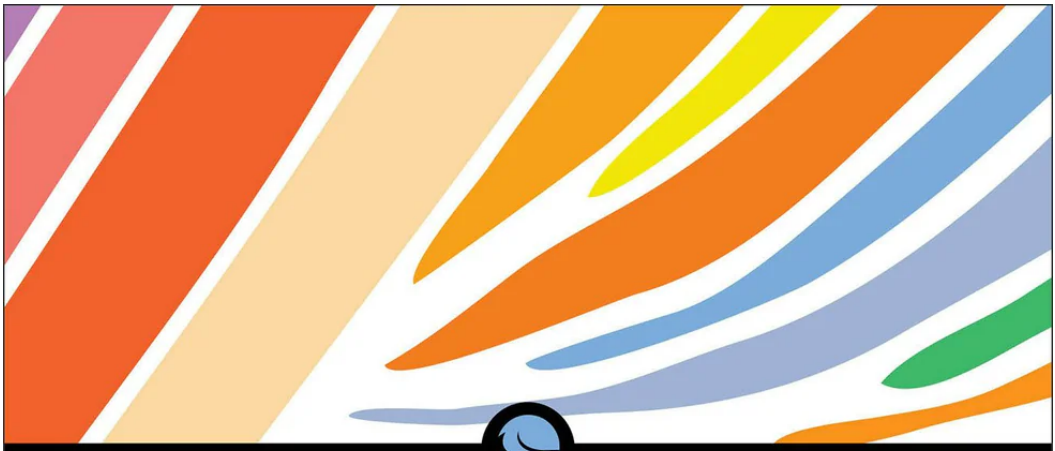
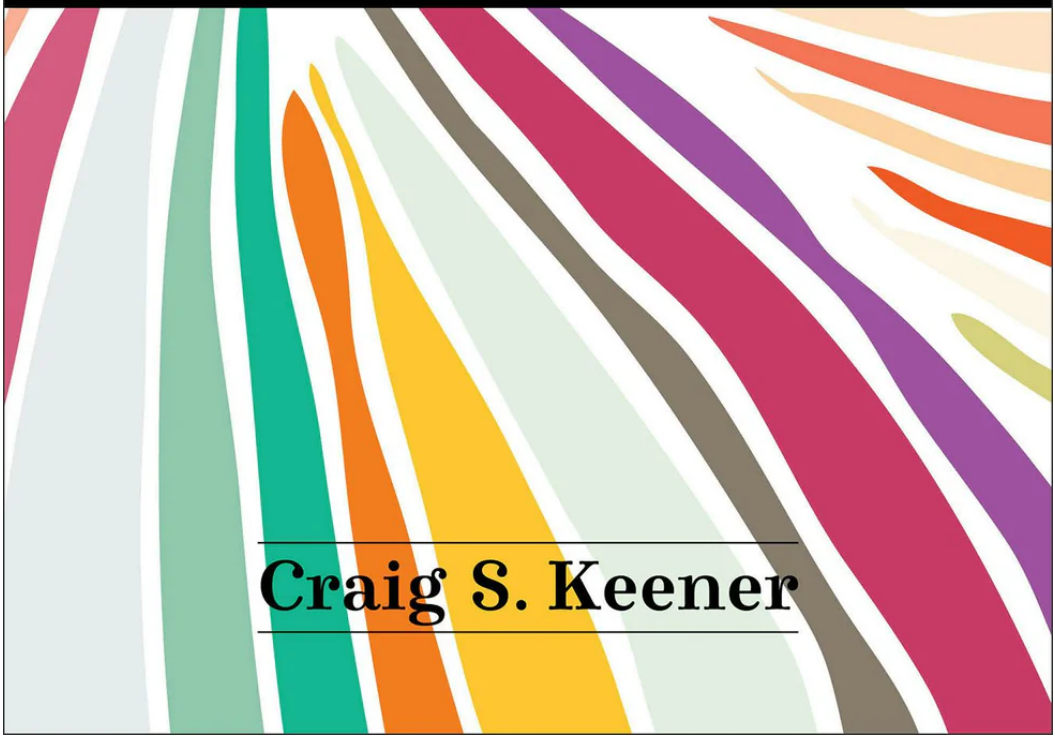


WORD and SPIRIT COMMENTARY ON THE NEW TESTAMENT

# 1–2 PETER, JUDE

SERIES EDITORS : Holly Beers and Craig S. Keener



Craig S. Keener

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# Contents

*Series Preface* *ix*
*Acknowledgments* *xi*
*Abbreviations* *xiii*

1 Peter ..... 1

2 Peter ..... 65

Jude ..... 121

*Bibliography* *151*
*Index of Authors* *161*
*Index of Scripture and Other Ancient Sources* *165*



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# 1 Peter

## Introduction

Even a casual glance at this commentary will reveal that I have treated 1 Peter differently from 2 Peter and Jude.[1] For the latter two I have provided my own translations and much fuller documentation from primary sources, which I have neglected in 1 Peter for the sake of space. This is because my translation and documentation for 1 Peter are already available in another commentary, for those who wish to pursue it,[2] whereas the same is not true for these other works. For 1 Peter my brief quotations therefore use the NIV to save space.

### *Authorship*

I regard Jesus's disciple Peter as the author of 1 Peter. Although this position once commanded nearly unanimous consensus, scholars highly debate it today, not least because the style of the letter seems too advanced for a Galilean fisherman. Still, Peter had been preaching in Greek for more than three decades at this point, and we should not assume that the movement he led would leave him entirely to his own skills to compose the work. Like most ancient authors, literate or not, Peter would have dictated his ideas to a scribe.

More to the point here, supportive members of the movement surely would also have volunteered to help shape his language more eloquently.[3] Josephus, for

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Scripture quotations in the commentary on 1 Peter are from the NIV unless otherwise noted.

1. These three letters belong to a collection today called General Epistles, Catholic Epistles, or (with Slater, "Misnomer," esp. 5) "Judeo-Christian literature" (though more broadly that could apply to the entire New Testament); or perhaps, non-Pauline epistles.

2. Keener, *1 Peter*.

3. For varying levels of scribal involvement in composition, see esp. Richards, *Secretary*; Richards, *Letter Writing*.



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example, used style assistants, as did Cicero.[4] We do not know for certain who may have helped Peter, but among those explicitly present with him were Mark and Silvanus (1 Pet. 5:12–13), both of whom came from respected and probably educated backgrounds (Acts 12:12–13; 16:37). Silvanus, known to participate in letter writing (1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1), certainly helped at some stage in the process (1 Pet. 5:12). Some scholars even find elements of style similar to earlier letters in the composition of which Silvanus participated.

Some scholars complain that 1 Peter sounds too Pauline; others respond that Silvanus could also account for alleged Paulinisms (cf. 2 Cor. 1:19; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1). The question of Silvanus's participation aside, however, Peter himself knew Paul (Gal. 2:11–14), and clearly they shared some key beliefs (see Gal. 2:16).

Outside of New Testament studies, historians of antiquity usually depend heavily on objective, external evidence. A key list for attesting the ancient author Plutarch's works, for example, stems from a century or two after Plutarch, yet historians of antiquity rely heavily on it. Meanwhile, *all* external evidence supports Peter as the author of 1 Peter—starting from within a generation of the letter. Living memory normally is defined as the period when those who knew eyewitnesses were still living, or quantified as a period of sixty to eighty years. The major weaknesses of oral tradition are much less relevant within this shorter time frame.

Christians accepted 1 Peter as authentic from its earliest attestation.[5] Writing in the early second century, Polycarp clearly echoes 1 Peter, as may the *Didache* (1.4), Clement of Rome, and possibly Ignatius of Antioch.[6] These early authors hardly would quote from 1 Peter as authoritative if they believed it to be spurious. Likewise, Eusebius, who had the text of Papias available (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.39.1), reports that Papias quoted 1 John and 1 Peter (3.39.17). Very early evidence, therefore, strongly supports the view that the letter is indeed from Peter.

### *Date*

Evidence supporting Peter as author also suggests a date in the early 60s of the first century. If the letter is from Peter, it must come from shortly before Nero's persecution (64–67, when Peter reportedly was martyred in Rome) rather than later persecutions under Domitian (ruled 81–96) or Trajan (ruled 98–117). Peter warns of impending persecution; he does not claim current state persecution in Asia Minor.

4. Josephus, *Against Apion* 1.50; Cicero, *Epistles to Friends* 16.10.2.

5. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.3.1, 4; 3.25.2; cf. perhaps 2 Pet. 3:1.

6. See Berding, *Polycarp and Paul*, 201–2; Keener, *1 Peter*, 17–23. For example, Polycarp, *To the Philippians* 2.2 cites nine successive Greek words verbatim from 1 Pet. 3:9.



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### *Message*

The letter is explicit about an audience in Asia Minor (today's Türkiye); most scholars believe that the letter was sent from Rome (cf. 1 Pet. 5:13). At the proud heart of a vast empire, Rome's male aristocrats detested local Romans (often Roman women) who adopted foreign religious practices, including Judaism. Still less popular, Christians appeared as a messianic, apocalyptic, charismatic Jewish sect. A Christian writer in Rome by 62, such as Peter, might well see the handwriting on the wall; a mere spark could ignite a firestorm of persecution. Soon after, when an actual fire in AD 64 burned Rome but spared Nero's gardens, many people blamed the emperor for the fire. Needing an unpopular scapegoat without a significant local constituency, Nero accused Christians, and he proceeded to burn many alive to light his imperial gardens at night.[7]

The letter of 1 Peter often focuses on suffering (2:19–20; 3:9, 14, 17; 4:1, 13, 15, 19; 5:9–10), including that of Christ (1:11; 2:21, 23; 3:18; 4:1, 13). It does so in light of *hope*—that is, God's good promise for our future (1:3, 13, 21; 3:15). Enduring unmerited suffering for the sake of subsequent glory also follows the model, and shares the experience, of Christ (1:11, 21; 2:21; 3:17–18; 4:1, 13; 5:1). Like Christ, we endure unjust sufferings when we cannot avoid them, depending on God's vindication (2:18–25; 5:6). Suffering honors Christ so long as we suffer for doing right rather than for doing wrong (2:12, 19–20; 3:13–18; 4:14–18; cf. 2:15).

This message is of vital importance for today's church. Christians in many regions face persecution and even martyrdom for Christ's name, proving their faith in his promises.[8] In the Western world, however, many of us lack a good theology of suffering, whether it is directly *for* Christ or simply *with* Christ as part of life in a difficult world.

### *Outline*

1. Letter address (1:1–2)
2. Praising God for salvation (1:3–12)
3. Live for God's eternal values (1:13–2:3)
   A. Live wholly for God (1:13–16)
   B. Ransomed from the world by the precious Lamb (1:17–21)
   C. Transformed by God's eternal message (1:22–2:3)

7. Tacitus, *Annals* 15.44.

8. See P. Marshall, *Their Blood Cries Out*; Marshall, Gilbert, and Shea, *Persecuted*; for particular cases, Ibraheem with Bach, *Shackled*; Panahi, *I Didn't Survive*.



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4. God's people (2:4–10)
5. Honoring Christ where you are exiled (2:11–17)
   A. Do not act as the world does (2:11–12)
   B. Submit to the world's authorities (2:13–17)
6. Slaves to slaveholders (2:18–25)
7. Wives and husbands (3:1–7)
8. General exhortation before God (3:8–12)
9. Better to suffer unjustly than justly (3:13–17)
10. Christ's suffering and exaltation (3:18–4:2)
11. Live for God's assessment, not the world's (4:3–6)
12. Serve fellow believers (4:7–11)
13. Suffering for Christ (4:12–19)
14. Servant leaders and mutuality (5:1–7)
15. General exhortation (5:8–11)
16. Epistolary postscript/closing (5:12–14)

### *Recommended Resources*

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## Letter Address (1:1–2)

First Peter 1:2–25 highlights the future consummation of salvation brought about by Christ and inherited through new birth by the gospel (1:23–25). This salvation rests on Christ's sacrificial suffering (1:19; cf. 1:11; 2:24), his resurrection (1:3, 21), and his future revealing (1:7).

The first two verses of 1 Peter constitute the epistolary prescript and introduce some key themes of the letter, such as resident aliens, God's plan, obedience, and Christ's sacrifice. Ancient letters typically began by naming the sender, then the recipient(s), followed by a greeting and a prayer for the recipient's well-being. All the regions named in 1:1 are provinces in Roman Asia Minor.

The audience's identity as **exiles scattered** (1:1) reflects their continuity with the Jewish community after the exile. Jewish people dispersed outside the Holy Land recognized themselves as God's **chosen** people (1:2), but they often lived as resident aliens in the predominantly gentile cities where they settled. Whereas




Roman Asia Minor



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my wife, who is from Central Africa, received a green card and US citizenship fairly quickly after our marriage, Jewish residents in gentile cities often remained "resident aliens" there for generations, vulnerable to discrimination. Peter, however, refers to a spiritual rather than ethnic diaspora, and he transfers these images to all who now follow Israel's God in Christ (1:17; 2:11; cf. 5:13). They are God's people residing as aliens in a culture foreign to their divine origin.

Their spiritual identity as **chosen according to the foreknowledge** (1:2) reflects not the pagan idea of arbitrary fate but the providential, benevolent Jewish understanding of God. Most Jewish groups affirmed human responsibility alongside God's sovereignty. God knowing and God choosing or bringing about are closely connected here (as in Acts 2:23; Rom. 8:29; 11:2), as in earlier Scripture (see LXX Gen. 18:19; Jer. 1:5; Amos 3:2). Reacting against determinism, most early church fathers predicated predestination on **foreknowledge** in the sense that God's "choice depends on our foreseen response to his invitation."[9] Reacting against the idea that humans can make themselves righteous, Augustine and his Western heirs underlined God's sovereign choice. Both approaches offer insights, but Peter's setting and focus differ. Though he would both affirm God's sovereignty and invite conversion, his primary point is simpler. Like other New Testament writers, he uses our chosenness to remind us of the special privilege that God has given us in Christ.

The mention of **God the Father**, the **Spirit**, and **Jesus Christ** together in 1:2 probably reflects a trinitarian understanding, as in, for example, 1 Cor. 12:4–6; 2 Cor. 13:14 (note also Matt. 28:19; Eph. 4:4–6). **Grace** [*charis*] adapts the conventional greeting *chairein*; **peace** [*eirēnē*] reflects the standard Jewish greeting *shalom*, "May it be well with you," implicitly invoking God's blessing (as in today's "God bless you"; cf. Num. 6:26).

## Praising God for Salvation (1:3–12)

In Greek, 1 Pet. 1:3–12 is one elaborate "periodic" sentence, a sophisticated literary form that required of its author intense attention. Believers have been reborn into a living hope (1:3), an imperishable inheritance (1:4), and a prepared salvation (1:5).

"Blessed be" or **praise be to** is a common blessing form that appears more than forty times in the Old Testament, usually for God, and appears pervasively in a later mishnaic tractate, Berakot, devoted to such Jewish blessings. Peter praises God's saving acts. **God** the **Father** of **Jesus** births us into new life

9. Edwards, *Galatians*, xix. See, e.g., Origen, *Commentary on Romans* 7.7.5; 8.29; Ambrosiaster, *Commentary on Romans* 8.29; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Commentary on Romans* 8.29–30.



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**through** Jesus Christ's **resurrection** to eschatological life. That is why Peter describes this eschatological expectation as **living** (cf. 1:23; 2:5). Resurrection would inaugurate eternal life (Dan. 12:2), and Jesus's resurrection has confirmed the promised future resurrection of all his followers (1 Cor. 15:20, 23). Our spiritual **birth** from God creates a new and virtuous nature within us, one that will live forever, like God (see comment on 1:23; 2 Pet. 1:4).

Being born to God (1 Pet. 1:3) also confers on God's new children an **inheritance** (1:4). The inheritance rightly belongs to the obedient children (1:14) born to the Father (1:3, 23). Jewish tradition widely reapplied the biblical language of "inheritance" to our future hope (cf. already LXX Isa. 57:13; 58:11; 60:21; 65:9; Ezek. 36:12; 47:14, 22–23). In Jewish tradition the righteous expected to "inherit" God's "promises" and to "inherit" eternal life. The promise of inheriting the "land" (e.g., Pss. 25:13; 37:9, 11, 22, 29, 34) came to be understood as inheriting the "earth" (the same Hebrew term). Early Christians sometimes expressed this hope as "inheriting" (or, for the rebellious, not inheriting) the kingdom.

Our **inheritance** is imperishable and guarded for us (1:4) because we ourselves are protected by God for ultimate **salvation** (1:5, 9). **Heaven** (1:4) is the divine realm articulated in spatial terms; any **inheritance** there is secure (Matt. 6:20 // Luke 12:33–34; Mark 10:21).[10] In 1 Pet. 1:5, perhaps because early Christians saw themselves as already *in* the "last days" (e.g., 1:20; cf. Acts 2:17), Peter describes the future consummation not as the last days but as **the last time** (1:5) (cf. "the last day" in John 6:39–40, 44, 54; 12:48).

In Jewish thought, distress tested one's character to see if one would sin; suffering thus often functioned as testing or **trials** (1:6). Jewish pietists believed that God would reward the righteous who, though suffering, praised God. Peter encourages those who are suffering by reminding them of their future hope; it is easier to endure suffering when we remember that it is temporary—**a little while** (1:6; cf. 5:10) (as in the line from an old hymn: "Just a few more weary days and then . . .").

**Fire** refines and tests the genuineness of metals; **gold** may endure testing by **fire**, but **faith** that is tested by **fire** proves far more permanent and will be honored once Christ returns (1:7). This is because believers were bought not with perishable silver or "gold" (1:18), valuable merely outwardly (3:3), but with the far more precious blood of Christ (1:19).[11] God's people are tested as if **refined by fire** (cf. Ps. 66:10; Isa. 1:25; 48:10; Zech. 13:9). Just as testing refines **gold** and improves the final product as pure gold, so testing improves those who persevere through it. As in the old adage, how we respond to hardship determines whether it makes us bitter or better.

10. See also *4 Ezra* 7.77; *2 Baruch* 14.12; *t. Pe'ah* 4.18.

11. For God's gifts being worth incomparably more than gold or silver, see, e.g., Ps. 119:127; Prov. 3:14; 8:19; 22:1.



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Believers do not see Jesus Christ **now** (1:8), in contrast to when he will be **revealed** (1:7). Because of trust in him, however, we **rejoice**, even in the face of sufferings (1:6; cf. Luke 6:22–23; Acts 5:41; 16:25; Rom. 5:3; James 1:2). Scripture and Jewish tradition associated **joy** (1:8) with worship,[12] and joy often characterizes charismatic worship in the Spirit today. The **joy** is **inexpressible** because words are not adequate to articulate it (cf. 1 Cor. 2:9–10, 13; Eph. 3:19; Phil. 4:7); we might express it to some degree affectively in tongues (cf. 1 Cor. 14:2, 14–15) or wholly inarticulately (cf. Rom. 8:26).

In 1:9, Peter speaks of the "future outcome" (**end result**) of our **faith**. Here Peter returns to the final, end-time salvation through trust promised in 1:5 (since this will include bodily resurrection, **souls** here means eternal "lives," not a Platonic idea of souls apart from bodies).

Peter says that the prophets prophesied about **grace** involving the **salvation** that they were trying to understand (1:10). **Grace** is a recurrent theme in 1 Peter (cf. 1:2; 4:10; 5:5, 10), including with respect to future **salvation** (1:10, 13; 3:7), and is a key subject of Peter's message (5:12). The prophets looked forward to the messianic era in which we now live (cf. Matt. 13:17 // Luke 10:24).[13] The prophets were trying to understand what person or what sort of time **the Spirit of Christ** within them was announcing (1 Pet. 1:11); God's Spirit inspires prophecy (e.g., Num. 11:25; 1 Sam. 19:20). That the Spirit "of Jesus" or "of Christ" (Acts 16:7; Rom. 8:9b) is the Spirit of God (Acts 16:6; Rom. 8:9a; 1 Pet. 1:12) underlines Jesus's divinity. The prophets did not understand everything, but they predicted the Messiah's sufferings and subsequent exaltation, and they knew that their message would serve most fully the future era when these matters would be fulfilled (1 Pet. 1:12). Angels knew more than the prophets, but Jesus's coming has revealed even more than they knew (cf. 1 Cor. 6:3).

## Live for God's Eternal Values (1:13–2:3)

### *Live Wholly for God (1:13–16)*

In 1 Pet. 1:13–2:3, Peter repeatedly grounds moral exhortations in God's action in Christ. For example:

- We must remain sober (1:13) because ("therefore" in 1:13a) of God's grace in Christ (1:10–12).

12. See, e.g., Pss. 5:11; 20:5; 27:6; 31:7; 32:11; 33:1–3; 35:9; 43:4; 47:1; 63:7; 67:4; 68:3–4; 71:23; 81:1; 84:2; 90:14; 92:4; 95:1; 98:4; 132:9, 16.

13. Later rabbis also often affirmed that the prophets prophesied for the end of the age and the messianic era; the Dead Sea Scrolls share this end-time perspective.



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- We must love (1:22) because we have obeyed the truth (1:22) of the gospel (1:23–25), which has transformed us.
- We must put away former sinful ways (2:1) because ("therefore" in 2:1a) of the transforming gospel (1:23–25) and because we have tasted the Lord's kindness (2:3).

In Greek, 1:13 speaks of "girding up the loins" of our **minds**, the way one would have to pull up a long garment to run without tripping. It thus connotes readiness and devotion to God's promise of Christ's coming. Considering the **grace** experienced most fully at Christ's future revealing (1:13; cf. 1:7) urges a perspective that evaluates the present in light of its eternal significance.[14] Missions leader C. T. Studd expressed well the importance of an eternal perspective: "Only one life, 'twill soon be past; only what's done for Christ will last."[15] May we devote ourselves and all our resources for God's kingdom.

The theme of obedience in 1:14 revisits its mention in 1:2 and anticipates it in 1:22. **Obedient children** (1:14) imitate and become like their parents (1:15–16); here we become like our Father, God (1:17). Unconverted gentiles' passions and **ignorance** (1:14) contrast with our engaged **minds** now (1:13).[16]

Instead of being conformed to a pattern formed by passions (1:14; cf. 2:11), we should **conform** to the pattern of God (1:15–16), also exemplified as the pattern of Christ (3:17–18; 4:1, 13). God's holiness separates him from what is profane; for God's people to be **holy** (1:15) means that we are consecrated to him, separate from the values of the profane world. In principle, such consecration means that everything that we are and have, including time and money, belongs to God, and we should live accordingly. The average consumer in the United States spends over five hours per day on entertainment—about thirty-six hours per week.[17] If all Christians immersed themselves in God's Word more than entertainment, how would that reshape our thinking? If just thirty million Christians shifted two more hours a day to prayer, meeting needs in our communities for the honor of Jesus's name, or sharing Christ with their neighborhoods, that would be more than twenty billion fresh hours a year devoted to God's kingdom. Imagine what would happen if we took seriously the call, **Be holy, because I am holy** (1:16, citing Lev. 11:44–45; 19:2).

14. On this theme in Paul's letters, see Keener, *Mind of the Spirit*, 154–55, 176–79, 235, 254.

15. Quoted in Alcorn, *Heaven*, 453.

16. For the contrast between the passions and reason in ancient thought, see 1 Pet. 2:11; Keener, *Mind of the Spirit*, 19–23, 76–78.

17. The average rate is higher for men, at some 5.56 hours per day ("American Time Use Survey Summary," U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, June 27, 2024, https://www.bls.gov/news.release/atus.nr0.htm).



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Many people in antiquity spoke of imitating deity, but the God of Israel, unlike pagan deities, is wholly just and moral. Our behavior (**all you do**, *anastrophē*) must be **holy** (1:15), so we behave (**live out**, *anastrephō*) honorably (1:17), rather than in the form of behavior (**way of life**, *anastrephō*) inherited from our (for some, some further back than others) pagan ancestors (1:18). The goal of such distinctive behavior is to win over nonbelievers, or at least vindicate God's justice in the final time (*anastrophē* in 2:12; 3:1–2, 16; "live lives," "behavior," "lives," "behavior").

### *Ransomed from the World by the Precious Lamb (1:17–21)*

Not only has God **called** us (1:15), but also we **call on** God (1:17). If we bear the name of Christ (4:14, 16), we must live accordingly, as those consecrated to (1:15–16) God and Christ. Scripture (Deut. 10:17; 2 Chron. 19:7) and Jewish tradition heavily emphasized God's impartiality (1 Pet. 1:17). Because God **judges . . . impartially**, we must live in **reverence** (NET)—that is, the biblical fear of the Lord (cf. 2:17), keeping in mind the future judgment.

Peter uses conventional Jewish language to challenge **the empty way of life** inherited **from your ancestors**. Jewish polemic often used words such as "futile" or **empty** [*mataios*] to describe idols (1:18). Some of these were made from **silver or gold** (e.g., Deut. 29:17; Pss. 115:4; 135:15; Isa. 2:20; 31:7; Hosea 8:4; Rev. 9:20). **Redeemed** [*lytroō*] or "ransomed" (1:18) can refer to liberation more generally, but it sometimes involves a price, as it clearly does here. Because of **gold**'s worldly value, Scripture often used it in contrasts with what was much more valuable, such as God's word (Pss. 19:10; 119:72, 127) and wisdom (Job 28:19; Prov. 3:14; 8:10, 19; 16:16; 20:15; cf. 25:12) and even an honorable reputation (Prov. 22:1). But nothing could be more **precious** than the **blood** of God's own beloved Son (1:19; cf. John 1:29, 36; Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 5:7; Rev. 5:6; 7:14). Scripture frequently mandated the sacrifice of a **lamb** (or certain other animals) for guilt or sin offerings (Lev. 4:32; 5:6–7; 14:12–13, 21, 25; Num. 6:12, 14) and for Passover (Exod. 12:5, 21). Such lambs were to be **without blemish**, hence ritually acceptable for sacrifice (e.g., Exod. 29:1, 38; Lev. 1:3, 10; 3:1, 6).

That Christ was known **before** the **world**'s beginning (1:20) suggests that God in his foreknowledge designed this plan for redemption even before sin began (cf. 2 Tim. 1:9; Rev. 13:8). **Last times** and equivalent expressions such as "last days" applied to Israel's future restoration (Isa. 2:2; Dan. 2:28; Hosea 3:5; Mic. 4:1) and the end-time suffering that preceded it (Jer. 23:20; 30:24; Ezek. 38:16; Dan. 10:14). Early Christians consistently viewed themselves as living in this period (Acts 2:17; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:1; Heb. 1:2; James 5:3; 2 Pet. 3:3; 1 John 2:18). Modern prophecy teachers are right to emphasize that we live in the "end



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times" but wrong when they treat that observation as only recently applicable. And those who believe that the gift of prophecy has ceased misunderstand completely New Testament eschatology: if it was already the "last days" when Peter explained tongues at Pentecost as last-day prophecy (Acts 2:17–18), it can hardly be anything other than "last days" today as well.

These gentile converts' trust in God came **through him**, Christ (1:21), and his gospel (1:23–25, esp. 1:25b). I can relate to this as a former atheist converted by an encounter with the Spirit through hearing the gospel of Christ. **Glorified him** (1:21) refers to resurrection (cf. 5:1, 4, 10; also Luke 24:26; 1 Cor. 15:40–43; Phil. 3:21) and also implies attendant honor (cf. 1:7–8; 2:12; 4:11, 16).

### *Transformed by God's Eternal Message (1:22–2:3)*

**Purified** (1:22) stems from a biblical ritual image of making someone able to stand before God. It may evoke the image of blood found in 1:19, since sacrificial blood consecrates and purifies (Exod. 29:21; Lev. 8:15, 30; 16:19; Heb. 9:13–14, 22; 10:29; 13:12; 1 John 1:7) (in 1:2, Peter has already connected being "obedient" with the sprinkling of Christ's blood). **Obeying the truth** (1:22) depicts his hearers' conversion through obeying the truth of the gospel (cf. 1:2); thus Peter elaborates how that gospel message has changed them (1:23–25). For Peter, the highest expression of obeying the truth is for us to **love** one another, an emphasis consistent with Jesus's teaching (Mark 12:30–31). Jesus treated love as the highest command in the law (Matt. 22:36–40), shaping this unanimous and distinctive emphasis in early Christianity (Rom. 13:8–10; 1 Cor. 13:13; Gal. 5:14; James 2:8; *Didache* 1.2–3).

The first term of affection that Peter uses in 1:22 (*philadelphia*) especially indicates love for brothers and sisters (a familial sense obscured in the NIV's more generic **for each other**). Embracing Christ entails a new family (cf. Mark 3:34–35; 10:29–30), in which all believers are spiritual siblings, sharing the same Father (1:17, 23), with consequent claims on one another (cf. *philadelphia* in Rom. 12:10; 1 Thess. 4:9; Heb. 13:1). The emphasis on *philadelphia* seems particularly prominent in Petrine literature (1 Pet. 1:22; 3:8; 2 Pet. 1:7). **Sincere** love is *anypokritos*, "without hypocrisy," hence genuine (also Rom. 12:9; 2 Cor. 6:6).

Being **born again** from God's seed (1:23; cf. 1:3; 1 John 3:9) is equivalent to being "born from God" (John 1:13; 1 John 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18), "born from above" (John 3:3, 7), and "born from the Spirit" (John 3:5–6, 8; Gal. 4:29). As like begets like, those born from God share his moral nature (see 2 Pet. 1:3–4). This rebirth explains the purification and sibling love in 1:22: those also spiritually born from the same Father (1:17) are spiritual siblings; also, as obedient children (1:14), we obey the truth (1:22; cf. 1:2).



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Human sperm was called "seed," and gentile thinkers often spoke of divine seed as being innate in humans.[18] The New Testament, by contrast, views the divine seed not as innate in fallen humanity but as God's message (e.g., Mark 4:14; cf. *4 Ezra* 9.31, 33) that bears fruit in them (Gal. 5:22–23; 6:8). Created in God's image (Gen. 1:26–27; 9:6) as his children (cf. Gen. 5:1–3), we are being restored to that image fully in Christ (Rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 15:49; 2 Cor. 3:18; Col. 3:10). In 1 Pet. 1:23, the most explicit characteristic of the **seed** is that it is **imperishable**, thus suggesting in general terms that we who are born from it have eternal life (cf. 1:4). In 1:24–25a, Peter demonstrates the eternal character

18. For example, Seneca, *To Lucilius* 73.16 (unless otherwise noted, all citations of Seneca refer to Seneca the Younger); Musonius Rufus, *Lectures* 2, p. 38.14; Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.9.4, 6. Note also Philo, *Life of Moses* 1.279: human souls spring from divine seed.

PENTECOSTAL INTEREST

## Confessing a New Identity

Some in charismatic circles talk a lot about positive confession. So long as our faith is genuinely in what God has promised, it is biblical to express and act on that faith. Often people have confessed things that God has *not* promised, seeking to bring them to pass, but "who can speak and have it happen if the Lord has not decreed it?" (Lam. 3:37). At the same time, we charismatics (and other Christians) often fail to speak and act in faith on what God has explicitly affirmed in Scripture. We have been purified and born anew by God's own word (1 Pet. 1:3, 22–23). We need to accept for ourselves that new identity, recognizing our new allegiance to Christ, and speak and live as if that is true.

In Rom. 4:24, Paul emphasizes that God has "credited" righteousness to our account (cf. 4:3–11, 22–23, repeatedly using *logizomai*); in 6:11, he invites us to trust God's verdict so that we "count" (again using *logizomai*) ourselves as dead to sin and alive to God. That may feel hard when others view us the old way, or our memories, habits, and temptations pull us toward that old way. But God invites us to trust his transforming grace more than temptations. As we remind ourselves in faith about that new identity and fill our minds with God's values (e.g., through immersing ourselves in Scripture) rather than the world's values (e.g., through immersing ourselves in social media or worse), we continue to be transformed (Rom. 12:2; Phil. 4:8).



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of God's message from Isa. 40:6–8, a passage about the good news of ultimate salvation and restoration. The **living and enduring** message in 1:23 is the transformative good news preached to the audience in 1:25.

**Therefore** in 2:1 predicates new behavior on the birth from God's seed stated in 1:23. We should reject vices on the basis of our new status and identity in Christ (e.g., Col. 3:3–5, 8–10). This rejection is often expressed as "putting off" (rendered in the NIV more generically as **rid yourselves of**), using a clothing metaphor (Rom. 13:12; Eph. 4:22, 25; Col. 3:8; James 1:21; cf. Heb. 12:1) that is usually matched with "putting on" the new ways (Rom. 13:12, 14; Gal. 3:27; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10, 12; cf. 1 Pet. 5:5).

Lists of vices, such as in 2:1, were common in antiquity, including the New Testament (e.g., Rom. 1:29–31; 1 Cor. 5:10–11; 6:9–10; Gal. 5:19–21; Eph. 5:3–5; Col. 3:5, 8). All vices listed here contrast with the love expressed in 1 Pet. 1:22. As the source of believers' birth (1:23), God is here the source of the **milk** (2:2) (cf. the analogy with Paul in 1 Cor. 3:2; 1 Thess. 2:7). Although adults in antiquity derived many dairy products from sheep and goats, newborn infants received milk from their mother (or sometimes a paid or slave nurse). In ancient usage, **pure** (lit., "without deceit," contrasting with 2:1) **milk** is unadulterated. Ancients often used **milk** as an analogy to refer to learning. Although the NIV renders *logikos* in 2:2 as **spiritual**, its meaning here is closer to "figurative" or even "rational"; playing on words, it likely relates to the *logos* ("word") in 1:23 (cf. 2:8; 3:1, 15). That is, those born from God's seed, his word (1:23), must further nurture themselves and mature by consuming God's word, so persevering toward final salvation.

We **crave** the **milk** of God's message (2:2) because we have already **tasted** how kind the Lord is (2:3). In 2:3, Peter evokes the Greek version of Ps. 34:8: "Taste and see that the Lord is kind." Aware of the verse's context, Peter resumes quoting from this psalm in 3:10–12 (Ps. 34:12–16); indeed, in Peter's next verse (2:4), he borrows an image from the Greek version of Ps. 34:5 (LXX 33:6a, different in Hebrew and English): "coming to him." Whereas the Greek version of the psalm applies the image to YHWH, Peter refers in 2:4 to Jesus, whom he recognizes to be divine.

## God's People (2:4–10)

In 2:4–10, Peter reminds his audience of their new identity as a community founded on Christ, although he will soon go on to show how this alternative community must still function as resident aliens within the world (2:11–3:12). In 2:4, Peter shifts from an image of human maturation to one of architecture.



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The biblically saturated wording of 2:4 anticipates the explicit biblical quotations in 2:6–7. That the stone is **living** connects this stone with the living hope (1:3), God's living message (1:23), and, in particular, the resurrection (2:24; cf. 4:6). That the stone was **rejected** by people before being exalted by God speaks of unjust suffering; Peter soon urges his hearers to share, when necessary, Christ's sufferings (2:21; 4:13–16). The stone is **chosen** (2:4, 6), like Peter's audience (1:1; 2:9). It is also invaluably **precious** (2:4, 6), like believers' faith (1:7), Jesus's blood (1:19), and believers' hearts (3:4), but its value is evident only to people of faith (2:7). Peter's **chosen** and **precious** stone anticipates his Isaiah quotation in 2:6.

The **living stones** in 2:5 are those who share Christ's risen life, and thus can function like the living stone in 2:4. Greek and Roman mythology recounts stones becoming people,[19] but (of far greater relevance here) 1 Peter uses temple imagery (2:5–8). God could raise up people for himself, without genetic lineage from Abraham, from stones (Matt. 3:9 // Luke 3:8), prepared for a new temple (cf. Mark 12:10; 13:2; 14:58). Peter will soon (in 2:9) make explicit his theological source (Exod. 19:6) for identifying believers as a consecrated community (or order) of priests (NIV: **royal priesthood**); the **spiritual house** (2:5) where we offer sacrifices is a spiritual temple.

The **spiritual house** draws on the early Christian image of God's people as a spiritual house or temple (1 Cor. 3:16–17; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:18–22; Rev. 3:12). This image in turn adapts an already existing Jewish image, especially in the Qumran scrolls.[20] In New Testament letters, **spiritual** usually connotes the activity of God's Spirit,[21] hence here a temple for the Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; Eph. 2:22; cf. John 4:21, 24). Figurative or metaphoric sacrifices appear frequently in ancient sources, including the Old Testament (e.g., 1 Sam. 15:22; Pss. 51:16–17; 69:30–31; 141:2; Mic. 6:6–8) and Jewish tradition. The New Testament notion of **spiritual sacrifices** (e.g., Rom. 12:2; 15:16; Phil. 2:17; 4:18; Rev. 5:8) would be easily intelligible. God values our worship in the Spirit (John 4:24).

In 2:6, again Peter cites **Scripture** as his authority, justifying his claim about the **precious** stone in 2:4. Here Peter quotes from Isa. 28:16, a text highlighted also by Paul for its emphasis on faith (Rom. 9:32–33; 10:11). (Early Christians may have learned this pattern of linking "stone" texts from Jesus; cf. Matt. 21:42, 44[22] // Luke 20:17–18.) However much mockers may make fun of Jesus's followers now, God will ultimately (eschatologically) vindicate whoever **trusts in him**, so we will not **be put to shame**.

19. See Keener, "Human Stones."

20. See esp. *1QRule of the Community* (1QS) 8.5–9 (which includes an allusion to Isa. 28:16); 9.6.

21. For example, Elliott, *1 Peter*, 422 (sacrifices "motivated by the Holy Spirit"); see esp. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 28–31.

22. On the fair likelihood that Matt. 21:44 reflects the original reading.



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Remains of stones from Jerusalem's temple thrown down after AD 70, and surviving stones in its retaining wall

But whereas Isa. 28:16 (quoted in 2:6) promises vindication to those who trust the **precious cornerstone**, the verses that Peter quotes in 2:7–8 declare the fate of those who do not trust it. Jewish interpreters often used shared key words to link verses; in 2:7 Peter quotes Ps. 118:22, another passage about a **cornerstone**. The verse's wide use in early Christian tradition (Acts 4:11 [attributed to Peter]; Eph. 2:20) probably stems from Jesus's own use (Mark 12:10).[23] The **builders** who reject the **cornerstone** in 2:7 contrast with the spiritual house's implicit builder, God, in 2:5.

In 2:8, Peter adds yet another "stone" text, Isa. 8:14, a natural text to link with the Isaian "stone" text with which he started this series (cf. similarly Luke 20:18; Rom. 9:33). Again, Peter obviously knows more of the context than he specifically quotes: the verses preceding Isa. 8:14 encourage the righteous not to fear what the wicked fear, but instead to fear the Lord (Isa. 8:12–13, which Peter later uses in 3:14–15). Isaiah's passage goes on, just before the line that Peter uses here, to speak of the Lord as a "sanctuary" for the righteous, as well as a stone of judgment to disobedient Israel. Scripture sometimes uses this term for "sanctuary" for the temple, and potentially even God's people as his sanctuary (Judah as *hagiasma* in Ps. 114:2 [LXX 113:2]).

23. Part of the festal Hallel (Pss. 113–18), the passage was especially familiar in the Passover setting in which the Gospels place it. The psalm and its usual New Testament use fit a temple setting.



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For disbelievers, then, the good rock becomes an occasion to trip, to **stumble** (2:8), an image relevant to apostasy or meriting judgment.[24] Peter had once learned how he himself could function as both a positive rock and a stumbling

24. See, e.g., Ezek. 14:3, 4, 7; 18:30; 33:12; 44:12; Sir. 9:5; 25:21; 32:15; 34:7, 19; 39:24; Matt. 5:29–30; 11:6; 13:41; 16:23; 18:6–9; Mark 9:42–47; Luke 7:23; 17:1–2.

PENTECOSTAL INTEREST

## Replacement Theology?

Through much of history, Christians have believed that the church replaced Israel in God's plan. The New Testament passages used to support this were meant to argue against an opposite error in the first century—namely, that gentiles were always second class and could never become part of God's people.

Paul nevertheless could see that some gentiles were in danger of viewing themselves as chosen at the expense of any promises to ethnic Israel—that is, that they replaced Israel (Rom. 11:18). Thus, in Romans, he explains that God gave the Jewish people special historic privileges (3:1–2; 9:4–5), and that although many Jews rejected the promised Messiah, others did accept him (11:1–6). Since Israel as a whole was not ready for the fulfillment of the promises, God welcomed gentiles, but to be grafted into Israel's heritage rather than to replace it (11:17–21).

Moreover, God's plan for ethnic Israelites to be saved remains and will consummate his plan (Rom. 11:12, 15, 26–31). Gentile believers are meant to play a role in this: the ingathering of gentiles promised in the Prophets (Isa. 19:25; Zeph. 3:9; Zech. 2:11; 9:6–7) would provoke Israel to jealousy (Rom. 11:11, 14; cf. 10:19), and their ingathering would precipitate Israel's conversion (11:25–26; note *houtōs*, "in this way," in 11:26). Because ancient gentile anti-Semitism infiltrated the church,[a] however, the largely gentile church claimed to replace Israel and proved a negative witness to the Jewish people. Paul's plan remains to be fulfilled: when the Jewish people see multitudes among the nations respecting their God, Scripture, and heritage instead of usurping it (cf. Zech. 8:20–23), God will turn the majority of ethnic Israel to saving faith in Christ, grafting them back into their heritage among the eschatological people of God. Presumably, Peter, who ends up in Rome at some point (see comment on 1 Pet. 5:13), knew Paul's letter to the believers there (cf. 2 Pet. 3:15–16).

a. See Brown, *Our Hands Are Stained*.



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block (Matt. 16:18, 23), but here the rock of stumbling is Christ (cf. Rom. 9:33; 1 Cor. 1:23). Disbelievers **disobey the message** (2:8), in contrast to those who were reborn through it (1:23) (on disobedience, cf. 3:1, 19–20; 4:17). That nonbelievers **were destined for** such judgment contrasts them starkly with the ***chosen*** **people** in 2:9.

**Chosen** (see comment on 1:1–2) **people** (2:9) recalls Old Testament language for Israel, here especially Isa. 43:20 (not least since the following Isaian verse, 43:21, speaks of them declaring God's "praise"). **A royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession** all reflect Israel's sacred identity in Exod. 19:5–6 (applied to all believers also in Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6). On believers' consecrated status, see 1 Pet. 1:15–16; 2:5; these priests offer spiritual sacrifices (2:5). Writers commonly applied the contrast between light and darkness to good and evil, for example in the Qumran scrolls.[25] God calling his people from darkness to light (cf. Acts 26:18; Col. 1:12–13; 1 John 2:8–9) might reflect Isaian imagery (Isa. 9:2; 42:16; 58:10).

Peter further develops believers' role as a **people** (2:9) in 2:10. As signs to Israel, Hosea named a daughter "Unloved" and a son "Not My People" (Hosea 1:6, 9), a status that would be reversed when God saved his people (Hosea 1:10; 2:1, 23). Like Paul, Peter applies this language not directly to eschatologically restored Israel but to gentiles (Rom. 9:24–26). Paul does envision a future turning of the Jewish people (Rom. 11:25–26), so his point is not a permanent rejection of the Jewish people, but simply that gentiles can be grafted into Israel's heritage and thus belong to the eschatological people of God. The same approach may well be true of Peter. Peter again encourages us, affirming our new identity in Christ.

## Honoring Christ Where You Are Exiled (2:11–17)

This status as God's people (2:4–10) makes us outsiders to the world (2:11), to those who still live as gentiles (2:12). Peter has emphasized our group identity in Christ (2:4–10), but now he underlines the importance of fulfilling our social obligations in the world. The eschatological people of God must still function within society, morally distinct but socially honorable.

As with the general moral exhortations in 1:13–2:3, Peter provides rationales for the more concrete social exhortations in 2:11–3:17. Here, however, most

25. For examples of the contrast between light and darkness, see *1QRule of the Community* (1QS) 3.3, 19, 25; 10.2; *1QWar Scroll* (1QM) 1.1, 11; 13.5, 15; 14.17; *4QNarrativeC*[a] (4Q462) frg. 1.9–10; *4QVisions of Amram*[f] *ar* (4Q548) frg. 1.ii 2.10–16; *11QApocryphal Psalms* (11Q11) 5.7; cf. *1QHodayot*[a] (1QH[a]) 17.26; 20.9; 21.15; *4QRule of the Community*[c] (4Q257) 3.5; *4QMysteries*[a] (4Q299) frg. 5.2; *4QWorks of God* (4Q392) frg. 1.4–6; *11QPsalms*[a] (11Q5) 26.11; *11QSongs of Sabbath Sacrifice* (11Q17) 10.5.



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of the rationale seems less generically Christian (focused on the gospel) and more addressed to the audience's precarious social situation. The instructions regarding subjects of kings (2:13), slaves (2:18–25), and wives of nonbelievers (3:1–6) do not mandate maintaining monarchy, slavery, or patriarchal forms of marriage in all societies. (Indeed, attempts to resurrect those structures against current social paradigms would undercut the attempts at peace with society for which these instructions were designed.) These are *human* institutions (2:13), and Peter himself recognizes that they may act unjustly (2:19). The particular instructions do, however, illustrate the principle of honoring social roles where possible for the sake of Christian witness (2:12–13).

We might divide the exhortations among four (overlapping) categories, all "on account of the Lord" (2:13 AT):

- Counter misrepresentation by living in ways that honor God (2:12, 15; 3:1–2, 16).
- Be encouraged because God favors those who suffer unjustly (2:19–20).
- Follow Christ's example of suffering graciously (2:21–25).
- Recognize more ancient, biblical examples of submission (3:5–6).

None of this suggests that believers should seek suffering or subordination; it does, however, instruct believers locked in such situations to respond with grace rather than retaliation. Still, these four categories (of which the first and third seem most prominent) do not exhaust grounds for behavior outside 2:12–3:6. In 2:11, believers are urged to avoid fleshly lusts because they do not belong to this world. In 3:7–12, one should be gracious specifically toward a wife, and more generally toward others, or God will not hear one's prayers.

### *Do Not Act as the World Does (2:11–12)*

Verses 11–12 are key for what follows, but they also relate to the preceding section. As members of a new people (2:9–10), Christ-followers are aliens on earth (1:1, 17; 2:11), but we should behave honorably in human societies, just as societies expected of other resident aliens (2:12–14). (For discussion of the roles of resident aliens, see comment on 1:1.) This is the first of two times that Peter "urges" (*parakaleō*) them (2:11; 5:1), and therefore an important key point in a letter the purpose of which was partly to "encourage" (*parakaleō*) them (5:12).

The Greek terms in 2:11 that the NIV renders as **foreigners** and **exiles** (which many scholars relate to the ancient concept of resident aliens) appear together only twice in the most common Greek version of the Old Testament. Abraham is a "foreigner" and "resident alien" among long-term residents of



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Canaan (Gen. 23:4), and the psalmist, echoing Abraham's experience, is a "foreigner" and "resident alien" before God, like his ancestors (Ps. 39:12 [LXX 38:13]). The former term is more frequent and applies initially to the patriarchs in a land promised to them but not yet theirs (Gen. 23:4), and for Israel in Egypt (Gen. 15:13; Exod. 2:22; Deut. 23:7 [LXX 23:8]) or Moses in Midian (Exod. 18:3). The psalm depicts the fleeting character of life under God's discipline but fits well into Peter's motif that life in this world is merely transitory (cf. 1 Pet. 1:24). A similar combination declares that God's own people are just aliens (LXX: *prosēlytoi*, which came to mean "proselytes") and foreigners with him in his land (Lev. 25:23).

This world is not our home; it is, however, the arena for our only opportunity in eternity to witness to nonbelievers and to demonstrate our love for God in the face of adversity.

The NIV's **sinful desires** are more literally "fleshly" desires. Ancients often thought in terms of bodily desires, a concept we might compare with our understanding of hormones, libido, and so forth, although today we understand that mind and body are much more closely intertwined than was recognized by many ancient philosophers, especially in the Platonic tradition. Biological desires themselves serve essential functions, but like our forebears, we would agree at least in principle that they also must be governed and channeled appropriately. Virtuous thinking includes the proper governing of passions.

Some diaspora Jews used language about soul and body much the way Greeks did. The pre-Christian Wisdom of Solomon, for example, notes that "the perishable body weighs down the soul" (Wis. 9:15 AT). Josephus views the soul as afflicted by the body's defilements until freed from the body at death.[26] Despite the contrast between flesh and human soul in 1 Pet. 2:11, however, Peter elsewhere contrasts flesh and God's Spirit in a more typical Judean manner (3:18; 4:6; cf. Gen. 6:3). The Qumran scrolls develop the sense of the weakness of "flesh" in a moral direction, including its vulnerability to sin,[27] a sense that the equivalent Greek term often bears in Paul's letters.[28] Peter's language should thus not be pushed too far here. We rule our passions not because the body is bad but because providing moral guidance is not the proper function of its God-given passions.

26. Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.203. Like some Greek philosophers, he even speaks of the soul as being a portion of the divine (*Jewish War* 3.272).

27. Flusser, *Judaism*, 62–65. See *1QRule of the Community* (1QS) 3.8; 4.20–21; 9.9; 11.7, 12; *1QWar Scroll* (1QM) 4.3; 12.12.

28. James Dunn correctly notes, "It is precisely the weakness and appetites of 'the mortal body' (= the flesh) which are the occasion for sin" (*Romans*, 1:370). Likewise, "The problem with flesh is not that it is sinful *per se* but that it is vulnerable to the enticements of sin—flesh, we might say, as 'the desiring I' (7.7–12)" (Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 67).



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Ancient thinkers also often used figurative military language (**wage war**) regarding the challenge of passions, as here in 2:11.[29] Indulging fleshly passions (2:11) resembles gentile behavior (4:2–4). Self-centered passions also are not inclined to submit to or respect others (2:13–17). Abstention from some fleshly passions may inflame outsiders' hostile perceptions (4:4), but we can best respond to such perceptions, silencing hostile slanders (2:12), by self-controlled submission and respect (2:13).

Many might slander Christ-followers as **doing wrong** (2:12); this term (*kakopoios*) or its cognate surface also in 2:14; 3:17; 4:15, which together constitute 57 percent of New Testament uses. The phrase **among the pagans** is very common in the Septuagint, sometimes used of Israel's dispersion there. That others **glorify God** because of believers' **good** works may well echo Jesus's saying in Matt. 5:16. **The day he visits us** reflects a phrase in the Greek version of Isa. 10:3 that speaks of the day of judgment. By maintaining honorable behavior (Peter repeatedly uses the term *anastrophē* to refer to behavior [1:15, 18; 2:12; 3:1–2, 16]; the cognate verb in 1:17), we can challenge outsiders' slanders (again, 3:16).

### *Submit to the World's Authorities (2:13–17)*

One should not act as the world does, as if one belongs to it (2:11–12). But neither should one provoke nongospel offense by failing to submit to its laws or by disrespecting its leaders (cf. 2:13–18; 3:1).[30] Such status may not matter in light of eternity,[31] but those who live in the world need to follow its demands that do not contradict faith. In modern idiom, believers must choose their battles, and this is not one we need to fight. If human respect does not ultimately matter, then neither does it cost us anything to offer it to those who desire it.

For Christians themselves, even those who do hold socially superior positions should use them to serve (5:3). Although believers should submit to human systems in which they are foreigners, they do so not because all these systems are intrinsically just but for the Lord's honor—**for the Lord's sake** (2:13). They do this to silence critics of the faith (2:12, 15) and bring nonbelievers to the faith (3:1; cf. 1 Tim. 3:7; 5:14; 6:1; Titus 2:5, 8, 10). Rome's greatest concern about minority cults (in which they included Jews and Christians) was their potential to subvert traditional social structures.[32] It may also be no coincidence that two

29. For example, Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 1.2.24; Seneca, *Natural Questions* 1.pref.5; 3.pref.10; Pseudo-Diogenes, *Epistles* 5. Compare the idea in Prov. 16:32b.

30. John Kloppenborg views 1 Peter as ambivalent toward the civic context ("Associations").

31. Lewis Donelson notes that the semantic range of *hōs* includes both "as" and "as if," potentially relativizing some of the praise of authority here (*I & II Peter*, 71–72).

32. See Keener, *Paul, Women, and Wives*, 139–42; esp. Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive*, 65–80, 118.



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of the major sets of household codes in the New Testament probably were sent, like 1 Peter, from Rome (Eph. 5:22–6:9; Col. 3:18–4:1), and the most explicit call to submission to authorities appears in a letter addressed to believers in Rome (Rom. 13:1–7, esp. *hypotassō* in 13:1).

After speaking of submitting to **every human** system (2:13), Peter offers examples. Ancient elites naturally promoted the ideal of submission to authorities, although even those who urged it might qualify that submission for special circumstances. Ancient writers often narrated household codes—that is, instructions for ideal relationships in households, diverse in form but functionally similar to 1 Pet. 2:18–3:7. (Unlike New Testament examples, however, most surviving examples directly instruct only the male householder.) Sometimes, as here, these household codes appear in a broader set of relational instructions that include civic duties or principles for civic management.

Aristotle instructed the male householder how to rule his wife, children, and slaves,[33] forms adopted by Jewish writers in the diaspora, probably for apologetic reasons.[34] Paul adopts the format but then transforms its approach by framing the codes with mutual submission in Eph. 5:21–6:9 (note 5:21; 6:9).

Peter's first example is that of submission to the king; this example in fact brackets the paragraph (2:13, 17). While the empire included some client kings, most people in the east would envision especially the **emperor** (which the NIV reads into both verses). Provinces, especially those whose leaders appreciated Roman rule, were often lavish in praising their **governors** (2:14). Governors **punish** and **commend** here, much as in Rom. 13:3–4.

People might slander believers as wrongdoers (1 Pet. 2:12), but by being instead good-doers we should merit "praise" (NRSV; NIV: **commend**) from governors (2:14), and so refute the false accusations (2:15). Yet, though it is **God's will** for us to **silence** accusers by **good** deeds (2:15),[35] Peter explicitly allows that God sometimes wills us to suffer for doing good (3:17; 4:19).

The Greek participle in 2:16 suggests that the thought of the preceding context continues. Although believers should **live as free** (2:16),[36] Peter speaks of moral freedom to do good; he is well aware that many of his hearers are slaves (2:18). Paul also offers the paradox of Christian freedom: slaves are freedpersons

33. Aristotle, *Politics* 1.2.1, 1253b; see also 1.2.2, 1253b; 1.5.3–4, 1259b; 3.4.4, 1278b.

34. Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.199–217 (in light of Balch, "Household Codes," 28–29, though other relationships also fall in these paragraphs [cf. Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 19.129–31]); Philo, *Hypothetica* 7.14 (cf. Philo, *Decalogue* 165–67; *Special Laws* 2.225–27).

35. Hearers in Greek would appreciate alliteration in 2:15: *agathopoiountas . . . aphronōn anthrōpōn agnōsian*.

36. For alliteration in 2:16, note *eleutheroi . . . epikalymma echontes . . . eleutherian*.



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in Christ, and free persons are also Christ's slaves (1 Cor. 7:22). Everyone understood that people sometimes twisted liberty into license,[37] a warning reiterated by early Christians (1 Cor. 6:12–13; Gal. 5:13; Jude 4). We need to beware of voices that promise freedom to do whatever *we* want as opposed to doing whatever *Christ* wants.

As was familiar in moral exhortation, a writer could offer disconnected, short exhortations one after another. Most of those in 1 Pet. 2:17 address the same subject, **honor**. Despite the different renderings in the NIV, the Greek verb in the opening, **show proper respect to everyone**, and the closing, **honor the emperor**, is the same one (*timaō*), underlining Christians' countercultural way of seeking to respect all (for fellow believers, see Rom. 12:10; Eph. 5:21). To **fear** (revere) **God** constituted the fundamental characteristic of Jewish wisdom: living in light of the true God's reality and recognizing that we must give account for all that we do (e.g., Prov. 1:7; 2:5; 9:10). Biblically, honoring God and the king (in the Old Testament, the king of Israel) normally would coincide (Exod. 22:28; Prov. 24:21). In some cities, refraining from worshiping the **emperor** could lead to charges of disloyalty; but like Jews, Christians could honor the emperor while refraining from worshiping him. We cannot give Caesar what is God's, but surely we should give Caesar what is Caesar's.

## Slaves to Slaveholders (2:18–25)

The reuse of the term rendered as **submit** (*hypotassō*) from 2:13, and perhaps also its Greek participial form here (also in 3:1), indicates a continuation of the thought from the preceding context. Typical ancient household codes advised slaveholders, not slaves. Peter's audience, however, presumably includes far more slaves than slaveholders, as well as (thus 3:1–6) a disproportionate number of wives with unconverted husbands.

Although the term for "slave" (*oiketēs*) here potentially had a wider meaning than "household slave," Peter addresses urban congregations and adapts household codes, which concerned *household* slaves. He thus addresses especially household slaves, whose conditions generally were superior to those of slaves in the fields and especially the virtual death sentence of slavery in the mines, gladiatorial combat, or galleys. A minority of household slaves even achieved some status and power, and some aristocratic women even married into slavery to improve their social status.[38] Nevertheless, Peter recognizes that

37. See, e.g., Livy, *History of Rome* 5.6.17; 27.31.6; Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 14.3–6, 18; Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 4.145–49.

38. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves*, 196.



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many slaveholders practiced harsh abuses (thus the end of 2:18). Moreover, for many young women and boys, sexual abuse (at least from the slaveholder himself) remained an even graver danger for household slaves than for those in the fields.[39]

Most ancient household codes did not address slaves directly; usually these codes were written to elites who ruled slaves rather than to those who served slaveholders. But in an unjust setting in which slaves could not easily escape their holders' social control, Peter empowers slaves by affirming their own moral volition and identifying them with Christ (2:21–25).

The NIV's **fear of God** in 2:18 has added **of God** to the Greek text. In 2:18, the term for **fear** (*phobos*) is a noun cognate of the verb that Peter uses for reverencing God in 2:17; but Peter uses it also for wives' respect for their husbands (3:2) and Christians' humility (3:16), while rejecting the wrong sort of fear (3:6, 14). Here it applies to enslaved persons showing respect to their holders (with, e.g., ESV; NASB; NET; NJB; NRSV). Peter urges respect even for **harsh** holders; the term translated as **harsh** (*skolios*) nevertheless offers a moral judgment against such holders, suggesting being twisted or perverted from the right way (e.g., LXX Prov. 2:15; 16:28; Phil. 2:15). Although most thinkers agreed that we should avoid suffering when possible, some emphasized the value of suffering justly as superior to suffering unjustly.[40]

The basis for enduring unjust treatment is not that this suffering is just[41] but that one honors God (2:19), who sees and more than compensates with his **favor** (2:20 NASB). God is near the lowly and favors the oppressed, who have only him to depend on (5:5–6); God pays special attention to those who suffer wrongly (5:6–7; cf. 2 Sam. 16:10–12). Who would rather have worldly honor than God's **favor**, if we really believe in God and an eternal perspective that puts things right? Again, we must work for just conditions when possible; but when we are wronged, we know who has our back.

In 2:20, Peter addresses the harsh and unjust conditions of many enslaved persons, which are not unlike (in 2:21) the sufferings of Christ. Slaves could receive a **beating**, even in Jewish circles (Sir. 42:5). Again, Peter is not urging his audience to seek out suffering; rather, he wants to provide meaning and hope in the face of it. The **example** of Christ's suffering (2:21) stands at the center of this section.

39. See fuller discussion and documentation in Keener, *1 Peter*, 178, 185–87; at greater length, Keener, *Acts*, 2:1906–42.

40. Diogenes Laertius, *Eminent Philosophers* 2.35; Musonius Rufus, *Lectures* 3, p. 40.30; Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.2.5.

41. Contrast Aristotle, for whom by definition a slaveholder cannot be unjust to his slave, since the slave is property (*Nicomachean Ethics* 5.6.8–9, cited in Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 116).



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A Instruction for everyone (2:13–17)
  B Instruction for slaves (2:18–20)
    C Christ's example (2:21–25)
  B′ Instruction for wives (and husbands) (3:1–7)
A′ Instruction for everyone (3:8–12)[42]

Although Peter invites most explicitly slaves and wives of unbelievers to identify with Christ, the model proves relevant for all suffering believers. In most of the letter, believers face suffering for Christ; but in 2:18–3:6 and especially 2:18–20, believers may embrace Christ's model and name in any suffering that they may face, so long as it is not on account of their own wrongdoing or folly that risks dishonoring Christ's name. Identification with Christ affirms the sufferer's dignity, even if it cannot immediately resolve the sufferings.

Christ's crucifixion was potentially an uncomfortably relevant example for slaves (2:18), since slaves could be crucified, sometimes cavalierly.[43] That **Christ suffered for you** (2:21) takes for granted substitutionary atonement and reflects the early Christian theme of God's and Christ's self-sacrificial love for us (Rom. 5:5–10; 8:32, 37–39; 2 Cor. 5:14; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 5:2, 25; John 3:16; 1 John 3:16; 4:9–10; Rev. 1:5).

In 2:22, Peter cites Isa. 53:9, again supporting his case from Scripture. Because the servant in Isa. 53 suffers on behalf of his people rather than for his own sin (53:9), in contrast to Israel (cf. Isa. 40:2), early Christians naturally understood this ultimate servant as Jesus (e.g., Matt. 8:17; Acts 8:32–33; Rom. 4:25). The servant mission belonged to Israel (Isa. 41:8; 44:1–2, 21; 45:4; 48:20; 49:3), but Israel initially failed in its mission (42:18–19), so one representative leader suffered on Israel's behalf (49:5–6; 53:4–6).

In 2:23, Peter, like Paul earlier (Rom. 15:3), confirms the Gospels' accounts of Jesus enduring abuse during his passion. Though ridiculed, Jesus refused to resist (Mark 14:65; 15:17–20, 29–32). Jesus taught us to bless those who curse us (Luke 6:28; echoed in Rom. 12:14), a teaching followed by his apostles (1 Cor. 4:12). Given the context of Peter's use of Isa. 53 in 2:22, 24–25, here he may think of Isa. 53:7: twice it repeats that the suffering servant "did not open his mouth" when persecuted. Jesus both taught dependence on God as Father (e.g., Matt. 6:25–33 // Luke 12:22–31) and modeled it when **he entrusted himself** (2:23) to God in a death from which only God could raise him. Peter here reiterates that we can trust God's justice (see 1:17; 2:23; 4:5–6). Jesus's trust in the Father

42. I borrow this chiasm from J. Green, *1 Peter*, 72.

43. Terence, *Woman of Andros* 622–24; Livy, *History of Rome* 22.33.1–2; Seneca, *Mercy* 1.26.1; Martial, *Epigrams* 2.82; Juvenal, *Satires* 6.219–24.



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Hindu militants deface a church building

**who judges justly** echoes Jeremiah's experience when facing unjust persecution (Jer. 11:20).

In 2:23, Jesus models the teaching that Peter presents in 3:9, the wording of which likely echoes Jesus's teaching (see comment there). Some others in antiquity taught the ideal of nonretaliation, although they were a decided minority.[44] I never struck back when beaten for my witness. Indeed, in time I developed a positive relationship with one of the assailants. Likewise, putting his arm around an Ethiopian evangelist, Haji, another minister, explains, "I used to beat him." Haji led a radical Islamic group attacking Christians, but as this evangelist repaid Haji's hatred with love, he eventually won over Haji. Now Haji himself faces persecution, but he responds with joyful love.[45] Sometimes God will even make our enemies to be at peace with us (Prov. 16:7).

In 2:24, Peter adapts wording from Isa. 53, which he has just quoted in 2:22, drawing now on Isa. 53:4 and 53:11–12, both of which speak of the servant bearing our sins. Ancient hearers appreciated antithetical paradox, which Peter offers here: death brings new life, and liberation from sin brings righteousness (cf. Rom. 6:4, 11; 2 Cor. 5:14–15; Col. 3:3–5). Like Paul, Peter believes that death to sin with Christ entails not only forensic justification but also the ability to live a new, just life.

44. See, e.g., Philodemus, *Frank Criticism* col. 2a; Musonius Rufus, *Lectures* 10, p. 76.23–24; 10, p. 78.11–19; 39, p. 136.11–16; Maximus of Tyre, *Orations* 12 passim; Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 5.39; Diogenes Laertius, *Eminent Philosophers* 6.1.3, 7; *b. Shabbat* 88b, bar. Foundational in Scripture would be Lev. 19:18.

45. Nettleton, *When Faith Is Forbidden*, 24–25.



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PENTECOSTAL INTEREST

## Healing in the Atonement

Some argue that healing is in the atonement in such a way that it is not even a promise but "a statement of fact" that one may simply claim.[a] Russell Kelso Carter, author of the now famous hymn "Standing on the Promises" (1886), was an early leading defender of atonement-for-healing theology. Later, however, he became sick for three years until he finally obeyed his doctor. After this experience, he himself became a doctor and publicly changed his position in a work written in 1897. He still believed in healing and prayed for the sick, but he doubted that healing could be automatically appropriated apart from God's will.[b]



R. Kelso Carter

Matthew 8 does show that Jesus often healed people at the cost he would soon pay of his death on the cross, but Scripture does not emphasize this point in the same way as salvation from the rule of sin, as if it *always* must happen in *this* life.[c] Jesus's death purchased the renewal of all creation, but we await the fullness of some of these effects (Rom. 8:23). Bishop William Taylor affirmed that Christ's death provided "for bodily as well as spiritual restoration," but he maintained "that the work of physical redemption would not be completed until the resurrection."[d] Likewise, the Assemblies of God position paper on divine healing recognizes that Jesus's death provides for physical healing, but the present experience is proleptic and will be complete only at Jesus's return.[e]

At the same time, Jesus's sacrifice is what makes healing, deliverance, and other gifts accessible as a foretaste of the future, fuller restoration. This is why we can pray with full confidence in God's kindness and power. It is also why we should thank God when he blesses us, remembering what those blessings cost him.

a. Hagin, *What Faith Is*, 7; G. Copeland, *God's Will*, 34; Capps, *The Tongue*, 38; cf. similarly, Jeter, *By His Stripes*, 31.

b. Curtis, *Faith*, 197–99; Opp, *The Lord for the Body*, 32; Reyes, "Theological Framework," 76; Baer, "Perfectly Empowered Bodies," 150–51; Dayton, *Roots of Pentecostalism*, 129–32.

c. See Fee, *Health and Wealth Gospels*, 24–25.

d. Curtis, *Faith*, 194.

e. Assemblies of God, "Divine Healing."



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At the end of 2:24, Peter again quotes from Isa. 53, here from 53:5. Although the Isaian corpus sometimes envisions physical healing (Isa. 29:18; 32:3–4; 35:5–6), an application that some early Christians drew from Isaiah (Matt. 8:16–17), the language can also envision healing in a spiritual sense (Isa. 6:10; 57:18), as often in the prophets (Jer. 3:22; 6:14; 8:11, 15; 14:19; Hosea 14:4). The context in Isa. 53 suggests that the servant's death would heal the nation from its sin (53:4–6, 8–9), and this is the sort of healing on which Peter focuses: We may live to righteousness because **"by his wounds you have been healed."** ***For*** [*gar*] **"you were like sheep going astray"** (2:24–25).

Just as Peter adapts Isa. 53:4–5 in 2:24, in 2:25 he adapts Isaiah's next verse: **You were going astray like sheep** (Isa. 53:6: "We all, like sheep, have gone astray"); he returns to the image of sheep and shepherd in 5:2. Here the **Shepherd** is also the sufferer in Isa. 53:9 (2:22), himself a lamb (Isa. 53:7; cf. 1 Pet. 1:19), who lays down his life for the sheep (cf. 1 Pet. 3:18; John 10:11, 15). As rulers of sheep, shepherds already provided a natural image for rulers in ancient Near Eastern, Hellenistic, and Jewish contexts. In Scripture, Moses, David, and others were shepherds of Israel, but by far the most common as shepherd is God. As shepherds provided a natural image of compassionate leaders, the language of **Overseer** suggests the same point even less metaphorically. Both Greeks and Jews used this leadership title; first-century Christians applied it to elders, who were also shepherds/pastors (Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5, 7; 1 Pet. 5:1–2). Jewish people called God himself the ultimate overseer.[46]

## Wives and Husbands (3:1–7)

As in other ancient household codes (cf. Eph. 5:22–6:9; Col. 3:18–4:1), expectations for submission relate not only to slaves but also to wives (though the Christian codes, unlike those of Aristotle, address the slaves and wives as moral agents directly). The relation of Peter's instructions to wives of unbelievers (1 Pet. 3:1–6) to the preceding instructions regarding submission to rulers (2:13–17) and slaves (2:18–25) is made explicit in 3:1 with **in the same way** [*homoiōs*].[47] All of these instructions exemplify the initial exhortation in 2:13: "*Submit* yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority." Peter's motivation is a specifically Christian one. These power relations are "human"

46. Wis. 1:6; *Sibylline Oracles* 1.152; Philo, *Allegorical Interpretation* 3.43; Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.160.

47. Such language could be used in analogies in ethical argumentation (e.g., Arius Didymus, *Epitome* 2.7.7d, p. 46.26–28; 2.7.11m, p. 88.10–11). Paul Achtemeier sees submission here as explaining how wives fulfill honoring all (2:17) (*1 Peter*, 209).



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institutions,[48] but "for the Lord's sake," for the sake of witness (most explicit in 3:1) and silencing hostile talk (2:12), believers in these various roles **submit**. Unlike what Peter says here, other ancient codes often grounded wives' submission in the intrinsic superiority of the male gender.[49]

One must submit to the government (2:13–14) for the sake of peace, and accept society's role expectations for the same purpose. But does this submission to authorities legitimize those *particular* authority structures permanently? In other words, does Peter's letter prescribe monarchy, slavery, and patriarchal marriage structures? Or does he counsel those *within* such situations? Considering the character of ancient social structures may help readers today who respect Peter's counsel to decide whether they should consider such structures universals or merely culturally conditioned.

Although not always observed, modesty and meekness were among the chief virtues traditionally expected for women. A truly prudent wife should "yield in all things" to her husband.[50] Xenophon, one of the more progressive authors of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, praises his wife for obeying even his mere word.[51] He notes that if a wife misbehaves, it is his own fault if he has not properly instructed her, just as it is the fault of one who tends animals if the animals are poorly trained.[52]

In the first century, Seneca the Elder advises a wife to walk around looking at the ground; if a man greeted her with too much interest, she should act confused and blush.[53] Being progressive for his era, Plutarch urges the husband to control his wife only like the soul lovingly controls the body.[54] He urges that sensible wives wait silently for their husbands' fits of rage to subside before comforting them.[55] Aelius Aristides declares that the wife "should be pleased with whatever the husband says; her place is to be 'ruled,' and he will command her; she will also seek to be girded by his nature, as a better person would treat an inferior one."[56]

An early Jewish sage instructed, "If your wife does not go as your hand directs, cut her off" (Sir. 25:26 AT) (apparently advising divorce). In Philo's ethics, the

48. In this case, not marriage itself (a divine institution), but its patriarchal form. Though, in any case, Peter in 3:1–6 explicitly addresses only wives of unbelievers.

49. For example, Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.11.4, 1161a; Aelius Aristides, *Defense of Oratory* 129–30, §41D.

50. Euripides, *Electra* 1052–53.

51. Xenophon, *Economics* 10.1.

52. Xenophon, *Economics* 3.10.

53. Seneca the Elder, *Controversiae* 2.7.3.

54. Plutarch, *Bride and Groom* 33, *Moralia* 142E.

55. Plutarch, *Bride and Groom* 37, *Moralia* 143C.

56. Aelius Aristides, *Defense of Oratory* 129, §41D (trans. C. A. Behr, LCL 1:357). He compares the husband's superiority to the wife with God's superiority to mortals, the ruler's to the citizen's, and the master's to the slave's (130, §41D) (undoubtedly in different ways).



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wife "serves" the husband, and the husband-wife relationship is comparable to father-child and slaveholder-slave relationships[57] Josephus claims that the law of Moses regards women as inferior to men in every respect; the wife should be submissive.[58] Heeding the wife can even merit punishment.[59] Women do not control their lives, early rabbis note, since they are under others' dominion.[60]

Particularly relevant for wives with unbelieving husbands (1 Pet. 3:1) were expectations regarding religion. Writing in the late first and early second centuries AD, Plutarch advises a wife not to cultivate her own friends or religion, but to accept those of her husband.[61] In light of concerns about cults from outside the Greek and Roman sphere subverting family values, the behavior of women in such cults became an apologetic issue. A range of ancient texts reveals "that the lack of submission of wives to their husbands would be a source of slander or blasphemy against Christianity."[62]

Ironically, ancient accusations essentially invert one non-Christian feminist critique of Christianity today. These particular feminist critics often anachronistically read early Christian texts that were designed to assuage the opposite critique in order to protect a minority faith from persecution. Karen Jobes laments, "How ironic it is that words that first-century slaves and wives would have read as affirming and empowering are criticized by some today as enslaving and oppressive."[63] Shively Smith concurs: "1 Peter strategized survival for a scattered population facing real threats of verbal attack, physical harm, and the looming chance of genocide."[64] Keeping his hearers alive was itself a pragmatic form of resistance in that setting, one of the only viable forms.

The husbands in 1 Pet. 3:1 are nonbelievers (2:8; 4:17). Ideally, believers were not supposed to marry nonbelievers (1 Cor. 7:39; cf. 2 Cor. 6:14), but many were converted to faith after their marriage, or had limited input into whom they married (1 Cor. 7:12–15). In 3:1–2, Peter continues to emphasize the role of **behavior** [*anastrophē*] in favorable witness, as he did in 2:12 (also 3:16; cf. 1:15, 17–18). Wives' submission carries on the theme of submission from 2:13–17, already applied to other social subordinates (slaves) in 2:18–20. Insofar as Peter defines submission, it involves respect (3:2), gentleness (3:4), and avoiding attention-getting attire that might dishonor the husband (3:3).

57. Philo, *Hypothetica* 7.3, 14.
58. Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.200–201.
59. Josephus, *Antiquities* 1.49; 18.255.
60. *Sipra Qedoshim* par. 1.195.2.2.
61. Plutarch, *Bride and Groom* 19, *Moralia* 140D. John Elliott (*1 Peter*, 557) notes also Xenophon, *Economics* 7.8; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 2.25.1; Cicero, *Laws* 2.8.19–22.
62. Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive*, 90–92.
63. Jobes, *1 Peter*, 209.
64. Smith, *Strangers to Family*, 165.



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Peter underlines the point with an extreme example (further than would usually be expected of Greco-Roman wives) of calling husbands **lord** (3:6). The forms of submission that Peter encourages here are ones that would appeal to typical nonbelieving husbands. The wife's submission to her husband contrasts with the husband being "disobedient to the message" (3:1 AT; NIV: **do not believe the word**). That is, its purpose is to prioritize bringing the nonbelieving partner to submission to Christ.

The **word** or "message" (*logos*) that the husbands disobey (3:1) is the gospel, as in 1:23–25 and especially 2:8 (where more generic unbelievers disobey the message). But because *logos* has a wider semantic range, Peter plays on another sense of it later in the verse. Husbands are not won without the gospel, as if they never heard about it even once. Otherwise, how would they know the cause of their wives' honorable behavior? Rather, they are won without continuing speech. Once people know the gospel, it is often better served by how we treat them than by pestering them when they act resistant.

In 3:2 husbands "observe" (NIV: **see**) their wives' behavior, here recalling the same verb (*epopteuō*) in 2:12, its only other use in the New Testament. Both verses suggest that observing honorable behavior typically leads to conversion or at least respect and honor. Thus it continues the thought of the context by way of a specific example.

The idea of "respect" in 3:2 (NIV: **reverence**) differs from terror or dread, which Peter expressly opposes (3:6). Negative fear could characterize an abusive relationship, which Peter certainly opposes (cf. 3:7). Whereas slaves could escape an abusive situation (2:20) only by running away or purchasing their freedom, in the Greco-Roman world nothing legally forced the wife to stay in an abusive situation.

Ancient moralists often commented on **adornment** (3:3), and how women should dress modestly in public so as not to excite male interest.[65] Another common criticism of excessive adornment was its ostentatious display of luxury rather than simplicity. Peter's disinterest in **gold** surfaced earlier (1:7, 18). Here he starkly warns against outward **adornment, such as . . . wearing . . . clothes**; pressed literally, his words could entail eschewing not only braids and **gold jewelry** but also clothing altogether. Given the Jewish shame of nakedness, and that this would entail much greater immodesty and attention-getting than the practices Peter opposes here, he certainly does not mean that (thus the NIV adds **fine** to **clothes**). Rather, he urges (in 3:4) focusing on the beauty of the heart rather than outer adornment.

65. For example, Seneca, *To Lucilius* 90.20; Juvenal, *Satires* 6.457–73; Apuleius, *Apology* 76; *Testament of Reuben* 5.1–5.



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Many ancient thinkers emphasized **inner** versus outer adornment (3:4; cf. 1 Tim. 2:9–10).[66] Rather than "putting on" (*endysis*) costly outward array (3:3), believers should put on, by antithetical implication, virtues of the heart (3:4). Just like his image of putting *off* old ways (2:1), Peter's image of putting *on* virtues fits first-century Christian paraenesis (Gal. 3:27; Eph. 4:22–25; Col. 3:8–12). As always, Peter is interested in what is "imperishable" (NIV: **unfading**) (3:4; cf. 1:4, 23), which Greeks often identified with the inner person.

Being **gentle** (3:4) is appropriate for all believers (3:15), as is being **quiet** (3:4; cf. 1 Thess. 4:11; 2 Thess. 3:12; 1 Tim. 2:2), but the latter is relevant here also in the context of winning husbands **without words** (3:1). Moreover, as already noted, modesty and meekness were among the chief virtues traditionally expected of women in antiquity.[67]

Jewish tradition often appealed to the ancient matriarchs (3:5–6) as models of virtue. Note that the examples that Peter offers here are not examples of abusive relationships, in contrast to the example offered to enslaved persons. Unlike most slaves, wives in the Greco-Roman world did have the option of leaving a marriage,[68] though normally they would have to give up any children (cf. 1 Cor. 7:14).

Peter naturally appeals to the side of the evidence needed to make his point, here that the matriarchs were submissive to their husbands, as he urges Christian wives of nonbelievers to be in 3:1. Sarah obeyed Abraham and called him **lord** (3:6; cf. LXX Gen. 18:12),[69] following cultural conventions in which wives sometimes called their husbands "lord" (*ba'al*).[70] What Peter does not mention, since it is not germane to his point, is that Genesis explicitly recounts also that Abraham obeyed or complied with Sarah's words (Gen. 16:2, 5–6), once at God's command (21:12)! Peter's example need not logically demonstrate that all wives in all cultures must address their husbands as "lord," but it does make Peter's point about respect by entailing that even this degree of respect is a virtuous option in relevant cultural settings.

Ancients often spoke of people who walked in ancestors' ways as their sons or **daughters** (3:6) (on being Sarah's children, cf. Isa. 51:1–2; Gal. 4:31). The motif of "doing good" (*agathapoieō*; NIV: **do what is right**) runs throughout 1 Peter (2:14–15, 20; 3:6, 17; 4:19); for Peter, submitting to husbands constitutes one

66. For example, Justin, *Epitome* 20.4.8–12; Epictetus, *Enchiridion* 40; Plutarch, *Bride and Groom* 12, *Moralia* 139DE; Pseudo-Socrates, *Epistles* 6.

67. On silence, see, e.g., Homer, *Iliad* 1.565–69; Sophocles, *Ajax* 293; Valerius Maximus, *Deeds and Sayings* 3.8.6; Plutarch, *Bride and Groom* 32, *Moralia* 142D; Heliodorus, *Aethiopica* 1.21; Sir. 9:9.

68. Verner, *Household of God*, 40; O'Rourke, "Roman Law," 181.

69. More frequent in a later source: *Testament of Abraham* 5.12; 6.2, 8; 15.4 A; 4.2; 6.5 B.

70. Gen. 20:3; Exod. 21:3, 22; Deut. 22:22; 24:4; Prov. 31:11, 23, 28; Hosea 2:18 (ET 2:16); Joel 1:8.



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