the Discipline,” *BTB* 10 (1980): 159.

181 C. Hemer remarks about returning to Bithynia, “There on the Bosphorus he could best intercept shipping returning direct to Rome before autumn closed the Black Sea” (“The Address of

1 Peter,” *ExpTim* 89 [1978]: 241).

182 Jobes, *1 Peter*, 66.

183 Hort, *The First Epistle of St Peter*, 18–19; E. G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 119; F. W. Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter: The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1947), 49–50; Grudem, *1 Peter*, 50.

184 So N. Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, EKKNT, 2nd ed. (Zürich: Benziger/Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1986), 57; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 70; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 7; S. McKnight, *1 Peter*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 53; Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 3; Forbes, *1 Peter*, 12. K. H. Schelke says it modifies *ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις* (*Der Petrusbriefe—Der Judasbrief*, HTKNT [Freiburg: Herder, 1980], 20).

185 This view has an ancient pedigree; see Origen in *James, 1–2 Peter, 1–3 John, Jude*, ACCS (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000), 69.

186 For an extended defense of the view propounded here, see S. M. Baugh, “The Meaning of Foreknowledge,” in *Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives on Election, Foreknowledge, and Grace*, ed. T. R. Schreiner and B. A. Ware (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 183–200. So also Michaels, *1 Peter*, 10–11; M. Williams, *The Doctrine of Salvation in the First Letter of Peter*, 52–54; cf. Hort, *The First Epistle of St Peter*, 19–20; D. F. Watson, *First Peter*, PCNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 21; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 68. For an exposition on the new covenant in 1 Peter, see J. W. Pryor, “First Peter and the New Covenant (I),” *RefTR* 45 (1986): 1–4; Pryor, “First Peter and the New Covenant (II),” *RefTR* 45 (1986): 44–50.

187 See especially the insightful discussion in Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 73, n. 46; cf. also Lea, “1 Peter—Outline and Exposition,” 20; Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 55–57. Goppelt draws our attention to the important parallels in CD 2:7 and 1QH 9:26–36. In Acts 26:5 and 2 Pet 3:17 the term “foreknow” means “know in advance.” These two verses are distinct from the texts examined here since they refer to human foreknowledge instead of divine foreknowledge.

188 Rightly C. Spicq, *Les Épîtres de Saint Pierre*, SB (Paris: Gabalda, 1966), 69.

189 Rightly Schelke, *Der Petrusbriefe—Der Judasbrief*, 20.

190 Michaels wrongly restricts election to present status and future vindication, excluding past election (*1 Peter*, 7). The connection of “elect” with “foreknowledge” demonstrates that the past also is involved. Elliott missteps by emphasizing voluntary choice so that a synergism between foreknowledge and human choice is communicated (*1 Peter*, 318).

191 See L. Thurén, *Argument and Theology in 1 Peter: The Origins of Christian Paraenesis*, JSNTSup 114 (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1995), 92.

192 B. Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians*, vol. II: *A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1–2 Peter* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007), 68–69.

193 The dative is instrumental (so Jobes, *1 Peter*, 69; Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 3; Forbes, *1 Peter*, 13), but J. B. Green takes it as locative or sphere (*1 Peter*, THNTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007], 19–20).

194 The word “Spirit” is a subjective genitive (Selwyn, *First Peter*, 119; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 11; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 73; Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 58). Even though Peter refers to conversion here, Goppelt wrongly focuses on baptism (*1 Peter*, 74). Baptism is part of the conversion process, of course, but there is no evidence that it was specially in Peter’s mind.

195 Jobes, *1 Peter*, 70.

- 196 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 11.
- 197 So F. H. Agnew, “1 Peter 1:2—an Alternative,” *CBQ* 45 (1983): 68–73; E. J. Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter: A Literary and Theological Commentary*, RNT (Macon: Smith & Helwys, 2000), 32; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 319; J. Green, *1 Peter*, 20; D. Harink, *1 & 2 Peter*, BTCB (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 41–42.
- 198 See especially S. H. T. Page, “Obedience and Blood-Sprinkling in 1 Peter 1:2,” *WTJ* 72 (2010): 291–98. Cf. Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 59, n. 46.
- 199 See also Page, “Obedience and Blood-Sprinkling in 1 Peter 1:2,” 294.
- 200 Page, “Obedience and Blood-Sprinkling in 1 Peter 1:2,” 293–94.
- 201 Page, “Obedience and Blood-Sprinkling in 1 Peter 1:2,” 294–95. Cf. Forbes, *1 Peter*, 13.
- 202 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 87.
- 203 Grudem, *1 Peter*, 52.
- 204 For this view see esp. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 11–12. See also M. Williams, *The Doctrine of Salvation in the First Letter of Peter*, 58–59.
- 205 See the commentary on that verse.
- 206 Grudem, *1 Peter*, 52–54.
- 207 Grudem, *1 Peter*, 52–54.
- 208 For views similar to my own, see Michaels, *1 Peter*, 12–13; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 86–88.
- 209 See Page, “Obedience and Blood-Sprinkling in 1 Peter 1:2,” 296–97. Michaels also draws attention to the sprinkling of the ashes of the red heifer in Numbers 19 (*1 Peter*, 12). It seems unlikely, though, that this is the most natural background since Exod 24:3–8 relates more directly to the inception of new life, to the inauguration of God’s covenant with Israel.
- 210 So Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 89.
- 211 So Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 71–72, 74–75.
- 212 Also J. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 38.
- 213 Some scholars posit a hymn in vv. 3–12 (H. Windisch, *Die katholischen Briefe*, HNT [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1951], 52; D. Hill, “‘To Offer Spiritual Sacrifices . . .’ [1 Peter 2:5]: Liturgical Formulations and Christian Paraenesis in 1 Peter,” *JSNT* 16 [1982]: 45–63), but the hymnic nature of the text has not been established (rightly L. Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993], 79).
- 214 E.g., Gen 14:20; 24:27; Exod 18:10; Josh 22:33; 1 Sam 25:32; 2 Sam 18:28; 22:47; 1 Kgs 1:48; 5:7; 1 Chr 16:36; Ezra 7:27; Neh 9:5; Pss 28:6; 31:21; 41:13; 72:18–19; Dan 2:20.
- 215 P. J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter*, Her (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 94.
- 216 The focus is not on baptism but conversion (against Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 84; N. Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, EKKNT, 2nd ed. [Zürich: Benziger/Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1986], 61; rightly W. J. Dalton, “‘So That Your Faith May Also Be Your Hope in God’ (1 Peter 1:21),” in *Reconciliation and Hope: New Testament Essays on Atonement and Eschatology Presented to L. L. Morris on His Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. R. Banks (Exeter: Paternoster, 1974), 266).

217 Goppelt rightly says, “Even in anthropological perspective, the basis for being a Christian is not a decision or the appropriation of a commandment, but a second birth established in God’s mercy, the manifestation of a new being” (*I Peter*, 81). See also his discussion of parallels in the history of religion (pp. 81–83). Cf. also the comments of K. H. Schelke, *Der Petrusbriefe—Der Judasbrief*, HTKNT (Freiburg: Herder, 1980), 27; M. Williams, *The Doctrine of Salvation in the First Letter of Peter*, SNTSSM 149 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 128–35; B. Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians*, vol. II: *A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1–2 Peter* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007), 79.

218 R. H. Gundry argues that Peter reflects dependence on John 3:3, 7 here and in 1 Pet 1:23; 2:2; see “*Verba Christi*” in *I Peter: Their Implications concerning the Authorship of I Peter and the Authenticity of the Gospel Tradition*, *NTS* 13 (1967): 338–39; “Further *Verba* on *Verba Christi* in First Peter,” *Bib* 55 (1974): 218–19. Contra Gundry, see E. Best, “1 Peter and the Gospel Tradition,” *NTS* 16 (1970): 98. Perhaps we have an allusion to John 3, but it is difficult to be certain.

219 So BDAG, 512–13.

220 See M. Dubis, *1 Peter: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, BHGNT (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2010), 6.

221 Hope, then, is the consequence of God’s begetting and not its cause (rightly J. Piper, “Hope as the Motivation of Love: I Peter 3:9–12,” *NTS* 26 [1980]: 215).

222 Cf. J. R. Michaels, *1 Peter*, WBC (Waco: Word, 1998), 23; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 95. So also M. Luther, *Commentary on Peter & Jude* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1990), 31.

223 In his essay on eschatology in 1 Peter, E. G. Selwyn demonstrates that the tension between the already and not yet is maintained in the letter, even though he does not use this terminology. He emphasizes that the future hope is grounded in the inauguration of the end, an end that believers already participate in by virtue of the death and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah (“Eschatology in I Peter,” in *The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology in Honour of Charles Harold Dodd* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956], 394–401). For agreement with Selwyn’s view see P. L. Tite, *Compositional Transitions in 1 Peter: An Analysis of the Letter-Opening* (San Francisco: International Scholars Publications, 1997), 77. Contra D. C. Parker, who overemphasizes realized eschatology in the letter (“The Eschatology of 1 Peter,” *BTB* 24 [1994]: 27–32).

224 E.g., D. E. Hiebert, “Peter’s Thanksgiving for Our Salvation,” *Studia Missionalia* 29 (1980): 19; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 19; Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 7.

225 See here M. Williams, *The Doctrine of Salvation in the First Letter of Peter*, 154; cf. Watson, *First Peter*, 24.

226 So also Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 95, n. 27.

227 Josh 11:23; 13:6, 7, 8, 14, 15, 23, 24, 28, 29, 33; 14:2, 3, 9, 13, 14; 15:20; 16:4, 5, 8, 9; 17:4, 6, 14; 18:2, 7, 20, 28; 19:1, 2, 8, 9, 10, 16, 23, 31, 39, 41, 48, 49; 21:3; 23:4; 24:30, 32.

228 See J. H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 336; R. Feldmeier, *The First Letter of Peter: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, trans. P. H. Davids (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2008), 71.

229 W. Grudem, *The First Epistle of Peter*, TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 57.

230 Imperishability for human beings means that the sphere of the divine has impacted human beings. See the discussion in Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 72–76.

231 For a study of suffering in 1 Peter that includes how believers are to respond to it, see A. P. Joseph, *A Narratological Reading of 1 Peter*, LNTS 440 (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 94–147.

232 Contra M. C. Tenney, it cannot be established that Peter recalls here his own preservation after his denial of Christ (“Some Possible Parallels between 1 Peter and John,” in *New Dimensions in New Testament Study* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974], 372–73).

233 Rightly C. Bigg, *The Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1901), 102; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 23; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 97.

234 Contra Parker, “Eschatology of 1 Peter,” 28. Rightly M. Williams, *The Doctrine of Salvation in the First Letter of Peter*, 160–62.

235 The revelation at the last time suggests that the eschaton envisioned here is wholly future. Against J. de Waal Dryden, *Theology and Ethics in 1 Peter: Paraenetic Strategies for Christian Character Formation*, WUNT 2/209 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 73–75.

236 Contra Brox, the participle here is passive and not middle (*Der erste Petrusbrief*, 63).

237 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 23.

238 D. Horrell points out that it is possible that the reference here is to God’s faithfulness, although he concludes (rightly in my view) that a reference to the faith of believers is more likely in context (cf. 1:7–9; see “Whose Faith[fulness] Is It in 1 Peter 1:5?,” *JTS* 48 [1997]: 110–15). J. B. Green argues that the reference is to God’s faithfulness (*1 Peter*, THNTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007], 21). Against this, see Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 8.

239 My discussion here comes from T. R. Schreiner and A. B. Caneday, *The Race Set before Us: A Biblical Theology of Perseverance and Assurance* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001), 246–47.

240 A further theological observation could be made, which I owe to a paper written by M. Perman in a class I taught on 1 Peter. Perman says the following in his exegesis of v. 5: “It must be admitted that God knows which external circumstances would lead any particular believer to apostatize. Consequently, even if the ‘guarding’ simply means that God protects us from attack, would not that necessarily imply that he will never allow to be actualized any circumstances or attacks in our lives that would lead to our apostasy?” Nevertheless, Perman agrees that the text says more than this, that Peter teaches that God is the one who sustains our faith.

241 Best, *1 Peter*, 77.

242 Against F. J. A. Hort’s claim that “faith is the human condition which brings the Divine strengthening into operation” (*The First Epistle of St Peter: I.1–II.17* [New York: Macmillan, 1898], 38). Such a view sees human faith rather than God’s preservation as ultimate.

243 Contra Hort, *The First Epistle of St Peter*, 40.

244 So Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 9–10. He understands, however, the last time to include the content of all of vv. 3–5, and thus his interpretation, at the end of the day, does not differ from what is offered here.

245 C. F. D. Moule, “The Nature and Purpose of I Peter,” *NTS* 3 (1956–57): 131–32; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 338–39; du Toit suggests “herein” (“1 Peter 1:3–13,” 68); Senior, *1 Peter*, 32. So already Calvin, *Catholic Epistles*, 31.

246 B. Reicke, *The Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism: A Study of 1 Pet. III.19 and Its Context*, ASNU 13 (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1946), 111; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 100; Grudem, *1*

Peter, 60; P. R. Fink, "The Use and Significance of *en hō* in I Peter," *GTJ* 8 (1967): 34; Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 63.

247 So Jobes, *1 Peter*, 92.

248 So Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 88–89; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 27–28; Horrell, *The Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 25; G. W. Forbes, *1 Peter*, EGGNT (Nashville: B&H, 2014), 23; T. W. Martin, "The Present Indicative in the Eschatological Statements of 1 Peter 1:6, 8," *JBL* 111 (1992): 307–14. Martin defends this view by stating that the time of the aorist participle *λυπηθέντας* must precede the time of the main verb (*Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*, 62–63). It is incorrect, however, to argue that the aorist participle is necessarily antecedent temporally to the main verb. In this instance the participle and verb should be construed as contemporaneous. Martin also argues that from the perspective of ancient authors that one cannot experience both joy and sorrow at the same time, and thus the verb must denote the future. See T. W. Martin, "Emotional Physiology and Consolatory Etiquette: Reading the Present Indicative with Future Reference in the Eschatological Statement in 1 Peter 1:6," *JBL* 135 (2016): 649–60. Paul's words in 2 Cor 6:10 ("as grieving, yet always rejoicing"), contra Martin, demonstrate that this claim is off-center. On the mixture of joy and grief, see also P. A. Holloway, *Coping with Prejudice: 1 Peter in Social-Psychological Perspective*, WUNT 244 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 148–49.

249 Rightly Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 10. Elliott observes that 4:13 also favors a reference to the present (*1 Peter*, 339). Contra A. B. du Toit, who takes the verb as an imperative ("The Significance of Discourse Analysis for New Testament Interpretation and Translation: Introductory Remarks with Special Reference to 1 Peter 1:3–13," *Neot* 8 [1974]: 70–71). Agreeing with du Toit is E. J. Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter: A Literary and Theological Commentary*, RNT [Macon: Smith & Helwys, 2000], 45–46). The verb *ἀγαπᾶτε* is also most likely construed as indicative rather than imperative. T. W. Martin rightly observes that imperatives do not commence until 1:13 ("1 Peter 1:6," 307–8). First Peter 1:3–12 is the indicative segment of the letter, underlining the fact that the indicative is the foundation for the imperatives.

250 NA²⁸ reads *λυπηθέντας* instead of *λυπηθέντες*, which means that the participle agrees with the implied *ὑμᾶς*. See here the discussion in Forbes, *1 Peter*, 24.

251 Selwyn, *First Peter*, 126. Rightly Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 11.

252 Calvin captures beautifully what Peter communicates, saying that "the faithful know by experience, how these things [joy and sorrow] can exist together, much better than can be expressed in words." He says believers "are not logs of wood" and hence are affected by sufferings, and yet this suffering is "mitigated by faith, that they cease not at the same time to rejoice" (*Catholic Epistles*, 32).

253 For the apocalyptic and evangelistic character of the suffering in 1 Peter, see J. Holdsworth, "The Sufferings in 1 Peter and 'Missionary Apocalyptic,'" *Studia Biblica 1978*: III. *Papers on Paul and Other New Testament Authors*, JSNTSup 3 (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1980), 225–32.

254 So Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 89–90, n. 29; Best, *1 Peter*, 78; J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude*, Thornapple Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 54; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 101; Schelke, *Der Petrusbriefe—Der Judasbrief*, 35.

255 M. Dubis sees a reference to the messianic woes that precede the end (*Messianic Woes in 1 Peter: Suffering and Eschatology in 1 Peter 4:12–19*, SBL 33 [New York: Peter Lang, 2002], 68–70). K. D. Liebengood raises a number of cautions about such a thesis (*Eschatology in 1 Peter*:

Considering the Influence of Zechariah 9–14, SNTSMS 157 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012], 116–27).

256 A few manuscripts and \mathfrak{P}^{72} insert the more common word *δόκιμον*, but it is clear that the unusual word *δοκίμιον* (with essentially the same meaning; cf. Jas 1:3) is original. It is unlikely that Peter’s point is that God finds our faith to be more precious than gold as a result of our sufferings (rightly Michaels, *1 Peter*, 30; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 102, n. 40; contra Selwyn, *First Peter*, 129; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 54). The prepositional phrase with *εἰς* functions as the predicate with the verb *εὔρεθῆναι* (rightly Michaels, *1 Peter*, 31; BDF 145.1).

257 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 30.

258 Michaels: “In honoring he is honored, in glorifying he receives glory, and in praising he is praised. . . . Yet the priority is clear. Peter has in mind *explicitly* the praise, glory, and honor that God bestows on his servants, and only *implicitly* the praise, glory, and honor that is his in the act of giving” (*1 Peter*, 31). Cf. also Hort, *The First Epistle of St Peter*, 43; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 92; P. H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 58; L. Thurén, *Argument and Theology in 1 Peter: The Origins of Christian Paraenesis*, JSNTSup 114 (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1995), 99.

259 Contrary to Parker there is no suggestion here that Jesus Christ is revealed now by the behavior of believers (“The Eschatology of 1 Peter,” 29). Peter thinks exclusively of the second coming of Christ.

260 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 32.

261 A few manuscripts (A, K, P, Ψ, 33, 81, 614, *al*) support *εἰδόντες*, but both the Alexandrian and Western texts support *ἰδόντες*. Further, the contrast is awkward if Peter said, “Though you have not known him, you love him” (cf. B. M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary of the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 616; hereafter: *TCGNT*).

262 Forbes, *1 Peter*, 25.

263 Peter is not contrasting himself with his readers in this verse by reminding them that he as an apostle had seen the Lord (rightly Michaels, *1 Peter*, 32; contra Selwyn, *First Peter*, 131; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 56).

264 It is unclear whether Peter draws here on the Jesus tradition reflected in John 20:29. Some think there is an allusion. E.g., Gundry, “*Verba Christi*,” 338; “*Further Verba*,” 218; Tenney, “Parallels between 1 Peter and John,” 373; G. Maier, “Jesu-tradition im 1. Petrusbrief,” in *Gospel Perspectives: The Jesus Tradition outside the Gospels*, vol. 5, ed. D. Wenham (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984), 87. Against such a notion, see Best, “Gospel Tradition,” 98.

265 Contra du Toit, *ἀγαλλιᾶσθε* should be understood as indicative, not imperative (“1 Peter 1:3–13,” 70–71). Rightly Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 16. The presence of *ὃν ἄρτι* and the participle *πιστεύοντες* in context indicate that the indicative is in view. I understand *ἰδόντες* to modify the verb *ἀγαπᾶτε*, and the particle *δὲ* contrasts the two participles *ὁρῶντες* and *πιστεύοντες* (so Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 103). I also understand *ἀγαλλιᾶσθε* as designating present experience instead of future. Against Forbes, *1 Peter*, 26.

266 Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 86.

267 “Not even a thousand ironclad tongues can sound out the sweetness of the heavenly blessings,” says Hilary of Arles in *James, 1–2 Peter, 1–3 John, Jude*, ACCS (Downers Grove:

InterVarsity, 2000), 72.

268 As L. R. Donelson says, the joy is eschatological because it “already partakes of glory” (*I and II Peter and Jude*, NTL [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010], 35). See also Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 86–87; Dryden, *Theology and Ethics in 1 Peter*, 77.

269 Watson, *First Peter*, 27.

270 Grudem, *1 Peter*, 67.

271 This is Michaels’s translation and interpretation of the verse (*1 Peter*, 25, 35).

272 So also Thurén, *Argument and Theology in 1 Peter*, 100; Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, 30; Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 16. The pronoun ὑμῶν is missing altogether in B, a few manuscripts support ἡμῶν, but both the context and the majority of the manuscripts suggest that ὑμῶν is original.

273 Michaels, again, wrongly restricts joy here to the future (*1 Peter*, 34). So also Luther, *Commentary on Peter & Jude*, 50.

274 M. Williams, *The Doctrine of Salvation in the First Letter of Peter*, 172–73.

275 Against Dryden, *Theology and Ethics in 1 Peter*, 83.

276 Grudem mistakenly emphasizes growth in salvation here instead of seeing the eschatological focus of the term (*1 Peter*, 67). Elliott notes that Peter shares the eschatological tension between inaugurated and consummated eschatology that is typical of NT writers (*1 Peter*, 337–38).

277 P. G. Dautzenberg, “σωτηρίαν ψυχῶν,” *BZ* 8 (1964): 273–75; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 35; J. B. Green, *1 Peter*, THNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 27. Dryden says the focus is on the inner person (*Theology and Ethics in 1 Peter*, 78).

278 R. Feldmeier, “Salvation and Anthropology in First Peter,” in *The Catholic Epistles and Apostolic Tradition*, ed. K.-W. Niebuhr and R. W. Wall (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009), 203–6; Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 87–92.

279 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 104, n. 69.

280 B. Sargent is too reductionistic in claiming that 1 Pet 1:10–12 (and other texts in the letter as well) was only directed for Peter’s readers instead of also having meaning for OT readers, even if the latter did not experience the fulfillment in Christ (*Written to Serve: The Use of Scripture in 1 Peter*, LNTS 547 [London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015]).

281 The word “grace” here is virtually equivalent to salvation (so S. R. Bechtler, *Following in His Steps: Suffering, Community, and Christology in 1 Peter*, SBLDS 162 [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998], 183–84).

282 BDAG, 290.

283 Selwyn, *First Peter*, 134; D. Warden, “The Prophets of 1 Peter 1:10–12,” *ResQ* 31 (1989): 1–12.

284 So Michaels, *1 Peter*, 41; D. G. McCartney, “The Use of the Old Testament in the First Epistle of Peter” (Ph.D. diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 1989), 27–31; Dubis, *1 Peter 4:12–19*, 108–10; P. T. Egan, *Ecclesiology and the Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2016), 46–49.

285 So Michaels, *1 Peter*, 40.

- 286 Selwyn, *First Peter*, 136–37, 263–65; Liebengood, *Eschatology in 1 Peter*, 179–81.
- 287 So Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 110.
- 288 Forbes, *1 Peter*, 31.
- 289 Some scholars see a reference to the suffering and glory of both Christ and believers (Dubis, *1 Peter 4:12–19*, 113–17; W. L. Schutter, *Hermeneutic and Composition in 1 Peter*, WUNT 2/30 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989], 107–8). But Peter restricts his vision here to Christ, even though he elsewhere taught that believers will experience glory because of their sufferings in Christ.
- 290 A number of manuscripts read ἐδήλου instead of the imperfect active ἐδήλου, but the former came about from wrongly combining the article τό with the verb.
- 291 So McCartney, “The Use of the Old Testament in the First Epistle of Peter,” 37; contra Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 54.
- 292 Rightly Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 109–10. Against this view see W. D. Kirkpatrick, “The Theology of First Peter,” *SwJT* 25 (1982): 75.
- 293 Similarly, G. D. Kilpatrick, “1 Peter 1:11: ΤΙΝΑ Ἡ ΠΟΙΟΝ ΚΑΙΠΟΝ,” *NovT* 28 (1986): 91–92; N. Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, NIBC (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1992), 41–42; J. Green, *1 Peter*, 21–22; Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 19.
- 294 Grudem objects that τίς is not an interrogative adjective with temporal words (*1 Peter*, 75). The question is whether such a usage is lexically defensible, and it surely is.
- 295 The references are from Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 109.
- 296 Cf. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 109; Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 51; Schelke, *Der Petrusbriefe—Der Judasbrief*, 39.
- 297 So Michaels, *1 Peter*, 41.
- 298 Christ’s suffering and consequent glory blaze the pathway for believers, who will also experience glory after suffering (Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 179–80).
- 299 See here Jobes (*1 Peter*, 102) who points out that the prophets looked forward to the time when their prophecies would be fulfilled (cf. Dan 12:6–13; Hab 2:1–4).
- 300 I owe this point to Justin Taylor, from an exegesis paper he wrote in a class I taught on 1 Peter.
- 301 McCartney, “The Use of the Old Testament in the First Epistle of Peter,” 41.
- 302 The preposition ἐν is missing in some important manuscripts (ϩ⁷², A, B, Ψ, 33, *al*), but the majority of the witnesses support its inclusion. See the divided response of the committee in Metzger (*TCGNT*, 616–17). In any case, the meaning of the phrase remains unaltered. The dative may also be associative, signifying circumstances and manner rather than being instrumental (Michaels, *1 Peter*, 47).
- 303 So D. J. Moo, “The Problem of *Sensus Plenior*,” in *Hermeneutics, Authority, and Canon* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 204.
- 304 See the work of McCartney, “The Use of the Old Testament in the First Epistle of Peter.”
- 305 Egan, *Ecclesiology and the Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 44–75.
- 306 “A central purpose in the whole larger unit 1.1–12 is to make the addressees appreciate their status as Christians” (Thurén, *Argument and Theology in 1 Peter*, 102).

307 Maier sees allusions to Luke 24:25–27; Matt 13:17; John 8:56 (“1. Petrusbrief,” 88–89).

308 Thurén rightly argues that both the prophets and angels highlight the privilege of Peter’s readers (*The Rhetorical Strategy of 1 Peter*, 114).

309 As J. H. Elliott notes, the indicatives are the foundation for the imperatives (*A Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981], 139). For a helpful study on union with Christ in 1 Peter, see Sean Christensen, “Reborn Participants in Christ: Recovering the Importance of Union with Christ in 1 Peter,” *JETS* 61 (2018): 339–54.

310 So J. J. J. van Rensburg, “The Use of Intersentence Relational Particles and Asyndeton in 1 Peter,” *Neot* 24 (1990): 294.

311 So Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 102–5.

312 See especially D. Daube, “Participle and Imperative in 1 Peter,” in E. G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 467–88. Daube argues that NT writers follow the pattern of Tannaitic literature, where participles are used as imperatives. Other scholars argue that Daube’s theory has not been sustained and that the development of the imperative from the participle in Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic is to be explained by “independent development in each language.” So S. Snyder, “Participles and Imperatives in 1 Peter: A Re-examination in the Light of Recent Scholarly Trends,” *Filologia Neotestamentaria* 8 (1995): 188. See also T. B. Williams, “Reconsidering the Imperative Participle in 1 Peter,” *WTJ* 73 (2011): 67–69. The entire essay is helpful (see pp. 59–78). Elliott commends Snyder’s work but complains that he has not included the “influence of Christian hortatory tradition” (*1 Peter*, 358).

313 The CSB correctly attaches the adverb *τελείως* to the verb *ἐπίσατε*, so Selwyn, *First Peter*, 140; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 119; Tite, *Compositional Transitions in 1 Peter*, 67–68. Some commentators link it with *νήφοντες* (e.g., Hort, *The First Epistle of St Peter*, 65; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 55), and such a reading is possible since the adverb could modify either word. It seems more likely, however, that the adverb modifies the main verb.

314 See Piper, “Hope as the Motivation of Love,” 214; cf. also Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 108.

315 Cf. Snyder, “Participles and Imperatives in 1 Peter,” 190; M. Dubis, *1 Peter: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, BHGNT (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2010), 23. For a similar caution about identifying the participles as imperatives, see Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 118, although he mistakenly identifies the participles as attendant circumstance or causal instead of seeing them as instrumental (p. 118, n. 11). B. Witherington III leads us in the wrong direction in saying that the participles “are prerequisites” to the main verb, which summons readers to set their hope completely on the coming grace (*Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians*, vol. II: *A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1–2 Peter* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007], 94).

316 Piper rightly observes that the imperative does not mean “demonstrate hope” but “have hope” (“Hope as the Motivation of Love,” 216).

317 The present participle *φερομένην* should be understood to denote the future (cf. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 56; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 119; contra Parker, “The Eschatology of 1 Peter,” 29; Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, 46).

318 Peter probably alludes to Jesus tradition (Luke 12:35) here (so Gundry, “*Verba Christi*,” 339; “*Further Verba*,” 224; Best, “*Gospel Tradition*,” 104–5; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 54). More cautious is Maier, “1. Petrusbrief,” 89–90.

319 So McCartney, “The Use of the Old Testament in the First Epistle of Peter,” 106; Hillyer, *and 2 Peter, Jude*, 44.

320 Cf. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 120; T. W. Martin, *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*, 91–92; Snyder, “Participles and Imperatives in 1 Peter,” 191.

321 See the discussion of E. Lohse (“Parenesis and Kerygma in 1 Peter,” in *Perspectives on 1 Peter* [Macon: Mercer University Press, 1986], 45–46) and Dubis (*1 Peter Handbook*, 25–26) defending an imperatival participle here. Forbes (*1 Peter*, 38) thinks it is instrumental in that it contrasts with the positive command in v. 15.

322 For an excellent discussion of desires in Peter’s religious-historical context, see Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 102–5.

323 So Michaels, *1 Peter*, 58.

324 J. Green, *1 Peter*, 37–38.

325 The genitive ὑπακοῆς in τέκνα ὑπακοῆς represents a Semitism, but at the same time it denotes a genitive of quality.

326 Cf. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 120–21.

327 We probably should understand καλέσαντα as an attributive participle and ἅγιον as a substantive noun here (so Bigg, *Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 114; Best, *1 Peter*, 86; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 51). Achtemeier, on the contrary, sees καλέσαντα as a substantive (*1 Peter*, 121).

328 So Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 68; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 121.

329 McCartney, “The Use of the Old Testament in the First Epistle of Peter,” 99.

330 It is difficult to discern whether ὅτι is original since it could represent assimilation from Lev 11:44–45.

331 Jobes, *1 Peter*, 114; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 122; J. Green, *1 Peter*, 44; cf. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 59; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 36

332 Rightly Egan, *Ecclesiology and the Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 77–78.

333 J. W. Pryor, “First Peter and the New Covenant (II),” *RTR* 45 (1986): 50.

334 So also Thurén, *Argument and Theology in 1 Peter*, 114.

335 Notice the link between the noun ἀναστροφή in v. 15 and the verb ἀναστράφητε in v. 17.

336 E.g., Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 125.

337 So Pryor, “New Covenant,” 46.

338 Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 41–49; Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 63.

339 Rightly Michaels, *1 Peter*, 62.

340 So also Best, *1 Peter*, 87; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 71; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 124.

341 There is no basis for B. L. Campbell’s view that the verb bears a legal significance, referring to an “an appeal for honor/vindication” (*Honor, Shame, and the Rhetoric of 1 Peter*, SBLDS 160 [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998], 67).

342 McCartney rightly emphasizes that fathers also functioned as judges in ancient societies (“The Use of the Old Testament in the First Epistle of Peter,” 130); see also Watson, *First Peter*, 34). Richard notes that the command to fear one’s parents (Lev 19:3) follows Lev 19:2, which is cited in

1 Pet 1:16 (*Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 63). J. Green fails to see the judicial role of fathers in his one-sided portrayal of God as beneficent (*1 Peter*, 45–46). On the other hand, some have wrongly understood from the word *abba* that God is “daddy,” applying it in astonishingly casual ways. J. Barr has demonstrated in two important articles that such an understanding is flawed. “‘Abba, Father’ and the Familiarity of Jesus’ Speech,” *Theology* 91 (1988): 173–79; Barr, “‘*Abbā* Isn’t ‘Daddy,’” *JTS* 39 (1988): 28–47.

343 Grudem, *1 Peter*, 81.

344 That the judgment is the final judgment is rightly argued by Dalton, “Your Hope in God,” 271.

345 See here the helpful comments of Schelke, *Der Petrusbrief—Der Judasbrief*, 47.

346 Luther says that “works are only the fruits of faith, by which one sees where faith is and where unbelief is” (*Commentary on Peter and Jude*, 69–70).

347 So Michaels, *1 Peter*, 63; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 126.

348 Thurén, *Argument and Theology in 1 Peter*, 115–16.

349 So Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 127. Michaels thinks both ideas are included, which is certainly possible (*1 Peter*, 65).

350 D. G. Horrell and W. H. Wan rightly argue that the coming of Christ represented the inbreaking of a new era, but it is doubtful that there was any intention to contrast this understanding with the Roman conception of time, as if we have subtle criticism of Roman pretensions (“Christology, Eschatology and the Politics of Time in 1 Peter,” *JSNT* 38 [2016]: 263–76).

351 E.g., LXX Lev 17:7; 1 Kgs 16:2, 13, 26; 2 Kgs 17:15; 2 Chr 11:15; Ps 23:4; Hos 5:11; Amos 2:4; Jonah 2:9; Isa 2:20; 44:9; Jer 8:19; 10:15.

352 The comments here depend on the study of W. C. van Unnik, “The Critique of Paganism in I Peter 1:18,” in *Neotestamentica et Semitica: Studies in Honour of Matthew Black*, ed. E. E. Ellis and M. Wilcox (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1969), 129–42. A. R. C. Leaney mistakenly relates this verse to Jewish ancestors and to the fulfillment of the Passover in Christ (“I Peter and the Passover: An Interpretation,” *NTS* 10 [1963–64]: 238–251). Contra Leaney, it is not evident that the Passover motif plays a significant role in Peter’s theology. He never mentions it explicitly. Rightly T. C. G. Thornton, “I Peter, a Paschal Liturgy?,” *JTS* 12 (1961): 20.

353 Against Witherington (*1–2 Peter*, 105–6) who thinks Peter refers to the Jews, and Jobes (*1 Peter*, 119) who thinks what is said here is true of all cultures, which includes the Jews.

354 For the radical nature of what Peter says here, see J. Green, *1 Peter*, 38. For an excellent theological treatment, see D. Strange, *Their Rock Is Not like Our Rock: A Theology of Religions* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014).

355 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 65; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 128.

356 See Egan, *Ecclesiology and the Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 80–81.

357 The preciousness of Christ’s blood may anticipate 2:4, 6, where Christ is God’s elect and honored cornerstone (so Michaels, *1 Peter*, 65).

358 Bechtler overreads the word *τιμίω* when he tries to read the notion of honor into the word (*Following in His Steps*, 184–85).

359 L. Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 3rd ed. (1965; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 114–18. See also M. Williams, *The Doctrine of Salvation in the First Letter of Peter*, 89–90.

360 E.g., B. B. Warfield, *The Person and Work of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1950), 429–75; Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 16–55.

361 I. H. Marshall, “The Development of the Concept of Redemption in the New Testament,” in *Reconciliation and Hope: New Testament Essays on Atonement and Eschatology Presented to L. L. Morris on His Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. R. Banks (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 153–54. So also M. Williams, *The Doctrine of Salvation in the First Letter of Peter*, 83–87.

362 So F. Büchsel, “ἀπολύτρωσις,” *TDNT* 4:354–55.

363 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 128

364 Cf. M. Williams, *The Doctrine of Salvation in the First Letter of Peter*, 88–89.

365 Van Unnik thinks the key to interpreting the two verses is seeing that the background does not depend on OT sacrifices but the offering of a proselyte (“The Redemption in 1 Peter 1.18–19,” 3–82). Against van Unnik, it is unclear that the proselyte’s offering is alluded to in this text since the OT background seems clear.

366 So Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 128–29.

367 E.g., Calvin, *Catholic Epistles*, 51 (though he also includes the sacrificial cult); F. W. Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter: The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1947), 80; Davids, *First Peter*, 73; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 116. Hence, the death was substitutionary. Against B. Howe, *Because You Bear This Name: Conceptual Metaphor and the Moral Meaning of 1 Peter*, BIS 81 (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 207–8.

368 Thornton notes that “a lamb was not the only possible Paschal victim” (“1 Peter, a Paschal Liturgy?” 19).

369 Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 75.

370 E.g., Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 129.

371 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 128.

372 Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 116; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 129.

373 R. Bultmann suggests that the participles signal a liturgical statement that is bound together with 1 Pet 3:18–19, 22 (“Bekenntnis und Liedfragmente im ersten Petrusbrief,” *ConBNT* 11 [1947]: 10–12). The evidence for such a fragment here, however, is questionable since contrasting participles do not themselves signify the use of tradition. Even more speculative is the notion that the words used here should be attached to 1 Pet 3:18–19, 22.

374 Witherington wrongly concludes that predetermining the coming of the Christ means that one of the persons of the Trinity (Christ) would not be free and would be subject to the will of another, which is impossible for a divine person (*1–2 Peter*, 108, n.129). But we must be careful not to be reductionistic in formulating the teaching on the Trinity, for we see in the Gospel of John that the Father both sent the Son *and* the Son freely goes. Predestination does not lead to the conclusion that the eternal Son had no will or choice in the matter. Obviously, such a matter cannot be resolved here, but we should note that predestination and authentic choices are not contrary to each other (cf. Acts 2:23; 4:27–28).

375 Cf. also Michaels, *1 Peter*, 67; Davids, *First Peter*, 74; Schelke, *Der Petrusbriefe—Der Judasbrief*, 50. Hence, it is surprising that P. E. Davies says any notion of Christ's preexistence is "absent" in 1 Peter ("Primitive Christology in 1 Peter," in *Festschrift to Honor F. Wilbur Gingrich: Lexicographer, Scholar, Teacher, and Committed Christian Layman*, ed. E. H. Barth and R. E. Cocroft [Leiden: Brill, 1972], 117; so also J. O. Tuñi, "Jesus of Nazareth in the Christology of 1 Peter," *HeyJ* 28 [1987]: 295; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 377). Some argue that the idea is merely that God's plan for the Christ and for salvation was preexistent, not the person of Christ himself. So J. D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1980), 238; E. Richard, "The Functional Christology of First Peter," in *Perspectives on 1 Peter* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1986), 131. But the text does not refer to the *plan* being foreknown but the *person*, for the participle in v. 20 clearly modifies "Christ" in v. 19. The reference to Christ as a person being foreknown implies preexistence.

376 Michaels rightly says, "What is decided from all eternity is not simply that Jesus Christ should come into the world but that he should fulfill a certain role, the role intimated already in v. 19" (*1 Peter*, 66–67). Cf. Grudem, *1 Peter*, 85–86.

377 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 68.

378 What we have here is inaugurated but not yet consummated eschatology (see Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 131–32).

379 Most texts actually support the reading *πιστεύοντας*, probably because *πιστούς* (A, B, 398, Vg) is unusual. The latter should be retained as the harder reading (cf. *TCGNT*, 617).

380 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 70.

381 Michaels rightly says, "The phrase 'gave him glory,' therefore, defines for the readers the significance of 'raised him from the dead'" (*1 Peter*, 69).

382 See also Michaels, *1 Peter*, 68.

383 Contra Dalton, it is unlikely that "hope" is a predicate adjective ("Your Hope in God," 272–74), and hence we should reject the translation "so that your faith may also be your hope in God." Rightly Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 133.

384 J. A. Williams argues that Peter's christology undergirds his teaching on ecclesiology and his exhortations here ("A Case Study in Intertextuality: The Place of Isaiah in the 'Stone' Sayings of 1 Peter 2," *RefTR* 66 [2007]: 37–55).

385 For the themes of honor and shame in 1 Peter, see J. H. Elliott, "Disgraced Yet Graced: The Gospel according to 1 Peter in the Key of Honor and Shame," *BTB* 25 (1995): 166–78.

386 For an understanding of the participles similar to mine, see Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 69–70; Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 36–38. Forbes (*1 Peter*, 49) takes the participles as casual. M. Evang becomes more precise than the text allows in arguing that *ἀναγεγεννημένοι* functions as the ground only to the word *ἐκτενώς* and that the participle *ἡγνικότες* modifies only *ἐκ καρδίας* ("Ἐκ καρδίας ἀλλήλους ἀγαπήσατε ἐκτενώς: Zum Verständnis der Aufforderung und ihrer Begründungen in 1 Petr 1,22f," *ZNW* 80 [1989]: 117).

387 So Piper, "Hope as a Motivation of Love," 214. The word is used often in cultic contexts especially in the OT (e.g., Exod 19:10; Num 6:3; 8:21; 19:12) but also in the NT (John 11:55; Acts 21:24, 26; 24:18). It is not clear, however, that we have a reference to baptism (against J. W. C. Wand, *The General Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, WC [London: Methuen, 1934], 59).

388 Cf. 2 Cor 6:7; Gal 2:5, 14; 5:7; Eph 1:13; Col 1:5; 2 Thess 2:10, 12, 13; 1 Tim 2:4; 3:15; 4:3; 6:5; 2 Tim 2:15, 18, 25; 3:7, 8; 4:4; Titus 1:1, 14; Heb 10:26; Jas 1:18; 5:19; 2 Pet 1:12; 2:2.

389 Rightly Selwyn, *First Peter*, 149; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 136–37; Beare, *First Peter*, 83–84; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 78.

390 Grudem, *1 Peter*, 87–88.

391 Achtemeier appears to think both are in view, “You are purified . . . by your acceptance of, and your living out, the Christian faith” (*1 Peter*, 137). The perfect participle, however, points to a past event.

392 The NKJV translates, “Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren.” The remarkable difference is found in the words “through the Spirit,” and *διὰ πνεύματος* is added by the majority text. It is clearly secondary and may have been inserted to guard against any notion of works righteousness (cf. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 135).

393 The *εἰς* indicates purpose here (cf. Best, *1 Peter*, 93; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 137), although Davids understands it as result (*First Peter*, 76).

394 Contra Gundry, it is not evident that Peter reflects the tradition found in John 13:34–35 and 15:12 in 1 Pet 1:22 and 4:8 (“*Verba Christi*,” 340; “*Further Verba*,” 215–16; cf. also Maier, “1. Petrusbrief,” 90). Rightly Best, “Gospel Tradition,” 96–97. The reference is too vague to point clearly to John 13:34–35 and 15:12.

395 It is difficult to know whether the word *καθαρᾶς* is original. The term is lacking in A, B, and Vg. Yet it occurs in \mathfrak{D}^{72} , \aleph , C, 86, 614. It could represent assimilation from 1 Tim 1:5 and 2 Tim 2:22. The meaning is not affected dramatically either way.

396 Scholars differ about whether *ἐκτενῶς* means “fervently” or “constantly.” For the latter see C. E. B. Cranfield, *I & II Peter and Jude: Introduction and Commentary*, TBC (London: SCM, 1960), 57; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 75–76; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 137; Evang, “Zum Verständnis der Aufforderung und ihrer Begründungen in 1 Petr 1, 22f,” 116, 118; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 387; Dubis *1 Peter Handbook*, 37; Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 121. Richard says that the emphasis on fervency is already in the text in the expression “from the heart” and hence constancy is in view here (*Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 71).

397 Cf. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 139.

398 So Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, 51; Forbes, *1 Peter*, 50.

399 So Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 126; Piper, “Hope as a Motivation of Love,” 214.

400 So Selwyn, *First Peter*, 150–51; Beare, *First Peter*, 86; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 76; E. A. LaVerdiere, “A Grammatical Ambiguity in 1 Pet 1:23,” *CBQ* 36 (1974): 92.

401 So LaVerdiere, “A Grammatical Ambiguity,” 89–94; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 76–77; Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 72.

402 For OT antecedents see Schelke, *Der Petrusbriefe—Der Judasbrief*, 53.

403 Cf. Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 87–88.

404 The addition of the words *εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα* and *εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας* in some manuscripts is clearly secondary.

405 Cf. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 77; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 141.

- 406 See Egan, *Ecclesiology and the Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 92.
- 407 Contra Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 74; Egan, *Ecclesiology and the Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 90–91.
- 408 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 79.
- 409 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 141.
- 410 Rightly Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 142; Forbes, *1 Peter*, 52.
- 411 Cf. Egan, *Ecclesiology and the Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 93. E. Schweizer wrongly concludes from the aorist participle that once-for-all action is in view (“The Priesthood of All Believers: 1 Peter 2.1–10,” in *Worship, Theology and Ministry in the Early Church: Essays in Honor of Ralph P. Martin*, ed. M. J. Wilkins and T. Paige, JSNTSup 87 [Sheffield: JSOT, 1992], 286). Recent research has overturned this understanding of the participle and the aorist.
- 412 So Michaels, *1 Peter*, 84; Forbes, *1 Peter*, 55; contra Richard, who sees a reference to conversion (*Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 77). Others see the participle as one of attendant circumstance. So Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 144; Snyder, “Participles and Imperatives in 1 Peter,” 193.
- 413 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 145.
- 414 E.g., Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 83–84.
- 415 Rightly Grudem, *1 Peter*, 93, n. 1; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 144, n. 14.
- 416 Cf. Selwyn, *First Peter*, 153; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 144.
- 417 E.g., Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 84; Cranfield, *I & II Peter and Jude*, 61; Beare, *First Peter*, 88.
- 418 Rightly Selwyn, *First Peter*, 154; Grudem, *1 Peter*, 94.
- 419 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 145.
- 420 Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 150.
- 421 Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, 57.
- 422 Again Schweizer overreads the aorist tense of verb here (“The Priesthood of All Believers,” 287).
- 423 Calvin rightly argues that “milk” here does not refer to simple teachings for the immature (*Catholic Epistles*, 63).
- 424 Nor is there a clear allusion to the milk and honey of entering the promised land (contra Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, 57).
- 425 E.g., Best, *1 Peter*, 98; Goppelt, *I Peter*, 131; J. Francis, “‘Like Newborn Babies’—the Image of the Child in 1 Peter 2:2–3,” in *Studia Biblica 1978: Sixth International Congress on Biblical Studies, Oxford, 3–7 April 1978*, vol. 3: *Papers on Paul and Other New Testament Authors*, ed. E. A. Livingstone, JSNTSup 3 (Sheffield: JSOT Press), 115; C. F. D. Moule, “Sanctuary and Sacrifice in the Church of the New Testament,” *JTS* 1 (1950): 34.
- 426 G. Kittel, “λογικός,” *TDNT* 4.142; rightly Wand, *Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 64–65. Cf. D. Harink, *1 & 2 Peter*, BTCB (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 65.
- 427 Against Elliott, *1 Peter*, 400. For similar views see esp. D. G. McCartney, “λογικός in 1 Pet 2,2,” *ZNW* 82 (1991): 128–32; Bigg, *Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 126; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 85; Grudem, *1 Peter*, 95; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 147; Davids, *First Peter*, 83; Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 92; Egan, *Ecclesiology and the Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 93–94. Michaels identifies the milk as

God's sustaining life that he gives to his children (*1 Peter*, 87–89). Others identify the milk as Christ (Wand, *Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 65; Beare, *First Peter*, 90). Richard sees it as God's love and kindness (*Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 79–80). Luther argues that the milk is the gospel, and the gospel, of course, is certainly the content of the word (*Commentary on Peter & Jude*, 87). K. H. Jobes describes it as God's continuing grace through Jesus Christ (see "Got Milk? Septuagint Psalm 33 and the Interpretation of 1 Peter 2:1–3," *WTJ* 63 [2002]: 1–14; see also Jobes, *1 Peter*, 131–40; Watson, *First Peter*, 45; 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), 1022–23. Jobes argues that milk cannot refer to God's word since in 1:23–25 it is metaphorically depicted as seed (p. 3). But the shifting of metaphors is not a problem since biblical writers mix metaphors with some regularity. She also says that Peter simply could have written "the milk of the word" if he desired to identify the milk as the word (p. 6). But her argument is not persuasive if there is a link between λογικός and λόγος and if the former should be translated "reasonable," as I argue above.

428 Cf. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 147. The majority text omits the preposition either through oversight or because of rejection of the idea of growing into salvation (so *TCGNT*, 618).

429 Cf. Davids, *First Peter*, 83.

430 Rightly Michaels, *1 Peter*, 89; cf. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 147.

431 For a similar view see Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 132, n. 50; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 82, 90; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 143, 148; Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 80; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 402. Against T. W. Martin who understands the tasting as a reference to the eucharist ("Tasting the Eucharistic Lord as Usable (1 Peter 2:3)," *CBQ* 78 [2016]: 515–25; so also Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 87; Davids, *First Peter*, 83, n. 12).

432 Some later manuscripts insert εἴπερ instead of εἰ, but the Alexandrian manuscript tradition supports the latter.

433 Kelly rightly says, "Our writer's citation of Ps. xxxiv.8 is not haphazard; the whole psalm was present in his mind as he wrote the letter, . . . Its theme is broadly the same as that of the letter" (*Peter and Jude*, 87). For a similar view of the influence of Ps 34, see G. L. Green, "The Use of the Old Testament for Christian Ethics in 1 Peter," *TynBul* 41 (1990): 280–81; cf. also Jobes, "Got Milk?," 9–13. But we should reject the view of Bornemann that a baptismal sermon was constructed on the basis of the psalm ("Der erste Petrusbrief," 143–65). Rightly, F. W. Danker, "1 Peter 1:24–2:17—a Consolatory Pericope," *ZNW* 68 (1967): 94.

434 See Piper, "Hope as the Motivation of Love," 212–31; F. Neugebauer, "Zur Deutung und Bedeutung des 1. Petrusbriefes," *NTS* 26 (1980): 73–74.

435 K. R. Snodgrass rightly rejects the notion that 1 Peter is a baptismal sermon based on Ps 34, but he goes on to say that the psalm played "a formative role in the composition of 1 Peter and especially of ii.1–10." Snodgrass identifies the themes from Ps 34 echoed in 1 Peter ("1 Peter II.1–10: Its Formation and Literary Affinities," *NTS* 24 [1977]: 102).

436 A few manuscripts add καὶ εἶδετε, a clear example of assimilation (Ps 33:9).

437 Some scribes accidentally inserted χριστός for χρηστός, which is a natural mistake since the two words sound the same. We can be sure that the latter is original. Neither is it persuasive to suggest a play on words here. Peter selected the word because it was in the OT citation.

438 So D. P. Senior, *1 Peter*, SP (Collegeville: Michael Glazier, 2003), 53; Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 133–34.

439 See L. R. Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 59–60; Forbes, *1 Peter*, 61.

440 So Michaels, *1 Peter*, 90, 98; McCartney, “The Use of the Old Testament in the First Epistle of Peter,” 73; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 403; Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 93.

441 As background Achtemeier points here to the texts where God is said to be our “rock” (e.g., Deut 32:4; 2 Sam 23:3; Isa 26:4; Ps 62:3, 7; *1 Peter*, 154, n. 56). But in these texts Yahweh is never called λίθος, and interestingly, the LXX avoids using even the word “rock” in these texts. It is not clear, therefore, that the language of God being Israel’s rock is appropriated here, although it is certainly possible.

442 Cf. J. H. Elliott, *The Elect and the Holy: An Exegetical Examination of I Peter 2:4–10 and the Phrase Βασιλειον Ἱεράτευμα*, NovTSup 12 (Leiden: Brill, 1966), 34; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 410. N. Hillyer provides a helpful summary of the Feast of Tabernacles in Jewish tradition, but his view that 1 Peter evinces a reference to the feast is speculative and lacking in evidentiary support (“First Peter and the Feast of Tabernacles,” *TynBul* 21 [1970]: 39–70).

443 Supporting dependence on gospel tradition here are Gundry, “*Verba Christi*,” 340; “Further *Verba*,” 221–22; Maier, “1. Petrusbrief,” 90–91. Best’s doubts are not compelling (“Gospel Tradition,” 101).

444 N. Hillyer argues that “stone” was a messianic title among the Jews (“‘Rock-Stone’ Imagery in I Peter,” *TynBul* 22 [1971]: 59, 69).

445 So Michaels, *1 Peter*, 98; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 154.

446 Contra Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 154.

447 E.g., 2 Sam 7:5, 13; 1 Kgs 5:3, 5, 18; 6:1; 8:16, 18–19; 9:1; 11:38; 2 Chr 36:23; Ps 69:9; Isa 56:7). Rightly Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 156; E. Best, “I Peter II.4–10—a Reconsideration,” *NovT* 11 (1969): 280; Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 140–41.

448 So also Best, “I Peter II.4–10,” 292–93; 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): 290; Elliott, *The Elect and the Holy*, 153–54.

449 Contra Elliott, *The Elect and the Holy*, 149, 152–53, 157–59; Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 165–266; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 414–18; Dryden, *Theology and Ethics in 1 Peter*, 122–23. Elliott understands the motif to be domestic rather than cultic, but he wrongly underestimates the significance of the temple as God’s house in the OT. Against Dryden, Peter is more versatile here in that the readers are both priests *and* the temple. Jobes rightly says that the reference to “building stones and a cornerstone” in the context shows that a structure is intended (*1 Peter*, 150). See also Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 141; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 100; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 158–59; Best, “I Peter II.4–10,” 280; T. Seland, “The ‘Common Priesthood’ of Philo and 1 Peter: A Philonic Reading of 1 Peter 2:5, 9,” *JSNT* 57 (1995): 111.

450 Cf. Andrew M. Mbuvi, *Temple, Exile and Identity in 1 Peter*, LNTS 345 (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 109.

451 Contra Michaels, οἶκος πνευματικός is not a predicate nominative (*1 Peter*, 100) but appositional to the “you” of οἰκοδομείσθε (Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 154; Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, 60; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 150). Forbes (*1 Peter*, 62) sees it as appositional to “living stones.” Dubis (*1 Peter Handbook*, 48) takes it as a complement “in a double nominative subject-complement construction.”

452 We have a divine passive here, and the word εἰς designates purpose (so Elliott, *The Elect and the Holy*, 160; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 412–13). Achtemeier points out that εἰς denotes purpose when linked with οἰκοδομέω in 1 Chr 22:5; 28:10; Tob 14:5 (*1 Peter*, 156, n. 91). Tobit 14:5, however, is temporal rather than purpose.

453 The majority text omits εἰς, but it is original (P⁷², א, A, B, C, 5, 88, 307, 322, etc.).

454 Katie Marcar shows how the terms used to describe believers in the letter reshapes their identity (“Building a Holy House: Identity Formation in the Community Rule, 4QFlorilegium and 1 Peter 2.4–10,” in *Muted Voices of the New Testament: Readings in the Catholic Epistles and Hebrews*, ed. K. M. Hockey, M. N. Pierce, and F. Watson, LNTS 565 [London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017], 41–54).

455 Cf. Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 140, n. 29.

456 So also Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 139–40; T. W. Martin, *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*, 181; Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 85; Senior, *1 Peter*, 53; Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 135.

457 So Selwyn, *First Peter*, 159; Elliott, *The Elect and the Holy*, 16; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 100; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 155; Davids, *First Peter*, 87; Forbes, *1 Peter*, 62.

458 Cf. also Jobes, *1 Peter*, 156; Dubis *1 Peter Handbook*, 47–48.

459 Rightly Elliott, *The Elect and the Holy*, 167; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 156.

460 So Elliott, *The Elect and the Holy*, 68–69, 74, 167–68; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 420, 451–54; A. T. M. Cheung, “The Priest as the Redeemed Man: A Biblical-Theological Study of the Priesthood,” *JETS* 29 (1986): 274; Seland, “A Philonic Reading of 1 Peter 2:5, 9,” 102–9; Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 104; J. Green, *1 Peter*, 61.

461 Cf. also E. Best, “Spiritual Sacrifice: General Priesthood in the New Testament,” *Int* 14 (1960): 279, 296–97. Luther rightly saw that all believers are designated as priests here, not simply those set aside for special ministry (*Commentary on Peter & Jude*, 93).

462 E.g., Gen 8:20; 22:2; Exod 24:5; 29:18, 25; Lev 3:5, 11, 14, 16; Num 5:26; Deut 12:13–14; cf. also Heb 7:27; 9:28; 13:15; 1 Pet 2:24.

463 So Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 91.

464 Rightly Elliott, *The Elect and the Holy*, 220. Cf. Luther, *Commentary on Peter & Jude*, 94.

465 To see a reference to the Eucharist as a sacrifice is unlikely and reflects the view of early church history rather than the NT era (contra Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 92; Best, “Spiritual Sacrifice,” 279; Hill, “Spiritual Sacrifices,” 61). Rightly Elliott, *The Elect and the Holy*, 186–88.

466 So Selwyn, *First Peter*, 292–93; Elliott, *The Elect and the Holy*, 185, 195; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 156. Best rejects this argument, contending that the argument moves in a new direction in v. 9. Thus, he sees the sacrifices in v. 5 as being general in nature (“1 Peter II.4–10,” 287).

467 So Jobes, *1 Peter*, 150–51; Watson, *First Peter*, 49. Bechtler sees a reference to the ethic explicated in the rest of the letter (*Following in His Steps*, 168).

468 Elliott defines such sacrifices as “the living of a holy life and the persistence in well-doing through the power of the Holy Spirit to the glorification of God” (*The Elect and the Holy*, 183). Bechtler argues that any reference to evangelism here is illegitimate (*Following in His Steps*, 159). Achtemeier rightly argues that evangelism cannot be excluded from the spiritual sacrifices Peter had in mind (*1 Peter*, 150, 156). S. McKnight suggests “something like the list of behaviors typical

of early Christian churches” (e.g., 4:7–11; *1 Peter*, NIVAC [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996], 107). Michaels sees a reference to both worship and conduct (*1 Peter*, 101–2).

469 Cf. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 102. There is no basis for Selwyn’s view that Peter refers to a writing in general rather than the OT. He defends his interpretation by noting the omission of the article before *γραφή* (*First Peter*, 163), but this is insufficient grounds, especially when a particular text from Isaiah is cited immediately. Also improbable is R. Martin’s suggestion that *γραφή* may signal reference to a hymn (“*1 Peter* in Recent Study,” 31); rightly Michaels, *1 Peter*, 102–3.

470 Some manuscripts insert *ἡ γραφή* as the subject, but the external evidence favors *ἐν γραφή* (P⁷², x, A, B, Ψ, etc.).

471 For a helpful sketch of the OT context, see Carson, “*1 Peter*,” 1024.

472 Egan, *Ecclesiology and the Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 102.

473 Egan, *Ecclesiology and the Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 102.

474 So McCartney, “Use of the Old Testament in the First Epistle of Peter,” 80, 209; cf. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 424. D. A. Oss suggests that the stone in Isaiah may have referred to the remnant or Yahweh (“The Interpretation of the ‘Stone’ Passages by Peter and Paul: A Comparative Study,” *JETS* 32 [1989]: 188). He notes, however, that a messianic text is nearby in Isa 9:1–7, and hence, even though the text is not specifically messianic, a messianic reading is apropos (pp. 187–88). For a more inclusive and vaguer referent, see Carson (following Childs), “*1 Peter*,” 1025.

475 See the analysis of Oss, “The Interpretation of the ‘Stone’ Passages,” 186–87.

476 Hort, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, 116; Beare, *First Peter*, 95.

477 See especially K. R. Snodgrass, “*1 Peter* II.1–10: Its Formation and Literary Affinities,” *NTS* 24 (1977): 97–106; Hillyer, “Rock-Stone,” 60–61.

478 J. F. Stenning, *The Targum of Isaiah* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1949).

479 E. E. Ellis, *Paul’s Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), 89–90.

480 See C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures* (New York: Scribners, 1952), 41–43; Elliott, *The Elect and the Holy*, 130–33. Snodgrass rejects the idea of a testimony book but believes “there were texts that were grouped thematically to assist in worship, proclamation, teaching, and defense of the faith” (“*1 Peter* II.1–10,” 105; cf. also Best, “*1 Peter* II.4–10,” 270). Elliott sees the use of the OT here as reflecting a “common Christian tradition” (*The Elect and the Holy*, 32–33). Brox maintains it was formulated by the author of *1 Peter* (*Der erste Petrusbrief*, 95).

481 P. A. Himes rightly argues that *τίθημι* represents Peter’s adaptation of the LXX, and the verb emphasizes God’s election (“Why Did Peter Change the Septuagint? A Reexamination of the Significance of the Use of *τίθημι* in *1 Peter* 2:6,” *BBR* 26 [2016]: 227–44).

482 So Bauckham, “James, *1 Peter* and *2 Peter*, Jude,” 311.

483 Elliott sees election as the “unifying theme” of vv. 6–10 (*The Elect and the Holy*, 145).

484 B. Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians*, vol. II: *A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1–2 Peter* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007), 117. J. Jeremias, “*γωνία, κτλ.*,” *TDNT* 1:791–93. Hillyer’s view that both a capstone and cornerstone are intended is unlikely (“Rock-Stone,” 70–72).

485 See especially R. J. McKelvey, “Christ the Cornerstone,” *NTS* 8 (1961–62): 352–59; so also Michaels, *1 Peter*, 103; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 425.

486 So McCartney, “The Use of the Old Testament in the First Epistle of Peter,” 81.

487 Oss remarks that the insertion of “shame” rather than “will not hurry” in the MT puts the focus on judgment (“The Interpretation of the ‘Stone’ Passages,” 186–87).

488 See Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 51–52. Campbell rightly sees a reference to honor rather than preciousness here (contrary to Watson, *First Peter*, 47), although he emphasizes present honor without excluding the eschatological component (*Honor, Shame, and the Rhetoric of 1 Peter*, 86, 93, 95). Cf. also I. H. Marshall, *1 Peter*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1991), 72. For the significance of honor and shame in 1 Peter, see also Elliott, “Disgraced Yet Graced,” 166–78.

489 So Michaels, *1 Peter*, 105.

490 Rightly Grudem, *1 Peter*, 105; cf. Selwyn, *First Peter*, 163.

491 Elliott argues that the stone here refers to a stone or rock in open areas over which people may stumble, and the stone here refers to God (*1 Peter*, 430), but in context the reference is certainly to Christ.

492 The idea of the verse is that “they stumble because they disobey the word” rather than “they disobey because they stumble over the word.” Hence the word οἱ should be construed as a relative pronoun and the subject of προσκόπτουσιν rather than modifying ἀπειθοῦντες (rightly Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 162), and the dative τῷ λόγῳ is the object of the participle ἀπειθοῦντες rather than the verb προσκόπτουσιν. In support of this, ἀπειθέω takes τῷ λόγῳ as the object in 3:1 and τῷ τοῦ θεοῦ εὐαγγελίῳ in 4:17 (so Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 162). Contrary to Michaels, τῷ λόγῳ is not the object of both verbs (*1 Peter*, 106).

493 So Bigg, *Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 133; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 107; Campbell, *Honor, Shame, and the Rhetoric of 1 Peter*, 93; A. J. Panning, “Exegetical Brief: What Has Been Determined (ἐτέθησαν) in 1 Peter 2:8?,” *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 98 (2001): 48–52; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 433–34; Marshall, *1 Peter*, 73. Hillyer suggests that perhaps the point is “not that individuals are predestined to stumble but that the stumbling of many against the rock is foretold in Scripture” (“Rock-Stone,” 63). This is an unlikely interpretation since the text emphasizes the doom appointed for people, not the fulfillment of Scripture.

494 So Didymus the Blind and Oecumenius in *James, 1–2 Peter, 1–3 John, Jude*, ACCS (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000), 86–87.

495 Rightly Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 138–39.

496 Rightly Hort, *The First Epistle of St Peter*, 123; Best, *1 Peter*, 106; Beare, *First Peter*, 100; Grudem, *1 Peter*, 107; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 162; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 156; Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, 65–66; M. Williams, *The Doctrine of Salvation in the First Letter of Peter*, 68–72. Hort remarks, “All attempts to explain away the statement, as if e.g. it meant only that they were appointed to this by the just and natural consequences of their own acts, are futile.” We should also note that Hort sees the antecedent particularly in the verb “stumble.”

497 So Andreas in *James, 1–2 Peter, 1–3 John, Jude*, ACCS (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000), 86. Davids rightly remarks that the emphasis here is corporate (*First Peter*, 90), but he wrongly sets the corporate in opposition to individuals. For a discussion of this matter see T. R. Schreiner, “Does Romans 9 Teach Individual Election unto Salvation?,” in *Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives on Election, Foreknowledge, and Grace* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 98–105; T. R.

Schreiner, “Corporate and Individual Election in Romans 9: A Response to Brian Abasciano,” *JETS* 49 (2006): 373–86.

498 McCartney rightly says, “If God is absolutely sovereign in everything that happens, then God must be the one sending the suffering. Peter never refers to judgment or suffering as coming from anyone except God” (“The Use of the Old Testament in the First Epistle of Peter,” 136).

499 Rightly Schutter, *Hermeneutic and Composition in I Peter*, 134–35.

500 Horrell reveals his presuppositions when he suggests that we can no longer accept what the Scriptures teach on this matter (*The Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 43).

501 Contra Elliott, *The Elect and the Holy*, 143.

502 Thurén, *Argument and Theology in 1 Peter*, 127.

503 Horrell, *Becoming Christian*, 144. For further study of the words γένος, ἔθνος, and λαός in classical Greek, Jewish sources, and the NT, see Horrell, *Becoming Christian*, 133–63.

504 D. G. Horrell, “Tradition and Innovation: Reassessing 1 Peter’s Contributions to the Making of Christian Identity,” in *Muted Voices of the New Testament: Readings in the Catholic Epistles and Hebrews*, ed. K. M. Hockey, M. N. Pierce, and F. Watson, LNTS 565 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017), 19.

505 Elliott argues that “the Isaiah passage has been interpolated into the Exodus verse” (*The Elect and the Holy*, 142).

506 Jobes, *1 Peter*, 158; cf. Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, 66.

507 J. Green, *1 Peter*, 61.

508 See Horrell, *Becoming Christian*, 137–38.

509 See Jobes, *1 Peter*, 159.

510 The term βασιλειον is an adjective here modifying ἱεράτευμα (contra Selwyn, *First Peter*, 165–66; Elliott, *The Elect and the Holy*, 149–54; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 97; Best, “I Peter II.4–10,” 288–89). Elliott understands Peter to be saying that the church is the house of God as king (*The Elect and the Holy*, 196; *1 Peter*, 436–37; cf. also Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 103). In 2 Macc 2:17 both words are nouns, but this is clear because each word is preceded by the article τόν, and the word καί also separates them. Supporting the idea that we have an adjective here is the fact the other two phrases in the verse have adjectives and the adjective in the phrase ἱεράτευμα ἅγιον in v. 5 (cf. Beare, *First Peter*, 104; Goppelt, *I Peter*, 149, n. 65; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 108–9; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 164; Davids, *First Peter*, 91–92, n. 30; Schweizer, “The Priesthood of All Believers,” 291–92).

511 Best is correct in arguing that levitical ideas of the priesthood merges with the nonlevitical nature of the priesthood in Exod 19:6 (“I Peter II.4–10,” 283–86; contra Elliott, *The Elect and the Holy*, 173, 210, 219–20). For Luther’s understanding that all believers are priests, see *Commentary on Peter & Jude*, 103–4.

512 Best, “I Peter II.4–10,” 287.

513 See Horrell, *Becoming Christian*, 138–39.

514 It seems less likely, therefore, that the reference is to final salvation and preservation here (against Michaels, *1 Peter*, 109–10).

515 Elliott remarks, “The sect, it is implied, is not the exclusive representative of the chosen people of God, the sole community where the prophetic hopes of Israel are fulfilled” (*Home for the*

Homeless, 127).

516 Rightly Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 165–66.

517 Cf. Elliott, *The Elect and the Holy*, 197; *1 Peter*, 439–40; R. Feldmeier, *Die Christen als Fremde: Die Metapher der Fremde in der antiken Welt, im Urchristentum und im 1. Petrusbrief*, WUNT 64 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), 167, 181, 186. It is mistaken, then, to limit what is said here to worship (rightly T. Seland, “Resident Aliens in Mission: Missional Practices in the Emerging Church of 1 Peter,” *BBR* 19 (2009): 583–85), although worship is certainly included. Those who restrict the text to worship only include Michaels, *1 Peter*, 110; Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive*, 133; Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 158–59. The notion that the Eucharist is in view is farfetched (contra Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 100–101).

518 Since this language is typically used to denote the present state of believers, darkness and light here should not be understood as future (contra Michaels, *1 Peter*, 111).

519 Cf. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 112.

520 Carson, “1 Peter,” 1032.

521 Cf. Schutter, *Hermeneutic and Composition in 1 Peter*, 29.

522 So also J. H. Elliott, *The Elect and the Holy: An Exegetical Examination of 1 Peter 2:4–10 and the Phrase Βασιλειον Ἱεράτευμα*, NovTSup 12 (Leiden: Brill, 1966), 16.

523 J. R. Michaels, *1 Peter*, WBC (Waco: Word, 1998), 115; R. Feldmeier, *The First Letter of Peter: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, trans. P. H. Davids (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2008), 146–47.

524 D. F. Watson, *First Peter*, PCNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 57–58.

525 Contra J. H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 458–62, 476–83; J. H. Elliott, “Peter, Silvanus and Mark in 1 Peter and Acts: Sociological-Exegetical Perspectives on a Petrine Group in Rome,” in *Wort in der Zeit: Neutestamentlichen Studien: Festgabe für Karl Heinrich Rengstorf zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. W. Haubeck and M. Bachmann (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 254. Elliott now says that the terms were used of both actual strangers and resident aliens and metaphorically were applied to the whole community. Such a conclusion calls into question the legitimacy of reading the terms at a literal level. E. J. Richard distinguishes the two terms and thus sees both ideas in the verse (*Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter: A Literary and Theological Commentary*, RNT [Macon: Smith & Helwys, 2000], 103), but this is unlikely since it is unclear that Peter intended one of the descriptions to be read socially and the other spiritually.

526 P. J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter*, Her (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 174; cf. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 116; J. de Waal Dryden, *Theology and Ethics in 1 Peter: Paraenetic Strategies for Christian Character Formation*, WUNT 2/209 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 127–30.

527 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 175.

528 The textual evidence is rather evenly divided between the imperative ἀπέχεσθε (ⲑ⁷², A, C, L, P, 33, 81, etc.) and the infinitive ἀπέχεσθαι (Ⲡ, B, Ψ, 049, 1739, MT). But the meaning remains the same. The external evidence slightly favors the infinitive, but see Michaels, *1 Peter*, 114.

529 Richard argues that “natural impulses” are in view, and so the injunction should be interpreted to say that believers should “abstain from natural impulses in as much as they [in their excesses] wage war against the soul” (*Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 105). Against Richard, nothing is said in the text about resisting fleshly desires in terms of excess. Richard

introduces the idea of “excess” into the text, whereas the text simply says that believers must abstain from fleshly desires that wage war against us.

530 M. Luther’s comments are insightful: “As soon as the Spirit and faith enter our hearts, we become so weak that we think we cannot beat down the least imaginations and sparks of temptation, and we see nothing but sin in ourselves from the crown of the head even to the foot. For before we believed, we walked according to our own lusts, but now the Spirit has come and would purify us, and a conflict arises when the devil, the flesh, and the world oppose faith. . . . If thou then hast wicked thoughts, thou shouldst not on this account despair; only be on thy guard, that thou be not taken prisoner by them” (*Commentary on Peter & Jude* [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1990], 112–13).

531 Cf. W. Grudem, *The First Epistle of Peter*, TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 115.

532 Rightly J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude*, Thornapple Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 105–6; C. E. B. Cranfield, *I & II Peter and Jude: Introduction and Commentary*, TBC (London: SCM, 1960), 72; Michaels, *I Peter*, 115–16.

533 W. Munro argues that 1 Pet 2:12–3:12 is a later interpolation (*Authority in Paul and Peter: The Identification of a Pastoral Stratum in the Pauline Corpus and I Peter*, SNTSMS 45 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983]). Her view is unpersuasive. See J. H. L. Dijkman, “1 Peter: A Later Pastoral Stratum?,” *NTS* 33 (1987): 265–71.

534 So Achtemeier, *I Peter*, 177.

535 For a discussion of the terms ἀναστροφή and ἀγαθοποιός, see Elliott, *The Elect and the Holy*, 179–82.

536 See Elliott, *I Peter*, 466; cf. Joel B. Green, *I Peter*, THNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 67.

537 M. Dubis says that ἐν ᾧ isn’t temporal since a temporal understanding does not fit with the two verbs καταλαλοῦσιν and δοξάσωσιν which refer to two different time frames (*I Peter: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, BHGNT [Waco: Baylor University Press, 2010], 62). For support of a temporal understanding of ἐν ᾧ, see B. Reicke, *The Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism: A Study of 1 Pet. III.19 and Its Context*, ASNU 13 (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1946), 110–11; P. R. Fink, “The Use and Significance of ἐν ᾧ in I Peter,” *GTJ* 8 (1967): 34. Elliott thinks it is temporal or circumstantial (*I Peter*, 467). Against T. B. Williams (*Good Works in 1 Peter: Negotiating Social Conflict and Christian Identity in the Greco-Roman World*, WUNT 337 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014], 172–73), who takes it as causal, but a causal reading would be unusual grammatically and awkward. Another weakness with Williams’s reading is that he posits too sharp of a dichotomy between 1 Pet 2:12 and Matt 5:16 (pp. 168–74).

538 T. Seland, “Resident Aliens in Mission: Missional Practices in the Emerging Church of 1 Peter,” *BBR* 19 (2009): 565–89.

539 E.g., J. Moffatt, *The General Epistles: James, Peter, and Jude* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1928), 120–21.

540 Rightly Michaels, *I Peter*, 117; Achtemeier, *I Peter*, 177.

541 Achtemeier argues that ἐκ τῶν καλῶν ἔργων is partitive as in John 16:17 and Luke 21:16, so that the phrase can be rendered “some of your good works” (*I Peter*, 178, also n. 78). It seems unlikely, though, that Peter restricted his idea to only “some” of their works.

542 So Michaels, *I Peter*, 118; Achtemeier, *I Peter*, 178.

543 E.g., F. W. Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter: The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1947), 112. Rightly Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 106. See S. Sandmel's famous article, "Parallelomania," *JBL* 81 (1962): 2–13.

544 E.g., W. C. van Unnik, "The Teaching of Good Works in I Peter," *NTS* 2 (1954): 99.

545 So R. H. Gundry, "'Verba Christi' in I Peter: Their Implications concerning the Authorship of I Peter and the Authenticity of the Gospel Tradition," *NTS* 13 (1967): 340; R. H. Gundry, "Further Verba on Verba Christi in First Peter," *Bib* 55 (1974): 224; E. Best, "1 Peter and the Gospel Tradition," *NTS* 16 (1970): 109–10; L. Goppelt, *A Commentary on I Peter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 160–61.

546 T. Williams rightly sees in the letter a cautious resistance to social hierarchy (*Good Works in I Peter*, 254–57), but it is not as clear in the texts that good works were also a cause of persecution. All the texts that speak of good works and conflict and persecution (2:15, 20; 3:6, 11, 13, 17; 4:21) are plausibly interpreted to say that persecution may come *even though believers were doing good works*. We do not see any direct indication that good works themselves provoked persecution. Unbelievers did criticize the conduct of believers (1 Pet 3:16), but this may have been a case of secondary rationalization. It is possible in some cases that unbelievers persecuted Christians because of the works believers did, but Peter does not make that argument clearly.

547 In both cases it refers to the last day, contra D. C. Parker, "The Eschatology of 1 Peter," *BTB* 24 (1994): 30. For its eschatological character, see T. B. Williams, *Good Works in I Peter*, 169. J. B. Green says both judgment and salvation will take place on the last day, and which it will be depends on the response of human beings (*I Peter*, THNTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007], 69–70).

548 Cf. e.g., T. Seland, "Resident Aliens in Mission: Missional Practices in the Emerging Church of 1 Peter," *BBR* 19 (2009): 576–77. So C. Spicq, *Les Épîtres de Saint Pierre*, SB (Paris: Gabalda, 1966), 99; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 106; Michaels, *I Peter*, 118–20; S. McKnight, *I Peter*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 128; I. H. Marshall, *I Peter*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1991), 82; Grudem, *I Peter*, 117; Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 108; Elliott, *I Peter*, 471; Bede in *James, 1–2 Peter, 1–3 John, Jude*, ACCS (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000), 91; D. P. Senior, *I Peter*, SP (Collegeville: Michael Glazier, 2003), 67. J. Calvin argues that unbelievers will be converted before Christ's return by the behavior of believers (*Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948], 79).

549 For salvific character of God's visitation cf. Gen 50:24, 25; Exod 3:16; Pss. Sol. 10:4; 11:1, 6.

550 Goppelt, *I Peter*, 160; J. R. Michaels, "Eschatology in I Peter iii.17," *NTS* 13 (1967): 397.

551 Achtemeier, *I Peter*, 178; 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), 1033; cf. D. G. McCartney, "The Use of the Old Testament in the First Epistle of Peter" (Ph.D. diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 1989), 140–41; T. Williams, *Good Works in I Peter*, 170.

552 P. T. Egan, *Ecclesiology and the Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2016), 121–25. So also Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 150.

553 van Unnik, "Good Works in I Peter," 104–5; cf. also D. L. Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive: The Domestic Code in I Peter*, SBLMS 26 (Chico: Scholars Press, 1981), 87–88; K. H. Jobes, *I Peter*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 172. S. R. Bechtler argues that the verse does not speak of the evangelism and conversion of unbelievers, but he thinks it is possible that *δοξάσωσιν* refers to eschatological salvation (*Following in His Steps: Suffering, Community, and Christology in I Peter*, SBLDS 162 [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998], 159–60).

554 Goppelt identifies the instruction in 2:13–3:7 as “station codes” instead of household codes and provides a helpful survey of research (*1 Peter*, 162–79; cf. also Jobes, *1 Peter*, 183). Recent scholarship, in particular, has located the origin of such codes in Aristotelian teaching, something Goppelt does not emphasize.

555 Joel B. Green, *1 Peter*, THNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 72.

556 See especially Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive*. Cf. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 504–7.

557 These references are from Michaels, *1 Peter*, 122.

558 So Michaels, *1 Peter*, 122.

559 B. J. Bauman-Martin, “Women on the Edge: New Perspectives on Women in the Petrine *Haustafel*,” *JBL* 123 (2004): 259–63.

560 Bauman-Martin, “Women on the Edge,” 263.

561 Bauman-Martin, “Women on the Edge,” 264–65.

562 H. von Lips sees the household code in 1 Peter as similar in many respects to Titus and maintains that the code in 1 Peter and Titus represents a tradition that is parallel to what is found in Colossians and Ephesians (“Die *Haustafel* als ‘Topos’ im Rahmen der urchristlichen Paränese: Beobachtungen anhand des 1. Petrusbriefes und des Titusbriefes,” *NTS* 40 [1994]: 261–80).

563 Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive*.

564 J. H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 110–12, 208–20.

565 Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 118.

566 Horrell, *Becoming Christian*, 211–38; T. Williams, *Good Works in 1 Peter*. Williams, however, is not as convincing in seeing good works as the *cause* of conflict, even though the believers may have criticized the believers for their good works, probably as a secondary rationalization.

567 P. A. Holloway, *Coping with Prejudice: 1 Peter in Social-Psychological Perspective*, WUNT 244 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 179.

568 Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 64.

569 Cf. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 124; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 182; Campbell, *Honor, Shame, and the Rhetoric of 1 Peter*, 110.

570 Rightly Grudem, *1 Peter*, 135–37. See also E. Kamlah, “ΥΠΟΤΑΣΣΕΣΘΑΙ in den neutestamentlichen ‘*Haustafeln*,’” in *Verborum Veritas: Festschrift für Gustav Stählin zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. O. Böcher and K. Haacker (Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 1970), 240–41. Cf. also the helpful discussion in Elliott, *1 Peter*, 487. Richard’s translation “recognize one’s association with, relationship to, or duty toward” does not capture the call for submission contained in the term (*Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 111). A. B. Spencer wrongly implies mutuality when she describes submission as “respectful cooperation with others” (“Peter’s Pedagogical Method in 1 Peter 3:6,” *BBR* 10 [2000]: 110).

571 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 124.

572 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 182.

573 It was recognized early that there were exceptions. See Andreas in *James, 1–2 Peter, 1–3 John, Jude*, ACCS (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000), 92.

574 S. T. J. Smith, *Strangers to Family: Diaspora and 1 Peter's Invention of God's Household* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2016), 66.

575 Senior (*1 Peter*, 68) translates it as “created structures.”

576 So Kamlah, “ΥΠΟΤΑΣΣΕΣΘΑΙ,” 237; Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 111; Cranfield, *I & II Peter and Jude*, 74; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 124; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 182.

577 Cf. N. Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, EKKNT, 2nd ed. (Zürich: Benziger/Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1986), 119.

578 See here T. Williams, *Good Works in 1 Peter*, 224–28; T. B. Williams, “The Divinity and Humanity of Caesar in 1 Peter 2.13,” *ZNW* 105 (2014): 131–47; J. Green, *1 Peter*, 75; Watson, *First Peter*, 64; D. Harink, *1 & 2 Peter*, BTCB (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 76–77. See also Horrell (*Becoming Christian*, 231), who observes that the emperor is not identified as divine but a creature. He also shows in another essay that the distinction between worshiping God and honoring the emperor was picked up by subsequent writers in early church history (“Tradition and Innovation,” 23–24).

579 So Michaels, *1 Peter*, 124. Contra Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 109; Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 111–12.

580 So Michaels, *1 Peter*, 125.

581 Cf. Matt 1:6; 2:1, 2–3; 14:9; 27:11, 29, 37, 42; Luke 1:5; John 1:49; 12:13; 18:33, 37, 39; 19:14, 19, 21; Acts 7:10, 18; 12:1; 13:22; 25:13; 2 Cor 11:32.

582 Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 185, n. 31; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 183, n. 53.

583 So E. Best, *1 Peter*, NCB (1971; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 114; F. V. Filson, “Partakers with Christ: Suffering in First Peter,” *Int* 9 (1955): 407.

584 Rightly Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 109; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 125–26; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 183.

585 Luther remarks that Christians are to avoid taking vengeance, but the civil authorities have the responsibility of punishing evil actions (*Commentary on Peter & Jude*, 118).

586 See Egan, *Ecclesiology and the Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 125–27.

587 S. Légasse, “La Soumission aux Autorités d’après 1 Pierre 2.13–17: Version Spécifique d’une Parénèse Traditionnelle,” *NTS* 34 (1988): 388.

588 Calvin observes that even tyrannical governments provide some measure of order in society (*Catholic Epistles*, 83).

589 Cf. B. W. Winter, “The Public Honouring of Christian Benefactors: Romans 13.3–4 and 1 Peter 2.14–15,” *JSNT* 34 (1988): 87–103; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 185–86; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 184; Campbell, *Honor, Shame, and the Rhetoric of 1 Peter*, 112; B. Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians*, vol. II: *A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1–2 Peter* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007), 129–30.

590 Rightly Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 89, n. 153; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 175; J. Green, *1 Peter*, 75; Seland, “Resident Aliens in Mission,” 578–79. Cf. also McKnight, who observes that nothing else is said in 1 Peter about doing things “for the civic good” (*1 Peter*, 147, n. 15).

591 T. Williams, *Good Works in 1 Peter*, 84–104.

592 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 185; so also Elliott, *1 Peter*, 494.

593 For this reading grammatically, see Michaels, *1 Peter*, 127; T. Williams, *Good Works in 1 Peter*, 177–79; Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 67–68; G. W. Forbes, *1 Peter*, EGGNT (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2014), 80.

594 Forbes, *1 Peter*, 80.

595 So T. Williams, *Good Works in 1 Peter*, 179–80.

596 Cf. E. G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 173; Beare, *First Peter*, 117; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 111.

597 Rightly Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 68. Michaels wrongly connects the clauses in v. 16 with v. 17 (*1 Peter*, 128). It is more natural to take the *ὡς* clauses with what precedes rather than what follows.

598 Gundry wrongly posits a dependence on the Jesus tradition found in Matt 17:26–27 (“*Verba Christi*,” 340–41; “*Further Verba*,” 230; so also G. Maier, “Jesustradition im 1. Petrusbrief,” in *Gospel Perspectives: The Jesus Tradition outside the Gospels*, vol. 5, ed. D. Wenham [Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984], 91–92). Best is more convincing in this instance (“*Gospel Tradition*,” 110–11). Maier also sees an allusion to Matt 22:15–22 (p. 92).

599 Against Elliott, *ἐλεύθεροι* does not refer to the social and legal status of those addressed (*1 Peter*, 496).

600 J. Green, *1 Peter*, 75.

601 It is not clear here that Peter draws on Isa 53–54. Contra Egan, *Ecclesiology and the Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 128–29.

602 Luther recognized this long ago (*Commentary on Peter & Jude*, 123). See also Holloway, *Coping with Prejudice*, 181–82.

603 E. Best wrongly suggests that Peter introduces a different “verb to preserve the rhythm of his sentence” (“*1 Peter II.4–10—a Reconsideration*,” *NovT* 11 [1969]: 274), but he fails to see that fear is directed only to God in *1 Peter*.

604 So Campbell, *Honor, Shame, and the Rhetoric of 1 Peter*, 121–23; T. W. Martin, *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*, SBLDS 131 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 204–5; S. E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*, BLG 2 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 54, 227; S. Snyder, “*1 Peter 2:17: A Reconsideration*,” *FNT* 4 (1991): 211–15.

605 Rightly E. Bammel, “*The Commands in 1 Peter II.17*,” *NTS* 11 (1964–65): 280; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 498; Légasse, “*1 Pierre 2.13–17*,” 384; Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 164, n. 44.

606 Bammel proposes a chiasm (“*1 Peter II.17*,” 280). We can accept a chiasm if we see the injunctions at the beginning and the end as framing the entire verse (Elliott, *1 Peter*, 499), but the verse isn’t strictly a chiasm (rightly T. Williams, *Good Works in 1 Peter*, 229–30).

607 So N. Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, NIBC (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1992), 80.

608 Contra Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 187–88.

609 So also P. H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 103, n. 14.

610 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 130.

611 L. R. Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 76.

612 Rightly Horrell, *Becoming Christian*, 231–34.

613 Against Warren Carter, “Going All the Way? Honoring the Emperor and Sacrificing Wives and Slaves in 1 Peter 2:13–3:6,” in *A Feminist Companion to the Catholic Epistles and Hebrews*, ed. A.-J. Levine with M. M. Robbins, *Feminist Companion to the New Testament and Early Christian Writings* 8 (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 14–33. Carter argues that the readers are encouraged here to participate in the imperial cult, and in calling for submission to the government the author does not think there are any exceptions. Against this, see T. Williams, *Good Works in 1 Peter*, 206–9.

614 Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 190.

615 Rightly T. Williams, *Good Works in 1 Peter*, 228.

616 Jobes, *1 Peter*, 185; cf. J. Green, *1 Peter*, 80.

617 Holloway, *Coping with Prejudice*, 183.

618 J. W. Aageson, “1 Peter 2.11–3.7: Slaves, Wives, and the Complexities of Interpretation,” in *A Feminist Companion to the Catholic Epistles and Hebrews*, ed. A.-J. Levine with M. M. Robbins, *Feminist Companion to the New Testament and Early Christian Writings* 8 (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 43.

619 So L. Thurén, *Argument and Theology in 1 Peter: The Origins of Christian Paraenesis*, JSNTSup 114 (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1995), 140; Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 128. But J. Green (*1 Peter*, 78) takes this too far in saying that Peter “refers” to all believers in addressing slaves.

620 On the nonretaliation theme in 1 Peter see M. H. Schertz, “Nonretaliation and the Haustafeln in 1 Peter,” in *The Love of Enemy and Nonretaliation in the New Testament*, ed. W. M. Swartley (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992), 258–86.

621 See S. S. Bartchy, “Slavery: NT,” *ABD* 6.66.

622 J. A. Harrill, “Slavery,” *DNTB*, 1125.

623 Harrill, “Slavery,” 1126.

624 Jobes, *1 Peter*, 188.

625 Jobes, *1 Peter*, 188.

626 The word *δεσπότης* is used elsewhere of slave owners (cf. 1 Tim 6:1–2; Titus 2:9). Bechtler thinks non-Christian masters are in view (*Following in His Steps*, 165). They probably were the majority, but we cannot rule out the possibility that a few of the masters were believers.

627 Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 189.

628 Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 189.

629 Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 171.

630 Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 151–52.

631 E.g., Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 116; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 138; Forbes, *1 Peter*, 86; D. Daube, “Participle and Imperative in I Peter,” in E. G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 482–83; S. Snyder, “Participles and Imperatives in 1 Peter: A Re-examination in the Light of Recent Scholarly Trends,” *FNT* 8 (1995): 197.

632 Cf. C. Bigg, *The Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1901), 142; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 194. Campbell maintains that the subsequent participles depend on all of 2:11–17 rhetorically and on *ἀπέχεσθαι* in 2:11 grammatically (*Honor, Shame, and the Rhetoric of 1 Peter*, 124). Jobes suggests that we have a periphrastic with the imperative of *εἶμι* implied (*1 Peter*, 200–201). But the problem with this view is that such a use of imperative with the imperative of

εἰμὶ is not well grounded (see T. B. Williams, “Reconsidering the Imperatival Participle in 1 Peter,” *WTJ* 73 [2011]: 64–65).

633 So also J. W. C. Wand, *The General Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, WC (London: Methuen, 1934), 79–80; Grudem, *1 Peter*, 125; Holloway, *Coping with Prejudice*, 183–84.

634 Rightly K. H. Schelke, *Der Petrusbriefe—Der Judasbrief*, HTKNT (Freiburg: Herder, 1980), 80; Bigg, *Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 142; Beare, *First Peter*, 121; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 116; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 138; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 195; Davids, *First Peter*, 106; Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 170. Contra Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 131.

635 Calvin rightly saw that there were exceptions to the injunction that slaves should submit to their masters (*Catholic Epistles*, 86).

636 The term *σκολιοίς* in the OT denotes those who are wicked and considered to be morally bankrupt (Deut 32:5; Ps 77:8; Prov 2:15; 4:24; 8:8; 16:26, 28; 21:8; 22:5, 14; 23:3; 28:18; Job 9:20; cf. Wis 1:3).

637 I owe this reference to Elliott, *1 Peter*, 521.

638 Harrill, “Slavery,” 1125.

639 See B. Bauman-Martin, “Feminist Theologies of Suffering and Current Interpretations of 1 Peter 2:18–3:9,” in *A Feminist Companion to the Catholic Epistles and Hebrews*, ed. A.-J. Levine with M. M. Robbins, *Feminist Companion to the New Testament and Early Christian Writings* 8 (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 69–70.

640 Bauman-Martin, “Feminist Theologies of Suffering and Current Interpretations of 1 Peter 2:18–3:9,” 70–72. In this instance, doing good will cause more conflict. Against Kathleen E. Corley, who interprets the letter as saying that male and female slaves should submit to rape (“1 Peter,” in *Searching the Scriptures*, vol. 2: *A Feminist Commentary*, ed. E. S. Fiorenza with the assistance of A. Brock and S. Matthews [New York: Crossroad, 1994], 353).

641 So Michaels, *1 Peter*, 142; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 196.

642 So Michaels, *1 Peter*, 135; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 196–97; D. W. Kendall, “The Literary and Theological Function of 1 Peter 1:3–12,” in *Perspectives on 1 Peter* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1986), 119; E. J. Richard, “The Functional Christology of First Peter,” in *Perspectives on 1 Peter* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1986), 137; Campbell, *Honor, Shame, and the Rhetoric of 1 Peter*, 143; Elliott, “Reception of 1 Peter 2:18–25,” 188.

643 Some commentators see such a meaning in this verse as well (e.g., Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 197–98; Davids, *First Peter*, 107).

644 The unusual meaning for *συνείδησις* provoked some scribes to make changes, but the genitive *θεοῦ* is strongly attested (cf. *TCGNT* 619).

645 This interpretation of *συνείδησις* is the majority view. Cf. J. Moffatt, *The General Epistles: James, Peter, and Jude*, MNTC (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1928), 126; Best, *1 Peter*, 119; Wand, *Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 80; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 116–17; Cranfield, *I & II Peter and Jude*, 83; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 140; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 196. Contra Selwyn, *First Peter*, 177.

646 Cf. Elliott, “Reception of 1 Peter 2:18–25,” 189–90; *1 Peter*, 518, 520; Selwyn, *First Peter*, 176; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 116; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 139–41; Campbell, *Honor, Shame, and the Rhetoric of 1 Peter*, 61; Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 191–92. Contra Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 195–96, 199; Martin, *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*, 59; Watson, *First Peter*, 68–69. Although Bechtler

rightly sees that divine approval is in view, he wrongly sees a reference to present approval, but the focus is on future reward.

647 T. B. Williams argues that grace should be understood in the context of gift giving and the convention of reciprocity in the Greco-Roman world. Grace here, then, represents God's gift of grace and the reciprocal response of believers ("Reciprocity and Suffering in 1 Peter 2, 19–20: Reading *χάρις* in Its Ancient Social Context," *Bib* 97 [2016]: 421–39). Williams's interpretation is possible and fascinating. I am not convinced, however, since *κλέος*, contrary to Williams, fits within the semantic range of the word "reward." Words like "reputation" or "fame" or "praise" (*ἔπαινος*) may also designate one's final reward (cf. Rom 2:29; 13:3; 1 Cor 4:5; 1 Pet 1:7; 2:14).

648 Rightly Witherington, *1–2 Peter*, 152.

649 For support of the idea that Peter uses Jesus tradition here, see Gundry, "*Verba Christi*," 341; "Further *Verba*," 226; Best (in cautious agreement), "Gospel Tradition," 106; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 135–36, 139.

650 The verb *ὑπομενεῖτε* in both instances is in the future tense. Some manuscripts have the present tense (e.g., \mathfrak{P}^{72} , $2^{\mathfrak{A}}$, Ψ , 69, 323, 614, 945, 1241, 1739), but the future is preferable both on the grounds of external evidence (\mathfrak{A} , A, B, C, P, 049, etc.) and as the harder reading (cf. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 134). The basic meaning remains unchanged in either case.

651 The word for "beaten" (*κολαφιζόμενοι*) is replaced by the more general "punish" (*κολαζόμενοι*), but the former is clearly original. Van Unnik argues from Greek parallels that the word "sinning" (*ἁμαρτάνοντες*) means "doing wrong" in a secular sense, not sinning against God ("1 Classical Parallel to I Peter II.14 and 20," in *Sparsa Collecta: The Collected Essays of W. C. van Unnik. Part Two: I Peter, Canon, Corpus Hellenisticum, Generalia*, NovTSup 30 [Leiden: Brill, 1980], 106–10). Perhaps Peter would not have made a distinction between these two notions.

652 Supporting the idea that *εἰς τοῦτο* points backward are Wand, *Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 81; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 142; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 198; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 523. Grudem, on the other hand, thinks *τοῦτο* refers to trusting God (*1 Peter*, 128).

653 E.g., D. E. Hiebert, "Following Christ's Example: An Exposition of 1 Peter 2:21–25," *BSac* 139 (1982): 33. There is, however, no allusion to baptism (contra Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 118).

654 T. P. Osborne rightly observes that Peter does not merely summon believers to suffer, "but to perseverance in good actions even when unjust suffering accompanies these actions" ("Guide Lines for Christian Suffering: A Source-Critical and Theological Study of 1 Peter 2, 21–25," *Bib* 64 [1983]: 390).

655 Some scholars have detected an early Christian hymn or creedal formula in vv. 21–25 (K. Wengst, *Christologische Formeln und Lieder des Urchristentums* [Gütersloh, Germany: Gerd Mohn, 1972]; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 204–7; R. Bultmann, "Bekenntnis und Liedfragmente im ersten Petrusbrief," *ConBNT* 11 [1947]: 12–13; D. Hill, "'To Offer Spiritual Sacrifices . . . ' [1 Peter 2:5]: Liturgical Formulations and Christian Paraenesis in 1 Peter," *JSNT* 16 [1982]: 53–56), but the support for this is not compelling (see Michaels, *1 Peter*, 136–37). Osborne rightly argues that the features of the text are better explained by the view that Peter applied the message of Isaiah 53 to his readers ("Guide Lines for Christian Suffering," 381–408; cf. also Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 167–68). For cogent arguments against seeing a hymn here, see Elliott, *1 Peter*, 548–50.

656 The word *ὅτι* is clearly causal here.

657 A variant reading inserts *απεθανεν* (ϩ⁸¹, ⳨, Ψ, 623, 2464, and some others), but both internal (the theme of suffering in 1 Peter) and external evidence (ϩ⁷², A, B, C, 33, 81, 614, 1739, and others) support the term *ἔπαθεν*. It is also difficult to discern whether *ὑμῶν*, *ὑμῖν* are original or *ἡμῶν*, *ἡμῖν*. The second person is preferable, given the second person plural verb that follows, and the external evidence also inclines one to the reading in NA²⁸.

658 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 198–99.

659 The participle *ὑπολιμπάνων* designates result or purpose (see Forbes, *1 Peter*, 90). Aageson (“1 Peter 2.11–3.7,” 46) suggests that the example of Christ is problematic since it can justify abuse. But Peter reflects on situations, as with Christ’s suffering, where options were limited and there was little choice for slaves and women who suffered.

660 Dryden emphasizes that the whole of Christ’s sufferings and death are exemplary even though Christ’s suffering can also be distinguished from the sufferings of believers (*Theology and Ethics in 1 Peter*, 178–91).

661 O. Cullmann thinks the Servant of the Lord is fundamental in Petrine theology (*Christology of the New Testament* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963], 75).

662 For a good discussion of the whole question, see Egan, *Ecclesiology and the Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 133–34.

663 Achtemeier tries to distinguish the two by saying that the point of Isa 53:7 is silence rather than retaliation (*1 Peter*, 200), but the two themes belong together and should not be segregated.

664 So Hill, “Spiritual Sacrifices,” 55.

665 See esp. J. Piper, *Love Your Enemies* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991).

666 Defending “himself” are Bigg, *Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 146; Wand, *Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 82; Selwyn, *First Peter*, 179–80; his cause (Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 121), his enemies (Michaels, *1 Peter*, 147).

667 M. Dubis draws a connection between 2:23 and 4:19 because a number of similar terms and concepts are used in the two verses (*Messianic Woes in 1 Peter: Suffering and Eschatology in 1 Peter 4:12–19*, SBL 33 [New York: Peter Lang, 2002], 178–82). He concludes from this that 2:23 not only refers to Jesus entrusting himself to God but also to God’s judgment of Jesus on the cross (cf. 2:24–25). Contra Dubis, v. 23 lacks any notion of God’s judging Jesus. The substitutionary character of Jesus’s death is communicated in vv. 24–25.

668 Rightly Harink, *1 & 2 Peter*, 84. Contra Goppelt, who denies any reference to future judgment (*1 Peter*, 212). We see the same theme in Rom 12:19–20; see T. R. Schreiner, *Romans*, 2nd ed., BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2018), 654–57.

669 Peter’s dependence on Isaiah probably explains the shift from the second person to the first person here. A few manuscripts, not surprisingly, insert the second plural, but the textual evidence overwhelmingly supports the first-person plural, and it also represents the harder reading.

670 Contra Schelke, *Der Petrusbriefe—Der Judasbrief*, 85.

671 See Kelly’s helpful comments on these matters (*Peter and Jude*, 122–23). Cf. also Elliott, *1 Peter*, 532.

672 See the helpful and more detailed discussion in M. Williams, *The Doctrine of Salvation in the First Letter of Peter*, SNTSSM 149 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 103–9; cf. Witherington, *1–2 Peter*, 157.

673 Rightly Michaels, *1 Peter*, 149; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 202–3.

674 Michaels rightly argues that in using the word ἀπογενόμενοι Peter does not use the metaphor of death as Paul did in Romans 6. The participle here means “departing from” (*1 Peter*, 148–49). Cf. also Selwyn, *First Peter*, 181; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 123; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 535; M. Williams, *The Doctrine of Salvation in the First Letter of Peter*, 109–13. Osborne thinks it means “die” in this context (“Guide Lines for Christian Suffering,” 400–401), but such a reading is unpersuasive since Peter does not speak of dying to sin but of being separated from *sins*.

675 Support for the latter by a number of manuscripts is an example of assimilation to Isa 53:5. Egan suggests that the change in verbs can be ascribed to Peter’s memorizing the text, although he is not dogmatic about the solution he proposes (*Ecclesiology and the Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 136–38).

676 So McCartney, “The Use of the Old Testament in the First Epistle of Peter,” 93.

677 K. D. Liebengood thinks there is an allusion here to the shepherd theme in Zechariah 9–14, and particularly to Zech 10:2 in the LXX, which says there is no healing for those who sinned (*Eschatology in 1 Peter: Considering the Influence of Zechariah 9–14*, SNTSMS 157 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012], 100–2). Liebengood makes a fascinating case for the notion that Zechariah 9–14 is the substructure for Peter’s eschatological understanding.

678 Cf. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 149–50; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 214–15; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 124.

679 The MT and some other significant manuscripts (ⲩ⁷², C, P, Ψ, 33, 1739) support the reading πλανώμενα. The masculine plural πλανώμενοι is to be preferred (Ⲱ, B, 1505, and some others) since the neuter plural was likely a correction to fit with πρόβατα.

680 This allusion is noted by Michaels, *1 Peter*, 150; cf. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 204. Dubis detects an allusion to the shepherd, wandering, and return motifs in Ezek 34 (*1 Peter 4:12–19*, 57–58).

681 Matt 26:31; Mark 14:27; John 10:2, 11–12, 14, 16; Heb 13:20; cf. John 21:15–17; Rev 7:17. But see Osborne, who thinks the reference is possibly to the Father (“Guide Lines for Christian Suffering,” 403–5).

682 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 54–55; so also Elliott, *1 Peter*, 559. It does not follow, then, that slaves and women are addressed because of their large numbers. Contra Michaels, *1 Peter*, 122.

683 So Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 126.

684 The word is lacking in a few manuscripts, but it is original and supported by most of the manuscript tradition.

685 So Michaels, *1 Peter*, 156; Witherington, *1–2 Peter*, 161. J. R. Slaughter thinks the term has a broader frame of reference, indicating that wives, like slaves, should submit themselves for the sake of the Lord (“Submission of Wives [1 Pet. 3:1a] in the Context of 1 Peter,” *BSac* 153 [1996]: 68); so also Elliott, *1 Peter*, 553.

686 The comparison to the previous two texts is not established by ὁμοίως but the repetition of the verb “submit.”

687 Slaughter, “1 Pet. 3:1a,” 70; Witherington, *1–2 Peter*, 162; Spencer, “Peter’s Pedagogical Method in 1 Peter 3:6,” 109.

688 So many commentators, e.g., Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 142.

689 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 209. Spencer holds a view similar to Achtemeier's ("Peter's Pedagogical Method in 1 Peter 3:6," 111).

690 For the status of women in the Greco-Roman world, see Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 206–7.

691 J. R. Slaughter, "Winning Unbelieving Husbands to Christ (1 Pet 3:1b–4)," *BSac* 153 (1996): 199; cf. Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 127. Bechtler argues that the admonitions are directed particularly to wives with unbelieving husbands (*Following in His Steps*, 166).

692 It is not clear that the term implies active and overt opposition to the gospel (contra Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive*, 99).

693 E.g., Cranfield, *I & II Peter and Jude*, 88–89; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 208–11. Goppelt argues that submission is not part of the order of creation and contradicts the fundamental equality of women (*I Peter*, 218–19). It is required, he contends, because of custom. Kelly, on the other hand, thinks the command derives from the creation order (*Peter and Jude*, 127).

694 For a helpful discussion of the view of wives and women in the culture of Peter's day, see Elliott, *1 Peter*, 553–58, 585–99. Contra Elliott, I believe Peter's words are normative for today's world.

695 For the Jewish antecedents to the term, see D. Daube, "Κερδαίνω as a Missionary Term," *HTR* 40 (1947): 109–20. After the particle ἵνα we expect a subjunctive instead of the future κερδηθήσονται. Boyer shows, however, that the future and subjunctive overlap. Further, he rightly argues that the future does not suggest that the conversion of unbelieving husbands is guaranteed. We have a purpose clause here, not a promise (cf. Mark 14:2; Luke 20:10; Gal 2:4–5; 4:17, where indicatives after ἵνα are equivalent to subjunctives). See J. L. Boyer, "The Classification of Subjunctives: A Statistical Study," *GTJ* 7 (1986): 3–19.

696 For a different reading of this text, see J. G. Bird, *Abuse, Power and Fearful Obedience: Reconsidering 1 Peter's Commands to Wives*, LNTS 442 (London: T&T Clark, 2011). Bird writes from a feminist, postcolonial, and materialist perspective and argues that the instructions here subjugate women instead of freeing them. Readers need to read 1 Peter with a critical eye, realizing that the author was himself part of a male-dominated culture that affected his admonitions. Bird raises important questions about how texts like this have been used to abuse and mistreat women. She rejects objective readings of the text since all of us have our own social location. I concur that no one comes to a text neutrally, and I approach Peter's words as the authoritative word of God, and thus I come to the text from a different perspective from Bird. Still, she raises questions that are important and need to be considered, although this commentary can only deal with such matters briefly.

697 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 206.

698 Schelke rightly sees marriage as a creation ordinance (*Der Petrusbriefe—Der Judasbrief*, 88). It is interesting to note, given current debates, that Calvin believed husbands were the head of their wives and yet argued at the same time for mutual submission (*Catholic Epistles*, 147). He apparently believed that husbands were the authority in a relationship, but such authority did not mean that husbands did not concede to the wishes of their wives when such was fitting. That Calvin was not thinking of mutual submission in the same terms as modern egalitarians is clear by his immediately succeeding words, where he argued that sometimes parents should occasionally

submit to children. Clearly, Calvin did not think that such occasional bending to the desires of children subverted the authority of parents.

699 Rightly Slaughter, “1 Pet. 3:1a,” 70.

700 The textual evidence is rather evenly divided between the present and aorist forms of the participle, but the meaning is not affected significantly in either instance. Perhaps the present participle stems from 2:12. The participle could be construed as causal, temporal, or as means. All three make sense (so also Forbes, *1 Peter*, 99).

701 So also Beare, *First Peter*, 128; Best, *1 Peter*, 125; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 158; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 210; Schelke, *Der Petrusbriefe—Der Judasbrief*, 88; contra Slaughter, “1 Pet 3:1b–4,” 207; Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 143.

702 Slaughter, “1 Pet 3:1a,” 72–73.

703 Rightly Slaughter, “1 Pet 3:1b–4,” 203.

704 *Conj. praec.* 19, *Mor.* 140D (the translation is taken from Elliott, *1 Peter*, 557–58). For the importance of the gods for social cohesion in Rome, see Polybius (*Poly* 6.56.6–8) and Cicero (*Nat. d.* 2.8), as cited by Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 5, n. 14. So also Michaels, *1 Peter*, 157; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 211; Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive*, 84–85; B. Winter, “‘Seek the Welfare of the City’: Social Ethics according to 1 Peter,” *Them* 13 (1988): 93.

705 Cf. also Jobes, *1 Peter*, 186; J. Green, *1 Peter*, 93; T. Williams, *Good Works in 1 Peter*, 205–6, although I think Williams exaggerates the level of subversion here.

706 So Jobes, *1 Peter*, 203.

707 Jobes, *1 Peter*, 204.

708 Bauman-Martin, “Feminist Theologies of Suffering and Current Interpretations of 1 Peter 2.18–3:9,” 73.

709 Bauman-Martin, “Women on the Edge,” 266. So also Jeannine K. Brown, “Silent Wives, Verbal Believers: Ethical and Hermeneutical Considerations in 1 Peter 3:1–6 and Its Context,” *Word and World* 24 (2004): 400.

710 See C. E. J. Hodge, “‘Holy Wives’ in Romans Households: 1 Peter 3:1–6,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary Feminist Thought* 4 (2010): 1–24, see esp. pp. 3–14.

711 See the excellent discussion in Egan, *Ecclesiology and the Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 155–58.

712 Jobes, *1 Peter*, 204.

713 See D. Scholer, “Women’s Adornment: Some Historical and Hermeneutical Observations on the New Testament Passages,” *Daughters of Sarah* 6 (1980): 4–5; Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive*, 101–2. Campbell argues that the women in Peter’s community were inclined to dress ostentatiously or seductively, and hence Peter responds to such a situation (*Honor, Shame, and the Rhetoric of 1 Peter*, 154).

714 Seneca, *Ep.*; *Helv.* 16.3–4; *Ben.* 1.10.2; 7.9.4–5; Dio Chrysostom, *Ven.* 7.117; Juvenal, *Satire* 6.457–63; 490–511; Plutarch, *Mor.*, *Conj. praec.* 141E; Epictetus, *Ench.* 40; Tacitus, *Ann.* 3.53; Ovid, *Am.* 3.130–49.

715 Hilary of Arles says, “There is nothing wrong with these ornaments in themselves, but they are unnecessary extras for the believer and should be avoided” (*James, 1–2 Peter, 1–3 John, Jude*, ACCS [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000], 98).

716 Note already the wise comments on this matter by Calvin, *Catholic Epistles*, 96. It does not follow necessarily from the exhortation that many wealthy women were in the churches (rightly Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 221; contra Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 129; Beare, *First Peter*, 129). Still, the exhortation implies that at least some of the women were upper class (so Davids, *First Peter*, 117–18; Batten, “Neither God nor Braided Hair,” 497; T. B Williams, *Persecution in 1 Peter: Differentiating and Contextualizing Early Christian Suffering*, NovTSup 145 [Leiden: Brill, 2012], 119–20 [although he cautions that some of the women with such adornment may not have been in the wealthiest class]).

717 Rightly Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive*, 101–2; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 160; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 212.

718 Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 221.

719 Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 130.

720 So Beare, *First Peter*, 129–30; Best, *1 Peter*, 126; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 214.

721 Achtemeier wrongly understands their holiness only in terms of their membership in the people of God, and not their behavior (*1 Peter*, 214). Such a reading misses the emphasis of the verse since Peter focuses on their character here, not their righteousness by faith.

722 So Best, *1 Peter*, 126; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 164; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 214.

723 Rightly Beare, *First Peter*, 130; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 215.

724 Supporting an instrumental participle is Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 215.

725 Dijkman fails to note this point in his discussion (“1 Peter,” 267–68).

726 So Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 215, n. 138. Richard simply departs from the meaning of the term and offers the meaning “show respect” (*Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 133). He provides no lexical evidence for his interpretation, and hence his interpretation is not credible.

727 Goppelt recognizes the connection here (*1 Peter*, 224, n. 44).

728 Egan sees an allusion to Isa 54:1, 4 (*Ecclesiology and the Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 158–64), but the connection between the two texts is not clear. The words “children” and “fear” are too common to suggest a link.

729 McCartney makes the same point: “Although Gen 18:12 does not give in itself a direct example of Sarah’s obedience, the fact that even in this negative instance in Sarah’s life she referred to Abraham as ‘my lord’ would have indicated to Peter, and it did to his contemporaries, that submission was her *customary attitude* toward Abraham” (“The Use of the Old Testament in the First Epistle of Peter,” 146–47; cf. also J. R. Slaughter, “Sarah as a Model for Christian Wives [1 Pet. 3:5–6],” *BSac* 153 [1996]: 360).

730 Against Davids, who says that the exegesis here would satisfy Peter’s readers, even though it violates contemporary standards of interpretation (*First Peter*, 121). Campbell goes even further, saying that Peter “seems to misapply her story” (*Honor, Shame, and the Rhetoric of 1 Peter*, 159). Sarah may have been amused at the prospect of having children at such an advanced age, but even in the midst of her laughter she referred to Abraham respectfully.

731 M. Kiley, “Like Sara: The Tale of Terror behind 1 Peter 3:6,” *JBL* 106 (1987): 689–92. D. I. Sly’s attempt to read the Petrine account in light of the exegesis of Philo and Josephus is unpersuasive (“1 Peter 3:6b in the Light of Philo and Josephus,” *JBL* 110 [1991]: 126–29); cf. also Watson, *First Peter*, 75. T. W. Martin rightly says about Sly’s view that “she offers no proof that the

author of 1 Pet relied upon such traditions” (“The TestAbr and the Background of 1 Pet 3, 6,” *JBL* 90 [1999]: 141). Spencer’s interpretation bears similarities to Kiley’s because she also thinks Gen 12:11–20 is the likely background (“Peter’s Pedagogical Method in 1 Peter 3:6,” 113–18). She notes a number of parallels between 1 Peter and Gen 12, such as Abraham and Sarah were aliens in Egypt, Sarah’s beauty, Abraham’s disobedience in traveling to Egypt, and Sarah’s obedience. Abraham, however, was not disobedient in the same sense intended in 1 Peter since in chapter 3 the husbands are clearly unbelievers, and so the parallel is forced in this instance. Possibly there is an allusion to Sarah being an heir, but one wonders if Sarah’s suffering is viewed as vicarious and if Abraham’s prayer for Pharaoh is alluded to in 1 Pet 3:7. Contrary to Spencer, the only clear allusion is to Gen 18:12. In discussing Kiley’s view, T. W. Martin points out the problem with the view shared by him and Spencer. In appealing to Genesis 12 (and 20) they wander from the evidence of the text, supplying a background that is not clearly in view since Sarah never calls Abraham “lord” in these texts (“The TestAbr and the Background of 1 Pet 3, 6,” 140). Martin’s own solution, that Peter draws on T. Ab., cannot be clearly established (see his defense of the view on pp. 141–46). Cf. Senior, *1 Peter*, 83; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 205–6. Egan notes that the problem with seeing a reference to the *Testament of Abraham* is the late date of the latter (*Ecclesiology and the Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 158, n. 22).

⁷³² Carter, “Going All the Way?,” 29, 31–32. See also C. C. Kroeger, “Toward a Pastoral Understanding of 1 Peter 3:1–6 and Related Texts,” in *A Feminist Companion to the Catholic Epistles and Hebrews*, ed. A.-J. Levine with M. M. Robbins, *Feminist Companion to the New Testament and Early Christian Writings* 8 (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 85.

⁷³³ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 205.

⁷³⁴ Rightly Carson, “1 Peter,” 1036.

⁷³⁵ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 206.

⁷³⁶ C. Reeder, “1 Peter 3:1–6: Biblical Authority and Battered Wives,” *BBR* 25 (2014): 527–28.

⁷³⁷ Reeder, “1 Peter 3:1–6: Biblical Authority and Battered Wives,” 533–34.

⁷³⁸ Bauman-Martin, “Feminist Theologies of Suffering and Current Interpretations of 1 Peter 2.18–3:9,” 73. She (p. 75) envisions a situation where a slave woman is asked to have sex by her master but resists and is beaten and perhaps raped. Her endurance shows her resistance to the culture of the day, and her Christian faith taught her that her suffering was unjust, and in the midst of her suffering, she found solace from the church and strength from Christ. Corley, on the other hand, thinks wives are counseled to endure sexual abuse, just as Sarah was exposed to such in Pharaoh’s household (“1 Peter,” 353). I think Bauman-Martin’s view is more compelling, and she points out that the admonition to abstain from fleshly desires in 1 Pet 2:11 supports her reading (“Women on the Edge,” 270).

⁷³⁹ So Slaughter, “1 Pet. 3:5–6,” 361; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 573. Kelly wrongly sees a “specific reference” to baptism (*Peter and Jude*, 131).

⁷⁴⁰ Beare suggests a conditional clause but appears inclined to understand the participles as instrumental or manner (*First Peter*, 130–31).

⁷⁴¹ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 216. Michaels sees them as imperative (*1 Peter*, 166–67). T. W. Martin thinks the participles designate purpose (“The TestAbr and the Background of 1 Pet 3, 6,” 144). Both of these latter suggestions are unlikely.

⁷⁴² Michaels, *1 Peter*, 166–67; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 216; van Unnik, “Good Works in 1 Peter,” 100.

- 743 So Bigg, *Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 153–54; Goppelt, *I Peter*, 224.
- 744 See Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 91–92. Forbes (*1 Peter*, 102–3) takes them as result.
- 745 Michaels says that all believers are children of Sarah (*1 Peter*, 166). Certainly all believers should do good, but Michaels goes beyond the intent of the text in saying that Peter sees all believers as Sarah’s children.
- 746 See Michaels, *1 Peter*, 167.
- 747 See the discussion in T. Williams, *Persecution in 1 Peter*, 317–22. Hence, unbelieving husbands seem to be the focus here (so Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 165).
- 748 Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, 93.
- 749 Cf. Bauman-Martin, “Women on the Edge,” 271–72.
- 750 Jobes, *1 Peter*, 211.
- 751 Jobes, *1 Peter*, 212. Jobes rightly says that what submission looks like in our culture, at least in part, is “culturally defined. A woman who is active outside the home or a married woman appearing in public without the escort of her husband or other male relative does not scandalize our society as it did in the first century. Peter wisely did not spell out in specific terms what it means for a Christian wife to submit to her husband or for a Christian husband to live considerately with his wife. The apostle laid down the principles and left the details to be worked out between the spouses. The church today is right to uphold a biblical order within marriage that mirrors the relationship of Christ and his church, but it should also follow Peter’s wisdom and refrain from trying to specify what that must look like in every case” (p. 212).
- 752 Claire Smith’s words here come from an interview with *Books at a Glance*, accessed at <https://www.booksataglance.com/author-interviews/interview-with-claire-smith-author-of-gods-good-design-what-the-bible-really-ways-about-men-and-women>.
- 753 Bechtler observes that the admonition to husbands undermines Balch’s view that the household code served an apologetic purpose (*Following in His Steps*, 167–68). Peter is scarcely calling on husbands to assimilate to cultural norms. Nor is it evident that we have a polemic here against wives who adopted an egalitarian agenda (rightly Elliott, *1 Peter*, 584).
- 754 Even though Lea does not argue that husbands should submit to wives, he overreads the connective here (“*1 Peter—Outline and Exposition*,” 34). Elliott rightly observes that the connective is loose and that Peter would not be thinking of husbands submitting to wives (*1 Peter*, 574).
- 755 Kelly sees a reference to sexual intercourse (so also McKnight, *1 Peter*, 186) in the term *συννοικοῦντες* (*Peter and Jude*, 132), but this is unlikely in context (cf. B. Reicke, “Die Gnosis der Männer nach I. Ptr 3:7,” in *Neutestamentliche Studien für Rudolf Bultmann zu seinem siebenzigsten Geburtstag*, 2nd ed., BZNW 21 [Berlin: Töplemann, 1957], 299). The word can refer to sexual relations (Deut 22:13; 24:1; 25:5), or living with someone in marriage, without the emphasis being on sexual union (e.g., Gen 20:3; Judg 14:20; 2 Mac 1:14; Sir 25:8, 16; 42:9–10; Isa 62:5).
- 756 Contra Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 217, who, in effect turns it into imperative. Rightly Selwyn, *1 Peter*, 483; Goppelt, *I Peter*, 226; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 167; Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 93; Forbes, *1 Peter*, 103.
- 757 Bechtler thinks husbands should know their wives are weaker vessels (*Following in His Steps*, 174–75; cf. also Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 93–94). Against Jobes (*1 Peter*, 207–8), it isn’t clear

that unbelieving wives are also considered here.

⁷⁵⁸ So also Spicq, *Les Épîtres de Saint Pierre*, 123; D. Senior, “The Conduct of Christians in the World (2:11–3:12),” *RevExp* 79 (1982): 435–36; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 218. Contra Richard, who thinks the knowledge is the husband’s superior intellectual ability relative to wives (*Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 136–37). Nowhere do the canonical Scriptures teach that men are intellectually superior to women. Therefore, Richard’s interpretation should be rejected.

⁷⁵⁹ Kelly correctly observes that husbands are not called upon to submit to their wives but to exercise their authority properly (*Peter and Jude*, 132).

⁷⁶⁰ The first use of ὡς here is not concessive (contra Reicke, “Gnosis,” 302).

⁷⁶¹ The meaning of the term in 1 Thess 4:4 is debatable, although I incline to the view that wives are mentioned there as well.

⁷⁶² Bigg, *Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 155; Wand, *Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 93; Grudem, *1 Peter*, 144; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 217.

⁷⁶³ Contra Campbell, *Honor, Shame, and the Rhetoric of 1 Peter*, 164. Against Corley (“1 Peter,” 353), who thinks this designation reflects the notion that “women were of a lower order of humanity than men.” She concludes that drawing parallels between Christ’s suffering and the suffering of women justifies abuse and violence and encourages passivity (p. 354). She says, “Of all the Christian texts, the message of 1 Peter is the most harmful in the context of women’s lives” (p. 355) because suffering is commended for its own sake and it ends up supporting patriarchal structures. See my discussion of 1 Pet 3:1–6 for a better alternative.

⁷⁶⁴ Neither, contra Grudem, does he refer to being weaker in terms of delegated authority (*1 Peter*, 144).

⁷⁶⁵ This view has an ancient pedigree. See Hilary of Arles in *James, 1–2 Peter, 1–3 John, Jude*, ACCS (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000), 100. So also Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 133; Cranfield, *I & II Peter and Jude*, 91; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 169; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 217; Davids, *First Peter*, 122–23; Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, 98. Elliott agrees but then observes that modern science has since disproved Peter’s contention (*1 Peter*, 577–78). Against Elliott, Peter refers here to brute strength and does not intend to say that men are stronger than women in every conceivable way. Luther suggests that women are weaker physically and emotionally (*Commentary on Peter & Jude*, 140).

⁷⁶⁶ Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, 94. N. T. Bott is too specific in limiting weaker vessel to inability to give birth (“Sarah as the ‘Weaker Vessel’: Genesis 18 and 20 in Peter’s Instructions to Husbands in 1 Pet 3:7,” *TrinJ* 36 [2015], 243–59).

⁷⁶⁷ In this context, however, he thinks only of wives, not other female members of the household (contra Reicke, “Gnosis,” 302; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 216). Rightly Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 94–95.

⁷⁶⁸ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 209.

⁷⁶⁹ The participle ἀπονέμοντες should be construed as a participle of manner (see Forbes, *1 Peter*, 104). Cranfield mistakenly concludes that showing honor is equivalent to submission (*I & II Peter and Jude*, 91). Husbands are to honor their wives as equals, but this is not the same as saying that husbands are to submit to wives since the latter is never commanded in the NT.

⁷⁷⁰ In some manuscripts we find the nominative συγκληρονόμοι (A, C, P, Ψ, MT) instead of the dative συγκληρονόμοις (P⁷², P⁸¹, 2^x, B, 33, 69, 232, 141, 1739). The external evidence supports the

latter, and contextually it makes better sense to say that wives are coheirs instead of stressing that husbands are coheirs.

771 Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 175.

772 Reicke, “Gnosis,” 303. Reicke (pp. 297–98) also defends the nominative *συγκληρονόμοι* instead of the dative *συγκληρονόμοις*.

773 C. D. Gross argues, however, that the wives in view here probably are unbelievers, arguing that both grammar and the rest of the household code in 1 Peter (2:18–3:6) point to such a conclusion (“Are the Wives of 1 Peter 3.7 Christians?,” *JSNT* 35 [1989]: 89–96). This interpretation is unlikely since wives are almost surely in view in the term “coheirs.” Gross thinks the shift from the singular to the plural makes this view “extremely awkward.” But shifts from the singular to the plural are found elsewhere in exhortations to men and women (e.g., Eph 5:22–24, 28; 1 Tim 2:8–15).

774 An allusion to Isa 54:3, 17, however (contra Egan, *Ecclesiology and the Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 165–66) is not clear.

775 The genitive should be construed appositionally, “grace that consists in life” (Michaels, *1 Peter*, 169; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 21; Beare, *First Peter*, 132; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 134; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 580). Elliott rightly remarks that Peter does not conclude from this that men and women are equal in every sense, and hence a modern egalitarian agenda cannot be read out of Peter’s words.

776 It is improbable that Peter says the prayers of both men and women are hindered. Against Calvin, *Catholic Epistles*, 100; Beare, *First Peter*, 132; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 228; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 171; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 581; Davids, *First Peter*, 123, n. 20 [possibly]; Schelke, *Der Petrusbriefe—Der Judasbrief*, 92; Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 183–84.

777 What we have here is not a summary of what precedes but the conclusion for 2:11–17 (Michaels, *1 Peter*, 174, though he also identifies it as the conclusion of 2:18–3:7).

778 J. J. J. van Rensburg argues that *δὲ* with *τὸ τέλος* signals the conclusion to 2:11–3:7 (“The Use of Intersentence Relational Particles and Asyndeton in 1 Peter,” *Neot* 24 [1990]: 288).

779 Bechtler argues that in these verses Peter modifies and softens the hierarchical ethic of his day (*Following in His Steps*, 171–76). He is correct in seeing that the relationship between husbands and wives is to be leavened with love, and in that sense the patriarchy of the ancient world is modified.

780 Some scholars think the similarities between Pauline and Petrine paraenesis suggest the literary dependence of the latter upon the former when we compare a text such as Rom 12:9–17 with 1 Pet 3:8–12. Evidence for such dependence, however, is not compelling (cf. Selwyn, *First Peter*, 407–13; Piper, “Hope as the Motivation of Love,” 218–19).

781 Against Achtemeier, it is difficult to believe that the adjectives relate back to the imperatives in 2:17 (*1 Peter*, 222). Hence, the adjectives could be construed as imperatival (Davids, *First Peter*, 124), or more likely there is an implied imperative *ἔστέ*.

782 So also Forbes, *1 Peter*, 107–8.

783 The majority text reads *φιλόφρονες* (“courteous”), but the variant is clearly secondary.

784 See Elliott, *1 Peter*, 605; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 215.

785 Bauckham sees a chiasm in which v. 8 matches 11b, 9 = 11b, 9a = 11a, 9b = 10b, and 9c = 10a (“James, 1 Peter and 2 Peter, Jude,” 312).

786 So McKnight, *1 Peter*, 201.

787 So Piper, “Hope as the Motivation of Love,” 220–22; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 224.

788 Cf. Gundry, “*Verba Christi*,” 342; Gundry, “Further *Verba*,” 226; Goppelt, “Jesus,” 100; Piper, “Hope as the Motivation of Love,” 220–22; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 224; against Best, “Gospel Tradition,” 105.

789 Jobes, *1 Peter*, 217.

790 The participles ἀποδιδόντες and εὐλογοῦντες are both to be explained as imperatival. So Daube, “Participle,” 483; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 136; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 223; Snyder, “Participles and Imperatives in 1 Peter,” 195; Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 98, 108–9. Their distance from other main verbs precludes their dependence on them. Therefore Achtemeier’s (*1 Peter*, 223) view that they depend on the imperatives in 2:17 cannot be sustained.

791 Rightly Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 224; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 218.

792 Jobes, *1 Peter*, 218.

793 For a forward reference see Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 137; Davids, *First Peter*, 126–27.

794 So Piper, “Hope as the Motivation of Love,” 224–28; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 178; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 224; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 609–10; Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 99; Forbes, *1 Peter*, 109.

795 Rightly Michaels, *1 Peter*, 179; Spicq, *Les Épîtres de Saint Pierre*, 127.

796 Cf. Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 237–38; Best, *1 Peter*, 130; T. Williams, *Good Works in 1 Peter*, 250–54.

797 Selwyn thinks some changes of the OT in Peter can be explained by citations from memory (*First Peter*, 25), while Piper thinks the changes here are intentional (“Hope,” 226). The matter, however, is complex since the textual tradition of the Greek Psalter must also be taken into consideration. Egan appeals to the variants in the Greek textual tradition of the psalm, concluding, therefore, that the changes do not come from Peter himself (*Ecclesiology and the Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 167–69; P. T. Egan, “Did Peter Change Scripture? The Manuscript Tradition of Greek Psalms 33–34 and 1 Peter 3:10–12,” in *Die Septuaginta—Entstehung, Sprache, Geschichte: 3. Internationale Fachtagung veranstaltet von Septuaginta Deutsch (LXX.D), Wuppertal 22–25. Juli 2010*, ed. S. Kreuzer, M. Meiser, and M. Sigismund [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012], 505–28).

798 Bauckham says, “1 Peter was by no means content to relay isolated scriptural texts which came to him in the tradition, but studies whole passages of Scripture . . . in a way which combined christological-prophetic interpretation and paraenetic application” (“James, 1 Peter and 2 Peter, Jude,” 313). So also McCartney, “The Use of the Old Testament in the First Epistle of Peter,” 102–3. See the programmatic work of C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures* (New York: Scribners, 1952), 78–82. Even though W. Bornemann overemphasizes the role of Ps 34, he rightly discerns that it plays a critical role in the writing of the letter (“Der erste Petrusbrief—eine Taufrede des Silvanus?,” *ZNW* 19 [1919]: esp. 147–51. See E. Gréaux, “The Lord Deliver Us: An Examination of the Function of Psalm 34 in 1 Peter,” *RevExp* 106 [2009]: 603–13. Cf. W. L. Schutter, *Hermeneutic and Composition in 1 Peter*, WUNT 2/30 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989], 44–49). But in my judgment Schutter underplays the significance of Ps 34 so that the truth is somewhere between Bornemann and Schutter.

799 So most commentators. E.g., Cranfield, *I & II Peter and Jude*, 96; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 138; Reicke, *The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude*, 105; Piper, “Hope as the Motivation of Love,” 226–27; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 180; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 226; Lea, “I Peter—Outline and Exposition,” 35; Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 155; Schelke, *Der Petrusbriefe—Der Judasbrief*, 95; Watson, *First Peter*, 81. Grudem wrongly places the blessing in this life (*1 Peter*, 148–49; so also Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 141; Calvin, *Catholic Epistles*, 104).

800 Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 236–37; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 226; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 223–24; S. M. Christensen, “Solidarity in Suffering and Glory: The Unifying Role of Psalm 34 in 1 Peter 3:10–12,” *JETS* 58 (2015): 343–44.

801 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 182.

802 The manuscript evidence is rather evenly divided over whether $\delta\acute{\epsilon}$ should be included. It is probably original and was omitted because it is lacking in the LXX.

803 Some manuscripts add the remaining words from Ps 34:16, “to destroy their memory from the earth.” Others add “to destroy them from the earth.” The additions are secondary, but they remind us that the punishment in view, from Peter’s perspective, is eternal and definitive.

804 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 226.

805 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 227.

806 Some think the “Lord” here, as in the OT context, probably refers to God rather than Christ (Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 227). Bauckham argues that “Lord” refers to Christ since Peter, when he cited Ps 34 in 2:3, clearly identifies the Lord as Christ (“James, 1 Peter and 2 Peter, Jude,” 313). Bauckham’s argument is persuasive since he takes into account the Petrine usage of the psalm.

807 Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 139–40; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 229; van Rensburg, “Intersentence Relational Particles and Asyndeton in 1 Peter,” 289. Michaels translates it “then” or “and so” (*1 Peter*, 185; cf. also Tite, *Compositional Transitions in 1 Peter*, 95–97).

808 The link between the two verses is even clearer in Greek. Note the close proximity of the words $\kappa\alpha\kappa\acute{\alpha}$ and $\kappa\alpha\kappa\acute{\omega}\sigma\omega\nu$.

809 E.g., Davids, *First Peter*, 129–30; McKnight, *1 Peter*, 212–13; Marshall, *1 Peter*, 114; Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 106.

810 Rightly Cranfield, *I & II Peter and Jude*, 97–98; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 139–40; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 183–84; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 229; T. W. Martin, *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*, 214; Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 164; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 620; Schelke, *Der Petrusbrief—Der Judasbrief*, 100; Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 193.

811 Jobes, *1 Peter*, 226. Cf. the discussion in Egan, *Ecclesiology and the Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 172–74.

812 The word $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\theta\omicron\upsilon$ here is an objective genitive.

813 E.g., Lea, “I Peter—Outline and Exposition,” 35.

814 F. Neugebauer thinks there is also an emphasis on present reward here (“Zur Deutung und Bedeutung des 1. Petrusbriefes,” *NTS* 26 [1980]: 78–79).

815 Augustine says, “If you love the good, you will suffer no loss, because whatever you may be deprived of in this world, you will never lose God, who is the true Good” (in *James, 1–2 Peter, 1–3 John, Jude*, ACCS [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000], 103).

816 Michaels paraphrases the beginning of v. 14 as follows: “What is more (even if you should suffer . . .) you are blessed” (*1 Peter*, 185).

817 See also Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 140; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 231.

818 So Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 241.

819 Cf. Cranfield, *I & II Peter and Jude*, 98; Beare, *First Peter*, 137; Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 147.

820 Cf. Acts 4:1–22; 5:17–42; 7:54–8:3; 9:29–30; 12:1–24; 13:45; 14:1–6, 19, 22; 16:19–40; 17:5–9, 13–15; 18:12–17; 19:23–41; 1 Thess 3:1–5; 2 Thess 1:4; 2 Tim 3:11–12.

821 So Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 141; Selwyn, *First Peter*, 191; R. Omanson, “Suffering for Righteousness’ Sake (1 Pet 3:13–4:11),” *RevExp* (1982): 439; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 231; F. W. Danker, “1 Peter 1:24–2:17—a Consolatory Pericope,” *ZNW* 68 (1967): 100, n. 38. Michaels suggests that the optative provides emphasis so that the point is that even when believers suffer their future is better than unbelievers (*1 Peter*, 186).

822 The connecting word is δέ, but contextually we should discern an inference here.

823 For this interpretation see Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, 110; Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 108.

824 The pronoun αὐτῶν would then be a genitive of source (so also Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 232, n. 45). Or similarly it could be an objective genitive (Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 142; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 186–87; Forbes, *1 Peter*, 114–15). Calvin maintains that Peter shifts the meaning slightly from the original intention in Isaiah but argues that the difference in meaning is not significant in any case (*Catholic Epistles*, 106–7).

825 The words μηδὲ παραχθῆτε are omitted in a few manuscripts (P⁷², B, L) but are surely original. Perhaps Michaels is correct that they were omitted because of the similar ending on φοβηθῆτε (*1 Peter*, 183).

826 See the discussion in Egan, *Ecclesiology and the Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 175–77.

827 Jobes, *1 Peter*, 229.

828 McCartney observes that despite the minor differences between the OT and Peter, “the resultant force is actually quite similar. In both contexts the exhortation is on being afraid not of other people, but only of the Lord” (“The Use of the Old Testament in the First Epistle of Peter,” 95–96).

829 The majority text inserts θεόν instead of Χριστόν. The external evidence supports the latter (P⁷², N, A, B, C, Ψ, 33, 614, 1739), and perhaps scribes inserted θεόν because Christ was not in the LXX of Isa 8:13. See also *TCGNT* 622–23. Egan says that Christ “is inserted by the author in a radical reading of Scripture which equates the Christ with the Lord” (*Ecclesiology and the Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 177).

830 Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 142; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 187; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 229; Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 110; Carson, “1 Peter,” 1038.

831 Rightly Forbes, *1 Peter*, 115.

832 T. Williams, *Persecution in 1 Peter*, 313–14.

833 So Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 233, n. 54. Beare describes the adjective as imperatival (*First Peter*, 138).

834 E.g., Beare, *First Peter*, 138–39; P. A. Holloway, *Coping with Prejudice: 1 Peter in Social-Psychological Perspective*, WUNT 244 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 202–3.

835 See, e.g., Omanson, “Suffering,” 439; Selwyn, *First Peter*, 193; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 142–43; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 188; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 233; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 244.

836 Some manuscripts (²⋈, A, Ψ) insert ἀπαιτοῦντι instead of αἰτοῦντι. The latter is original, and it is possible that the former emphasizes the forcefulness with which believers are challenged (cf. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 228).

837 The words ἀπολογία and ἀπολογέομαι are also used of private controversies (cf. 1 Cor 9:3; 2 Cor 7:11; 12:19).

838 Horrell, *Becoming Christian*, 183–209.

839 So Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 143; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 233; Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 90–91.

840 Luther argues from this text that every believer needs to know God’s word individually (*Commentary on Peter & Jude*, 158–59).

841 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 234.

842 So Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 17.

843 Selwyn, *First Peter*, 194; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 189; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 233–34.

844 Rightly Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 244; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 143.

845 Rightly Michaels, *1 Peter*, 189.

846 Elliott, *1 Peter*, 627. Cf. also Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 164.

847 Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 245.

848 Most versions translate this clause as temporal (so also Reicke, *The Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism*, 110–11; Fink, “Use of *en hō* in 1 Peter,” 34; Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 161), but Dubis (*1 Peter Handbook*, 113) is probably right in understanding it in terms of reference since the verbs, as noted in 2:12, have two different temporal frames of reference. A number of witnesses substitute καταλαλοῦσιν ὑμῶν ὡς κακοποιῶν for καταλαλεῖσθε, but the former is almost certainly due to assimilation to 1 Pet 2:12.

849 So Michaels, *1 Peter*, 190.

850 Bechtler says that the shame of unbelievers is recognized by the believing community (*Following in His Steps*, 195), but this would afford little encouragement to a beleaguered church.

851 Cf. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 236; Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 151–52.

852 So Michaels, *1 Peter*, 190–91; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 623–33; T. Williams, *Persecution in 1 Peter*, 311–12.

853 E.g., Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 163; Omanson, “Suffering,” 440; Beare, *First Peter*, 140; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 237–38.

854 So Michaels, *1 Peter*, 191; cf. Michaels, “Eschatology in 1 Peter iii.17,” 394–401; T. W. Martin, *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*, 223.

855 Rightly Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 162–63; Horrell, *The Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 68–69. Horrell notes that the author would not speak of judgment as the cause of suffering.

856 Cf. Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 246.

857 Calvin rightly says our suffering is not due to chance but God's will (*Catholic Epistles*, 111).

858 Jobes, *1 Peter*, 233.

859 Campbell comments, "Peter's point is this: just as Christ who suffered innocently . . . was exalted to honor, so those who faithfully follow him can anticipate the divinely bestowed honor" (*Honor, Shame, and the Rhetoric of 1 Peter*, 179).

860 Cf. also R. T. France, "Exegesis in Practice: Two Examples," in *New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods*, ed. I. H. Marshall (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 266; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 243; W. J. Dalton, *Christ's Proclamation to the Spirits: A Study of 1 Peter 3:18-4:6*, AnBib 23 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1965), 111-12.

861 So Reicke, *The Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism*, 130-31 (who argues that believers should, like Jesus, proclaim the gospel); Selwyn, *First Peter*, 195; Thurén, *Argument and Theology in 1 Peter*, 164. Rightly Best, *1 Peter*, 139; W. J. Dalton, "1 Peter 3:19 Reconsidered," in *The New Testament Age: Essays in Honor of Bo Reicke*, 2 vols. (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1984), 1:97.

862 See, e.g., Wand, *Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 99-100; Selwyn, *First Peter*, 325-26; K. Shimada, "Formula," 158-59; R. Bultmann, "Bekenntnis und Liedfragmente im ersten Petrusbrief," ConBNT 11 (1947): 1-14; K. Wengst, *Christologische Formeln und Lieder des Urchristentums*, SNT 7, 2nd ed. (Gütersloh: Gütersloher/Mohn, 1974); Dalton, *Proclamation to Spirits*, 96-100. Kelly restricts the liturgical elements to vv. 18 and 22 (*Peter and Jude*, 147). See the more detailed discussion of Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 241-43; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 694-97.

863 Rightly Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 198-99.

864 Support for ἀπέθανεν includes \mathfrak{P}^{72} , \aleph , A, C, Ψ , 33, 1739, etc. (so Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 147-48). The word ἔπαθεν is supported by B, K, P, and the majority text.

865 So Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 239; Dalton, *Proclamation to Spirits*, 119-21; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 258-59.

866 N. T. Wright, "The Meaning of περι Ἄμαρτίας in Romans 8.3" in *Studia Biblica 1978: Sixth International Congress on Biblical Studies, Oxford, 3-7 April 1978*, vol. 3: *Papers on Paul and Other New Testament Authors*, ed. E. A. Livingstone, JSNTSup 3 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980), 453-59; also France, "Exegesis in Practice," 267.

867 Rightly Davids, *First Peter*, 135-36; Witherington, *1-2 Peter*, 181; M. Williams, *The Doctrine of Salvation in the First Letter of Peter*, 123-25; contra Dalton, *Proclamation to Spirits*, 122.

868 The manuscript tradition has a plethora of readings. Most variants read that Christ suffered or died for "our sins" or "your sins." Such elaborations are hardly surprising, and the concise "for sins" is to be preferred.

869 Manuscript tradition is divided in that a number read "us" rather than "you." Scribes were apt to confuse the two since they sounded the same. And scribes would be prone to use the first-person plural to include all believers. Thus, the second-person plural should be accepted as original.

870 Matt 26:41; Mark 14:38; Luke 24:39; John 3:6; 6:63; Rom 1:3-4; 2:28-29; 7:5-6; 8:4-9, 12-13; 1 Cor 5:5; 2 Cor 7:1; Gal 3:3; 4:29; 5:16-19; 6:8; Phil 3:3; Col 2:5; 1 Tim 3:16; Heb 9:13-14; 12:9.

871 The view that they are datives of reference (so Selwyn, *First Peter*, 196; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 151) does not differ remarkably from the idea that they are datives of sphere.

872 E.g., France, “Exegesis in Practice,” 267; cf. Dalton, *Proclamation to Spirits*, 134; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 645–46.

873 The verb is used eleven times in the NT and in eight out of the eleven instances refers to resurrection, but only here to Christ’s resurrection. A. T. Hanson wrongly concludes that if the text refers to the resurrection, then the resurrection is not a bodily one (“Salvation Proclaimed: I. 1 Peter 3.18–22,” *ExpTim* 93 [1982]: 101).

874 Rightly France, “Exegesis in Practice,” 267–68; Davids, *First Peter*, 136–37.

875 Cf. Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 117–18.

876 For a more detailed history of interpretation, see Reicke, *The Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism*, 7–51; Dalton, *Proclamation to Spirits*, 15–41.

877 Luther, *Commentary on Peter & Jude*, 166.

878 Augustine, *Letter*, 164. See J. S. Feinberg, “1 Peter 3:18–20, Ancient Mythology, and the Intermediate State,” *WTJ* 48 (1986): 303–36; J. H. Skilton, “A Glance at Some Old Problems in First Peter,” *WTJ* 58 (1996): 1–9; Wayne Grudem, “Christ Preaching through Noah; 1 Peter 3:19–20 in the Light of Dominant Themes in Jewish Literature,” *TrinJ* 7 (1986): 3–31.

879 Clement of Alexandria thought the reference was to righteous men and women who preceded Christ (*Strom.* 6.6.46–47; cf. *Ign. Magn.* 9:2; Justin, *Dial.* 72:4). So Calvin, *Catholic Epistles*, 114. Cyril of Alexandria teaches that Jesus grants a second chance to those who did not sin grievously while on earth. See James, *1–2 Peter, 1–3 John, Jude*, ACCS (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000), 107–8. The view of Severus of Antioch is ambiguous. It could be interpreted to refer to release from hell for those who had already believed in Christ, or alternatively he may be teaching a second chance for those in hell (see James, *1–2 Peter, 1–3 John, Jude*, ACCS [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000], 108).

880 Some understand the spirits to refer to those who perished during the flood (Cranfield, *I & II Peter and Jude*, 102; Cranfield, “I Peter iii.19 and iv.6,” 370) or to those who perished before the coming of Christ (cf. Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 153; E. Schweizer, “1. Petrus 4,6,” *TZ* 8 [1952]: 78).

881 Cranfield, *I & II Peter and Jude*, 104; Cranfield, “The Interpretation of I Peter iii.19 and iv.6,” *ExpTim* 69 (1957–58): 369–72; Goppelt, *I Peter*, 258–60; Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 203–6. Cf. Wand, who suggests that such mercy is likely extended to all who have lived (*Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 111–12). Hanson adds that mercy was offered during this interval to both human beings and evil angels (“1 Peter 3.18–22,” 102–3). Fink suggests the unusual view that Jesus’s spirit preached victory over the spirits in prison during the three hours he hung on the cross (“Use of *en hō* in I Peter,” 37–38). For a survey of the early church tradition of Jesus’s descent into hell, see Elliott, *1 Peter*, 706–10.

882 Cf. Witherington, *1–2 Peter*, 183–89.

883 McCartney essentially accepts this view but argues that Peter appealed to a legend to point to Christ (“The Use of the Old Testament in the First Epistle of Peter,” 175–76).

884 This is still the view of the majority of commentators. E.g., Selwyn, *First Peter*, 198–200; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 245–46; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 152–56; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 648–50; Davids, *First Peter*, 138–41; D. E. Hiebert, “The Suffering and Triumphant Christ: An Exposition of 1 Peter 3:18–22,” *BSac* 139 (1982): 146–58; A. J. Bandstra, “‘Making Proclamation to the Spirits in Prison’:

Another Look at 1 Peter 3:19,” *CTJ* 38 (2003): 120–21. Michaels argues that the “spirits” are the offspring of evil angels (i.e., the evil spirits often mentioned in the Gospels). He understands the “prison” to be their refuge, which Jesus declares now, as a result of his death and resurrection, to be under his sovereignty. The point is that the powers are now domesticated (*1 Peter*, 206–10). It is unclear, however, that the offspring of evil angels are specifically in view. Further, that φυλακῆ refers to a place of refuge is unattested in the literature (so Davids, *First Peter*, 141, n. 39). Even if the term bears that meaning in some instances, the similarity to 2 Pet 2:4 and Jude 6 suggests that the meaning is not “refuge” here (so McCartney, “The Use of the Old Testament in the First Epistle of Peter,” 170). If the imprisoned spirits refer to all demons and the imprisonment is metaphorical, this would also handle Feinberg’s objection that it seems strange that Christ would proclaim victory over only *some* angels (“1 Peter 3:18–20,” 329, 333). If Peter describes Jesus’s victory in metaphorical instead of literal terms, we do not need to discern the place in which the spirits were imprisoned since the tradition includes under the earth, to the ends of heaven and earth, and in the second of the seven heavens (see Feinberg, “1 Peter 3:18–20,” 270–71). France remarks, “Christ went to the prison of the fallen angels, not to the abode of the dead, and the two are never equated” (“Exegesis in Practice,” 271).

⁸⁸⁵ Cf. also Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 155–56; Dalton, *Proclamation to Spirits*, 159–61; France, “Exegesis in Practice,” 271; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 257–58; Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 158–59.

⁸⁸⁶ So most commentators (e.g., Dalton, *Proclamation to Spirits*, 145–50; Selwyn, *First Peter*, 198; Best, *1 Peter*, 142; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 154; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 207; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 255; “1 Peter 3:18–20,” 269–70; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 657; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 250–51). Reicke thinks the primary reference is to angels, although human beings are also included (*The Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism*, 52–70).

⁸⁸⁷ Cf. Matt 8:16; 10:1; 12:15; Mark 1:27; 3:11; 5:13; 6:7; Luke 4:36; 6:18; 7:21; 8:2; 10:20; 11:26; Acts 5:16; 8:7; 19:12–13; 1 Tim 4:1; Heb 1:14; 12:9; 1 John 4:1; Rev 16:13–14; cf. Heb 1:7. On four occasions πνεύματα appears to refer to spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:10; 14:12, 32; Rev 22:6), and four times in Revelation to what I believe is the Holy Spirit (1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6).

⁸⁸⁸ Michaels rightly objects that Feinberg’s view requires that the spirits were embodied when they heard Christ preach through Noah, although they are *now* disembodied (Feinberg, “1 Peter 3:18–20,” 320–21, 330). But this requires that the text move back in time, and no indication of such is supplied in the text (Michaels, *1 Peter*, 210–11). The same point is rightly made by Reicke, *Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism*, 96–97.

⁸⁸⁹ Rightly Reicke, *Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism*, 53, 66–67; Dalton, *Proclamation to Spirits*, 157–59; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 256; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 657–58.

⁸⁹⁰ For a survey of this tradition see Elliott, *1 Peter*, 697–705. For a thorough sifting of the traditions that informed 1 Peter, see Chad T. Pierce, *Spirits and the Proclamation of Christ: 1 Peter 3:18–22 in Light of Sin and Punishment Traditions in Early Jewish and Christian Literature*, WUNT 2/305 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011). Pierce argues that a confluence of traditions influenced 1 Peter so that influence cannot be confined to a single tradition. He also argues that the spirits are not limited to fallen angels but also include cosmic forces and human evil as well. Pierce’s study represents a careful sifting of tradition and reminds us that dogmatism in interpreting this text should be avoided. I suggest a reference to angels is still the most convincing. It is clear that both Jude (Jude 6) and 2 Peter thought angels were in view (2 Pet 2:4).

891 The view that Christ descended into hell has a long history. Those supporting such a view, however, vary in terms of their understanding of the text as a whole. See Justin, *Dial.* 72:4; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 6.6.45–46; Athanasius, *Ep. Epict.* 5:26–27. So also Beare, *First Peter*, 145–47; S. E. Johnson, “The Preaching to the Dead,” *JBL* (1960): 48–51. If one understands Christ descended into hell to mean merely that he was among the dead, then the text clearly teaches that he was dead before his resurrection, but the word translated “went” (*poreutheis*) shows that the focus isn’t on what Christ did when he was dead since the term celebrates his victory as the risen and ascended Lord.

892 Elliott rightly says that such a view “would be completely inconsistent with the outlook of 1 Peter, which envisions divine judgment according to one’s deeds (1:17; 4:17–18) and condemnation of the disobedient (2:7–8; 4:17–18). . . . And any notion of a possibility of conversion or salvation after death would seriously undermine the letter’s consistent stress on the necessity of righteous behavior here and now” (*1 Peter*, 661–62).

893 Cf. Dalton, *Proclamation to Spirits*, 184–86.

894 For a brief synopsis of this tradition see Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 171–75.

895 Dalton argues that evidence from 2 Peter indicates the author understood 1 Pet 3:19; 4:6 to refer to the proclamation of victory over angels and the preaching of the gospel to human beings who have since died, respectively (“Light from 2 Peter,” 551–55). This constitutes early evidence in support of the interpretation offered here. See also Dalton’s commentary on the impact of Jewish tradition (*Proclamation to Spirits*, 163–71).

896 The notion that Christ preached between his death and resurrection has been widely held. See Beare, *First Peter*, 145; Reicke, *The Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism*, 116–18; Best, *1 Peter*, 140; Cranfield, *I & II Peter and Jude*, 103–4.

897 Many scholars believe the gospel was proclaimed by Christ either personally or by means of the Holy Spirit through Noah. E.g., Best, *1 Peter*, 144; Grudem, *1 Peter*, 160. Some argue that Christ only announced salvation to Noah’s generation, OT saints, or all the righteous (cf. Spicq, *Les Épîtres de Saint Pierre*, 138). Reicke gives cogent arguments, defending the view that Christ rather than Enoch did the preaching (*The Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism*, 98–100).

898 So Dalton, *Proclamation to Spirits*, 150–57; Selwyn, *First Peter*, 200; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 260, 262; France, “Exegesis in Practice,” 271; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 659–62.

899 Dalton, *Proclamation to Spirits*, 186–91.

900 Cf. Reicke, *The Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism*, 64; Dalton, *Proclamation to Spirits*, 166; France, “Exegesis in Practice,” 270. But Reicke does not draw the same conclusion as Dalton and France regarding *πορευθεῖς* (see p. 65 in Reicke). Where Christ proclaimed this victory is debated, see the discussion in Dalton, *Proclamation to Spirits*, 177–84.

901 Some scholars believe the original reading was Ἐνώχ and that scribes accidentally introduced an error through haplography. See, e.g., E. J. Goodspeed, “Some Greek Notes: IV; Enoch in I Peter 3:19,” *JBL* 73 (1954): 91–92. The reading has no manuscript support, and a reference to Enoch does not cohere with the rest of the context (see Reicke, *The Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism*, 94; Dalton, *Proclamation to Spirits*, 134–36; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 253–54).

902 So Reicke, *The Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism*, 103–15; Fink, “Use of *en hō* in I Peter,” 36–37; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 652; Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 170; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 242–43.

- 903 The phrase is probably reference instead of temporal in 3:16. See the commentary there.
- 904 Defending a causal reading is Skilton, "Some Old Problems in First Peter," 4.
- 905 Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 255–56.
- 906 Dalton, *Proclamation to Spirits*, 137–39; Forbes, *1 Peter*, 123–24. France sensibly argues that this refers to the activity of the risen Christ ("Exegesis in Practice," 268–69). Feinberg thinks that Christ as a spirit, without his body, preached either through Noah ("1 Peter 3:18–20," 318) or after his death and before his resurrection (cf. Beare, *First Peter*, 144–45). Kelly identifies the antecedent similarly, but he adopts the view that Christ proclaimed victory over demonic spirits after his resurrection (*Peter and Jude*, 152–56).
- 907 So O. S. Brooks, "1 Peter 3:21—the Clue to the Literary Structure of the Epistle," *NovT* 16 (1974): 303.
- 908 Rightly Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 252; Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 119. Michaels observes that a temporal interval between vv. 18 and 19 is preserved in almost all the interpretations proposed for ἐν ᾧ (*1 Peter*, 205–6).
- 909 We should not see a reference here to Christ's human spirit.
- 910 Again Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 253.
- 911 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 262. Skilton takes it as temporal ("Some Old Problems in First Peter," 2). But Dubis (*1 Peter Handbook*, 122) may be right in taking it as attributive.
- 912 Cf. the discussion in Dalton, *Proclamation to Spirits*, 204–5.
- 913 Rightly Michaels, *1 Peter*, 213.
- 914 Kelly, e.g., sees a reference to the eighth day as Christ's resurrection and the baptism of believers on Easter (*Peter and Jude*, 159). He falls prey to reading later church history into 1 Peter at this point. For a similar attempt to read the text symbolically, see Reicke, *The Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism*, 140–41.
- 915 Rightly France, "Exegesis in Practice," 272; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 213; Dalton, *Proclamation to Spirits*, 190; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 265.
- 916 K. Marcar argues that Noah and the traditions associated with the flood functioned as a type and correspondence of the end time that has begun in Jesus Christ. She sees four parallels: (1) Noah's righteousness points to Christ's greater righteousness; (2) the evil of the flood generation points to the evil of pagan society in Peter's day and to the final judgment; (3) both Noah and believers in Peter's day preach to their contemporaries; and (4) Noah and those in Asia Minor call on people to repent ("In the Days of Noah: *Urzeit/Endzeit* Correspondence and the Flood Tradition in 1 Peter 3–4," *NTS* 63 [2017]: 550–66). It is not clear, however, that Peter draws a parallel between Noah's and Christ's righteousness. Furthermore, the preaching of Noah is not clear in 1 Peter but appears in 2 Pet 2:5, but perhaps it is implied in 1 Peter.
- 917 So Dalton, *Proclamation to Spirits*, 207; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 212; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 264; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 665. Elliott rightly observes that εἰς was being used for ἐν in the NT period. Against D. Cook, "1 Peter iii.20: An Unnecessary Problem," *JTS* 31 (1980): 73, 75. Cook thinks Peter was reflecting on Gen 7:6–7 and conceives of Noah and his family entering into the ark from the waters of the flood that had already begun to inundate the land. Grudem also opts for the translation "into" (*1 Peter*, 161).

918 So Best, *1 Peter*, 147; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 159; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 213; France, “Exegesis in Practice,” 273; Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 124; Forbes, *1 Peter*, 127.

919 So Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 265; Cook, “1 Peter iii.20,” 75–76; Selwyn, *First Peter*, 202–3; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 265–66; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 667. Davids is confusing in presenting his own view, saying first that water is not “the means of salvation” and then later that “Peter’s thought seems to view the water as a means of salvation” (*First Peter*, 142, n. 44).

920 So McCartney, “The Use of the Old Testament in the First Epistle of Peter,” 177.

921 McCartney, “The Use of the Old Testament in the First Epistle of Peter,” 178.

922 So L. Thurén, *The Rhetorical Strategy of 1 Peter with Special Regard to Ambiguous Expressions* (Åbo: Academy Press, 1990), 114. Reicke says that Noah and his family were saved “from his dangerous environment, the disobedient beings of his time” (*The Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism*, 143).

923 Elliott opts for the dative ϕ here instead of δ arguing for a substitution on the basis of the similar sight and sound of the two terms (*1 Peter*, 668–70). But the external evidence overwhelmingly favors δ , and hence Elliott’s suggestion should be rejected.

924 The Greek pronoun δ in v. 21 most naturally goes back to the word “water” ($\psi\delta\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$), which is the word that immediately precedes the pronoun (so Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 176; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 213–14; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 266–67; Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 124; Forbes, *1 Peter*, 128). Others understand the pronoun to be more general, referring to the phrase that precedes (see Cook, “1 Peter iii.20,” 77; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 266; Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, 111; Beare, *First Peter*, 148 (though Beare prefers the reading ϕ to δ). Even more improbable is the view of F. C. Syngé, who understands v. 20 as parenthetical and thus connects δ to the death and resurrection of Christ (“1 Peter 3:18–21,” *ExpTim* 88 [1971]: 311).

925 The word $\alpha\nu\tau\acute{\iota}\tau\upsilon\pi\omicron\nu$ is understood as an adjective by some (“this analogous baptism now saves you,” Reicke, *James, Peter, and Jude*, 106; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 671; Dalton, *Proclamation to Spirits*, 212 [though Dalton does not concur with Reicke’s overall interpretation [pp. 213–14]; Forbes, *1 Peter*, 128), and this is the most likely reading. See Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 125, though contrary to what is written in the book, he takes it as an accusative in apposition to $\acute{\upsilon}\mu\grave{\alpha}\varsigma$, and he communicated to me by email that the word “nominative” was an erratum. Selwyn thinks the reference is to people (“and water now saves you too, who are the antitype of Noah and his company” [*First Peter*, 203]). Brooks moves the period so that it is placed after $\alpha\nu\tau\acute{\iota}\tau\upsilon\pi\omicron\nu$. He translates the verse: “a few, that is, eight people were saved through water which even in reference to you (is) a pattern. Baptism now saves, not as . . .” (“1 Peter 3:21,” 291). Brooks’s view should be rejected since he is forced to take the pronoun $\acute{\upsilon}\mu\grave{\alpha}\varsigma$ in two different ways.

926 R. E. Nixon is unpersuasive when he argues that baptism refers primarily to suffering rather than to water baptism (“The Meaning of ‘Baptism’ in 1 Peter 3,21,” in *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur*, vol. 102, SE, vol. IV [Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1968], 437–41).

927 Contra Dalton, who fails to see that the image of death applies to believers (*Proclamation to Spirits*, 203).

928 So also Elliott, *1 Peter*, 674; Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 177.

929 So Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 267 (nonetheless Goppelt holds to a sacramental view; see p. 266); Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 267–68.

930 The two contrasting noun clauses (οὐ σαρκὸς ἀπόθεσις ρύπου ἀλλὰ συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς ἐπερώτημα εἰς θεόν) are appositional to the clause where ὁ functions as the subject. So France, “Exegesis in Practice,” 273; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 266.

931 E.g., Michaels, *1 Peter*, 215–16.

932 So Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 162.

933 Dalton, *Proclamation to Spirits*, 215–24; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 161–62; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 269; cf. also the more general view of Reicke, *The Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism*, 188; Witherington, *1–2 Peter*, 191.

934 Cf. Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 268; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 215; Davids, *First Peter*, 144, n. 49; D. Hill, “On Suffering and Baptism in I Peter,” *NovT* 18 (1976): 186–87; France, “Exegesis in Practice,” 281, n. 59; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 678–79; Senior, *1 Peter*, 105.

935 So Selwyn, *First Peter*, 204; Grudem, *1 Peter*, 163; Davids, *First Peter*, 144; France, “Exegesis in Practice,” 274; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 679.

936 Calvin emphatically rejects any notion that baptism alone saves (*Catholic Epistles*, 118–19).

937 So France, “Exegesis in Practice,” 275; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 255; Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, 110; J. Green, *1 Peter*, 137.

938 So Senior, “The Conduct of Christians in the World,” 72; Grudem, *1 Peter*, 163–64; Beare, *First Peter*, 149; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 217; Schweizer, “1. Petrus 4,6,” 82; H. Greeven, “ἔρωτάω, κτλ.,” *TDNT* 2:688–89; Schelke, *Der Petrusbriefe—Der Judasbrief*, 109; Witherington, *1–2 Peter*, 192–93.

939 So Fitzmyer, “First Peter,” 367; Dalton, *Proclamation to Spirits*, 224–29; G. C. Richards, “I Pet. iii.21,” *JTS* 32 (1930): 77; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 162–63; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 270–72; G. T. D. Angel, *NIDNTT* 2:880–81; Best, *1 Peter*, 148; Selwyn, *First Peter*, 205–6; Davids, *First Peter*, 145; D. H. Tripp, “Eperōtēma (I Peter 3:21): A Liturgist’s Note,” *ExpTim* 92 (1981): 267–70; Hill, “Spiritual Sacrifices,” 59; France, “Exegesis in Practice,” 275; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 679–80; Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 178.

940 In defense of this view from early reception history, see M. R. Crawford, “‘Confessing God from a Good Conscience’: 1 Peter 3:21 and Early Christian Baptismal Theology,” *JTS* 67 (2016): 23–37.

941 Alternatively, Brooks understands the phrase as a “declaration of the individual’s appropriate conscious awareness in reference to God” (“I Peter 3:21,” 294).

942 So Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 207. See his further objections, 207–8.

943 Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 207–8. Michaels suggests that the word εἰς following ἐπερώτημα might support “appeal” (*1 Peter*, 217).

944 Scholars who support the subjective genitive even though they may not agree on the meaning of the word ἐπερώτημα include Cranfield, *I & II Peter and Jude*, 106–7; Best, *1 Peter*, 148; Selwyn, *First Peter*, 205; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 216; Richards, “I Pet iii.21,” 77.

945 Supporting the objective genitive with this interpretation are Dalton, *Proclamation to Spirits*, 230–33; Grudem, *1 Peter*, 163; Beare, *First Peter*, 149; Moffatt, *James, Peter, and Jude*, 143; Schweizer, “1. Petrus 4,6,” 82; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 271–72; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 268–69; Schelke, *Der Petrusbriefe—Der Judasbrief*, 109; Senior, *1 Peter*, 105–6; Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 126. Of course, one may favor the interpretation “pledge” and still argue for an objective genitive (see Kelly, *Peter*

and Jude, 163). Contra to Campbell, believers are not asking to be honored or vindicated (*Honor, Shame, and the Rhetoric of 1 Peter*, 183), for the text links the plea to having a good conscience.

946 Some might object that believers do not ask God to cleanse their consciences and forgive their sins at baptism since they are already forgiven and cleansed before baptism. Such a view demands more than is warranted, for Peter is not delineating the exact moment when sins were forgiven.

947 Rightly Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 274; Selwyn, *1 Peter*, 208; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 164.

948 Van Rensburg, “The Use of Intersentence Relational Particles and Asyndeton in 1 Peter,” 297.

949 Michaels wrongly thinks that vv. 19–22 are skipped over when the argument resumes in v. 1 (*1 Peter*, 225).

950 See BDAG, 337; I. T. Blazen, “Suffering and Cessation from Sin according to 1 Peter 4:1,” *AUSS* 21 (1983): 30–32.

951 The point made here is not damaged by the fact that the noun *σάραξ* is connected to *θανατωθείς*.

952 E.g., Calvin, *Catholic Epistles*, 121; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 166; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 278; Davids, *First Peter*, 148, n. 2; Dalton, *Proclamation to Spirits*, 241; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 263.

953 So Michaels, *1 Peter*, 225–26; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 280; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 714; Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, 118, 20; Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 130; Forbes, *1 Peter*, 136. Elliott argues that the focus on action—ceasing from sinning—stands in favor of this option.

954 Achtemeier mentions the notion that one’s suffering could atone for sin but rightly rejects this as incompatible with Petrine theology (*1 Peter*, 279).

955 So Michaels, *1 Peter*, 226–29; Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, 120; cf. Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 167–68.

956 Bechtler says the verse is ambiguous and both Christ and believers are in view (*Following in His Steps*, 196–98).

957 Jobes, *1 Peter*, 263–64.

958 So Calvin, *Catholic Epistles*, 121; Beare, *First Peter*, 153; Dalton, *Proclamation to Spirits*, 244–48; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 168–69; Cranfield, *I & II Peter and Jude*, 108.

959 See Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 279–80.

960 Elliott, *1 Peter*, 716.

961 Rightly Blazen, “1 Peter 4:1,” 39–41.

962 So Grudem, *1 Peter*, 167; Schweizer, “1. Petrus 4,6,” 84; Omanson, “Suffering,” 445–46; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 280; Bigg, *Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 167; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 264–65; Dryden, *Theology and Ethics in 1 Peter*, 183.

963 The reference is not to physical suffering per se here but to undeserved suffering. Rightly Jobes, *1 Peter*, 264.

964 Nor is it likely that the term “suffer” here refers to death so that believers cease from sinning upon death (so Blazen, “1 Peter 4:1,” 27–50). Blazen mistakenly imports the meaning of “suffer” in terms of Christ’s specific suffering and reads the same meaning into the lives of believers.

965 The view supported here should be distinguished from the idea that suffering itself breaks the inclination to sin in a person's life since people may respond to suffering negatively. Neither is there any reference to Jewish martyr traditions here, where suffering atones for sin (rightly Elliott, *1 Peter*, 715).

966 Rightly Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 280; Bigg, *Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 167.

967 Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 169; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 281.

968 Nor is there any basis for understanding the word *σάρξ* here to be one's sinful inclinations. The text refers to the life in the body here (rightly Davids, *First Peter*, 150; Selwyn, *First Peter*, 210; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 281). Still, as Davids remarks, "Since the flesh is weak and fallen, it is the mode of existence in which the evil impulse in human beings operates" (p. 150).

969 The reference to the past life of the readers demonstrates that they were mainly Gentiles. Nor do the allusions and citations from the OT in *1 Peter* suggest otherwise (against Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, 121). Frequent reference to the OT is found in *1 Corinthians*, which was written mainly to Gentiles.

970 Michaels supports a reference to sexual sin (*1 Peter*, 231).

971 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 282, n. 84. Elliott suggests a possible reference to Dionysian feasts (*1 Peter*, 724).

972 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 282, n. 84.

973 So Elliott, *1 Peter*, 724.

974 Contrary to Jobes (*1 Peter*, 268). Certainly Jews committed sordid sins, but such sins were probably exceptional instead of typical.

975 So Michaels, *1 Peter*, 232–33; Fink, "Use of *en hō* in *1 Peter*," 35. Reicke takes it as causal (*The Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism*, 111). Elliott thinks it is circumstantial (*1 Peter*, 725). For reference, see Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 134.

976 The participle is probably causal. See Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 135.

977 So Michaels, *1 Peter*, 233; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 284.

978 Rightly Elliott, who notes that the other interpretation does not fit with how Peter uses participles elsewhere (*1 Peter*, 727). See also Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 136; Forbes, *1 Peter*, 140.

979 The focus is on reviling believers, not God, although God himself is reviled when his people are criticized (so Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 170–71).

980 See the excellent discussion in Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 284–85.

981 See S. R. F. Price, *Rituals and Power* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 78.

982 Perhaps we have a reversal of *1 Pet* 3:15–16 here (so Michaels, *1 Peter*, 234).

983 So Beare, *First Peter*, 155–56; Best, *1 Peter*, 154; Selwyn, *First Peter*, 213–14; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 172.

984 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 235; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 287–88; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 286; Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 172; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 730.

985 Davids, *First Peter*, 153.

986 Rightly Selwyn, *First Peter*, 214; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 238; Schweizer, "1. Petrus 4,6," 153; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 732. Forbes (*1 Peter*, 141) thinks it points both forward and backwards.

987 See the summary of views by Dalton, *Proclamation to Spirits*, 42–51.

988 Cf. McCartney, “The Use of the Old Testament in the First Epistle of Peter,” 172. This view was held by some of the church fathers. See Augustine, *James, 1–2 Peter, 1–3 John, Jude*, ACCS (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000), 113. Others taught that Jesus preached to those in hell. See Oecumenius and Theophylact in *James, 1–2 Peter, 1–3 John, Jude*, ACCS (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000), 114.

989 Rightly Reicke, *The Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism*, 205.

990 McCartney points to the shift in the meaning of the word *νεκρός* from one verse to another in Col 2:12–13 (“The Use of the Old Testament in the First Epistle of Peter,” 172). The change of meaning is clearer in Col 2:12–13, however, since in the first instance the reference is to Christ’s resurrection and the second is to the spiritual state of believers.

991 Cf. Bigg, *Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 170–71; Beare, *First Peter*, 156; Cranfield, *I & II Peter and Jude*, 110; “1 Peter iii.19 and iv.6,” 371–72; Goppelt, *I Peter*, 289; Schweizer, “1. Petrus 4,6,” 152–54; J. Green, *1 Peter*, 122, 127–31; Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 216. For a variant view see Reicke, *The Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism*, 205, 209. One does not have to see a connection between the two verses to support the proclamation of the gospel to the dead in 1 Pet 4:6. See, e.g., D. J. Horrell, “Who Are ‘the Dead’ and When Was the Gospel Preached to Them?: The Interpretation of 1 Pet 4.6,” *NTS* 49 (2003): 70–89. Against Horrell, it is possible that Petrine believers worried about the fate of dead believers in a context in which they were persecuted and reviled by unbelievers since the death of believers would suggest that Christian faith was pointless and useless. See the updating of Horrell’s essay in D. G. Horrell, *Becoming Christian: Essays on 1 Peter and the Making of Christian Identity*, LNTS 394 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 73–99.

992 Elliott, *1 Peter*, 731.

993 So Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 173–74; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 287; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 730.

994 Best argues that a second opportunity is not promised to persecutors but to others who have died without hearing the gospel. I have already noted that restricting the “dead” to such a category has no contextual basis. But there is another problem with this interpretation. It is difficult to see why Peter would suddenly bring up the fate of those who died without hearing the gospel and then just as quickly leave the subject. On Best’s reading, we would have a lightning bolt from out of the blue on the subject, and then just as suddenly the matter would be left behind. No plausible reason can be adduced as to why the matter is even addressed. Against Best, see Elliott, *1 Peter*, 731. On the whole question see, H. Yoshihara, “A Study of 1 Peter 3:18b–20 and 4:6: A Response to the Notion of Christ’s Postmortem Evangelism to the Unevangelized, a View Recently Advocated in Japan: Part 1 and 2,” *AJPS* 20 (2017): 183–97 and 20 (2017): 199–217.

995 Elliott, *1 Peter*, 731.

996 For this interpretation see Fitzmyer, “First Peter,” 367; Grudem, *1 Peter*, 170–71; Selwyn, *First Peter*, 354; Dalton, *Proclamation to Spirits*, 270–72; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 290–91; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 174–75; Davids, *First Peter*, 153–55; France, “Exegesis in Practice,” 265; Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 173–74; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 733–34; Senior, *1 Peter*, 117; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 272.

997 But it is unclear that their death was due to martyrdom (contra France, “Exegesis in Practice,” 265). The language is too vague to yield this conclusion.

998 Michaels adds a twist to this interpretation, arguing that it refers to all believers who have died throughout history (*1 Peter*, 236–37). This interpretation is possible, but it is more likely that Peter reflects on those who died in the churches addressed, attending to the specific concern of believers in Asia Minor. Michaels unconvincingly appeals to Hebrews (4:2, 6) to solve the problem, but what is necessary is evidence from *1 Peter*.

999 The two *κατά* phrases refer to the standpoint of human beings and God. So Selwyn, *First Peter*, 215–16; Dalton, *Proclamation to Spirits*, 274–75; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 238; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 288.

1000 Elliott, *1 Peter*, 737–38.

1001 Rightly Elliott, *1 Peter*, 738; Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 138.

1002 Rightly Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 287–88.

1003 Most commentators argue to the contrary here and see them as datives of sphere or reference (Best, *1 Peter*, 158; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 289; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 288).

1004 Cf. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 239.

1005 Rightly D. E. Hiebert, “Living in Light of Christ’s Return: An Exposition of *1 Peter* 4:7–11,” *BSac* 139 (1982): 244; contra T. W. Martin, *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*, 235–36.

1006 Cf. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 244.

1007 The preposition *εἰς* designates purpose here (so Elliott, *1 Peter*, 749; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 277).

1008 Jobes, *1 Peter*, 277.

1009 E.g., Michaels, *1 Peter*, 246; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 296–97; Daube, “Participle,” 484.

1010 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 295; so also Snyder, “Participles and Imperatives in *1 Peter*,” 196.

1011 The reflexive pronoun *ἑαυτοὺς* here means “one another,” and the latter meaning usually is communicated with the reciprocal pronoun *ἀλλήλους*.

1012 Possibly both constancy and fervency are in view (so Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 297), but more likely it is only the former. See M. Evang, “*Ἐκ καρδίας ἀλλήλους ἀγαπήσατε ἐκτενῶς*: Zum Verständnis der Aufforderung und ihrer Begründungen in *1 Petr* 1,22f.,” *ZNW* 80 (1989): 122; Witherington, *1–2 Peter*, 204. Donelson says fervency is the more common meaning (*I and II Peter and Jude*, 127).

1013 Some manuscripts (ϩ⁷², κ, P, 049, and the majority text) support the future *καλύψει* instead of the present *καλύπτει* (e.g., A, B, K, Ψ, 33, 81, 323, 614, 630, 1241, 1505, 1739). The former may have crept in from *Jas* 5:20, and it also may have occurred to scribes that the truth enunciated here fits well with the final judgment. The present tense should be accepted as original.

1014 So Spicq, *Les Épîtres de Saint Pierre*, 150; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 178; Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 179–80; Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 205. Michaels thinks the question is beside the point, arguing that Peter was thinking in community terms of “the giving and forgiving love that binds them together as a community in Christ” (*1 Peter*, 247).

1015 L. Kline adopts this meaning but understands Peter to have been saying that the one who shows mercy to others is also able to receive mercy from God (“Ethics for the End Time: An Exegesis of *1 Peter* 4:7–11,” *ResQ* 7 [1963]: 117).

1016 So most interpreters; e.g., Luther, *Commentary on Peter & Jude*, 179; Cranfield, *I & II Peter and Jude*, 114; Goppelt, *I Peter*, 298–99; Wand, *Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 114; Michaels, *I Peter*, 247; Best, *I Peter*, 159; Achtemeier, *I Peter*, 296; van Unnik, “Good Works in I Peter,” 107–8; Marshall, *I Peter*, 143.

1017 Jobes, *I Peter*, 279. See also the helpful comments of 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), 1039–40.

1018 Peter must have been depending on a tradition of Prov 10:12 that matches the MT since the meaning is changed significantly in the LXX.

1019 Cf. D. J. Moo, *The Letter of James*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 250–51.

1020 The participle ὄντες may be implied (so Achtemeier, *I Peter*, 296; Snyder, “Participles and Imperatives in 1 Peter,” 196), but more likely the imperative ἐστε is implied (Dubis, *I Peter Handbook*, 142).

1021 For the importance of hospitality in Jesus’s ministry, see Kline, “Ethics for the End Times,” 118.

1022 Jobes, *I Peter*, 280.

1023 The Greek participle functions as an imperative here (Michaels, *I Peter*, 249; Elliott, *I Peter*, 755).

1024 Elliott rightly argues, over against Collins, that the notion of humble service is found in the term (Elliott, *I Peter*, 755; J. N. Collins, *Diakonia: Re-interpreting the Ancient Sources* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1990]). Rightly A. D. Clarke, *Serve the Community of the Church: Christians as Leaders and Ministers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 233–45.

1025 So Goppelt, *I Peter*, 302; Best, *I Peter*, 160; Achtemeier, *I Peter*, 298.

1026 I understand λόγια θεοῦ to be the direct object here (so Beare, *First Peter*, 160; Selwyn, *First Peter*, 219; Goppelt, *I Peter*, 302; Achtemeier, *I Peter*, 298–99).

1027 So Bigg, *Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 176; Michaels, *I Peter*, 253; Schweizer, “1. Petrus 4,6,” 91.

1028 Luke 2:14; Rom 1:25; 11:36; 16:27; 2 Cor 11:31; Eph 3:21; Phil 4:20; 1 Tim 1:17; 2 Tim 4:18; Heb 13:21; Jude 25.

1029 See Best, *I Peter*, 161; Hiebert, “Living,” 252; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 181–82; Goppelt, *I Peter*, 306, n. 57; Achtemeier, *I Peter*, 299; Elliott, *I Peter*, 762.

1030 Jobes (*I Peter*, 283) suggests the ambiguity itself points to the equality of the Father and the Son.

1031 Cf. L. R. Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 134.

1032 M. Dubis argues that the conception of messianic woes plays a major role in 1 Peter as a whole and 4:12–19 in particular (*Messianic Woes in 1 Peter: Suffering and Eschatology in 1 Peter 4:12–19*, SBL 33 [New York: Peter Lang, 2002]). At times he overstates his case, but it seems correct to say that Peter refers to the distress and suffering that must precede the time of the end, and thus he may have been influenced by the tradition of the messianic woes. But see K. D. Liebengood who raises a number of cautions about such a thesis (*Eschatology in 1 Peter*:

Considering the Influence of Zechariah 9–14, SNTSMS 157 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012], 116–27).

1033 P. A. Holloway argues that 1 Pet 4:12 and following develops the consolation *topos* that nothing accidental has happened in the lives of the readers (“*Nihil inopinati accidisse*—‘Nothing Unexpected Has Happened’: A Cyrenaic Consolatory *Topos* in 1 Pet 4.12ff.,” *NTS* 43 [2002]: 433–48). Peter does console the readers, but the evidence for Cyrenaic influence is doubtful (see Liebengood, *Eschatology in 1 Peter*, 109–10). J. B. Green also observes that Cyrenaics lived for the present but Peter focuses on the future (*1 Peter*, THNTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007], 158).

1034 Liebengood, *Eschatology in 1 Peter*, 146.

1035 Michaels says that 4:12–5:11 elaborates and applies 4:7–11 to congregations ruled by elders (*1 Peter*, xxxix). It is unclear from the text, however, that 4:12–5:11 has such a specific purpose.

1036 It might be objected that 2:11 does not formally have an imperative, but the verb παρακαλέω and the infinitive constitute a command.

1037 Rightly L. Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 311; J. R. Michaels, *1 Peter*, WBC (Waco: Word, 1998), 258; J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude*, Thornapple Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 185; J. H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 769–70. Contrary to F. W. Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter: The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1947), 162–64.

1038 Beare, *First Peter*, 162–64.

1039 The “fiery ordeal” is probably a causal dative. So M. Dubis, *1 Peter: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, BHGNT (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2010), 146.

1040 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): 287; cf. also the comments of N. Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, EKKNT, 2nd ed. (Zürich: Benziger/Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1986), 213.

1041 Johnson, “Fire in God’s House,” 287–89. It is not as clear that the term is technical, designating the end-time tribulation (contra Dubis, *1 Peter 4:12–19*, 76–85).

1042 For the allusion to Zech 13:7–9, see especially Liebengood, *Eschatology in 1 Peter*, 153–54. He argues, however, that the trials don’t purify but test their faithfulness.

1043 Liebengood raises some objections to Johnson’s reading, which may show that Johnson presses his case too far (*Eschatology in 1 Peter*, 128–30). Against Liebengood, however, it is possible that Peter alludes to both Malachi and Zechariah here.

1044 I understand the preposition πρὸς to designate purpose. So also Michaels, *1 Peter*, 261; P. J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter*, Her (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 306; Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 147; G. W. Forbes, *1 Peter*, EGGNT (Nashville: B&H, 2014), 154.

1045 Satan may also be testing believers in their suffering, but he does so not to refine them but to destroy them (1 Pet 5:8; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 306).

1046 Dubis argues that testing is part of the messianic woes (*1 Peter 4:12–19*, 85–95).

1047 The term καθό seems to refer to degree (W. Grudem, *The First Epistle of Peter*, TNTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988], 178) rather than being causal (against Elliott, *1 Peter*, 774).

1048 The idea is that believers are imitating Christ in their suffering. So P. H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 166; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 262; Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 148. Thus, Peter does not refer to participating in Christ's sufferings sacramentally or mystically, nor is he thinking of Jesus's own sufferings. Dubis thinks a reference to messianic woes is in view (*1 Peter 4:12–19*, 97–117).

1049 So Michaels, *1 Peter*, 262; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 306; contra D. C. Parker, who also sees a reference to the present ("The Eschatology of 1 Peter," *BTB* 24 [1994]: 30). D. F. Watson wrongly limits what Peter says here to consequences (*First Peter*, PCNT [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012], 110).

1050 The "if" (εἰ) constitutes a real condition and should not be translated "since" or "when," for Peter wants them to reflect on the condition, even if he expected it to become a reality (contra Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 307).

1051 Cf. Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 186; J. Moffatt, *The General Epistles: James, Peter, and Jude*, MNTC (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1928), 157; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 307; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 779.

1052 As some commentators point out, the preposition ἐν is causal here (Elliott, *1 Peter*, 778–79; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 186; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 323).

1053 "That the letter assumes Christians had already been condemned to death, however, whether on the charge of murder or on the charge of being a Christian, seems highly unlikely. It is simply inconceivable that so grave a situation would not have been more clearly reflected in the letter" (S. R. Bechtler, *Following in His Steps: Suffering, Community, and Christology in 1 Peter*, SBLDS 162 [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998], 93–94).

1054 Some manuscripts add καὶ δυνάμεως, so that the text reads "the spirit of glory and the spirit of power and the spirit of God" (κ*, A, P, 33, 81, 323, 945, 1241, 1739, pm), but the shorter reading that deletes the phrase is to be preferred (ϣ⁷², B, K, L, Ψ, 049, 330, pm).

1055 According to this interpretation the τὸ preceding τῆς δόξης refers to the glory mentioned in v. 13.

1056 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 309, n. 66.

1057 Cf. also Goppelt, who understands the καί as ascensive, the Spirit of glory is the Spirit of God (*1 Peter*, 323; so also Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 187; Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 150). By the Spirit they now experience the glory that will be theirs eschatologically (so E. J. Richard, "The Functional Christology of First Peter," in *Perspectives on 1 Peter*, ed. C. H. Talbert [Macon: Mercer University Press, 1986], 137). Goppelt thinks the text echoes Num 11:25–26, where the Spirit rested on the seventy elders (cf. Exod 24:17; 29:43).

1058 P. H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 167–68, n. 10. See also Elliott, *1 Peter*, 782 (cf. also Forbes, *1 Peter*, 156–57), who thinks it should be translated "the divine Spirit of glory."

1059 Johnson suggests that there is also an allusion to the temple as Yahweh's resting place, where God's glory and Spirit dwell ("Fire in God's House," 289–90).

1060 The LXX says "the *Spirit of God*" (emphasis added). J. W. Pryor is unconvincing when he dismisses the clear allusion to Isa 11 and forges a link to the descent of God's glory upon Mount Sinai instead ("First Peter and the New Covenant [II]," *RTR* 45 [1986]: 49). At this point he forces the evidence in trying to sustain an exodus motif in 1 Peter.

1061 Some manuscripts have the intriguing addition *κατὰ μὲν αὐτοὺς βλασφημεῖται κατὰ δὲ ὑμᾶς δοξάζεται* (“in their eyes it is blasphemy, but in your eyes it is glory”; majority text, K, L, P, Ψ). Some scholars defend its authenticity, arguing that (1) the words were accidentally deleted because of the *-ται* ending, (2) that the *μὲν-δέ* construction fits Petrine style, (3) that the addition does not contribute much to the passage, and (4) that abrupt use of *αὐτοὺς* parallels *αὐτῶν* in 3:14 (cf. P. R. Rodgers, “The Longer Reading of 1 Peter 4:14,” *CBQ* 43 [1981]: 94; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 265). But external evidence favors its omission, and we probably have a gloss by an early scribe (see *TCGNT*, 625; Davids, *First Peter*, 168, n. 11).

1062 Forbes (*1 Peter*, 157) understands it as introducing a contrast with the previous verse.

1063 Contra Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 39; Dubis, *1 Peter 4:12–19*, 134. I am not denying that Christians *may* have been hauled into court. The point is that this text does not clearly indicate that they were taken to court. Peter’s language is rhetorical here (cf. Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 92).

1064 Nor is it clear that the admonitions against lawlessness signal the onset of the messianic woes (contra Dubis, *1 Peter 4:12–19*, 134–35).

1065 So Michaels, *1 Peter*, 267; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 310; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 784–85. But K. Erbes thinks the parallels in 1 Pet 2:12; 3:16; John 18:30 suggest that criminal activity is in view (“Was bedeutet ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος 1 Pt 4,15?,” *ZNW* 19 [1919–20]: 39).

1066 One of the suggestions of BDAG, 501.

1067 So E. G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 225; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 326; E. Schweizer, “1. Petrus 4,6,” *TZ* 8 (1952): 94; E. Best, *1 Peter*, NCB (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 165; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 267–68; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 188–89; Davids, *First Peter*, 169; J. H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 141–42; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 785–88.

1068 For the former see Moffatt, *James, Peter, and Jude*, 158; Beare, *First Peter*, 167; and for the latter Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 310–13; Erbes, “Was bedeutet?,” 40–44; J. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 137; Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 219–20.

1069 Elliott shows that when *ἀλλότριος* is used in compounds, the “other” refers to the object, not the subject of the word (*1 Peter*, 786). Hence, *ἀλλοτριπραγέω* refers to meddling in another’s affairs, so also *ἀλλοτριπραγία*. The term *ἀλλοτριφαγέω* means “to eat another’s food,” while *ἀλλοτριφρονέω* means “to be ill-disposed to another” (for these definitions see LSJ, 70–71). This evidence suggests, then, that *ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος* refers to meddling in or overseeing another’s affairs.

1070 Rightly Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 92. For an earlier interpretation defending “meddler,” see Theophylact in *James, 1–2 Peter, 1–3 John, Jude*, ACCS (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000), 119.

1071 Cf. E. J. Richard, who points out that Peter in other places in the epistle may have been warning believers about annoying unbelievers (*Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter: A Literary and Theological Commentary*, RNT [Macon: Smith & Helwys, 2000], 192–93).

1072 Brown, “Just a Busybody,” 561. See her entire discussion: J. K. Brown, “Just a Busybody? A Look at the Greco-Roman Topos of Meddling for Defining ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος in 1 Peter 4:15,” *JBL* 125 (2006): 549–68.

1073 See the discussion in Horrell, *Becoming Christian*, 167–69.

- 1074 BDAG, 440, 1090. For a helpful discussion of “Christian,” see Elliott, *1 Peter*, 789–91.
- 1075 For this reading, see Horrell, *Becoming Christian*, 197–209.
- 1076 Horrell, *Becoming Christian*, 183–209; T. B Williams, *Persecution in 1 Peter: Differentiating and Contextualizing Early Christian Suffering*, NovT Supp 145 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 179–297.
- 1077 J. Knox’s attempt to link the charges specifically with Pliny and Trajan’s correspondence must be judged as unsuccessful (“Pliny and 1 Peter: A Note on 1 Pet 4:14–16 and 3:15,” *JBL* 72 [1953]: 187–89). Rightly Elliott, *1 Peter*, 792–93.
- 1078 T. B. Williams, *Good Works in 1 Peter: Negotiating Social Conflict and Christian Identity in the Greco-Roman World*, WUNT 337 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 235–37.
- 1079 Rightly Dubis, *1 Peter 4:12–19*, 135–36.
- 1080 K. M. Hockey, “1 Peter 4.16: Shame, Emotion, and Christian Self-Perception,” in *Muted Voices of the New Testament: Readings in the Catholic Epistles and Hebrews*, ed. K. M. Hockey, M. N. Pierce, and F. Watson, LNTS 565 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017), 27–40.
- 1081 Hockey, “1 Peter 4.16,” 36.
- 1082 Hockey, “1 Peter 4.16,” 36.
- 1083 Hockey, “1 Peter 4.16,” 37.
- 1084 Hockey, “1 Peter 4.16,” 37. “Negative shame asks the believers not to care so strongly about the opinion of the hostile other and therefore indicates that their relationship with the other is less important to the believers’ flourishing than their allegiance to Christ.”
- 1085 Hockey, “1 Peter 4.16,” 38. “In the end, the only judgement that matters is God’s, because he is the one who has ultimate control over the good and is the only one who can really bestow lasting honour.”
- 1086 Hockey, “1 Peter 4.16,” 38–39.
- 1087 Hockey, “1 Peter 4.16,” 39.
- 1088 Hockey, “1 Peter 4.16,” 39.
- 1089 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 314–15; Selwyn, *First Peter*, 225. For causal, see Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 190–91, and especially T. Williams, *Persecution in 1 Peter*, 286–88. Others take it to be instrumental (Davids, *First Peter*, 170, n. 17; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 796; Horrell, *Becoming Christian*, 181–82). A number of manuscripts read ἐν τῷ μέρει τούτῳ (P, 049, majority text) instead of ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τούτῳ (Ϟ⁷², κ, A, B, Ψ, 33, 81, 323, 614, 1241, 1505, 1739). The external evidence supports the reading in the text, although the variant is surely the harder reading. In this case the external evidence is decisive enough to overturn what we find in NA²⁸ so that the reading in the CSB is preferred (Forbes, *1 Peter*, 159–60). See the discussion in Horrell, *Becoming Christian*, 179–81. In favor of the variant, see Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 194–95; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 257, 269–70; T. Williams, *Persecution in 1 Peter*, 282–83.
- 1090 Cf. Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 328; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 190–91; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 796.
- 1091 Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 153–54.
- 1092 E.g., LXX 1 Kgs 5:14, 17, 19; 7:31, 34, 37; 8:1, 17, 18; 12:27; 14:26; 1 Chr 5:36; 6:16; 9:23, 26, 27; 10:10; 22:1, 2, 6, 7, 11; 26:27; 28:21; 29:2, 3; 2 Chr 3:3; 4:11; 5:14; 7:5; Ezra 1:3, 4; 3:8, 9; 4:3; 6:5;

Neh 8:16; 10:33, 34, 35; Pss 41:5; 54:15; Mic 4:2; Joel 1:13, 14, 16; Isa 2:2, 3; 38:20). Supporting the notion of family is Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 144–46.

1093 K. H. Jobes (*1 Peter*, BECNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005], 292) argues that none of these fit since these texts have to do with judgment, and Peter does not violate the original context of the OT texts, but it seems more likely that Peter applies the OT texts to a new context in creative ways.

1094 See here Johnson, “Fire in God’s House,” 291–93; I. H. Marshall, *1 Peter*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1991), 156. Supporting Ezek 9 as the background is W. L. Schutter, *Hermeneutic and Composition in 1 Peter*, WUNT 2/30 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989), 276–84. Dubis argues that Ezek 9 is the primary text, but references to Mal 3 cannot be excluded (*1 Peter 4:12–19*, 148–54).

1095 Because of the differences, some dispute an allusion to Ezek 9 (Elliott, *1 Peter*, 798–800; Liebengood, *Eschatology in 1 Peter*, 146–47), but the texts do not need to match in every respect for an allusion to be present. OT texts can be handled in nuanced ways.

1096 The temple language is bound up with the notion that the people of God are his temple. So Johnson, “Fire in God’s House,” 292–93; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 271; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 316.

1097 So Best, *1 Peter*, 165; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 315.

1098 For a suggestion about how the LXX translator developed this translation, see J. Barr, “בְּאֶרֶץ~μόλις: Prov. xi.31, 1 Pet. iv.18,” *JSS* 20 (1975): 149–64. In agreement with Barr is D. G. McCartney, “The Use of the Old Testament in the First Epistle of Peter” (Ph.D. diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 1989), 97–98. Dubis, on the other hand, argues that the MT and the LXX are compatible (*1 Peter 4:12–19*, 164–67). According to Dubis, the MT refers to God’s punishing his people even when they are in the land of promise. Thus, μόλις in his view is parallel to בְּאֶרֶץ. Just as God punishes his people even when they are in the land, so too he saves the righteous with difficulty in that he saves them through a purifying judgment. The main difference Dubis sees between the MT and the LXX is that the latter focuses on the eschatological future.

1099 Contra Elliott, Peter was not leaving open in this context the prospect that the wicked may repent in the future (*1 Peter*, 804).

1100 Dubis, *1 Peter 4:12–19*, 167.

1101 So C. E. B. Cranfield, *I & II Peter and Jude: Introduction and Commentary*, TBC (London: SCM, 1960), 122; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 333; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 316.

1102 Rightly Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 157. The word ὥστε is an inferential conjunction, and καὶ modifies ὥστε (so Selwyn, *First Peter*, 226; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 272–73; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 317) rather than modifying οἱ πάσχοντες (Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 334; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 194) or παρατιθέσθωσαν (C. Bigg, *The Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, ICC [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1901], 181).

1103 Dubis agrees but also connects this to the messianic woes that precede the end (*1 Peter 4:12–19*, 176–77).

1104 Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, 139.

1105 As we have seen elsewhere in Peter, the word “souls” (τὰς ψυχὰς) refers to the “lives” of believers, not the immaterial part of their being (see 1:9, 22; 2:11, 25; 3:20). Against B.

Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians*, vol. II: *A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1–2 Peter* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007), 139.

1106 Dubis overreads the text in seeing a reference to the new creation here (*1 Peter* 4:12–19, 174–75).

1107 Cf. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 274.

1108 Cf. Schutter, *Hermeneutic and Composition in 1 Peter*, 156–65.

1109 So Elliott, *1 Peter*, 812.

1110 The conjunction is omitted in a few manuscripts (per NA²⁸), but the conjunction was probably deleted because it was difficult to see how it connected with the preceding context (so Forbes, *1 Peter*, 165).

1111 For a view similar to mine, see Davids, *First Peter*, 174–75. Conversely, Goppelt argues that οὐν is not inferential here, signaling a loose transition best translated as “now” (*1 Peter*, 340, n. 4). Kelly says that godly leadership and “respect between members” is crucial in the midst of suffering (*Peter and Jude*, 196).

1112 For a helpful study, see C. Lynch, “In 1 Peter 5:1–5, Who Are the Elders and What Is Said about Their Role?,” *ExpTim* 123 (2012): 129–40.

1113 Supporting an official use here is Selwyn, *First Peter*, 228; Bigg, *Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 183; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 340; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 196; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 321–22; J. H. Elliott, “Ministry and Church Order in the NT: A Traditio-Historical Analysis (1 Pt 5,1–5 & plls.),” *CBQ* 32 (1970): 371; D. P. Senior, *1 Peter*, SP (Collegeville: Michael Glazier, 2003), 137; Witherington, *A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1–2 Peter*, 225. Richard thinks the emphasis here is on the age of the elders instead of office (*Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 202).

1114 Calvin says that elders are equivalent to pastors and presbyters and that it designates office, not necessarily old age (*Catholic Epistles*, 143, 145).

1115 For the background of the term, see B. L. Merkle, *The Elder and Overseer: One Office in the Early Church* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003), 23–65. Thus, the elders are not merely the older men in the church (against Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, 141).

1116 Selwyn says that Peter does not emphasize his humility here but instead communicates his empathy for their task (*First Peter*, 228). Cf. also Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 137.

1117 Brox understands the reference to Peter to be a fictional device (*Der erste Petrusbrief*, 228).

1118 Jobes (*1 Peter*, 300) notes that the titles apostle and elder “were not necessarily mutually exclusive even during the lifetime of the apostles.”

1119 E.g., Michaels, *1 Peter*, 280–81. Kelly thinks the author was a witness in the sense that he also suffered for his allegiance to Christ (*Peter and Jude*, 198–99; so already Calvin, *Catholic Epistles*, 144), but he fails to read the expression in its most natural sense.

1120 Rightly D. Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 4th ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1990), 774; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 301; J. Green, *1 Peter*, 164–65. For arguments supporting the notion that Peter was an eyewitness, see Dubis, *1 Peter* 4:12–19, 104–6.

1121 Others think the purpose is to emphasize that all leaders are witnesses to the gospel because of their allegiance to and experience of the crucified and risen Lord (Davids, *First Peter*, 176–77).

- 1122 E.g., Selwyn thinks that the transfiguration is in view (*First Peter*, 228–29).
- 1123 There is no suggestion here that the glory is partially experienced in the present (Parker, “The Eschatology of 1 Peter,” 30–31).
- 1124 Rightly M. Luther, *Commentary on Peter & Jude*, trans. and ed. J. N. Lenker (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1990), 205.
- 1125 The evidence is insufficient to establish dependence on gospel tradition (contra R. H. Gundry, “*Verba Christi*” in 1 Peter: Their Implications concerning the Authorship of 1 Peter and the Authenticity of the Gospel Tradition,” *NTS* 13 [1967]: 341–42; Gundry, “Further *Verba* on *Verba Christi* in First Peter,” *Bib* 55 [1974]: 216–18; Elliott, “Ministry and Church Order,” 383–84; M. C. Tenney, “Some Possible Parallels between 1 Peter and John,” in *New Dimensions in New Testament Study* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974], 375; rightly Best, “Gospel Tradition,” 97–98).
- 1126 Luther, *Commentary on Peter & Jude*, 205.
- 1127 The participle ἐπισκοποῦντες is missing in some early manuscripts (א*, B, 323), but the majority of witnesses include it, and we should not put much confidence in B, which also wrongly omits v. 3. The corrector of Sinaiticus includes the participle, and it may have been omitted by some scribes because they distinguished the offices of elder and overseer and thought the text was mistaken in correlating them. Supporting omission is Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 206; R. Feldmeier, *The First Letter of Peter: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, trans. P. H. Davids (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2008), 230. In support of inclusion, see Elliott, *1 Peter*, 824, n. 665; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 310; Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, 142; Forbes, *1 Peter*, 167–68.
- 1128 R. A. Campbell, *The Elders: Seniority with Earliest Christianity* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998).
- 1129 Merkle, *The Elder and Overseer*. So already Luther, *Commentary on Peter & Jude*, 206.
- 1130 So Jobes, *1 Peter*, 303.
- 1131 Jobes, *1 Peter*, 309.
- 1132 Davids, *First Peter*, 177–78.
- 1133 So Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 326.
- 1134 So Gundry, “*Verba Christi*,” 344; cf. G. Maier, “Jesustradition im 1. Petrusbrief,” in *Gospel Perspectives: The Jesus Tradition outside the Gospels*, vol. 5, ed. D. Wenham (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984), 93–95; contra Best, “Gospel Tradition,” 100. Elliott also sees the tradition in the Gospels reflected here and argues that the evidence is insufficient for any literary relationship to Qumran literature (“Ministry and Church Order,” 372–74).
- 1135 Cf. Kelly for a survey of interpretations (*Peter and Jude*, 202–3).
- 1136 So also Calvin, *Catholic Epistles*, 145–46; Beare, *First Peter*, 174; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 347; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 285–86; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 328; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 831.
- 1137 Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 163.
- 1138 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 287; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 204; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 835; Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, 142.
- 1139 Campbell, *Honor, Shame, and the Rhetoric of 1 Peter*, 216. Ezekiel 9:6 uses both the term πρεσβύτερον and νεανίσκον.

- 1140 So Bigg, *Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 190; Selwyn, *First Peter*, 233; Cranfield, *I & II Peter and Jude*, 131–32.
- 1141 So Calvin, *Catholic Epistles*, 147.
- 1142 Rightly Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 233.
- 1143 Elliott, “Ministry and Church Order,” 375–86; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 836–40.
- 1144 Cf. Best, *1 Peter*, 171; Grudem, *1 Peter*, 192–93; C. Spicq, *Les Épîtres de Saint Pierre*, SB (Paris: Gabalda, 1966), 170–71; Davids, *First Peter*, 183–84; Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 209; Schelke, *Der Petrusbriefe—Der Judasbrief*, 130; Marshall, *1 Peter*, 164–65. Marshall says that people could be considered young up to the age of forty.
- 1145 Against N. Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, NIBC (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1992), 141.
- 1146 So Michaels, *1 Peter*, 288–89; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 350–51; Reicke, *The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude*, 130; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 331–32; S. McKnight, *1 Peter*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 263; Senior, *1 Peter*, 141; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 307; J. Green, *1 Peter*, 169; Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 238; Forbes, *1 Peter*, 170.
- 1147 So Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 339. Brox thinks Peter drew on traditional formulations here (*Der erste Petrusbrief*, 234).
- 1148 Dubis, *1 Peter Handbook*, 163–64.
- 1149 Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 231.
- 1150 Both James and Peter used the term θεός instead of κυριός from Prov 3:34 (LXX).
- 1151 See here Feldmeier (*First Peter*, 239–42), and the words “to impress” come from p. 241.
- 1152 Dubis (*1 Peter Handbook*, 158, 166) rightly argues that the verb should be construed as a middle and translated “humble yourselves.”
- 1153 So F. V. Filson, “Partakers with Christ: Suffering in First Peter,” *Int* 9 (1955): 405.
- 1154 Grudem, *1 Peter*, 194–95. Richard’s view is similar to Grudem’s (*Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 216).
- 1155 So Michaels, *1 Peter*, 296; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 208; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 357; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 339; Schelke, *Der Petrusbriefe—Der Judasbrief*, 131. The parallel from 2:12 probably is the reason some manuscripts add the word ἐπισκοπῆς in v. 12 (A, P, [Ψ], 33, 623, and a few other manuscripts). The addition represents an accurate interpretation but is secondary.
- 1156 Cf. Best, *1 Peter*, 172; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 356; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 294–95.
- 1157 Rightly Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 208; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 296; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 339; S. Snyder, “Participles and Imperatives in 1 Peter: A Re-examination in the Light of Recent Scholarly Trends,” *FNT* 8 (1995): 196. Against Elliott, *1 Peter*, 851, who sees it as an independent imperative.
- 1158 Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 359.
- 1159 Cf. Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 236.
- 1160 Jobes, *1 Peter*, 313.
- 1161 Calvin remarks: “For all those who recumb not on God’s providence must necessarily be on constant turmoil and violently assail others. We ought the more to dwell on this thought, that God cares for us, in order, first, that we may have peace within; and, secondly, that we may be humble and meek towards men” (*Catholic Epistles*, 149).

- 1162 Cranfield, *I & II Peter and Jude*, 134; Maier, “1. Petrusbrief,” 102.
- 1163 Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 244–45.
- 1164 Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 245.
- 1165 The textual tradition is complicated here, with some manuscripts deleting *τινα* and some substituting *καταπή* for *καταπιεῖν*. See *TCGNT*, 626–27, for the whole discussion. The reading in the NA²⁸ is likely original.
- 1166 D. G. Horrell, B. Arnold, and T. B. Williams maintain that the roaring lion includes the idea of facing beasts in the arena, arguing that such spectacles took place in Asia Minor as well (“Visuality, Vivid Description, and the Message of 1 Peter: The Significance of the Roaring Lion [1 Peter 5:8],” *JBL* 132 [2013]: 697–716). But if believers were being put to death, it is surprising that Peter does not mention it more clearly, when he does specify that they were verbally abused.
- 1167 For the notion that the devil is trying to induce God’s people into apostasy, see Goppelt, *I Peter*, 361; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 210; Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, 150.
- 1168 T. Williams, *Good Works in 1 Peter*, 237–40, although Williams probably overemphasizes the role of Rome here.
- 1169 Feldmeier, *First Peter*, 245. Interestingly, as Feldmeier observes, the devil is not given a personal name in the Scriptures; the focus is on his activities (247–48).
- 1170 So Michaels, *1 Peter*, 300.
- 1171 So also Goppelt, *I Peter*, 362; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 210; Davids, *First Peter*, 191–92.
- 1172 For this interpretation see Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 211; J. W. C. Wand, *The General Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, WC (London: Methuen, 1934), 125; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 342; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 300–301; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 861–62.
- 1173 Achtemeier (*1 Peter*, 342–43) provides a survey of interpretation for the phrase τὰ αὐτὰ τῶν παθημάτων, but in the end various interpretations proposed are not remarkably different.
- 1174 I understand the infinitive ἐπιτελεῖσθαι to be passive rather than middle (see Wand, *Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 125; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 363, n. 22; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 343; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 862; Forbes, *1 Peter*, 178). Some manuscripts have the indicative here ἐπιτελεῖσθε (ⲛ, A, B, K, 0206, 33, 614, 630, 1505, 2495, *al*). Even though the external evidence is strong for the variant, in context an infinitive seems more likely.
- 1175 Against Calvin, *Catholic Epistles*, 151; Beare, *First Peter*, 180.
- 1176 Goppelt, *I Peter*, 363; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 212; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 301; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 343; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 863.
- 1177 Goppelt, *I Peter*, 364.
- 1178 Rightly Goppelt, *I Peter*, 363, n. 25.
- 1179 Goppelt says the verse “summarizes the intention of the entire letter” (*I Peter*, 364).
- 1180 The majority text replaces ὑμᾶς with ἡμᾶς. The external evidence clearly favors the former, and the substitution would naturally occur because the two words sounded similar.
- 1181 A number of manuscripts support ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (ⲡ72, A, P, Ψ, 33, 1739, majority text, etc). Still, Ἰησοῦ is missing in B, 1505, 630, 614, ⲛ, pc). The CSB probably is correct in preferring the

shorter text. See also NA²⁸.

1182 Those who defend the interpretation adopted here are Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 212; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 302; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 345; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 365, n. 29. Davids argues that both are intended and that Peter did not intend such precision (*First Peter*, 195).

1183 For the connection to 1:6, see Schutter, *Hermeneutic and Composition in 1 Peter*, 29.

1184 Contra Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 222. Rightly Jobes, *1 Peter*, 315–16.

1185 The verb *σθενώσει* probably was accidentally deleted by P^{72} and P^{81} since the similar ending could have led to the deletion. The attempt to substitute optatives for futures reflects a misunderstanding of the text by early scribes, in which they turned promises into prayers.

1186 Rightly Calvin, *Catholic Epistles*, 153; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 867.

1187 Dubis emphasizes the eschatological character of these verbs (*1 Peter* 4:12–19, 54) but concedes that they may relate also to the present and culminate in the *eschaton*. He overreads the text, however, in seeing a reference to the rebuilding of God's eschatological temple (pp. 55–56).

1188 So TCGNT, 627.

1189 So Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 346; cf. also Selwyn, *1 Peter*, 241; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 304; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 867.

1190 P. J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter*, Her (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 351.

1191 It is unpersuasive to argue that Peter is fictional but Silvanus is the real carrier (contra J. H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB [New York: Doubleday, 2000], 873–74). N. Brox maintains that Silvanus is also fictional (*Der erste Petrusbrief*, EKKNT, 2nd ed. [Zürich: Benziger/Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1986], 241–42).

1192 E.g., Torrey Seland, *Strangers in the Light: Philonic Perspectives on Christian Identity in 1 Peter*, BIS 76 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 22–28; L. Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 369–71; E. G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 11, 241; J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude*, Thornapple Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 215. Selwyn believes he was both the secretary and bearer of the letter. P. H. Davids argues that Silvanus is the primary author behind the letter and its contents derive from him (*The First Epistle of Peter*, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990], 198).

1193 See especially the thorough discussion in E. R. Richards, “Silvanus Was Not Peter's Secretary: Theological Bias in Interpreting *διὰ Σιλουανοῦ . . . ἔγραψα*,” *JETS* 43 (2000): 417–32. Richards also includes some important examples from secular papyri. Cf. also J. R. Michaels, *1 Peter*, WBC (Waco: Word, 1998), 306–7; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 349–50; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 124, 872; Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 242–43; J. A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976), 168–69.

1194 E.g., Michaels, *1 Peter*, 307.

1195 So C. Bigg, *The Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1901), 196; W. C. Wand, *The General Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, WC (London: Methuen, 1934), 128–29; G. W. Forbes, *1 Peter*, EGGNT (Nashville: B&H, 2014), 184; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 308–10; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 352; cf. the comments of Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 245–46. Elliott thinks the antecedent is

the word “grace” in v. 10 (*1 Peter*, 878). E. R. Wendland argues that the aim of the entire letter is summed up here (“‘Stand Fast in the True Grace of God!’ A Study of 1 Peter,” *JOTT* 13 (2000): 25–26. See also D. G. Horrell, “The Product of a Petrine Circle? A Reassessment of the Origin and Character of 1 Peter,” *JSNT* 86 (2002): 29–60.

1196 The word εἰς usually means “into,” but the distinction between εἰς and ἐν was diluted during the era of the NT (A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* [Nashville: Broadman, 1934], 591–93; BDF §205). In this instance εἰς should be translated as “in” (so Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 217; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 352–53; M. Dubis, *1 Peter: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, BHGNT [Waco: Baylor University Press, 2010], 175–76; Forbes, *1 Peter*, 185). Michaels retains the sense of the preposition, translating the clause, “For it you must stand” (*1 Peter*, 305, 310). Contra E. J. Richard, the verb in context should be read as an imperative, not a subjunctive (*Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter: A Literary and Theological Commentary*, RNT [Macon: Smith & Helwys, 2000], 228; rightly Elliott, *1 Peter*, 879). We should also note that some manuscripts supply an indicative (ἐστήκατε) instead of the imperative. But the weight of the evidence supports the imperative. Goppelt mistakenly interprets the text to contain an indicative and an imperative (*1 Peter*, 373).

1197 Brox (*Der erste Petrusbrief*, 244–45) mistakenly defines “grace” here to be equivalent to the usage in 2:19–20, but as explained in this commentary, the term “grace” has a different meaning in 2:19–20.

1198 J. de Waal Dryden, *Theology and Ethics in 1 Peter: Paraenetic Strategies for Christian Character Formation*, WUNT 2/209 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 49.

1199 So W. L. Schutter, *Hermeneutic and Composition in 1 Peter*, WUNT 2/30 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989), 28.

1200 Contra J. K. Applegate, “The Co-elect Woman of 1 Peter,” *NTS* 38 (1992): 587–604. Applegate argues that this woman was a leader known to the churches in Asia Minor. She is mentioned because women leaders in Asia Minor would have resisted the household code, where they are enjoined to submit to unbelieving husbands. By mentioning this woman, the author provides support for the household code, which would have been questionable to women leaders in the churches addressed. Applegate’s theory should be rejected as speculative. We have no evidence that women functioned as leaders in the Petrine churches, nor is there any clear evidence that the household code was questioned. For rejection of Applegate’s view, see also Elliott, *1 Peter*, 881; K. H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 322.

1201 Rightly Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 247.

1202 So Michaels, *1 Peter*, 310. Similarly, some manuscripts betray the same interpretive tendency in replacing “Babylon” with “Rome.” The interpretation is correct, but the manuscript evidence for “Rome” is inferior. The word “church” should be preferred over “brotherhood” (contra Elliott, *1 Peter*, 882).

1203 So E. Best, *1 Peter*, NCB (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 178.

1204 For the evidence see Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 353, n. 73; T. B. Williams, *Good Works in 1 Peter: Negotiating Social Conflict and Christian Identity in the Greco-Roman World*, WUNT 337 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 240–41.

1205 So already M. Luther, *Commentary on Peter & Jude*, trans. and ed. J. N. Lenker (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1990), 226. Cf. the discussion in Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 218–20; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 882–87; T. Williams, *Good Works in 1 Peter*, 241–43. Brox thinks the reference to Rome may be part of

the fictional device in the letter (*Der erste Petrusbrief*, 247), but as I. H. Marshall observes, the reference to Rome as “Babylon” may have come from the time of Nero (*1 Peter*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1991], 175). In any case, the connection between Babylon and Rome is a natural one.

1206 Rightly Michaels, *1 Peter*, 311; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 354; D. G. McCartney, “The Use of the Old Testament in the First Epistle of Peter” (Ph.D. diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 1989), 114; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 323.

1207 Once again Brox suggests the reference to Mark may be part of the pseudepigraphical nature of the letter (*Der erste Petrusbrief*, 247).

1208 Cf. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 312; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 887–89.

1209 Some manuscripts read “holy kiss,” but surely this is a case of Pauline influence and is hence secondary.

1210 A number of manuscripts add “Jesus” and “amen,” but the words are missing in other manuscripts, and scribes would be prone to make an ending more liturgical; therefore, the additions should be rejected.

1211 For a survey of scholarship on 2 Peter up to the year 2000, see P. Müller, “Der 2. Petrusbrief,” *TRu* 66 (2001): 310–37.

1212 E. Käsemann, “An Apologia for Primitive Christian Eschatology,” in *Essays on New Testament Themes*, trans. W. J. Montague (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1964), 169–95. See also G. Aichele, *The Letters of Jude and Second Peter: Paranoia and the Slaves of Christ*, Phoenix Guides to the New Testament 19 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2012). For a summary of some common criticisms of 2 Peter, see Müller, “Der 2. Petrusbrief,” 310.

1213 R. Martin, though not as negative as Käsemann, complains about the letter’s “rigidity and somewhat mechanical reaction to innovation and theological enterprise.” He also worries that “2 Peter represents a Christianity that is on the road to becoming tradition-bound, authoritarian, and inward-looking” (“2 Peter,” in *The Theology of the Letters of James, Peter, and Jude* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994], 163).

1214 Käsemann, “Apologia for Primitive Christian Eschatology,” 195.

1215 The translation of Klein is by J. D. Charles, *Virtue amidst Vice: The Catalog of Virtues in 2 Peter 1*, JSNTSup 150 (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1997), 19–20. The citations from Klein derive from G. Klein, “Der zweite Petrusbrief und der neutestamentliche Kanon,” in *Ärgernisse: Konfrontationen mit dem Neuen Testament* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1970), 111–12.

1216 J. D. G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1990), 386.

1217 R. W. Wall maintains that 2 Peter is complementary to 1 Peter when viewed from a canonical perspective (“The Canonical Function of 2 Peter,” *BibInt* 9 [2001]: 64–81).

1218 Contra the idea that 2 Peter is early catholic, see M. J. Gilmour, *The Significance of Parallels between 2 Peter and Other Early Christian Literature*, SBLAB 10 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002); T. Callan, *Second Peter*, PCNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 36–40.

1219 See the discussion of 2 Pet 1:19–21 below.

1220 R. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter* (Waco: Word, 1983). Many argue 2 Peter is a testament. W. G. Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, rev. ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1975), 433; B. Reicke, *The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude*, AB (Garden City: Doubleday, 1964), 146; T. V. Smith, *Petrine*

Controversies in Early Christianity: Attitudes toward Peter in Christian Writings of the First Two Centuries, WUNT 2/15 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1985), 67; T. Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society: A Study of 2 Peter*, ConBNT 9 (Lund: Gleerup, 1977), 10–12; Müller, “Der 2. Petrusbrief,” 329–30; E. Fuchs and P. Reymond, *La Deuxième Épître de Saint Pierre, L’Épître de Saint Jude*, CNT (Neuchâtel–Paris: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1980), 25–26. T. S. Caulley, “The Idea of ‘Inspiration’ in 2 Peter 1:16–21” (Ph.D. diss., Eberhard-Karls Universität zu Tübingen, 1982), 83–105.

1221 D. Farkasfalvy suggests that the writer chose Peter’s name because writing in Paul’s name would not solve the problems facing his readers. The author desires to provide a “normative context” for interpreting both Pauline and other apostolic teachings (“The Ecclesial Setting of Pseudepigraphy in Second Peter and Its Role in the Formation of the Canon,” *SecCent* 5 [1985–86]: 12–13, 26–27). This solution is only persuasive if one has already adopted the theory of pseudonymity. Indeed, one can imagine an objection to the author’s attempt to write authoritatively in Peter’s name, in which it is said that the author has no right to claim the mantle of Peter’s authority since he is not Peter. W. R. Farmer suggests that the term “pseudepigraphic” should be avoided, even though another wrote the book in Peter’s name, for the term suggests an unethical practice (“Some Critical Reflections on Second Peter: A Response to a Paper on Second Peter by Denis Farkasfalvy,” *SecCent* 5 [1985–86]: 40–45).

1222 For standard arguments against Petrine authorship, see J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude*, Thornapple Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 235–37; Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 430–34; J. Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, THKNT (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2015), 180–86; Reicke, *James, Peter, and Jude*, 180–83; C. E. B. Cranfield, *I and II Peter and Jude: Introduction and Commentary*, TBC (London: SCM, 1960), 148–49; J. W. C. Wand, *The General Epistles of Peter and Jude*, WC (London: Methuen, 1934), 143–44; K. H. Schelke, *Der Petrusbrief—Der Judasbrief*, HTKNT (Freiburg: Herder, 1980), 179–81; H. Paulsen, *Der zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief*, KEK (Göttingen; Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 93–95; A. Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, Der 2 Petrusbrief*, EKKNT (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1994), 122–27; Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 30–34. J. B. Mayor, *The Epistle of St. Jude and the Second Epistle of St. Peter* (1907; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1965), cxv–cxviii; Callan, *Second Peter*, 37–38.

1223 E.g., Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 154–62.

1224 See Bauckham for a thorough discussion on this matter (*Jude, 2 Peter*, 135–36).

1225 So Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 144.

1226 For a defense of a Jewish understanding and background for the phrase, see A. Gerdmar, *Rethinking the Judaism-Hellenism Dichotomy: A Historiographical Case Study of Second Peter and Jude*, ConBNT 36 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2001), 222–43.

1227 Käsemann, “Apologia for Primitive Christian Eschatology,” 179–80.

1228 Käsemann, “Apologia for Primitive Christian Eschatology,” 179–80; see also Smith, *Petrine Controversies*, 95.

1229 E.g., Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 432. Fuchs and Reymond argue for proto-Gnosticism (*2 Pierre, Jude*, 28–29).

1230 E.g., Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 164.

1231 Käsemann, “Apologia for Primitive Christian Eschatology,” 174–75.

1232 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 149–51.

- 1233 Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 434.
- 1234 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 131–35.
- 1235 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 145–47.
- 1236 Against a Petrine school see also Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 125.
- 1237 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 162.
- 1238 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 161–62.
- 1239 A. Schlatter, *The Theology of the Apostles: The Development of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 356.
- 1240 Supporting authenticity are M. J. Kruger, “The Authenticity of 2 Peter,” *JETS* 42 (1999): 645–71; C. Bigg, *The Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1901), 199–247; M. Green, *The Second Epistle General of Peter and the General Epistle of Jude*, 2nd ed., TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 13–39; D. J. Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 21–26; G. L. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 139–50; P. H. R. Houwelingen, “The Authenticity of 2 Peter: Problems and Possible Solutions,” *EJT* 19 (2010): 119–29. See also the arguments of various scholars noted below.
- 1241 In a stimulating article M. J. Gilmour maintains that the evidence supporting both authenticity and inauthenticity is ambiguous and does not support clearly either position (“Reflections on the Authorship of 2 Peter,” *EvQ* 73 [2001]: 291–309). Many of Gilmour’s arguments are correct. Often the arguments on both sides are not decisive in establishing the view defended. Nevertheless, there are several weaknesses with Gilmour’s view. First, he should acknowledge more clearly that historical work involves plausibility, not absolute proof. Many of the arguments adduced on both sides are not compelling. Still, some arguments are more plausible than others, and it is the task of the historian to indicate such. Second, Gilmour wrongly concludes that neither position is more likely than the other from a historical standpoint. He ignores entirely the internal evidence of the letter, viewing it only in terms of presuppositions. The self-claim of the letter cannot be dismissed merely as presuppositional. We must remember that the letter itself represents historical evidence containing documentary claims about the author. Third, Gilmour fails to recognize clearly enough that those who support authenticity do not think that all of the arguments are decisive in and of themselves. But the arguments do demonstrate that the letter’s own claim is defensible and plausible. Fourth, Gilmour does not perceive the historical weakness of the testament hypothesis (see below). The notion that 2 Peter was a transparent fiction is historically flawed since there is no evidence that anyone in the early history of the church identified the letter as transparent fiction. Finally, Gilmour rightly notes that presuppositions play a role in establishing authorship, but he does not explain clearly the relationship between presuppositions and evidence and thus appears to suggest that the former is in an airtight compartment that is hermetically sealed off from the latter.
- 1242 So B. B. Warfield, “The Canonicity of Second Peter,” in *Selected Shorter Writings*, 2 vols. (Phillipsburg, NJ; Presbyterian & Reformed, 1973), 2:69; Kruger, “The Authenticity of 2 Peter,” 662.
- 1243 Rightly D. Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 4th ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1990), 820–21.
- 1244 Charles rightly remarks, “Such requires too much from the reader” (*Virtue amidst Vice*, 97).
- 1245 Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 823.

1246 Rightly D. B. Wallace, “Second Peter: Introduction, Argument, and Outline,” <https://bible.org/seriespage/second-peter-introduction-argument-and-outline>.

1247 J. A. T. Robinson says that the term points to a coworker who was still living (*Redating the New Testament* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976], 181).

1248 Cf. R. Riesner, “Der zweite-Petrus Brief und die Eschatologie,” in *Zukunftserwartung in biblischer Sicht: Beiträge zur Eschatologie*, ed. G. Maier (Giessen: Brunnen, 1984), 132–33; Kruger, “The Authenticity of 2 Peter,” 664–65.

1249 Wallace, “Second Peter: Introduction, Argument, and Outline.”

1250 For citations and assessment of the evidence, see Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 199–215. For early reception history, see W. Grünstäudl and T. Nicklas, “Searching for Evidence: The History of Reception of the Epistles of Jude and 2 Peter,” in *Reading 1–2 Peter and Jude: A Resource for Students*, ed. E. F. Mason and T. W. Martin, SBLRBS 77 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014), 220–27.

1251 R. E. Picirilli, “Allusions to 2 Peter in the Apostolic Fathers,” *JSNT* 33 (1988): 57–83. See also C. P. Thiede, “A Pagan Reader of 2 Peter: Cosmic Conflagration in 2 Peter 3 and the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix,” *JSNT* 26 (1986): 79–96. Thiede argues that Minucius Felix knew 2 Peter and used his notion of the conflagration in his dialogue *Octavius*. Thiede also thinks there are “unmistakable allusions to 2 Peter” in Justin Martyr (so also Warfield, “The Canonicity of Second Peter,” 55) and Minucius (p. 80). He dates Minucius’s *Octavius* in the 140s and concludes from the evidence presented that 2 Peter was written in the first century.

1252 For an older study that draws similar conclusions to those of Picirilli, see Warfield, “The Canonicity of Second Peter,” 49–68. Cf. also Kruger, “The Authenticity of 2 Peter,” 655.

1253 G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 142.

1254 Gilmour notes that Picirilli’s arguments do not establish authenticity (“Reflections on the Authorship of 2 Peter,” 298–99).

1255 Picirilli, “Allusions to 2 Peter,” 74.

1256 So K. P. Donfried, *The Setting of Second Clement in Early Christianity* (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 91, 93; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 149–51.

1257 So also Warfield, “The Canonicity of Second Peter,” 56; G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 142.

1258 Warfield thinks the evidence is sufficient to indicate that the Shepherd of Hermas used 2 Peter (“The Canonicity of Second Peter,” 55), but the parallels are not as clear as he suggests.

1259 Kruger, “The Authenticity of 2 Peter,” 654; against Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 143. See also my comments under 2:1.

1260 See the evidence in Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 203; Kruger, “The Authenticity of 2 Peter,” 653–54, n. 52.

1261 Bauckham, 162; G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 142.

1262 Cf. Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 806; Warfield, “The Canonicity of Second Peter,” 49–50; Kruger, “The Authenticity of 2 Peter,” 649–50; G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 143.

1263 See the argument of Warfield, “The Canonicity of Second Peter,” 52–54. Warfield also presents evidence that Theophilus of Antioch and Melito of Sardis seem to depend on 2 Peter (p. 54).

- 1264 Kruger (“The Authenticity of 2 Peter,” 653) deduces from this that Irenaeus had access to 2 Peter, that it was known to many others, that he recognized its authenticity and probably considered it to be authentic.
- 1265 G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 142–43.
- 1266 See the discussion in Kruger, “The Authenticity of 2 Peter,” 652–53.
- 1267 See Kruger, “The Authenticity of 2 Peter,” 654; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 162; J. Robinson, *Redating*, 178; Smith, *Petrine Controversies*, 52–53.
- 1268 J. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 363–64, 423.
- 1269 Calvin, *Catholic Epistles*, 363. T. L. Wilder rightly points out that Calvin does not accept pseudonymity but argues that “the letter had been written by a secretary under Peter’s direction” (“Pseudonymity and the New Testament,” in *Interpreting the New Testament: Essays on Methods and Issues*, ed. D. A. Black and D. S. Dockery [Nashville: B&H, 2001], 310).
- 1270 Kruger, “The Authenticity of 2 Peter,” 651.
- 1271 Kruger, “The Authenticity of 2 Peter,” 651. P. D. Strickland shows from \mathfrak{P}^{72} that a proto-orthodox Coptic community prized 1–2 Peter and Jude, which points to an early acceptance of their authority (“The Curious Case of \mathfrak{P}^{72} : What an Ancient Manuscript Can Tell Us about the Epistles of Peter and Jude,” *JETS* 60 [2017]: 781–91).
- 1272 Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 809.
- 1273 Kruger, “The Authenticity of 2 Peter,” 651.
- 1274 Frey thinks the differences exclude common authorship (*Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 162–64).
- 1275 For other links to 1 Peter, see Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 850–52; Mayor, *Jude and Second Peter*, lxviii–cv.
- 1276 In his work Fornberg points out the Hellenistic flavor of 2 Peter (*An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*), but he minimizes the Jewish and OT background in the letter.
- 1277 Cf. Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 837. Gerdmar argues, however, contrary to the consensus that Jude is more Hellenistic stylistically than 2 Peter (*Rethinking the Judaism-Hellenism Dichotomy*, 30–63).
- 1278 Gerdmar, *Rethinking the Judaism-Hellenism Dichotomy*, 64–91.
- 1279 Gerdmar, *Rethinking the Judaism-Hellenism Dichotomy*, 124–60.
- 1280 M. Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 20–21; cf. Kruger, “The Authenticity of 2 Peter,” 658.
- 1281 On the use of a secretary, see G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 146–47.
- 1282 Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 247; Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 833; Charles, *Virtue amidst Vice*, 60–63.
- 1283 See the discussion in Kruger, “The Authenticity of 2 Peter,” 656–59; cf. also G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 145.
- 1284 Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 832.
- 1285 Cf. Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 224–32.

1286 So, e.g., M. Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 18–19. Davids observes that Asiatic style was considered as empty and inflated, and such a description does not capture adequately the content of the letter (*2 Peter and Jude*, 131–32). Indeed, Gerdmar argues that it is incorrect to identify 2 Peter as Asiatic in style (*Rethinking the Judaism-Hellenism Dichotomy*, 60–61).

1287 Wallace, “Second Peter: Introduction, Argument, and Outline.”

1288 Riesner remarks that if 2 Peter were truly pseudonymous, we would expect an author to copy the style of 1 Peter. Hence, the argument from style also could pose a problem for pseudonymity (“Der zweite-Petrus Brief,” 131).

1289 For a convenient summary see Kruger, “The Authenticity of 2 Peter,” 659–61.

1290 See M. Green, who thinks both are dependent on a common source (*2 Peter and Jude*, 58–64).

1291 So Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 216–24.

1292 Rightly G. Green, who accepts the notion that 2 Peter drew on Jude (*Jude and 2 Peter*, 159–62). So also Fornberg, though he rejects Petrine authorship on other grounds (*An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 59).

1293 J. Robinson postulates that Jude wrote 2 Peter as his secretary (*Redating*, 193–95). This is improbable as the distinct vocabulary and the failure to mention Jude as a cosender in 2 Peter show (cf. Riesner, “Der zweite-Petrus Brief,” 133).

1294 M. Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 26.

1295 See the work of J. M. Starr, *Sharers in Divine Nature: 2 Peter 1:4 in Its Hellenistic Context*, ConBNT 33 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2000).

1296 Note also the helpful observations of Kruger, “The Authenticity of 2 Peter,” 667.

1297 In an instructive essay J. H. Elliott criticizes those who reject some writings as early catholic. He notes that Käsemann’s own view is reductionistic, that it arbitrarily erects a canon within the canon, and that he himself turns the gospel into a doctrine (“A Catholic Gospel: Reflections on ‘Early Catholicism’ in the New Testament,” *CBQ* 36 [1969]: 213–23). Fornberg also argues that the term “early catholicism” is “an artificial category which cannot do justice to a document such as 2 Peter” (*An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 4–5). See also the effective critique of the label “early catholicism” in Charles, *Virtue amidst Vice*, 11–37.

1298 Even though C. H. Talbert denies authenticity, he agrees that the alleged delay of the parousia does not constitute a serious problem for the readers of 2 Peter. The objection is raised by the opponents and fits with what we find in letters such as 1 Corinthians and 1 Clement (“2 Peter and the Delay of the Parousia,” *VC* 20 [1966]: 137–45). So also Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 151.

1299 Charles, *Virtue amidst Vice*, 29–30. See his discussion of this issue on pp. 26–32.

1300 See the trenchant comments of Kruger, “The Authenticity of 2 Peter,” 665.

1301 Contrary to J. Robinson, who thinks 1 John 2:13–14 refers to “fathers” of the first generation in contrast to second and third generation Christians (*Redating*, 180). But it is unlikely that John was speaking of different *generations* of believers in 1 John.

1302 Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 213–14; Riesner, “Der zweite-Petrus Brief,” 134.

1303 Rightly Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 21–22; J. Robinson, *Redating*, 182.

1304 For this point see Wallace, “Second Peter: Introduction, Argument, and Outline.”

1305 Bauckham proposes another interpretation, saying that these verses “have nothing to do with the exegesis of Scripture, and therefore do not insist on an authoritative interpretation of Scripture by officeholders who alone possess the Spirit” (*Jude, 2 Peter*, 152).

1306 Rightly Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 233.

1307 So Charles, *Virtue amidst Vice*, 33. He argues that Käsemann fails to see the centrality of the Spirit in 2 Peter (34–35).

1308 So T. L. Wilder, *Pseudonymity, the New Testament, and Deception: An Inquiry into Intention and Reception* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2004); Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 1012–18; cf. also E. E. Ellis, “Pseudonymity and Canonicity of New Testament Documents,” in *Worship, Theology and Ministry in the Early Church: Essays in Honor of Ralph P. Martin*, ed. M. J. Wilkins and T. Paige, JSNTSup 87 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1992), 212–24. S. E. Porter remarks, “The general, if not invariable, pattern was that, if a work was known to be pseudonymous, it was excluded from any group of authoritative writings” (“Exegesis of the Pauline Letters, Including the Deutero-Pauline Letters,” in *Handbook to Exegesis of the New Testament*, ed. S. E. Porter [Leiden: Brill, 1997], 533). His whole discussion is illuminating (see 531–39).

1309 Wilder argues that pseudonymity does not square with the early Christian virtue of truthfulness. Furthermore, some have argued for pseudonymity by seeing a parallel with Greco-Roman writings, saying, e.g., that pseudonymity was common among the disciples of Pythagoras. The parallel is not apt, as Wilder observes, since pseudonymity was not common in Jewish epistolary literature (“Pseudonymity and the New Testament,” 297–303). Some argue, of course, that 2 Thessalonians itself is pseudonymous, and hence they would reject any reference to 2 Thessalonians.

1310 Wilder notes that the works of the Shepherd of Hermas were excluded by the Muratorian Canon because they were not from the apostolic era. He concludes from this that pseudonymous works from postapostolic times were rejected (“Pseudonymity and the New Testament,” 304).

1311 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 162; Farkasfalvy, “Ecclesial Setting,” 28; Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 15–19. So also Farmer, “Some Critical Reflections on Second Peter,” 40–45. Farmer calls attention to a pseudonymous letter written by Salvian to his bishop Salonus (ca. AD 440), in which the latter detected from the substance of the letter that it was authored by his former teacher (pp. 43–45). Salvian then wrote a letter to his former student, explaining why he wrote pseudonymously. Salvian claims he wrote pseudonymously to avoid human glory and that he wrote in Timothy’s name because Timothy was honored and people might not pay attention to the contents of the work since Salvian himself was an obscure person. The example Farmer adduces is interesting indeed. It demonstrates that Salvian intended to deceive his readers in referring to a famous personage rather than himself in order to secure a hearing for his letter. The response of the bishop indicates that the authority of the letter was questioned when the device of pseudonymity was recognized. The bishop does not respond to Salvian by saying that writing under false pretenses is a venerable tradition, including even canonical writings. He questions the ethics of Salvian. In my judgment the same problem obtained during the time of the writing of 2 Peter, and writing under false pretenses would have raised severe questions about the credibility of the author.

1312 Rightly Wilder, "Pseudonymity and the New Testament," 304–5; M. Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 33–34; Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 1019–20; Kruger, "The Authenticity of 2 Peter," 647–48. See pp. 306–9 in Wilder for further support of this thesis.

1313 Wilder also shows that Tertullian's apparent support of disciples writing works that belong to their masters does not support the notion of pseudonymity ("Pseudonymity and the New Testament," 305).

1314 I owe this reference to Wilder, "Pseudonymity and the New Testament," 305. It derives from *On Principles*, preface 8.

1315 So Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 839–40.

1316 D. G. Meade, *Pseudonymity and Canon: An Investigation into the Relationship of Authorship and Authority in Jewish and Earliest Christian Tradition* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1986). J. D. G. Dunn (Meade's doctoral supervisor) presents the same case (see "Pseudepigraphy," *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1997], 977–84).

1317 J. Zmijewski's solution is rather similar ("Apostolische Paradosis und Pseudepigraphie im Neuen Testament: 'Durch Erinnerung wachhalten' [2 Petr 1,13; 3,1]," *BZ* 33 [1979]: 161–71). Zmijewski argues that pseudepigraphy does not involve deception or falsity as long as the writer's purpose is to transmit authentic apostolic tradition so that it will be remembered by coming generations. The church criticized those who conveyed teaching that was not in accord with apostolic tradition but was not opposed to pseudepigraphy itself according to Zmijewski. Zmijewski certainly puts the best face on pseudepigraphy, but it is not apparent that he has explained how the device of pseudonymity is spared from deception. It would seem that his solution would work only if one also accepts Bauckham's view that the pseudonymity in the case of 2 Peter is a "transparent fiction."

1318 Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 1026–28.

1319 Against Meade, see Wilder, "Pseudonymity and the New Testament," 317–18. For a very helpful summary of the history of scholarship relative to pseudonymity, see 310–22. Wilder remarks on the work of past scholars who defended pseudonymity, "With little or no supporting documentation, the scholars highlighted in the foregoing discussion defended the view that the early church readily accepted the practice of pseudonymity" (p.313).

1320 L. R. Donelson, *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument in the Pastoral Epistles* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1986).

1321 Donelson, *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument*, 19–20.

1322 Donelson, *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument*, 11.

1323 Donelson, *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument*, 16.

1324 Donelson, *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument*, 62.

1325 Donelson, *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument*, 24–42.

1326 Hence, the agnosticism of Davids (*2 Peter and Jude*, 149) on authorship is not satisfying.

1327 K. Aland, "The Problem of Anonymity and Pseudonymity in Christian Literature of the First Two Centuries," *JTS* 12 (1961): 39–49.

1328 Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 1025–26.

1329 Guthrie states that 2 Peter is either authentic or “a forgery” (*New Testament Introduction*, 812).

1330 Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 1021–22; Charles, *Virtue amidst Vice*, 64–66. See his whole discussion of the issue and especially his critique of Bauckham’s view on pp. 49–75.

1331 C. Gempf rightly says, “We must conclude that if pseudonymous works got into the canon, the church fathers were *fooled* by a transparent literary device that was originally intended *not* to fool anyone” (“Pseudonymity and the New Testament,” *Them* 17 [1992]: 9).

1332 So also M. Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 36–37, and Müller (who rejects authenticity), “Der 2. Petrusbrief,” 335.

1333 Starr, *Sharers in Divine Nature*, 51.

1334 But cf. Mayor, who thinks the letter was addressed to Jews and Gentiles (*Jude and Second Peter*, 181).

1335 Kruger, “The Authenticity of 2 Peter,” 646.

1336 Kruger also points out that most pseudonymous writings advance a distinctive view not accepted in the church, such as defending Gnosticism, Docetism, etc. No such distinct contribution is evident in 2 Peter, casting further doubt on the theory of pseudonymity (pp. 669–70).

1337 So M. Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 37; Charles, *Virtue amidst Vice*, 57; Ben Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians*, vol. II: *A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1–2 Peter* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007), 267–69; Wallace, “Second Peter: Introduction, Argument, and Outline.”

1338 Rightly Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 148–49.

1339 See especially the questions posed by Charles, *Virtue amidst Vice*, 49–75; cf. also M. Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 37–38; G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 149. Charles thinks the letter does not clearly belong to the testament genre but is “apostolic paraenesis that is urgently needed in a local situation” (75, n. 123).

1340 E.g., Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 822.

1341 So J. H. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, AB (Garden City: Doubleday, 1993), 112.

1342 Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 148. Cf. G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 166.

1343 Witherington, *1–2 Peter*, 318–19.

1344 M. D. Mathews, “The Genre of 2 Peter: A Comparison with Jewish and Early Christian Testaments,” *BBR* 21 (2011): 51–64.

1345 Mathews, “The Genre of 2 Peter,” 60–62.

1346 Witherington, *1–2 Peter*, 320–21.

1347 G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 165. See also Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 148.

1348 G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 167. Green also notes that 2 Peter lacks a heavenly journey which is typical in testaments (pp. 166–67).

1349 Witherington, *1–2 Peter*, 318.

1350 Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 840–41.

1351 For Peter dying in 65, see J. Robinson, *Redating*, 149; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 24. Wallace dates it in AD 64 or 65 (“Second Peter: Introduction, Argument, and Outline”). But whether Paul had already died, as Wallace avers, is less clear though certainly possible.

1352 Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 843–44. Warfield dates it in AD 67 (“The Canonicity of Second Peter,” 78).

1353 J. Robinson, *Redating*, 197–98. M. Green suggests from AD 61 to 68 (*2 Peter and Jude*, 41).

1354 But see Gerdmar who thinks the letter was written from Palestine (*Rethinking the Judaism-Hellenism Dichotomy*, 303–5).

1355 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 158–59. Reicke thinks the letter was written ca. AD 90 (*James, Peter, and Jude*, 144).

1356 Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 237. Cranfield dates it between AD 120 and 125 (*Peter and Jude*, 149; cf. also Wand, *Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 144; Mayor and Callan opt for AD 125 (Mayor, *Jude and Second Peter*, cxxvii; Callan, *Second Peter*, 136). D. G. Horrell dates it between AD 90 and 110 (*The Epistles of Peter and Jude*, EC [Peterborough: Epworth, 1998], 138). Fuchs and Reymond place the letter between AD 100 and 125 (*2 Pierre, Jude*, 40). L. R. Donelson says AD 120–150 (*I and II Peter and Jude*, NTL [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010], 209).

1357 Guthrie admits that we can have no certainty about the recipients (*New Testament Introduction*, 842–43). It is possible that the letter was sent to the same churches (or some of the same churches) that received 1 Peter and yet lacked the same wide circulation (cf. here the view of Wallace, “Second Peter: Introduction, Argument, and Outline”). The problem of attestation, however, indicates that the recipients of the letter cannot be identified with certainty.

1358 So Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, passim; Charles, *Virtue amidst Vice*, 80–83.

1359 It can be argued that the rhetorical language eliminates the possibility of identifying the opponents. So T. A. Miller, “Dogs, Adulterers, and the Way of Balaam: The Forms and Socio-Rhetorical Function of the Polemical Rhetoric in 2 Peter (Part I),” *IBS* 22 (2000): 123–44. Certainly the language used is emotional and defamatory. It does not follow logically, however, that the opponents are thereby misrepresented. The preservation of the letter suggests that Peter described accurately the adversaries.

1360 So also Caulley, “Inspiration in 2 Peter 1:16–21,” 33.

1361 So G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 153.

1362 Smith notes that that the opponents did not argue for the delay of the parousia. What they argued was that the second coming would not occur at all, and the argument about its delay was used to defend the notion that there would not be a second coming (*Petrine Controversies*, 85).

1363 E.g., Talbert, “2 Peter and the Delay of the Parousia,” 141–43; Smith, *Petrine Controversies*, 93–100.

1364 A number of scholars support some form of the gnostic hypothesis. See Schelke, *Der Petrusbrief—Der Judasbrief*, 232; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 231; Käsemann, “Apologia for Primitive Christian Eschatology,” 170–72; T. S. Caulley, “The False Teachers in Second Peter,” *SBT* 12 (1982): 27–42; Caulley, “Inspiration in 2 Peter 1:16–21,” 50–82. But Caulley has modified his view, as we shall see below.

1365 See Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 31; Jörg Frey, “Judgment on the Ungodly and the *Parousia* of Christ: Eschatology in Jude and 2 Peter,” in *Eschatology of the New Testament and Some Related Documents*, ed. J. G. van der Watt, WUNT 2/315 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 508; J. H. Neyrey, “The Form and Background of the Polemic in 2 Peter,” *JBL* 99 (1980): 407–31; Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 815, 828, 848–50; Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 266–72; G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 153–54. For rejection of a gnostic polemic from a scholar of a past era, see Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 239.

1366 For the reasons sketched in here, see, Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 156–57; J. Kahmann, “Second Peter and Jude,” in *The New Testament in Early Christianity: La réception des écrits néotestamentaires dans le christianisme primitif*, ed. J.-M. Sevrin, BETL 86 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1989), 114–15; M. Desjardins, “The Portrayal of the Dissidents in 2 Peter and Jude: Does It Tell Us More about the ‘Godly’ than the ‘Ungodly?’,” *JSNT* 30 (1987): 93–95; J. H. Neyrey, “The Apologetic Use of the Transfiguration in 2 Peter 1:16–21,” *CBQ* 42 (1980): 506–7. See also Neyrey’s essay in which he subjects Käsemann’s denigration of 2 Peter to evaluation, concluding that Käsemann missed the point in his analysis of the letter (“Polemic in 2 Peter,” 407–31).

1367 Rightly Müller, “Der 2. Petrusbrief,” 327; contra Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 847; Miller, “Polemical Rhetoric in 2 Peter (Part I),” 137.

1368 Riesner notes that there are many parallels between the false teaching in 2 Peter and the problems Paul encountered in Corinth, suggesting a possible early date (“Der zweite-Petrus Brief,” 135).

1369 The patchwork nature of the evidence is obvious from Caulley’s essay, where he stitches together a few clues to support a gnostic hypothesis (“The False Teachers in Second Peter”). Reading Caulley’s work is instructive since it clarifies that determinative evidence for Gnosticism is lacking.

1370 Käsemann, “Apologia for Primitive Christian Eschatology,” 179–80.

1371 Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 122–28; cf. Neyrey, “Polemic in 2 Peter,” 407–31. In the latter essay Neyrey notes his purpose is not to demonstrate that the opponents were Epicurean but merely to indicate where analogies exist. In his commentary, however, he says, “It is the hypothesis of this commentary that the opponents were either Epicureans, who rejected traditional theodicy, or ‘scoffers’ (*Apikoros*), who espoused a similar deviant theology” (122). Davids stands in basic agreement with Neyrey (*2 Peter and Jude*, 132–36). See also the brief comments of Frey, “Eschatology in Jude and 2 Peter,” 509.

1372 K. Berger is in substantial agreement with Neyrey’s thesis, exploring the matter further by investigating some texts in Philo. He also argues that the author of 2 Peter responds to the opponents’ slander of angels by resorting to the Pharisaic tradition, where regard for angels is linked with cultic purity (“Streit um Gottes Vorsehung: Zur Position der Gegner im 2. Petrusbrief,” in *Tradition and Re-interpretation in Jewish and Early Christian Literature: Essays in Honour of Jürgen Lebram*, ed. J. W. Wesseliuss, van Rooden, H. J. de Jonge, and J. W. van Henten, SPB 36 [Leiden: Brill, 1986], 121–35). There is no evidence in the letter, however, that Peter espoused cultic purity (rightly Kahmann [“Second Peter and Jude,” 121]). Hence, the appeal to Pharisaic tradition is not substantiated by the evidence.

1373 G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 156.

- 1374 Kahmann thinks it is unclear that they rejected a future judgment (“Second Peter and Jude,” 119).
- 1375 G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 156–57.
- 1376 Kahmann, “Second Peter and Jude,” 119.
- 1377 See T. S. Caulley, “‘They Promise Them Freedom’: Once Again the ψευδοδιδάσκαλοι in 2 Peter,” *ZNW* 99 (2008): 129–38.
- 1378 See L. Nortjé-Meyer, “Vilification in 2 Peter 2: A Comparison with the Letter of Jude,” *Scriptura* 112 (2013): 5; cf. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 236.
- 1379 See G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 157–59.
- 1380 Contra M. McNamara, “The Unity of Second Peter: A Reconsideration,” *Scr* 12 (1960): 13–19. McNamara argues that 2 Pet 1 and 3 originally circulated independently, but no clear evidence can be adduced to support such a conclusion.
- 1381 D. F. Watson, *Invention, Arrangement, and Style: Rhetorical Criticism of Jude and 2 Peter*, SBLDS 104 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 81–146. For an acceptance of Watson’s argument with some adjustments, see Starr, *Sharers in Divine Nature*, 53–58. For another attempt to analyze the structure of 2 Peter, see G. K. Barr, “The Structure of Hebrews and of 1st and 2nd Peter,” *IBS* 19 (1997): 17–31.
- 1382 See especially the criticisms of Gerdmar, *Rethinking the Judaism-Hellenism Dichotomy*, 94–106; cf. also Müller, “Der 2. Petrusbrief,” 315–16.
- 1383 For instructive evaluations of the role of rhetoric in NT epistles, see S. E. Porter and T. H. Olbricht, eds., *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993); J. A. D. Weima, “What Does Aristotle Have to Do with Paul? An Evaluation of Rhetorical Criticism,” *CTJ* 32 (1997): 458–68. Cf. also G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 163–64.
- 1384 So C. Bigg, *The Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1901), 248.
- 1385 See J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude*, Thornapple Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 296; B. Reicke, *The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude*, AB (Garden City: Doubleday, 1964), 150.
- 1386 R. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, WBC (Waco: Word, 1983), 167.
- 1387 See K. H. Rengstorf, “δοῦλος,” *TDNT* 2.268, 276–77.
- 1388 See esp. J. H. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, AB (Garden City: Doubleday, 1993), 144–45.
- 1389 So A. Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, Der 2 Petrusbrief*, EKKNT (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1994), 127.
- 1390 E.g., Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 296; K. H. Schelke, *Der Petrusbrief—Der Judasbrief*, HTKNT (Freiburg: Herder, 1980), 185; H. Paulsen, *Der zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief*, KEK (Göttingen; Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 104; Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 162.
- 1391 Rightly M. Green, *The Second Epistle General of Peter and the General Epistle of Jude*, 2nd ed., TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 68; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 168; D. J. Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 34–35; J. D. Charles, “The Language and Logic of Virtue in 2 Peter 1:5–7,” *BBR* 8 (1998): 66.

1392 “In this sentence the point of λαγχάνειν is that faith has come to them from God with no cooperation on their part” (H. Hanse, “λαγχάνω,” *TDNT* 4.2). So also T. Callan, *Second Peter*, PCNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 153; L. R. Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 214; G. L. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 174; Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 162.

1393 J. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 366; Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 250; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 297; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 167; E. Fuchs and P. Reymond, *La Deuxième Épître de Saint Pierre, L’Épître de Saint Jude*, CNT (Neuchâtel–Paris: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1980), 44–46; S. J. Kraftchick, *Jude, 2 Peter*, ANTC (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 86; D. J. Harrington, *Jude and 2 Peter*, SP (Collegeville: Michael Glazier, 2003), 239–40; Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 161–62; J. Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, THKNT (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2015), 211. This interpretation is ancient. See Andreas and Oecumenius in *James, 1–2 Peter, 1–3 John, Jude*, ACCS (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000), 130.

1394 So J. B. Mayor, *The Epistle of St. Jude and the Second Epistle of St. Peter* (1907; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1965), 81; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 34. Against this, Fuchs and Reymond object that the Jew-Gentile conflict is over (*2 Pierre, Jude*, 44).

1395 N. Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, NIBC (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1992), 157.

1396 Mayor, *Jude and Second Peter*, 81; Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 250; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 297; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 168; G. Schrenk, “δικαιοσύνη,” *TDNT* 2.198; Kraftchick, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 87; Callan, *Second Peter*, 153–54; J. M. Starr, *Sharers in Divine Nature: 2 Peter 1:4 in Its Hellenistic Context*, ConBNT 33 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2000), 41–42; Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 133; Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 162–63; G. L. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 175; Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 212.

1397 So M. Luther, *Commentary on Peter & Jude*, trans. and ed. J. N. Lenker (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1990), 232; Calvin, *Catholic Epistles*, 366; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 35; J. D. Charles, *Virtue amidst Vice: The Catalog of Virtues in 2 Peter 1*, JSNTSup 150 (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1997), 160; R. A. Reese, *2 Peter and Jude*, THNTC (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 131; A. Gerdmar, *Rethinking the Judaism-Hellenism Dichotomy: A Historiographical Case Study of Second Peter and Jude*, ConBNT 36 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2001), 219. Cf. C. Spicq, *Les Épîtres de Saint Pierre*, SB (Paris: Gabalda, 1966), 208.

1398 This interpretation is supported by the NLT 1996, which translates the last clause “who makes us right with God.”

1399 See Bigg’s excellent discussion (*Peter and Jude*, 250–52). Cf. T. Callan, “The Christology of the Second Letter of Peter,” *Bib* 82 (2001): 253; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 298; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 168–69; Starr, *Sharers in Divine Nature*, 29; Paulsen, *Petrusbrief und Judasbrief*, 104–5; Harrington, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 241–42 (seeing an anti-imperial theme); Reese, *2 Peter and Jude*, 131–32; Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 163–64; Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 212–13.

1400 Rightly Peter H. Davids, *II Peter and Jude: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, BHGNT (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2011), 42. D. B. Wallace restates Sharp’s rule in the following way: “In the TSKS construction, the second noun refers to the same person mentioned with the first noun” (*Greek Grammar beyond the Basics* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996], 271–72). Wallace is also

careful to note that Sharp's rule applies only with "personal, singular, and non-proper nouns." See also discussion on pp. 276–77.

1401 See the hesitation in Neyrey (2 *Peter, Jude*, 147–48).

1402 For a careful analysis of these texts, see M. J. Harris, *Jesus as God: The New Testament Use of Theos in Reference to Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992).

1403 Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 251. See also Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 83, 142–43.

1404 Fuchs and Reymond suggest the term may have been used to counter the emperor cult or incipient Gnosticism (2 *Pierre, Jude*, 45). For background on the term, see W. Foerster, "σωτήρ," *TDNT* 7.1004–12.

1405 Callan, "Christology of Second Peter," 254–55; cf. also Schelke, *Der Petrusbrief—Der Judasbrief*, 185.

1406 Gerdmar, *Rethinking the Judaism-Hellenism Dichotomy*, 216–18.

1407 Charles says on this subject, "Not the philosophic reflection of contemporary ethicists and moral philosophers, not the protognostic speculation of pseudo-Christian mystics, but the knowledge 'of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ'" (*Virtue amidst Vice*, 134).

1408 R. E. Picirilli, "The Meaning of 'Epignosis,'" *EvQ* 47 (1975): 85–93; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 169–70; Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 14; Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 164–65.

1409 Rightly Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 253; Starr, *Sharers in Divine Nature*, 136–38; Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 134.

1410 For the view that the two terms cannot be distinguished sharply, see Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 127–31, esp. 129–30. G. Green says context is decisive in the whole matter (*Jude and 2 Peter*, 176–77).

1411 Nor should we read into this a polemic against Gnosticism since the opponents do not clearly fit into such a mold. Against Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 299; Reicke, *James, Peter, and Jude*, 151.

1412 F. W. Danker argues that 2 Pet 1:3–11 is modeled on decretal forms of honor, which were well known in the Hellenistic world ("2 Peter 1: A Solemn Decree," *CBQ* 40 [1978]: 64–82). So also T. Callan, *Second Peter*, PCNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 149–51. Danker's evidence indicates that the language of 2 Peter would have been familiar to Hellenistic readers. The parallels are not close enough, however, to conclude that 2 Pet 1 is modeled after Hellenistic decrees. Rightly A. Gerdmar, *Rethinking the Judaism-Hellenism Dichotomy: A Historiographical Case Study of Second Peter and Jude*, ConBNT 36 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2001), 107–8; R. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter* (Waco: Word, 1983), 174; S. Hafemann, "Salvation in Jude and the Argument of 2 Peter 1:3–11," in *The Catholic Epistles and Apostolic Tradition*, ed. K.-W. Niebuhr and R. W. Wall (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009), 480, n. 31. As B. Witherington III (*Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians*, vol. II: *A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1–2 Peter* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007], 302) points out "the language of patron and client is not used here."

1413 For a detailed argument, see T. Callan, "The Syntax of 2 Peter 1:1–7," *CBQ* 67 (2005): 632–40. See also J. M. Starr, *Sharers in Divine Nature: 2 Peter 1:4 in Its Hellenistic Context*, ConBNT 33 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2000), 24–26; J. H. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, AB (Garden City: Doubleday, 1993), 150; J. D. Charles, *Virtue amidst Vice: The Catalog of Virtues in 2 Peter 1*, JSNTSup 150 (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1997), 84; Hafemann, "Salvation in Jude and the Argument of 2

Peter 1:3–11,” 340. The $\omega\varsigma$ then is causal (L. R. Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, NTL [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010], 217).

1414 So C. Bigg, *The Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1901), 253; J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude*, Thornapple Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 299; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 173; T. Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society: A Study of 2 Peter*, ConBNT 9 (Lund: Gleerup, 1977), 86; Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 167; J. Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, THKNT (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2015), 208–9.

1415 So Starr, *Sharers in Divine Nature*, 24; Hafemann, “Salvation in Jude and the Argument of 2 Peter 1:3–11,” 340.

1416 One of the problems with this interpretation is that the words $\kappa\alpha\iota\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron\ \delta\grave{\epsilon}$ in v. 5 often point forward in the text instead of backward. Still, a backward reference is not impossible here (see Starr, *Sharers in Divine Nature*, 25). But Hafemann (“Salvation in Jude and the Argument of 2 Peter 1:3–11”) points out (in favor of taking vv. 3–4 with vv. 5–7) that a genitive absolute, which we have in v. 3, typically precedes the clause it modifies. Cf. also. Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, 218.

1417 Rightly Hafemann, “Salvation in Jude and the Argument of 2 Peter 1:3–11,” 340.

1418 Fornberg argues that “life” is closely related to “godliness” so that “life” here has an ethical meaning (*An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 90).

1419 Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 253; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 177; D. J. Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 41; A. Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, Der 2 Petrusbrief*, EKKNT (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1994), 138; Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 218.

1420 So Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 300; D. G. Horrell, *The Epistles of Peter and Jude*, EC (Peterborough: Epworth, 1998), 149.

1421 Starr wisely remarks: “Where 2 Peter could easily have specified Christ’s agency in 1:3–4, then, he is content to imply it, leaving open the possibility of understanding God as the agent. This is not especially surprising, since 2 Peter would have assumed that behind Christ stands God as the one who prompts the Christ event” (*Sharers in Divine Nature*, 34).

1422 I am not suggesting that Peter was a modalist of some kind.

1423 So Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 81, 144; T. Callan, “The Christology of the Second Letter of Peter,” *Bib* 82 (2001): 253; Starr, *Sharers in Divine Nature*, 32; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 300–301.

1424 For another view see Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 138. E. Fuchs and P. Reymond argue that God and Jesus are mentioned respectively so that, in their view, we have a reference to God’s power and Christ’s calling (*La Deuxième Épître de Saint Pierre, L’ Épître de Saint Jude*, CNT [Neuchâtel–Paris: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1980], 50, n. 2). The diversity among commentators demonstrates the obscurity, indicating again that the text does not unambiguously resolve the matter for readers.

1425 Life and godliness represent hendiadys. So Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 208, n. 422.

1426 Rightly Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 177; Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 138–39; T. Callan, *Second Peter*, PCNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 155. Vögtle observes that all Christians are called

in 1:10.

1427 Against R. A. Reese who thinks earthly life is included” (2 *Peter and Jude*, THNTC [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007], 134). G. L. Green argues similarly that “human existence” is in view rather than eternal life (*Jude and 2 Peter*, BECNT [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008], 182).

1428 Godliness include both one’s relationship to God and one’s relationship with others. So G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 182.

1429 Bauckham fails to see that eternal life here is linked with godliness and hence misconstrues the relationship (*Jude, 2 Peter*, 178).

1430 Cf. also Charles, *Virtue amidst Vice*, 161.

1431 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 178; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 42; Starr, *Sharers in Divine Nature*, 40, n. 59; Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 169–70; Peter H. Davids, *II Peter and Jude: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, BHGNT (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2011), 45. Bauckham argues that καλέω εἰς would be more likely if the translation “called to” were intended rather than “called through” (cf. Col 3:15; 1 Thess 2:12; 1 Tim 6:12). Second Timothy 1:9 may indicate that the dative can be translated “called to.” Still, such an interpretation seems less likely. The variant reading διά, though clearly secondary, may indicate that some scribes support the interpretation suggested here. Bigg thinks that ἰδίᾳ δόξῃ καὶ ἀρετῇ are linked with the verb δεδωρημένης (*Peter and Jude*, 254). But the word order suggests that they should be attached to the participle καλέσαντος.

1432 Similarly, Starr, *Sharers in Divine Nature*, 42. Cf. Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 219.

1433 Charles emphasizes that Peter drew on Stoic vocabulary in these verses but incorporated the terms into a Christian worldview (*Virtue amidst Vice*, 134–38).

1434 Cf. Starr, *Sharers in Divine Nature*, 43–44. We probably have hendiadys here. So Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 208, n. 423.

1435 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 178–79.

1436 Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 171.

1437 D. Harink, *1 & 2 Peter*, BTCB (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 139.

1438 J. B. Mayor, *The Epistle of St. Jude and the Second Epistle of St. Peter* (1907; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1965), 87; Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 255; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 301; M. Green, *The Second Epistle General of Peter and the General Epistle of Jude*, 2nd ed., TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 72; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 179; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 43; Starr, *Sharers in Divine Nature*, 26; N. Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, NIBC (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1992), 161. And the prepositional phrase denotes means. Davids, *II Peter and Jude*, 45.

1439 So also Harink, *1 & 2 Peter*, 139.

1440 Rightly Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 255; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 301; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 179; Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 52.

1441 For the concept of divine nature in the Greco-Roman world, see Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 157–58.

1442 So Charles, *Virtue amidst Vice*, 137.

1443 See S. Hafemann, “‘Divine Nature’ in 2 Pet 1,4 within its Eschatological Context,” *Bib* 94 (2013): 80–99. Hafemann carefully studies the word φύσις in Greco-Roman and Second Temple

Jewish literature. He emphasizes that the term does not refer to an abstract essence or nature but God's nature expressed in action, especially the eschatological action of creating the new heavens and the new earth. Still, it is more natural, as Frey says, to see the notion of participation in the divine nature (*Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 223). For Frey's discussion of the background, see 223–24.

1444 See K. H. Rengstorf, "Becoming like God: An Evangelical Doctrine of Theosis," *JETS* 40 (1997): 257–69; D. B. Clendenin, *Eastern Orthodox Christianity: A Western Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 117–37, 157–59.

1445 Though some statements made by Eastern theologians go too far in erasing the distinction between God and human beings. For an excellent discussion, see Harink, *1 and 2 Peter*, 140–45.

1446 Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 225.

1447 So Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 141; Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 225. Fornberg rightly argues that the Stoic notion of the divine being inherent in humanity is not what Peter intends here (*An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 86). He thinks the idea is that believers will obtain immortality (88), but it is unclear, contra Fornberg, that the letter speaks to those influenced by mystery religions.

1448 A. Wolters argues that the phrase should be translated "partners of deity," not "sharers in the divine nature" ("Partners of the Deity": A Covenantal Reading of 2 Peter 1:4," *CTJ* 25 [1990]: 28–44; A. Wolters, "Postscript to 'Partners of the Deity,'" *CTJ* 26 [1991]: 418–20). Wolters has demonstrated the possibility, but not the probability, of his interpretation. The word φύσις most naturally refers to God's nature. Against Wolters's covenantal idea, see Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 174; Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 223.

1449 Starr, *Sharers in Divine Nature*. See also the excellent study of W. C. Reuschling, "The Means and the End in 2 Peter 1:3–11: The Theological and Moral Significance of *Theōsis*," *JTI* 8 (2014): 275–86.

1450 So also Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 172–76. Davids also shows that Peter does not focus on the immortality received at death but on ethical transformation. Perhaps, as my editor R. Clendenen suggests, we have an allusion to Gen 3:5, 22, which refers to becoming like God.

1451 Rightly Starr, *Sharers in Divine Nature*, 47–48; Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 176; against Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 181–82; H. Paulsen, *Der zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief*, KEK (Göttingen; Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 108; Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 220.

1452 For the notion that sharers of the divine nature refers to the Holy Spirit, see Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 256.

1453 See especially Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 182–83; Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 141–42.

1454 Rightly Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 302; M. J. Kruger, "The Authenticity of 2 Peter," *JETS* 42 (1999): 668–69.

1455 Charles sees only a present fulfillment (*Virtue amidst Vice*, 161).

1456 Mayor, *Jude and Second Peter*, 88; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 44.

1457 Witherington, *1–2 Peter*, 303–4; cf. G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 186–87.

- 1458 So Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 89; Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 142; Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 174–75.
- 1459 Reese, *2 Peter and Jude*, 136–37.
- 1460 Against Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 305; Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 155.
- 1461 *The Mishnah*, trans. H. Danby (New York: Oxford University Press, 1933), 306–7. For other parallels see Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 174–76.
- 1462 Rightly Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 184–85; Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 150; Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, 220; Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 227. Mayor observes that the relationship between each virtue is unclear (*Jude and Second Peter*, 91).
- 1463 Charles, *Virtue amidst Vice*, 145–46, 156–57; J. D. Charles, “The Language and Logic of Virtue in 2 Peter 1:5–7,” *BBR* 8 (1998): 70–71.
- 1464 “First of all comes faith, which is the foundation and source of all good works.” So Theophylact in *James, 1–2 Peter, 1–3 John, Jude*, ACCS (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000), 133.
- 1465 Charles notes the common language between 1:5–7 and a first-century inscription in Asia Minor (“The Language and Logic of Virtue in 2 Peter 1:5–7,” 71–72). Any literary dependence, however, is unlikely in my view.
- 1466 Rightly B. Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians*, vol. II: *A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1–2 Peter* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007), 308–9.
- 1467 Rightly Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 56; Witherington, *1–2 Peter*, 309. On the priority of faith, see Charles, *Virtue amidst Vice*, 162.
- 1468 I am not suggesting, incidentally, that Charles falls into such an error, only that some might deduce such from the interpretation offered.
- 1469 Fornberg fails to clarify this crucial point in his explanation of the relationship between vv. 3–4 and vv. 5–7 (*An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 97).
- 1470 M. Luther, *Commentary on Peter & Jude*, trans. and ed. J. N. Lenker (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1990), 237.
- 1471 Charles discusses an inscription from first-century Asia Minor that lists many of the same virtues (*Virtue amidst Vice*, 139). Cf. also discussion of an inscription on pp. 146–47.
- 1472 E.g., Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 257.
- 1473 Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 228–29.
- 1474 Danker mistakenly sees a link to benefaction here and translates the term as “faithfulness” (“2 Peter 1,” 460; so also Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 158–59; G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 192). For a convincing defense of faith as trust here, see Charles, *Virtue amidst Vice*, 140; cf. also Witherington, *1–2 Peter* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007), 310.
- 1475 See discussion in Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 97–101; Charles, *Virtue amidst Vice*, 139–40. Fornberg observes that love is not commonly featured in Greek literature.
- 1476 See the discussion in Charles, *Virtue amidst Vice*, 148, though he probably goes too far in explaining the parallel.
- 1477 So Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 179.

- 1478 Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 141. Gerdmar argues that the link with Stoicism is superficial and flawed (*Rethinking the Judaism-Hellenism Dichotomy*, 212–16).
- 1479 See W. Grundmann, “ἐγκράτεια,” *TDNT* 2.340–41.
- 1480 See especially Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 159–60.
- 1481 Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 231.
- 1482 Cf. W. Foerster, “εὐσέβεια,” *TDNT* 7.175–85.
- 1483 Rightly Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 181.
- 1484 Cf. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 161; Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 100. Charles thinks it is equivalent to φιλανθρωπία in paganism (*Virtue amidst Vice*, 144), but he ignores the familial dimension of the word Peter used.
- 1485 Seeing love as the supreme virtue distinguishes Peter from Stoicism (Charles, *Virtue amidst Vice*, 145).
- 1486 Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 184.
- 1487 The participles are conditional (Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 57).
- 1488 Witherington, *1–2 Peter*, 312.
- 1489 Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 258.
- 1490 The word εἰς means “in.” The use of εἰς for ἐν is typical of Hellenistic Greek.
- 1491 Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 57.
- 1492 So Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 307; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 188–89. In this context Peter is not speaking of growing more in one’s knowledge of Christ but conceives of knowing Christ as the foundation for growth (contra B. Reicke, *The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude*, AB [Garden City: Doubleday, 1964], 154; M. Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 81).
- 1493 G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 196.
- 1494 Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 308; Charles, *Virtue amidst Vice*, 149–50.
- 1495 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 189.
- 1496 Cf. Horrell, *The Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 152.
- 1497 G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 198.
- 1498 So Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 233.
- 1499 So Mayor, *Jude and Second Peter*, 97; Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 234.
- 1500 Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 48.
- 1501 Cf. G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 199. But neither should we conclude that the expression used here points to second-century Christianity (contra Paulsen, *Petrusbrief und Judasbrief*, 112).
- 1502 Luther remarks that those who do not have “the fruits of faith” lack genuine faith (*Commentary on Peter & Jude*, 239).
- 1503 Moo thinks it reaches back to vv. 3–9 (*2 Peter, Jude*, 48).
- 1504 Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 258.

1505 Some have questioned whether Peter overemphasizes human effort, but Fornberg rightly remarks that Peter's comment here is akin to what Paul says in Phil 2:12–13 (*An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 27).

1506 Fuchs and Reymond remark that an emphasis on human responsibility is surprising when the subject is calling and election (*2 Pierre, Jude*, 60).

1507 J. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 376–77.

1508 Rightly Reicke, *James, Peter, and Jude*, 153; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 190.

1509 Note the agreement with Calvin by Charles, *Virtue amidst Vice*, 151.

1510 “Those who go back to their crimes after they have been called and who die in their sins make it clear to everyone that they are damned” (Bede in *James, 1–2 Peter, 1–3 John, Jude*, ACCS [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000], 135).

1511 The participle *ποιοῦντες* is conditional (Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 60).

1512 So Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 95. Nevertheless, he proceeds to say, “The author regarded good deeds as essential for salvation” (p. 96). He argues such a perspective does not necessarily contradict the Pauline claim that good works are a consequence of salvation.

1513 So most commentators. See, e.g., Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 235; Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 261; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 309; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 191; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 49; Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 60; Callan, *2 Peter*, 159; G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 201–2; Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 188–89.

1514 G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 202.

1515 Cf. the helpful comments of Charles, *Virtue amidst Vice*, 152.

1516 “Lord and Savior” are an example of the Granville Sharp rule where both nouns have the same referent. See P. H. Davids, *II Peter and Jude: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, BHGNT (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2011), 52.

1517 Starr, *Sharers in Divine Nature*, 32.

1518 Starr, *Sharers in Divine Nature*, 49.

1519 Cf. E. Fuchs and P. Reymond, *La Deuxième Épître de Saint Pierre, L'Épître de Saint Jude*, CNT (Neuchâtel–Paris: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1980), 62.

1520 J. H. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, AB (Garden City: Doubleday, 1993), 164.

1521 L. R. Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 224.

1522 Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 62.

1523 So Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 63; R. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter* (Waco: Word, 1983), 195.

1524 Bauckham questions whether Peter could have been referring to the remainder of the letter since he did not remind the readers of 1:3–11 of what follows (*Jude, 2 Peter*, 195). Peter may, however, have been thinking of the letter as a whole, in which 1:3–11 is the foundation for what is to come.

1525 Rightly G. L. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 209–10; Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 193. It is too far-flung to think the present truth refers to the Son of Man of Dan 7:13 LXX (against A. Gerdmar, *Rethinking the Judaism-Hellenism Dichotomy: A Historiographical Case Study of Second Peter and Jude*, ConBNT 36 [Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2001], 194).

1526 Contra to T. Fornberg it is not at all likely that there is any allusion to the soul's being imprisoned in the body (*An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society: A Study of 2 Peter*, ConBNT 9 [Lund: Gleerup, 1977], 124).

1527 Rightly Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 198. Against M. Green, *The Second Epistle General of Peter and the General Epistle of Jude*, 2nd ed., TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988).

1528 See Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 199; Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 65, n. 11. D. Guthrie thinks "swift" is possible (*New Testament Introduction*, 4th ed. [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1990], 821).

1529 See the excellent discussion in Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 200–201.

1530 T. Callan argues that we have dependence here on what is *written* in John 21:18 ("The Gospels of Matthew and John in the Second Letter of Peter," A. J. Batten and J. S. Kloppenborg, eds., *James, 1 & 2 Peter, and Early Jesus Traditions*, LNTS 478 [London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014], 173–74). Such a judgment depends, however, on a late date for the writing of 2 Peter.

1531 So also D. B. Wallace, "Second Peter: Introduction, Argument, and Outline," <https://bible.org/seriespage/second-peter-introduction-argument-and-outline>.

1532 This would answer the objection of J. B. Mayor (*The Epistle of St. Jude and the Second Epistle of St. Peter* [1907; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1965], cxliv) and A. Vögtle (*Der Judasbrief, Der 2 Petrusbrief*, EKKNT [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1994], 160) that no date is given in John 21.

1533 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 201.

1534 Cf. Mayor, *Jude and Second Peter*, 102–3.

1535 M. McNamara, "The Unity of Second Peter: A Reconsideration," *Scr* 12 (1960): 13–19.

1536 Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 846.

1537 Neyrey rightly says that the reminder includes this section and what follows (*2 Peter, Jude*, 169).

1538 For a history of interpretation of 1:16–21, see T. S. Caulley, "The Idea of 'Inspiration' in 2 Peter 1:16–21" (Ph.D. diss., Eberhard-Karls Universität zu Tübingen, 1982), 3–16.

1539 T. Callan, *Second Peter*, PCNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 174.

1540 D. Harink, *1 & 2 Peter*, BTCB (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 156–57.

1541 In defense of the apostolic "we," see Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 67. Both apostles and prophets may be in view. See G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 219.

1542 So Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 215; P. H. Davids, *II Peter and Jude: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, BHGNT (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2011), 58; G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 219; J. Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, THKNT (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2015), 253.

1543 So Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 253.

- 1544 See, e.g., C. Spicq, *Les Épîtres de Saint Pierre*, SB (Paris: Gabalda, 1966), 219–20.
- 1545 Rightly Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 79–80; Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 165. A reference to both comings is not plausible (contra Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 68).
- 1546 See A. Oepke, “παρουσία,” *TDNT* 5.859–61.
- 1547 Contra Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 847; K. H. Schelke, *Der Petrusbrief—Der Judasbrief*, HTKNT (Freiburg: Herder, 1980), 197. J. N. D. Kelly rightly perceives this but then, somewhat inconsistently, opts for a both-and view (*A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude*, Thornapple Commentaries [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981], 316). Rightly Mayor, *Jude and Second Peter*, 103; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 213. Caulley argues that the term “myths” refers primarily to the opponents, noting that the author reverses the charges against his own teaching and applies them to the opponents. According to Caulley, the gnostic creation myth of the false teachers is criticized by the author (“Inspiration in 2 Peter 1:16–21,” 61, 109–12). Contra Caulley, the term does not refer to the opponents since the text clearly indicates that the label “myths” was applied to apostolic teaching. Nor is there any clear evidence that Peter characterized the opponents’ teaching as mythical by turning their own accusations against them since he nowhere identifies the opponents’ teaching as mythical. Caulley relies on evidence from the Pastorals and Irenaeus to categorize the opponents, but such a procedure is methodologically unconvincing since it is questionable whether the adversaries in the Pastorals should be identified as gnostic or that data from the Pastorals should be used to delineate the false teaching in 2 Peter. Moreover, the evidence from Irenaeus is too late to be helpful in establishing the nature of the heresy in 2 Peter.
- 1548 On myths see Neyrey’s helpful comments (*2 Peter, Jude*, 175–76). D. F. Strauss and R. Bultmann used the term in a similar way to communicate their understanding of Gospels. See J. D. G. Dunn, “Demythologizing—the Problem of Myth in the New Testament,” in *New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 289–90, 294–96.
- 1549 This citation is taken from G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 218. See also his other references on 218.
- 1550 See J. H. Neyrey, “The Form and Background of the Polemic in 2 Peter,” *JBL* 99 (1980): 94–195, esp. 185. Concerning Epicurus’s dismissal of providence see also G. Stahlin, “μῦθος,” *TDNT* 4.779, n. 102.
- 1551 For a proto-gnostic view of the opponents, see Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 28, 67.
- 1552 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 332.
- 1553 Contra Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 114; J. D. Charles, *Virtue amidst Vice: The Catalog of Virtues in 2 Peter 1*, JSNTSup 150 (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1997), 84. Cf. W. Michaelis, “ἐπόπτης,” *TDNT* 5.373–75.
- 1554 G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 220–21.
- 1555 So G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 221; Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 203.
- 1556 T. Callan, “The Christology of the Second Letter of Peter,” *Bib* 82 (2001): 255; so also Caulley, “Inspiration in 2 Peter 1:16–21,” 116.
- 1557 Cf. the tradition of the divine voice in Judaism (O. Betz, “φωνή,” *TDNT* 9.288–90).

- 1558 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 217.
- 1559 Hence, we have a reference to Christ's deity here (Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 69).
- 1560 Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 173.
- 1561 E.g., Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 217.
- 1562 Rightly Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 319; D. J. Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 72.
- 1563 For a careful sifting of the tradition, see Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 204–10.
- 1564 P. Dschulnigg argues that Peter was closest to and most dependent on Matthew of the three Synoptics (“Der theologische Ort des zweiten Petrusbriefes,” *BZ* 33 [1989]: 168–76). Dschulnigg exaggerates to some degree the closeness of Peter to Matthew, but he does show that in some texts Peter may depend on Matthean tradition.
- 1565 E.g., Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 205–10. H. Paulsen argues that Peter is dependent on general traditional material (*Der zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief*, KEK [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992], 119).
- 1566 R. J. Miller, “Is There Independent Attestation for the Transfiguration in 2 Peter?,” *NTS* 42 (1996): 620–25. Cf. M. G. Gilmour, *The Significance of Parallels between 2 Peter and Other Early Christian Literature*, *Academia Biblica* 10 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 95–97, 120; T. Callan, “The Gospels of Matthew and John in the Second Letter of Peter,” in *James, 1 & 2 Peter, and Early Jesus Traditions*, ed. A. J. Batten and J. S. Kloppenborg, *LNTS* 478 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), 168–72; Callan, *2 Peter*, 168–69.
- 1567 M. J. Kruger, “The Authenticity of 2 Peter,” *JETS* 42 (1999): 663.
- 1568 Cf. G. Schrenk, “εὐδοκέω,” *TDNT* 2.739–41.
- 1569 So Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 80.
- 1570 T. V. Smith argues that the event verifies Peter's authority but does not point to the parousia (*Petrine Controversies in Early Christianity: Attitudes toward Peter in Christian Writings of the First Two Centuries*, *WUNT* 2/15 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1985], 79). He introduces a false disjunction here since Peter's witness of the transfiguration in history demonstrates his authority and anchors the second coming in a historical event that functions as a prelude of the parousia.
- 1571 Bauckham thinks the author adheres to the literary form of a testament in recounting eyewitness testimony (*Jude, 2 Peter*, 216).
- 1572 “There used to be many people who thought that this letter was not written by Peter. But it is enough to read this verse, and you will soon see that it was Peter who stood with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration. It is therefore the same Peter who heard the voice testifying to the Lord who wrote this letter” (Gregory the Great in *James, 1–2 Peter, 1–3 John, Jude*, ACCS [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000], 139–40). Cf. also Bede, “Those who doubt that Peter wrote this letter need to pay careful attention to this verse and to the one which follows, because the eyewitness testimony makes it clear that no one else could have written it” (p. 140). Bauckham argues that the historical evidence of a transparent fiction was erased by the time of Gregory and Bede, but we should observe that we have no early historical evidence supporting Bauckham's theory.
- 1573 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 221; see also G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 225.

1574 So Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 169. For the genuineness of what Peter said here, see Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 824.

1575 R. H. Stein, "Is the Transfiguration (Mark 9:2–8) a Misplaced Resurrection-Account?" *JBL* 95 (1976): 79–96; cf. also Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 210–11; Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 69–70.

1576 For support of the notion that the "we" refers to the apostles, see Caulley, "Inspiration in 2 Peter 1:16–21," 126; B. P. Wolfe, "The Prophets' Understanding or Understanding the Prophets?: 2 Peter 1:20 Reconsidered," *BRT/RBT* 8 (1998): 96–97; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 224–25; Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 72. For a reference to all believers, see Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 320; Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 256.

1577 Neyrey, "2 Peter 1:16–21," 514–16; Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 178–79.

1578 Rightly Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 224; Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 170; D. Farkasfalvy, "The Ecclesial Setting of Pseudepigraphy in Second Peter and Its Role in the Formation of the Canon," *SecCent* 5 (1985–86): 8, n. 12.

1579 Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 321; Schelke, *Die Petrusbrief—Die Judasbrief*, 200; Paulsen, *Petrusbrief und Judasbrief*, 120; Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 72; Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 256–57.

1580 So Wolfe, "2 Peter 1:20 Reconsidered," 96. Moo thinks the reference is to OT prophecies about the establishing of the messianic kingdom (*2 Peter, Jude*, 75).

1581 Caulley, "Inspiration in 2 Peter 1:16–21," 128–30. Caulley argues that the reference is to messianic texts uttered during the event of the transfiguration (129–30).

1582 In citing the OT, Peter does not limit himself merely to the words cited but the entire context drawn upon. Supporting the notion that NT writers drew upon the wider context from which they quoted is the classic work by C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures* (New York: Scribners, 1952).

1583 So Wolfe, "2 Peter 1:20 Reconsidered," 96, n. 23.

1584 Cf. C. Bigg, *The Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1901), 268; M. Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 97–98.

1585 B. Reicke, *The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude*, AB (Garden City: Doubleday, 1964), 158.

1586 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 223; N. Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, NIBC (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1992), 179; G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 226.

1587 Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 320–21; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 75–76; Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 82, n. 1; Horrell, *The Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 158; Caulley, "Inspiration in 2 Peter 1:16–21," 130–34; Wolfe, "2 Peter 1:20 Reconsidered," 96–97; Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 207.

1588 Harink, *1 & 2 Peter*, 159. Italics his.

1589 Cf. also Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 256.

1590 G. L. Green maintains that the discussion about prophecy must be set against the canvas of skepticism about the validity of prophecies in the Greco-Roman world ("As for Prophecies, They Will Come to an End": 2 Peter, Paul and Plutarch on 'the Obsolescence of Oracles,'" *JSNT* 82 [2001]: 107–22).

1591 Caulley, "Inspiration in 2 Peter 1:16–21," 133.

- 1592 Callan (*2 Peter*, 177) suggests that the reference is to the sun here.
- 1593 Cf. Callan, *2 Peter*, 136.
- 1594 Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 322.
- 1595 T. Callan argues that the phrase “in your hearts” modifies “knowing,” but this is unlikely. In 2 Pet 3:3 the same basic construction starts a new thought, and the same is almost certainly true here (“A Note on 2 Peter 1:19–20,” *JBL* 125 [2006]: 143–50). See especially S. E. Porter and A. W. Pitts, “τοῦτο πρῶτον γινώσκοντες ὅτι in 2 Peter 1:20 and Hellenistic Epistolary Convention,” *JBL* 127 (2008): 165–71.
- 1596 Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 269.
- 1597 Cf. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 226; Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 85; G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 229.
- 1598 Rightly Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 73.
- 1599 Caulley, “Inspiration in 2 Peter 1:16–21,” 140–41.
- 1600 For a detailed discussion of this verse, see Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 229–33.
- 1601 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 229–33; see also L. R. Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 234; Callan, *2 Peter*, 177; G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 231–32; Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 210–12.
- 1602 “They were fully aware that the message had been given to them, and they made no attempt to put their own interpretation on it” (Oecumenius in *James, 1–2 Peter, 1–3 John, Jude*, ACCS [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000], 141).
- 1603 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 232.
- 1604 Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 269–70; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 323–24; Reicke, *James, Peter, and Jude*, 158–59; Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 847; B. Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians*, vol. II: *A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1–2 Peter* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007), 336–37; S. J. Kraftchick, *Jude, 2 Peter*, ANTC (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 118. Vögtle rightly says that no polemic against Gnosticism can be read out of this verse (*Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 173–74; contra Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 74–75).
- 1605 Caulley, “Inspiration in 2 Peter 1:16–21,” 142–48. Neyrey argues that opponents charge the author with arbitrary interpretations, and hence the author defends the legitimacy of his interpretation (“2 Peter 1:16–21,” 516–19).
- 1606 B. B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1948), 83–96. S. Voorwinde says: “Thus he draws our attention to a profound mystery. The words of Scripture are divine words, and yet they are also the words of human writers. We cannot explain this antinomy. All we can do is observe the evidence there is for it” (“Old Testament Quotations in Peter’s Epistles,” *VR* 49 [1987]: 3–16). He also says there is no evidence for the theory of dictation (p. 6) and argues that Peter respected the OT context in his citations (in both letters), that his interpretation is christologically centered (following the example of Jesus himself), and that he uses a grammatical-historical approach that is integrated with redemptive history.
- 1607 B. Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians*, vol. II: *A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1–2 Peter* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007), 348.

1608 Note R. Bauckham's careful discussion, where he draws a similar conclusion (*Jude, 2 Peter*, WBC [Waco: Word, 1983], 237).

1609 H. C. C. Cavallin surmises that perhaps the reference to teaching indicates that they claimed the ability to teach and interpret prophecy rather than possessing the gift of prophecy itself ("The False Teachers of 2 Pt as Pseudo-Prophets," *NovT* 21 [1979]: 269–70; cf. also A. Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, Der 2 Petrusbrief*, EKKNT [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1994], 184). E. Fuchs and P. Reymond also observe that the opponents were teachers, not prophets (*La Deuxième Épître de Saint Pierre, L'Épître de Saint Jude*, CNT [Neuchâtel–Paris: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1980], 77).

1610 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 238.

1611 D. Harink, *1 & 2 Peter*, BTCB (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 163.

1612 J. D. Charles, *Virtue amidst Vice: The Catalog of Virtues in 2 Peter 1*, JSNTSup 150 (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1997), 86; C. Bigg, *The Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1901), 271. Alternatively, Bigg says they may appear at various times.

1613 So also G. L. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 238.

1614 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 239. Hence, it fits with the testament hypothesis (so also H. Paulsen, *Der zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief*, KEK [Göttingen; Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992], 127).

1615 D. J. Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 92; M. Green, *The Second Epistle General of Peter and the General Epistle of Jude*, 2nd ed., TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 104.

1616 See especially J. H. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, AB (Garden City: Doubleday, 1993), 190; contra Charles, *Virtue amidst Vice*, 86.

1617 Rightly Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 239.

1618 So Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 239; D. G. Horrell, *The Epistles of Peter and Jude*, EC (Peterborough: Epworth, 1998), 161; Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 78–79.

1619 Charles rightly sees that libertinism rather than false doctrine is the focus in 2 Peter, though he downplays unduly the presence of doctrinal aberrations (*Virtue amidst Vice*, 48–49, 86–87).

1620 See I. H. Marshall, "The Development of the Concept of Redemption in the New Testament," in *Reconciliation and Hope: New Testament Essays on Atonement and Eschatology Presented to L. L. Morris on His Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. R. Banks (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 153–69.

1621 Bauckham thinks the denial is only moral (*Jude, 2 Peter*, 241; cf. Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 221). D. Guthrie suggests that they denied Christ's redemptive work (*New Testament Introduction*, 4th ed. [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1990], 847). B. Reicke, implausibly, thinks the author addressed masters who wanted to foment a political revolt (*The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude*, AB [Garden City: Doubleday, 1964], 145, 161). T. V. Smith argues that they denied "the redemptive meaning and significance of Jesus' crucifixion" (*Petrine Controversies in Early Christianity: Attitudes toward Peter in Christian Writings of the First Two Centuries*, WUNT 2/15 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1985], 87). This latter interpretation reads more into the text than is warranted.

1622 So J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude*, Thornapple Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 328.

1623 Reading the participle *ἐπάγοντες* as result of the previous sentence, but if it belongs to the next sentence, then it is concessive. So Davids, *II Peter and Jude Handbook*, 66. Along the same lines, *καί* is coordinate if *ἐπάγοντες* goes with v. 1 but adverbial if it is connected to v. 2 (see Davids, *II Peter and Jude Handbook*, 66)

1624 Vögtle rejects the notion that the reference is to a sudden judgment (*Judasbrief*, 2 *Petrusbrief*, 185).

1625 Bauckham, *Jude*, 2 *Peter*, 241.

1626 J. Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* (1852; repr., Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1995), 250–52. Cf. also G. D. Long, *Definite Atonement* (Rochester: Backus, 1988), 67–84. A. D. Chang rightly argues that attempts to understand ἀγοράζω nonsoteriologically constitute special pleading (“Second Peter 2:1 and the Extent of the Atonement,” *BSac* 142 [1985]: 54–56).

1627 D. W. Kennard agrees that redemption is soteriological. His view is distinctive in that he argues that one may be genuinely redeemed and yet one may not obtain eschatological salvation on the last day. Kennard argues that some of those who are redeemed are not elect, and hence the redeemed and elect are not necessarily coterminus (“Petrine Redemption: Its Meaning and Extent,” *JETS* 39 [1987]: 399–405). At the end of the day, this view is a more nuanced explanation of the notion that one can lose salvation, although it could be labeled more precisely as “the loss of redemption” view. Kennard’s attempt to segregate redemption, salvation, and election does not square with the rest of the NT, nor is it evident that Peter distinguishes between an irrevocable election and a revocable redemption.

1628 Cf. Bauckham, “Thus 2 Peter does not deny that the false teachers are Christians, but sees them as apostate Christians who have disowned their Master” (*Jude*, 2 *Peter*, 240). Chang adopts what he calls the “spiritual redemption” view in which he embraces unlimited atonement and then argues that the problem with the false teachers was that they did not embrace the salvation purchased for them (“Extent of the Atonement,” 52–63). What Chang does not explain, however, is how his reading accords with the remaining context of 2 Peter, where it is clear that the false teachers confessed Jesus as Lord, were part of the Christian community, and were recognized as Christians by others in the church (at least initially). Hence, to be consistent he should argue that those who initially submit to the lordship of Christ may in fact apostatize.

1629 See my comments on that verse.

1630 The dative ἀσελείαις is the direct object of the verb ἐξακολουθήσουσιν, not dative of reference (against Davids, *II Peter and Jude Handbook*, 67).

1631 So Paulsen, *Petrusbrief und Judasbrief*, 129; Fuchs and Reymond, 2 *Pierre*, *Jude*, 80.

1632 T. Fornberg suggests that in context the term may refer to doctrinal deviation rather than sexual immorality (*An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society: A Study of 2 Peter*, ConBNT 9 [Lund: Gleerup, 1977], 37). Quite unlikely as well is the view of T. A. Miller that the author does not refer literally to sexual immorality (“Dogs, Adulterers, and the Way of Balaam: The Forms and SocioRhetorical Function of the Polemical Rhetoric in 2 Peter [Part I],” *IBS* 22 [2000]: 133).

1633 Cf. Bauckham, *Jude*, 2 *Peter*, 243; J. Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, THKNT (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2015), 273.

1634 Note Ps 121:3–4, where we are told that God does not sleep.

1635 Rightly Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 100.

1636 It could be argued that we do not have a second example here since angels and human beings were judged at the same time, and seeing two examples would fit nicely with the preservation of both Noah and Lot. Still, the parallel with Jude (vv. 5–7) suggests three examples of judgment.

1637 So J. Kahmann, “Second Peter and Jude,” in *The New Testament in Early Christianity: La réception des écrits néotestamentaires dans le christianisme primitif*, ed. J.-M. Sevrin, BETL 86 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1989), 108; cf. Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 48 (though he may underemphasize the presence of sexual sin in 2 Peter).

1638 Another possibility is that Gen 6:1–4 itself represents the fall of angels from righteousness. If this is the case, then the angels fell from righteousness after Adam and not at the same time as Satan.

1639 See here the discussion in G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 250–51.

1640 Rightly Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 103.

1641 Rightly Paulsen, *Petrusbrief und Judasbrief*, 133; N. R. Wense, “Second Temple Literary Traditions in 2 Peter,” *CBQ* 78 (2016): 118.

1642 But note that the datives modify *ταρταρώσας* in my judgment. The difference in meaning is not significant either way.

1643 Cf. *TCGNT* 632; G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 268.

1644 So Mayor, *Jude and Second Peter*, 121; Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 52; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 102; Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 83. Fornberg notes that *σιποῖς* was used for storage rooms for seed. The word also was used for the underworld since it denoted “the underground silos at Eleusis, where the firstfruits were stored as a symbol of Kore’s descent to, and sojourn in Hades” (pp. 52–53).

1645 Rightly Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 116.

1646 M. Luther says about this verse: “This is also a fearful example, the most horrible one in the Scriptures. One might almost despair in view of it, even if he were strong in faith. For when such language and judgment of God go to man’s heart, and he thinks of it, that he too shall die. He must tremble and fear if he is not well armed, since among so many in the whole world no one but these eight only were saved” (*Commentary on Peter & Jude*, trans. and ed. J. N. Lenker [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1990], 261).

1647 Note the link between the judgment at the time of the flood (*ἐπάξιας*, v. 5) and the future judgment (*ἐπάγοντες*, v. 1). I owe this insight to Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 42.

1648 The creative suggestion of M. D. Jensen that we should count back eight generations from Noah to Enosh so that Noah is the eighth generation of those who proclaim righteousness is unlikely (“Noah, the Eighth Proclaimer of Righteousness: Understanding 2 Peter 2.5 in Light of Genesis 4.26,” *JSNT* 37 [2015]: 458–69). Besides the fact that the connection is obscure, calling on the name of the Lord (Gen 4:26) should not be equated with being a preacher of righteousness.

1649 Bigg adopts the view that Noah is the eighth from Adam chronologically (*Peter and Jude*, 276), but the parallel with 1 Pet 3:20 suggests otherwise, nor is there any suggestion that Peter began with Adam.

- 1650 Cf. Reicke, *James, Peter, and Jude*, 165; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 250.
- 1651 Rightly Paulsen, *Petrusbrief und Judasbrief*, 133.
- 1652 E.g., Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 85.
- 1653 S. Hafemann argues that the phrase “preacher of righteousness” is a double entendre, referring both to God’s righteousness and Noah’s righteousness at the same time (“‘Noah, the Preacher of (God’s) Righteousness’: The Argument from Scripture in 2 Peter 2:5 and 9,” *CBQ* 76 [2014]: 306–20). Hafemann’s reading is intriguing, but it seems strained and an overreading to see a double meaning in the phrase itself.
- 1654 For a fascinating attempt to read the event in Sodom as nonsexual, see S. Morschauer, “‘Hospitality,’ Hostiles, and Hostages: On the Legal Background to Genesis 19.1–19,” *JSOT* 27 (2003): 461–85. Such a view does not fit with the reading in Second Temple Judaism, and the story in Judg 19 is meant to show that Gibeah is as evil as Sodom, and there the sin is clearly sexual. See here the comments by D. A. Carson, “2 Peter,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 1053–54.
- 1655 See the more extensive discussion on Jude 7.
- 1656 Josephus claims to have seen the pillar of salt that was Lot’s wife (*Ant.* 1.203).
- 1657 Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 280.
- 1658 Against Mayor, who reads the dative of *καταστροφῆ* as instrumental (*Jude and Second Peter*, 124).
- 1659 Against its inclusion see Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 83.
- 1660 *TCGNT*, 632.
- 1661 Cf. Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 43.
- 1662 See E. K. Lee, “Words Denoting ‘Pattern’ in the New Testament,” *NTS* 8 (1961): 167–69.
- 1663 G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 268.
- 1664 So NA²⁸. Cf. Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 85.
- 1665 Supporting the argument here is T. D. Alexander, “Lot’s Hospitality: A Clue to His Righteousness,” *JBL* 104 (1995): 289–91. Alexander concludes his article with these words (p. 191): “The portrait of Lot as ‘righteous’ represents an accurate interpretation of the author’s intention in Genesis 18–19.”
- 1666 Moo rightly notes that “righteous” can denote one’s status before God (*2 Peter, Jude*, 105), but it is unlikely that Peter suggests that notion here. His point is that Lot lived a righteous life in comparison to the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. Thus, Charles is incorrect to say that Lot functions as a contrast to Noah, nor is he on target when he claims that Lot is not presented as righteous in the OT (*Virtue amidst Vice*, 88–89).
- 1667 N. Hillyer remarks that “Lot’s heart was clearly still somewhat responsive to God, even after having his permanent home in such an environment” (*1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, NIBC [Peabody: Hendrickson, 1992], 190).
- 1668 G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 258–59.
- 1669 For a reference to sexual sin, see Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 86. J. Makujina appeals to Jewish tradition and a textual variant represented by the LXX in Gen 19:16 (which reads “and they were troubled” instead of “he hesitated”) to explain the positive reference to Lot here

(“The ‘Trouble’ with Lot in 2 Peter: Locating Peter’s Source for Lot’s Torment,” *WTJ* 60 [1998]: 255–69). Doubtless Peter may have referred to extrabiblical tradition when referring to Lot, though it seems to me that one can appeal to the biblical material itself to explain the positive reference to Lot. Furthermore, it is difficult to sustain the notion that Peter uses the LXX of Gen 19:16 in 2 Peter. The evidence is insufficient to warrant such a conclusion.

1670 So Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 281.

1671 Kelly thinks the focus is on “temptation” (*Peter and Jude*, 334).

1672 M. Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 113; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 253.

1673 Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 106.

1674 Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 282.

1675 So Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 335; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 107; Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 45; Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, 191.

1676 Cf. N. Turner, in J. H. Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 4 vols. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark), 1908–76, vol. 3 (1963): *Syntax*, by N. Turner, 87; D. B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 626; A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman, 1934), 891, 1115.

1677 So also Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 254.

1678 So already J. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 400; cf. Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 88; G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 264–65; Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 283.

1679 See Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 201.

1680 Perhaps Peter has homosexuality specifically in mind (so M. Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 114; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 107).

1681 Supporting church officials are Luther, *Commentary on Peter & Jude*, 265–66; Calvin, *Catholic Epistles*, 401; Smith, *Petrine Controversies*, 89–91.

1682 So Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 284. Davids leans toward God’s lordship (*2 Peter and Jude*, 233).

1683 Most scholars see a reference to Christ’s authority (Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 279; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 336; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 255; J. M. Starr, *Sharers in Divine Nature: 2 Peter 1:4 in Its Hellenistic Context*, *ConBNT* 33 [Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2000], 28).

1684 Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 120.

1685 Fuchs and Reymond understand *αὐθάδεις* to be an adjective modifying *τολμηταί* (*2 Pierre, Jude*, 90).

1686 I am not suggesting by this that *αὐθάδεις* is an adjective (see previous note), only that such a translation renders the Greek in a dynamic way.

1687 For a reference to church leaders see Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 279–80; M. Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 116–17; Smith, *Petrine Controversies*, 89–91; for political leaders see Reicke, *James, Peter, and Jude*, 167. But T. Callan thinks the reference is to God and Jesus (*Second Peter*, *PCNT* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012], 190).

1688 R. A. Reese, *2 Peter and Jude*, THNTC (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 154; G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 271.

1689 So also Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 337; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 261–62; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 121; K. H. Schelke, *Der Petrusbrief—Der Judasbrief*, HTKNT (Freiburg: Herder, 1980), 210.

1690 So Mayor, *Jude and Second Peter*, 129. Cf. here the discussion of Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 199–200; Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 90.

1691 D. Farkasfalvy says that Peter, in contrast to Jude, may omit any direct reference to 1 Enoch or Assumption of Moses to preclude any suggestion that these works should be considered as authoritative Scripture on the same level as the OT or Pauline writings (1:19–21; 3:15–16) (“The Ecclesial Setting of Pseudepigraphy in Second Peter and Its Role in the Formation of the Canon,” *SecCent* 5 [1985–86]: 15). Fornberg thinks pseudepigraphal books were omitted because such Jewish traditions would not be meaningful to Gentiles (*An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 58). For a similar view, see G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 272–73.

1692 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 262; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 123.

1693 The words *παρὰ κυρίῳ* and *παρὰ κυρίου* are both represented in the textual tradition. Other texts omit the words altogether. The omission of the words altogether is likely due to the influence of Jude 9, where in a similar context the words are lacking. It is much more difficult to decide between the dative and the genitive, but *παρὰ κυρίῳ* is the more difficult reading and enjoys Alexandrian support; it is thus probably original. See T. J. Kraus, “*Παρὰ κυρίου, παρὰ κυρίῳ* oder *omit* in 2Petr 2,11: Textkritik und Interpretation vor dem Hintergrund juristischer Diktion und der Verwendung von *παρά*,” *ZNW* 91 (2000): 265–73; Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 88–89; *TCGNT* 633.

1694 See T. Callan, “Comparison of Humans to Animals in 2 Pet 2,10b–22,” *Bib* 90 (2009): 101–5.

1695 Most English translations attach *φυσικὰ* to *ζῶα*.

1696 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 263.

1697 The term *φθορᾶ* could refer to moral corruption, but the parallel term *φθαρήσονται* shows that destruction at the end of the age is intended. So Davids, *II Peter and Jude Handbook*, 79. Davids says that the noun could be temporal, causal, or context/circumstance.

1698 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 264; Horrell, *The Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 168.

1699 See G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 276. Callan thinks the main point is that animals and the false teachers will suffer “death and decay,” seeing Ps 49:12, 20 as a parallel (“Comparison of Humans to Animals in 2 Pet 2, 10b–22,” 103–5). Reicke thinks the destruction here is inflicted by political authorities, but there is no basis for seeing such authorities as the subject of the verb (*James, Peter, and Jude*, 167). The divine passive (*φθαρήσονται*) points to God as the one who brings destruction.

1700 Rightly Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 339; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 124; Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 237–38. Peter does not teach, then, that animals will be judged (rightly Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 203).

1701 So Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 290.

1702 Bigg says that the term in the text does not yield any sense and believes the text has been corrupted (*Peter and Jude*, 281).

- 1703 P. W. Skehan suggests that a colon should be inserted after *ἀδικούμενοι* and that *ἀδικούμενοι* should be connected to *φθαρήσονται* in v. 12 (“A Note on 2 Peter 2,13,” *Bib* 41 [1960]: 69–71), but this solution has not convinced scholars.
- 1704 So M. Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 120; Reicke, *James, Peter, and Jude*, 167–68.
- 1705 So Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 265.
- 1706 Callan, *2 Peter*, 192.
- 1707 The same verb is used of Noah feasting with his house after the flood and also of eating during the three Jewish feasts each year (see Josephus, *Ant.* 1.92 and 4.203 respectively).
- 1708 G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 281.
- 1709 P. Dschulnigg detects a reference to Matthean tradition here (“Der theologische Ort des zweiten Petrusbriefes,” *BZ* 33 [1989]: 169).
- 1710 G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 283.
- 1711 In the phrase *κατάρας τέκνα* the genitive *κατάρας* is Semitic.
- 1712 So Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 295.
- 1713 Fornberg points to Deut 11:26–28 as background where the blessing and curse are set before Israel, and Moses spoke of Israel forsaking the straight way and going astray (*An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 102–3).
- 1714 So Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 102.
- 1715 With some alterations, my discussion here matches the discussion in Jude 11.
- 1716 So Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 98. Mayor engages in rationalization, arguing that Balaam heard the voice in his own conscience, not from the donkey (*Jude and Second Peter*, 203). Such a comment reveals Mayor’s worldview, but it hardly constitutes a valid reading of what Peter intended.
- 1717 For a survey of traditions about Balaam, see C. H. Savell, “Canonical and Extracanonial Portraits of Balaam,” *BSac* 166 (2009): 387–404.
- 1718 R. Eliezer of Modiim (ca. AD 135) reports how certain rulers responded to Balaam, who promised that God would not bring another flood. “Perhaps He may not bring a flood of water, but He may bring a flood of fire” (Mek. Exod 18:1). I owe this reference to Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 40, n. 3.
- 1719 Cf. Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 283; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 342–43.
- 1720 Rightly Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 267–68; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 128.
- 1721 G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 289–90.
- 1722 Todd Fornberg, “Balaam and 2 Peter 2:15: ‘They Have Followed in the Steps of Balaam’ (Jude 11),” in *The Prestige of the Pagan Prophet Balaam in Judaism, Early Christianity and Islam*, ed. G. H. van Kooten and J. van Ruiten, TBN 11 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 267–68.
- 1723 Reicke again overreads the text, seeing the teachers as hired agents of foreign employers (*James, Peter, and Jude*, 169).
- 1724 But Charles takes the point too far in seeing Balaam as an example of apostasy (*Virtue amidst Vice*, 90). There is no evidence that Balaam was ever a believer in Yahweh.
- 1725 G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 287.

- 1726 Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 205; Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 98.
- 1727 M. Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 126.
- 1728 Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 284.
- 1729 So Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, 207.
- 1730 So Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 345; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 274.
- 1731 Hafemann rightly sees that judgment is the result of their wicked behavior in 2:17a (“Identity, Ethics, and Eschatology in 2 Peter 2.17–22,” in *Muted Voices of the New Testament: Readings in the Catholic Epistles and Hebrews*, ed. K. M. Hockey, M. N. Pierce, and F. Watson, LNTS 565 [London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017], 59).
- 1732 So Calvin, *Catholic Epistles*, 407; M. Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 126.
- 1733 Rightly Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 141.
- 1734 Cf. the structure of the argument in S. Hafemann, “Identity, Ethics, and Eschatology in 2 Peter 2.17–22,” 60.
- 1735 So also S. Hafemann though he takes it to refer to the extent of their escape and not temporally (“Identity, Ethics, and Eschatology in 2 Peter 2.17–22,” 61, n. 13).
- 1736 See the helpful comments here in *TCGNT*, 635.
- 1737 Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 284.
- 1738 Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 99.
- 1739 So also Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 346; Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 106–7. Hence, the appeal to freedom does not constitute evidence of a Gnostic threat (rightly Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 218–19). G. Green argues that the false teachers drew on Paul and other sources in proclaiming freedom (*Jude and 2 Peter*, 297–99). Frey says the opponents may have drawn on Paul for their conception of freedom, but in contrast to Paul merged their notion of freedom with the notion that there would not be a final judgment (*Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 302).
- 1740 Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 246. Contra to Smith, who understands their freedom to consist of their knowledge (*Petrine Controversies*, 92). Frey sets forth six different historical scenarios to explain the freedom promoted by the opponents (*Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 301–2).
- 1741 E.g., Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 346; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 276; Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 247.
- 1742 Cf. also Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 287; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 144. Hafemann takes it as “slaves for corruption” (italics his), and he understands corruption to stand for judgment (cf. 2:3; 3:7, 16) (“Identity, Ethics, and Eschatology in 2 Peter 2.17–22,” 63).
- 1743 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 277; Schelke, *Der Petrusbrief—Der Judasbrief*, 217.
- 1744 Rightly Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 144–45.
- 1745 See especially Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 347–48; Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 100–101; cf. also D. A. Dunham, “An Exegetical Study of 2 Peter 2:18–22,” *BSac* 140 (1983): 41–42; Reese, *2 Peter and Jude*, 161–62.
- 1746 Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 347–48.

1747 See, e.g., Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 207; Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 285; Reicke, *James, Peter, and Jude*, 172; M. Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 129; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 145; R. A. Peterson, "Apostasy," *Presbyterion* 19 (1993): 18; Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 106; Mayor, *Jude and Second Peter*, 142; S. J. Kraftchick, *Jude, 2 Peter*, ANTC (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 147; L. R. Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 260; D. J. Harrington, *Jude and 2 Peter*, SP (Collegeville: Michael Glazier, 2003), 277, 280; G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 300; Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 249; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 277. Bauckham wrongly, though, argues that Kelly advances such a view, when it is clear that Kelly holds a different view from Bauckham.

1748 Dunham argues that the verses relate to new converts, and the sin in view is not apostasy ("2 Peter 2:18–22," 40–54). On the contrary, the entire letter shows that the danger is apostasy. The epithets "dog" and "sow" point to unclean animals, i.e., those who are not in the realm of the sacred. Dunham's comments on the fastidiousness and cleanness of dogs and pigs (p. 50) misses the Jewish background of the proverbial saying, where such animals were conceived of as unclean. Also his view that the imperfect tense in 2:21 is a desiderative imperfect is improbable (p. 49).

1749 So Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 304 (who argues that a second repentance is ruled out). Note here the comments of Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 106.

1750 Italics are added.

1751 So A. Gerdmar, *Rethinking the Judaism-Hellenism Dichotomy: A Historiographical Case Study of Second Peter and Jude*, ConBNT 36 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2001), 231–32.

1752 For this latter view, see Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 304–5.

1753 Supporting the idea that Jesus tradition is used here is Farkasfalvy, "Ecclesial Setting," 7.

1754 There may be dependence on Matthean tradition here (cf. Dschulnigg, "Der theologische Ort des zweiten Petrusbriefes," 169). But Dschulnigg probably goes beyond the evidence in seeing the Matthean emphasis on the law in 2 Peter (pp. 174–75).

1755 G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 305.

1756 Fuchs and Reymond rightly observe that there is no basis to see legalism in the reference to "command[ment]" (*2 Pierre, Jude*, 102).

1757 See T. Callan, "Comparison of Humans to Animals in 2 Pet 2,10b–22," *Bib* 90 (2009): 106–12.

1758 See G. S. Kirk, *Heraclitus: The Cosmic Fragments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954), 76–80.

1759 Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 350; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 279–80.

1760 The translation of the proverb is cited as quoted in Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 350.

1761 So Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 287.

1762 For this possibility see, e.g., Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 103; Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 107.

1763 So Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 307.

1764 So, e.g., I. H. Marshall, *Kept by the Power of God: A Study of Perseverance and Falling Away* (Minneapolis: Bethany, 1969), 169–70; M. Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 131; G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 307.

1765 Charles argues that the examples of the fallen angels and Balaam show that apostasy can and does happen (*Virtue amidst Vice*, 166–67, 169–73). See also the remarks of Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, 208; Callan, *2 Peter*, 199.

1766 Charles, e.g., reduces predestination to God's future judgment when he says, "One perseveres, one persists in the faith, precisely because the sovereign Lord has predestined all humans to give account of themselves" (*Virtue amidst Vice*, 168).

1767 So E. A. Blum, *2 Peter*, EBC 12 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 283; Peterson, "Apostasy," 19–20.

1768 Cf. Carson, "2 Peter," 1057–58.

1769 S. Hafemann, "Identity, Ethics, and Eschatology in 2 Peter 2.17–22," 154–69.

1770 E.g., G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 307.

1771 For a full examination of the issues of perseverance and assurance, see T. R. Schreiner and A. B. Caneday, *The Race Set before Us: A Biblical Theology of Perseverance and Assurance* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001). See also T. R. Schreiner, *Run to Win the Prize: Perseverance in the New Testament* (Nottingham/Wheaton: InterVarsity/Crossway, 2009/2010).

1772 S. Hafemann, "Identity, Ethics, and Eschatology in 2 Peter 2.17–22," in *Muted Voices of the New Testament: Readings in the Catholic Epistles and Hebrews*, ed. K. M. Hockey, M. N. Pierce, and F. Watson, LNTS 565 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017), 56.

1773 R. Bauckham argues that the parallels between 2 Pet 3 and 1 Clem. 23:3–4; 27:4, 2 Clem. 11:2–4 and 16:3 indicate dependence on a common source (*Jude, 2 Peter*, WBC [Waco: Word, 1983], 284, 296–97). The discussion is complex. It seems that the evidence is insufficient to draw such a conclusion.

1774 M. McNamara, "The Unity of Second Peter: A Reconsideration," *Scr* 12 (1960): 13–19.

1775 J. A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976), 193–95.

1776 Rightly Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 285.

1777 So M. Green, *The Second Epistle General of Peter and the General Epistle of Jude*, 2nd ed., TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 134; Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 257–59.

1778 D. J. Moo is particularly attracted to this option, though he remains undecided (*2 Peter, Jude*, NIVAC [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997], 162–63).

1779 See G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 310; C. Bigg, *The Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1901), 288–89; B. Reicke, *The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude*, AB (Garden City: Doubleday, 1964), 173; J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude*, Thornapple Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 352–53; J. H. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, AB (Garden City: Doubleday, 1993), 229; T. V. Smith, *Petrine Controversies in Early Christianity: Attitudes Toward Peter in Christian Writings of the First Two Centuries*, WUNT 2/15 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1985), 70–74; T. Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society: A Study of 2 Peter*, ConBNT 9 (Lund: Gleerup, 1977), 12; H. Paulsen, *Der zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief*, KEK (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 150. G. H. Boobyer presents evidence that the author

of 2 Peter refers to the first letter (“The Indebtedness of 2 Peter to 1 Peter,” in *New Testament Essays: Studies in Memory of Thomas Walter Manson* [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959], 34–53). Not all of Boobyer’s arguments are compelling, but he does demonstrate that the author refers to 1 Peter here. For further evidence that 2 Peter knew and used 1 Peter, see W. J. Dalton, “The Interpretation of 1 Peter 3:19 and 4:6: Light from 2 Peter,” *Bib* 60 (1979): 547–55; D. Farkasfalvy, “The Ecclesial Setting of Pseudepigraphy in Second Peter and Its Role in the Formation of the Canon,” *SecCent* 5 (1985–86): 16–20. B. Witherington argues that the author of 2 Peter used a Petrine source for 2 Pet 1:12–2:3a and 3:1–3 (“A Petrine Source in Second Peter,” *SBLSP* [Atlanta: Scholars, 1985], 187–92). The argument is not that 2 Peter used 1 Peter per se, but he “had access to another source by the same person who was responsible for 1 Peter” (188). Though the evidence presented by Witherington shows that 2 Peter probably knew 1 Peter, it is more likely that 2 Peter refers to 1 Peter as a whole.

1780 J. Green (“Narrating the Gospel in 1 and 2 Peter,” *Int* 60 [2006] 262–77) argues that 1–2 Peter cohere theologically when we embrace a narrational theological approach.

1781 G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 311.

1782 So also Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 287; Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 260.

1783 For a reference to the whole OT, see E. Fuchs and P. Reymond, *La Deuxième Épître de Saint Pierre, L’Épître de Saint Jude*, CNT (Neuchâtel–Paris: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1980), 106.

1784 See F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 168.

1785 The reference to the apostles and prophets does not necessarily indicate a postapostolic situation (contra A. Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, Der 2 Petrusbrief*, EKKNT [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1994], 215).

1786 Rightly Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 164.

1787 E.g., Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 354.

1788 Cf. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 287; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 164–65; G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 313.

1789 The words *τοῦτο πρῶτον γινώσκοντες* are repeated exactly from 1:20.

1790 Fornberg rightly notes that we have an example of irony here since the skepticism of the false teachers is a sign of the imminence of the end (*An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 61).

1791 E. Lövestam points out the remarkable similarities between 2 Pet 3 and Matt 24:34–51 (“Eschatologie und Tradition im 2. Petrusbrief,” in *The New Testament Age: Essays in Honor of Bo Reicke* [Macon: Mercer University Press, 1984], 2:297–99).

1792 Fornberg thinks the reference to “desires” may refer to their false teaching rather than their licentiousness (*An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 39), but the latter probably is in view.

1793 See esp. Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 173–74.

1794 Reicke, *James, Peter, and Jude*, 174; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 355–56; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 291–92; Smith, *Petrine Controversies*, 86; D. G. Horrell, *The Epistles of Peter and Jude*, EC (Peterborough: Epworth, 1998), 176; Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 216; J. Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, THKNT (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2015), 323.

1795 Cf. also M. Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 139–40; R. A. Reese, *2 Peter and Jude*, THNTC (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 164.

1796 Rightly D. Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 4th ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1990), 829; Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 265–66; E. Adams, “Where Is the Promise of His Coming?: The Complaint of the Scoffers in 2 Peter 3.4,” *NTS* 51 (2005): 112. I am excluding, of course, texts in which physical fathers are addressed (e.g., Eph 6:4; Col 3:21). In Fornberg’s objection to the interpretation proposed here he cannot point to a single example in the NT where the word “fathers” refers to the first Christian generation (*An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 62–63). Davids also makes the interesting point that even if the fathers referred to the first generation of Christians, it does not necessarily follow that the letter should have a late date (*2 Peter and Jude*, 266–67).

1797 So also T. Callan, *Second Peter*, PCNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 205.

1798 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 291–92.

1799 Rightly Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 291.

1800 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 290.

1801 Cf. Guthrie’s response (*New Testament Introduction*, 829, n. 2).

1802 S. Meier contends that the author shared the same worldview of the opponents, arguing that uniformity in history demands divine judgment instead of all things proceeding as usual (“2 Peter 3:3–7—an Early Jewish and Christian Response to Eschatological Skepticism,” *BZ* 32 [1988]: 255–57). Contrary to Meier, the short description of the worldview of the opponents does not indicate a shared conception since the opponents envisioned a world without cataclysmic interventions. Peter does not merely remind them that in the usual course of history we find divine judgments and interventions.

1803 Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 292.

1804 Fornberg thinks it is possible that the author misconstrued the teaching of the opponents, but he rightly observes that the letter probably would not have been preserved if it did not address accurately the concerns of his readers (*An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 65).

1805 Adams, “Where Is the Promise of His Coming?,” 115. Adams also shows that the view of the opponents does not fit with Epicureans since they, in contrast to the Epicureans, believed in creation (115–16).

1806 Adams, “Where Is the Promise of His Coming?,” 116.

1807 BDAG, 448; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 297.

1808 G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 319.

1809 So Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 112–13. For the notion that both the heavens and the earth are attached to the verb ἤσαν, see the HCSB, “Long ago the heavens and the earth were brought about from water and through water by the word of God.” So also Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 327–28.

1810 See here the discussion of Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 293.

1811 But against this see Edward Adams, who argues that Peter draws on Stoic thought by maintaining that water is the stuff or substance out of which the world was created, and the world will be destroyed eventually by fire (“Creation ‘out of’ and ‘through’ Water in 2 Peter 3:5,” in *The Creation of Heaven and Earth: Re-interpretations of Genesis 1 in the Context of Judaism, Ancient Philosophy, Christianity, and Modern Physics*, ed. G. H. van Kooten, TBN 8 [Leiden: Brill, 2005], 195–210).

- 1812 Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 293; M. Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 141.
- 1813 J. W. C. Wand, *The General Epistles of Peter and Jude*, WC (London: Methuen, 1934), 178.
- 1814 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 297–98; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 170.
- 1815 NA²⁸ sees ὄν as original instead of ὄν, but the external evidence favors the latter, and thus it should be accepted as original.
- 1816 D. A. Carson, “2 Peter,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 1058. Cf. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 299.
- 1817 Reicke, *James, Peter, and Jude*, 174.
- 1818 So Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 293–94; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 359–60; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 298; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 170–71; Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 226; Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 113; Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 270; Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 330–31.
- 1819 Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 359; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 298–99.
- 1820 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 299.
- 1821 Rightly M. Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 29; Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 228; cf. R. Riesner, “Der zweite-Petrus Brief und die Eschatologie,” in *Zukunftserwartung in biblischer Sicht: Beiträge zur Eschatologie*, ed. G. Maier (Giessen: Brunnen, 1984), 140.
- 1822 See here the intriguing article by R. P. Juza, who sees echoes of the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah in 2 Pet 3:7–13 (“Echoes of Sodom and Gomorrah on the Day of the Lord: Intertextuality and Tradition in 2 Peter 3:7–13,” *BBR* 24 [2014]: 227–45).
- 1823 The “Lord” here is a reference to God and not Christ (so Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 115).
- 1824 Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 295.
- 1825 So also Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 310.
- 1826 For the tradition history in Jewish thought in this verse, see W. Schrage, “‘Ein Tag ist beim Herrn wie tausend Jahre, und tausend Jahre sind wie ein Tag,’” in *Glaube und Eschatologie: Festschrift für Werner Georg Kümmel zum 80. Geburtstag*, ed. E. Gräßer and O. Merk (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1985), 267–75.
- 1827 Rightly Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 186; cf. also Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 69–70.
- 1828 Rightly Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 307.
- 1829 Fornberg argues that the contemporary writers have overemphasized the problem of the delay of the parousia, noting that many passages in the Gospels indicate that a temporal interval will obtain before Christ returns (*An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 69).
- 1830 So G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 326; Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 276–77.
- 1831 Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 362.
- 1832 Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 296; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 187.
- 1833 I owe this insight to the preaching pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Jason Meyer.

1834 Vögtle remarks that this verse rules out Calvinist theology (*Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 231–32). Cf. also the comments of Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 116.

1835 For a defense of this view, see T. R. Schreiner and B. A. Ware, eds., *Still Sovereign* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000).

1836 This view is suggested already by J. Calvin (*Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948], 419–20).

1837 J. Piper, “Are There Two Wills in God?,” in *Still Sovereign*, ed. T. R. Schreiner and B. A. Ware (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 107–31.

1838 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 313; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 188; L. R. Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 275; Horrell, *The Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 180 (though he thinks all people can be included by extension). Fornberg argues, on the other hand, that the adversaries are included in God’s desire for all to repent (*An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 71).

1839 We cannot adduce the evidence here, but universalism is ruled out by many biblical texts. See now the definitive historical and theological work by M. J. McClymond, *The Devil’s Redemption: A New History and Interpretation of Christian Universalism*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2018).

1840 What is argued here does not contradict divine simplicity, but that is a discussion for another place and another time.

1841 Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 345. Fuchs and Reymond argue that the author refers to God here and not Christ (*2 Pierre, Jude*, 117).

1842 Isa 13:6, 9; Ezek 13:5; 30:3; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14; Amos 5:18, 20; Obad 15; Zeph 1:7, 14; Mal 4:5; cf. Acts 2:20; 1 Cor 5:5; 2 Cor 1:14; 1 Thess 5:2; 2 Thess 2:2.

1843 Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 296.

1844 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 315.

1845 E.g., Paulsen, *Petrusbrief und Judasbrief*, 167; A. Gerdmar, *Rethinking the Judaism-Hellenism Dichotomy: A Historiographical Case Study of Second Peter and Jude*, ConBNT 36 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2001), 167–68.

1846 Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 297; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 364; Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 234. Fornberg thinks stars are in view (*An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 74).

1847 G. Delling, “στοιχέω,” *TDNT* 7:681–82; Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 284–86.

1848 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 315. Cf. Vaticanus, Lucian; cf. 2 Clem. 16:3.

1849 G. Delling, “στοιχέω,” *TDNT* 7:672–79; Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 243; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 190.

1850 For this view see also C. P. Thiede, “A Pagan Reader of 2 Peter: Cosmic Conflagration in 2 Peter 3 and the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix,” *JSNT* 26 (1986): 82–83.

1851 G. van den Heever concludes that the text is corrupt and no solution has been plausibly advanced to explain its meaning (“In Purifying Fire: World View and 2 Peter 3:10,” *Neot* 27 [1993]: 107–18).

1852 *TCGNT* 636.

1853 For this view see Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 74–76.

- 1854 Fornberg observes that this reading fits with his interpretation (*An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 76–77).
- 1855 J. B. Mayor, *The Epistle of St. Jude and the Second Epistle of St. Peter* (1907; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1965), 160.
- 1856 Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 364–66; so also R. L. Overstreet, “A Study of 2 Peter 3:10–13,” *BSac* 137 (1980): 358.
- 1857 Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 74–76.
- 1858 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 319–20; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 191; cf. also Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 118–19; G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 330–31.
- 1859 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 319; see also Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 243–44.
- 1860 So also R. E. Picirilli, “Allusions to 2 Peter in the Apostolic Fathers,” *JSNT* 33 (1988): 64; A. Wolters, “Worldview and Textual Criticism in 2 Peter 3:10,” *WTJ* 49 (1987): 411.
- 1861 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 320. For similar interpretations see W. E. Wilson, “Εὐρεθῆσεται in 2 Pet. iii.10,” *ExpTim* 32 (1920–21): 44–45; J. W. Roberts, “A Note on the Meaning of II Peter 3:10d,” *ResQ* 6 (1962): 32–33; Thiede, “A Pagan Reader of 2 Peter,” 82; D. Wenham, “Being ‘Found’ on the Last Day: New Light on 2 Peter 3:10 and 2 Corinthians 5:3,” *NTS* 33 (1987): 477–79. Wenham detects allusions to Jesus’s eschatological parables, where the Lord “finds” his servants to be faithful or unfaithful (Matt 24:46 par.). He also sees a parallel in 2 Cor 5:3, where some are “being found naked,” understanding that to refer to evil works (cf. Luke 12:36–38; Mark 13:34–36; Rev 16:15). F. W. Danker proposes a similar interpretation, but he conjectures that the words *κατὰ τὰ ἔργα* are original, seeing a parallel in Pss. Sol. 17:10. (“II Peter 3:10 and Psalm of Solomon 17:10,” *ZNW* 53 [1962]: 82–86). It is unlikely, however, that the phrase would have dropped out if it were original.
- 1862 Wolters, “2 Peter 3:10,” 408.
- 1863 Wolters, “2 Peter 3:10,” 408–12.
- 1864 So Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 366; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 196–97.
- 1865 Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 298; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 323.
- 1866 J. M. Starr, *Sharers in Divine Nature: 2 Peter 1:4 in Its Hellenistic Context*, *ConBNT* 33 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2000), 30.
- 1867 E.g., Overstreet, “2 Peter 3:10–13,” 366–67.
- 1868 Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 367; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 198.
- 1869 For further discussion of this theme, see Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 325.
- 1870 Cf. also 2 Clem. 12:6.
- 1871 Cf. the comments of Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 313, 325.
- 1872 It is unclear to me, contra Moo (*2 Peter, Jude*, 199), that the heavens refer to the invisible “spiritual dimension of the universe.”
- 1873 My translation. Cf. LXX—Vaticanus, Lucian.
- 1874 So Thiede, “A Pagan Reader of 2 Peter,” 79, 81.
- 1875 Perhaps Peter draws on Matthean tradition here (cf. P. Dschulnigg, “Der theologische Ort des zweiten Petrusbriefes,” *BZ* 33 [1989]: 170).

- 1876 So, e.g., Overstreet, “2 Peter 3:10–13,” 362; Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, 278; Callan, *2 Peter*, 205, 210–11.
- 1877 So, e.g., Wolters, “2 Peter 3:10,” 405–13; Thiede, “A Pagan Reader of 2 Peter,” 79–91.
- 1878 Thiede, “A Pagan Reader of 2 Peter,” 83–91. Supporting renovation is G. Z. Heide, “What Is New about the New Heaven and the New Earth? A Theology of Creation from Revelation 21 and 2 Peter 3,” *JETS* 40 (1997): 37–56; B. Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians*, vol. II: *A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1–2 Peter* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007), 381–82.
- 1879 D. Harink, *1 & 2 Peter*, BTCB (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 183.
- 1880 Fornberg rightly rejects Vögtle’s view that the text only refers to personal salvation and does not relate to cosmic, eschatological events (*An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 78).
- 1881 Cf. 1 Pet 1:19 on Christ as a sacrifice without blemish or spot.
- 1882 Rightly Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 327; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 208; Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 122.
- 1883 The “Lord” here may be Christ (Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 299), but others think the Father is intended (Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 370; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 208; Paulsen, *Petrusbrief und Judasbrief*, 172–73).
- 1884 Cf. Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 301.
- 1885 Rightly Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 332. Overrealized eschatology posits that perfection and full glorification that will be ours in the age to come belongs to us now. Hence, it sees no need for a future physical resurrection or a second coming of Christ.
- 1886 Many scholars agree that this was part of the opponents’ teaching (e.g., Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 301; Reicke, *James, Peter, and Jude*, 183).
- 1887 So Mayor, *Jude and Second Peter*, cxxxvii; Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 357.
- 1888 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 327–28.
- 1889 G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 338.
- 1890 Fornberg thinks Peter may have been drawing on 1 Cor 3:10 here (*An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 26).
- 1891 So Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 329–30.
- 1892 Rightly Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 824.
- 1893 Kelly, e.g., thinks Paul’s letters were beginning to be collected and that the canonical process was underway (*Peter and Jude*, 370–71). See D. Trobisch, *Paul’s Letter Collection: Tracing the Origins* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994). For a view similar to my own, see Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 210–11.
- 1894 See Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 331.
- 1895 Possibly the verb “distort” is future, “They will distort” (so J. D. Charles, *Virtue amidst Vice: The Catalog of Virtues in 2 Peter 1*, JSNTSup 150 [Sheffield: Academic Press, 1997], 36; J. Crehan, “New Light on 2 Peter from the Bodmer Papyrus,” *SE* (Berlin: Akademie, 1982), VII, 145–49).
- 1896 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 334.

1897 Perhaps Bauckham is correct in seeing a reference to both the false teachers and their disciples (*Jude, 2 Peter*, 331). Fuchs and Reymond wrongly see a reference to Gnosticism here (*2 Pierre, Jude*, 124).

1898 M. Luther, *Commentary on Peter & Jude*, trans. and ed. J. N. Lenker (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1990), 286. Cf. Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 361.

1899 Rightly G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 340–41. There is no basis for Bigg’s view that Peter actually disagrees with some of what Paul has written (*Peter and Jude*, 234).

1900 So Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 333.

1901 That Peter has in mind authoritative writings when he referred to the Scriptures is supported by Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 302.

1902 So Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 212.

1903 Rightly Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 328.

1904 See T. R. Schreiner, *Galatians*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 139–48.

1905 For a defense of the historical accuracy of Acts, see C. J. Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History*, WUNT 49 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989).

1906 Cf. Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 302–3. Note, e.g., K. H. Schelke, who speaks of a canon (*Der Petrusbrief—Der Judasbrief*, HTKNT [Freiburg: Herder, 1980], 236–37). Mayor agrees that the writer need not know of all Pauline letters but then proceeds to say that the verse must refer to a collection of the letters after Paul’s death (*Jude and Second Peter*, 165).

1907 Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 826–27.

1908 Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 827.

1909 See here Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 475.

1910 Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 303.

1911 Rightly Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 337.

1912 Cf. Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 213.

1913 Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 265; Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 127.

1914 See Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 375; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 337; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 214.

1915 Rightly Calvin, *Catholic Epistles*, 426; G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 344; T. Callan, “The Christology of the Second Letter of Peter,” *Bib* 82 (2001): 255. Callan goes on to argue that the author of 2 Peter was a monotheist, and yet he also distinguished Jesus from God (pp. 256–63).

1916 Cf. *TCGNT* 637–38.

1917 D. J. Rowston, “The Most Neglected Book in the New Testament,” *NTS* 21 (1974–75): 554–63.

1918 I will use the singular “church” in the commentary, even though Jude may have written to a number of churches.

1919 For instance, Aichele sees paranoia in Jude. G. Aichele, *The Letters of Jude and Second Peter: Paranoia and the Slaves of Christ*, Phoenix Guides to the New Testament 19 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2012).

1920 For a helpful survey of scholarship on Jude, see R. Heiligenthal, “Der Judasbrief: Aspekte der Forschung in den letzten Jahrzehnten,” *TRu* 51 (1986): 117–29; P. Müller, “Der

Judasbrief,” *TRu* 63 (1998): 267–89.

1921 See commentary on v. 1.

1922 R. A. Reese adopts a literary approach to Jude. She does not pursue the author’s intention but explores the literary ambiguity and creativity of the letter (*Writing Jude: The Reader, the Text, and the Author in Constructs of Power and Desire*, Biblical Interpretation Series 51 [Leiden: Brill, 2000]). Actually, Reese pursues the author’s intention more than she admits. For a sophisticated defense of authorial intent, see K. J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998). Cf. G. L. Green (*Jude and 2 Peter*, BECNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008], 10. H. W. Bateman IV (*Jude*, EEC [Bellingham: Lexham, 2017], 2) says that Reese’s approach “leads, in the end, to historical nihilism and ultimately, to the breakdown of communication and the possibility of knowing.” Such a judgment is exaggerated and doesn’t adequately represent the contribution of Reese’s work.

1923 Bede in P. R. Jones, *The Epistle of Jude as Expounded by the Fathers—Clement of Alexandria, Didymus of Alexandria, the Scholia of Cramer’s Catena, Psuedo-Oecumenius, and Bede*, Texts and Studies in Religion 89 (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 2001), 113; J. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 428–29. This was the traditional view before the nineteenth century, though R. Bauckham notes that most who defended this view also believed that the apostle James was the same person as the relative of Jesus listed in Mark 6:3. See Bauckham’s *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990), 172.

1924 Rightly C. Bigg, *The Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1901), 319.

1925 E. E. Ellis, “Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Jude,” in *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity: New Testament Essays* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 226–30; see also in the same volume his essay “Paul and His Co-Workers,” 13–22.

1926 See H. Koester, “GNOMAI DIAPHOROI,” *HTR* 58 [1965]: 296–97.

1927 For a helpful assessment of the evidence see Bauckham, *Relatives of Jesus*, 32–37.

1928 B. H. Streeter, *The Primitive Church* (London: Macmillan, 1930), 178–80.

1929 J. Moffatt, *The General Epistles: James, Peter, and Jude* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1928), 224–26. Rightly R. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, WBC (Waco: Word, 1983), 23.

1930 So J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude*, Thornapple Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 234; B. Reicke, *The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude*, AB (Garden City: Doubleday, 1964), 9; D. J. Rowston, “The Most Neglected Book in the New Testament,” *NTS* 21 (1974–75): 559–61; Müller, “Der Judasbrief,” 286; H. Paulsen, *Der zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief*, KEK (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 44–45; E. Fuchs and P. Reymond, *La Deuxième Épître de Saint Pierre, L’Épître de Saint Jude*, CNT (Neuchâtel–Paris: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1980), 148; S. J. Kraftchick, *Jude, 2 Peter*, ANTC (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 20–21; D. J. Harrington, *Jude and 2 Peter*, SP (Collegeville: Michael Glazier, 2003), 183. For a list of others who see the attribution as a reference to the brother of Jesus or as pseudonymous, see Bauckham, *Relatives of Jesus*, 174.

1931 So J. W. C. Wand, *The General Epistles of Peter and Jude*, WC (London: Methuen, 1934), 188. A. Vögtle suggests that the author desired to counter the antinomianism of the opponents by appealing to the circle of the Lord’s brothers. Since James was already known to be dead, he selected Jude, who was still known at the end of the first century (*Der Judasbrief, der 2 Petrusbrief*,

EKKNT [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1994], 11). Such a view suggests that the author deliberately intended to deceive the readers.

1932 Rowston, "Most Neglected Book," 560.

1933 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 14; Bauckham, *Relatives of Jesus*, 176.

1934 So also C. E. B. Cranfield, *I and II Peter and Jude: Introduction and Commentary*, TBC (London: SCM, 1960), 146–48 (AD 70–80); D. Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 4th ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1990), 902–5; M. Green, *The Second Epistle General of Peter and the General Epistle of Jude*, 2nd ed., TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 48–52; D. A. deSilva, *Jude*, PCNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 179–83; Bateman, *Jude*, 11–19.

1935 J. P. Meier demonstrates that the references to the brothers of Jesus in the Gospels refer to the biological sons of Joseph and Mary ("The Brothers and Sisters of Jesus in Ecumenical Perspective," *CBQ* 54 [1992]: 1–28). Thus, if we are correct in our identification of Jude, he was the biological son of Joseph and Mary. Bauckham thinks the brothers were sons of Joseph by a previous marriage (*Relatives of Jesus*, 19–32), but Meier's assessment of the evidence is more persuasive.

1936 E.g., Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 233; W. G. Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, rev. ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1975), 428; Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 4–11; L. R. Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 161–63; J. Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, THKNT (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2015), 21–22.

1937 So Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 15; cf. also D. A. deSilva, *The Jewish Teachers of Jesus, James, and Jude: What Earliest Christianity Learned from the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 46–48.

1938 Bauckham, *Relatives of Jesus*, 178. See also Bateman, *Jude*, 32–34.

1939 So, e.g., Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 428; Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 22–23.

1940 Rightly, Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 906–7.

1941 D. B. Wallace, "Jude: Introduction, Argument, and Outline," at <https://bible.org/seriespage/26-jude-introduction-argument-and-outline>.

1942 Cf. Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 906.

1943 See the primary sources in Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 305–8. For early reception history of Jude, see W. Grünstäudl and T. Nicklas, "Searching for Evidence: The History of Reception of the Epistles of Jude and 2 Peter," in *Reading 1–2 Peter and Jude: A Resource for Students*, ed. E. F. Mason and T. W. Martin, SBLRBS 77 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014), 216–20. For a helpful survey of the reception of Jude and the impact 1 Enoch had on its reception, see N. J. Moore, "Is Enoch also among the Prophets? The Impact of Jude's Citation of *1 Enoch* on the Reception of Both Texts in the Early Church," *JTS* 64 (2013): 498–515.

1944 For older defenses of authenticity, see Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 305–22; J. B. Mayor, *The Epistle of St. Jude and the Second Epistle of St. Peter* (1907; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1965), cxlvi–clii.

1945 Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 428; Kelly, *Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 223–24.

1946 G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 1–9.

1947 See the full list in Bauckham, *Relatives of Jesus*, 168–69. J. Frey (*Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 26) and E. M. Sidebottom (*James, Jude and 2 Peter*, NCB [London: Thomas Nelson, 1967], 78) suggest a date between AD 100 and 120. For a date ca. AD 100, see Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 429. Reicke suggests AD 90 (*James, Peter, and Jude*, 192). D. G. Horrell suggests AD 75–90 (*The Epistles of Peter and Jude*, EC [Peterborough: Epworth, 1998], 107). Fuchs and Reymond suggest AD 80–100 (*2 Pierre, Jude*, 152). Paulsen postulates AD 80–120 (*Petrusbrief und Judasbrief*, 45). Cranfield suggests AD 70–80 (*I and II Peter and Jude*), 146–48. Vögtle suggests either the 90s or the turn of the century (*Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 12). Donelson suggests the 90s (*I and II Peter and Jude*, 165). W. F. Brosend opts for AD 70 (*James & Jude*, NCBC [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004], 6–7). G. L. Green suggests the late 50s AD to early 60s (*Jude and 2 Peter*, BECNT [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008], 17–18). Davids (*2 Peter and Jude*, 14–17, 23) leans toward a pre-AD 70 date and says it could have been written anytime after AD 50 or 55. Bateman places the dates between AD 62 and 66 (*Jude*, 44).

1948 Against a gnostic background, see J. Kahmann, “Second Peter and Jude,” in *The New Testament in Early Christianity: La réception des écrits néotestamentaires dans le christianisme primitif*, ed. J.-M. Sevrin, BETL 86 (Leuven: University Press, 1989), 114–15; I. H. Eybers, “Aspects of the Background of the Letter of Jude,” *Neot* 9 (1975): 117–19; Bauckham, *Relatives of Jesus*, 162–65; Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 911. Bateman rightly dissents from the view that the opponents are gnostics but mistakenly concludes from this that they were not false teachers at all, as if any claim of antinomianism or libertinism is tarred with the gnostic brush (*Jude*, 45–49).

1949 Ellis suggests AD 55–65 (“Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Jude,” 235–36); J. A. T. Robinson, AD 60–62 (*Redating the New Testament* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976], 197–98); Bigg, ca. AD 61–62 (*Peter and Jude*, 318); Wallace, AD 66–67 (“Jude: Introduction, Argument, and Outline”); Guthrie, AD 65–80 (*New Testament Introduction*, 908); M. Green, AD 65–80 (*2 Peter and Jude*, 55–56); Kelly, AD 70s (*Peter and Jude*, 233); Eybers, AD 80 (“Aspects of the Background of the Letter of Jude,” 113–23). Bauckham seems to be open to any date between AD 60 and 90 (*Jude, 2 Peter*, 13–14). Mayor opts for near 80 (*Jude and Second Peter*, cxlv). R. A. Reese suggests AD 70–90 (*2 Peter and Jude*, THNTC [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007]), 19–20).

1950 Rightly Bauckham, *Relatives of Jesus*, 158–62; Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 426–27.

1951 E.g., Eybers, “Background of the Letter of Jude,” 114; Bateman thinks it was written to Jews in Judea (*Jude*, 27–34). For the pervasiveness of Jewish traditions in Jude, see T. Wolhuis, “Jude and Jewish Traditions,” *CTJ* 22 (1987): 21–41; J. D. Charles, “Jude’s Use of Pseudepigraphical Source-Material as Part of a Literary Strategy,” *NTS* 37 (1991): 130–45. See also J. D. Charles, *Literary Strategy in the Epistle of Jude* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1993).

1952 So Wand, *Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 189.

1953 Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 233–34; Wallace, “Jude: Introduction, Argument, and Outline”; cf. also Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 321; Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 10.

1954 Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 144.

1955 See the discussion in Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 16. J. J. Gunther argues that Jude was written for Alexandrian believers (“The Alexandrian Epistle of Jude,” *NTS* 30 [1984]: 549–62). Gunther’s argument is particularly dependent on the notion that Jude was written against a gnostic heresy. Hence, the main argument for an Egyptian destination (or origin) fails. Wallace

suggests Ephesus (“Jude: Introduction, Argument, and Outline”). Vögtle suggests Asia Minor (*Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 12).

1956 deSilva, *Jude*, 86. G. Green suggests Palestinian Christianity which was beginning to accept Gentiles (*Jude and 2 Peter*, 9–16). Cf. Davids, who says that coastal cities in Palestine could be in view (*2 Peter and Jude*, 14, 22), and even “the whole sweep of the eastern Mediterranean where the Jerusalem leaders were revered” (p. 22).

1957 F. Wisse argues for a contrary view. He maintains that the polemic against the opponents is not addressed to specific circumstances, that Jude borrows from Jewish apocalyptic to demonize heretics, and hence we learn nothing from Jude about the opponents (“The Epistle of Jude in the History of Heresiology,” in *Essays on the Nag Hammadi Texts in Honour of Alexander Böhlig*, ed. M. Krause, NHS 3 [Leiden: Brill, 1972], 133–43). See also M. J. Gilmour, *The Significance of Parallels between 2 Peter and Other Early Christian Literature*, SBLAB 10 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 7–8. The specific character of the letter suggests, on the contrary, that Jude describes real opponents. G. Sellin rightly notes that Wisse’s position is extreme (“Die Häretiker des Judasbriefes,” *ZNW* 77 [1986]: 207). Bauckham observes that reviling angels is a specific feature that calls into question the notion that we have a stock denunciation of opponents (*Relatives of Jesus*, 167; cf. also C. D. Osburn, “Discourse Analysis and Jewish Apocalyptic in the Epistle of Jude,” in *Linguistics and New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Discourse Analysis*, ed. D. A. Black, K. Barnwell, and S. Levinsohn [Nashville: Broadman, 1992], 312).

1958 Contra Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 910.

1959 For a sociological study of Jude, see S. J. Joubert, “Language, Ideology and the Social Context of the Letter of Jude,” *Neot* 24 (1990): 335–49.

1960 Rightly S. J. Joubert, “Facing the Past: Transtextual Relationships and Historical Understanding in the Letter of Jude,” *BZ* 42 (1998): 67.

1961 For a helpful listing of various identifications, see Osburn, “Discourse Analysis and Jewish Apocalyptic in the Epistle of Jude,” 310.

1962 E.g., Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 426. In support of an early form of Gnosticism, see Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 231; Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 143.

1963 Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 231.

1964 Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 230–31.

1965 P. A. Seethaler, “Kleine Bemerkungen zum Judasbrief,” *BZ* 31 (1987): 261–64.

1966 Sellin, “Die Häretiker des Judasbriefes,” 206–25. See the careful discussion of the whole question in G. L. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 18–26.

1967 Many other theories have been promulgated. Ellis identifies the opponents as Judaizers, and he appears to argue that the adversaries were the same faced by Paul in all his letters (“Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Jude,” 230–35). Seeing the opponents as Judaizers does not fit well with their libertinism. Furthermore, the method Ellis uses is unconvincing in that he does not distinguish the Pauline opponents in the various letters. Hence, he lumps all the opponents in the Pauline letters into one category and then sees the same set of adversaries in Jude. It is questionable in any case whether the opponents in Jude can be linked with those in any of the Pauline letters. To see all the Pauline adversaries through a single lens is improbable. Before a link between Jude and Pauline opponents can be established, a thorough inductive study is needed to establish the identity of the opponents in each Pauline letter and then in Jude.

C. Daniel identifies them as Essenes (“La mention des Esséniens dans le texte grec de l’épître de S. Jude,” *Mus* 81 [1968]: 503–21), but again the libertinism of the adversaries contradicts the attempt to see them as Essenes.

1968 Rowston rightly observes, “The refusal to attempt an exact identification of the opponents is judicious. One may go as far as listing their characteristics and visualizing a likely occasion during which the confrontation occurred. But putting a definite label on the heretics seems to be out of the question” (“Most Neglected Book,” 555). However, Rowston immediately violates his own canon and too confidently identifies the opponents as “proto-gnostic” (pp. 555–56). Methodologically, he makes the mistake of using Irenaeus to describe the opponents in Jude. For a more careful and restrained analysis, see Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 27–37. Frey especially points out the fascination with angels, though he depends too much on Pauline sources for his reconstruction.

1969 L. Thurén, “Hey Jude! Asking for the Original Situation and Message of a Catholic Epistle,” *NTS* 43 (1997): 451–65.

1970 Cf. R. L. Webb, who argues that Jude’s rhetoric has a social function, and its intention is to influence the readers so that they separate themselves from the intruders (“The Eschatology of the Epistle of Jude and Its Rhetorical and Social Functions,” *BBR* 6 [1996]: 139–51).

1971 Cf. here J. F. Hultin, “Bourdieu Reads Jude: Reconsidering the Letter of Jude through Pierre Bourdieu’s Sociology,” in *Reading Jude with New Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of Jude*, ed. R. L. Webb and P. R. Davids, LNTS 383 (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 49.

1972 Bateman, *Jude*, 51–80.

1973 See S. Sandmel, “Parallelomania,” *JBL* 81 (1962): 1–13.

1974 J. M. G. Barclay, “Mirror-Reading a Polemical Letter: Galatians as a Test-Case,” *JSNT* 31 (1987): 73–93

1975 See deSilva, *Jude*, 183–84.

1976 J. Knight, *2 Peter and Jude*, New Testament Guides (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 28–31, 78–81.

1977 For an analysis of ethical admonition in Jude that uses G. Stassen’s model for evaluating Christian social ethics, see K. R. Lyle Jr., *Ethical Admonition in the Epistle of Jude* (New York: Peter Lang, 1998).

1978 So Bauckham, *Relatives of Jesus*, 166. Cf. A. Robinson, *Jude on the Attack: A Comparative Analysis of the Epistle of Jude, Jewish Judgement Oracles, and Greco-Roman Invective*, LNTS 581 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2018), 110.

1979 Bauckham thinks they were “itinerant charismatics” (*Relatives of Jesus*, 167).

1980 Bauckham, *Relatives of Jesus*, 167.

1981 R. Heiligenthal thinks the opponents promoted the theology advocated in Colossians. Heiligenthal locates the opponents’ teaching in Pharisaism that hails from the diaspora (see *Zwischen Henoch und Paulus: Studien zum theologiegeschichtlichen Ort des Judasbriefes*, Texte und Arbeiten zum neutestamentlichen Zeitalter 6 [Tübingen: Francke, 1992]). Heiligenthal rightly sees the Jewish character of Jude, but evidence for a Pharisaic connection is not supported by clear evidence in his book (rightly J. Frey, “The Epistle of Jude between Judaism and Hellenism,” in *The Catholic Epistles and Apostolic Tradition*, ed. K.-W. Niebuhr and R. W. Wall [Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009], 314–15). Nor is it clear that Jude opposes the sort of theology we find in Colossians

(rightly Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 51). Heiligenthal imposes the theology of Colossians on the opponents of Jude, but specific features we find in Colossians (e.g., adherence to asceticism, Col 2:16–23) do not fit with the libertine character of the opponents in Jude.

Frey argues that Jude is a Hellenistic-Jewish writing instead of being limited to a Palestinian writing (“The Epistle of Jude between Judaism and Hellenism,” 309–29). He also argues that Jude counters the view of angels promoted by the author of Colossians (whom he argues is not Paul), and the letter is pseudonymous. Space is lacking here to interact fully with Frey. In contrast to Frey, I judge the letter to be authentic. Hellenistic features of the letter can be acknowledged since Palestinian Judaism was affected by Hellenism, as Hengel has shown. M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period* (London: SCM Press, 1974). Frey, however, underestimates the Jewishness of Jude, and his criteria for seeing Jewish Christianity (Jewish observances and a relation to the synagogue) are too limiting and need to be defended more rigorously.

1982 But there is no evidence that they rejected Jude’s authority. Rightly deSilva, *Jude*, 184; against Brosend, *James and Jude*, 185–86.

1983 J. Frey rightly notes that Jude differs from 2 Peter since in Jude there is no concern about the delay of the coming of Christ (“Judgment on the Ungodly and the *Parousia* of Christ: Eschatology in Jude and 2 Peter,” in *Eschatology of the New Testament and Some Related Documents*, ed. J. G. van der Watt, WUNT 2/315 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011], 495).

1984 For a helpful and brief discussion, see J. F. Hultin, “The Literary Relationships among 1 Peter, 2 Peter, and Jude,” in *Reading 1–2 Peter and Jude: A Resource for Students*, ed. E. F. Mason and T. W. Martin, SBLRBS 77 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014), 27–42.

1985 So Mayor, *Jude and Second Peter*, i–xxv; Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 216–24; A. Gerdmar, *Rethinking the Judaism-Hellenism Dichotomy: A Historiographical Case Study of Second Peter and Jude*, ConBNT 36 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2001), 116–23; M. D. Mathews, “The Literary Relationship of 2 Peter and Jude: Does the Synoptic Tradition Solve This Synoptic Problem?,” *Neot* 44 (2010): 47–66. Guthrie has a fine summary of the evidence, and though he is undecided, he seems to favor slightly the priority of 2 Peter (*New Testament Introduction*, 916–25).

1986 E.g., T. Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society: A Study of 2 Peter*, ConBNT 9 (Lund: Gleerup, 1977), 33–59; Cranfield, *Peter and Jude*, 145–46; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 225–27; Paulsen, *Petrusbrief und Judasbrief*, 97–100; Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 136–43; T. Callan, “Use of the Letter of Jude by the Second Letter of Peter,” *Bib* 85 (2004): 42–64. See the cautious conclusions on this matter in T. Wasserman, *The Epistle of Jude: Its Text and Transmission*, ConBNT 43 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2006), 73–98.

1987 Wallace, “Jude: Introduction, Argument, and Outline.”

1988 Less convincing is Wallace’s claim that the apostolic age had ended according to Jude. Neither is it persuasive to say that the opponents were only predicted in 2 Peter, whereas in Jude they were already present. Another problem with Wallace’s theory is that a denial of the second coming is nowhere mentioned in Jude. It seems like special pleading to say, as Wallace does, that the Petrine prophecy was “only *partially* fulfilled” when Jude was written.

1989 Mathews, “The Literary Relationship of 2 Peter and Jude,” 47–66.

1990 E.g., M. Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 58–64; C. Spicq, *Les Épîtres de Saint Pierre*, SB (Paris: Gabalda, 1966], 197, n. 1). So also Reicke, who sees both as coming from a “sermon pattern” (*James, Peter, and Jude*, 190).

1991 T. V. Smith rightly says: “In fact, verbal agreements between the two documents are slight. . . . There is nothing comparable to the close similarities one finds, for example, in the Synoptic relationships” (*Petrine Controversies in Early Christianity: Attitudes toward Peter in Christian Writings of the First Two Centuries*, WUNT 2/15 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1985], 76). Nevertheless, he concludes that Jude is the source for 2 Peter (p. 77).

1992 “The traditional penchant for assuming a literary relationship between the two documents fails to account for the fact that the material Jude has in common with 2 Peter occurs in a different context and is deficient of the verbal precision one encounters, for instance, among the Synoptic Gospels. Accordingly, while recognizing a certain similarity, one must question the validity of assuming at the outset that one can reconstruct the ancient walls of Jude by using stones borrowed indiscriminately from 2 Peter” (Osburn, “Discourse Analysis and Jewish Apocalyptic,” 311).

1993 M. L. Soards, “1 Peter, 2 Peter, and Jude as Evidence for a Petrine School,” *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* II.25, ed. W. Haase (New York: de Gruyter, 1988), 3827–49. See also the “Addenda” by V. O. Ward (3844–49) in support of a Petrine school. For arguments against a Petrine school, see D. G. Horrell, “The Product of a Petrine Circle? A Reassessment of the Origin and Character of 1 Peter,” *JSNT* 86 (2002): 29–60.

1994 Cf. Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 33–59; Bauckham, *Relatives of Jesus*, 146–47.

1995 See J. D. Charles, “Literary Artifice in the Epistle of Jude,” *ZNW* 82 (1991): 106–24.

1996 Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 24.

1997 A. Robinson, *Jude on the Attack*. Cf. also A. J. Batten, “The Letter of Jude and Graeco-Roman Invective,” *HTS Theologese Studies/Theological Studies* at <http://www.scielo.org.za/pdf/hts/v70n1/88.pdf>. B. Bauman-Martin, using postcolonial criticism, argues that Jude adopts an imperial and totalizing perspective (“Postcolonial Pollution in the Letter of Jude,” in *Reading Jude with New Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of Jude*, ed. R. L. Webb and P. H. Davids, LNTS 383 [London: T&T Clark, 2008], 54–80).

1998 The structure of the text is dependent, of course, on what the text *is*. For a text-critical study of Jude from the standpoint of thoroughgoing eclecticism, see C. Landon, *A Text-Critical Study of the Epistle of Jude*, JSNTSup 135 (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1996). Landon’s study is useful, but rational eclecticism is a better approach to text criticism in my judgment, and for significant criticisms of Landon, see Wasserman, *Jude: Text and Transmission*, 20–22.

1999 For the structure of Jude, see also H. Harm, “Logic Line in Jude: The Search for Syllogisms in a Hortatory Text,” *JOTT* 1 (1987): 147–72.

2000 D. F. Watson, *Invention, Arrangement, and Style: Rhetorical Criticism of Jude and 2 Peter*, SBLDS 104 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 29–79.

2001 See the study by S. J. Joubert, “Persuasion in the Letter of Jude,” *JSNT* 58 (1995): 75–87. Joubert identifies the letter as epideictic rhetoric.

2002 Cf. Joubert, “Persuasion in the Letter of Jude,” 77–78; Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 4.

2003 See especially the critique and analysis of Jude by E. R. Wendland, “A Comparative Study of ‘Rhetorical Criticism,’ Ancient and Modern—with Special Reference to the Larger Structure and Function of the Epistle of Jude,” *Neot* 28 (1994): 193–228. He points out that Watson does not take into account sufficiently the midrashic and Jewish character of the letter, and hence

Bauckham's structure is to be preferred over Watson's. For criticism of Watson's view, see also Müller, "Der Judasbrief," 272; cf. also Gerdmar, *Rethinking the Judaism-Hellenism Dichotomy*, 94–106. J. D. Charles argues that Jude defies any single rhetorical analysis ("Polemic and Persuasion: Typological and Rhetorical Perspectives on the Letter of Jude," in *Reading Jude with New Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of Jude*, ed. R. L. Webb and P. H. Davids, LNTS 383 [London: T&T Clark, 2008], 90–99).

2004 T. R. Wolthuis, "Jude and the Rhetorician: A Dialogue on the Rhetorical Nature of the Epistle of Jude," *CTJ* 24 (1989): 126–34.

2005 G. L. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 37.

2006 G. L. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 37.

2007 Osburn points out that Watson's scheme incorrectly separates vv. 3–4, and hence the connection between these verses and vv. 20–23 is also missed (see "Discourse Analysis and Jewish Apocalyptic in the Epistle of Jude," 289).

2008 A. Robinson (*Jude on the Attack*, 37–38) argues, however, that the line between what is written and what is oral must not be pressed since the letters were read out loud in the congregations, and thus the writers considered their oral effect.

2009 For instructive evaluations of the role of rhetoric in NT epistles, see S. E. Porter and T. H. Olbricht, eds., *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993); J. A. D. Weima, "What Does Aristotle Have to Do with Paul? An Evaluation of Rhetorical Criticism," *CTJ* 32 (1997): 458–68.

2010 Wallace argues that Jude was written after the death of both Paul and Peter to encourage the readers not to defect from the gospel they were taught ("Jude: Introduction, Argument, and Outline"). But clear evidence that Peter and Paul had died recently is lacking, and the scenario painted by Wallace is nowhere stated in the letter. Nor is it evident that the reference to "the salvation we share" indicates that previously Jude had minimal contact with the readers.

2011 Watson, *Invention, Arrangement, and Style*, 46.

2012 We see this pattern as well in vv. 17–19. The words of the apostles are cited in vv. 17–18, and then Jude turns to "These" who cause divisions (v. 19).

2013 Ellis, "Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Jude," 221–26.

2014 Ellis, "Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Jude," 225.

2015 See Bauckham, *Relatives of Jesus*, 201–6.

2016 See the careful discussion of whether Jude engages in peshar exegesis, B. A. Jurgens, "Is It Peshar? Readdressing the Relationship between the Epistle of Jude and the Qumran Pesharim," *JBL* 136 (2017): 491–510.

2017 Bauckham, *Relatives of Jesus*, 153–54, 179–80.

2018 Bauckham, *Relatives of Jesus*, 154; so also Müller, "Der Judasbrief," 275; Osburn, "Discourse Analysis and Jewish Apocalyptic in the Epistle of Jude," 289.

2019 Bauckham, *Relatives of Jesus*, 157. Bauckham says that vv. 5–19 are "a very carefully composed piece of scriptural commentary which *argues* for the statement made in verse 4" (p. 181).

2020 Bauckham, *Relatives of Jesus*, 157.

2021 Bauckham, *Relatives of Jesus*, 150–54, 182.

2022 R. Bauckham, “James, 1 Peter and 2 Peter, Jude,” in *It Is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture: Essays in Honour of Barnabas Lindars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 304. J. T. Reed and R. A. Reese note that Jude alternates between the aorist and the present. Often Jude commences in the aorist tense and then follows with the present tense. It seems that their analysis of the tenses supplements Bauckham’s view (“Verbal Aspect, Discourse Prominence, and the Letter of Jude,” *FNT* 9 [1996]: 191).

2023 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 5–6. I have adopted the modification of Bauckham’s outline set forth by Wendland (“Structure of Jude,” 207).

2024 Wendland, “Structure of Jude,” 207–9.

2025 Osburn, “Discourse Analysis and Jewish Apocalyptic in the Epistle of Jude,” 287–319, see esp. 309.

2026 A. Robinson, *Jude on the Attack*, 62.

2027 Wendland, “Structure of Jude,” 211–12. Charles (“Polemic and Persuasion, 102–3) seems to be in agreement with Wendland.

2028 A. Vögtle agrees that the Lord’s brother is intended but argues for pseudonymity (*Der Judasbrief, Der 2 Petrusbrief*, EKKNT [Neukirchen–Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1994], 16).

2029 See K. H. Rengstorf, “δοῦλος” *TDNT* 2:268, 276–77; E. Fuchs and P. Reymond, *La Deuxième Épître de Saint Pierre, L’Épître de Saint Jude*, CNT (Neuchâtel–Paris: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1980), 154.

2030 R. Bauckham observes that Jude has “a striking preference for the ‘double-name’” Jesus Christ (*Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990], 285). He goes on to observe that Jewish Christians would have applied the epithet “Christ” to Jesus from the beginning to distinguish Jesus of Nazareth from others with the name Jesus. Nor is there any reason to doubt that the term “Christ” retained its messianic import in Jude’s letter.

2031 For this view of the authorship of James, see D. J. Moo, *The Letter of James*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 9–22; L. T. Johnson, *The Letter of James*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 92–108.

2032 J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude*, Thornapple Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 242.

2033 Rightly G. L. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 46.

2034 J. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, AB (Garden City: Doubleday, 1993), 45, 47–48. But he engages in speculation in saying that the opponents claimed “achieved authority” in contrast to Jude’s claim to status by kinship. We have no evidence that the opponents even criticized Jude or contrasted themselves specifically with him. Supporting the notion that we have authority designated here and not just humility is J. F. Hultin, “Bourdieu Reads Jude: Reconsidering the Letter of Jude through Pierre Bourdieu’s Sociology,” in *Reading Jude with New Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of Jude*, ed. R. L. Webb and P. H. Davids, LNTS 383 (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 41–43.

2035 In this commentary the term “church” is used for the recipients, but in doing so I am not claiming Jude did not write to more than one church. It is possible that he addresses several churches.

2036 Rightly D. J. Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 222.

2037 Bauckham argues that the Christology of Jude can be summed up to say “that Jesus is the eschatological agent of God’s salvation and judgment,” that he is God’s Messiah, and that as such he bears God’s authority relative to both judgment and salvation (*Relatives of Jesus*, 312–13). Cf. also H. W. Bateman IV, *Jude*, EEC (Bellingham: Lexham, 2017), 104–6.

2038 So also N. Turner in J. H. Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 4 vols. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark), 1908–76, vol. 3 (1963): *Syntax*, by N. Turner, 264. Cf. also C. Bigg, *The Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1901), 324; R. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, WBC (Waco: Word, 1983), 25; Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 37.

2039 Rightly Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 223; cf. Bateman, *Jude*, 111–12. BDAG also demonstrates that the preposition *en* can denote personal agency (p. 329).

2040 Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 155; N. Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, NIBC (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1992), 233; D. J. Harrington, *Jude and 2 Peter*, SP (Collegeville: Michael Glazier, 2003), 186; L. R. Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 169; G. L. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 48; Bateman, *Jude*, 112–13. D. B. Wallace thinks the dative should be translated “kept for Jesus Christ” and thinks it is unlikely it denotes agency (*Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996], 144, 165); cf. also P. H. Davids, *II Peter and Jude: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, BHGNT (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2011), 2; Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 38.

2041 Cf. J. B. Mayor, *The Epistle of St. Jude and the Second Epistle of St. Peter* (1907; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1965), 18; R. A. Reese, *2 Peter and Jude*, THNTC (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 33. J. Frey rightly says the decision is not easy, and there are good grounds also to think Jesus did the calling (*Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, THKNT [Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2015], 51–52). B. Reicke adopts this view but gives no supporting argumentation to defend it (*The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude*, AB [Garden City: Doubleday, 1964], 194).

2042 See notes 13 and 16 below for Wallace’s view. I owe the following arguments and much of the wording to Jason Meyer.

2043 Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 75–76.

2044 Vögtle rightly sees the need for human agency but fails to see that God’s grace secures a persevering response (*Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 18).

2045 Cf. here Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 155.

2046 Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 38–39.

2047 Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 48.

2048 For a discussion and listing of triads in Jude, see J. D. Charles, “Literary Artifice in the Epistle of Jude,” *ZNW* 82 (1991): 122–23. It has long been recognized that Jude loves triads (Mayor, *Jude and Second Peter*, lvi).

2049 Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 155.

2050 The source also is lacking in 1 Thess 1:1.

2051 Cf. J. L. White, *The Form and Function of the Body of the Greek Letter*, SBLDS 2 (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1972), 18; G. L. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 52–53.

2052 Cf. the discussion in A. Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, der 2 Petrusbrief*, EKKNT (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1994), 21–23. E.g., some defend the view I support by the shift from

the present infinitive γράφειν to the aorist infinitive γράψαι. But it is difficult to see how the change in tense establishes one view or the other.

2053 J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude*, Thornapple Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 246. Contra E. Fuchs and P. Reymond, there is not a polemic here against mystery cults that restricted salvation to some (*La Deuxième Épître de Saint Pierre, L'Épître de Saint Jude*, CNT [Neuchâtel–Paris: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1980], 157). Rightly Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 23, n. 12.

2054 Rightly R. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, WBC (Waco: Word, 1983), 31.

2055 Against H. W. Bateman IV (*Jude*, EEC [Bellingham: Lexham, 2017], 127–31), who sees a reference to physical deliverance, largely because of his notion that the danger for the church came from the Zealots. The eschatological focus in vv. 1 and 24–25, as well as the threat of final judgment, which pervades the letter (see e.g., vv. 5–7), shows that that spiritual salvation is in view.

2056 Against A. Robinson, S. Llewelyn, and B. Wassell, who say the readers are implored to contend “by means of the faith” (“Showing Mercy to the Ungodly and the Inversion of Invective in Jude,” *NTS* 64 [2018]: 208–9).

2057 For the motif see V. C. Pfitzner, *Paul and the Agon Motif: Traditional Athletic Imagery in the Pauline Literature*, NovTSup 16 (Leiden: Brill, 1967).

2058 Bauckham wrongly puts the emphasis on contending for the faith as a positive growth in the gospel instead of opposing the false teachers (*Jude, 2 Peter*, 32). Both ideas are present, and we should not prefer one over the other.

2059 Against Bateman (*Jude*, 133–36), there is no conception here of contending against the Zealot movement. Bateman is too restrictive in thinking we need words like “false” or “liars” to designate the presence of false teachers.

2060 Though D. B. Wallace thinks the agent is likely God (*Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996], 436).

2061 Against A. Robinson (*Jude on the Attack: A Comparative Analysis of the Epistle of Jude, Jewish Judgement Oracles, and Greco-Roman Invective*, LNTS 581 [London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2018], 97–104), faith doesn’t refer here to a pledge or to a covenant relationship. The collocation of πίστις with the verb παραδίδωμι, which is the word for handing down tradition (e.g., Rom 6:17; 1 Cor 11:2, 23; 15:3; 2 Pet 2:21) points to the truth confessed by believers.

2062 Rightly J. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, AB (Garden City: Doubleday, 1993), 55; cf. R. Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990), 159. J. Frey remarks that Jude’s use of “faith” is close to Paul’s understanding of gospel (*Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, THKNT [Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2015], 58).

2063 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 33.

2064 Bauckham, unfortunately, suggests that there was only a concern for moral probity and not doctrinal fidelity (*Jude, 2 Peter*, 34). The separation of the one from the other distorts the true character of the gospel Jude proclaimed, almost reducing it to a kind of moralism. R. A. Reese rightly says that faith here is not as formalized as the Apostles’ Creed and also contains behavioral implications (*2 Peter and Jude*, THNTC [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007], 37).

2065 I am not denying, of course, that many other factors must be considered when we think of canonicity.

2066 E.g., Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 158. It seems to me that Neyrey imposes his social-scientific analysis on the text when he says the major issue is that they challenged the honor of God and Jude (*2 Peter, Jude*, 52). A liability with the social-scientific approach is that modern theories may be imposed on the text (cf. P. Müller, “Der Judasbrief,” *TRu* 63 [1998]: 278–79).

2067 See W. Michaelis, “παρεισάγω,” *TDNT* 5.824–25; G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 57.

2068 So Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 35; Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 43.

2069 Jude used the verb *παρεισέδυσαν*, while Paul used the terms *παρεισάκτους* and *παρεισῆλθον* in Gal 2:4. Peter used the term *παρεισάξουσιν* in 2 Pet 2:1.

2070 Contra C. D. Osburn, “Discourse Analysis and Jewish Apocalyptic in the Epistle of Jude,” in *Linguistics and New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Discourse Analysis*, ed. D. A. Black, K. Barnwell, and S. Levinsohn (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 289. See here Didymus of Alexandria in P. R. Jones, *The Epistle of Jude as Expounded by the Fathers—Clement of Alexandria, Didymus of Alexandria, the Scholia of Cramer’s Catena, Psuedo-Oecumenius, and Bede*, *Texts and Studies in Religion* 89 (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 2001), 65, 67, 71.

2071 S. J. Joubert remarks: “The actions of people, however contrary they seemed to appear to the divine will, were thus in no way outside the control of God. History has continued to run its predetermined course, in spite of various forms of evil and catastrophes. The false teachers in the midst of Jude’s community will therefore also not interfere with the divine plan” (“Facing the Past: Transtextual Relationships and Historical Understanding of the Letter of Jude,” *BZ* 42 [1998]: 68).

2072 Cf. N. Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, NIBC (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1992), 239.

2073 So D. A. Carson, “Jude,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 1069–70.

2074 So Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 250–51.

2075 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 35–36.

2076 Osburn, “Discourse Analysis and Jewish Apocalyptic in the Epistle of Jude,” 290; C. D. Osburn, “1 Enoch 80:2–8 (67:5–7) and Jude 12–13,” *CBQ* 47 (1985): 300. Cf. also J. B. Mayor, *The Epistle of St. Jude and the Second Epistle of St. Peter* (1907; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1965), 24.

2077 J. H. Charlesworth, *OTP* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1983–85), 1:46.

2078 Cf. F. Maier, “Zur Erklärung des Judasbriefes (Jud 5),” *BZ* 2 (1904): 386; Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 26–27; Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 61. Maier also sees a connection to vv. 14, 17, as do Bauckham (*Jude, 2 Peter*, 36) and D. J. Moo (*2 Peter, Jude*, NIVAC [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997], 230). It is doubtful, though, that the apostles (vv. 17–18) would be included in those who wrote “long ago.”

2079 G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 58.

2080 So C. Bigg, *The Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1901), 326.

2081 The notion that we have a reference to Rom 3:8 is improbable and should be rejected (contra G. Sellin, “Die Häretiker des Judasbriefes,” *ZNW* 77 [1986]: 209–11). Instead, the antecedent or postcedent should be derived from Jude itself.

- 2082 In support of τοῦτο pointing forward, see Robinson, *Jude on the Attack*, 68; P. H. Davids, *II Peter and Jude: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, BHGNT (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2011), 6.
- 2083 W. Foerster, “εὐσέβεια,” *TDNT* 7.185–91.
- 2084 See H. Paulsen, *Der zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief*, KEK (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 55; O. Bauernfeind, “ἀσέλγεια,” *TDNT* 1.490.
- 2085 Against Bateman, *Jude*, 150–52.
- 2086 Cf. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 270–90; see esp. 276 and his cautionary remarks there.
- 2087 So Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 252; Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 160. The latter think the “only” in v. 25 supports this view as well.
- 2088 So also Osburn, “Jude 12–13,” 301; Bauckham, *Relatives of Jesus*, 302–3.
- 2089 Bauckham, *Relatives of Jesus*, 283–84. Bauckham argues that the term used here developed in the earliest Palestinian churches in the bilingual context of early Christianity.
- 2090 Bauckham, *Relatives of Jesus*, 306–7.
- 2091 This is exceedingly common. For an example of this mistake, see D. J. Rowston, “The Most Neglected Book in the New Testament,” *NTS* 21 (1974–75): 556; K. H. Schelke, *Der Petrusbrief – Der Judasbrief*, HTKNT (Freiburg: Herder, 1980), 152. Cf. also Mayor, *Jude and Second Peter*, 27.
- 2092 So already M. Luther, *Commentary on Peter & Jude*, trans. and ed. J. N. Lenker (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1990), 232; cf. also Bauckham, *Relatives of Jesus*, 303; Osburn, “Discourse Analysis and Jewish Apocalyptic in the Epistle of Jude,” 291; Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 29–32; Reese, *2 Peter and Jude*, 40–41.
- 2093 On the importance of typology in Jude, see J. D. Charles, “‘Those’ and ‘These’: The Use of the Old Testament in the Epistle of Jude,” *JSNT* 38 (1990): 109–24. R. Bauckham rightly notes that all three serve as “eschatological types” (*Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990], 187, 217–18).
- 2094 So Charles, “The Use of the Old Testament in Jude,” 116.
- 2095 So R. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, WBC (Waco: Word, 1983), 50.
- 2096 On disclosure formulas see J. L. White, *The Form and Function of the Body of the Greek Letter*, SBLDS 2 (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1972), 11–15.
- 2097 See support for this view especially in the thorough discussion of S. Hafemann, “Salvation in Jude 5 and the Argument of 2 Peter 1:3–11,” in *The Catholic Epistles and Apostolic Tradition: A New Perspective on James to Jude*, ed. K.-W. Niebuhr and R. W. Wall (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009), 331–39. Cf. also S. J. Kraftchick, *Jude, 2 Peter*, ANTC (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 36–37; R. A. Reese, “Remember ‘Jesus Saved a People out of Egypt,’” in *Muted Voices of the New Testament: Readings in the Catholic Epistles and Hebrews*, ed. K. M. Hockey, M. N. Pierce, and F. Watson, LNTS 565 [London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017], 94–95). I am not convinced, however, of Hafemann’s textual decision (see the references cited in the next note) or that the act of saving was the forgiveness of the wilderness generation at the golden calf. A reference to the deliverance from Egypt is more likely.
- 2098 Supporting this view is Metzger, *TCGNT*, 657–58; A. Wikgren, “Some Problems in Jude 5,” in *Studies in the History and Text of the New Testament in Honor of Kenneth Willis Clark, Ph.D.*, ed. B. L. Daniels and M. J. Suggs (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1967), 147–48; C. D. Osburn, “The Text of Jude 5,” *Bib* 62 (1981): 109–11; E. Fuchs and P. Reymond, *La Deuxième Épître de Saint*

Pierre, L'Épître de Saint Jude, CNT (Neuchâtel–Paris: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1980), 162; T. Wasserman, *The Epistle of Jude: Its Text and Transmission*, ConBNT 43 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2006), 258–60; T. Flink, “Reconsidering the Text of Jude 5, 13, 15, and 18,” *Filologia Neotestamentaria* 20 (2007): 103–4; J. Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, THKNT (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2015), 68. For the former view see M. Black, “Critical and Exegetical Notes on Three New Testament Texts: Hebrews xi. 11, Jude 5, James i. 27,” in *Apophoreta: Festschrift für Ernst Haenchen zu seinem siebzigsten Geburtstag*, ed. W. Eltester (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1964), 44–45; C. Landon, *A Text-Critical Study of the Epistle of Jude*, JSNTSup 135 (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1996), 77; G. L. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 77–78; S. Hafemann, “Salvation in Jude and the Argument of 2 Peter 1:3–11,” 332; Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 47; Bateman, *Jude*, 162–65.

²⁰⁹⁹ Psuedo-Oecumenius appeals to the judgment here to show that the God of the NT is the same as the God in the OT. It is not as if “there is one vengeful and savage god of the Old Testament and another of the New, who is a kindly ruler, loving towards mankind; and at the same time, he shows that these men under discussion will not remain unpunished” (in P. R. Jones, *The Epistle of Jude as Expounded by the Fathers—Clement of Alexandria, Didymus of Alexandria, the Scholia of Cramer’s Catena, Psuedo-Oecumenius, and Bede*, Texts and Studies in Religion 89 [Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 2001], 101).

²¹⁰⁰ The reading Ἰησοῦς is supported by A, B, 33, 81, 1241, 1739, 1881, 2344. See also Bede in P. E. Jones, *The Epistle of Jude as Expounded by the Fathers—Clement of Alexandria, Didymus of Alexandria, the Scholia of Cramer’s Catena, Psuedo-Oecumenius, and Bede*, Texts and Studies in Religion 89 (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 2001), 114. ϣ⁷² has the reading θεός Χριστός, which is certainly a corruption. Some scholars support κύριος. E.g., Bauckham, *Relatives of Jesus*, 308–9; Landon, *A Text-Critical Study of the Epistle of Jude*, 75–76; H. W. Bateman IV, *Jude*, EEC (Bellingham: Lexham, 2017), 161–62; D. J. Harrington, *Jude and 2 Peter*, SP (Collegeville: Michael Glazier, 2003), 195, especially on internal grounds (which is supported by κ, Ψ, C*, 630, 1505, etc.). T. Wasserman, *The Epistle of Jude: Its Text and Transmission*, ConBNT 43 [Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2006], 26), agrees that Ἰησοῦς is supported by the manuscripts, but he thinks it is stylistically difficult and doesn’t fit the context of verses 5–7. See also the discussion in *TCGNT*, 657, where the committee is itself divided.

Supporting Ἰησοῦς are Wikgren, 148–49; Osburn, “The Text of Jude 5,” 111–15; P. F. Bartholomä, “Did Jesus Save the People out of Egypt? A Re-examination of a Textual Problem in Jude 5,” *NovT* 50 (2008): 143–58; Flink, “Reconsidering the Text of Jude 5, 13, 15, and 18,” 106–12; C. Bigg, *The Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1901), 328; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 49; G. L. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 65; Kraftchick, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 37. Bartholomä argues that Jesus makes sense in terms of internal evidence as well since scribes would reason that it is “anachronistic” for Jesus to save people from Egypt, and thus they would be inclined to substitute “Lord” (“Did Jesus Save the People out of Egypt,” 150).

J. Fossum thinks the external evidence supports “Jesus” and that Jude understands Jesus to be the angel of the Lord in the OT (“Kyrios Jesus as the Angel of the Lord, in Jude 5–7,” *NTS* 33 [1987]: 226–43; so also R. Martin, “Jude,” in *The Theology of the Letters of James, Peter, and Jude* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994], 77–78). For instance, in the OT account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the annihilation of those cities is attributed to the angel of the Lord (cf. Gen 18:1, 13–14, 17–33; 19:13–14, 25, 29). Fossum indicates that intermediaries, such as the Logos or Wisdom, are also understood as the means by which the cities were destroyed in Philo and Wisdom of Solomon. The step of identifying Jesus as the angel of the Lord is explicitly

argued by Justin Martyr, and hence it is not impossible that Jude preceded Justin in drawing such a conclusion.

For arguments against Fossum, see Bauckham, *Relatives of Jesus*, 310–11; Landon, *A Text-Critical Study of the Epistle of Jude*, 71–74. They raise the following objections to Fossum's view. Fossum depends on 1 En. 10:4–6 and 10:11–12, but in 1 Enoch two angels are included in the judgment, and so it is difficult to see how the references can now be collapsed to refer to one person, Jesus. Furthermore, the reference to Michael in v. 9 shows that he rather than Jesus was identified as the angel of the Lord. References to Jesus as the preexistent Christ do not occur in the NT. Stylistically, Jude always refers to "Jesus Christ," never "Jesus" alone. I would reply that even if Jesus should not be identified as the angel of the Lord, the arguments for a reference to Jesus are still the most persuasive.

2101 Cf. J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude*, Thornapple Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 255; D. J. Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 239–40; A. Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, Der 2 Petrusbrief*, EKKNT (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1994), 37–40; Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 162; Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 48; Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 69–70.

2102 E. E. Kellett agrees that Ἰησοῦς is the superior reading but then argues that the reference is to Joshua ("Note on Jude 5," *ExpTim* 15 [1903–1904]: 381). Kellett's identification of Ἰησοῦς with Joshua should be rejected. Joshua did not destroy those in the wilderness who failed to believe, and neither is it plausible that he judged the angels who sinned in Genesis 6. Rightly Osburn, "The Text of Jude 5," 111–12; Fossum, "Angel of the Lord," *NTS* 33 (1987): 226; Bartholomä, "Did Jesus Save the People out of Egypt?," 153; cf. also H. Paulsen, *Der zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief*, KEK (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 62–63; R. A. Reese, *2 Peter and Jude*, THNTC (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 43–44.

2103 Osburn, "The Text of Jude 5," 112–13; cf. E. E. Ellis, "Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Jude," in *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity: New Testament Essays* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 232, n. 49.

2104 Reese argues that Jesus is the superior reading, and even if the correct word is "Lord," the referent is still Jesus since Jesus is designated as Lord in v. 4 ("Remember 'Jesus Saved a People out of Egypt,'" 93–94). See also G. Aichele, *The Letters of Jude and Second Peter: Paranoia and the Slaves of Christ*, Phoenix Guides to the New Testament 19 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2012), 10.

2105 Rightly J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988), 67.50; Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 163. Some scholars have postulated some strange interpretations based on the word δεύτερον. E.g., B. Reicke (*The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude*, AB [Garden City: Doubleday, 1964], 199) and M. Green (*The Second Epistle General of Peter and the General Epistle of Jude*, 2nd ed., TNTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987], 164) suggest a reference to the second coming of Christ here, which seems completely out of place in this context.

2106 Some might object to the connection since the Lord did not carry out his threat to destroy the whole people because of Moses's intercession. The objection is not compelling. Yahweh did not destroy the entire nation (hence he responded to Moses's prayer), but he did destroy the adult generation that sinned.

2107 In rabbinic circles (m. Sanh. 10:3) it was debated whether the wilderness generation had a portion in the world to come. The controversy is significant since it shows that Israel's

behavior in the eyes of the rabbis had implications for their future destiny, not just temporal judgment. The NT perspective on this debate is clear from 1 Corinthians and Hebrews.

2108 E.g., Bateman (*Jude*, 173) says the death in the wilderness was physical.

2109 Contra Osburn, who believes that only 1 Enoch, and not Gen 6, is the source for Jude's discussion ("Discourse Analysis and Jewish Apocalyptic in the Epistle of Jude," 296).

2110 A. F. J. Klijn understates the presence of sexual sin in his essay ("Jude 5 to 7," in *The New Testament Age: Essays in Honor of Bo Reicke*, ed. W. C. Weinrich [Macon: Mercer University Press, 1984], 1:237–44). G. Sellin, unconvincingly, denies any reference to sexual sin, arguing that even in reference to Sodom and Gomorrah the sins should be understood metaphorically to designate denial of the true God and a turn toward idols ("Die Häretiker des Judasbriefes," *ZNW* 77 [1986]: 216–17). His interpretation fails to convince since both the OT and Jewish tradition indicate that the sin of the angels and Sodom and Gomorrah included sexual deviance. Supporting a reference to sexual sin is F. Hand, "Randbemerkungen zum Judasbrief," *TZ* 37 (1981): 212. On the other hand, Sellin rightly notes that the emphasis is on the angels' abandoning their allotted role (so also Charles, "The Use of the Old Testament in Jude," 114). For a fascinating attempt to read the event in Sodom as nonsexual, see S. Morschauser, "'Hospitality,' Hostiles, and Hostages: On the Legal Background to Genesis 19.1–19," *JSOT* 27 (2003): 461–85. But such a view does not fit with the reading in Second Temple Judaism, and the story in Judges 19 is meant to show that Gibeah is as evil as Sodom, and there the sin is clearly sexual. See here the comments by D. A. Carson, "Jude," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 1072–74.

2111 So also Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 76.

2112 N. Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, NIBC (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1992), 242. See also Bateman, *Jude*, 180–81.

2113 J. B. Mayor observes that the bonds are said to be eternal, but they last only until the day of judgment (*The Epistle of St. Jude and the Second Epistle of St. Peter* [1907; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1965], 31).

2114 It is possible that Gen 6:1–4 records the original fall of angels, and hence their alignment with Satan was subsequent to the fall of Adam and Eve.

2115 J. H. Charlesworth, *OTP* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1983–85), 1.17.

2116 Charlesworth, *OTP*, 1.18. All subsequent citations are from Charlesworth.

2117 Rightly G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 68; J. D. Charles, "The Angels under Reserve in 2 Peter and Jude," *BBR* 15 (2005): 47.

2118 For a reference to divine beings, see C. Westermann, *Genesis I–II: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984), 371–72. For a reference to human beings, see C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament: Vol. 1. The Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n.d.), 127–34; K. Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, NAC (Nashville: B&H, 1996), 323–32. For a reference to angels, see G. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, WBC (Waco: Word, 1987), 139–40.

2119 Against Osburn, who wrongly locates Jude's allusion to Jewish tradition and excludes Gen 19 ("Discourse Analysis and Jewish Apocalyptic in the Epistle of Jude," 297).

2120 M. A. Kruger argues that *τούτοις* here refers back to the *τινες ἄνθρωποι* of v. 4, not to the angels of v. 6 or to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah ("TOΥΤΟΙΣ in Jude 7," *Neot* 27 [1993]: 119–32). The antecedent, however, is too distant to refer to v. 4. Kruger also contends that *οὗτοι* in v. 8

refers to v. 4. But οὔτοι is regularly used to denote the opponents as a stock term, and thus a reference to vv. 5–7 is more convincing. For a reference to the angels, see Paulsen, *Petrusbrief und Judasbrief*, 64; Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 165.

2121 The words used clearly point to sexual immorality. So T. Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society: A Study of 2 Peter*, ConBNT 9 (Lund: Gleerup, 1977), 47; W. J. Dalton, “The Interpretation of 1 Peter 3,19 and 4,6: Light from 2 Peter,” *Bib* 60 (1979): 551, n. 11. Contra Paulsen, *Petrusbrief und Judasbrief*, 64. Surprisingly, Reicke identifies the sins as idolatry and self-exaltation (*James, Peter, and Jude*, 199).

2122 E.g., Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 43–45; Harrington, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 196–97.

2123 Bateman’s wide definition of sexual sin here does not account well for the specific reference to Sodom and Gomorrah (*Jude*, 186).

2124 Note the words ἐνήλλαξε τάξιν φύσεως αὐτῆς (“she changed the order of her nature”).

2125 The καί here is explicative. They committed sexual sin by going after other flesh. Rightly Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 77, n 412.

2126 For this view see Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 258–59; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 54; L. R. Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 180.

2127 Rightly Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 242; Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 77.

2128 Contra D. G. Horrell, *The Epistles of Peter and Jude*, EC (Peterborough: Epworth, 1998), 121.

2129 For further discussion of this point, see T. R. Schreiner, *Romans*, 2nd ed., BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2018), 102–6. See also Oecumenius in *James, 1–2 Peter, 1–3 John, Jude*, ACCS (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000), 251. For a full and convincing treatment of the issue of homosexuality, see esp. R. A. J. Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001).

2130 Josephus claims to have seen the pillar of salt that was Lot’s wife (*Ant.* 1.203).

2131 Philo, *The Works of Philo* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1993), 495–96.

2132 Bauckham (*Jude, 2 Peter*, 45 and *Relatives of Jesus*, 201–6) and Ellis (“Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Jude,” 225) detect in the repetition of the word οὔτοι an interpretive formula such as we see at Qumran or in apocalyptic literature. If this is the case, we have something similar to peshar exegesis. Bauckham admits, however, that the parallel is inexact, and it is unclear that Jude interprets Scripture in every case (*Jude, 2 Peter*, 45). J. Neyrey argues that the repetition of οὔτοι is rhetorical (*2 Peter, Jude*, AB [Garden City: Doubleday, 1993], 72). For a similar rhetorical pattern with οὔτοι, see Acts 7:35–38.

2133 See Bauckham, *Relatives of Jesus*, 188.

2134 Kelly understands the participle similarly; the sins are “a result of their dreamings” (*Peter and Jude*, 260–61). Donelson says the participle is causal (*I and II Peter and Jude*, 182). Bateman takes it as attributive (*Jude*, 197–98).

2135 Osburn thinks Jude merely teaches that the false teachers were deluded (“Discourse Analysis and Jewish Apocalyptic in the Epistle of Jude,” 298). See also Bateman, *Jude*, 199–200.

2136 So Horrell, *The Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 121–22; G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 74; Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 54–55. Hillyer says that they “claim to have visionary revelations” (*1 and 2 Peter*,

Jude, 247). He cites 1 En. 99:8, which speaks of those who “will sink into impiety because of the folly of their hearts, and their hearts will be blinded through the fear of their hearts and through the visions of their dreams.”

2137 For the connection to false prophets, see R. Heiligenthal, *Zwischen Henoch und Paulus: Studien zum theologiegeschichtlichen Ort des Judasbriefes*, Texte und Arbeiten zum neutestamentlichen Zeitalter 6 (Tübingen: Francke, 1992), 50; K. H. Schelke, *Der Petrusbrief—Der Judasbrief*, HTKNT (Freiburg: Herder, 1980), 156; D. A. deSilva, *Jude*, PCNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 204.

2138 Cf. Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 47; Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 166–67; Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 81.

2139 That their sin was sexual is defended by Bauckham, *Relatives of Jesus*, 187, n. 13. Verses 5–7 do not necessarily indicate the sin in view was homosexuality (rightly Osburn, “Discourse Analysis and Jewish Apocalyptic in the Epistle of Jude,” 299; Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 48). Bateman thinks the reference is general and refers to religious contamination in general (*Jude*, 201–3). This is certainly possible, but the focus on sexual sin in vv. 6–7 makes his reading less likely.

2140 See here Darian Lockett, “Purity and Polemic: A Reassessment of Jude’s Theological World,” in *Reading Jude with New Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of Jude*, ed. R. L. Webb and P. R. Davids, LNTS 383 (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 17–19.

2141 Paulsen, *Petrusbrief und Judasbrief*, 65.

2142 Frey thinks the lordship of both angels and the Lord is in view here (*Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 81).

2143 Fuchs and Reymond see a rejection of God’s lordship (*2 Pierre, Jude*, 167). Hillyer sees a reference to v. 4 and thus thinks a denial of Christ’s lordship is in view (*1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, 248; so also G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 76).

2144 Some understand it to refer to civil authorities. E.g., M. Luther, *Commentary on Peter & Jude*, trans. and ed. J. N. Lenker (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1990), 293; J. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 438.

2145 Cf. Mayor, *Jude and Second Peter*, 35; G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 77; Bateman, *Jude*, 207–8. A reference to angels is strengthened when we observe Jude’s interest in angels (so I. H. Eybers, “Aspects of the Background of the Letter of Jude,” *Neot 9* [1975]: 116).

2146 Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 57–58.

2147 E.g., Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 57; Carson, “Jude,” 1074–75; Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 82.

2148 Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 69.

2149 So Bauckham, *Relatives of Jesus*, 272. Vögtle questions the antinomian thesis, noting that words like “commandment” or “law” are lacking (*Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 55–56).

2150 See Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 83.

2151 M. Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 168–69; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 245–46. But we cannot read into this gnostic dualism (against Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 167).

2152 “The great angel” ὁ ἄγγελος ὁ μέγας in B.

- 2153 See the helpful summary in Bateman, *Jude*, 210–13; cf. G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 81–82.
- 2154 The genitive *βλασφημίας* is an adjectival genitive, reflecting a Semitic idiom. So Mayor, *Jude and Second Peter*, 36; Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 168; Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, 249; C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: University Press, 1959), 175.
- 2155 So already Bede, in Johnson, *Epistle of Jude*, 116.
- 2156 H. C. Kee, “The Terminology of Mark’s Exorcism Stories,” *NTS* 14 (1968): 238–39.
- 2157 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 65–76; see also his careful study as reflected in the next note.
- 2158 Bauckham, *Relatives of Jesus*, 238–70. For further discussion of related traditions, see Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 84–85.
- 2159 Frey says, “We can only guess which form of tradition the author of Jude was involved in” (“The Epistle of Jude between Judaism, and Hellenism,” 321).
- 2160 See Bauckham’s summary, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 72–73.
- 2161 Since the date of Testament of Moses is debated, it is possible that the story recounted by Jude derives from oral rather than written tradition (cf. J. D. Charles, “Jude’s Use of Pseudepigraphical Source-Material as Part of a Literary Strategy,” *NTS* 37 [1991]: 137, n. 31; cf. also Eybers, “Background of the Letter of Jude,” 121, n. 15).
- 2162 J. Muddiman, “The Assumption of Moses and the Epistle of Jude,” in *Moses in Biblical and Extra-Biblical Traditions*, ed. A. Graupner and M. Wolter, BZAW 372 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 174–77.
- 2163 R. E. Stokes, “Not over Moses’ Dead Body: Jude 9, 22–24 and the Assumption of Moses in Their Early Jewish Context,” *JSNT* 40 (2017): 192–213.
- 2164 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 60–62; Bauckham, *Relatives of Jesus*, 271–75.
- 2165 Bauckham, *Relatives of Jesus*, 273. He also argues that in 2 Pet 2:11 the purpose is not to say that the good angels treat demons with respect. In support of Bauckham is T. Wasserman, *The Epistle of Jude: Its Text and Transmission*, ConBNT 43 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2006), 91.
- 2166 See also here Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 61.
- 2167 See commentary for discussion of these verses.
- 2168 For convincing criticisms of Bauckham’s reading of Jude 9, see Muddiman, “The Assumption of Moses and the Epistle of Jude,” 177–79. The interpretation offered here is represented in the earliest commentators on Jude. See Bede and Psuedo-Oecumenius in Johnson, *The Epistle of Jude*, 116–18 and 103 respectively.
- 2169 See also the discussion in Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 249–50.
- 2170 Note that the words are the verb *βλασφημοῦσιν* in v. 8 and the noun *βλασφημίας* in v. 9.
- 2171 It exceeds the evidence to say, however, that they despised angels because of their “disdain for the malevolent OT Creator-god as well as his creation” (contra Charles, “Jude’s Use of Pseudepigraphical Source-Material,” 139).
- 2172 So Bateman, *Jude*, 227–28.

- 2173 Cf. Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 87. There is no basis here for seeing a reference to Zealots (contra Bateman, *Jude*, 230).
- 2174 Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 86–87.
- 2175 Others argue that the reference here is to moral corruption. E.g., G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 85–86; Bateman, *Jude*, 211–12.
- 2176 See D. E. Garland, *The Intention of Matthew 23* (Leiden: Brill, 1979).
- 2177 For Jewish tradition on Cain, Balaam, and Korah, see G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 90–93.
- 2178 So Lockett, “Purity and Polemic,” 19–20. See also R. L. Webb, “The Rhetorical Function of Visual Imagery in *Jude*: A Socio-Rhetorical Experiment in Rhetography,” in *Reading Jude with New Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of Jude*, ed. R. L. Webb and P. R. Davids, LNTS 383 (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 131–32.
- 2179 Bede in Johnson, *Epistle of Jude*, 117. He goes on to say, “They strive like Cain to kill their brothers with the sword of false doctrine, like Balaam to beguile them with evil counsel, and like Korah to set themselves up against Catholic teachers, to their own perdition” (p. 117).
- 2180 Vögtle says that the verb ἐπορεύθησαν signifies the way of death (*Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 66). The dative here may designate a locative of sphere. Cf. Moule, *Idiom Book*, 47.
- 2181 So Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 332; Harrington, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 199.
- 2182 Reicke, *James, Peter, and Jude*, 205–6.
- 2183 Cf. Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 88.
- 2184 Translated by G. Vermes, “The Targumic Versions of Genesis 4:3–16,” in *Post-Biblical Jewish Studies*, SJLA 8 (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 97–99. For a good summary of Second Temple and OT perspectives on Cain, see Bateman, *Jude*, 242–46.
- 2185 R. A. Reese, *2 Peter and Jude*, THNTC (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 54.
- 2186 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 79–80; cf. Charles, “The Use of the Old Testament in *Jude*,” 116.
- 2187 See Bateman, *Jude*, 247–48. G. H. Boobyer understands all three aorists verbs to refer to death, so that *Jude* was saying that the opponents had gone to death in the way of Cain (“The Verbs in *Jude* 11,” *NTS* 5 [1958–59]: 45–47). The interpretation is unconvincing, for the expression more naturally refers to the intruders copying Cain’s sin (rightly Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 269; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 80–81).
- 2188 *OTP*, 2:326.
- 2189 On Balaam as a false prophet, see Heiligenthal, *Zwischen Henoch und Paulus*, 51, 61.
- 2190 Bateman, since he thinks the letter was written against Zealot influence, thinks *Jude* instructs the readers that they should not rebel against Rome (*Jude*, 260–62).
- 2191 Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 41.13. The genitive μισθοῦ is a genitive of price (N. Turner in J. H. Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 4 vols. [Edinburgh: T&T Clark], 1908–76, vol. 3 [1963]: *Syntax*, by N. Turner, 238; Moule, *Idiom Book*, 47). Hillyer thinks it is a genitive of quality (*1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, 253).
- 2192 Against Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 332.
- 2193 For a summary of Second Temple traditions about Korah, see Bateman, *Jude*, 264–67.

- 2194 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 83–84.
- 2195 So Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 332–33; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 268; M. Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 173; Reicke, *James, Peter, and Jude*, 206. Though, contrary to Reicke, no evidence of rebellion against legal authorities is mentioned.
- 2196 The surreptitious infiltration of the opponents into the church does not preclude their being teachers. Against Bateman, *Jude*, 270. We see a similar accusation against those promoting circumcision who had wormed themselves into the church (or churches) in Jerusalem in Gal 2:3–5. Bateman’s notion that the reference is to Judean priests rebelling against Roman authority in the 60s in Judea is improbable, as is noted in the introduction (*Jude*, 271–72).
- 2197 Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 258.
- 2198 Perhaps the dative *ἀντιλογία* is causal here. Cf. Moule, *Idiom Book*, 47.
- 2199 Rightly Charles, “The Use of the Old Testament in Jude,” 110; against Boobyer, “The Verbs in Jude 11,” 45–47.
- 2200 Osburn maintains that Jude’s metaphors in vv. 12–13 find their framework in 1 En. 80:2–8 and 67:5–7 (“Jude 12–13,” 296–303). Contrary to Osburn, however, it is unclear that the metaphors derive from 1 Enoch. The alleged parallels do not share the exact wording, nor are they even remarkably similar in wording.
- 2201 So Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 95.
- 2202 Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 333–34; Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 74–75; Paulsen, *Petrusbrief und Judasbrief*, 71; Harrington, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 199; G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 94–95.
- 2203 Cf. Mayor, *Jude and Second Peter*, 40–41; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 270; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 85–86; Kraftchick, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 48–49; Lockett, “Purity and Polemic,” 20; Bateman, *Jude*, 275–76.
- 2204 See already Bede and Pseudo-Oecumenius in Johnson, *Epistle of Jude*, 117–18 and 104–5 respectively. The word *σπιλάδες* is feminine and is in apposition to the participle *οἱ . . . συννεωχούμενοι* (so Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 77, 86). A. D. Knox argues that the term here means a dirty or foul wind, but this makes little sense in context (“*Σπιλάδες*,” *JTS* 14 [1913]: 547–49).
- 2205 An interesting textual variant is *ἀπάταις*, but the variant represents assimilation from 2 Pet 2:13 and is clearly inferior. W. Whallon suggests the emendation *οὔτοι εἰσιν αἱ ἐν ταῖς ἀχάταις ὑμῶν σπιλάδες*, translated “these are the spots in your agates” (“Should We Keep, Omit or Alter the *οἱ* in Jude 12?,” *NTS* 34 [1988]: 156–69). There is really no reason to accept the emendation since, contra Whallon, the text makes sense as it stands. Cf. the discussion in Landon, *A Text Critical Study of the Epistle of Jude*, 103–7.
- 2206 Rightly Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 68–69.
- 2207 Bigg and Kelly link *ἀφόβως* with *ποιμαίνοντες* instead of *συννεωχούμενοι* (Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 335; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 271; Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 70). The word *ἀφόβως* is closer to *συννεωχούμενοι* than to *ποιμαίνοντες*, which is suggestive. A decision is difficult, but I incline to the reading in the NIV and CSB; so also Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 86.
- 2208 Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 334.
- 2209 So Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 93.
- 2210 So Bauckham, *Relatives of Jesus*, 190. Contra Bateman, *Jude*, 280–81.

2211 The order of the universe in terms of the heavens, the earth, and the waters is also reflected in 1 En. 2:1–5:4 and 80:2–7 (cf. Bauckham, *Relatives of Jesus*, 196–97; Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 96).

2212 Bauckham, *Relatives of Jesus*, 191.

2213 Jude's allusion depends on a tradition rooted in the MT of Prov 25:14 because the LXX does not follow the MT here. Bauckham points out that Jude is also closer to the MT than the LXX in his allusions to both Ezek 34:2 (Jude 12) and to Isa 57:20 (Jude 13). Furthermore, Bauckham argues that Jude nowhere reflects the language of the LXX, suggesting, perhaps, that he was more familiar with the MT than the LXX (see *Relatives of Jesus*, 136–37). It must be admitted that the LXX is close to the MT in Ezek 34:2, and hence a conclusion cannot be clearly drawn in this instance. Davids (*2 Peter and Jude*, 71, n. 33) suggests that instead of allusions to the MT in Prov 25:14 and Ezek 34:2 we may have proverbial language.

2214 Five of the last six words in the verse end with the letter α in Greek, creating a poetic effect. See A. Robinson, *Jude on the Attack: A Comparative Analysis of the Epistle of Jude, Jewish Judgement Oracles, and Greco-Roman Invective*, LNTS 581 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2018), 188–89.

2215 See Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 272.

2216 Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 335; Reicke, *James, Peter, and Jude*, 208. Hillyer thinks they were twice dead because the farmer destroyed them for not bearing fruit (*1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, 255).

2217 So Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 273; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 88; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 260. Vögtle says that the first death is moral and spiritual and that it leads to the second death (*Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 68).

2218 So Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 72.

2219 So Bateman, *Jude*, 283–84.

2220 So Bateman, *Jude*, 286.

2221 Bateman, *Jude*, 286.

2222 Flink, "Reconsidering the Text of Jude 5, 13, 15, and 18," 113–15. Cf. T. Wasserman, *The Epistle of Jude: Its Text and Transmission*, ConBNT 43 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2006), 291–93.

2223 Flink, "Reconsidering the Text of Jude 5, 13, 15, and 18," 115.

2224 Bateman, *Jude*, 286.

2225 Again, Bateman, *Jude*, 287, though I dissent from his view that they are Zealots.

2226 The suggestion of J. P. Oleson that we have an allusion to the birth of Aphrodite, who emerged from the foam of the sea, is improbable ("An Echo of Hesiod's *Theogony* vv. 190–92 in Jude 13," *NTS* 25 [1979]: 492–503). The only connection with Jude is the use of the word "foam" ($\alpha\phi\phi\acute{\rho}\acute{o}\varsigma$), which does not inspire confidence in the proposed theory. Furthermore, Jude uses Jewish apocalyptic sources, not pagan myths (so Osburn, "Jude 12–13," 298–99, 301).

2227 Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 73.

2228 Bauckham, *Relatives of Jesus*, 191.

2229 Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 74; cf. also Bateman, *Jude*, 290.

2230 A. Robinson, *Jude on the Attack*, 177.

- 2231 So also Bauckham, *Relatives of Jesus*, 208.
- 2232 The Venerable Bede rejects 1 Enoch as canonical because it is a pseudepigraph and contains teachings that are contrary to apostolic doctrine (in *James, 1–2 Peter, 1–3 John, Jude*, ACCS [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000], 255).
- 2233 So Reicke, *James, Peter, and Jude*, 209; Müller, “Der Judasbrief,” 280. Kelly says the revelations given to Enoch were thought to be inspired by Jude (*Peter and Jude*, 278).
- 2234 See the discussion in J. Hultin, “Jude’s Citation of 1 Enoch,” in *Jewish and Christian Scriptures: The Function of ‘Canonical’ and ‘Non-Canonical’ Religious Texts* (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 115–16.
- 2235 Some argue that the author of Epistle of Barnabas cites 1 Enoch as Scripture (cf. Barn. 16:5 and 1 En. 89:56–66). It is unclear, however, that 1 Enoch is genuinely being cited here.
- 2236 Hultin, “Jude’s Citation of 1 Enoch,” 117.
- 2237 Hultin, “Jude’s Citation of 1 Enoch,” 117–19.
- 2238 Hultin, “Jude’s Citation of 1 Enoch,” 119.
- 2239 E.g., G. Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 430. Tertullian endorses the notion that the teachings of Enoch were handed down (see Hultin, “Jude’s Citation of 1 Enoch,” 116). This view is rejected by most scholars (e.g., Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 85; Schelke, *Der Petrusbriefe—Der Judasbrief*, 164).
- 2240 Hultin, “Bourdieu Reads Jude,” 46. Frey says that Jude believed 1 Enoch was authoritative Scripture (*Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 104).
- 2241 Reicke, *James, Peter, and Jude*, 209. S. G. Joseph says that the authority of 1 Enoch for Jude does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that Jude thought the book was “canonical Scripture” (“‘Seventh from Adam’ [Jude 14–15]: Re-examining Enochic Traditions and the Christology of Jude,” *JTS* 64 [2013]: 473).
- 2242 Rightly Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 915; G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 28, 31.
- 2243 Bede rejects 1 Enoch as canonical since it is pseudonymous and contains many incredible tales, while defending the canonicity of Jude. He may imply that the citation Jude quotes is from the historical Enoch. See Bede in Johnson, *Epistle of Jude*, 51, 120–21.
- 2244 For a view in harmony with mine see Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 271–74; Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 914–16. W. M. Dunnett says, “Jude clearly accepted it [1 En. 1:9] as an inspired, apparently historical, and true utterance, without necessarily placing approval on the entire content of the Book of Enoch” (“The Hermeneutics of Jude and 2 Peter: The Use of Ancient Jewish Traditions,” *JETS* 31 [1988]: 289).
- 2245 Charles, “The Use of the Old Testament in Jude,” 112. See also his insightful comments on pp. 119–20, n. 4. Along the same lines, see P. J. Gentry and A. M. Fountain, “Reassessing Jude’s Use of Enochic Traditions (with Notes on Their Later Reception History),” *TynBul* 68 (2017): 261–86.
- 2246 Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 84.
- 2247 As G. Green points out, the same truth is expressed in many canonical texts (*Jude and 2 Peter*, 32). He goes on to say, “Jude makes judicious and limited use of references to apocryphal literature and evokes only sources that tie into the canonical text and interpretive traditions

surrounding it. Jude's use of apocryphal texts is closer to canonical bedrock than is sometimes acknowledged" (p. 32).

2248 G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 103.

2249 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 96. See his more detailed and nuanced discussion in *Relatives of Jesus*, 225–33.

2250 For the former interpretation see Mayor, *Jude and Second Peter*, 44; Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 336. For the latter, Turner, *Syntax*, 238; Moule, *Idiom Book*, 47; Reicke, *James, Peter, and Jude*, 208; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 275; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 93; Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 77.

2251 Bauckham answers in the affirmative, arguing that Jude drew a link between Enoch's prophecy in the seventh generation at the beginning of history and the apostles' prophecies near the end of history (*Relatives of Jesus*, 225).

2252 Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 101. Cf. Charles, "Jude's Use of Pseudepigraphical Source-Material," 143; C. D. Osburn, "The Christological Use of I Enoch i.9 in Jude 14, 15," *NTS* 23 (1976–77): 335; Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 915.

2253 Hultin, "Bourdieu Reads Jude," 44.

2254 For a discussion of the Book of Watchers (1 En. 1–36) and its influence on Jude, see D. A. deSilva, *The Jewish Teachers of Jesus, James, and Jude: What Earliest Christianity Learned from the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 104–10.

2255 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 96–97.

2256 Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 275. Bateman (*Jude*, 311) says it is "closest to a Greek version."

2257 B. Dehandschutter, "Pseudo-Cyprian, Jude and Enoch: Some Notes on 1 Enoch 1:9," in *Tradition and Re-interpretation in Jewish and Early Christian Literature: Essays in Honour of Jürgen H. Lebram*, ed. J. W. Wesselius, van Rooden, H. J. de Jonge, and J. W. van Henten, SPB 36 (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 114–20. See the discussion in Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 72–76.

2258 Osburn, "Christological Use of Enoch in Jude," 334–41; R. J. Bauckham, "A Note on a Problem in the Greek Version of I Enoch i.9," *JTS* 32 (1981): 136–38; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 97.

2259 Against Bauckham and Osburn, see Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 106–7; Dehandschutter, "Pseudo-Cyprian, Jude and Enoch," 117–19.

2260 *OTP* 1.13–14.

2261 Osburn, "Christological Use of Enoch in Jude," 337; M. Black, "The Maranatha Invocation and Jude 14, 15 (I Enoch 1:9)," in *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament: Studies in Honour of Charles Francis Digby Moule*, ed. B. Lindars and S. S. Smalley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 194; Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 79; Bateman, *Jude*, 313–14.

2262 S. E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), 37; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 93–94; Black, "Maranatha," 194; Osburn, "Christological Use of Enoch in Jude," 336; G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 105; Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 79–80; E. Mazich, "'The Lord Will Come with His Holy Myriads': An Investigation of the Linguistic Source of Enoch 1,9 in Jude 14b–15," *ZNW* 94 (2003): 278–80. J. T. Reed and R. A. Reese argue that the aorist is not akin to a prophetic perfect. The aorist "is part of the background material. It provides an example or illustration rather than a direct statement about the subject" ("Verbal Aspect, Discourse Prominence, and the Letter of Jude," *FNT* 9 [1996]: 195). Jude does not, contrary to the suggestion of D. A. deSilva, allude to the past judgment of the Watchers here (*Jude*, PCNT [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012]), 215).

2263 So Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 108. The reference is not to God (contra Fuchs and Reymond, who say it may possibly refer to God or Christ; *2 Pierre, Jude*, 176).

2264 The word ἐν here means “with” (Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 176; Mayor, *Jude and Second Peter*, xxxviii).

2265 So Charles, “The Use of the Old Testament in Jude,” 111–12; cf. Bauckham, *Relatives of Jesus*, 288. For the OT antecedents to Enoch’s prophecy, see J. Vander Kam, “The Theophany of Enoch 1:3b–7, 9,” *VT* 33 (1973): 129–50. Bauckham notes that the day of the Lord texts that predicted a theophany of Yahweh are now related to the coming of Christ and that applying such to Jesus Christ is rooted in early Palestinian Christianity (*Relatives of Jesus*, 288–302).

2266 The infinitive ποιῆσαι denotes purpose. So P. H. Davids, *II Peter and Jude: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, BHGNT (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2011), 25.

2267 Rightly Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 78.

2268 So Flink, “Reconsidering the Text of Jude 5, 13, 15, and 18,” 116–18; Wasserman, *The Epistle of Jude: Its Text and Transmission*, 301–4; Landon, *A Text Critical Study of the Epistle of Jude*, 117–18.

2269 *OTP*, 1.15.

2270 *OTP*, 82.

2271 *OTP*, 27.

2272 Rightly Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 177.

2273 Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 110.

2274 The term μεμψίμοιροι is not an adjective modifying γογγυσται but a second noun (so Bateman, *Jude*, 323).

2275 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 98.

2276 Cf. Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 177.

2277 Rightly Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 278. Cf. G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 108.

2278 So Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 278; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 271.

2279 Hence, there is no reference to glossolalia, against the suggestion of Sellin, “Die Häretiker des Judasbriefes,” 222–23.

2280 Reicke speculates unduly when he says they may have negotiated with rich republican Romans to gain advantage (*James, Peter, and Jude*, 211).

2281 So Bauckham, *Relatives of Jesus*, 208.

2282 R. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, WBC (Waco: Word, 1983), 102–3.

2283 Rightly J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude*, Thornapple Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 281; J. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, AB (Garden City: Doubleday, 1993), 84–85; D. J. Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 280.

2284 The term οὔτοι in v. 19 demonstrates, however, that Jude’s exhortation still relates to the opponents as well, and thus we can see why Bauckham divides the text as he does.

2285 Cf. H. W. Bateman IV, *Jude*, EEC (Bellingham: Lexham, 2017), 343–44.

2286 E.g., J. B. Mayor, *The Epistle of St. Jude and the Second Epistle of St. Peter* (1907; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1965), cxlv; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 281–82; H. Paulsen, *Der zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief*, KEK (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 79; J. Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, THKNT (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2015), 113.

2287 Against Jörg Frey, “Judgment on the Ungodly and the *Parousia* of Christ: Eschatology in Jude and 2 Peter,” in *Eschatology of the New Testament and Some Related Documents*, ed. J. G. van der Watt, WUNT 2/315 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 496. I. H. Eybers rightly observes, “The reference to the predictions of the disciples of Jesus . . . need not be regarded as an indication that the letter of Jude is of late origin, because in the eyes of the author the *fact* of the prediction . . . was much more important than the lapse of time since the warning was uttered” (“Aspects of the Background of the Letter of Jude,” *Neot* 9 [1975]: 115). See also Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 103–4.

2288 Rightly Eybers, “Background of the Letter of Jude,” 115.

2289 Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 103.

2290 For a fine survey of last days in the OT, Second Temple Jewish literature, and the NT, see Bateman, *Jude*, 347–51.

2291 A reference to Zealot rebels is arbitrary here (against Bateman, *Jude*, 354–57).

2292 Rightly C. Bigg, *The Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1901), 337; B. Reicke, *The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude*, AB (Garden City: Doubleday, 1964), 218–19; Bateman, *Jude*, 356. E. Fuchs and P. Reymond point out that the genitive could also be construed as a subjective genitive, but they opt for the objective genitive (*La Deuxième Épître de Saint Pierre, L’Épître de Saint Jude*, CNT [Neuchâtel–Paris: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1980], 181). Mayor supports a subjective genitive (*Jude and Second Peter*, 47).

2293 Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 284–85; so also Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 181–82.

2294 Again Bateman (*Jude*, 358–61) opts for a reference to the Zealots, but the language of v. 4 indicates that they are members of the church, sharing meals (v. 12) with those in the church, and there is no evidence Zealots belonged to assemblies where Jesus was proclaimed as Messiah.

2295 So also Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 105; C. D. Osburn, “Discourse Analysis and Jewish Apocalyptic in the Epistle of Jude,” in *Linguistics and New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Discourse Analysis*, ed. D. A. Black, K. Barnwell, and S. Levinsohn (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 308–9. See also the discussion of A. Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, der 2 Petrusbrief*, EKKNT (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1994), 90–92.

2296 Rightly Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 106; Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 89. Bateman intriguingly says that the participle ἔχοντες is causal, explaining why the scoffers are divisive and worldly (*Jude*, 364).

2297 Rightly Bateman, *Jude*, 375–78, 387, 390, 394–95. Others understand all three participles to designate means. So R. Martin, “Jude,” in *The Theology of the Letters of James, Peter, and Jude* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 79–80; Osburn, “Discourse Analysis and Jewish Apocalyptic in the Epistle of Jude,” 292; A. J. Bandstra, “Onward Christian Soldiers—Praying in Love, with Mercy: Preaching on the Epistle of Jude,” *CTJ* 32 (1997): 138; R. L. Webb, “The Use of ‘Story’ in the Letter of Jude: Rhetorical Strategies of Jude’s Narrative Episodes,” *JSNT* 31 (2008): 77, n. 40.

2298 Apparently Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 340.

- 2299 Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 286; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 284.
- 2300 Bateman (*Jude*, 383) says that the dative is not sphere or means.
- 2301 R. A. Reese, *2 Peter and Jude*, THNTC (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 67–68.
- 2302 In support of the notion that the church is conceived of here as a temple, see Bateman, *Jude*, 378–82.
- 2303 Neyrey's suggestion that πίστει should be translated "faithfulness" does not fit the context as well (*2 Peter, Jude*, 90). Rightly Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 285.
- 2304 So Paulsen, *Petrusbrief und Judasbrief*, 83; Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 183. Faith and the Spirit belong together in *Jude*; see R. Heiligenthal, *Zwischen Henoch und Paulus: Studien zum theologiegeschichtlichen Ort des Judasbriefes*, Texte und Arbeiten zum neutestamentlichen Zeitalter 6 (Tübingen: Francke, 1992), 69.
- 2305 Supporting charismatic praying are Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 113; J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit: A Study of the Religious and Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians as Reflected in the NT* (1975; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 239–42; and Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 94–95. Against Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 100; G. L. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 121; and Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 123. Of course, speaking in tongues may be included in the wider idea of praying in the Spirit (so N. Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, NIBC [Peabody: Hendrickson, 1992], 264).
- 2306 Cf. Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 285.
- 2307 Kelly suggests both ideas are intended and calls it a "comprehensive genitive" (*Peter and Jude*, 286–87). Vögtle rightly emphasizes that God's love has priority (*Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 100). Frey says it is only subjective (*Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 125).
- 2308 R. A. Reese, *2 Peter and Jude*, THNTC (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 69.
- 2309 Reicke understands the εἰς to denote purpose, which is again close to the notion of result (*James, Peter, and Jude*, 214). Supporting result is Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 287; Bateman, *Jude*, 399–400.
- 2310 E.g., Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 340.
- 2311 Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 185.
- 2312 Supporting two clauses are Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 340–42; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 288; G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 124–25, 128–29; Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 119–21.
- 2313 This reading is also attested with slight variations by syr^{ph} and Clement^{lat}. Scholars defending this view are J. N. Birdsall, "The Text of *Jude* in \wp^{72} ," *JTS* 14 (1963): 394–99; C. D. Osburn, "The Text of *Jude* 22–23," *ZNW* 63 (1972): 139–44; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 109–10; Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 85–86; S. C. Winter, "Notes and Observations *Jude* 22–23: A Note on the Text and Translation," *HTR* 87 (1994): 215–22; D. G. Horrell, *The Epistles of Peter and Jude*, EC (Peterborough: Epworth, 1998), 130–31; S. J. Kraftchick, *Jude, 2 Peter*, ANTC (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 65; and C. Landon, *A Text-Critical Study of the Epistle of Jude*, JSNTSup 135 (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1996), 131–34. It should be noted that Osburn now thinks the three-clause text is authentic ("Discourse Analysis and Jewish Apocalyptic in the Epistle of *Jude*," 292).
- 2314 Reicke thinks the majority text preserves the correct reading (*James, Peter, and Jude*, 215).

2315 See especially T. Wasserman, *The Epistle of Jude: Its Text and Transmission*, ConBNT 43 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2006), 320–29; S. Kubo, “Jude 22–23: Two-Division Form or Three?,” in *New Testament Textual Criticism: Its Significance for Exegesis: Essays in Honour of Bruce M. Metzger* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), 239–53; Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 102–5; Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 98–99; D. Lockett, “Objects of Mercy in Jude: The Prophetic Background of Jude 22–23,” *CBQ* 77 (2015): 325; Bateman, *Jude*, 370–73; J. M. Ross, “Church Discipline in Jude 22–23,” *ExpTim* 8 (1989): 297–98, but he differs in seeing the imperative ἐλέγχετε as original in the third clause rather than ἐλεᾶτε or ἐλεεῖτε. This view is unlikely since the textual evidence overwhelmingly supports “have mercy,” and the text comes to a suitable climax in such a triad, since Jude concludes with the need for mercy coupled with fear. W. Bieder proposes the emendation ἐᾶτε here (“Judas 22f.: Οὐς δὲ ἐᾶτε ἐν φόβῳ” *TZ* 6 [1950]: 75–77). Such a conjecture should only be accepted as a last resort.

2316 Ross, “Jude 22–23,” 297.

2317 Ross argues against ϣ⁷², noting that, “If Jude introduced the first category by *hous men*, he would have introduced the second by *hous de*, not by *diakrinomenous de*” (“Jude 22–23,” 297).

2318 *TCGNT*, 660–61.

2319 See for instance, Reese, *2 Peter and Jude*, 72–73.

2320 Bateman (*Jude*, 405) sees three distinct groups: (1) mercy to believers who struggle with doubts; (2) mercy to those who are not yet believers and yet still have the potential to believe; and (3) mercy to those who will never put their trust in Jesus.

2321 So Osburn, “Discourse Analysis and Jewish Apocalyptic in the Epistle of Jude,” 292.

2322 J. S. Allen, “A New Possibility for the Three-Clause Format of Jude 22–3,” *NTS* 44 (1998): 133–43. So also P. H. Davids, *II Peter and Jude: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, BHGNT (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2011), 35; Lockett, “Objects of Mercy in Jude,” 327–28. Lockett argues that the reference to the same group indicates that Jude holds out hope that some of the false teachers may be reclaimed, Jude has not given up on them. They may still receive mercy (“Objects of Mercy in Jude,” 322–36).

2323 Wasserman, *Jude: Text and Transmission*, 327.

2324 See P. Spitaler, “Doubt or Dispute (Jude 9 and 22–23): Rereading a Special New Testament Meaning through the Lens of Internal Evidence,” *Bib* 87 (2006): 201–22; see also P. Spitaler, “Διακρίνεσθαι in Mt. 21:21, Mk. 11:23, Acts 10:20, Rom. 4:20, 14:23, Jas. 1:6 and Jude 22—the ‘Semantic Shift’ That Went Unnoticed by Patristic Authors,” *NovT* 49 (2007): 1–39; Lockett, “Objects of Mercy in Jude,” 325–26; Wasserman, *Jude: Text and Transmission*, 327; Frey, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 128–29.

2325 For these arguments, see Lockett, “Purity and Polemic,” 22–23. So also L. R. Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 197, 199–200; Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 341; G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 126; A. Robinson, S. Llewelyn, and B. Wassell, “Showing Mercy to the Ungodly and the Inversion of Invective in Jude,” *NTS* 64 (2018): 203–4.

2326 Birdsall, “The Text of Jude,” 398.

2327 So Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 288; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 287; Ross, “Jude 22–23,” 297.

2328 So Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 100; Bateman (*Jude*, 406); he goes astray in suggesting that they were wavering about whether to join the revolt against Rome (p. 407) and in suggesting a reference to deliverance from physical judgment if they don't join the resistance (p. 413).

2329 Spitaler. Followed by Lockett, "Purity and Polemic," 21–26.

2330 The translation is from Spitaler, "Doubt or Dispute (Jude 9 and 22–23)," 220.

2331 It is also possible that the three clauses do not intend to distinguish various groups internally but externally, having to do with "actions shown by them or to them. So A. Robinson, S. Llewelyn, and B. Wassell, "Showing Mercy to the Ungodly," 199.

2332 So G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 125.

2333 See for the Zechariah background, Lockett, "Objects of Mercy in Jude," 334–35. The OT background demonstrates that the garment in Jude has nothing to do with the opponents being wandering charismatics (against G. Sellin, "Die Häretiker des Judasbriefes," *ZNW* 77 [1986]: 223–24).

2334 Alternatively, he holds out hope for the opponents. So Lockett, "Objects of Mercy in Jude," 322–36; A. Robinson, S. Llewelyn, and B. Wassell, "Showing Mercy to the Ungodly," 207; A. Robinson, *Jude on the Attack: A Comparative Analysis of the Epistle of Jude, Jewish Judgement Oracles, and Greco-Roman Invective*, LNTS 581 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2018), 14–16.

2335 Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 289; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 116.

2336 So M. Green (*The Second Epistle General of Peter and the General Epistle of Jude*, 2nd ed., TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 188; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 289; Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 103–4).

2337 Jude was not thinking literally here of garments being defiled (contra Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 186).

2338 Bede, P. R. Jones, *The Epistle of Jude as Expounded by the Fathers—Clement of Alexandria, Didymus of Alexandria, the Scholia of Cramer's Catena, Psuedo-Oecumenius, and Bede*, Texts and Studies in Religion 89 (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 2001), 122.

2339 Contra Winter, the letter of Jude indicts sexual license and does not advocate sexual asceticism. Hence, Jude was not suggesting that the body itself is a defiled garment that should be hated ("Jude 22–23," 219–22). The preposition *ἀπό* with the passive participle *ἐσπιλωμένον* designates agency rather than indicating that the defiled garment *is* the flesh.

2340 It should be noted that Zech 3:4 does not speak of the flesh (so Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 106), and so the parallel with Jude does not stand at every point.

2341 Reicke says the "flesh" stands for the sinful environment of the world (*James, Peter, and Jude*, 216). Vögtle rightly remarks that there is no anti-gnostic polemic here (*Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 106).

2342 Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 289.

2343 Jim Hamilton pointed out this triad to me.

2344 So Augustine in *James, 1–2 Peter, 1–3 John, Jude*, ACCS (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000), 259.

2345 Nor does it have to do with joining the Zealot movement and the physical harm that could eventuate. Against Bateman, *Jude*, 430–32.

2346 So also Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 291; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 122; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 300; Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 189. Davids does not communicate clearly that God keeps his own from apostasy (*2 Peter and Jude*, 109–10).

2347 So Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 100.

2348 Against Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 292.

2349 Luke 2:11; John 4:42; Acts 5:31; 13:32; Eph 5:23; Phil 3:20; 2 Tim 1:10; Titus 1:4; 2:13; 3:6; 2 Pet 1:1, 11; 2:20; 3:2, 18; 1 John 4:14.

2350 M. Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 207.

2351 Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 97.

2352 Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 293.

2353 But there is no polemic against Gnosticism here (contra Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 190).

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