

THE FIRST LETTER OF PETER

{*The Christians in Asia Minor (present day Turkey) needed encouragement during a period of tension and persecution. The writer describes Christianity as "the living hope" or, "a life of hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead..." Scholars are divided about the authorship of this letter. Some hold that Peter, the Apostle was the author. Others believe that a Roman Christian who was concerned about the acceptance of his message wrote this letter and attributed it to Peter.*}

INSCRIPTION

{*Manuscripts provide the following inscriptions: "The First Epistle of Peter" P72, Aleph, A, K, Psi, 33, 69, 81, 614, 630 & 1241. There are slight variants in these manuscripts. "The First Epistle of Peter the Apostle" 1739. "The First Catholic Epistle of Peter" 323, 1505, 1739. "The Catholic, Holy and Praiseworthy Epistle of Peter" L & 049. "First Peter" B.*}

CHAPTER I

SALUTATION

<I Peter 1:1-2>

¹ Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to God's elect of the dispersion <*i.e. those who live in exile, or, the scattered believers*> residing in Pontus, <*Located on the south coast of the Black Sea.*> Galatia, <*In central Asia Minor. A portion of present day central Turkey.*> Cappadocia, <*East of Galatia and south of Pontus.*> Asia <*A portion of present day Turkey.*> and Bithynia <*West of Pontus, along the south shore of the Black Sea.*> ² who were chosen in accordance with the foreknowledge of God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ. May grace and peace be given you in increasing abundance.

A LIVING HOPE

<I Peter 1:3-12>

³ Let us give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who because of His great (*or, ample*) mercy has enabled us to be born anew into a life of hope, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead -- ⁴ a birth that provides an inheritance that is imperishable, without blemish and unfading, which is reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are protected by the power of God through your faith, for salvation which is ready to be disclosed at the end of time <*i.e. the end of the world.*? *The Greek word "καιρος" used here usually denotes "appointed time". "χρονος" is "chronological time" with no set limit of duration.*> ⁶ Be joyful because of this, even though now for a short time you are distressed by a variety of troubles. ⁷ These take place in order that your faith might be [tested;] ¹ <*i.e. that it might be found to be genuine.*> it being more precious than gold which melts but is refined by fire, so that your faith might prove to be for praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸ Even though you have not [seen] ² Him now, you love Him. You do not see Him now, but in spite of that you believe and you rejoice with inexpressible joy and are clothed with splendor while you are obtaining, ⁹ as the result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

¹⁰ This salvation the prophets searched for and investigated and prophesied about the grace which was to become yours (*or, you were to receive*). ¹¹ They tried to research the circumstances and

1 {C} Minor variants occur.

2 {B} ἰδόντες meaning "to catch sight of" P72, Aleph, B, C, 048 several minuscules, Old Latin, Peshitta & Hareclean Syriac, Sahidic Coptic, Armenian & Ethiopic. εἰδοτες meaning "to perceive" A, K, P, Psi, 049, 056, 0142, many minuscules & Bohairic Coptic.

the time that the Spirit of Christ indicated when it predicted the sufferings that were destined for Christ and the resulting glories. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were not simply serving themselves. You also, in the announcements that have been made by those who through the Holy [Spirit,]³ were sent from heaven, brought the Good News of the sort that angels long to look into.

A CALL TO HOLY LIVING

<I Peter 1:13-25>

¹³ Your minds must be ready for action! Fix your hope entirely on the grace of God that will soon be yours, when Jesus Christ is revealed. ¹⁴ You should be like obedient children who do not allow their lives to be shaped by controlling passions as was the case in your previous ignorance. ¹⁵ Instead, imitating the Holy One who called, you should, yourself, become holy in your behavior ¹⁶ for it is written: 'You must be holy, because I am holy!' (cf. *Leviticus 11:44; 19:2; 20:7*)

¹⁷ Moreover, if you address the one who impartially judges you according to your work, as Father, you need to behave in a reverent way (or, *with awe*) during your stay on earth. ¹⁸ You must know (or, *be aware*) that it is not with perishable wealth such as silver and gold that you have been redeemed (or, *ransomed*) <The Greek word for "ransomed" "λυτροω" is used for the payment of acquired freedom for a slave. cf. *Titus 2:14; Luke 24:33*> from your life of futility which was inherited from your forefathers, ¹⁹ by the precious blood of Jesus Christ who was the flawless and unblemished lamb. ²⁰ He was determined (or, *predestined*) for that purpose, prior to the creation of the world but this has only been revealed (or, *disclosed*) in these last days and that was done for your sakes. ²¹ Through Him you are believers in God who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory. Because of this your faith rests in God!

²² Because of your souls being purified by your obedience to the [truth]⁴ that engenders sincere love among fellow believers from the [heart,]⁵ you must love one another sincerely and fervently. ²³ You have been born all over again by God's living and ever-enduring Word, not from perishable, but rather from imperishable seed.

²⁴ 'For all humanity is like grass (or, *vegetation*)

and all its glory is like the grass' flower.

The grass dries up

the flowers drop off

²⁵ but the Word of the Lord endures forever.' (cf. *Isaiah 40:6-8*)

And this is what is meant in the message that has been preached to you in the Good News.

CHAPTER II

THE LIVING STONE AND THE HOLY NATION

<I Peter 2:1-10>

¹ Rid yourselves of all maliciousness and deceit, all pretense, jealousy and slander (*literally, evil speech*). ² Like new born babies, long thirstily for the unadulterated spiritual milk, so that, as you drink it you might grow up into salvation. ³ [If]⁶ you [who believe]⁷ have had a taste of the Lord's

3 {C} So: P72, A, B, Psi, 33 & 436. "in the Holy Spirit" Aleph, C, K, P, 049, 056, 0142 & many minuscules.

4 {C} So: P72, A, B, C, Psi, many minuscules, Peshitta & Harclean Syriac, Sahidic & Bohairic Coptic. "truth by means of the Spirit" K, P, 049, 056, 0142, many minuscules & Armenian.

5 {C} So: A, B & several Old Latin. "pure heart" P72, Aleph in the original hand, C, K, P, Psi, 049, 056, 0142, many minuscules, a few Old Latin, Peshitta & Harclean Syriac, Sahidic & Bohairic Coptic & Armenian.

6 {C} So: P72, Aleph in the original hand, A, B & Old Latin. An intensive of the word "if" is used in many minuscules.

7 {C} So: P72, Aleph in the original hand, A, B, a few Old Latin, Peshitta Syriac & some Coptic translations. An alternative form is used in Aleph in the third corrective hand, C, K, P, Psi, 049, 056, many minuscules, many Old Latin & Harclean Syriac.

goodness (*or, kindness*)⁴ come <The word "come" "προσερχομαι" is usually used to describe approach to God, as in a priest's approach to the altar of sacrifice.> to Him who is the living stone, definitely rejected by humanity (*literally, men*), but chosen by God and precious.⁵ You, yourselves, are also like living stones. Let yourselves be built up into a spiritual house, as a holy (*or, dedicated*) priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices which will be most acceptable to God through Jesus Christ,

⁶ for, as the Writings say,

'See! I am placing in Zion
a chosen and valuable cornerstone
and whoever has faith in Him
will never suffer disappointment.' (*cf. Isaiah 28:16 LXX*)

⁷ He is valuable to you who believe but to those who do not believe He is

'the stone which was rejected by the builders.
This same stone has become the cornerstone.' (*cf. Psalm 118:22*)

⁸ and has become

'a stone to cause stumbling (*or, stub one's toe on,*)
a rock upon which to trip.' (*cf. Isaiah 8:14*)

They trip over it because they disbelieve the message. To this they have been destined.

⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, consecrated to God, a people who are claimed by Him, so that you might make known His perfections, for He has called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.

¹⁰ 'Once you were not a people
but now you are the people of God.
Once you experienced no mercy,
now you have received mercy.' (*cf. Hosea 1:6, 9; 2:23*)

LIVE AS SERVANTS OF GOD

<I Peter 2:11-17>

¹¹ My beloved, I appeal to you as strangers and refugees to refrain from the passions of your lower nature which continually wage a campaign against your soul. ¹² Live lives that are honorable in the midst of the Gentiles, in order that, even though they defame or malign you as those who do evil, that they might recognize your good works and give glory to God in the day of His visitation (*or, the day God returns as judge*).

¹³ Be submissive to every person who is in authority, for the Lord's sake: to the ruler (*literally, king or emperor*) who is supreme, ¹⁴ and to the governors <*i.e. government officials*> who are sent by him (*or, commissioned by him*) to punish criminals and to praise those who have done well (*or, been well behaved*). ¹⁵ It is the intention (*or, the will*) of God that by doing well (*or, being well behaved*), you should silence (*literally, muzzle*) the ignorant talk of foolish people (*literally, men*). ¹⁶ Live as those who are free, yet do not use your freedom as a cover (*or, pretext*) for wickedness but rather, live as God's servants (*literally, slaves*). ¹⁷ Deal in an honorable fashion with everyone. Love your fellow believers! Revere God (*literally, fear, the concept being that of awe*). Honor those who are rulers.

THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST'S SUFFERING

<I Peter 2:18-25>

¹⁸ You servants <The Greek word "οικετης" usually refers to domestic help. Perhaps in the 21st century the word "laborers" would be more appropriate.> must submit to your masters,

<Perhaps "employers" in the 21st century> showing highest respect <This implies that the employer is one who deserves that respect.> not only to those who are kind and considerate, but also to those who are unfair in their treatment of you. ¹⁹ This is acceptable to God who provides His grace, if a person, because of consciousness of God's presence bears unjust treatment uncomplainingly. In fact, when you have done wrong and are beaten for it (*or, are harshly dealt with*). ²⁰ of what credit is there when you bear it patiently <*i.e. if you deserved it*>? However, when you do what is right and yet suffer for it, bear it patiently, for this is pleasing to God. ²¹ You have been called to this very situation because Christ [suffered] ⁸ [on your behalf (*or, for you*)] ⁹ leaving you to be an example for He wanted us to follow in His footsteps.

²² He committed no sin

and no one found deceit (*or, guile*) in his utterances (*literally, his mouth*).'

(*cf. Isaiah 53:9*)

²³ When He was insulted He did not insult in return. When he suffered He did not threaten. He committed Himself and His cause to the righteous Judge. ²⁴ Christ, Himself, carried our sins personally in His own body on the cross so that we might be separated from our sins and might live righteous lives. Because of His wounds you have been healed! (*cf. Isaiah 53:5*) ²⁵ You have strayed like lost sheep but now you have come back to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.

CHAPTER III

WIVES AND HUSBANDS

<I Peter 3:1-7>

¹ Similarly, [you] ¹⁰ wives should subject yourselves to your husbands, so that even if some among them do not believe the Message (*literally, word*) <*i.e. the Word of God*>, they might be won by the conduct of their wives, ² with no argument, after observing their wives who conduct themselves in purity and reverent behavior. ³ You should not seek beauty by outward adornment: the braiding of your hair, the wearing of gold trinkets, or wearing of fashionable clothing ⁴ but in contrast to that, your beauty should lie in the imperishable qualities of a gentle and peaceful spirit <*i.e. personality*> which is certainly a priceless possession in the sight of God. ⁵ It is in this way that holy (*or, devout*) women in times past, who placed their hopes in God, adorned themselves. They subjected themselves to their husbands. ⁶ Sarah <*The name means "princess". cf. Genesis 11:29-31 ff.*> for example, was obedient to Abraham, <*The name means "the father of a multitude". cf. Genesis 11:24-29 ff.*> calling him 'My master'. You have become her daughters if you do right <*i.e. lead honest lives*> and do not permit yourselves to be terrorized by fear.

⁷ You husbands, similarly, live with your wives with the understanding that they are weaker than you. In the light of this you must treat them with respect. They also, along with you, are the [fellow heirs] ¹¹ of God's gift of life <*i.e. eternal life*>. In that way your progress will not be hindered.

SUFFERING FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS SAKE

<I Peter 3:8-27>

8 {B} So: P72, A, B, C, K, P, 049, 056, 0142, many minuscules, Old Latin, Harclean Syriac, Sahidic, Bohairic & Fayyumic Coptic & Ethiopian. "died" Aleph, Psi, Peshitta Syriac & Armenian.

9 {B} So: P72, Aleph, A, B, C, Psi, some minuscules, Old Latin, Harclean Syriac, Sahidic Coptic, Armenian & Ethiopian. "for us" K, P, several minuscules, 2 Old Latin & possibly Fayyumic Coptic.

10 {D} So: P72, Aleph, B & several minuscules.

11 {C} So: P72, Aleph in the third corrective hand, B, some minuscules, Old Latin, Peshitta Syriac, Armenian & Ethiopic. The case is different in A, C, K, P, Psi, 049, 056, 0142, many minuscules, & Harclean Syriac. One is nominative, the other dative.

8 Finally, all of you should be harmonious, sympathetic, loving one another *<i.e. compassionate>*, without pride, not repaying injury for injury *<i.e. being revengeful>*, nor abuse with abuse. 9 On the other hand, repay with a blessing because you have received a blessing, for this is what God has promised you who have been called by God as heirs:

10' Whoever desires to enjoy life,
and see happy days,
let him prevent his tongue from evil talk,
and his lips from speaking treacherously.
11 Let him turn away from evil and do what is right,
let him seek peace and pursue it,
12 for the Lord's eyes are on the righteous
and His ears are attentive to their prayers.

But the Lord's face is set against those who do evil." (*cf. Psalm 34:12-16*)

13 Now then, who will harm you if you are eager for that which is right? 14 However, even though you undergo suffering on account of righteousness, you may consider yourself blessed. Do not be afraid because of their threats or become confused (*or, worry*), 15 but revere [Christ] ¹² in your hearts and always be prepared to defend yourself before anyone who asks you for the reason why you cherish the hope that is within you. But do so in a considerate and respectful manner. 16 Keep your conscience free of guilt so that, should you be [slandered] ¹³ *<The Greek word "καταλαλεω" also has the concept of "being insulted".>* by those who defame your fine Christian life, these might be put to shame. 17 It is better for you to suffer for doing that which is right, if this is the will of God, than for doing that which is wrong. 18 For Christ, also, once [died] ¹⁴ for sinners [on your behalf,] ¹⁵ the innocent one, on behalf of the many who are guilty in order to bring [us] ¹⁶ to God. He was physically put to death but was made alive spiritually. 19 By virtue of this spirit He also went, preaching to the imprisoned spirits. 20 In the past these had been disobedient at the time when God patiently waited. At the time of Noah, *<The name means "rest" cf. Genesis 5-9>* during the construction of the ark, in which a few people, namely, eight, were safely brought through the water. 21 Corresponding to (*or, prefiguring*) that symbol is baptism which now saves you, not through washing away of physical filthiness but by the earnest craving of a good conscience after God *<i.e. know in faith>* through the resurrection of Jesus Christ who is at God's right hand. 22 He went to heaven and angels, authorities and powers have been made submissive to Him.

CHAPTER IV GOOD STEWARDS OF GOD'S GRACE

<I Peter 4:1-11>

1 Christ was [the subject of physical suffering.] ¹⁷ You also must arm yourselves *<A military*

12 {B} So: P72, Aleph, A, B, C, Psi, many minuscules, Old Latin, Peshitta & Harclean Syriac, Sahidic & Bohairic Coptic & Armenian. "God" K, P, 049, 056, 0142 & many minuscules.

13 {B} So: P72, B, Psi, 8 minuscules & Sahidic Coptic. "slandered as an evildoer" Syriac, Bohairic Coptic & with variants, Aleph, A, C, K, P, 049 & many minuscules.

14 {D} So: P72, Aleph, A, C, P & many minuscules. "physically suffered" B, K, P, 049, 056, 0142 & many minuscules. Numerous other variants occur.

15 {C} So: P72, A & several minuscules. There are many other variants.

16 {C} The word "us" varies in the manuscripts.

17 {B} So: P72, B, C, Psi, 049, five minuscules, Old Latin & Sahidic Coptic. "the subject of physical suffering for you (or, on your behalf)" Aleph in the third corrective hand and in a variant form in the original hand, A, K, P, 056, 0142 & many minuscules. "the subject of physical suffering sacrificed for you" Armenian & Ethiopic.

metaphor is used.> with the same attitude, for He who has suffered physically is done with [sin] ¹⁸ (*or, is no longer involved with sin*). ² From now on you are to spend the rest of your natural life ruled not by your base (*or, human*) passions but by the will of God, ³ [for you] ¹⁹ have devoted enough time in the past to those things that bring delight and are being done by the Gentiles, pursuing as you did, and indulging in shameless immorality, passions, drunkenness, revelry, carousing and forbidden idolatries (*or, disgusting idols*). ⁴ In the light of this, people are astonished that you are running headlong in the same course of excess in reckless living, and abuse (*or, insult*) you for it. ⁵ It will be necessary for them to give an accounting of themselves to Him who stands ready to pass judgment on the living and the dead. ⁶ It was for this reason that the Good News was proclaimed to the dead *<i.e. those who have since died>* that they might be judged as all persons in the body are judged, but may live with God spiritually.

⁷ The end of all things is near. Be serious and self-controlled so as to be able to be in prayer. ⁸ Above everything else, love one another with fervent love for love conceals (*or, covers*) many sins. ⁹ Be hospitable toward one another. Never begrudge hospitality (*or, do not complain*). ¹⁰ What ever grace gifts *<The Greek word "χαρισμα" is the root of our word charismatic.>* you have received, use these gifts in the service of one another, doing this as good stewards of the variety of grace gifts that have been received. ¹¹ Whoever speaks (*or, preaches*), let it be as if it were God's message. If anyone provides a service, let it be with the strength God supplies, so that glory may be given to God in everything through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and power for ever and ever. Amen.

SUFFERING AS A CHRISTIAN

<I Peter 4:12-19>

¹² My beloved, do not be surprised (*or, alarmed*) at the fiery test (*or, trial*) which is coming when you, yourself, are put to the test, as though something strange was happening to you. ¹³ On the other hand, rejoice that you are sharing to some extent in the sufferings of Christ, so that when His glory is revealed you may be able to rejoice with triumphant exaltation. ¹⁴ You are blessed if you experience being insulted for the [glory of] ²⁰ the Spirit of God which [is resting] ²¹ on you.

¹⁵ Let none of you suffer as a murderer or as a thief or as a criminal or as an interferer (*or, meddler*) in other people's affairs *<i.e. as an informer or revolutionary>*. ¹⁶ However, if you suffer for being a Christian, do not feel ashamed. Honor God for having that name *<i.e. Christian,>* (*or, Thank God that you bear Christ's name*). ¹⁷ The time has come for judgment to begin in God's household. If it begins with us, what will the destiny be for those who reject God's Good News?

¹⁸ If it is difficult for the righteous to be saved

what will become of the impious and sinful?' (*cf. Proverbs 11:31 LXX*)

¹⁹ Now therefore, let those who are suffering because of God's will and are living a good life entrust their souls to the Creator who is always faithful.

CHAPTER V

18 {B} So: P72, Aleph in the original hand, A, C, K, P & many minuscules. "sins" Aleph in the third corrective hand, B, Psi, Old Latin, Peshitta Syriac & Ethiopic. "from sin" 049, 056, 0142.

19 {B} So: P72, Aleph in the third corrective hand, A, B, Psi, many minuscules, Old Latin, Peshitta & Harclean Syriac. * Armenian. "since you" Aleph in the original hand & some minuscules.

20 {B} So: P72, B, K, Psi, 049 & a number of minuscules. "glory and power" in variant forms, A, P, 056, 0142, many minuscules, Old Latin, Harclean Syriac, & Sahidic Coptic. "His glory and power" Aleph in the original hand.

21 {A} So: "αναπαυω" Aleph in the original hand, 056, 0142, 436, 629, 1739 & several ancient translations. A different word for "rest" "επαναπαυομαι" is used in some manuscripts. The following gloss is found in K, P, Psi & many minuscules and early translations: "on you for on their part He is blasphemed but on your part He is glorified."

TENDING THE FLOCK

<I Peter 5:1-11>

1 I appeal to those who are Elders, since I am a fellow Elder and an eyewitness of the sufferings, <It could also be translated, "and bear witness to the sufferings" The Greek word "μαρτυς" is used in either sense.> a sharer also in the glory that is to be revealed. 2 Be shepherds of God's flock that is among you. <i.e. as pastors and leaders of the congregations.> Perform your task [voluntarily, not unwillingly, in accordance with the will of God]²² not because of greed (*literally, not for mere pay*) but eagerly, 3 not domineeringly over those who are under your leadership, but become examples to your flock. 4 When the chief shepherd appears (*literally, is manifest*) you will receive your reward, a never fading crown of glory.

5 In the same way, you young men, submit yourselves to the authority of those who are older (*literally, Elders*). All of you must humble yourselves (*literally, clothe yourselves with humility*) because

'God is hostile toward the arrogant

but He shows His grace to the humble.' (*cf. Proverbs 3:34 LXX; Job 22:29*)

6 Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, so that He will lift you up at the proper time. 7 Throw all your anxiety (*or, all your worry*) on Him, because He is concerned (*or, cares*) about you.

8 Be self-controlled, be on the alert. Your enemy, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for [someone to devour.]²³ <Cf. the similarity with Job 1:7.> 9 Be firm in your faith and resist him. You must realize that the same sufferings you are enduring (*literally, that are imposed upon you*) are laid on your fellow believers through the entire world 10 after you have suffered for a brief time. The God of Grace, who has called you to share His eternal glory in [Christ]²⁴ will Himself perfect you and give you support, strength and establish you on a firm foundation. 11 To Him be [power]²⁵ for [ever.]²⁶

FINAL GREETINGS

<I Peter 5:12-14>

12 I have written this short letter with the assistance of Silvanus, <The name means "wooded". An alternate form of the name is "Silas".> I regard him as your faithful brother, that you might be encouraged and in order to testify that the grace of God, in which you stand, is true. Stand firm in it. 13 The church in Babylon, <Scholars feel this is a veiled reference to Rome.> also chosen as you have been, sends greetings, as does my son, Mark. <The name means "a large hammer".> 14 Greet one another with the kiss of love. Peace be with you who are in [Christ.]²⁷ [Amen.]²⁸

22 {C} So: P72, Aleph in the third corrective hand, A, P, Psi & many minuscules. In some manuscripts the word "oversight" "αναγκαστικως" is used instead of the word "αναγκαστως". Some manuscripts omit "in accordance with the will of God"

23 {D} So: Aleph in the third corrective hand, P, K & many minuscules. "he might devour" P72, A, 056, a number of minuscules, Old Latin, Peshitta & Harclean Syriac, Aramaic & Ethiopic.

24 {C} So: Aleph, 0206 & five minuscules. "the Christ" B. "Christ Jesus" P72, A, K, P, Psi, 049, 050, 0142, many minuscules, Old Latin, Sahidic & Boharic Coptic & Armenian. "Jesus Christ" Peshitta Syriac.

25 {C} So: P72, A, B, Psi, 0205. "glory" 336, 915, 1835. "glory and power" K, 049, 056, 0142, 330, 451, 2127. "the glory and the power" Aleph, P & a number of minuscules. "the power and the glory" many minuscules. "the glory and dominion" 629. "glory, dominion and honor" Peshitta Syriac.

26 {C} So: P72 & B. "for ever and ever" Aleph, A, K, P, Psi, 049, 056, 0142, 0206, many minuscules & Old Latin.

27 {C} So: A, B, Psi & Old Latin. "Christ Jesus" Aleph, K, P, 049, 056, 0142 & many minuscules. "the Lord Jesus" 629.

28 {C} Omitted by A, B, Psi & several minuscules. Added by Aleph, K, P, 049, 056, 0142, many minuscules & Old Latin.