

FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER

Approximate date: 64-67 C.E.

Time Period: immediately prior to the Jewish rebellion in Judea, possibly during the persecution by Emperor Nero

Author: the Apostle Peter, assisted by Silvanus

Location of author: Rome

Target audience and their location: Jewish and non-Jewish Believers in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, Bithynia (Northwestern Asia Minor)

The author of the Epistle of 1 Peter identifies himself as the Apostle Peter (1:1). He further says, “I exhort the elders among you, as *your* fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Messiah” (5:1, NASU), which has been taken in terms of the author being personally present during the time of Yeshua’s trial and execution. From the contents of the letter, and the personal character we see of Peter in the Gospels and Acts,¹ it is widely regarded as bearing all the necessary signs of being genuinely Petrine. Within the early Body of Messiah, Peter was widely considered to be the most prominent of the original Twelve Disciples, whose influence on the assembly was second only to James the Just. Peter is the first to verbalize to Yeshua that He is the Messiah, and Yeshua in turn tells Peter that He will give His Disciples the authority to bind and loose, prohibit and permit (Matthew 16:17-19). In the lists of the Twelve Disciples in the Apostolic Scriptures, Peter’s name always appears first (Mark 3:16-19; Matthew 10:2-4; Luke 6:14-16; Acts 1:13). It is Peter who preaches to the masses gathered at *Shavuot*/Pentecost in Acts ch. 2 when the Holy Spirit is poured out, and it is he who goes to the centurion Cornelius, the first non-Jewish person specifically recorded to have received the good news (Acts 10). Peter had a special calling from God to go with the good news to “the circumcised” (Galatians 2:7) or the Jewish people, and he was a dominant figure at the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15.

Genuine Petrine authorship of 1 Peter is accepted by conservative theologians, and it was recognized as such in Christian works from the Second Century. Polycarp definitely quotes from 1 Peter in the early Second Century: “In whom, though now ye see Him not, ye believe, and

believing, rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory [1 Peter 1:8];’ into which joy many desire to enter” (*Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians* 1:3).² In the late Second Century, Irenaeus bears direct testimony to Petrine authorship of the letter:

[A]nd Peter says in his Epistle: “Whom, not seeing, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, ye have believed, ye shall rejoice with joy unspeakable [1 Peter 1:8]” (*Against Heresies* 4.9.2).³

[All this is declared,] that we may know that we shall give account to God not of deeds only, as slaves, but even of words and thoughts, as those who have truly received the power of liberty, in which [condition] a man is more severely tested, whether he will reverence, and fear, and love the Lord. And for this reason Peter says “that we have not liberty as a cloak of maliciousness” [1 Peter 2:16], but as the means of testing and evidencing faith (*Against Heresies* 4.16.5).⁴

And this it is which has been said also by Peter: “Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom now also, not seeing, ye believe; and believing, ye shall rejoice with joy unspeakable” [1 Peter 1:8]. For our face shall see the face of the Lord and shall rejoice with joy unspeakable,—that is to say, when it shall behold its own Delight (*Against Heresies* 5.7.2).⁵

The Epistle of 1 Peter is quoted within Second Century Christian writings, attributing its contents and authorship squarely to the Apostle Peter. The Fourth Century Christian historian Eusebius later details how, “As to the writings of Peter, one of his epistles called the first is acknowledged as genuine. This was anciently used by the ancient fathers in their writings as an undoubted work of the apostle” (*Ecclesiastical History* 3.3.1).⁶ While ancient witnesses attest to genuine Petrine authorship of 1 Peter, many theologians today doubt it on various

² BibleWorks 8.0: Schaff, *Early Church Fathers*.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ecclesiastical History*, 61.

¹ R.P. Martin, “Peter, First Epistle of,” in *ISBE*, 3:807.

levels. In the view of Guthrie, however, "The very great weight of patristic evidence in favour of Petrine authorship and the absence of any dissenting voices raises so strong a presupposition in favour of the correctness of the claims of the epistle to be Peter's own work that it is surprising that this has been questioned."⁷

There is some debate as to where Peter was when the letter of 1 Peter was composed. 1 Peter 5:13 identifies the author's location as being "Babylon." Is this to be regarded as Babylon in Mesopotamia, or is it a veiled reference to the city of Rome? Many consider this a reference to the latter.⁸ The traditional composition of 1 Peter, as summarized by Eusebius, is that Peter traveled to Rome with John Mark, called "my son Mark" in this letter (5:3). There, he orally communicated to Mark the material that Mark would incorporate into his Gospel, and he would also compile the Epistle of 1 Peter:

"Mark [was] the companion of Peter, and whose Gospel we have, that he should leave them a monument in writing of the doctrine thus orally communicated....Peter made mention of Mark in the first epistle, which he is also said to have composed at the same city of Rome, and that he showed this fact, by calling the city by an usual figure of speech, Babylon" (*Ecclesiastical History* 2.15.1, 2).⁹

Various conservatives think that this letter had to have been written in the early 60s C.E., placing 1 Peter in the range of 64-67 C.E. presumably, when Emperor Nero was in power in Rome.¹⁰ While persecution is undeniably a theme seen in 1 Peter, Carson and Moo do not think that any specific Roman persecution of Believers in history, by a known emperor, is intended, but rather "What is implied...is the hostility Christians were known to have faced from the general Roman population."¹¹ They further observe how "The readers of 1 Peter were probably being criticized, mocked, discriminated against, and perhaps even brought into court on trumped-up charges."¹²

Liberals today largely deny authentic Petrine authorship of 1 Peter, within the lifetime of the Apostle. A commonly proposed date by liberals, for the composition of 1 Peter, is usually thought to be the late First Century during the reign of Domitian.¹³ It is instead often proposed that some kind of Petrine school or group of admirers in Rome, possibly involving figures like Silvanus (Silas) and

Mark, composed 1 Peter. In the view of *ABD* at least, "1 Peter represents the witness of the apostle Peter, the personal networks of a brotherhood reaching from Jerusalem to Rome, and the rich tradition of the Roman Christian community...Speaking in the name of their martyred leader, this Petrine branch of the family of God in 'Babylon' assured fellow members of the household dispersed throughout Asia Minor of the bonds of suffering, faith, and home which united"¹⁴ them. The Epistle of 1 Peter, then, could actually preserve some distinct elements of Petrine teaching, but would not be an actual transcription of something authorized by the Apostle Peter.

Another reason often issued against genuine Petrine authorship of 1 Peter, is how Peter mainly had a mission to the Jewish people, and the letter has too broad an audience to really substantiate a non-Jewish readership.¹⁵ This assumes too much of a division between the main missionary audiences of Paul (the nations) and Peter (the Jews). It is not as though Paul never reached out to his own Jewish people, as he surely lamented over their widescale rejection of the Messiah (cf. Romans 11:13-14). Similarly, Peter was certainly not one who disregarded the nations, as authentic Petrine authorship of 1 Peter requires us to recognize this Apostle caring for the needs of *all people*. More to the point, if Paul had recently died and Peter needed to take over some of Paul's previous responsibilities among the nations, then this certainly allows for non-Jewish Believers to be within the *direct* purview of Peter's influence and mentoring.¹⁶

Liberal theologians also tend to doubt Petrine authorship of 1 Peter, because of the high Greek composition style that this letter demonstrates to have,¹⁷ as a formal epistle.¹⁸ The Apostle Peter with a fisherman's background is believed to have been largely uneducated and unsophisticated (cf. Acts 4:13),¹⁹ which is hardly what the Epistle of 1 Peter demonstrates from its author. Yet, given the amount of time that transpired between Peter's calling by Yeshua to follow Him, and the strong likelihood of secretarial assistance, Petrine authorship cannot be ruled out at all. "[I]t is difficult to find arguments which rule out Petrine authorship completely, especially if the involvement of a co-worker or secretary in this letter composition is posited" (*ECB*).²⁰

Is it true that as a fisherman, Peter would have been unable to learn or communicate at all in Greek? While Acts 4:13 says that Peter was "uneducated and untrained," this "probably means only that Peter

⁷ Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 762.

⁸ Cf. John H. Elliott, "Peter, First Epistle of," in *ABD*, 5:277; J.R. Michaels, "1 Peter," in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament & its Developments*, 915; Carson and Moo, 646.

⁹ *Ecclesiastical History*, 50.

¹⁰ Martin, "Peter, First Epistle of," in *ISBE*, 3:808-809.

¹¹ Carson and Moo, 639.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ W.C. van Unnik, "Peter, First Letter of," in *IDB*, 3:762; Graham N. Stanton, "1 Peter," in *ECB*, pp 1494-1495.

¹⁴ Elliott, "Peter, First Epistle of," in *ABD*, 5:277-278.

¹⁵ Cf. Peter H. Davids, "Peter, First Letter of," in *EDB*, 1037.

¹⁶ Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, pp 773-774.

¹⁷ Cf. Elliott, "Peter, First Epistle of," in *ABD*, 5:272.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 5:270.

¹⁹ van Unnik, "Peter, First Letter of," in *IDB*, 3:763.

²⁰ Stanton, "1 Peter," in *ECB*, 1495.

and John were not versed in rabbinic lore" (Martin, *ISBE*),²¹ meaning that neither was ignorant in terms of basic reading and writing. As far as Peter's own Greek competence is concerned, "it must be remembered that in Peter's day Galilee was probably bi-lingual: the Greek language would have been familiar to Peter from boyhood (his own brother's name [Andrew] is a Greek one), and being a fisherman and living on one of the great trade routes would have made it necessary for him to speak it regularly" (*NBCR*).²² Carson and Moo further describe, "recent research on languages in first-century [Israel] has revealed that Greek was widely used...Peter probably grew up using Greek to converse with buyers of his fish,"²³ as a second language. When we couple this with three decades of ministry work by the Apostle Peter by the time of 1 Peter's composition, including some regular interaction with Greeks and Romans, Peter would have had to learn Greek in the Lord's service by His Divine empowerment. None of this should ever subtract, however, from *Kefa* (כֶּפֶת) or *Kēphas* (Κηφᾶς) being a First Century Jew with a high appreciation for the Tanach Scriptures.²⁴

Even if Peter were not necessarily an expert Greek speaker or orator, this by no means excludes Peter authorizing the composition of this letter via the hand of an amanuensis. The letter itself says, "Through Silvanus...I have written to you briefly" (5:12, NASU). If Peter could not write in excellent Greek, there is nothing wrong with Silvanus (Silas) serving as Peter's secretary in the composition of 1 Peter, as well as playing some role in specifying the letter's contents. Silvanus likely did the same with Paul, as is attested in 1 Thessalonians 1:1. Silvanus playing a large role in the composition of 1 Peter is intensified if Peter were at all confined or arrested, like Paul was when 2 Timothy was composed (which was likely transcribed at Paul's request by Luke).

A few conservatives, though, have actually ascribed Silvanus/Silas as being the actual author of the Epistle of 1 Peter.²⁵ While there are no ancient traditions that attest to this, such a view would by necessity, probably place the composition of 1 Peter quite close to the time of the Apostle's death. Silvanus being the author of 1 Peter, incorporating the teachings delivered to him by Peter himself, is to be preferred over a largely anonymous Petrine

school composing it a generation later than Peter at the end of the First Century. Guthrie points us more in the direction of Silvanus/Silas being the co-author of 1 Peter, along with the Apostle, stating, "The Silas (Silvanus) hypothesis cannot, therefore be ruled out, and forms a reasonable alternative for those whose main objection to Petrine authorship is linguistic."²⁶

Sadly, Messianics who might advocate that 1 Peter would have been written in Hebrew or Aramaic, might tend to fall into the same liberal arguments against Peter writing it. A Hebrew or Aramaic origin simply does not align with the history, extant traditions, and the intended audience of the epistle in mainly Northwestern Asia Minor. Linguistically speaking, "1 Peter has long been recognized" for the "excellence of its Greek style" (*ECB*),²⁷ as the author's "command of Greek syntactical usages is not inconsiderable" (Guthrie).²⁸

The intended audience of the Epistle of 1 Peter is identified early in its composition: "To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen" (1:1, NASU). The fact that 1 Peter lacks any quantitative personal references from the writer to the readers, indicates that it was to be read as a kind of circular epistle, and was not a private letter. Was the audience of 1 Peter Jewish, non-Jewish, or a mix of both? Both conservative and liberal interpreters are agreed that the audience was mixed.²⁹ While the Jewish Believers who received 1 Peter would have probably had an easier time understanding the many intertextual quotations from and allusions to the Tanach (Old Testament), a non-Jewish audience can by no means be excluded.

The audience of 1 Peter is actually labeled to be "the exiles of the Dispersion" (1:1, RSV), *parepidēmois diasporas* (παρεπιδήμοις διασποράς). In the First Century C.E., this would have been understood by many in terms of Diaspora Jews.³⁰ This leads some to think that the primary audience of 1 Peter was just Jewish Believers. Does Peter intend to include non-Jewish Believers as well, as a part of the Dispersion? The text of the letter forces any honest reader to draw non-Jews as being among those who would hear 1 Peter: "For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries" (4:3, NASU). Among "the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance" (1:14, NASU) would have been pagan

²¹ Martin, "Peter, First Epistle of," in *ISBE*, 3:808.

²² David H. Wheaton, "1 Peter," in D. Guthrie and J.A. Motyer, eds., *The New Bible Commentary Revised* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 1236; cf. Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, pp 767-768.

²³ Carson and Moo, 642.

²⁴ While most of the Apostles' original Hebrew or Aramaic names (with the exception of Andrew and Philip) were simply transliterated into the Greek Scriptures, the name of Kefa, meaning "rock," was apparently both transliterated and translated (John 1:42). One sees the Apostle Peter referred to by both the transliteration *Kēphas* (for *Kefa*) and translation *Petros* (Πέτρος), "rock."

²⁵ Cf. Michaels, "1 Peter," in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament & its Developments*, 916.

²⁶ Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 769.

²⁷ Stanton, "1 Peter," in *ECB*, 1493.

²⁸ Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 763.

²⁹ Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 786; Elliot, "Peter, First Epistle of," in *ABD*, 5:273.

Against: Carson and Moo, 647 who think that the audience is almost exclusively non-Jewish.

³⁰ Van Unnik, "Peter, First Letter of," in *IDB*, 3:761.

idolatry, which does not apply too well if the audience of 1 Peter is exclusively Jewish.

In terms of the identification with non-Jewish Believers making up a part of “those who reside as aliens” (1:1, NASU), Peter references numerous passages from the Tanach, connecting his readership with what the calling of Israel is all about: **a people for God’s own possession who are to testify to the world of His greatness** (1 Peter 2:9-10; cf. Deuteronomy 7:6; 10:15; Exodus 19:6; Isaiah 61:6; 43:21; Deuteronomy 4:20; 14:2; and Hosea 2:23).³¹ Most notable of these references has to be Hosea 2:23 and its appeal to how, “I will say to those who were not My people, ‘You are My people!’ And they will say, ‘You are my God!’” (NASU). The Apostle Peter definitely thought that non-Jewish Believers were incorporated into the community of Israel via their faith in Yeshua.³² Yet, while claims of replacement theology can be made of the many Christian theologians who point this out, the perspective of Carson and Moo is much more tempered: “[Peter’s] emphasis is entirely on the inclusion of these mainly Gentile believers in the historic people of God.”³³

The Epistle of 1 Peter is extremely rich for the array of contents it possesses, in only five chapters. “Probably no document in the NT is so theological as 1 Peter, if ‘theological’ is taken in the strict sense of teaching about God” (Martin, *ISBE*).³⁴ 1 Peter includes a significant amount of Tanach intertextuality and allusions. The *ABD* entry for 1 Peter includes a rather extensive list of connections for any reader of the letter to consider:

“From the Greek OT (LXX) use was made of no less than twenty-four texts or combinations of texts. Linking the eschatological community with the history of God’s covenant people, this material served to stress the social estrangement and oppression of God’s people as resident aliens in diaspora (1:1, 17-18; 2:11; 3:6 [Gen 23:4; cf. Gen 12:1-20, 20:1-18; Isa 52:3, 5]; 3:10-12 [Ps 33(34)]; 4:14 [Isa 11:2]; 5:8-9, 13 [Jeremiah 50:51]; their election and holiness (1:15-16 [Lev 19:2]; 2:5, 9 [Exod 19:6; Isa 43:20; Hos 1:6, 9; 2:1, 3, 25]); the rejection, suffering, and exaltation of the Messiah-Servant (2:4-8 [Isa 8:14, 28:16; Psa 117(118):22]; 2:22-24 [Isa 53:4, 6, 9]); divine redemption of the righteous and oppressed (1:13 [Exod 12:11]; 1:17-19, cf. 1:2 [Exod 12-15; Isa 52:3, 5]; examples of Sarah, 3:5-6, and Noah, 3:20); fear of God rather than man (2:17 [Prov 24:21]; 3:6 [Prov 3:25]; 3:14-15 [Isa 8:12-13]); moral conduct (3:10-12 [Ps

33(34):13-17]; 4:8 [Prov 10:12]); the imminence of divine judgment (2:12 [Isa 10:3]; 4:17 [Ezek 9:6]; 4:18 [Prov 11:31 LXX]); and God’s nurture (2:3 [Psa 33(34):9]) and exaltation of the humble (5:5 [Prov 3:34 LXX]; 5:7 [Psa 54(55):23]).”³⁵

The main thrust of the audience of 1 Peter being “aliens and strangers” in Diaspora (1:1, NASU), widely concerns how they are in exile from the realm of God’s Heaven in a world of sinners. Historically, people regarded as “aliens” were subject to “Constant exposure to local fear and suspicion, ignorant slander, discrimination and manipulation...[as] the regular lot” (*ABD*).³⁶ The Believers, who would hear Peter’s admonitions to them, were most responsible for not responding in kind to the ways of the world, and for demonstrating good works (2:12) representative of their Messiah faith. There is an expected submission of the redeemed in Yeshua toward the government (2:14-17), of slaves toward their masters (2:18-25), and wives toward their husbands (3:1-7). Yet, regardless of the various specific conclusions drawn by today’s interpreters about the original, ancient setting of Peter’s instructions, all should agree that “these duties are transformed by the example of Christ (2:21-25) and by the purpose of those duties: to testify to God’s power and goodness (3:1)” (Carson and Moo).³⁷ This requires the power of the Lord to change these intuitions from within, which in the case of slaves toward masters would necessarily mean the eventual abolishment of slavery.

Due to much of the widespread attention in New Testament studies often given to the teachings of Yeshua, and/or the theology of the Apostle Paul, a letter like 1 Peter has been too overlooked.³⁸ More and more scholars, though, are beginning to reconsider the value of the Epistle of 1 Peter.³⁹ Local pastors and laypersons more generally are those who have tended to value 1 Peter the most, as a part of various sermons or their personal Bible reading and study.

Different readers of 1 Peter have tended to be impacted by a multitude of themes witnessed in the text. One of the most overarching of such themes is the priesthood of all Believers (2:5), and the service that born again men and women are to demonstrate, incumbent of their salvation. Endurance through suffering and persecution (3:13-14, 17) is also a major theme of 1 Peter. All followers of Yeshua are to live like Him, having holy lives (4:3-5).

The Epistle of 1 Peter is by no means a text overlooked by today’s Messianic community, as

³¹ Kurt Aland, et. al., *The Greek New Testament, Fourth Revised Edition* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft/United Bible Societies, 1998), pp 788-789.

³² Cf. Michaels, “1 Peter,” in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament & its Developments*, 917; Peter H. Davids, “Peter, First Letter of,” in *EDB*, 1038; Carson and Moo, 650.

³³ Carson and Moo, 651.

³⁴ Martin, “Peter, First Epistle of,” in *ISBE*, 3:809.

³⁵ Elliot, “Peter, First Epistle of,” in *ABD*, 5:271.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 5:273.

³⁷ Carson and Moo, 637.

³⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, 650.

³⁹ Elliot, “Peter, First Epistle of,” in *ABD*, 5:270.

many of its verses have served to instruct Messianic Believers in the ways of holiness.⁴⁰ One area of some interest to all readers should be Peter's quotation of Hosea 2:23 in 1 Peter 2:9-10, as this Tanach prophecy is applied to a mixed group of Jewish and non-Jewish Believers. What are the implications of this? Peter's immediate concern is obviously for the spiritual character and proper lifestyle of his audience. They have a special calling upon them that is very serious for them to fulfill—and the same is true of any of us today. Yet, the personal salvation of all those who encounter 1 Peter is squarely placed within the expectations of Israel's national, corporate restoration. The most that any of us can conclude about this, is that Peter applies a restoration of Israel prophecy, in the process of being fulfilled, to non-Jewish Believers too—but obviously leaves the details of fulfillment to the Lord. Investigating the fuller ramifications of 1 Peter 2:9-10, both missionally and eschatologically, will be very interesting to witness in the future years and decades of the emerging Messianic movement.

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⁴⁰ One Messianic commentary on the Epistle of 1 Peter is Arnold G. Fructenbaum, *Ariel's Bible Commentary: The Messianic Jewish Epistles—Hebrews, James, I&II Peter, Jude* (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2005); written more popularly is Joel Liberman, *Letters From the Rock: Studies in 1 & 2 Kefa (Peter)* (San Diego: Tree of Life, 2014).

1

Salutation

¹ Peter, an apostle of Yeshua the Messiah, to the elect who are aliens of the Diaspora in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

² according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Yeshua the Messiah: Grace and peace be multiplied to you.

A Living Hope

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah from the dead,

⁴ to an inheritance imperishable and undefiled and unfading, reserved in Heaven for you,

⁵ who by the power of God are guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials,

⁷ that the proof of your faith, *being* more precious than gold that perishes, even though it is tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Yeshua the Messiah;

⁸ and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you rejoice greatly with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

⁹ obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

¹⁰ Concerning this salvation, the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that *would come* to you,

¹¹ inquiring to know what person or what time the Spirit of Messiah within them was indicating, when testifying beforehand the sufferings of Messiah and the glories to follow them.

¹² It was revealed to them, that not to themselves, but to you, were they ministering these things, which now have been announced to you through those who proclaimed the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent forth from Heaven – things into which angels desire to look.

A Calling to Holy Living

¹³ Therefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Yeshua the Messiah.

¹⁴ As obedient children, do not be conforming yourselves to the former lusts in *the time of* your ignorance,

¹⁵ but as He who called you is holy, be holy yourselves also in all *your* conduct;

¹⁶ because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY" [Leviticus 11:44, 45; 19:2; 20:7]^a.

^a "For I am YHWH your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy; for I am holy. And you shall not make yourselves unclean with any of the swarming things that swarm on the Earth" (Leviticus 11:44, PME).

"For I am YHWH, who brought you up from the land of Egypt, to be your God; thus you shall be holy for I am holy" (Leviticus 11:45, PME).

"Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel and say to them, 'You shall be holy, for I YHWH your God am holy'" (Leviticus 19:2, PME).

"You shall consecrate yourselves therefore and be holy, for I am YHWH your God" (Leviticus 20:7, PME).

¹⁷ And if you call on Him as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your sojourning *on Earth*;

¹⁸ knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things, *like silver or gold*, from your futile way of life inherited from your ancestors;

¹⁹ but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood of Messiah*.

²⁰ For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but was made manifest at the end of times for your sake,

²¹ who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

²² Having purified your souls in your obedience to the truth for a sincere mutual love, love one another earnestly from the heart,

²³ having been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the word of God, which lives and abides.

²⁴ For, "ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS, AND ALL ITS GLORY LIKE THE FLOWER OF GRASS. THE GRASS WITHERS, AND THE FLOWER FALLS OFF,

²⁵ "BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ABIDES FOREVER" [Isaiah 40:6-8]^a. And this is the word which was proclaimed to you.

2

The Living Stone and the Holy Nation

¹ Therefore, putting away all wickedness and all guile and hypocrisy and envy and all slander,

² like newborn babies, long for the pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation,

³ if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord^b.

⁴ Coming to Him, a living stone, rejected by mortals, but with God chosen, precious,

⁵ you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Yeshua the Messiah.

⁶ For it is contained in Scripture, "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHIEF CORNER STONE, CHOSEN, PRECIOUS, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE PUT TO SHAME" [Isaiah 28:16]^c.

⁷ To you therefore who believe is the preciousness, but for those who disbelieve, "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER *stone*" [Psalm 118:22]^d;

⁸ and, "A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE" [Isaiah 8:14]^e; for they stumble at the word, being disobedient, to which also they were appointed.

⁹ But you are A CHOSEN RACE [Isaiah 43:20, LXX^f; Deuteronomy 7:6^g; 10:15^h], A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD [Exodus 19:6^a; Isaiah 61:6^b], A HOLY NATION [Exodus 19:6^c], A PEOPLE FOR *God's* OWN

^a "A voice says, 'Call out.' Then he answered, 'What shall I call out?' All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of YHWH blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever" (Isaiah 40:6-8, PME).

^b The CJB has bolded "tasted that *ADONAI* is good" for 2:3, noting a possible allusion to Isaiah 28:16: "therefore here is what *Adonai ELOHIM* says: 'Look, I am laying in Tziyon a tested stone, a costly cornerstone, a firm foundation-stone; he who trusts will not rush here and there'" (CJB).

^c "Therefore thus says the Lord YHWH, 'Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, a costly cornerstone *for* the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes *in it* will not be disturbed'" (Isaiah 28:16, PME).

^d "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief corner *stone*" (Psalm 118:22, PME).

^e "Then He shall become a sanctuary; but to both the houses of Israel, a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over, *and* a snare and a trap for the inhabitants of Jerusalem" (Isaiah 8:14, PME).

^f "The wild animals of the field will praise me, sirens and the daughters of ostriches, because I have provided water in the wilderness and rivers in the dry land, to give drink to my chosen race" (Isaiah 43:20, NETS).

^g "For you are a holy people to YHWH your God; YHWH your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the Earth" (Deuteronomy 7:6, PME).

^h "Yet on your ancestors did YHWH set His affection to love them, and He chose their descendants after them, *even* you above all peoples, as *it is this day*" (Deuteronomy 10:15, PME).

POSSESSION [Isaiah 43:21, LXX^d; Exodus 19:5^e; Deuteronomy 4:20^f; 7:6^g; 14:2^h], THAT YOU MAY PROCLAIM THE EXCELLENCIES OF HIM [Isaiah 43:21]ⁱ who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

¹⁰ once you were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY [Hosea 2:23].

Live as Servants of God

¹¹ Beloved, I urge you as strangers and aliens^k to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul,

¹² having your behavior excellent among the nations^l, so that in which they speak against you as evildoers, they may because of your good works, which they see, glorify God in the day of visitation.

¹³ Be submitted to every human institution for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme,

¹⁴ or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.

¹⁵ For such is the will of God that by doing right you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.

¹⁶ Act as free people, and do not *be* using your freedom as a covering for wickedness, but act as servants of God.

¹⁷ Honor everyone; love the brotherhood^m, fear God, honor the king.

The Example of Messiah's Suffering

¹⁸ Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fearⁿ, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh.

¹⁹ For this is a grace, if for the sake of conscience toward God someone endures sorrows, suffering unjustly.

²⁰ For what credit is it, if when you sin and are beaten, you endure patiently? But if when you do right and suffer *for it*, you endure patiently, this *finds* grace with God^o.

^a "and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the children of Israel" (Exodus 19:6, PME).

^b "But you will be called the priests of YHWH; you will be spoken of as ministers of our God. You will eat the wealth of nations, and in their riches you will boast" (Isaiah 61:6, PME).

^c "and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the children of Israel" (Exodus 19:6, PME).

^d "my people whom I have acquired to set forth my excellencies" (Isaiah 43:21, NETS).

^e "Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the Earth is Mine" (Exodus 19:5, PME).

^f "But YHWH has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, from Egypt, to be a people for His own possession, as today" (Deuteronomy 4:20, PME).

^g "For you are a holy people to YHWH your God; YHWH your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the Earth" (Deuteronomy 7:6, PME).

^h "For you are a holy people to YHWH your God; and YHWH has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the Earth" (Deuteronomy 14:2, PME).

ⁱ "The people whom I formed for Myself, will declare My praise" (Isaiah 43:21, PME).

^j "I will sow her for Myself in the land. I will also have compassion on her who had not obtained compassion, and I will say to those who were not My people, 'You are My people!' And they will say, 'You are my God!'" (Hosea 2:23, PME).

^k The CJB has bolded "aliens and temporary residents" for 2:11, noting a possible allusion to Genesis 23:4; 47:9:

"I am a foreigner living as an alien with you; let me have a burial site with you, so that I can bury my dead wife" (Genesis 23:4, CJB).

"and Ya'akov replied, 'The time of my stay on earth has been 130 years; they have been few and difficult, fewer than the years my ancestors lived'" (Genesis 47:9, CJB).

^l Grk. *en tois ethnesin* (ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσσιν); "among the pagans" (NIV/CJB).

^m Grk. *tēn adelphotēta* (τὴν ἀδελφότητα); "the family of believers" (NRSV); "your fellow believers" (TNIV).

ⁿ Grk. *phobos* (φόβος); often rendered as "respect" (RSV/NASU/NIV).

^o Grk. *touto charis para Theō* (τοῦτο χάρις παρὰ θεῶ); "this is gracious with God" (YLT).

²¹ For to this you have been called, because Messiah also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in His steps,

²² WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH [Isaiah 53:9]^a.

²³ And who, while being reviled, did not reviling in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but was committing *Himself* to Him who judges righteously;

²⁴ and who Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree^b, that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed^c.

²⁵ For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to^d the Shepherd and Guardian^e of your souls.

3

Wives and Husbands

¹ Likewise you wives, be submissive to your own husbands, so that even if any of *them* disobey the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives,

² as they observe your chaste behavior in fear.

³ Do not let your adornment be external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on fine clothing;

⁴ but *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, in the imperishable *adornment* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is very precious.

⁵ For in this manner previously the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands;

⁶ as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose children you have become if you do good, and are not fearing any intimidation.

⁷ Likewise you husbands, live with *your wives* in an understanding way^f, showing honor to the woman, as to the weaker vessel, as being also fellow heirs of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

Suffering for Righteousness' Sake

⁸ Finally^g, all of you be like-minded^h, sympathetic, loving one anotherⁱ, tenderhearted, humble-minded;

⁹ not repaying evil for evil, or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary bless; for to this you were called, that you might inherit a blessing.

^a "His grave was assigned with the wicked, yet He was with the rich in His death, because He had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in His mouth" (Isaiah 53:9, PME).

^b The CJB has bolded "He...bore our sins...stake" for 2:24, noting a possible allusion to Isaiah 53:4, 12; Deuteronomy 21:22-23:

"In fact, it was our diseases he bore, our pains from which he suffered; yet we regarded him as punished, stricken and afflicted by God...Therefore I will assign him a share with the great, he will divide the spoil with the mighty, for having exposed himself to death and being counted among the sinners, while actually bearing the sin of many and interceding for the offenders" (Isaiah 53:4, 12, CJB).

"If someone has committed a capital crime and is put to death, then hung on a tree, his body is not to remain all night on the tree, but you must bury him the same day, because a person who has been hanged has been cursed by God—so that you will not defile your land, which ADONAI your God is giving you to inherit" (Deuteronomy 21:22-23, CJB).

^c The CJB has bolded "by his wounds you were healed" for 2:24, noting a possible allusion to Isaiah 53:5: "But he was wounded because of our crimes, crushed because of our sins; the disciplining that makes us whole fell on him, and by his bruises* we are healed" (CJB).

^d The CJB has bolded "like sheep gone astray...you have turned to" for 2:25, noting a possible allusion to Isaiah 53:6: "We all, like sheep, went astray; we turned, each one, to his own way; yet ADONAI laid on him the guilt of all of us" (CJB).

^e Grk. *episkopos* (ἐπίσκοπος); also rendered as "Overseer" (NIV/ESV) or "Bishop" (ASV).

^f Grk. *kata gnōsin* (κατὰ γνώσιν); "according to knowledge" (ASV).

^g Grk. *To de telos* (Τὸ δὲ τέλος); "To sum up" (NASU); "now—the summary" (Brown and Comfort, 814).

^h Grk. *homophrōn* (ὁμόφρων); "**pert. to being like-minded, united in spirit, harmonious**" (BDAG, 709-710).

ⁱ Grk. *philadelphos* (φιλάδελφος); "love for one another" (NRSV).

¹⁰ For, “THE ONE WHO DESIRES LIFE, TO LOVE AND 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 GOOD; LET HIM SEEK PEACE AND PURSUE IT.

¹² “FOR THE EYES OF THE LORD ARE UPON THE RIGHTEOUS, AND HIS EARS ARE OPEN TO THEIR PRAYER, BUT THE FACE OF THE LORD IS AGAINST THOSE WHO DO EVIL” [Psalm 34:12-16]^a.

¹³ And who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good?

¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for righteousness¹ sake, *you are* blessed. AND DO NOT FEAR WHAT THEY FEAR, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED [Isaiah 8:12-13]^b,

¹⁵ but sanctify Messiah as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to every one who asks you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and fear,

¹⁶ having a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Messiah may be put to shame.

¹⁷ For it is better, if it should be the will of God, that you suffer for doing what is right than for doing what is evil.

¹⁸ For Messiah also died for sins once for all, *the* righteous for *the* unrighteous, so that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;

¹⁹ in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits in prison,

²⁰ who once were disobedient, when the longsuffering of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the preparing of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were brought safely through *the* water.

²¹ And corresponding to that^c, immersion^d now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah,

²² who is at the right hand of God^e, having gone into Heaven, with angels and authorities and powers being made subject to Him.

4

Good Stewards of God’s Grace

¹ Therefore, since Messiah has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same intention, for the one who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,

² so as to live the rest of your time in the flesh no longer for human lusts, but for the will of God.

^a “Who is the man who desires life, and loves *length* of days that he may see good? Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it. The eyes of YHWH are toward the righteous, and His ears are *open* to their cry. The face of YHWH is against evildoers, to cut off the memory of them from the Earth” (Psalm 34:12-16, PME).

^b “You are not to say, ‘*It is a conspiracy!*’ In regard to all that this people call a conspiracy, And you are not to fear what they fear or be in dread of it. It is YHWH of Hosts whom you should regard as holy. And He shall be your fear, and He shall be your dread” (Isaiah 8:12-13, PME).

^c Grk. *ho kai humas antitupon* (ὁ καὶ ὑμᾶς ἀντίτυπον); “also to which an antitype” (YLT); “Which antitype” (LITV).

^d Grk. noun *baptisma* (βάπτισμα); verb equiv. *baptizō* (βαπτίζω), more neutrally meaning, “wash ceremonially for purpose of purification, wash, purify, of a broad range of repeated ritual washing rooted in Israelite tradition,” but more theologically meaning “to use water in a rite for purpose of renewing or establishing a relationship w. God, plunge, dip, wash, baptize. The transliteration ‘baptize’ signifies the ceremonial character that NT narratives accord such cleansing” (BDAG, 164).

Perhaps due to some of the varied and diverse Christian traditions—across the spectrum—regarding “baptism,” Messianic people prefer to speak in terms of “immersion.” This is not because the term “baptism” is at all wrong, but more because of the intense amount of Christian-cultural associations or baggage that can come with it. A common term that you will hear across the Messianic community is *mikveh* (מִקְוֶה), which is a “gathering of water, esp. the ritual bath of purification” (Uastrow, 829).

^e The CJB has bolded “at the right hand of God” for 3:22, noting a possible allusion to Psalm 110:1: “A psalm of David: *ADONAI* says to my Lord, ‘Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool!’” (CJB).

³ For the time having past is sufficient *for you* to have worked out^a the desire of the nations^b, having proceeded in licentiousness, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.

⁴ In *all* this, they are surprised that you do not run with *them* into the same excess of dissipation, blaspheming;

⁵ *but* they will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

⁶ For this is why the good news has been proclaimed even to the dead, that though judged according to human flesh, they might live according to God in the spirit.

⁷ Now the end of all things^c is at hand; therefore, be of sound mind and sober for prayer.

⁸ Above all, be having fervent love for one another, FOR LOVE COVERS A MULTITUDE OF SINS [Proverbs 10:12]^d.

⁹ Be hospitable to one another without complaint.

¹⁰ As each has received a gift, be ministering it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God:

¹¹ whoever speaks, *speak* as it were oracles of God; whoever ministers, *ministering* as from the strength which God supplies, so that in all things God may be glorified through Yeshua the Messiah, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Suffering for the Messiah

¹² Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though something strange were happening to you;

¹³ but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Messiah, rejoice, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.

¹⁴ If you are reproached for the name of Messiah, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

¹⁵ For let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evildoer, or as a troublesome meddler;

¹⁶ but if *anyone* suffers as a “Christian,”^e let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name^f.

¹⁷ For the time *has come* for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what *will be* the outcome of those who do not obey the good news of God?

¹⁸ AND IF THE RIGHTEOUS IS SCARCELY SAVED, WHERE WILL THE UNGODLY AND SINNER APPEAR [Proverbs 11:31, LXX]^g?

¹⁹ Therefore let those also who suffer according to the will of God, commit their souls in doing what is right, to a faithful Creator.

^a Grk. verb *katergazomai* (κατεργάζομαι); “wrought” (ASV); “carried out” (NASU); “doing” (RSV/NRSV/ESV); *Katergazomai* is the same verb which appears in Philippians 2:12, and v. 3 is rendered in the LITV as “worked out.”

^b Grk. *to boulēma tōn ethnōn* (τὸ βούλημα τῶν ἐθνῶν); “the desire of the pagans” (TLV).

^c Grk. *Pantōn de to telos* (Πάντων δὲ τὸ τέλος); “The accomplishing of the goal of all things” (CJB).

^d “Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all transgressions” (Proverbs 10:12, PME).

^e The contemporary Messianic community understandably has a great deal of anxiety, when many of its members are referred to as “Christians” (widely due to modern associations), and this is reflected in the various renderings of 4:16 seen in Messianic Bible versions. *Hōs Christianos* (ὡς Χριστιανός) is rendered as “being [a] Messianic” in the CJB and HRV, and “for following Messiah” in the TLV. Hebrew New Testament editions like the Salkinson-Ginsburg have *ba’asher shel ha’Mashiach* (בְּאֲשֶׁר שֶׁל הַמְּשִׁיחַ), or Delitzsch with *ha’Meshi’chim* (הַמְּשִׁיחִים).

The rendering offered here actually follows that of the HCSB, which has placed the term Christian in quotation marks: “But if anyone suffers as a ‘Christian,’ he should not be ashamed but should glorify God in having that name.” This recognizes how the term *Christianos* was used by ancient people to describe the Messiah followers, but concedes how it was not a term originally applied by the Believers to themselves.

^f The dative case (indicating indirect object) *onomati* (ὀνόματι), can relate to “a false name, pretence, pretext... under the pretence” (LS, 560), giving support to the view that “Christian” was actually a term applied by outsiders to the First Century Messiah followers.

^g “If the righteous is scarcely saved, whether will the impious and the sinner appear?” (Proverbs 11:31, NETS).

5

Tending the Flock of God

¹ Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Messiah, and a partaker of the glory about to be revealed,

² shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not by compulsion, but willingly, according to *the will of God*; and not for dishonest gain, but eagerly;

³ not as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but being examples to the flock.

⁴ And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

⁵ Likewise, you who are younger, be submissive to the elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD OPPOSES THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE [Proverbs 3:34, LXX]^a.

⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,

⁷ casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you.

⁸ Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary, the Devil, prowls around as a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

⁹ But resist him, firm in the faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being accomplished by your brotherhood^b who are in the world.

¹⁰ And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Messiah, will Himself restore, confirm, strengthen, *and* establish you.

¹¹ To Him *be* the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Final Greetings

¹² By Silvanus, our faithful brother as I regard *him*, I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it!

¹³ She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, greets you, and *so does* Mark, my son.

¹⁴ Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace be to you all who are in Messiah.

^a "The Lord resists the arrogant, but he gives grace to the humble" (Proverbs 3:34, NETS).

^b Grk. *adelphotēs* (ἀδελφότης); "brothers and sisters" (NRSV); "fellow believers" (TNIV).