



The First Letter of Peter
Bible Study Session 11
1 Peter 2:18-25
“Serving Non-Christian Bosses”



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Greek NT

18 Οἱ οἰκέται ὑποτασσόμενοι ἐν παντὶ φόβῳ τοῖς δεσπόταις, οὐ μόνον τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς καὶ ἐπιεικέσιν ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς σκολιοῖς. 19 τοῦτο γὰρ χάρις εἰ διὰ συνείδησιν θεοῦ ὑποφέρει τις λύπας πάσῃων ἀδίκως· 20 ποῖον γὰρ κλέος εἰ ἀμαρτάνοντες καὶ κολαφιζόμενοι ὑπομενεῖτε; ἀλλ' εἰ ἀγαθοποιοῦντες καὶ πάσχοντες ὑπομενεῖτε, τοῦτο χάρις παρὰ θεῶ. 21 εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ ἐκλήθητε, ὅτι καὶ Χριστὸς ἔπαθεν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, ὑμῖν ὑπολιμπάνων ὑπογραμμὸν ἵνα ἐπακολουθήσητε τοῖς ἴχνεσιν αὐτοῦ· 22 ὃς ἀμαρτίαν οὐκ ἐποίησεν οὐδὲ εὐρέθη δόλος ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτοῦ· 23 ὃς λοιδορούμενος οὐκ ἀντελοιδορεῖ, πάσῃων οὐκ ἠπειλεῖ, παρεδίδου δὲ τῷ κρίνοντι δικαίως· 24 ὃς τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἡμῶν αὐτὸς ἀνήνεγκεν ἐν τῷ σώματι αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον, ἵνα ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις ἀπογενόμενοι τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ ζήσωμεν· οὐ τῷ μῶλωπι ἰάθητε. 25 ἦτε γὰρ ὡς πρόβατα πλανώμενοι, ἀλλὰ ἐπεστράφητε νῦν ἐπὶ τὸν ποιμένα καὶ ἐπίσκοπον τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν.

Gute Nachricht Bibel

18 Ihr Sklaven und Sklavinnen, ordnet euch euren Herren und Herrinnen unter, und erweist ihnen den schuldigen Respekt, nicht nur den guten und freundlichen, sondern auch den launischen. 19 Es ist eine Gnade Gottes, wenn jemand ohne Schuld nur deshalb Kränkungen erfährt und leiden muss, weil er im Gewissen an Gott gebunden ist. 20 Habt ihr etwa Grund, euch zu rühmen, wenn ihr ein Unrecht begangen habt und dafür geschlagen werdet? Aber wenn ihr das Rechte getan habt und dafür leiden müsst, ist das eine Gnade von Gott. 21 Und eben dazu hat er euch berufen. Ihr wisst doch:

Christus hat für euch gelitten und euch ein Beispiel gegeben, damit ihr seinen Spuren folgt. 22 Ihr wisst: »Er hat kein Unrecht getan; nie ist ein unwahres Wort aus seinem Mund gekommen.« 23 Wenn er beleidigt wurde, gab er es nicht zurück. Wenn er leiden musste, drohte er nicht mit Vergeltung, sondern überließ es Gott, ihm zum Recht zu verhelfen. 24 Unsere Sünden hat er ans Kreuz hinaufgetragen, mit seinem eigenen Leib. Damit sind wir für die Sünden tot und können nun für das Gute leben. Durch seine Wunden seid ihr geheilt worden! 25 Ihr wart wie Schafe, die sich verlaufen haben; jetzt aber seid ihr auf den rechten Weg zurückgekehrt und folgt dem Hirten, der euch leitet und schützt.

NRSV

18 Slaves, accept the authority of your masters with all deference, not only those who are kind and gentle but also those who are harsh. 19 For it is a credit to you if, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly. 20 If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval. 21 For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps. 22 "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." 23 When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. 24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. 25 For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

NLT

18 You who are slaves must accept the authority of your masters. Do whatever they tell you -- not only if they are kind and reasonable, but even if they are harsh. 19 For God is pleased with you when, for the sake of your conscience, you patiently endure unfair treatment. 20 Of course, you get no credit for being patient if you are beaten for doing wrong. But if you suffer for doing right and are patient beneath the blows, God is pleased with you. 21 This suffering is all part of what God has called you to. Christ, who suffered for you, is your example. Follow in his steps. 22 He never sinned, and he never deceived anyone. 23 He did not retaliate when he was insulted. When he suffered, he did not threaten to get even. He left his case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly. 24 He personally carried away our sins in his own body on the cross so we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. You have been healed by his wounds! 25 Once you were wandering like lost sheep. But now you have turned to your Shepherd, the Guardian of your souls.

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Introduction to Study.

This lengthy passage continues the emphasis on outsiders that was begun in 1:11-12. But it turns a corner into a 'household code,' i.e., Haustafeln, format, although with some very distinctive traits in comparison to the more common Pauline expressions of the code in Eph. 5:22-6:9 and Col. 3:18-4:1. Additionally, Paul will have instructions for Christian slaves in 1 Tim. 6:1-2; and Titus 2:9-10. All of these texts, related to Christian slaves, form an important backdrop to Peter's very distinctive instruction here.

Ephesians 6:5-9.¹ **5 Slaves**, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as you obey Christ; 6 not only while being watched, and in order to please them, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. 7 Render service with enthusiasm, as to the Lord and not to men and women, 8 knowing that whatever good we do, we will receive the same again from the Lord, whether we are slaves or free. 9 And, **masters**, do the same to them. Stop threatening them, for you know that both of you have the same Master in heaven, and with him there is no partiality.

Colossians 3:22-4:1.² **3.22 Slaves**, obey your earthly masters in everything, not only while being watched and in order to please them, but wholeheartedly, fearing the Lord. 23 Whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord and not for your masters, 24 since you know that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; you serve the Lord Christ. 25 For the wrongdoer will be paid back for whatever wrong has been done, and there is no partiality. 4.1 **Masters**, treat your slaves justly and fairly, for you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

1 Timothy 6:1-2. 1 Let all who are **under the yoke of slavery** regard their masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be blasphemed. 2 Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful to them on the ground that they are members of the church; rather they must serve them all the more, since those who benefit by their service are believers and beloved. Teach and urge these duties.

Titus 2:9-10. 9 Tell **slaves** to be submissive to their masters and to give satisfaction in every respect; they are not to talk back, 10 not to pilfer, but to show complete and perfect fidelity, so that in everything they may be an ornament to the doctrine of God our Savior.

1 Corinthians 7:20-24. 20 Let each of you remain in the condition in which you were called. 21 Were you a slave when called? Do not be concerned about it. Even if you can gain your freedom, make use of your present condition now more than ever. 22 For whoever was called in the Lord as a slave is a freed person belonging to the Lord, just as whoever was free when called is a slave of Christ. 23 You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of human masters. 24 In whatever condition you were called, brothers and sisters, there remain with God.

In the Haustafeln materials of Ephesians and Colossians, instructions to both Christian slaves and Christian slave owners are given. But in 1 Timothy, Titus, and First Corinthians instructions are given only to Christian slaves. In First Timothy, the instructions assume the Christian slave has a Christian owner, while in Titus the religious orientation of the owner is left undefined. The distinctive of First Peter is that the owner is assumed to not be a Christian, and the Christian slave is to be a witness to his non-Christian owner. This diversity of perspective reflects the individual needs of the groups being addressed by Peter and Paul in their letters.

The challenge of this text is one of application. We live in a world where slavery is at least illegal, although still present mostly as the forced bondage of women and children. In today's world a 'Christian slave owner' would be a contradiction of terms and not possible legitimately. The women and children in our world, who are enslaved for sexual abuse or for cheap labor, are caught up in a condition not legitimate and usually not legal.

This is a radically different situation than existed in the first century Roman empire that Paul and Peter are addressing. That world was dominated by slaves with almost a fourth of the Roman Empire populated by slaves. Unlike in early



¹For a detailed study of the Ephesians Haustafeln, see Lorin L. Cranford, "Eph. 5:22-6:9: An Ancient Christian Family," at cranfordville.com.

²For a detailed study of the Colossians Haustafeln on slaves, see Lorin L. Cranford, Colossian Bible study 16 on 3:22-4:1 at cranfordville.com.

modern Western society where slavery was primarily ethnically based, slaves in the Roman Empire were mostly captured prisoners in military battles of the Roman army without any particular ethnic orientation. With the collapse of the Seleucid Empire (100-63 BC) years before, that included the region of First Peter, thousands of people in Anatolia were taken into slavery and shipped westward to the Italian peninsula. The readers of First Peter had a long history of exposure to slavery, and many of the believers in the various churches in Anatolia were themselves slaves. The best known example from this era is the runaway slave Onesimus whose Christian owner was Philemon, and lived in Colossae in the province of Asia. Paul's letter to Philemon deals with the issue of Philemon accepting Onesimus back after he had become a Christian. In early church tradition, this converted, runaway slave rose to become a pastor and spiritual leader in early Christianity. Some of these traditions claim that Onesimus followed Timothy as spiritual leader at Ephesus.³ But we have no way of validating the accuracy of these church traditions to know with certainty what Onesimus did. But the reality of Onesimus' conversion and acceptance back by his Christian owner does provide a face to what Peter is talking about to his readers in our text, and this text would have especially spoken to the church at Colossae in the province of Asia when it was read to them.

Given this significant difference between that world and ours, how does this passage apply today? Clearly the assumption of slavery in the background of Peter's words no longer has relevance today.⁴ Slavery then was an accepted fact of life, but no so in our world.⁵ A growing movement prompted through the United Nations is attempting to stamp out all forms of slavery in our day. The UN sponsored *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* "states that 'All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights' (Article 1) and that 'no one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms' (Article 4)." The institution of slavery has no legitimacy in the modern world, and is banned. This reflects a substantial cultural distance between Peter's world and ours. And this automatically excludes any interpretation of these scripture texts to imply legitimacy for slavery as an institution in our world. The impact of Christian teachings over the centuries has brought western society to this opposition to the institution of slavery.

How then can we apply these teachings of Peter to our day? A common approach is to see the slave / owner as symbolic of employee / employer relationships. But this is highly questionable, to say the least. Basic principles of biblical interpretation seriously question such a linkage. Instead, one has to look more fundamentally at the slave / owner relationship in the ancient world for clues to patterns of relationship that might have relevance in our world. First of all, in the ancient world, the slave was a family member, not an outsider. He/she was connected to the male head of the household and looked to this person for the basics of daily existence. Roman law required slave owners to make basic provisions for their slaves, and most provided reasonably well for their slaves and some very generously. Many slaves received extensive education from their masters and served as doctors, lawyers, book keepers etc., sometimes with more education than their owners. The Greek term οἰκονόμος typically specified the slave who literally was the 'law of the house' and answerable only to the master, and had administrative responsibilities over the entire household. Roman law did give slaves some legal rights, although they were limited.

What the ancient experience of slavery suggests is a relationship of authority where one person comes under the authority of another person. This is perhaps the proper clue for finding modern applications of the principles set forth by Peter. Where believers find themselves under the authority of another person, whether that be in a work place, a school room, a social organization or whatever, this text has something important to say about believers relating properly to the authority individual. This perspective will guide our attempt to find contemporary meaning for this passage.

³See "Apostle Onesimus," *Orthodoxwiki.org*, for details.

⁴"The NT presupposes and uncritically accepts slavery as an institution. The → parables of Jesus mention it (Matt. 18:23-35; 25:14-30; Luke 12:42-48; 17:7-10), but faith in Christ makes slaves and freemen equal before God (Gal. 3:26-28). Because believers have the eschatological → kingdom of God in view, social distinctions fade, and the community of faith is to assemble in → love for Christ. → Paul, then, can direct slaves to obey their masters, and masters to deal with their servants in a way that is pleasing to God (Eph. 6:5-8; Col. 3:22-4:1, → Household Rules; see also 1 Pet. 2:18-25). Paul emphatically calls himself a 'slave of (Jesus) Christ' (Rom. 1:1; Gal. 1:10 NRSV marg.) and points to the new being 'in Christ Jesus' (Gal. 3:26, 28; see also 2:20), which makes all believers brothers and sisters (Phlm. 16)." [Erwin Fahlbusch and Geoffrey William Bromiley, vol. 5, *The Encyclopedia of Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI; Leiden, Netherlands: Wm. B. Eerdmans; Brill, 2008), 32.]

⁵An interesting chart, "Abolition of slavery timeline," in Wikipedia online charts out the legal outlawing of slavery around the world. Mauritania in west Africa was the last country to officially abolish slavery in 1981.

I. Context and Background⁶

Although some attention to background issues has already been given above, other details will also play an important role in the interpretation of this text.

a. Historical

External History. In the UBS 4th revised edition of the Greek New Testament variations of text readings occur at verses 19, 21, and 25, as listed in the text apparatus for Bible translators. This listing signals three places where variations of readings take place with enough importance to impact the translation of the text into other languages. In verse 19, later copyists felt the word χάρις needed further qualification.⁷ Several manuscripts add παρὰ τῷ θεῷ after χάρις, so that it reads “this is grace from God...”. But the earliest and most important manuscripts do not contain παρὰ τῷ θεῷ, since it is implicit in the text already. Also efforts to clarify the phrase συνείδησιν θεοῦ, “a consciousness of God.” The adjective ἀγαθὴν is added either before or after θεοῦ in order to create the expression “a good conscious to God,” or else replaces θεοῦ with ἀγαθὴν resulting in the simpler expression “a good conscious.”⁸ Once again the earliest and most important manuscripts favor the text reading συνείδησιν θεοῦ.

In verse 21, the verb ἔπαθεν, “he suffered,” is replaced with ἀπέθανεν, “he died,” in several manuscripts. Either makes sense, but the second verb is also used to replace ἅπαξ περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἔπαθεν, “once for all he suffered for sin,” in 3:18 by most of the same manuscripts with the more common “for sin he died.”⁹ The weight of manuscript evidence favors ἔπαθεν over ἀπέθανεν in both 2:21 and 3:18. Also in verse 21, some late manuscripts have ἡμῶν ἡμῖν, “in our behalf for us,” instead of ὑμῶν ὑμῖν, “in your behalf for you.”¹⁰ Overwhelmingly the evidence supports ὑμῶν ὑμῖν, the second person plural reference.

In verse 25, the participle πλανώμενοι is changed to πλανώμενα by several manuscripts.¹¹ The shift from

⁶Serious study of the Bible requires careful analysis of the background and setting of the scripture passage. Failure to do this leads to interpretive garbage and possibly to heresy. Detailed study of the background doesn't always answer all the questions, but it certainly gets us further along toward correct understanding of both the historical and contemporary meanings of a text. This serious examination of both the historical and literary background of every passage will be presented in summary form with each of the studies.

⁷“In order to identify more precisely the idea conveyed by χάρις, copyists added various supplements, παρὰ τῷ θεῷ (from God), θεῷ (by God), and θεοῦ (of God). In translation, this implicit information may be made explicit. Compare TEV: ‘God will bless you for this.’ Even if translators follow the reading in the text, they still have to decide whether χάρις here refers to the unmotivated grace of God or whether, as Elliott (1 Peter, p. 518) argues, it ‘describes a human action of one who is mindful of God’s will ... or a human action that is credible in God’s sight.’” [Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 484.]

⁸“The difficulty of interpreting the expression διὰ συνείδησιν θεοῦ, a collocation that occurs only here in the New Testament, prompted copyists to introduce one or another alleviation. In accord with Ac 23:1; 1 Tm 1:5, 19 some witnesses (C 94 206 322 323 424c 614 915 1175 1518 1739 2298 syr^p, h) replace θεοῦ with ἀγαθὴν. In other witnesses the two readings are conflated, producing θεοῦ ἀγαθὴν (A* Ψ 33) and ἀγαθὴν θεοῦ (P72 81). The reading θεοῦ is strongly supported by κ A2 B K L P most minuscules vg cop^{sa}, bo eth John-Damascus.” [Bruce Manning Metzger and United Bible Societies, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, Second Edition a Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament (4th Rev. Ed.) (London; New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 619.]

⁹“The reading ἔπαθεν, which is strongly supported by P72 A B C^{vid} 33 81 614 1739 it^{ar}, t, z vg syr^h cop^{sa,bo}, fay^{vid}, was replaced in other witnesses (including κ Ψ 209* 2127 syr^p arm) by ἀπέθανεν, probably under the influence of the variant reading in 3:18.” [Bruce Manning Metzger and United Bible Societies, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, Second Edition a Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament (4th Rev. Ed.) (London; New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 619-20.]

¹⁰“Both external evidence and transcriptional probabilities join in favoring ὑμῶν ὑμῖν as the original reading. Supported by representatives of both the Alexandrian and the Western types of text (P72 κ A B C 81 it^{ar}, w, z vg syr^h), the reading was altered by copyists either because of carelessness (having confused ὑ and ἡ, which were pronounced alike), or because reference to the work of Christ as an example to the readers alone seemed to be too limited.” [Bruce Manning Metzger and United Bible Societies, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, Second Edition a Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament (4th Rev. Ed.) (London; New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 620.]

¹¹ “The external evidence for each reading is fairly evenly balanced (-μενοι, κ A B 1505 2464 al; -μενα, P72 C Ψ and most minuscules), but in transcription the tendency to change to the neuter form was very natural in view of the word πρόβατα immediately preceding.” [Bruce Manning Metzger and United Bible Societies, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, Second Edition a Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament (4th Rev. Ed.) (London; New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 620.]

the masculine to the neuter participle shifts the translation from “you are being led astray like sheep” to “you are like sheep being led astray.” The manuscript evidence is divided enough that the reading could go either way, although the meaning remains the same whichever way it is taken.

The text apparatus of the Nestle-Aland 27th revised edition of the Greek New Testament lists 18 variant readings in these verses. The 13 additional ones, beyond those discussed above, have even less impact on the reading of the text, and/or surface in very late manuscripts with little indication of being original readings of the text.

Hopefully, from the above discussion, you can sense that when variations of readings do surface in the first eight hundred years of copying the Greek New Testament, these differences seldom have a major impact on the meaning of the scripture text.

Internal History. The time and place markers in vv. 18-25 center around the interaction between slaves and their masters in the first century world. And, secondly, around the trial and crucifixion of Jesus on the cross.

Slavery in ancient Rome formed the economic backbone of the Roman empire.¹² It motivated most of the expansion efforts of Rome beyond the Italian peninsula, along with a craving for new sources of wealth. The cheap labor of slaves provided most of the costs of living for the upper classes in Rome. Military conquests by the Romans was primarily to increase their wealth through plundering conquered lands and the importing of fresh supplies of slaves from the conquered peoples. The destruction of conquered territories was not massive, because the Romans supplemented their wealth from subsequent taxation of these territories. Of course, the different regions of the eastern Mediterranean Sea where this letter was sent had their own history of more localized slavery as well. Powerful aristocratic individuals in these provinces, apart from the Romans living there, were slave owners. The Roman law governed their treatment of their slaves, but how thoroughly these laws were enforced would be determined by the local Roman authorities.¹³ And this would depend on

Societies, 1994), 620.]

¹²“Slavery in the ancient world, specifically, in Mediterranean cultures, comprised a mixture of debt-slavery, slavery as a punishment for crime, and the enslavement of prisoners of war.^[1] The institution of slavery condemned a majority of slaves to agricultural or industrial labour and they lived hard lives. In some of the city-states of Greece and in the Roman Empire, slaves formed a very large part of the economy, and the Roman Empire built a large part of its wealth on slaves acquired through conquest.” [“Slavery in antiquity,” *Wikipedia online*]

¹³The legal status of slaves:

* Slaves were property. Owners exercised *dominium* over slaves. *Dominium* was the absolute right to dispose of and control the use of a piece of property. Interestingly enough, the authority of a pater over persons in his family was most frequently described as *potestas*. Legally, slavery was conceived of as a kind of death. Romans deemed citizens who did not return from battle as ‘dead’ because a captured citizen who survived battle would most certainly become an enemy slave. Thus, his will was read, his marriage formally ended, because the citizen was ‘socially’ dead to the Roman world.

* Similarly, the Romans legally conceived of the slaves they owned as cut off from all the rights and rituals of human society. Slaves could have no family. In practice, slaves formed relationships and had children. But they had no legal authority to protect these relationships. If you were a slave who had borne or fathered a child, the child was not yours. Similarly, while owners frequently gave slaves a *peculium* (an allowance), the slave had no right to it and had to surrender it on demand. The *peculium* was simply a device which permitted an owner to use his property more efficiently. Note that the legal theory here sounds very rigid (like the pater’s *ius necandi*) and that social practice was much more flexible.

* A slave by definition had no honor or dignity. The essence of being a slave was the inability to protect one’s body. While every citizen had the right to trial and appeal before they suffered physical punishment, a slave was defined by the absence of such a right and expectation. An owner could beat and abuse slaves (and it could not legally be considered assault) and compel sex from slaves of either sex (and it could not be considered rape). [Romans did not deal well with the notion that female citizens slept with male slaves, however.] If someone had sex with a slave without the owner’s permission, however, the owner could sue that person for trespass.

* The inviolability of the citizen’s body was a very important concept in the complex of ideas that constituted Roman identity. One of Cicero’s most telling charges against Verres, the corrupt governor of Sicily, is that he beat citizens (something only a tyrant would do). One of the most surprising aspects of St. Paul’s identity was his Roman citizenship. He was able to protect himself from abusive treatment by local authorities with the simple assertion “*civis Romanus sum*.”

* The mere experience of a state in which an individual could not protect his own body from abuse was inherently and permanently degrading. Thus, even if your owner treated you quite well, Romans believed that you were degraded simply by being subject to another man’s ability to treat you poorly if he chose.

* A child born of a slave woman was a slave (the legal status of his father being irrelevant) and the property of the slave

how favorably these authorities viewed individual aristocrats.

Jews living in Anatolia possessed slaves, but they were governed by the Torah of the Old Testament, which laid down specific guidelines on the treatment of slaves:

Old Testament or Tanakh

Leviticus draws a distinction between Hebrew debt slavery:

25:39 If your brother becomes impoverished with regard to you so that he sells himself to you, you must not subject him to slave service.

25:40 He must be with you as a hired worker, as a resident foreigner; he must serve with you until the year of jubilee,

25:41 but then he may go free, he and his children with him, and may return to his family and to the property of his ancestors.

25:42 Since they are my servants whom I brought out from the land of Egypt, they must not be sold in a slave sale.

25:43 You must not rule over him harshly, but you must fear your God.

and “bondslaves”, foreigners:

25:44 As for your male and female slaves who may belong to you, you may buy male and female slaves from the nations all around you.

25:45 Also you may buy slaves from the children of the foreigners who reside with you, and from their families that are with you, whom they have fathered in your land, they may become your property.

25:46 You may give them as inheritance to your children after you to possess as property. You may enslave them perpetually. However, as for your brothers the Israelites, no man may rule over his brother harshly.

You could beat a slave within an inch of his or her life and if they died in the first day your punishment was a fine. If they survived one day and died, there was no fine.

Exo 21:20 And if a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand; he shall be surely punished.

Exo 21:21 Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished: for he is his money.

As evident from the above, the Old Testament accepts the institution of slavery as such, but seeks to regulate it and ameliorate the slaves’ conditions. Transmitted throughout Western culture via Christianity (and given a slightly more anti-slavery spin in the New Testament), this ambiguous message could (and did) inspire both advocates of slavery and abolitionists.

That Christians, who came out of these backgrounds and lived in a slave owning culture, would possess slaves should not be surprising. Some of the New Testament texts treating slaves assume Christian owners, such as Philemon. To be clear, the tenor of the New Testament adamantly opposes the idea of one human owning another human, but the world of the New Testament did not share the values advocated by Jesus and the apostles, and it would take time before slavery as an institution began to be seriously questioned. Christianity began by seeking to help Christian slaves cope with their social situation, and by mandating very humane treatment of slaves by Christian owners.¹⁴ Yet at the same time such declarations of Paul as “there is no longer slave or free” (Gal. 3:28b; cf. Col. 3:11 & 1 Cor. 12:13) laid the foundation for eventual abolition of slavery. By the second century many former slaves, now Christians, rose to leadership roles in the Christian movement.¹⁵

Thus this passage in First Peter must be understood against this historical backdrop on the situation of slavery in the first Christian century. Without understanding slavery in that world, we will be hard pressed to make correct sense of Peter’s words to slaves in our passage.

b. Literary

Literary Form (Genre). The narrow genre issues of this text are complex but important for understanding our passage. Without serious question, 2:18-25 begins the Haustafeln material proper that will extend down through 3:7. Peter signals this in a unique way in Greek that is utterly impossible to preserve in English

woman’s owner.

[“Roman Civilization: Roman Slavery,” *abacus.edu online*]

¹⁴Col. 4:1, “Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly, for you know that you also have a Master in heaven.”

Eph. 6:9, “And, masters, do the same to them. Stop threatening them, for you know that both of you have the same Master in heaven, and with him there is no partiality.”

¹⁵See “Slavery and Christianity,” *The Catholic Encyclopedia online*.

translation. In 2:18 he begins the sentence with a participle rather than a regular verb: ὑποτασσόμενοι.¹⁶ And the next two segments of the household code section will be introduced the same way: wives in 3:1, ὑποτασσόμεναι, and husbands in 3:7, συνοικοῦντες. These all build off the foundational admonition in 3:13, Ὑποτάγητε πάσῃ ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει διὰ τὸν κύριον. Ancient Greek utilized participles in a far greater range of functions than is possible with English participles. Consequently, the clearly embedded structure in the Greek text is completely erased in translation.

Although the instructions given by Peter to Christian slaves does not differ with the basically similar instructions given by Paul, the perspective is very different. Peter speaks to Christian slaves with non-Christian owners, while Paul either addresses Christian slaves with Christian owners, or slaves with either kind of owner. It is largely because of this perspective that Peter does not come back to address slave owners in their treatment of slaves. That there were Christian slaves owners in the region addressed by First Peter is unquestioned since Colossians, Ephesians, First Timothy, and Philemon were all written to believers living in cities in the province of Asia that is included in First Peter. For unknown reasons, Peter felt no need to address these individuals, Christian slave owners, in his letter, whereas Paul did. This is one of those bits of unknown background derived from the ‘occasional’ nature of letters that would be interesting to understand, where it possible to learn the situation better.

The most controversial genre issue here relates to the nature of verses 22 through 25. The very distinctive, and repetitive use of the relative pronoun ὃς to introduce a series of short declarations about Jesus Christ has prompted numerous evaluations. The grammar pattern signals the use of ‘preformed Christian tradition,’ perhaps either a hymn or confession of faith statement.

Several questions emerge: Is the text quoting from pre-existing materials? If so, what was the nature of those materials? And how much of vv. 22-25 is quotation? Verse twenty only? Verses twenty through twenty-four? Or all of it? The N-A 27th revised edition of the Greek text places all five verses in poetic format indicating the editors’ view that all of it came from pre-existing material. But the UBS 4th revised Greek New Testament editors only list verse twenty-two in poetic format concluding that only this material is pre-existing, while the remainder is Peter’s composition. And Isaiah 53:9 is listed as the source of the quote in verse 22.¹⁷ These two Greek texts represent the opposite ends of the spectrum on this topic.

Is the text quoting from pre-existing materials? Most scholars will answer yes to this question, but the agreement ends here. *If so, what was the nature of those materials?* Clearly the role of Isaiah 53:4-12 (LXX) is significant here.¹⁸ Many will consider that Peter merely summarized Isaiah with application to Christ. But

¹⁶“The basic command is a participle rather than an imperative: ὑποτασσόμενοι (v 18), representing a further specific instance of the ὑποτάγητε of v 13. Deference to ‘every human creature’ covers far more than a citizen’s deference to the emperor or the provincial governor. It includes as well the deference of a domestic slave to his or her master, and of a wife to her husband. Peter focuses on these household situations in order to deal with something his optimistic view of the state and of Roman justice did not allow him to deal with in the preceding section: the possibility of suffering for doing good. While the state exists to punish wrongdoers and reward those who do good, the same is not true of every household. Peter calls attention precisely to the cruel master (v 18) and the unbelieving husband (3:1) in order to address cases where suffering could become a reality for some of his readers—and not just those who were literally domestic servants or wives.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 135.]

¹⁷Isaiah 53:9, “They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb with the rich, although he *had done no violence*, and there *was no deceit in his mouth*.”

¹⁸LXX: **Isaiah 53:4-12**, 4 οὗτος τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν φέρει καὶ περὶ ἡμῶν ὀδυνᾶται, καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐλογισάμεθα αὐτὸν εἶναι ἐν πόνῳ καὶ ἐν πληγῇ καὶ ἐν κακώσει. 5 αὐτὸς δὲ ἐτραυματίσθη διὰ τὰς ἀνομίας ἡμῶν καὶ μεμαλάκισται διὰ τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν, παιδεία εἰρήνης ἡμῶν ἐπ’ αὐτὸν, τῷ μῶλωπι αὐτοῦ ἡμεῖς ἰάθημεν. 6 πάντες ὡς πρόβατα ἐπλανήθημεν, ἄνθρωπος τῇ ὁδῷ αὐτοῦ ἐπλανήθη, καὶ κύριος παρέδωκεν αὐτὸν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ἡμῶν. 7 καὶ αὐτὸς διὰ τὸ κεκακῶσθαι οὐκ ἀνοίγει τὸ στόμα, ὡς πρόβατον ἐπὶ σφαγῆν ἤχθη καὶ ὡς ἄμνος ἐναντίον τοῦ κείροντος αὐτὸν ἄφωνος οὕτως οὐκ ἀνοίγει τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ. 8 ἐν τῇ ταπεινώσει ἡ κρίσις αὐτοῦ ἦρθη, τὴν γενεάν αὐτοῦ τίς διηγῆσεται; ὅτι αἴρεται ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς ἡ ζωὴ αὐτοῦ, ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνομιῶν τοῦ λαοῦ μου ἤχθη εἰς θάνατον. 9 καὶ δώσω τοὺς πονηροὺς ἀντὶ τῆς ταφῆς αὐτοῦ καὶ τοὺς πλουσίους ἀντὶ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ, *ὅτι ἀνομίαν οὐκ ἐποίησεν, οὐδὲ εὗρέθη δόλος ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτοῦ*. 10 καὶ κύριος βούλεται καθαρῶσαι αὐτὸν τῆς πληγῆς, ἐὰν δῶτε περὶ ἁμαρτίας, ἡ ψυχὴ ὑμῶν ὀψεται σπέρμα μακρόβιον, καὶ βούλεται κύριος ἀφελεῖν 11 ἀπὸ τοῦ πόνου τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτοῦ, δεῖξαι αὐτῷ φῶς καὶ πλάσαι τῇ συνέσει, *δικαιῶσαι δίκαιον* εὐ δουλεύοντα πολλοῖς, καὶ τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν αὐτὸς ἀνοίσει. 12 διὰ τοῦτο αὐτὸς κληρονομήσει πολλοὺς καὶ τῶν ἰσχυρῶν μεριεῖ σκῦλα, ἀνθ’ ὧν παρεδόθη εἰς θάνατον ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀνόμοις ἐλογίσθη, καὶ *αὐτὸς ἁμαρτίας πολλῶν ἀνήνεγκεν καὶ διὰ τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν παρεδόθη*.

[*Septuaginta : With Morphology*, electronic ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1979), Is 53:3–12.]

others are convinced that the allusions to Isaiah 53 have been filtered through an early Christian hymn based on Isaiah 53.¹⁹ Three basic reasons are given as the basis for this assumption of a Christian hymn.²⁰ But counter arguments explaining these patterns in alternative ways are very possible and can be very persuasive.²¹ Although the Block Diagram below visually tempts one to see hymnic qualities, the better conclusion is to see verses 21 through 25 as primarily Peter's interpretative application of Isaiah 53 to Christ, and via His example to believers, especially the slaves. Peter picks up phrases from Isaiah 53 and stitches them together in an eloquent praise of Christ and the example He set for His followers. Only verse 22 contains a long enough quote from Isaiah 53:9 to be considered a direct quote. Short phrases from Isaiah 53 are incorporated into the other expressions in verses 21-25. The modern label for this is Midrash or midrashic interpretation reflecting Peter's Jewish heritage in interpreting the Hebrew Bible, in a pattern that ancient Jewish scribes followed as reflected in the Talmud. Whether or not such a label applies to what Peter was doing here is questionable.²²

Literary Context. The literary setting of 2:18-25 is charted out in the outline to the right. The passage continues the emphasis upon obligations, mainly to outsiders, begun in 2:11. This is the second of three major units of the letter body. 2:18-25 is the first segment of the three pronged Haustafeln section in 2:18-3:7, slaves (2:18-25), wives (3:1-6), and husbands (3:7). Because of the unique grammatical structure of the Haustafeln, a very close link of 2:18-3:7 to 2:11-17 exists, and particularly important is 2:13-17. One of the applications of the general admonition, "For the Lord's sake accept the authority of every human institution," in 2:13a is 2:18-25, as well as 3:1-7. This will shape Peter's distinct perspective of addressing Christian slaves with non-Christian owners, in the continuation of the 'outsider' emphasis begun in 2:11. How could Christian slaves

¹⁹It has been widely argued (e.g., by Windisch and Preisker, 65; Bultmann, 295-97; Boismard, 111-32; Wengst, 83-86; and Goppelt, 204-07) that Peter is following not only (and not primarily) the text of Isa 53 itself but an early Christian hymn to Christ based on that passage (cf. also 1:20; 3:18-19, 22)." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 136.]

²⁰Three features in the text of vv 21-25 as it stands have been cited as reasons to detect a possible hymnic source:

1. The shift from the second person plural pronouns in v 21 to the first person plural in v 24a-b, and back to the second person plural in vv 24c-25.
2. The repeated use of the relative pronoun ὅς in vv 22a, 23a, and 24a (for some scholars dividing the reconstructed hymn into strophes or stanzas; cf. ὅς ἐστιν in 1 Tim 3:16, and ὅς ἐστιν in Col 1:15, 18).
3. The thematic shift between Christ's example of endurance and non retaliation in time of suffering (vv 21-23: relevant to Christian slaves) and his vicarious suffering for sins (vv 24-25: relevant to the entire Christian community).

[J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 136.]

²¹This leads Michaels to discount the hymnic origin of this material and see it as Peter's commentary on Isaiah 53: "There is no need, therefore, to posit an early Christian hymn behind vv 21-25. Peter's text is adequately explained as a midrash on Isa 53:4-12 summarizing both the responsibility (vv 21-23) and the redemptive experience of the epistle's readers. Only v 23, ironically, the verse 'which, from the standpoint of style, shows the closest resemblance to parallel members of a hymn' (Osborne, 395), shows no direct influence of Isa 53. Not only Osborne, but several of those who attempt to reconstruct an ancient hymn from vv 21-25 judge v 23 to be 'almost certainly the creation of the author himself' (Osborne, 395; cf. Wengst, 85 and Goppelt, 205: with considerably more doubt, Bultmann. 285-97)." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 137.]

²²One should, however, be very careful about labeling every effort by NT writers to interpret OT texts as Midrashim, Midrash, midrashic. The tendency in modern biblical scholarship is to use the terminology very loosely and casually to label efforts of writers using the Hebrew Bible no matter how they approached it. The Talmud contains extensive examples of the development of both the Halakhah and Haqqadah types of Midrashim, developed especially by the rabbinic schools of Ishmael be Elisha and Akiba ben Joseph in the second century AD. See "Midrash," *Answers.com* for more details. These literary genres are very clear and well defined.

Outline of Contents in First Peter:

Praescriptio: 1:1-2

- **Superscriptio, 1:1a**
- **Adscriptio, 1:1b-2a**
- **Salutatio, 1:2b**

Proem: 1:3-12

- **Core, 1:3a**
- **Expansion, 1:3b-12**

Body: 1:13-5:11

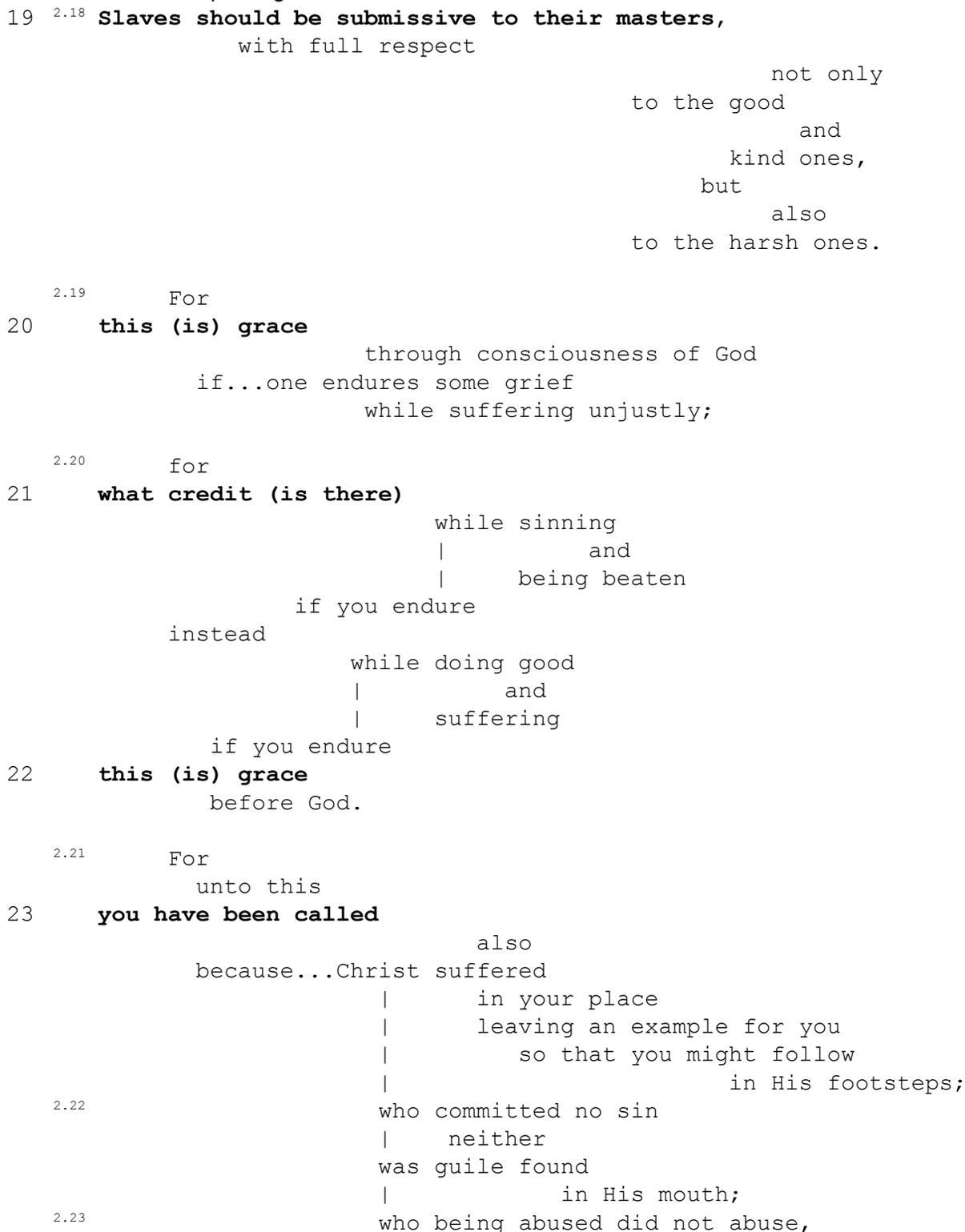
- **Holy living 1:13-2:10**
 - **Ideals 1:13-25**
 - **Privileges 2:1-10**
- **Obligations 2:11-3:12**
 - **Civic 2:11-17**
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- **Sender Verification, 5:12**
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distinguish themselves to their non-christian masters? The core word of Peter is by showing proper recognition of their authority: ὑποτασσόμενοι ἐν παντὶ φόβῳ. In contrast to the Apostle Paul who would spell out the core obligation with details of specific actions, Peter does not go beyond the core admonition. Instead, he felt the need to provide a series of reasons for this obligation, which he specifies in detail in verses 19-25. Very quickly these verses beginning in verse 21 shift the focus to the example of Jesus that applies not just to the household slaves but generally to the believing community at large.

Literary Structure. The block diagram below, based on the Greek text, highlights the internal organization of ideas within the passage.



2.24 --- suffering did not threaten,
 | but
 --- entrusted Himself to the One who judges
 | justly;
 who Himself carried our sins
 | in His body
 | upon the tree
 | being set free
 | from our sins
 | in righteousness
 | so that we might live;
 by whose strips you are healed.

2.25 For
 24 **you...were being led astray**
 like sheep
 but
 25 **you have returned**
 now
 to the Shepherd
 and
 Overseer
 of your lives.

The arrangement of ideas in 2:18-25 is simple. The admonition (statement 19), which is built off the same verb in verse 13, is put before the readers. This is followed by three sets of reasons that provide the basis for the admonition. **First** in statements 20-22, there is nothing praiseworthy about enduring suffering for having done bad. Only enduring unjust suffering merits praise and divine blessing. **Second** in statement 23, unjust suffering is a divine calling based upon the example of Christ's experience in His trial and execution at the end of His earthly life. **Third** in statements 24-25, the readers are affirmed as having abandoned their wayward living to return to Christ as Shepherd and Caregiver of their lives. Thus they are following 'in His footsteps.' One should note the progression of ideas in these three reasons for the admonition.

II. Message

Our study will revolve around the two natural emphases in the passage: the admonition (v. 18) and the basis for the admonition (vv. 19-25).

a. Be respectful of those in authority over you, v. 18

Slaves, accept the authority of your masters with all deference, not only those who are kind and gentle but also those who are harsh.

Οἱ οἰκέται ὑποτασσόμενοι ἐν παντὶ φόβῳ τοῖς δεσπότηταις, οὐ μόνον τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς καὶ ἐπιεικέσιν ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς σκολιοῖς.

Notes:

The admonition contains three natural elements: **Who** is to do **What** to **Whom**? All three elements are significant for understanding.

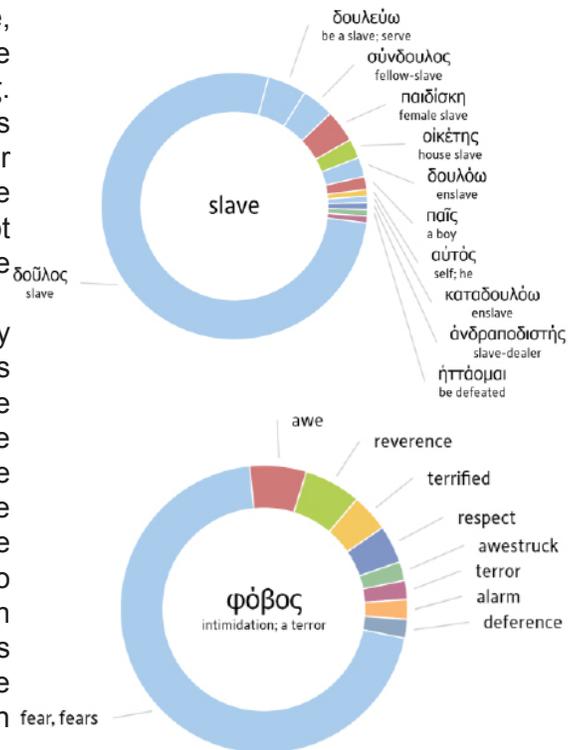
Who? The admonition is directed specifically to οἱ οἰκέται, the slaves.²³ This term οἰκέτης (4x), rather than the more inclusive commonly used (127x) word for slave δοῦλος, designated the slaves that were a part of the family and had duties in the home rather than in the fields or elsewhere outside the owner's house.²⁴

²³“The next class addressed is that of household slaves. But Peter probably does not intend to single out this group over against other slaves, but rather makes the distinction between a societal position that many, but not all, Christians had, and their slavery to God (mentioned in v. 16), which all had.” [Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 105.]

²⁴“οἰκέτης, οὐ, ὁ (fr. οἶκος, cp. prec. entry) lit. ‘member of the household,’ then specif. house slave, domestic, and slave gener.
Bible Study: Page 10

Quite a large number of Greek words had the meaning of slave, as the chart to the right illustrates. In the parallel passages on the domestic code, Paul consistently uses δοῦλος rather than οἰκέτης. What should we make of this different term used by Peter? Various opinions can be found, but very possibly it is merely stylistic rather than intended to make an important distinction.²⁵ Given the nature of the admonition and the expansion that follows, one should not draw much distinction from the use of οἰκέτης over against the δοῦλος that Paul uses.²⁶

What? The essential instruction to the slaves is that they ὑποτασσόμενοι ἐν παντὶ φόβῳ to their masters. The essence is that slaves are to show proper respect to their masters who have authority over them. This covers attitude, actions, and words. The prepositional phrase ἐν παντὶ φόβῳ, “in full respect,” defines the posture of submission, ὑποτασσόμενοι,²⁷ as acceptance of the master out of respect for him. The word φόβος has a wide range of meanings, but here it is the idea of respect and deference to another human being.²⁸ This challenged a fundamental pattern of ancient slavery where slaves complied with their master’s demand out of the fear of punishment for non-compliance. Brute force was the channel for enforcing the master’s demands on



(in the specif. sense Aeschyl., Hdt.+) Ac 10:7. Opp. δεσπότης (Dio Chrys. 64 [14], 10; Ael. Aristid. 45 p. 40 D.; Pr 22:7; Philo, Deus Imm. 64) 1 Pt 2:18; opp. κύριος as master (Philo, Poster. Cai. 138) Lk 16:13; 2 Cl 6:1. ἀλλότριος οἰκ. another’s slave Ro 14:4.—B. 1332. DELG s.v. οἶκο A II 4. M-M. Spicq.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 694.]

²⁵“Although οἰκέται can specify slaves attached to a household rather than, for example, those who worked in the field,⁷¹ it can also be used generically for slaves⁷² and is probably to be understood in that way here. That is not to ignore the force of this term, however; it was most likely chosen to emphasize that slaves also belong to the Christian community as members of the household of God.⁷³” [Paul J. Achtemeier and Eldon Jay Epp, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter*, Hermeneia—a critical and historical commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1996), 194.]

²⁶One should note that ὡς θεοῦ δοῦλοι, “as God’s slaves,” is used in 2:16 of all believers, which may have played some role in Peter’s use of οἰκέται, “slaves,” two sentences later, in order to specify the social group of slaves.

²⁷β. *subject oneself, be subjected or subordinated, obey* abs. (Jos., Bell. 4, 175) **Ro 13:5**; **1 Cor 14:34** (cp. δουλεύετε ἀλλήλοις Gal 5:13); 1 Cl 2:1a; 57:2. Of submission involving recognition of an ordered structure, w. dat. of the entity to whom/which appropriate respect is shown (Palaeph. 38 p. 56, 15; 57, 2): toward a husband (s. Ps.-Callisth. 1, 22, 4 πρέπον ἐστὶ τὴν γυναῖκα τῷ ἀνδρὶ ὑποτάσσεσθαι, s. 1a above; cp. SEG 26, 1717, 26 [III/IV A.D.] in a love charm) **Eph 5:22** v.l.; **Col 3:18**; **Tit 2:5**; **1 Pt 3:1** (on an alleged impv. sense s. Schwyzer II 407), 5; parents **Lk 2:51**; masters **Tit 2:9**; **1 Pt 2:18**; B 19:7; D 4:11; secular authorities (1 Ch 29:24; Theoph. Ant. 1, 11 [p. 82, 14]) **Ro 13:1** (CMorrison, The Powers That Be—**Ro 13:1–13**, diss. Basel ’56; EBarnikol, TU 77, ’61, 65–133 [non-Pauline]); **Tit 3:1**; **1 Pt 2:13**; 1 Cl 61:1; church officials 1 Cl 1:3; 57:1; IEph 2:2; IMg 2; 13:2; ITr 2:1f; 13:2; IPol 6:1; Pol 5:3; νεώτεροι ὑποτάγητε πρεσβυτέρους **1 Pt 5:5**. To God (Epict. 3, 24, 65 τ. θεῷ ὑποτεταγμένος; 4, 12, 11; Ps 61:2; 2 Macc 9:12) **1 Cor 15:28b**; **Hb 12:9**; **Js 4:7**; 1 Cl 20:1; IEph 5:3; to Christ **Eph 5:24**. To the will of God, the law, etc. **Ro 8:7**; **10:3**; 1 Cl 34:5; Hm 12, 5, 1; τῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ τῇ ἀγαθῇ 12, 2, 5.—Of submission in the sense of voluntary yielding in love **1 Cor 16:16**; **Eph 5:21**; **1 Pt 5:5b** v.l.; 1 Cl 38:1.—The evil spirits must be subject to the disciples whom Jesus sends out **Lk 10:17, 20**. Likew. the prophetic spirits must be subject to the prophets in whom they dwell **1 Cor 14:32**.—HMerklein, Studien zu Jesus und Paulus (WUNT 105) ’98, 405–37.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1042.]

²⁸“b. *reverence, respect ... β. toward humans, respect that is due officials* (cp. Byzantinische Papyri [Munich], ed. AHeisenberg/LWenger, 1914, no. 2, ln. 13 p. 43: ἔχοντες τὸν φόβον ... τῆς ὑμετέρας ἐνδόξου ὑπεροχῆς=having respect for your esteemed authority) Ro 13:7ab (CCranfield, NTS 6, ’60, 241–49: the ref. may be to God); fr. slave to master **1 Pt 2:18**; **Eph 6:5** (w. τρόμος); B 19:7=D 4:11 (w. αἰσχύνῃ); wife to husband **1 Pt 3:2** (cp. SEG XXXV, 1427, 5 [III A.D.]). Gener. 3:16 (w. πραύτης).—WLütgert, Die Furcht Gottes: MKähler Festschr. 1905, SBERkelbach v.der Sprenkel, Vrees en Religie 1920, 165ff; RSander, Furcht u. Liebe im paläst. Judentum ’35.—B. 1153. DELG s.v. φόβομαι I. M-M. EDNT. TW. Sv.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1062.]

the slave.²⁹ But for Christian slaves, their posture had to take on a different stance completely because of their faith (cf. 2:11-16). Conversion to Christ brought with it a new appreciation for humanity as created in God’s image and deserving respect, no matter how evil their actions. The opportunity for the Christian slave in responding to his human master with respectful obedience was to open the door for witness to the Gospel not only to the master but to the rest of the household including the other slaves.

Some of the Pauline instructions help ‘flesh’ out the idea of ‘respectful obedience.’

Eph. 6:5-8, “5 Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as you obey Christ; 6 not only while being watched, and in order to please them, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. 7 Render service with enthusiasm, as to the Lord and not to men and women, 8 knowing that whatever good we do, we will receive the same again from the Lord, whether we are slaves or free.”

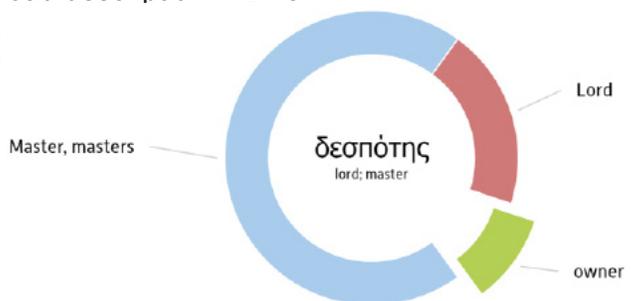
Col. 3:22-25, “22 Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything, not only while being watched and in order to please them, but wholeheartedly, fearing the Lord. 23 Whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord and not for your masters, 24 since you know that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; you serve the Lord Christ. 25 For the wrongdoer will be paid back for whatever wrong has been done, and there is no partiality.”

1 Timothy 6:1-2. 1 Let all who are under the yoke of slavery regard their masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be blasphemed. 2 Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful to them on the ground that they are members of the church; rather they must serve them all the more, since those who benefit by their service are believers and beloved. Teach and urge these duties.

Titus 2:9-10. 9 Tell slaves to be submissive to their masters and to give satisfaction in every respect; they are not to talk back, 10 not to pilfer, but to show complete and perfect fidelity, so that in everything they may be an ornament to the doctrine of God our Savior.

A substantial variety of attitudes and actions are put on the table by Paul in defining proper interaction of the slave with his master. These have significance to Peter’s broad description in 2:18.

To Whom? Slaves were to respectfully obey τοῖς δεσπόταις, “their masters.” Of the ten uses of δεσπότης in the NT, four of them refer to individuals who own slaves. This is a different word from κύριος, that Paul uses in his Haustafeln instructions in Ephesians and Colossians. Perhaps Peter’s choice of terms is because he normally reserves κύριος as a reference to God or Christ,³⁰ although δεσπότης can refer to either God or Christ also, as in 2 Pet. 2:1; Jude 4; Acts 4:24; Rev. 6:10.



Peter further qualifies the slaves owners as οὐ μόνον τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς καὶ ἐπιεικέσιν ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς σκολιοῖς, “not only those who are kind and gentle but also those who are harsh.” Peter urges obedience not just to the good masters, but to those who aren’t good to their slaves as well. Here is where Christian commitment makes the difference. Roman history records violent reactions by slaves to harsh treatment from their owners. But Christian commitment will not allow such from slaves who are mistreated. As he will go on to say in the first of the three reasons below, acceptance and praise from God comes when one endures injustice unjustly. Harsh treatment, σκολιοῖς, could range from beatings to executions, and would tend to provoke anger and frustration by the slave. The fundamental point here is that slaves were obligated to show respect to their master no

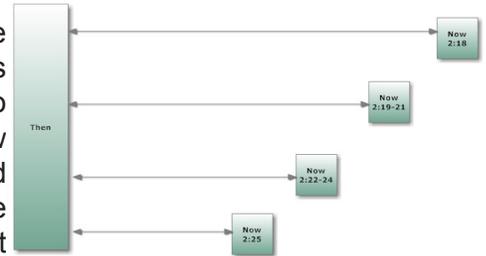
²⁹“While their situation was undergoing a slow amelioration in the first century — freedom continued to be possible,²⁸ the slave could demand to be sold to another, kinder master,²⁹ Stoic thought argued that slaves were truly men and comrades³⁰ whom one should treat kindly and moderately³¹ — they were still subject to harsh treatment.³² For the mass of slaves, therefore, life was demeaning and often cruel, and many slaves reacted accordingly,³³ their reactions ranging from murderous assault on cruel masters³⁴ and the destruction of their own children by some slave women so as not to be compelled to raise them in addition to enduring slavery,³⁵ to flight,³⁶ to petty annoyance at fellow slaves who tried to please the master.³⁷ Since the safety of a household depended on the obedience of its slaves, however,³⁸ such obedience had to be obtained.” [Paul J. Achtemeier and Eldon Jay Epp, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter*, Hermeneia—a critical and historical commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1996), 191.]

³⁰“Because Peter reserves the designation ‘Lord’ ὑποτάγητε πάσῃ ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει διὰ τὸν κύριον (κύριος) for God or Christ (the only exception being 3:6, where his language is dictated by an OT text), he chooses δεσπότης to refer to slave masters (cf. 1 Tim 6:1; Titus 2:9) instead of the κύριος of Colossians and Ephesians (where the same distinction is maintained by the phrase κατὰ σάρκα κυρίοις in Eph 6:5 and the play on οἱ κύριοι and ὁ κύριος in Eph 6:9 and Col 4:1).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 138.]

matter his character or disposition toward them. Only by God's help could a Christian slave rise above raw human emotions to achieve such respect to the one with authority over his life.

The Decreasing Cultural Gap between 'Then' and 'Now' in 1 Peter 2:18-25

How should we apply this admonition to our world? As the chart to the right illustrates, the cultural distance between 'then' and 'now' meanings in verse 18 is substantial, and thus harder to find a proper application to the 'now' meaning. At the core of the concept of the admonition is how a believer is supposed to relate to a person who possesses some kind of authority over him. A wide variety of contemporary settings can be found ranging from the workplace to social life. Thus, I would suggest that this admonition relates to every believer in such situations. We are



obligated by God to accept the authority of the other person in a posture of respect of the individual. And this respect is not conditioned by the 'boss' being a 'good' boss. Does this mean that we are just to 'grin and bear it' when we are treated wrongly? Not at all! In modern western society, various remedies exist for seeking justice and fair play in such situations. Using legitimate channels to express genuine grievances is entirely appropriate. But no place exists for getting revenge or for character assassination of our 'boss.' Believers must *always* treat people over them in authority with respect! This is rooted in the core admonition of 2:13, with some elaboration here in 2:18: Ὑποτάγητε πάσῃ ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει διὰ τὸν κύριον. Such an 'above human' response is predicated on the Lord and the believer's commitment to Him.

b. The reasons why, vv. 19-25

19 For it is a credit to you if, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly. 20 If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval. 21 For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps. 22 "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." 23 When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. 24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. 25 For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

19 τοῦτο γὰρ χάρις εἰ διὰ συνειδήσιν θεοῦ ὑποφέρει τις λύπας πάσχων ἀδίκως· 20 ποῖον γὰρ κλέος εἰ ἀμαρτάνοντες καὶ κολαφιζόμενοι ὑπομενεῖτε; ἀλλ' εἰ ἀγαθοποιῶντες καὶ πάσχοντες ὑπομενεῖτε, τοῦτο χάρις παρὰ θεῷ. 21 εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ ἐκλήθητε, ὅτι καὶ Χριστὸς ἔπαθεν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, ὑμῖν ὑπολιμπάνων ὑπογραμμὸν ἵνα ἐπακολουθήσητε τοῖς ἴχνεσιν αὐτοῦ· 22 ὃς ἀμαρτίαν οὐκ ἐποίησεν οὐδὲ εὐρέθη δόλος ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτοῦ· 23 ὃς λοιδορούμενος οὐκ ἀντελοιδόρει, πάσχων οὐκ ἠπειλεῖ, παρεδίδου δὲ τῷ κρίνοντι δικαίως· 24 ὃς τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἡμῶν αὐτὸς ἀνήνεγκεν ἐν τῷ σώματι αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον, ἵνα ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις ἀπογενόμενοι τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ ζήσωμεν· οὐ τῷ μῶλωπι ἰάθητε. 25 ἦτε γὰρ ὡς πρόβατα πλανώμενοι, ἀλλὰ ἐπεστράφητε νῦν ἐπὶ τὸν ποιμένα καὶ ἐπίσκοπον τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν.

Notes:

Three sets of reasons for the admonition are put on the table; note the repetition of γὰρ (for) in vv. 19, 20, 21, 25. This conjunction in Greek sets up reasons for a preceding assertion. These sets of reasons are 1) gaining χάρις for unjust suffering (vv. 19-20); 2) following the example of Christ enduring unjust suffering (vv. 21-24); and 3) having committed themselves to Christ (v. 25).

1) Gaining χάρις for unjust suffering (vv. 19-20). The repetition of the phrase τοῦτο χάρις (it is a credit; God's approval) in the first and last affirmation signal a unit of thought expression here; tucked between these two is ποῖον κλέος (what credit is that?). Appended to all three expressions is the subordinate conjunction εἰ introducing a real set of situations including unjust suffering, justified suffering, unjust suffering. The enduring of unjust suffering is defined as ὑποφέρει τις λύπας πάσχων ἀδίκως (enduring pain while suffering unjustly) and ἀγαθοποιῶντες καὶ πάσχοντες ὑπομενεῖτε (while doing good and suffering you endure). Between these two is the justified suffering situation: ἀμαρτάνοντες καὶ κολαφιζόμενοι ὑπομενεῖτε (while doing wrong and being beaten you endure). The first situation is generic (ὑποφέρει τις, someone endures), while the second and third situations are specifically directed toward the readers: ὑπομενεῖτε (you endure).

The common elements to all three situations are suffering (πάσχων; κολαφιζόμενοι; πάσχοντες) and en-

during (ὑποφέρει; ὑπομενεῖτε; ὑπομενεῖτε). The injustice of the suffering is defined as ἀδίκως (unjustly) and ἀγαθοποιούντες (doing good), while the justified suffering is based on ἀμαρτάνοντες (doing bad). A progression is clearly present that begins with a general principle of praiseworthiness for anyone suffering unjustly to no credit in being beaten for doing wrong to praiseworthiness from God for doing good and still suffering. The third expression is climatic and the ultimate point in mind by Peter. The praise is for enduring suffering, not just for suffering. χάρις (praise) is juxtaposed again κλέος (credit) as positive and negative aspects. Thus enduring unjust suffering is praiseworthy, while enduring deserved punishment for wrong doing merits no credit. The one giving either praise or no credit is God.

What Peter called for from Christian slaves in the first century was clearly ‘going against the stream’ of society at that time. One needs to remember the virtually universal mind set of the Romans in those days. The general feeling was that obedience to someone in authority had to be coerced by brute force. This was applied to all family members by the dominate male head of the household. It was applied to conquered peoples in the empire. School teachers assumed that learning had to be ‘beaten’ into children with severe force. Interrogation of prisoners always began with a severe beating to be followed by questions on the basis of instilling fear into the prisoner so he would be truthful in his answers. Thus the Christian slave was much more likely to encounter a master³¹ who used harsh treatment (τοῖς σκολιοῖς³²) rather than fairness and kindness (τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς καὶ ἐπιεικέσιν³³) to them. Most of the time, the brutal beatings etc. of slaves had no justification, and tended then to provoke in the slaves intense anger and determination to seek revenge. Peter calls upon the Christian slaves to continue doing good in respectful submission to the authority of the master even while enduring unjust treatment. This is the stance that will bring God’s “well done, my servant” in final judgment.

The application of this principle to our world is challenging. Particularly in modern western society where individualism has conditioned us to react very strongly to unjust treatment from people in supervisory roles in our life. In the work place, on the sports field, standing in line at the grocery store -- we face daily a host of situations where people are exercising some kind of authority over us and at times use that authority improperly or unjustly against us. The human impulse is to strike back in anger with verbal reaction, or even a violent physical response. But before giving in to our human nature, we need to remember Peter’s admonition and promise. God will acknowledge our enduring injustice with respectful submission, but only while we are doing good in it! The apostle John put it this way: “Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action” (1 John 3:18).

2) Following the example of Christ enduring unjust suffering (vv. 21-24). The second reason (γὰρ) for respectful submission by slaves to their owners is the example of Christ in His trial before Pilate and subsequent execution by the Roman authorities. Peter makes this clear by his introductory statement: εἰς τοῦτο

³¹One should resist the impulse to consider the ‘fair and gentle’ slave owners as Christians and the ‘harsh’ ones as pagans. These terms do not measure the religious commitment of the slave owner. Instead, they measure the treatment of the slave by his owner, whether Christian or non-Christian. The dominate orientation contextually strongly suggests that both types of slave owners were non-Christian. “Peter is not classifying slave masters on the basis of their religious convictions but on the basis of the way they treat their slaves.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 139.]

³²σκολιός, ἄ, ὄν (σκέλος; Hom. et al.; Kaibel 244, 4; LXX, Joseph.; SibOr 1, 124; prim. ‘curved, bent’)

1. pert. to being bent, curved, or crooked as opposed to straight, crooked (opp. εὐθύς; cp. Jos., Bell. 3, 118 τὰ σκολιὰ τῆς λεωφόρου [=highway] κατευθύνειν) ἔσται τὰ σκολιὰ εἰς εὐθεΐαν **Lk 3:5** (cp. schol. on Nicander, Ther. 478 of the ὁδός in contrast to εὐθύς; Is 40:4; 42:16). In imagery of τοῦ μέλανος ὁδός B 20:1 (cp. Pr 21:8; 28:18).

2. pert. to being morally bent or twisted, crooked, unscrupulous, dishonest, etc., fig. extension of 1 (Hom. et al.; Dio Chrys. 58 [75], 1 w. πονηρός; Lucian, Bis Accus. 16 ῥημάτια; LXX; Jos., C. Ap. 1, 179) γενεὰ σκ. (Dt 32:5 γεν. σκ. καὶ διεστραμμένη; Ps 77:8. Also Dionysius Perieg. [GGM II 186 p. 127 v. 392 σκολιὸν γένος]) Ac 2:40 (diff. MWilcox, The Semitisms of Ac, ’65, 30); Phil 2:15. δεσπότης harsh, unjust 1 Pt 2:18 (opp. ἀγαθοὶ κ. ἐπιεικεῖς).—σκολιόν τι someth. wrong 1 Cl 39:4 (Job 4:18).—JPalache, Semantic Notes on the Hebrew Lexicon ’59, 55f. B. 897. DELG s.v. σκέλος. M-M. TW.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 930.]

³³Kind is literally ‘good,’ not as inward quality, but as a description of the master’s dealing with his slaves, hence kind, ‘friendly’ (GECL). Considerate (Greek epieikēs) can also mean ‘gentle,’ ‘fair,’ and ‘reasonable.’ The two words are very close in meaning, describing a master who treats his slaves properly, in contrast to the master who is harsh.” [Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the First Letter from Peter*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 78.]

Paul's language, as well as verse 24b.³⁸

Peter has surveyed the life of Christ, especially those final days before the cross, and found in Christ the example for believers, especially Christian slaves, to follow in their experience of unjust suffering. One important thing also to remember is that believers in most modern western countries have options to peacefully protest and address injustices through law that were unimaginable to first century believers. Pheme Perkins offers helpful applicational insights to these verses:³⁹

The dynamics of this passage do not leave the Christian with a life of unjust suffering. Christ did not heal the flock in order to sacrifice the sheep. The concrete examples of suffering that Christians must endure point to episodic forms of harassment. For many the abuse is verbal. Slaves are at the greatest risk because their masters can physically abuse them. The example of Christ's suffering permits those who are slaves to recognize a value to their own experiences of injustice. At the same time, the sufferers know that they have a value to God, which has been expressed in Christ's death on their behalf. The negative words and deeds directed at believers will not shake their confidence in the salvation that they have already experienced. Suffering without belonging to this new community would be senseless. Even so, many Christians today feel that passages like 1 Peter 2:21–25 derail Christian opposition to social injustice and leave the oppressed as silent sufferers.

Certainly, in many parts of the world, Christians as a community are not "resident aliens" dependent on the whims of others. They are responsible for conditions in society. There is no reason for Christians to copy the silent Christ by not responding to speech designed to wound others. We must oppose unjust actions and words — especially when our silence might imply consent to such behavior. But we also know that at times we should walk away rather than respond to the violence directed against us. On the secular level, violence reduction programs in schools often teach such techniques. Christians also must raise challenges to the assumption that self-interest should come first in all situations. "When you try to sacrifice for others and show love rather than fighting back, people call you a fool," a parishioner protested. She did not mean that she would stop trying to follow the example of Christ. The edge of pain in her voice showed that the "name calling" was close to home and painful. That's why we have a church, a community. Christians must support those who are suffering.

We have an obligation to stand for justice and righteousness in our world. But taking such a stance does not allow us to be disrespectful of people in places of authority, no matter who they are. There is the 'Christian way' of seeking justice that refuses to succumb to anger, vengeance, or violence. It always operates from love and respect, first to God and then to human authorities. This is the example of Christ to us!

3) Having committed themselves to Christ (v. 25). The third reason (γὰρ) for respectful submission of people in authority is based on conversion to Christ. Still with Isaiah 53 (vv. 5-6) in view,⁴⁰ Peter switches from Christ to his readers and their transforming experience of coming to Christ, using the language of Isaiah. Conversion is described here -- using the imagery of Isaiah 53 -- as a return from "going astray" to "the shepherd and guardian of your souls." The expression of Peter is particularly graphic in the original text: ἦτε γὰρ ὡς πρόβατα πλανώμενοι, ἀλλὰ ἐπεστράφητε νῦν ἐπὶ τὸν ποιμένα καὶ ἐπίσκοπον τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν. He notes the BC and AD eras in the lives of his readers:⁴¹

BC era: ἦτε ὡς πρόβατα πλανώμενοι. You were being led astray like sheep, Peter says. The Christian slaves, and also the larger Christian communities as a part of the reference, were living in deception and false understanding prior to Christ. The Greek verb expression ἦτε...πλανώμενοι⁴² highlights an extensive

³⁸Unlike vv. 22 and 24, there is no reflection of language from Isaiah 53 in this verse; in light of the clear dependence in those verses on that passage from Isaiah, however, the silence of the sacrificial lamb described in Isa 53:7¹⁵⁶ could well lie behind this verse,¹⁵⁷ particularly if the author had in mind the silence Jesus maintained in face of the abuse he received during his trial.¹⁵⁸ Yet the point of the first two clauses is not specifically Jesus' silence; it is rather that in face of verbal abuse he did not retaliate in kind. Such non retaliation in kind, while certainly true of the passion, is nevertheless also true of the whole of Jesus' career.¹⁵⁹ [Paul J. Achtemeier and Eldon Jay Epp, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter*, Hermeneia--a critical and historical commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1996), 200.]

³⁹Pheme Perkins, *First and Second Peter, James, and Jude*, Interpretation, a Bible commentary for teaching and preaching (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1995), 54-55.

⁴⁰Isaiah 53:5–6 (NRSV): "5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." Isaiah 6:10 also plays an indirect role in this shift.

⁴¹This "once" and "now" perspective of Peter plays an important role in the letter. Verse 25 should be compared to 2:3-10, as well as 1:14-15, 18, 23; 4:3-4.

⁴²Periphrastic Imperfect verb construction.

period of being deceived.⁴³ Peter's drawing upon Isaiah 53 for the image doesn't imply that he is just talking about Jews here, which was the reference point in Isaiah.⁴⁴ Rather, he took this imagery and applied it first to slaves and then to his readers generally who were both Jewish and Gentile. His point is that those living apart from Christ are living in self-deception and in a condition separated away from Christ. This self-deception will continue until they come to Christ as Savior.

AD era: ἀλλὰ ἐπεστράφητε νῦν ἐπὶ τὸν ποιμένα καὶ ἐπίσκοπον τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν. A decisive change took place with the readers that Peter is addressing, and is highlighted by two strong words: ἀλλὰ and νῦν: "but now." Their conversion is defined as a "having been turned," ἐπεστράφητε.⁴⁵ The Aorist passive verb stresses a decisive moment of turning around their lives (the Aorist tense), and that God turned them around (the passive voice). Their coming to Christ in conversion is a divine action in their lives that moved them from being separated from Christ to now coming under His leadership and protection.

The turning around of the "sheep" is so they can come to their τὸν ποιμένα καὶ ἐπίσκοπον.⁴⁶ The Old Testament background of this would suggest the reference is to God, but in the New Testament only Jesus is referred to as Shepherd, not God the Father.⁴⁷ The shepherd, ποιμένα, and the caretaker, ἐπίσκοπον, are two ways to highlight the pastoral care and protection of the people of God. Later in 5:1-4, Peter will see in Jesus' care of His people the model for pastors to follow:

1 Now as an elder myself and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory to be revealed, I exhort the elders among you 2 to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it—not for sordid gain but eagerly. 3 Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief shepherd appears, you will win the crown of glory that never fades away.⁴⁸

Pastors are encouraged to both 'pastor' (ποιμάνετε) and take care of (ἐπισκοποῦντες) the flock of God placed in their care. Jesus stands as the 'chief shepherd' (τοῦ ἀρχιποίμενος) who will evaluate their work in final judgment.

Although many translations render τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν as "of your souls," the better translation is "of your lives." Sheep had no 'souls' but they did have 'lives.' This understanding stresses the complete care and protection of the believer by Jesus, the chief Shepherd. He takes care of us as complete persons, not just of our souls!⁴⁹

In a wonderful climax to this passage we are reminded of what we have received. Peter inspired Christian slaves to endure unjust suffering not only following the example of Christ (vv. 21-24) but because that same Christ stands as shepherd and protector of the lives of these slaves. And also of us as believers today!

⁴³The Greek verb πλανᾶω in 39 NT uses contains a variety of meanings: **1.** to cause to go astray from a specific way, **a.** lead astray, **b.** mislead, deceive; **2.** to proceed without a sense of proper direction, go astray (pass. frequently in active sense), **a.** lit. go astray, **b.** fig., stray from the right way, **c.** fig. without imagistic detail, **i.** go astray, be deluded, **ii.** wander away from something, **iii.** be mistaken in one's judgment, **iv.** be deceived, misled. The BDAG lexicon lists 1 Peter 2:25 under 1.b., "in imagery of people who strayed fr. the right way (cp. 1a), ὡς πρόβατα πλανώμενοι 1 Pt 2:25." [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 821.]

⁴⁴The straying sheep simile is adopted from Isa 53:6 (cf. Ps 118[119]:176; Isa 13:14; Jer 27[50]:17)." [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 537.]

⁴⁵The act of being turned²⁰⁵ here suggests not so much that the readers once had been with the shepherd, had strayed, and are now being returned (e.g., Jewish Christians) as their conversion from their former status of unbelievers to that of members of the Christian community (e.g., gentile Christians),²⁰⁶ the more so since this verb could be used as virtually a technical term for conversion of Gentiles.²⁰⁷ [Paul J. Achtemeier and Eldon Jay Epp, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter*, Hermeneia—a critical and historical commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1996), 204.]

⁴⁶Note the grammar construction: Article Noun καὶ Article Noun means one reference from two perspectives, not two separate references. Also this phrase, τὸν ποιμένα καὶ ἐπίσκοπον, is unique to First Peter and not found elsewhere in the New Testament. This is the failure of the King James Version translation, the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls, to sense this inner connection of the two terms and thus misses the idea of ἐπίσκοπον with the much latter and theologically loaded term Bishop.

⁴⁷Cf. John 10:1-16; 21:15-17; Heb. 13:20.

⁴⁸5.1 Πρεσβυτέρους οὖν ἐν ὑμῖν παρακαλῶ ὁ συμπρεσβύτερος καὶ μάρτυς τῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθημάτων, ὁ καὶ τῆς μελλούσης ἀποκαλύπτεσθαι δόξης κοινωνός, 2 ποιμάνετε τὸ ἐν ὑμῖν ποιμνιον τοῦ θεοῦ, ἐπισκοποῦντες μὴ ἀναγκαστῶς ἀλλὰ ἐκούσιως κατὰ θεόν, μὴδὲ αἰσχροκερδῶς ἀλλὰ προθύμως, 3 μὴδ' ὡς κατακυριεύοντες τῶν κλήρων ἀλλὰ τύποι γινόμενοι τοῦ ποιμνίου· 4 καὶ φανερωθέντος τοῦ ἀρχιποίμενος κομιεῖσθε τὸν ἀμαράντινον τῆς δόξης στέφανον.

⁴⁹This phrase refers to the servants/slaves as whole persons, similar to the sense of psychai in 1:9 and 1:22." [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 539.]