



The First Letter of Peter
Bible Study Session 22
1 Peter 5:12-14
“Saying Goodbye”



Study By
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Greek NT

12 Διὰ Σιλουανοῦ ὑμῖν τοῦ πιστοῦ ἀδελφοῦ, ὡς λογίζομαι, δι’ ὀλίγων ἔγραψα, παρακαλῶν καὶ ἐπιμαρτυρῶν ταύτην εἶναι ἀληθῆ χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ· εἰς ἣν στήτε. 13 ἀσπάζεταιται ὑμᾶς ἡ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι συνεκλεκτῇ καὶ Μάρκος ὁ υἱός μου. 14 ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν φιλήματι ἀγάπης. εἰρήνη ὑμῖν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ.

La Biblia

de las Américas

12 Por conducto de Silvano, nuestro fiel hermano (porque así lo considero), os he escrito brevemente, exhortando y testificando que esta es la verdadera gracia de Dios. Estad firmes en ella. 13 La que está en Babilonia, elegida juntamente con vosotros, os saluda, y también mi hijo Marcos. 14 Saludaos unos a otros con un beso de amor. La paz sea con todos vosotros los que estáis en Cristo.

NRSV

12 Through Silvanus, whom I consider a faithful brother, I have written this short letter to encourage you and to testify that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it. 13 Your sister church in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings; and so does my son Mark. 14 Greet one another with a kiss of love.
 Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

NLT

2 I have written this short letter to you with the help of Silas, whom I consider a faithful brother. My purpose in writing is to encourage you and assure you that the grace of God is with you no matter what happens. 13 Your sister church here in Rome sends you greetings, and so does my son Mark. 14 Greet each other in Christian love. Peace be to all of you who are in Christ.

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Introduction to Study.

How do you say, “Goodbye”? Au revoir? Auf Wiedersehen? Adiós? Αντίο? להתראות In the ancient world saying goodbye in letters was more involved. The epistolary *Conclusio* in ancient letters could be a few words or a few paragraphs! It all depended on the sender of the letter. In comparison of this section to the letters in the New Testament, Peter says his farewells fairly quickly.¹ But what he says gives us important insight not only into the writing of ancient letters but other information as well.

At the end of the exegesis section, we will do a brief survey of the letter contents so that we can carry away from our study of First Peter a more complete picture of the materials found in this writing of the New Testament.

I. Context and Background²

Historical and literary setting issues here play a particularly important role in the understanding not just of this

¹Compare Gal. 6:11-18; 1 Thess. 5:23-28; 2 Thess. 3:16-18; 1 Cor. 16:19-24; 2 Cor. 13:11-13; Rom. 16:1-27; Philm. 23-25; Col. 4:10-18; Eph. 6:23-24; Phil. 4:21-23; 1 Tim. 6:21b; 2 Tim. 4:19-22; Tit. 3:15 .

²Serious 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.

passage, but of the entire letter. Thus we should take a close look at them as a part of our study.

a. Historical

External History. Over the centuries of copying this text, some variations in wording surface. The UBS 4th revised edition of the *Greek New Testament* lists three places with variations significant enough to impact Bible translation. But the Nestle-Aland 27th revised edition of *Novum Testamentum Graece* list seven places with differences in wording.

First, let's look at the UBS variation in readings. In verse 13, the reference to Babylon varies from ἐν Βαβυλῶνι to Βαβυλῶνι ἐκκλησία or to Ῥώμη.³ Most of the manuscripts simply read ἡ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι συνεκλεκτή, *the in Babylon sister church*. Some manuscripts (κ it^{ar,z} vg^{cl,ww} syr^p arm eth^{pp}) change this to ἡ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι ἐκκλησία, *the in Babylon church*. One copyist (2138) adopted the common interpretation of Babylon to refer actually to Rome and so replaced Βαβυλῶνι with Ῥώμη. But the overwhelming weight of evidence favors the text reading of ἡ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι συνεκλεκτή, *the in Babylon sister church*.⁴

In verse 14, the ἐν φιλήματι ἀγάπης, *with a kiss of love*, is changed to read ἐν φιλήματι ἀγίῳ, *with a holy kiss*, or to read ἐν φιλήματι καὶ ἀγάπης, *with a holy kiss and of love*.⁵ Again the clear weight of evidence favors the text reading of ἐν φιλήματι ἀγάπης, *with a kiss of love*.⁶

In verse 14, τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ, *those in Christ*, is modified (1) to read τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ. ἀμήν, *those in Christ. Amen*, or (2) τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, *those in Christ Jesus*, or (3) Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. ἀμήν, *those in Christ Jesus. Amen*.⁷ The uncertainty revolved around whether to not to add Ἰησοῦ and ἀμήν. The shorter reading of τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ is preferred primarily because of scribal tendencies to lengthen the sacred name rather than shorten it.⁸

The additional variations that are listed in the N-A 27th edition Greek text are mainly stylistic variations that do not change the meaning of the text and are supported mostly by late manuscripts.⁹ Again, we observe what has consistency been true in every instance of variation in the wording of the text of First Peter that the essential meaning remains the same. The changes in the wording almost always are attempts by copyists to

³13 {A} Βαβυλῶνι P⁷² A B Ψ 81 322 323 436 945 1067 1175 1241 1243 1292 1409 1505 1611 1735 1739 1852 1881 2298 2344 2464 Byz [K L P] Lect it^{h,q} vgst syr^h cop^{sa,bo} geo slav Origen^{acc. to Eusebius} Eusebius // Βαβυλῶνι ἐκκλησία κ it^{ar,z} vg^{cl,ww} syr^p arm eth^{pp} // Ῥώμη 2138.

⁴“Instead of Βαβυλῶνι, a few minuscule manuscripts read Ῥώμη (Rome). The variant reading is probably correct in understanding the name Βαβυλῶνι to be a code name for ‘Rome’; and this information may be stated in a note which explains that, as in Rev 17:5, this name probably refers to Rome, the capital of the Roman Empire. TEV, for example, has a footnote which states, ‘As in the book of Revelation, this probably refers to Rome.’ GECL similarly has a note, which reads, ‘Probably a code-word for Rome (see Rev 17).’” [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), 492.]

⁵{A} ἀγάπης P⁷² κ A B Ψ 81 322 323 945 1175 1241 1243 1292 1505 1611 1739 1852 1881 2138 2298 2344 Byz [K L P] Lect it^{h,q} syr^h cop^{sa,bo} eth slav geo Cyril-Jerusalem^{dub}; Cassiodorus // ἀγίῳ 436 1067 1409 1735 2464 1593 1298 1365 it^{ar,z} vg syr^p (arm) // ἀγίῳ καὶ ἀγάπης l 422 (cop^{bomss}).

⁶“Instead of ἀγάπης, the copyists of several minuscule manuscripts wrote ἀγίῳ (holy), thus imitating the familiar Pauline expression φιλημα ἅγιον (holy kiss; [Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Thess 5:26]). Lectionary 422 combines both expressions, φιλήματι ἀγίῳ καὶ ἀγάπης. In order. In order to make clear that this kiss is not an erotic kiss, TEV says, ‘Greet one another with the kiss of Christian love.’” [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), 493.]

⁷{A} Χριστῷ. A B Ψ 2344 it^{ar,z} vgst cop^{sams,bomss} // Χριστῷ. ἀμήν. 2464 1895 1365 1441 vg^{ww} syr^p eth // Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. 81 322 323 945 1175 1241 1243 1739* 1881 2298 cop^{sams,bomss} geo // Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. ἀμήν κ 436 1067 1292 1409 1505 1611 1735 1739^c 1852 2138 Byz [K L P] Lect it^h vg^{cl} syr^h cop^{bomss} arm slav.

⁸“5:14 Χριστῷ (in Christ) {A}

“The Textus Receptus, along with several Greek and versional witnesses, adds Ἰησοῦ (Jesus), and manuscript 629 substitutes κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ (Lord Jesus). In view of the tendency of copyists to expand the sacred name, the shorter reading, supported by representatives of several text-types, is most likely original.

“5:14 omit ἀμήν. (amen.) {A}

“Although most witnesses, as might be expected, conclude the epistle with ἀμήν (amen), the copyists of some manuscripts resisted what must have been a strong liturgical temptation to add the word.”

[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), 493.]

⁹Note the following listing in the N-A, 27th rev. text apparatus:

make the text read clearer to his readership by updating the language, and / or by making the text conform to dominant patterns of similar expressions found either elsewhere in First Peter or in the New Testament.

Internal History. The time and place markers in this passage are minimal, and they relate to exegetical issues as much or more than they do to historical background matters. Thus, these will be treated below in the exegesis section of the study.

b. Literary

Literary Form (Genre). The broad genre issue here is that of the letter *Conclusio* that covers all three verses in the letter.¹⁰ Inside the New Testament reference is made to different letters,¹¹ and short excerpts of

<p>1. Petrus 5,12 * δια βραχεων P⁷² * P72 Ψ 0206^{vid} 33. 81. 323. 945. 1241. 1739 <i>al</i> * εστηκατε P M h r vg^{cl} εστε 1505 pc sy^h αιτειτε Ψ txt P⁷² & A B 33. 81. 323. 945. 1241. 1739 <i>al</i> vg^{st,ww}</p>	<p>1. Petrus 5,13 * Ρωμη 2138 pc * εκκλησια & ρ^c vg^{mss} sy^p</p>	<p>1. Petrus 5,14 * αγιω 623. 2464 <i>al</i> vg sy^p * P72 * Ιησου & P 1739 m h vg^{cl} sy^h sa^{mss} bo txt A B Ψ 33^{vid} pc vg^{st,ww} sy^p sa^{mss} bo^{mss} * αμην & P 1739^c m h vg^{cl,ww} sy bo^{mss} txt A B Ψ 81. 323. 945. 1241. 1739* pc vgst co</p>
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[Eberhard Nestle, Erwin Nestle, Kurt Aland et al., *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27. Aufl., rev. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1993), 608.]

^{10c}The normal Greek letter simply ended with a short closing word, perhaps preceded by such items as (1) an oath, (2) a health wish, (3) a purpose statement, and (4) a mention of who was carrying the letter,¹ but the NT writers (especially Paul, although that may only appear to be the case because we have so many of his letters and relatively few of those of other writers) have expanded this into a relatively lengthy conclusion. It was normal for these church letters to include (1) greetings (rare in Greek letters, but more common in oriental ones and valued in the church as a means of strengthening interchurch unity: 2 Cor. 13:12; Phil. 4:22; 2 John 13), (2) some comment about the messenger (Rom. 16:1; 1 Cor. 16:17; 2 Cor. 8:17; Eph. 6:21; Phil. 2:25; Col. 4:7–8; Philem. 11–12), (3) a statement as to the purpose of the letter (Gal. 6:11–17; 1 Tim. 6:20–21; Philem. 21–22; Heb. 13:22; Jas. 5:19–20; 1 John 5:21), and (4) a blessing or prayer as the concluding line (Rom. 16:20; 1 Cor. 16:23; 2 Cor. 13:13; Gal. 6:18; Eph. 6:24; Phil. 4:23; Col. 4:18; Heb. 13:25). It was also normal for the author to take the pen from the scribe at this point and write the conclusion (although not necessarily the greetings if they were extended) in his own hand, as likely happens here (Gal. 6:11; 2 Thess. 3:17). However, despite structural parallels our letter shows no literary dependence on Pauline formulas (as the differences will show), but rather a general similarity to Paul's letters as well as to other NT letters." [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), 197.]

^{11c}**ἐπιστολή, ἡς, ἡ** (s. ἐπιστέλλω) **letter, epistle** (so Eur., Thu.+; loanw. in rabb.) **2 Cor 7:8; 2 Th 3:17**; 1 Cl 47:1; 63:2; IEph 12:2; ISm 11:3; Pol 13:2b. δι' ἐπιστολῆς (Diod S 19, 48, 1; Polyaeus 7, 39; 53rd letter of Apollonius of Tyana [Philostrat. I 358, 9]; Ps.-Demetr., Form. Ep. p. 5, 10; BGU 884, 6; 1046 II, 5) **by a letter 2 Th 2:2** (Vi. Aesopi W 104 P. ἐ. ὡς ἐκ τοῦ Αἰσώπου; Polyaeus 8, 50 of two dead persons ὡς ἐτι ζώντων ἐπιστολή), vs. 15, cp. 3:14. γράφειν ἐπιστολήν (Diod S 17, 39, 2; Philo, Leg. ad Gai. 207) Ac 15:23 D; 23:25 (on the specific type of administrative communication s. Taubenschlag, OpMin II 722, w. ref. to PTeht 45, 27); Ro 16:22; ἐν τῇ ἐ. **1 Cor 5:9** (ἐν τῇ ἐ.=‘in the letter known to you’ [s. ὁ 2a] as ChronLind B 14 ἐν τῷ ἐπιστολῷ; Hyperid. 3, 25 ἐν τ. ἐπιστολαῖς; Pla., Ep. 7, 345c ἡ ἐ.=the letter [known to you]). ταύτην δευτέραν ὑμῖν γράφω ἐ. **2 Pt 3:1** (cp. BGU 827, 20 ἰδοῦ τρίτην ἐπιστολήν σοι γράφω. PMich 209, 5 δευτέραν ἐπιστολήν ἔπεμψά σοι). ἀπό τῆς Ἰωάννου προτέρας ἐ. Papias (2:17); αἱ δύο ἐπιστολαὶ αἱ μικραὶ Papias (11:1); ἀναδιδόναι τὴν ἐπιστολήν τινι *deliver the letter to someone* **Ac 23:33**. Also ἐπιδιδόναι **15:30**. διαπέμπεσθαι send MPol 20:1. διακονεῖν *care for* **2 Cor 3:3**. ἀναγνώσκειν (X., An. 1, 6, 4; 1 Macc 10:7; Jos., C. Ap. 2, 37) **3:2; Col 4:16; 1 Th 5:27**. In all probability the plur. in our lit.—even **Ac 9:2**; Pol 3:2—always means more than one letter, not a single one (as Eur., Iph. A. 111; 314; Thu. 1, 132, 5; 4, 50, 2, also M. Iulius Brutus, Ep. 1, 1 [fr. Mithridates]; 1 Macc 10:3, 7; Jos., Ant. 10, 15; 16): δι' ἐπιστολῶν **with letters 1 Cor 16:3**. τῷ λόγῳ δι' ἐπιστολῶν ἀπόντες (do someth.) *through word by means of letters, when we are absent* **2 Cor 10:11** (cp. UPZ 69, 3 [152 B.C.] ἀπόντος μου ... διὰ τοῦ ἐπιστολίου); vs. **9**; ἐ. βαρεῖται καὶ ἰσχυραὶ *the letters are weighty and powerful* vs. **10**. ἔγραψεν ὑμῖν ὡς καὶ ἐν πάσαις ἐ. **2 Pt 3:16**. ἐ. συστατικάι letters of recommendation **2 Cor 3:1** (s. on συστατικός). ἐπιστολάς πέμπειν (Ps.-Demosth. 11, 17; Diod S 17, 23, 6 ἔπεμψεν ἐπιστολάς=letters; OGI 42, 6; 2 Macc 11:34) IPol 8:1; cp. Pol 13:2a. ἐπιστολή πρὸς τινα *a letter to someone* (2 Esdr 12:7; 2 Macc 11:27; Jos., C. Ap. 1, 111) Ac 9:2; 22:5 (letters empowering someone to arrest people and deliver them to the authorities in the capital city, as PTeht 315, 29ff [II A.D.]); **2 Cor 3:1** (πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἢ ἐξ ὑμῶν).—Later epistolary subscriptions to the NT letters, as well as B, 1 Cl, 2 Cl.—GBahr, Paul and Letter Writing in the First Century, CBQ 28, '66, 465–77; JWhite, Light fr. Ancient Letters '86, 3–20, 221–24 lit. Lit. on χαιρω 2b. B. 1286; RAC II 564–85.—DELG s.v. στέλλω. M-M. EDNT. 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), 381.]

ἐπιστέλλω (s. ἐπιστολή, στέλλω) 1 aor. ἐπέστειλα; pf. 2 sg. ἐπέστακλας 3 Km 5:22 cod. A *to send someth. to, inform/instruct*
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a few letters are embedded in some of the other writings, namely, Acts.¹²

The *Conclusio* of most ancient Greek and Latin letters served an important role in helping seal a bond of friendship between the letter sender and those who received the letter as named recipients. Several items could surface in this section: sender verification, greetings, doxologies, benedictia. The patterns vary from writer to writer and from letter to letter reflecting the fact that no rigidly set pattern was in place. Not all of the letters in the New Testament contain a *conclusio*, although all thirteen of Paul's letters do. Among the non-Pauline letters, Hebrews 13:18-25 contains the lengthiest *conclusio*. Romans 16:1-25 is the longest of all of the *conclusia* found in the New Testament.

The *Conclusio* in First Peter is more developed than in Second Peter which contains only a doxology in 3:18b that compares to the one in Jude 24-25. This unit of the letter does provide insight into letter writing along with reference to some other Christian leaders at that time.

At the small genre level, this text contains three of the many possible elements typically found in letter *conclusia* in the ancient world: a) sender verification (v. 12); greetings (vv. 13-14a); and *benedictio* (v. 14b).

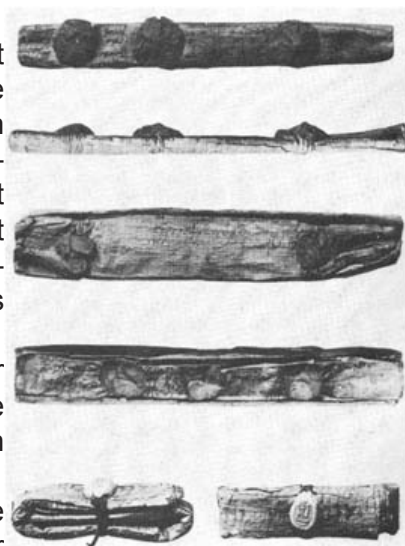
The Sender Verification. Because most formal letters, such as those in the New Testament, were not written directly by the designated sender but rather by a scribe who took dictation from the sender, the customary pattern was for the sender to take pen in hand at the *Conclusio* and write out most, if not all of it, in his own handwriting. This hand writing would normally be recognized by the designated readers of the letter and would thus serve as the sender's validation to them that the contents of the letter, even though not in the sender's hand writing, did reflect his ideas and thus should be taken as such by the readers.

In the New Testament we have a reflection of the common tendency in the outside world of that day regarding the composition of formal letters.¹³ What we have for certain in 1 Peter 5:12, as reflected in the first

by letter also simply write (so Hdt. et al.; SIG 837, 14; pap, LXX) w. dat. of pers. (PFay 133, 12; Jos., Ant. 4, 13; 14, 52) διὰ βραχέων ἐπέστειλα ὑμῖν *I have written to you briefly* **Hb 13:22** (cp. Herm. Wr. 14, 1 σοι δι' ὀλίγων ἐ.). ἰκανῶς ἐ. τινὶ περὶ τινος sufficiently to someone about someth. 1 Cl 62:1 (cp. Ps.-Aeschin., Ep. 12, 14; Jos., Ant. 12, 50). περὶ τινος (cp. UPZ 110, 185 [164 B.C.]; Jos., Ant. 18, 300) concerning someone **Ac 21:25**. τινὶ περὶ τινος (BGU 1081, 5) 1 Cl 47:3. W. subst. inf. foll. τοῦ ἀπέχεσθαι to abstain **Ac 15:20**. Abs. 1 Cl 7:1.—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), 381.]

^{12c}There are four different sources for our knowledge of ancient letters: letters preserved through literary transmission, letters discovered in modern times, letters preserved in inscriptions, and letters embedded in other kinds of literature. Many Greek and Latin letters were preserved and copied because they were valued as literature by certain communities. The Greek letters of Plato, Isocrates, Demosthenes, and Libanius and the Latin letters of Cicero, Pliny, Seneca, and Fronto fit into this category, as do the Christian letters in the NT, of the Apostolic fathers, Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, Augustine, and Jerome. Letters preserved in this way tend to be more consciously literary than letters from the other categories and are often highly shaped by Greek or Latin rhetoric. Some letters in this category were written and collected with an eye toward publication. They also reflect a higher social level than other sorts of letters." [David Noel Freedman, vol. 4, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 290-91.]

^{13c}The Greek term *grammateus* occurs only once in the NT in its normal sense of 'clerk' or 'secretary' (Acts 19:35), yet here the term designates not a 'secretary,' in the simple sense, but a high civic official whose duties included the drafting of decrees of the citizenry, administering civic funds, and transacting affairs of the city. (The frequent translation 'town clerk' is not quite apposite.) Still, the activity of secretaries is elsewhere intimated in the NT, especially in the letters of Paul. It was apparently Paul's custom to dictate his letters to a secretary. The 'oral style' of the letters is only one indication of this. In Rom 16:22, one Tertius expressly designates himself as the transcriber of the letter. Paul's practice in other letters of adding greetings (1 Cor 16:21, 2 Thess 3:17, Col 4:18), an asseveration (Phlm 19), and a summary statement (Gal 6:11-18) in his own handwriting implies that the letters themselves were written at the hands of amanuenses who transcribed at Paul's dictation. Indeed, 2 Thess 3:17 claims that Paul's appended greeting, written in his own hand, was a 'sign' or 'mark' employed in each of his letters. This practice suggests that these letters were normally in the handwriting of a secretary. A similar use of an amanuensis is also indicated by 1 Pet 5:12. In dictating his letters to a secretary, Paul was following a well-established practice in antiquity. Many papyrus letters preserved from the period were written in the hand of a secretary, with the final greeting or other closing matter written in the hand of the sender. In addition, classical literature often attests the use of a secretary. Cicero, a prolific letter writer, often dictated letters to his secretary, Tiro, and frequently alluded to this practice. Plutarch mentions it for Caesar (Vit. Caes. 17.3), Pliny the Younger mentions it for his uncle (Ep.



Papyri that have been rolled, bound, sealed, and addressed for dispatch (Staatliche Museen, Berlin)

person singular verb ἔγραψα, in verse 12 and probably also in vv. 12-14 is Peter himself writing the final words of the letter, rather than Silas who had written everything to that point.

Greetings. The greetings found in the letter *conclusio* differ from the *salutatio* greeting in the opening *praescriptio* of the letter, although their literary function is similar: to strengthen bonds of friendship between the letter sender(s) and the letter recipients. In the *conclusio*, greetings flow two directions: a) from the sender to the letter recipients, either inclusively or to named individuals among the designated recipients; b) from friends of the letter sender present with him at the time of the writing of the letter to the letter recipients, either inclusively or to named individuals among the designated recipients. Usually, these friends are known by the targeted recipients, or else by individuals among the targeted recipients.

The manner of greeting was both orally spoken greetings¹⁴ and the kiss (φίλημα) on the cheek.¹⁵ Shaking hands in the ancient world had another meaning, that of formalizing an agreement; see Gal. 2:9 for a NT example.¹⁶

The importance of sending and receiving greetings is underscored by the exceedingly long list of greetings in Romans 16:3-16, 21-23. This custom arose out of the important role of friendship in the ancient world,¹⁷ despite the single NT use of ἡ φιλία for 'friendship' in James 4:4.¹⁸ The concept of friendship did not

3.5, 9.36), and Quintilian objects to its widespread use (Inst. 10,3,19) (Bahr, 1966, concisely surveys the evidence).” [David Noel Freedman, vol. 1, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 172.]

¹⁴Cf. 2 John 10-11 for an example of an oral greeting:

10 Do not receive into the house or **welcome anyone** who comes to you and does not bring this teaching; 11 for **to welcome** is to participate in the evil deeds of such a person.

10 εἴ τις ἔρχεται πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ ταύτην τὴν διδασχὴν οὐ φέρει, μὴ λαμβάνετε αὐτὸν εἰς οἰκίαν καὶ **χαίρειν αὐτῷ μὴ λέγετε**: 11 **ὁ λέγων γὰρ αὐτῷ χαίρειν** κοινωνεῖ τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ τοῖς πονηροῖς.

¹⁵**φίλημα, ατος, τό** (Aeschyl.+; Pr 27:6; SSol 1:2; Philo, Div. Rer. Her. 40; Jos., Bell. 7, 391; Just., A I, 65, 2; Ath. 32, 3) *a kiss* (φιλέω 2) **Lk 22:48** (a basic betrayal of canons of friendship, cp. Aristot. EN 8; JDöller, Der Judaskuss: Korrespondenzblatt f. d. kath. Klerus Österreichs 1918; 127–29). φίλημά τι διδόναι *give someone a kiss* (Nicophon Com. [V/IV B.C.] 8) *Lk 7:45*. The kiss w. which Christians give expression to their intimate fellowship (Ath. 32, 3 τὸ φ., μάλλον δὲ τὸ προσκύνημα ‘the kiss, or rather the formal greeting’; here the qualification τὸ π. aims at thwarting charges of indecency) *is called* φίλημα ἅγιον: ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν φιλήματι ἁγίῳ *greet one another w. a kiss of esteem* **Ro 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; cp. 1 Th 5:26**. Also ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν φιλήματι ἀγάπης *greet one another w. an affectionate kiss* **1 Pt 5:14** (Just., A I, 65, 2 [without ἐν]).—H AChelis, Das Christentum in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten I 1912, 292f; Windisch on 2 Cor 13:12; RSeeberg, Aus Rel. u. Gesch. I 1906, 118–22; AWünsche, Der Kuss in Bibel, Talmud u. Midrasch 1911; K-MHofmann, Philema Hagion ’38; WLowrie, The Kiss of Peace, Theology Today 12, ’55, 236–42; KThraede, JAC 11f, ’68/69, 124–80; JEllington, Kissing in the Bible, Form and Meaning: BT 41, ’90, 409–16; WKlassen, NTS 39, ’93, 122–35.—B. 1114. DELG s.v. φίλος. 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), 1057.]

¹⁶NRSV: **and when James and Cephas and John, who were acknowledged pillars, recognized the grace that had been given to me, they gave to Barnabas and me the right hand of fellowship**, agreeing that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

καὶ γνόντες τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι, Ἰάκωβος καὶ Κηφᾶς καὶ Ἰωάννης, οἱ δοκοῦντες στῦλοι εἶναι, **δεξιὰς ἔδωκαν ἐμοὶ καὶ Βαρναβᾶ κοινωνίας**, ἵνα ἡμεῖς εἰς τὰ ἔθνη, αὐτοὶ δὲ εἰς τὴν περιτομήν·

¹⁷Friendship was a regular ancient topic of discourse (e.g., Epictetus Disc. 2.22), the leading subject of numerous essays, for instance, by Aristotle (Eth. Eud. 7.1234b-1246a; Eth. Nic. 8–9); Plutarch (Many Friends, Mor. 93A-97B); Dio Chrysostom (Third Discourse on Kingship 99–100); Cicero (De Amic.); Seneca (Ep. Lucil. 3, “On True and False Friendships”; 9, “On Philosophy and Friendship”; see further Sevenster, 172–77); and Theophrastus (according to Aulus Gellius Noc. Att. 1.3.10–11). Scholars have produced detailed studies of friendship in Philo, who develops some Stoic ideals (see Sterling); on Aristotle (Schroeder, 35–45) and his followers, the Peripatetics (Schroeder, 45–56; for other sources, see especially Fitzgerald 1997b, 7–10). Even before Aristotle, many ideals of friendship circulated that later became pervasive in the Roman world (see Fitzgerald 1997a). There were a variety of perspectives on and kinds of friendship, not only in the philosophers but also throughout Greco-Roman and Jewish society. Friendship could signify a relationship of dependence or of equality, of impersonal alliances or of personal bonds of affection.” [Stanley E. Porter and Craig A. Evans, *Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000).]

¹⁸“In one of its most common uses in ancient literature, ‘friendship’ could apply to alliances, cooperation or nonaggression treaties among peoples. Epics could use such language for alliances (Homer Il. 3.93, 256; 4.17; 16.282; Virgil Aen. 11.321), as might orators (Demosthenes On the Navy Boards 5; On the Embassy 62; Letters 3.27; cf. Rhet. Ad Herenn. 3.3.4). It also appears in geographers (Strabo Geog. 8.5.5) and apologists (Josephus Ag. Ap. 1.109; 2.83b). Naturally, this language predominates in biographers and historians. We can attest it abundantly in biographers such as Arrian (Alex. 1.28.1; 4.15.2, 5; 4.21.8; 7.15.4);

imply a leveling of social roles to equality; rather, it tended to be viewed a mutual need between individuals or groups.¹⁹ Although the terminology of friendship is not extensively used in the New Testament, the concept clearly was important among the writers of the New Testament.²⁰ But with both the teaching and example of

Plutarch (Comp. Lyc. Num. 4.6; Pel. 5.1; 29.4; also Epameinondas 17 in Reg. Imp. Apophth., Mor. 193DE); Cornelius Nepos (Vir. Illus. 7.4.7; 7.5.3; 7.7.5; 14.8.5; 23.10.2), and others (Josephus Life 30, 124). It is if anything more abundant in the historians, such as Polybius (e.g., Hist. 14.1); Dionysius of Halicarnassus (e.g., Ant. Rom. 3.28.7; 3.51.1; 5.26.4; 5.50.3); Diodorus Siculus (e.g., Bib. Hist.. 14.30.4; 14.56.2; 17.39.1); Livy (e.g., Hist. 6.2.3; 27.4.6; 43.6.9); and 1 Maccabees (1 Macc 12:1, 3, 8; 14:40).

“Ancient writers frequently apply the designation friendship to personal or familial relationships undertaken for political expediency (e.g., Achilles Tatius Leuc. 4.6.1–3); Plutarch provides abundant examples (e.g., Plutarch Ages. 23.6; Pomp. 70.4; Statecraft 13, Mor. 806F-809B; Philosophers and Men in Power 1, Mor. 776AB; Whether an Old Man Should Engage in Public Affairs 6, Mor. 787B).” [Stanley E. Porter and Craig A. Evans, *Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000).]

^{19c}“Although Roman patronal friendship made at best a vague pretense to equality, this traditional Greek image of friendship, even when related to benefaction, demanded at least the idea of equality. Aristotle cited the earlier proverb, ‘Friendship is equality’ (Aristotle Eth. Eud. 7.9.1, 1241b), and is said to have ‘defined friendship as an equality of reciprocal goodwill’ (Diogenes Laertius Vit. 5.31, as translated in LCL 1:478–79). Of course, what Aristotle meant by ‘equality’ differs considerably from our usage of that concept. Any kind of friendship could exist either between equals or with one as a superior (Aristotle Eth. Eud. 7.3.2, 1238b; 7.10.10, 1242b; Eth. Nic. 8.7.1, 1158b; 8.13.1, 1162ab); Aristotle further defined ‘equality’ more proportionately than quantitatively (Aristotle Eth. Nic. 8.7.2–3, 1158b). In the same way, his teacher Plato stressed both the friendship held by loving equals and that which stemmed from the poor’s need for the rich (Plato Leg. 8, 837AB).” [Stanley E. Porter and Craig A. Evans, *Dictionary of New Testament Background : A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000).]

^{20c}“Much of the conventional language of friendship, although not our specific term, recurs in Paul’s letters, possibly presupposed in Paul’s conflict with the Corinthians (see Marshall, especially 132–33; Mitchell, 230–31), in his pathos section in Galatians 4:12–20 (Mitchell, 227–30) and probably important in his letter to the Philippians (Mitchell, 233–36 and the numerous authors he cites).

“Luke-Acts employs a great deal of friendship imagery (see Mitchell, 236–57). The matter of reciprocal obligation may inform some of these texts, for example, in the case of the friend at midnight (Lk 11:5–8). The centurion’s friends act as his messengers (Lk 7:6), perhaps performing a favor in return for his benefactions (Lk 7:5) or acting as his clients (cf. Acts 10:7–8). The friends in view in Luke 15:6, 9, 29; 21:16 are one’s equals; in Luke 14:12 they could be social peers but possibly clients (cf. Lk 14:10), as also in Acts 10:24, where relatives are likely dependents, given the social status of a Roman officer in the provinces (see Family and Household). In Luke 16:9 the friends in the context might be clients in some sense, but the emphasis is on networking with allies bound to one by reciprocal obligation (cf. Lk 16:5–7). Luke 23:12 clearly designates the friendship of political alliance. The accusation in Q that Jesus is friends with sinners (Mt 11:19 par. Lk 7:34) probably stems from Palestinian Jewish ideas about table fellowship (cf. Ps 1:1), but Greco-Roman readers of Luke might recognize how this practice (Lk 5:29; 15:1–2) could be shockingly misinterpreted in terms of a patron endorsing clients or a client sage teaching at banquets of the well-to-do. The Asiarchs may be Paul’s patrons in some sense in Acts 19:31.

“In Acts 2:44–47, the ancient context of friendship as sharing possessions, as equality and as patronage all provide part of the context. Although Acts 2:44–47 does not employ the term friendship, its emphasis on shared possessions would evoke for many Greek readers the ideal of friendship held by various other communities, at the same time challenging the usual expectation of reciprocity in ancient friendship. In contrast to the patronal model of friendship, higher-status members of Luke’s audience are to use their possessions to provide benefaction without expecting reciprocation, even in honor (Lk 6:34–35; 14:12–14; Acts 20:35; Mitchell, 237–49; cf. perhaps Acts 27:3). Luke thus pushes the notion of equality in friendship further than traditions of patronage; Paul probably does the same (2 Cor 8:13–14). As in Roman party politics, those who share common allies also share common enemies (Jas 4:4).

“The ‘friend of the bridegroom’ in John 3:29 may represent a custom different from what we have discussed; many commentators relate this to the *shoshbin*, the best man of traditional Jewish weddings (e.g., Abrahams, 2:213; Dodd, 386). At least according to our later sources, the *shoshbins* of bride and groom functioned as witnesses in the wedding (Deut. Rab. 3:16), normally contributed financially to the wedding (Safrai, 757) and would be intimately concerned with the success of the wedding; thus, for example, the bride’s *shoshbin* might have the evidence of her virginity (Num. Rab. 18:12). Some have linked the *shoshbin* with the marriage negotiator (Batey, 16–17). This may have been sometimes the case; agents (*šāli.ahīm*) often negotiated betrothals (e.g., t. Yebam. 4:4; b. Qidd. 43a; Romans also negotiated betrothals through intermediaries [Friedländer, 1:234]), and sometimes these agents were probably significant persons who might also fill a role in the wedding, which might fit the image of John the Baptist in this context (Jn 3:27–29) as one sent by God. (Three of the four tannaitic parables regarding a marriage broker present Moses as the intermediary between God and Israel; Johnston, 589.) But such agents were sometimes servants (e.g., b. Giṭ 23a), not likely to become *shoshbins*. When possible, a *shoshbin* of status even higher than that of the groom was preferred (b. Yebam. 63a).

“We commented on the ideal of friends dying for one another in John 15:13–15 (§3 above), one of the most explicit friendship

Jesus, friendship between individual believers had a leveling impact, as Paul expresses in Gal. 6:2-5.²¹

The letter as a 'substitute presence' of the sender with the recipients then contained very naturally expressions of greetings, both at the beginning and at the closing in order to affirm the bonds of friendship between the sender and the recipients. In the letter *conclusio*, the noun ἀσπασμός²² and the verb ἀσπάζομαι²³ are used

passages in the NT, and addressed this text in terms of both Greco-Roman and Jewish writers' comments on friendship with God (§4 above). Although the passage may depend partly on the idea of patronal friendship, the ancient ideals of loyalty, intimacy and sharing are more dominant. Jesus intimately shares the secrets of his heart with his disciples, treating them as friends as God treated Abraham and Moses by revealing himself to them. The parallels with John 16:13–15 indicate that the Spirit of truth would continue passing down the revelations from the Father and Jesus to the disciples, just as in Jesus' own ministry (Jn 5:20; 8:26). They are his friends and therefore objects of his self-sacrifice (Jn 15:13), if they do what he commands them (Jn 15:14). The paradoxical image of friends, not slaves, who obey Jesus' commandments is meant to jar the hearer to attention; friendship means not freedom to disobey but an intimate relationship that continues to recognize distinctions in authority. (Authority distinctions remained in patron-client relationships; at the same time Jesus' complete sharing with his disciples resembles the Greek notion of equality in friendships.) Disciples as Jesus' friends might stem from Jesus tradition (Lk 12:4, though stylistically a Lukan preference). It may have become a title for believers (3 Jn 15) as in some philosophical groups.²⁴

[Stanley E. Porter and Craig A. Evans, *Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000).]

²¹NRSV: 2 Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. 3 For if those who are nothing think they are something, they deceive themselves. 4 All must test their own work; then that work, rather than their neighbor's work, will become a cause for pride. 5 For all must carry their own loads.

2 ἀλλήλων τὰ βάρη βαστάετε, καὶ οὕτως ἀναπληρώσετε τὸν νόμον τοῦ Χριστοῦ. 3 εἰ γὰρ δοκεῖ τις εἶναι τι μὴδὲν ὄν, φρεναπατᾷ ἑαυτὸν· 4 τὸ δὲ ἔργον ἑαυτοῦ δοκιμαζέτω ἕκαστος, καὶ τότε εἰς ἑαυτὸν μόνον τὸ καύχημα ἔξει καὶ οὐκ εἰς τὸν ἕτερον, 5 ἕκαστος γὰρ τὸ ἴδιον φορτίον βαστάσει.

²²ἀσπασμός, οὐ, ὁ (s. ἀσπάζομαι; Theognis et al.; Epict. 4, 4, 3; 37; POxy 471, 67; TestSol 18:21 H; EpArist 246; 304; Jos., Ant. 15, 210) *greeting*.

a. of personal salutations **Lk 1:29, 41, 44**; φιλεῖν etc. **Mt 23:7; Mk 12:38; Lk 11:43; 20:46**. ὦρα τοῦ ἁ. GJs 24:1 (s. ἀσπάζομαι 1b end).

b. of written greetings ὁ ἁ. τῆ ἐμῆ χειρὶ Παύλου **1 Cor 16:21; Col 4:18; 2 Th 3:17**.—DELG s.v. ἀσπάζομαι. 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), 144.]

²³ἀσπάζομαι fut. ptc. ἀσπασομένου 3 Macc. 1:8; 1 aor. ἠσπασάμην (s. next entry; Hom.+) 'greet'.

1. to engage in hospitable recognition of another (w. varying degrees of intimacy), *greet, welcome* τινά *someone* Just., A I, 65, 2

a. through word or gesture or both: of those entering a house **Mt 10:12; Lk 1:40; Ac 21:19**; Hv 5:1. Of those meeting others (Jos., Ant. 8, 321) **Lk 10:4**; *welcome, greet someone* (Philostrat., Vi. Apoll. 1, 12) **Mk 9:15**; Hv 1, 1, 4; 1, 2, 2; 4, 2, 2; AcPl Ha 7:38; 8:3. Of those departing take leave of (X., An. 7, 1, 8; Nicol. Dam.: 90 Fgm. 68, 7 Jac.; Plut., Aemil. P. 270 [29, 1] ἀσπασάμενος ἀνέξευξεν) **Ac 20:1, 12 D; 21:6** v.l.; AcPl Ha 5, 13.—**Mt 5:47** ἁ. here denotes more than a perfunctory salutation and requires some such rendering as spend time in warm exchange (cp. X., Cyr. 1, 4, 1; Ael. Aristid. 31, 6 K.=11 p. 128 D.; Aelian, VH 9, 4; Appian, Bell. Civ. 3, 79 §322 τ. ἐναντίους; w. ἀγαπάω (vs. 46), of which it is almost a synonym (as Plut., Mor. 143b; s. HAlmqvist, Plut. u. das NT, '46, 34; Ptolem., Apotel. 1, 3, 17.—W. φιλέω: Hierocles 19, 460; opp. μισέω: Simplicius in Epict. p. 31, 6). See FPorporato, Verb. Domini 11, '31, 15–22.—Freq. in written greetings (cp. the exx. in Ltzm., Griech. Papyri [Kleine Texte 14] 2 1910, nos. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13.—FZiemann, De Epistularum Graec. Formulæ Soll., diss. Halle 1911, 325ff; FXJExler, The Form of the Ancient Gk. Letter 1923; ORoller, D. Formular d. paul. Briefe '33, 67ff; HKoskenniemi, Studien z. Idee u. Phraseologie d. griech. Briefes '56, 148ff); the impv. may be transl. *greetings to (someone) or remember me to (someone)*; other moods than impv. may be rendered wish to be remembered, *greet, send greetings* **Ro 16:3, 5ff; 1 Cor 16:19f; 2 Cor 13:12; Phil 4:21f; Col 4:10, 12, 14f; 2 Ti 4:19, 21; Tit 3:15; Phlm 23; Hb 13:24; 1 Pt 5:13f; 2 J 13; 3 J 15**; IMg ins; 15; ITr ins; 12:1; 13:1; IRo ins; 9:3; IPHld ins; 11:2; ISm 11:1; 12:1f; 13:1f; IPol 8:2f. Another person than the writer of the letter sometimes adds greetings of his own **Ro 16:22** (sim. POxy 1067, 25 καγὼ Ἀλέξανδρος ἀσπάζομαι ὑμᾶς πολλά). ἁ. πολλά (besides the pap just mentioned also PParis 18, 3 [Dssm., B 215]; POxy 930, 22; 935, 22; PGrenf II, 73, 4 [=Ltzm. Pap. nos. 13, 14, 15]) *greet warmly* **1 Cor 16:19**; ἁ. κατ' ὄνομα (PParis 18, 15 [Dssm., B 216]; POxy 930, 26 [=Ltzm. Pap. no. 13]) *greet by name* **3 J 15**; ISm 13:2 (πάντας κατ' ὄνομα as PMich 206, 20ff [II A.D.]); ἄσπασαι τοὺς φιλοῦντας ἡμᾶς ἐν πίστει (PFay 119, 25ff ἀσπάζου τοὺς φιλοῦντες [sic] ἡμᾶς πρὸς ἀλήθειαν. Sim. BGU 814, 38) Tit 3:15. Among friends the greeting is accompanied by a kiss (Ps.-Lucian, De Asin. 17 φιλήμασιν ἠσπάζοντο ἀλλήλους; Heliod. 10, 6; φιλήματι Just., A I, 65, 2; cp. the apocryphal preface Ath. 32, 3 [Resch, Agrapha 137]), hence: ἁ. ἐν φιλήματι **Ro 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Th 5:26; 1 Pt 5:14**. Of homage to a king hail, acclaim (Dionys. Hal. 4, 39; Plut., Pomp. 624 [12, 4]; 13, 7; cp. Jos., Ant. 10, 211) **Mk 15:18** (cp. Philo, In Flacc. 38).

b. of short friendly visits, 'look in on' **Ac 18:22; 21:7**; IRo 1:1. Of official visits pay one's respects to (Sb 8247, 13; 15 [II A.D.]; BGU 248, 12; 347 I, 3 and II, 2; 376 I, 3; Jos., Ant. 1, 290; 6, 207) Ac 25:13 (OGI 219, 43 [III B.C.]) s. Schwyzer II 301, also



to express these written greetings. Consequently, most of the letters in the New Testament contain greetings from the sender to the recipients.²⁴

Benedictio. The final element in the *conclusio* of First Peter is the benedictory prayer.²⁵ This element is very common in the letters of the New Testament, especially those of Paul.²⁶ The ancient world was a very religious world that believed profoundly that deities played a deep role in human affairs. Thus appeals to the gods and goddesses permeated daily life and are natural elements in their letters. Again, these prayers form boundary determining elements of ancient letters with the *proem* as an opening prayer of thanksgiving and the *benedictio* as the final element in the *conclusio*. For the New Testament letter writers, and Paul in particular, the use of an opening and closing prayer in his letters mirrored the pattern of early Christian worship, which in turn had taken its clue from the pattern of Jewish synagogue worship with opening and closing prayers.

Prayer in ancient Israel was a major aspect of worship both in the temple and in the synagogue. Both Hebrew and Greek have a wide variety of words with the meaning of prayer, as the above charts illustrate. This carried over into early Christian experience.²⁷ Prayer was both formal and spontaneous, as illustrated

297. Of the greeting given to a priest in a liturgical service τοῦ ἀσπάσασθαι αὐτὸν ἐν εὐχῇ to greet him with prayer GJs 24:1.

2. to express happiness about the arrival of someth., *welcome, greet*, fig. ext. of 1 in ref. to someth. intangible (Eur., Ion 587; Chariton 6, 7, 12; Alciphron 1, 3, 3; Diog. L. σοφίαν ἀσπαζόμενος; POxy 41, 17 τὴν παρ’ ὑμῶν τιμὴν; CPR 30 II, 39; Philo, Det. Pot. Ins. 21; Jos., Ant. 6, 82; 7, 187; TestGad 3:3; Just.) τὰς ἐπαγγελίας *the promises* **Hb 11:13**.—DELG. 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), 144.]

²⁴See the listing “The Greetings in the Letters of the New Testament,” at cranfordville.com.

²⁵**1.1. Benedictions.** The inclusion of benedictions in a letter to express the writer’s wish-prayers for the readers may have been derived from Jewish worship, in which benediction was a common practice. In the Pauline corpus each letter commenced and ended with a benediction. In the group of writings we are considering, however, there are some distinctive features: not every letter includes a benediction (e.g., Jas and 1 Jn) and, except for 1 Peter, each letter includes only one benediction, either at the beginning (1 Pet 1:2; 2 Pet 1:2; 2 Jn 3; Jude 2; Rev 1:4) or at the end (Heb 13:20–21, 25; 1 Pet 5:14; 3 Jn 15; Rev 22:21). Even though benediction is frequently included in a letter, it is not a necessary element. The Johannine epistles provide strong evidence: there is no benediction in 1 John, one introductory benediction in 2 John and only a brief closing benediction in 3 John (see John, Letters of). Here the same writer does not follow a stereotyped format in his letters.

“Benedictions are essentially wishes of grace and/or peace: ‘Grace be with you [all]’ (Heb 13:25; Rev 22:21) or ‘Peace be with [or to] you’ (1 Pet 5:14; 3 Jn 15). In some letters benedictions are elaborated with additional features such as mercy (2 Jn 3) or love (Jude 2) or with a closing ‘Amen’ (Heb 13:25; Rev 22:21). In Hebrews 13:20–21 and Revelation 1:4, both letters include lengthy introductions about God, the source of the benefaction, with epithets that coincide with the major motifs of the letters (Lane, 560). The Pauline formula ‘The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you’ and the so-called Dominus Vobiscum (‘The Lord be with you’; see Lk 1:28; van Unnik 1959), are not shared by these writings. Thus we see the contents of benedictions are also subject to modification by each writer according to personal choice or the needs of the recipients (Delling, 76).” [Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids, *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000).]

²⁶Only one of Paul’s thirteen letters doesn’t contain a closing prayer, but only two of the general letters do. See the listing “The Benedictio in the Letters of the New Testament,” at cranfordville.com.

²⁷“Prayer played a central role in the activities of the early church. From the records in Acts of the earliest Christian community in Jerusalem (Acts 1:14, 24; 2; 42; 3:1; 4:31) to the records of the apostolic fathers in the Mediterranean world at the beginning of the second century (e.g., Ign. Eph. 1.2; Ign. Magn. 7.1; Ign. Smyrn. 7.1), prayer was a central activity and unifying feature of the Christian community.” [Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids, *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000).]

Outline of Contents in First Peter:

Paul's Letter to the Philippians	
Praescriptio	
Superscriptio	Παῦλος καὶ Τιμόθεος δοῦλοι Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ
Adscriptio	πᾶσιν τοῖς ἁγίοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν Φιλίπποις σὺν ἐπισκόποις καὶ διακόνους,
Salutatio	χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.
Proem	Εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ μνεΐα ὑμῶν. . .
Body	Γινώσκειν δὲ ὑμᾶς βούλομαι, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι τὰ κατ' ἐμὲ μᾶλλον εἰς προκοπὴν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἐλήλυθεν, ὥστε τοὺς δεσμούς μου φανεροὺς ἐν Χριστῷ γενέσθαι ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ πραιτωρίῳ καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς πάσιν, . . .
Conclusio	Ἀσπάσασθε πάντα ἅγιον ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς οἱ σὺν ἐμοὶ ἀδελφοί. . .

Ancient Letter on papyrus

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**
 - **Haustafeln 2:18-3:7**
 - **Social 3:8-12**
- **Persecution 3:13-5:11**
 - **Encouragement 3:13-4:11**
 - **Explanation 4:12-19**
 - **Proper Conduct 5:1-11**

Conclusio: 5:12-14

- **Sender Verification, 5:12**
- **Greetings, 5:13-14a**
- **Benedictio, 5:14b**

by the model prayer of Jesus in the sermon on the mount (cf. Mt. 6: 7-13). That is, it was given both to be prayed in formal worship and as a guide for composing individual prayers. Thus both Judaism²⁸ and Jesus²⁹

²⁸**2.1.1. Influence from Judaism.** The early church was thoroughly Jewish, which meant that its prayer life was governed by the common practices of Jewish prayer, informal and formal, private and public, individual and corporate. While continuing the ancient practice of personal, spontaneous prayers (note that Cornelius as a God-fearer both kept traditional times of prayer as well as prayed ‘continuously,’ Acts 10:2-4), Jews of the late Second Temple period gathered for increasingly fixed, communal prayer (Charlesworth, 265-66). In Diaspora Judaism Jews were characterized by their commitment to times of communal prayer (see Acts 16:13, 16). The synagogue and temple were places Jews gathered to pray. We find that the early church was a distinct entity gathered for prayer (Acts 1:13-14; 2:42), while at the same time they carried out the traditional times of prayer individually (Acts 10:9) and at least at the beginning attended the temple at the prescribed hour of prayer (Acts 3:1; cf. Acts 2:42, 46, ‘the prayers’). The apostle Paul regularly went to the synagogue upon arriving at a new location on his missionary journeys (Acts 13:5, 14; 14:1; 16:13; 17:1-2, 10, 17; 18:4, 19: 19:8).” [Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids, *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000).]

²⁹**2.1.2. Influence from Jesus.** The prayer life of the early church was also influenced by its relationship to Jesus. In the first place Jesus’ personal practice of prayer set an example for the early church. Jesus derided public, ostentatious prayers and called his followers to personal prayer with the Father (Mt 6:5-8), thereby enhancing private prayer and leading to silent prayer as a discipline (cf. van der Horst, 16-18). Jesus prayed at special times of crisis and need, but prayer was also the ‘daily inspiration of His life’ (Martin 1974, 28-29).

“Second, Jesus’ practice of prayer reflected his relationship to Judaism. All four Evangelists concur that Jesus frequently attended synagogue services on the sabbath, and his cleansing of the temple was based upon his desire that it should be a ‘house of prayer’ (Mk 11:17). These activities established continuity with Judaism but also set the stage for the breach between the church and Judaism (see Christianity and Judaism). ‘The originality of Christian worship is not that it rejects Jewish worship but that it reforms and develops that worship, in accordance with Jesus’ teaching and in recognition of his saving work’ (Beckwith, 65).

“Third, therefore, ‘the prayers the church offers are now Christocentric’ (Turner, 73-74). What Israel had identified as divine prerogatives the church now attributes to Jesus: he is the one Lord on whose name (in Joel’s terms) people are now to call for salvation (Joel 2:17-39); he speaks to Saul in conviction (Acts 9:4-6) and Peter in direction (Acts 10:13-16); prayer is offered to him by Stephen (Acts 7:59) and Ananias (Acts 9:10-16). Soon after the ascension of Jesus, the nascent church gathered to pray (Acts 1:14). They prayed for the Lord to show them which of the two who qualified—Joseph Barsabbas and Matthias—should take Judas’s place (Acts 1:15-26). This scene marks a central aspect of the new form of discipleship: although their Lord is no longer with them personally, they can still ask him and the Father for help in times of need through prayer.

“Fourth, the age of fulfillment that was announced by John the Baptist and Jesus (Mt 3:2; 4:17) was now experienced in the outpouring of the Spirit (Acts 2:14-41). The earliest gathering of the Christian community involved devotion to the apostles’ teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread and the prayers (Acts 2:42). The primitive church, already both within and outside Israel,

shaped the prayer life of apostolic Christianity. The writing of the apostles in their letters also reflect this central role of prayer with both the *proem* and the *benedictio* prayers. Peter was not an exception to this pattern; he stressed prayer greatly in both letters.³⁰

A comparison of the various benedictions in the letters found in the New Testament will suggest these prayers were short and to the point by invoking the grace of God upon the readers. Divine grace (ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ...) is the focus of every one of the benedictions in the Pauline letters, and also in Heb. 13:25. But Peter’s distinctive is to zero in on divine peace (εἰρήνη). Uniformly in all of them the channel through which God’s grace and peace flows into the lives of believers is Christ; all of the prayers are Christocentric!

Literary Context. As illustrated in the chart on the above right, and also by the genre label *conclusio*, the literary setting for this passage is at the very end of the letter. In ancient letter writing styles, the sender of the letter would almost always provide some kind of formal closing to the letter. All of Paul’s letters follow this standard, and among the general letters only James contains no closing. But this is largely due to the homily nature of this document that only contains a *praescriptio* in 1:1 and no other letter aspect. Thus James is not a real letter, but a sermon with a formal introduction in 1:1 using the letter *praescriptio*.

Beyond a literary role for the *conclusio*, this unit additionally served to cement bonds of friendship between the letter sender and the recipients. Thus it served an important role.³¹

Literary Structure. The diagram below represents the idea structure of the underlying Greek text of the passage.

```

5.12          Through Silvanus
                my faithful brother,
                        as I consider
                briefly
82  to you...I am writing,
                to encourage
                        and
                to give witness
                                that this is the true grace of God
                                        /-----|
                                                in which you are to stand.

83  5.13 You sister church in Babylon sends you greetings,
                and
                Mark, my son.

84  5.14 Greet one another
                with a kiss of love.

85  Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

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This text as a whole composes the letter *Conclusio* and as such contains three elements commonly found in letter *conclusia* throughout the ancient world: a) sender verification(#82); b) greetings (#s 83-84; and

now offered prayers in ‘Easter joy’ (Alsup, 34) and in the power of the Holy Spirit.”

[Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids, *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000).]

³⁰“The importance of prayer in 1 Peter and 2 Peter is indicated by the wide range of prayer material. It includes opening and closing wish-prayers (1 Pet 1:2; 5:14; 2 Pet 1:2), brief doxologies (1 Pet 4:11; 5:11; 2 Pet 3:18), the longer praise form related to the Jewish berakah style of liturgical prayer in which praise (1 Pet 1:3–4) merges into exhortation (1 Pet 1:5–12), and specific exhortations to prayer, including invocation of (1 Pet 1:17), entrusting themselves to (1 Pet 4:19) and casting their anxieties upon (1 Pet 5:7) God, who cares for them while they encounter various difficulties (1 Pet 4:17).” [Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids, *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000).]

³¹“The letter closing or postscript maintains contact between sender and recipient and enhances their friendship. This is accomplished by using greetings (*aspazomai*), a health wish and/or words of farewell. In Christian letters a doxology or benediction (see Liturgical Elements) can replace the last two.” [Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids, *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000).]

c) *benedictio* (#85).

II. Message

Given the well defined contents of this passage, the exegesis of the various units will follow the literary forms that are contained in the letter *Conclusio*. Then, we will do a brief synopsis of the contents of the letter following the outline as our final look at this letter in this series of studies.

a. Sender Verification, v. 12

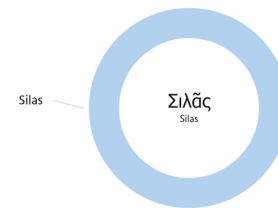
Through Silvanus, whom I consider a faithful brother, I have written this short letter to encourage you and to testify that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it.

Διὰ Σιλουανοῦ ὑμῖν τοῦ πιστοῦ ἀδελφοῦ, ὡς λογίζομαι, δι’ ὀλίγων ἔγραψα, παρακαλῶν καὶ ἐπιμαρτυρῶν ταύτην εἶναι ἀληθῆ χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ· εἰς ἣν στήτε.

Notes:

Διὰ Σιλουανοῦ ὑμῖν τοῦ πιστοῦ ἀδελφοῦ...ἔγραψα. Peter indicates that he has written (ἔγραψα) this letter through Silvanus (Διὰ Σιλουανοῦ) to his readers (ὑμῖν). Each of these segments is important.

Who was Silvanus?³² This spelling of his name, along with an alternative Σιλβανός (2 Cor. 1:19 only), is either a Latin form written out using Greek letters, or an original Greek name. In either case, Σιλᾶς or Σίλας³³ (Silas) -- both spellings are found in only in Acts in the New Testament -- represents a shortened Greek adaptation



silas | 12 of 12

- Ac 15:22 Then the apostles and the elders, with the consent of the whole church, decided to choose men from among their members and to send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leaders among the brothers.
- Ac 15:27 We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth.
- Ac 15:32 Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the believers.
- Ac 15:40 But Paul chose Silas and set out, the believers commending him to the grace of the Lord.
- Ac 16:19 But when her owners saw that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the authorities.
- Ac 16:25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.
- Ac 16:29 The jailer called for lights, and rushing in, he fell down trembling before Paul and Silas.
- Ac 17:4 Some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women.
- Ac 17:10 That very night the believers sent Paul and Silas off to Beroea; and when they arrived, they went to the Jewish synagogue.
- Ac 17:14 Then the believers immediately sent Paul away to the coast, but Silas and Timothy remained behind.
- Ac 17:15 Those who conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens; and after receiving instructions to have Silas and Timothy join him as soon as possible, they left him.
- Ac 18:5 When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with proclaiming the word, testifying to the Jews that the Messiah was Jesus.

silvanus | 4 of 4

- 2 Co 1:19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not "Yes and No"; but in him it is always "Yes."
- 1 Th 1:1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.
- 2 Th 1:1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:
- 1 Pe 5:12 Through Silvanus, whom I consider a faithful brother, I have written this short letter to encourage you and to testify that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it.

³²“Σιλουανός, οὐ, ὁ (Diod S 11, 27, 1, a Σ. as contemporary with the battle of Salamis [480 B.C.]; OGI 533, 50 [time of Augustus] and later ins and pap; Jos., Ant. 20:14; in rabbinic lit. נִיְלָוִס CIJ I, 596) *Silvanus*; surely the same man who appears in Ac as Σίλας (q.v.). Either he had two names (like Paul), one Semit. and one Lat. (Zahn), or Σιλουανός is the Lat. form of the same name that is Grecized in Σίλας (B-D-F §125, 2; Mlt-H. 109f; 146). **2 Cor 1:19** (v.l. Σιλβανός, which is also found Diod S 11, 41, 1); **1 Th 1:1**; **2 Th 1:1** (s. also the subscr. of 2 Th); **1 Pt 5:12** (this pass. has given rise to the conclusion that Silvanus was somehow or other [as translator? in Sb 8246, 38 Germanus speaks before the court δι’ Ἀνουβίωνος ἐρμηνεύοντος] connected w. the writing of 1 Pt; e.g., Zahn [Einleitung II 3 10f], GWohlenberg [NKZ 24, 1913, 742–62], WBornemann [Der erste Petrusbrief—eine Taufrede des Silvanus?: ZNW 19, 1920, 143ff], Harnack [Mission I 4 1923, 85], LRadermacher [Der 1 Pt u. Silvanus: ZNW 25, 1926, 287ff]; ESelwyn, 1 Pt ’46, 9–17 but s. WKümmel [Introd. NT, tr. HKee, ’75, 416–25]).—M-M.” [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), 923.]

³³“Σιλᾶς, α or Σίλας, ᾶ (still other spellings are attested for the NT; s. B-D-F §53, 2; 125, 2), ὁ (several times in Joseph. as a Semitic name; OGI 604, 4; IGR III 817, 1. Evidently=שִׁלְוָא, the Aram. form [in Palmyrene inscriptions] of שָׁלוּ Saul) *Silas*. This name, which occurs only in Ac, is borne by a respected member of the church at Jerusalem who was prophetically gifted **15:22, 27**; he was sent to Antioch and stayed there vss. **32, 33 [34]** v.l.; later he accompanied Paul on his so-called second missionary journey **15:40–18:5** (mentioned nine times). Despite CWeizsäcker, Das apost. Zeitalter 2 1892, 247 et al., incl. LRadermacher, ZNW 25, 1926, 295, it is hardly to be doubted that this Silas is the same pers. as the Σιλουανός who is mentioned in Paul and 1 Pt. See the next entry and s. AStegmann, Silvanus als Missionär u. ‘Hagiograph’ 1917. S. also s.v. Ἰωάν(ν)ης 6.—TRE III 609. M-M.” [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), 923.]

of his Latin name, or else a 'nickname' from the longer Σιλουανός.³⁴ Silvanus / Silas³⁵ was familiar to many if not all of the readers of this letter, since he was a respected member of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15:22) who was also very active in the church at Antioch (Acts 15:27-40). Silas became Paul's co-missionary beginning on the second missionary journey (Acts 14:40) and traveled with him from that point on (Acts 16:19, 25, 29; 17:4, 10; 14, 15; 18:5; 2 Cor. 1:19; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1). At some point in the late 50s to the early 60s, Silas began working with Peter, and also with Mark, to help their ministries, especially in and around Rome. The interesting irony is that Paul's and Silas' close relationship was prompted in large part because of a parting of the ways between Paul and Barnabas over the issue of taking Mark with them on the second missionary journey (Acts 15:27-40). Silas became Paul's traveling companion rather than Barnabas because of Mark! Now they are working together to help Peter. To learn how this developed would be quite a story of the power of God's grace in the lives of these early Christian leaders.

What was Silas doing for Peter? The expression here literally says that Peter wrote this letter 'through Silvanus.' Considerable debate among current scholars centers over whether Διὰ Σιλουανοῦ should be taken to mean either that a) Silas did the writing of the letter as the *amanuensis*, or that b) Silas was the one who delivered the letter to its recipients. To me, the arguments seem rather contrived and artificially framed to answer an either/or framing of the question. Because of many commentators extending implications of either view beyond what the text statement intends, the debate continues with the dominant trend favoring the second view in rejection of the first view.

When one carefully considers a somewhat similar statement in Acts 15:23 about Silas, a clear conclusion is that Silas played a role in drafting not only First Peter but also the letter of James and the leaders of the Jerusalem council to the church at Antioch:

22 Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: 23

³⁴Abbreviated names in -ᾱς (frequently without definitely identifiable full names): Ἀρτεμᾱς for Ἀρτεμίδωρος (Varro, de Lingua Latina 8.21), Ἐρμᾱς perhaps for Ἐρμύδωρος, Ζηνᾱς for Ζηνόδωρος (Bekker, Anec. Gr. II 857.2), Νυμφᾱς for Νυμφόδωρος (M.-H. 71 sees in Νύμφᾱν a fem. which he bases on αὐτῆς C 4:15 B), Ὀλυμπᾱς perhaps for Ὀλυμπιόδωρος; Δημᾱς for Δημήτριος? Στεφανᾱς for Στεφανηφόρος or a development from Att. Στέφανος? (Bechtel-Fick, op. cit. 253f. holds Στέφανος itself to be an abbreviation of Φιλοστέφανος or Στεφανοκλής). Παρμενᾱς for Παρμένων, cf. Πάρμενις, -νίδης, -νίσκος, -νίων (ibid. 205).—Abbreviated names in -ῆς appear less frequently: Ἀπελλῆς s. infra, Ἐρμῆς R 16:14 (hardly to be simply identified with the name of the god, although in the later period this type of designation also appears [ibid. 304ff.]); in -ῶς only Ἀπολλῶς (s. infra). Ἀνδρέας is an old Greek name.—**Double names for the same person: Σιλᾱς and Σιλουανός** s. infra (2); Ἀπολλώνιος A 18:24 D and Ἀπολλῶς Paul (Ἀπελλῆς s. §29(4)); Ἀμπλιᾱτος R 16:8 and v.l. Ἀμπλιᾱς; Ἀντιπᾱς and Ἀντίπατρος Jos., Ant. 14.10; accordingly, Ἐπαφρόδιτος Ph 2:25, 4:18 and Ἐπαφρῶς C 1:7, 4:12, Phm 23 could be one person, were it not improbable on other grounds." [Friedrich Blass, Albert Debrunner and Robert Walter Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 68.]

³⁵*Silvanus*. Except for the brief commendation that follows, nothing further is said of this person, thus suggesting that he was known to the addressees. Paul's letters also mention a person named Silvanus, who accompanied Paul on his mission to certain regions of Asia Minor and Greece, and who is identified, along with Paul and Timothy, as co-author of the letters of 1 and 2 Thessalonians (2 Cor 1:19; 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1). Since these are the only occurrences of the name Silvanus in the NT, it is likely that they refer to one and the same person. In Acts, as most scholars agree, this person is identified as "Silas," a Grecized form of the Aramaic *Šē'ilā'*, the name by which Silvanus was earlier known in the Jerusalem community (Acts 15:22, 25–27). In regions of the Diaspora to which the letters of Paul and 1 Peter were addressed, this companion of Paul referred to as Silas in Acts (16:19, 25, 29; 17:4–15; 18:5) was also known as Siluanos, a like-sounding Grecized form of the Latin name Silvanus.⁷⁰ Bigg (1902, 84) conjectures that 'Silvanus or one of his ancestors [was once a slave who] had been manumitted by one or other of the Roman [family] Silvani,' but he provides no support for this supposition.

"In Acts, Silas/Silvanus and his colleague Judas Barsabbas are identified as 'leading men among the brothers' of the Jerusalem church (15:22) and 'prophets' (15:32). As men of high prestige in Jerusalem, they were commissioned to deliver to the church of Antioch the letter conveying the decision of the Jerusalem church validating Paul's mission to the Gentiles (15:22–34). Thereafter, Silas/Silvanus was chosen by Paul as his associate on his journey to Asia Minor and Greece (15:40–18:21; 18:23–23:35), and in 2 Cor 1:19 he is mentioned as a cofounder of the Corinthian church. Acts indicates that Silas/Silvanus also possessed Roman citizenship (16:37) but records nothing of his further activity following his work with Paul. His earlier association with Peter and Mark in Jerusalem (Acts 15; cf. also 12:12–17) could have provided the stimulus for a later resumption of this association in Rome, a situation against which nothing in the historical record would argue. What is explicit in the NT evidence is his high standing in the early Jerusalem community, his later service with Paul as a missionary to areas of the Diaspora, including Asia Minor, and finally, his collaboration with Peter and Mark in Rome."⁷¹ [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 871.]

And *they wrote letters by them* after this manner (KJV)

22 Τότε ἔδοξε τοῖς ἀποστόλοις καὶ τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις σὺν ὅλῃ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ ἐκλεξαμένους ἄνδρας ἐξ αὐτῶν πέμψαι εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν σὺν τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ Βαρναβᾷ, Ἰούδαν τὸν καλούμενον Βαρσαββᾶν καὶ Σιλᾶν, ἄνδρας ἡγουμένους ἐν τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς, 23 **γράφαντες διὰ χειρὸς αὐτῶν**.³⁶

It seems to me that such rejection of the fundamental meaning of γράφω³⁷ as “I write” represents scholarly bias in very unjustifiable ways. The very questionable evidence cited as a basis for this rejection (IRo 10:1; IPhld 11:2; ISm 12:1; Pol 14) comes in the second century, much later than First Peter and Acts and itself is clearly capable of implying involvement in the composition of a letter.³⁸ Peter’s other use of γράφω in 1:16 clearly means to write, not to carry. Unquestionably, it means to write in the two uses in Second Peter (3:1 & 3:15). The bias against Silas having involvement in the composition of the letter stems from the authorship debates over First Peter almost a century ago when influential scholars rejected denial of Petrine authorship and then attributed supposed non-Petrine qualities of this letter to Silas.³⁹ But the view of Peter Davids, an expert in ancient

³⁶I find it interesting and puzzling why most English translations automatically assume that γράφαντες διὰ χειρὸς αὐτῶν with the literal meaning ‘having written by their hand’ means that Judas Barsabbas and Silas only carried the letter from Jerusalem to Antioch and had nothing to do with its composition.

³⁷γράφω impf. ἔγραφον; fut. γράψω; 1 aor. ἔγραψα; pf. γέγραφα; 1 pl. γεγραφήκαμεν 2 Macc 1:7 v.l. Pass.: 2 aor. ἐγράφη; pf. γέγραμμαι; 3 sg. plpf. ἐγέγραπτο LXX (Hom.+) ‘write’...

2. to express thought in writing...

c. of correspondence write (to) someone τινί (Plut., Pomp. 634 [29, 3]; pap; 1 Macc 12:22; 2 Macc 2:16; Da 6:26; ParJer; Jos., Ant. 12, 16; Mel., HE 4, 26, 10) **Ro 15:15; 2 Cor 2:4, 9** v.l.; **7:12; Phlm 21; 2 Pt 3:15; 1J 2:12ff.** δι’ ὀλίγων *briefly, a few lines* **1 Pt 5:12.** διὰ μέλανος καὶ καλάμου *w. pen and ink* **3J 13** (cp. ParJer 6:19). The content of the writing is quoted: **Rv 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14; write someth. to someone** τινί τι (Plut., Cic. 879 [37, 1]; pap; 1 Macc: 10:24; 11:29; 13:35) **1 Cor 14:37; 2 Cor 1:13; Gal 1:20; 3J 9.** τινί τι περί τινος (1 Macc 11:31) **Ac 25:26; 1J 2:26.** τινί περί τινος (1 Macc 12:22; Jos., Vi. 62; Mel., HE 4, 26, 10) **2 Cor 9:1; 1 Th 4:9; 5:1; Jd 3.** περί δὲ ὧν ἐγράψατε (μοι v.l.) *as to the matters about which you wrote (me)* **1 Cor 7:1** (Pla., Ep. 13 p. 361a περί δὲ ὧν ἐπέστελλές μοι; Socrat., Ep. 7, 1 ὑπὲρ ὧν γράφεις); γ. τινί *give someone directions in writing* w. inf. foll. **Ac 18:27;** also w. ὅπως *ibid.* D.—γ. διά τινος signifies either that the person referred to in the διά-phrase participated in writing the document (Dionys. of Cor. in Eus., HE 4, 23, 11; cp. IG XIV, 956B, 10f ὑπογράφαντες διὰ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ ἡμῶν) **1 Pt 5:12**, as some comm. hold, or that this person is its bearer IRo 10:1; IPhld 11:2; ISm 12:1; Pol 14. The latter mng. obtains in διὰ χειρὸς τινος **Ac 15:23.**”

[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), 207.]

³⁸Careful examination of the references to these letters of Ignatius (*To the Romans*, 10:1 [Γράφω δὲ ὑμῖν ταῦτα ἀπὸ Σμύρνης δι’ Ἐφεσίων τῶν ἀξιομακαρίστων]; *To the Philadelphians*, 11:2 [γράφω ὑμῖν διὰ Βούρρου]; *To the Smyrnaeans*, 12:1 [γράφω ὑμῖν διὰ Βούρρου]) clearly indicates that both participation in the composition and also the delivery of a letter, but especially the former, is the most natural meaning even of these texts. The letter of Polycarp *To the Philippians* 14 is only available in Latin rather than Greek but follows the same pattern: Haec vobis scripsi per Crescentem.

Ignatius was a spiritual leader in Antioch at the beginning of the second century and suffered martyrdom prior to 117 AD. He wrote seven letters that exist today including the ones referenced above. He was according to church tradition a disciple of the apostle John. Polycarp (69-155 AD) was a spiritual leader at Smyrna until his martyrdom in 155 AD.

³⁹Cf. Kelly, 215; Selwyn, 11; cf. Moffatt, 169. As one example, J.N.D. Kelly is often included among these scholars. But an examination of what he actually said on 1 Peter 5:12 seems reasonable. The rejection of his view outright by Achtemeier (Hermeneia) and Elliott (AYBC) is unwarranted and without adequate grounds. Many of these commentators seem not to have ever seriously explored the work of scribes (grammateus, amanuensis) in doing the actual writing of ancient letters. Thus sloppy scholarship results.

The expression by (dia with the genitive) Silvanus may hold the key to the secret of the letter. It has been held to mean (a) that Silvanus, as was regular practice in antiquity, was to act as its bearer (cf. Acts 15:23, where ‘having written by their hand ...’ indicates that the persons mentioned were given the letter to deliver, not that they had penned it); or (b) that Silvanus was the amanuensis who up to this point has taken the letter down from the author’s (Peter’s?) dictation; or (c) that Silvanus had been responsible for drafting the letter on the author’s (Peter’s?) behalf and on his instructions. As regards (a), such passages as Ignatius, Rom. x. 1; Philad. xi. 2; Smyrn. xii. 1; Polycarp, Phil. xiv. 1 confirm that the formula ‘write by X.’ could in Greek signify ‘despatch a letter with X. as its carrier’, although the more normal idiom was ‘send by X.’ or something of the sort; but this exegesis seems ruled out in the present case by short (a more literal rendering would be ‘I have written briefly’), which requires us to take ‘write’ in the strict sense of actually writing or drafting rather than the enlarged sense of transmitting. We should equally exclude (b) on the ground that we can hardly envisage Silvanus, Paul’s collaborator in writing to Thessalonica, serving as a dictation clerk, which was a role too modest for so important a figure. Everything in fact points to (c) as the correct explanation, and it is strikingly supported by a letter of the late-2nd cent. bishop Dionysius of Corinth (in Eusebius, Hist. eccl. iv. 23. 11) to the Roman church referring to 1 Clement (sent from Rome to Corinth c. 95) as ‘your earlier letter to us written by (dia) Clement’. Clearly Dionysius implies by this phrase that in writing the epistle Clement was expressing in his own words the views of the Roman church.

[J. N. D. Kelly, *Black’s New Testament Commentary: The Epistles of Peter and of Jude* (London: Continuum, 1969), 214-

epistolography, seems more plausible.⁴⁰ My personal inclination is closer to view number two that asserts that Silas did play an important role in the composition of the letter, although whether this process was done by strict dictation or by sketching out an outline followed by detailed composition of the letter is impossible to determine.⁴¹ Consequently the determination of detailed stylistic patterns to either the letter sender or to the writing secretary cannot be made with certainty; it all depends upon how much freedom Silas was given in the writing of the letter. The language of 5:12 does signal that Silas was involved in the composition, and very likely also in the deliverer of the letter to its designation as stated in 1:1-2, and perhaps John Mark.

That Silas was highly regarded in early Christianity is without question. He was labeled by Luke ἄνδρας ἡγουμένους ἐν τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς (*leaders among the brothers*) along with Judas Barsabbas in Acts 15:22 and αὐτοὶ προφῆται ὄντες (*prophets*) in 15:32. Paul valued his ministry enough to make him a co-missionary in joint ministry for much of his service to Christ on the second and third missionary journeys. He and Timothy were included in the sending and delivery of both the First and Second Thessalonian letters along with Paul. Very much in line with these evaluations, Peter goes out of his way to commend Silas as τοῦ πιστοῦ ἀδελφοῦ, ὡς λογίζομαι, a *faithful brother*.⁴² Peter's first contact with Silas had been in Jerusalem almost three decades earlier. Now toward the close of Peter's earthly life their paths crossed again in Rome. And Silas was there to help the apostle with an important project: the composition⁴³ and delivery of a letter.⁴⁴

Interestingly Peter indicates that this is a short letter: δι' ὀλίγων. The sense of length of a letter clearly was a very relative matter largely in the mind of the letter sender, for the writer of Hebrews says the same thing about his letter in Heb. 13:22.⁴⁵ In comparison with not just the letters inside the New Testament, but more formal letters in that era, First Peter is not a short letter! Peter evidently follows a frequent convention for letter writing in that time when a letter may have gone on too long the sender 'apologizes' by asserting

⁴⁰“The reference to Silvanus or Silas (the shorter form of his name) means one of three things: (1) he is the carrier of the letter (Acts 15:23, where there is no sense that both Judas and Silas wrote the short letter, but that they were delivering it; cf. Ignatius, Rom. 10:1; Phld. 11:2; Smyrn. 12:1; Polycarp, Phil. 14:1), (2) he is the secretary or amanuensis who wrote the letter by dictation (Rom. 16:22), or (3) he is responsible for writing the letter on behalf of someone else (Eusebius, Eccl. Hist. 4.23.11, quotes Dionysius of Corinth who uses the same grammatical structure used here to refer to Clement's writing on behalf of the Roman church in A.D. 96). The reference to writing 'briefly' would seem to make the first option less likely as the intention of 'by means of Silvanus' (although it is still possible that Silvanus carried the letter without that fact being mentioned), for it appears to make the sentence refer to the process of writing itself. ² The second option is possible, but given his need to go on to name Silvanus 'a faithful brother' and Silvanus's coworker (perhaps coapostle) status with Paul noted above, it would seem unlikely that he was a mere scribe. Thus this option merges into the third. Silvanus is being cited as the real author of the letter per se, although the thoughts behind it are those of Simon Peter (see Introduction).” [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), 198.]

⁴¹E. Randolph Richards, a former student, did his PhD dissertation at SWBTS on this topic that was published in the German University of Tübingen dissertation series several years ago. Out of this work has come two other important publications: *Paul and First-Century Letter Writing Secretaries: Composition and Collection*, by InterVarsity Press in 2004, and *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul*, volume 42 of series 2 in Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament by Mohr publications in 1991. The two approaches to the composition of ancient letters is well documented, although determining which approach was used in individual instances is very difficult without clear signaling in the contents of the letter.

⁴²“The expression, “faithful brother,” makes it clear that Silvanus was not only a Christian believer (for πιστός in that sense, cf. 1:21), but a valued co-worker as well (in the Pauline correspondence, cf. especially Eph 6:21–22//Col 4:7–9; also, for “brother,” 1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; Col 1:1; Philem 1). Silvanus was associated with Paul in his mission to the Greek cities of Philippi (Acts 16:19, 25, 29), Thessalonica (17:4), Berea (17:10, 14), and Corinth (18:5; cf. 2 Cor 1:19), but was known to the churches to which 1 Peter is written only by reputation, if at all (cf. Acts 16:6–8, where the Spirit directs Paul and Silas away from Asia and Bithynia).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 307.]

⁴³The use of ἔγραψα as an epistolary Aorist function of the verb reflects a common usage in ancient letters signaling the viewpoint of the readers rather than that of the writers. See ATR: “I have written (ἔγραψα [*egrapsa*]). Epistolary aorist applying to this Epistle as in I Cor. 5:11 (not 5:9); I Cor. 9:15; Gal. 6:11; Rom. 15:15; Philemon 19, 21.” [A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, 1997), 1 Pe 5:12.”

⁴⁴The speculation that it was Silas who reported to Peter the details of the situations in the various Roman provinces in Anatolia, which prompted the writing of the letter cannot be validated. See

⁴⁵“I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written to you *briefly*.” Παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, ἀνεχέσθε τοῦ λόγου τῆς παρακλήσεως, καὶ γὰρ *διὰ βραχείων* ἐπέστειλα ὑμῖν.

shortness.⁴⁶

The expressed objectives⁴⁷ of the letter are παρακαλῶν καὶ ἐπιμαρτυρῶν ταύτην εἶναι ἀληθῆ χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ· εἰς ἣν στήτε, *to encourage you and to verify that this grace of God is genuine, in which you are to stand.*⁴⁸ The twofold expression stresses a positive objective for his writing of the letter.⁴⁹ *First*, Peter's intention was to encourage his readers. Twice already he had expressed a similar desire (2:11; 5:1). The verb defines making a strong appeal to someone.⁵⁰ Here Peter does not define the content of the appeal, since the content of the letter is in view. He simply says that he objective in the letter generally was to help them spiritually.

Second, his objective was to ἐπιμαρτυρῶν. This is the only place in the New Testament where this verb ἐπιμαρτυρέω is used, and it has the meaning of validating something.⁵¹ What is being validated is ταύτην εἶναι ἀληθῆ χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς ἣν στήτε. Although various translations of this phrase are possible, the meaning is relatively clear. The ταύτην, *this*, goes back to πάσης χάριτος in verse ten, *the God of all grace.*⁵² What Peter has sought to do in the letter is to affirm to his readers that God's grace not only will sustain them in final judgment but also is essential for coping with their suffering on a day to day basis. This favor from God is

⁴⁶“The phrase δι’ ὀλίγων ἔγραψα⁴⁸ (‘I have written you briefly’) conforms again to ancient epistolary convention: long letters were regarded as inappropriate if not indeed impolite,⁴⁹ and so authors conventionally referred to their ‘brief letter.’⁵⁰ The phrase is thus not related to the actual length of the epistle,⁵¹ nor to its brevity in relation to the sublimity of its content,⁵² nor to the modesty of its author.⁵³ [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), 352.]

⁴⁷The grammatical function of the two Greek participles παρακαλῶν καὶ ἐπιμαρτυρῶν is adverbial telic (purpose).

⁴⁸An alternative translation which is possible is: “*this is the true grace of God.*”

⁴⁹“The two participles, both dependent on ἔγραψα, ‘I have written,’ are not quite parallel in function, for the first refers to ethical exhortation and the second to testimony or proclamation. The indirect discourse that follows (i.e., ‘that this is true grace from God’) is, accordingly, linked only to ἐπιμαρτυρῶν, ‘bring testimony,’ not to παρακαλῶν, ‘make an appeal.’ [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 308.]

⁵⁰“**παρακαλέω** impf. παρεκάλουν; fut. παρακαλέσω LXX; 1 aor. παρεκάλεσα. Pass.: 1 fut. παρακληθήσομαι; 1 aor. παρεκλήθην; pf. παρακέκλημαι (Aeschyl., Hdt.+). . . .

2. to urge strongly, appeal to, urge, exhort, encourage (X. et al.; LXX) w. acc. of pers. **Ac 16:40; 2 Cor 10:1; 1 Th 2:12** (but s. 5 below); **5:11; Hb 3:13**; ITr 12:2; IRo 7:2. The acc. is found in the immediate context **Ac 20:1; 1 Ti 5:1** (but s. 5 below). Pass. **1 Cor 14:31**. τινὰ λόγῳ πολλῶ *someone with many words* **Ac 20:2**; also τινὰ διὰ λόγου πολλοῦ **15:32**. τινὰ δι’ ὀλίγων γραμμάτων IPol 7:3. W. acc. of pers. and direct discourse **1 Cor 4:16; 1 Th 5:14; Hb 13:22; 1 Pt 5:1**; direct discourse introduced by λέγων (B-D-F §420) **Ac 2:40**. W. acc. of pers. and inf. foll. (SIG 695, 43 [129 B.C.]) 11:23; 27:33f; **Ro 12:1** (EKäsemann, Gottesdienst im Alltag, ’60 [Beih. ZNW], 165–71); **15:30; 16:17; 2 Cor 2:8; 6:1; Eph 4:1; Phil 4:2; Tit 2:6; 1 Pt 2:11** (cp. Phlegon: 257 Fgm. 36 II, 4 Jac. p. 1172, 19; ELohe, ZNW 45, ’54, 68–89); **Jd 3** (the acc. is found in the immediate context, as Philo, Poster Cai. 138); ITr 6:1; IPHd 8:2; IPol 1:2a; Pol 9:1 al. W. inf. (acc. in the context), continued by καὶ ὅτι (s. B-D-F §397, 6; Rob. 1047) **Ac 14:22**. W. acc. of pers. and ἵνα foll. (PRyl 229, 17 [38 A.D.]; EpArist 318; Jos., Ant. 14, 168.—B-D-F §392, 1c; Rob. 1046) **1 Cor 1:10; 16:15f; 2 Cor 8:6; 1 Th 4:1** (π. w. ἐρωτάω as BGU 1141, 10; POxy 294, 29) **2 Th 3:12**; Hm 12, 3, 2; AcPl Ha 7, 32. The ἵνα-clause expresses not the content of the appeal, as in the pass. referred to above, but its aim: πάντας παρακαλεῖν, ἵνα σώζονται IPol 1:2b.—Without acc. of pers.: w. direct discourse foll. ὡς τοῦ θεοῦ παρακαλοῦντος δι’ ἡμῶν· δεόμεθα since God as it were makes his appeal through us: ‘We beg’ **2 Cor 5:20**. Paul serves as God’s agent (like a ‘legate of Caesar’ Dssm. LO 320 [LAE 374]) and functions as mediator (like Alexander the Great, Plut., Mor. 329c διαλλακτής; cp. also the mediatorial role of a judge IPriene 53, esp. 10f; s. also CBreytenbach, Versöhnung ’89, 64–66). W. inf. foll. **1 Ti 2:1**. Abs. **Ro 12:8** (mng. 4 is also poss.); **2 Ti 4:2; Tit 1:9; Hb 10:25; 1 Pt 5:12** (w. ἐπιμαρτυρεῖν); B 19:10.—W. acc. of thing impress upon someone, urge, exhort πολλὰ ἔτερα **Lk 3:18**. ταῦτα δίδασκε καὶ παρακάλει **1 Ti 6:2**. ταῦτα λάλει καὶ παρακάλει καὶ ἔλεγχε **Tit 2:15**. In the case of several of the passages dealt with in this section, it is poss. that they could as well be classed under 3. (below).” [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), 765.]

⁵¹“**ἐπιμαρτυρέω** to affirm that someth. is true, bear witness, attest (s. μαρτυρέω; Pla., Crat. 397a; Lucian, Alex. 42; Plut., Lys. 445 [22, 9] al.; PLond 1692a, 19 [VI A.D.]; Cat. Cod. Astrol. IX/1 p. 182, 27f; Jos., Ant. 7, 349; Tat. 3:3 ‘endorse’; Ath., R. 77, 21) foll. by acc. and inf. **1 Pt 5:12**.—New Docs 2, 85f. 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), 375.]

⁵²Two other understandings of the antecedent of ταύτην are suggested by commentators: a) ταύτην refers to some experience of suffering that doesn’t readily appear to be an expression of divine grace, but here Peter so affirms it to be [2:20 is often appealed to in support]; or b) ταύτην refers to the contents of the letter generally as an expression of authentic grace from God [an assumed ἐπιστολή (letter) is supposed to lie behind the feminine spelling ταύτην]. Significant difficulties grammatically etc. are present in these alternatives, making them less attractive options.

what is real and genuine, not the accusations of their enemies nor those of the Devil who both seek to plant doubts and uncertainty in their thinking about their Christian commitment. Thus the sustaining power of this authentic grace of God is what they must stand in (εἰς ἣν στήτε) both during this life and on the final day of judgment. Every other source of supposed strength is faulty and will fail them in moments of crisis both now and in eternity. This, Peter says, is what he has sought to not only communicate to them in the letter, but, more importantly, to validate to them as genuine.

Clearly Peter has had some lofty goals for this letter. But as we have worked our way through its content, I believe we can say that these goals have been achieved well. His close working with Silas in the composition of the letter has been successful.

b. Greetings, vv. 13-14a

13 Your sister church in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings; and so does my son Mark. 14 Greet one another with a kiss of love.

13 ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς ἡ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι συνεκλεκτὴ καὶ Μάρκος ὁ υἱός μου. 14 ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν φιλήματι ἀγάπης.

Notes:

In a manner found commonly in the greetings of the letters of the New Testament, Peter sends greetings to the readers from the community of believers where he was at the writing of the letter. The identity of this group is unusual: ἡ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι συνεκλεκτὴ, *the in Babylon fellow elect*... The spelling of the Greek suggests that the full expression is ἡ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι συνεκλεκτὴ ἐκκλησία, *the in Babylon chosen congregation*.⁵³ But Peter has not used the term ἐκκλησία in the letter previously. Still he has not previously alluded to the Christian community where he was at the writing of the letter, until now. Most likely this assumption about ἐκκλησία is correct, and follows the pattern found also in 2 John 1 and 13: ἐκλεκτῆ κυρία καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις αὐτῆς (*to the elect lady and her children*) and τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἀδελφῆς σου τῆς ἐκλεκτῆς (*the children of your chosen sister*).

The somewhat mysterious aspect is what did Peter mean by ἐν Βαβυλῶνι? Literally, this would place him in the ancient of Babylon at the writing of the letter. Little possibility of this exists from what we know about Peter's travels. Far more likely, is that Babylon is simply a 'code word' for Rome.⁵⁴ The negative image of

⁵³Another option grammatically is to take the feminine ἡ ... συνεκλεκτῆ, 'chosen with,' as a reference to a woman, possibly Peter's wife (the immediate mention of 'Mark, my son,' would complete the authorial family). On this interpretation, συνεκλεκτῆ would mean 'chosen with me,' rather than 'chosen with you.' The difficulty with this is the correspondence between συνεκλεκτῆ here and ἐκλεκτοῖς, 'chosen,' in 1:1 (cf. 2:9). Brox (247) notes Peter's fondness for compounds ('inheritance' in 1:4 and 3:9, with 'co-heir' in 3:7; 'elder' and 'fellow elder' in 5:1). Peter is affirming common ground between the συνεκλεκτῆ and his readers, not himself." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 310.]

⁵⁴"Babylon" is undoubtedly Rome, as in Rev 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21 (cf. especially 17:18: 'the great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth'; in Jewish sources, cf. Sib. Or. 5.143, 159, and in general, the perspective of the two apocalypses, 4 Ezra and 2 Apoc. Bar., based on the analogy between Jerusalem's destruction by Babylon in 586 B.C. and by Rome in A.D. 70). This interpretation goes back at least to Papias in the second century, who, according to Eusebius, claimed that Peter 'composed it [συντάξα] in Rome itself, which ... he himself indicates, referring to the city metaphorically [τροπικώτερον] as Babylon' (Eusebius, HE 2.15.2; how much of this is Papias's actual language is difficult to say, but συντάξα, 'compose,' is at any rate characteristic of the few quotations of Papias that we possess).

"At the same time, it is doubtful that all the sinister associations of 'Babylon the Great, Mother of Prostitutes and of the Abominations of the Earth' (Rev 17:5) are present already in 1 Peter. Peter's earlier admonitions to defer to the Roman emperor and his appointed representatives (2:13–17) preclude any deep-seated critique of the empire or imperial authority. The only thing wrong with 'Babylon' is that it is not home. 'Babylon' at the end of the epistle is simply the counterpart to 'diaspora' at the beginning. It is the place of exile for a community whose natural home is Jerusalem. The author and his readers, wherever they may be, find themselves in the same predicament. 'Babylon' establishes for him credibility and common ground with them; he can give them advice on how to respond to opposition because he and his congregation face the same threats they do (cf. v 9). The designation becomes a metaphor both for an actual city (Rome) and for an experience of alienation not necessarily linked to a particular place. There were literal Babylons in the ancient world, of course, not only the original Babylon on the Euphrates in Mesopotamia, where Judaism flourished, but a Roman military settlement in Egypt where Cairo now stands (Selwyn, 243, points to 'the Roman legionnaires' custom of naming places after military stations where they had previously been on duty' to show how easily names were transferred). Neither of these identifications is very likely, yet a fourth century papyrus from the Egyptian Babylon illustrates how easily a name with such rich connotations could acquire a double meaning (Horsley, 141–48). A traveler, probably Jewish, is taken ill after falling from his horse and writes home from Babylon to Oxyrhynchus requesting help. 'You too, therefore, please send

Babylon as 'being away from home' underscored that Peter being in Rome with the Christian community there was an exile and foreigner along with his readers. Additionally, it served to help safeguard the geographical location of Christians in Rome who might also be subject to isolated persecution.

More interesting is the implicit story behind the reference to Μάρκος ὁ υἱός μου, *Mark, my son*.⁵⁵ Very unlikely is ὁ υἱός μου to be taken literally referring to Mark either as a birth son or an adoptive son. The expression is figurative and designates Mark as a spiritual 'son' of Peter in the sharing of common commitment to Christ.⁵⁶ The connection of John Mark to Peter reaches back to the beginning of the Christian movement in Jerusalem, as Acts 12:12-17 asserts. Mark evidentially traveled to Rome and became attached to Peter while they both were there. A very early church tradition reaching back to the end of the first century contends that Mark served as Peter's interpreter in Rome, and that Peter dictated to Mark the contents of the gospel that became the second gospel bearing Mark's name.⁵⁷ The encouraging story behind the reference here is that this young man who made a huge mistake in ministry when he abandoned Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey.⁵⁸ This happened in the mid 40s and now a little over a decade later Mark is in Rome

help to me since I am at a strange (town) [τῷ ὄντι ἐπὶ ξένης] and in sickness. I searched for a ship to embark on, and found no-one to search for me; for I am in Babylon' (ἐν τῇ γὰρ Βαβυλῶναι εἰμει; 141-42). There is no doubt that the writer is giving his actual location, yet he appears at the same time to be playing on the association—traditional and natural to any Jew—between being 'in Babylon' and being alone in a strange (ἐπὶ ξένης) place. Horsley (147) rightly rejects the notion 'that Babylon is a secret name, used for its figurative significance,' but a simple play on the connotation of a name is much more plausible. It is not quite the same in 1 Peter, where it is a matter of two metaphorical associations of the name Babylon, one specific (Rome) and one general (alienation or displacement), yet the papyrus text aptly illustrates how easily this particular name could do double duty." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 311.]

⁵⁵"The reference is probably to 'John who was called Mark,' first mentioned in Acts 12:12, whose mother Mary opened her house for prayer to the disciples in Jerusalem. The double name occurs again in Acts 12:25, where he becomes a companion of Barnabas and Saul of Tarsus, and in 15:37. In Acts 13:5, 13 he is called simply 'John,' and in 15:39 'Mark.' He is 'Mark' consistently in letters ascribed to Paul (cf. Philem 24; Col 4:10; 2 Tim 4:11). The information that he is cousin to Barnabas (Col 4:10) links him to the Acts accounts and helps explain Barnabas's attachment to him according to Acts 15:37-39. At the same time Paul's warm commendations of Mark (Col 4:10-11; 2 Tim 4:11) suggest that the disagreement between Paul and Barnabas over him, as described in Acts 15:37-39, was only temporary. Even if the references in Colossians and 2 Timothy are questioned by those who doubt Pauline authorship, Philem 24 remains, with its clear mention of Mark among Paul's co-workers, specifically in Rome." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 312.]

⁵⁶"Col 4:11 identifies Mark as a Jewish Christian, one of only three among Paul's 'fellow workers for the kingdom of God,' while the book of Acts points to an association between Mark and Peter going back to the early years of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12-17). With a little imagination, one could picture Peter marrying Mark's widowed mother, so that Mark actually became his adopted son. As we have seen, the phrase, 'she who in Babylon,' does not lend itself to such an interpretation. 'Son,' therefore, should be understood as 'convert' or 'disciple' (BGD, 833.1c) in the same way that Timothy is referred to as Paul's 'child' (τέκνον) in 1 Cor 4:17; 1 Tim 1:2; 2 Tim 1:2 (cf. Titus in Titus 1:4; also Onesimus in Philem 10; of Paul's converts more generally, cf. 1 Cor 4:15; Gal 4:19). υἱός, 'son,' in this sense is attested only in the plural or in relation to a group (e.g., the Pharisees: Matt 12:27// Luke 11:19; Acts 23:6), but Peter seems to have adopted it here to give to his concluding words the ring of a family greeting (cf. his emphasis on the Christian community as a 'brotherhood' in 2:17; 5:9)." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 312.]

⁵⁷"Eusebius attributes a knowledge of this passage to Papias in the mid-second century (see Comment above on "Babylon"), in connection with a reference to Mark as a 'follower' (ἀκόλουθον) of Peter (HE 2.15.1). The tradition of a 'presbyter' even earlier than Papias refers to Mark as Peter's 'interpreter' (ἐρμηνευτής) in the sense that he 'wrote accurately all that he remembered ... of the things said or done by the Lord' (HE 3.39.15; note that Eusebius mentions again in 3.39.17 Papias's knowledge of this epistle). Despite Papias's acquaintance with this passage, it is not likely that he (or the mysterious presbyter who preceded him) created the tradition of Mark's responsibility for Peter's memoirs out of the simple phrase, 'Mark, my son.' Rather, Papias provides independent evidence of Mark's association with Peter in Rome. If the style of Mark's Gospel were not so obviously different from that of 1 Peter, he would be a more natural candidate than Silvanus for the role of Peter's amanuensis or literary secretary. Probably he is mentioned simply because he and Peter were working closely together at this time in the Roman church, and because his name would be familiar to at least a few of the congregations where the epistle would circulate (e.g., Colosse, Col 4:10; Philem 24; Ephesus, 2 Tim 4:11)." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 312.]

⁵⁸Acts 13:13-14: 13 Then Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia. *John, however, left them and returned to Jerusalem;* 14 but they went on from Perga and came to Antioch in Pisidia.

13 Αναχθέντες δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς Πάφου οἱ περὶ Παῦλον ἦλθον εἰς Πέργην τῆς Παμφυλίας. *Ἰωάννης δὲ ἀποχωρήσας ἀπ' αὐτῶν ὑπέστρεψεν εἰς Ἱερουσόλυμα.* 14 αὐτοὶ δὲ διελθόντες ἀπὸ τῆς Πέργης παρεγένοντο εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν τὴν Πισιδίαν,

active in ministry, and even according to Col 4:10, Philem 24, and 2 Tim 4:11 has been reconciled to Paul. Perhaps Peter saw himself in this young man and was drawn to him in order to help him utilize his ministry gifts. That the two worked closely together in the closing years of Peter's earthly life is an almost universal assumption in early Christianity. By including Mark in these greetings, Peter may well be implying that Mark as well as Silas played a role in the composition and delivery of the letter. Whatever the situation may have been, one thing is clear: a mistake in ministry early on did not destroy ministry for John Mark. God's grace reclaimed him for the cause of the gospel.

Peter's admonition in the greetings section is both typical and unusual: ἀσπάσσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν φιλήματι ἀγάπης.⁵⁹ Cultural tradition dictates appropriate actions for greeting others beyond a verbal expression, which most commonly was χαίρειν (cf. 2 John 10-11). For those who have traveled and lived in different parts of our modern world, this reality is very clear. In the ancient world, the kiss on the cheek was the greeting beyond saying hello. Paul refers to the kiss as a holy kiss (ἀσπάσσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν φιλήματι ἀγίω; cf. Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Thess. 5:26). Neither of these expressions (holy kiss; kiss of love) specify a different way of kissing. Instead, they define the intent behind the greeting as being Christian in nature.

The encouragement to greet one another with a kiss that expressed sincere Christian love most likely also signals the assumption that this letter would be read in assembled worship settings among the various churches it was sent to.⁶⁰ Paul makes this explicit in 1 Thess. 5:27.⁶¹ These letters from the highly respected leaders of Peter and Paul would be welcomed expressions of instruction and encouragement. These churches in ancient Anatolia, and those especially in the western province of Asia, enjoyed not only this letter of Peter, but Colossians, Ephesians and Philemon from Paul. Such a beginning collection of writings addressed directly to them would have been quickly copied before being passed on to the next congregation, and then greatly treasured by the different congregations. It would not be many years before these documents took on a level of authority as sacred writings, along side that of the Hebrew Bible in the Greek Septuagint form.

This failure was considered significant enough that Paul absolutely refused to take Mark on the second missionary journey. The division over John Mark between Paul and Barnabas was so severe that they parted ways and went separate directions in ministry. Compare Acts 15:36-41:

36 After some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Come, let us return and visit the believers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord and see how they are doing." 37 Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. 38 But Paul decided not to take with them one who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not accompanied them in the work. 39 The disagreement became so sharp that they parted company; Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus. 40 But Paul chose Silas and set out, the believers commending him to the grace of the Lord. 41 He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

36 Μετὰ δὲ τινὰς ἡμέρας εἶπεν πρὸς Βαρναβᾶν Παῦλος· Ἐπιστρέψαντες δὴ ἐπισκεψώμεθα τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς κατὰ πόλιν πᾶσαν ἐν αἷς κατηγγείλαμεν τὸν λόγον τοῦ κυρίου, πῶς ἔχουσιν. 37 Βαρναβᾶς δὲ ἐβούλετο συμπαραλαβεῖν καὶ τὸν Ἰωάννην τὸν καλούμενον Μάρκον· 38 Παῦλος δὲ ἠξίου, τὸν ἀποστάντα ἀπ' αὐτῶν ἀπὸ Παμφυλίας καὶ μὴ συνελθόντα αὐτοῖς εἰς τὸ ἔργον, μὴ συμπαραλαμβάνειν τοῦτον. 39 ἐγένετο δὲ παροξυσμὸς ὥστε ἀποχωρισθῆναι αὐτοὺς ἀπ' ἀλλήλων, τὸν τε Βαρναβᾶν παραλαβόντα τὸν Μάρκον ἐκπεῦσαι εἰς Κύπρον, 40 Παῦλος δὲ ἐπιλεξάμενος Σιλᾶν ἐξῆλθεν παραδοθεὶς τῇ χάριτι τοῦ κυρίου ὑπὸ τῶν ἀδελφῶν, 41 διήρχετο δὲ τὴν Συρίαν καὶ τὴν Κιλικίαν ἐπιστηρίζων τὰς ἐκκλησίας.

⁵⁹“In Greco-Roman culture, the kiss (*philēma*) was an expression of affection (*philia*) among family members and close friends (*philoī*; see Adinolfi 1988, 183–86). The etiquette of the kiss varied in expression (lips to lips; lips to hand; lips to feet; cheek to cheek; kiss as embrace or hug) and according to social situation. It could serve as a gesture of greeting; of farewell; of respect, honor, and deference; of familial or fraternal affection; of sexual ardor; of reconciliation; or of friendship and solidarity.⁸¹⁸ As the letters of Paul also show, the Christian community adopted the kiss as a regular physical manifestation of their affection for one another, not as a perfunctory ritual but as a genuine expression of love within the brotherhood. Paul, however, preferred the expression ‘holy kiss’ (*philēma hagion*, Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Thess 5:26).⁸¹⁹ For both authors, however, this kiss was an expression of the familial affection typical of the Christian community, whose members regarded one another as sisters and brothers in the faith.” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 890.]

⁶⁰“The author's encouragement of this greeting may suggest the presumption that the letter would be read during a worship assembly. Reference to the kiss in combination with the reading of letters, probably during the worship assembly, is found already in 1 Cor 16:19–20 and 1 Thess 5:26–27; cf. also Acts 20:37. Later evidence clearly attests the sharing of the kiss in the setting of the Eucharistic liturgy.⁸²¹” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 891.]

⁶¹I solemnly command you by the Lord that this letter be read to all of them.

Ἐνορκίζω ὑμᾶς τὸν κύριον ἀναγνωσθῆναι τὴν ἐπιστολὴν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς.

c. **Benedictio, v. 14b**

Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

εἰρήνη ὑμῖν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ.

Notes:

The final word of Peter to his readers is a prayer asking for God's peace to be upon them and upon all who are in spiritual union with Christ. The prayer wish for God's peace reflects a very traditional Jewish expression that was widely used in early Christian circles as well.⁶² The Christian distinctive to this prayer wish is τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ, *to those in Christ*. This reflects the Christian perspective that true peace can be found with God only through Jesus Christ. It was often a farewell also, and so the letter closes with Peter's farewell to them as a prayer for God's peace to permeate their lives and the congregations completely.

d. **Review of the Contents of the Letter.**

Notes:

Before the leave this study of First Peter, a brief synopsis of what we have learned from the letter is appropriate. The outline of the letter that we have been following will help organize our review. Perhaps helpful also will be to frame those thoughts around a series of questions. Out of these can come some timeless truths that help us live the Christian life more as God desires.

1. How did Peter put his ideas together to present to his readers? He used the format of a letter that followed the general patterns of letting writing in his time. Such means of communication played a large role in that world for presenting one's ideas to a group of individuals.⁶³ The letter served as a "substitute visit" by the sender who was unable to personally visit his readers due to some circumstance. This meant that letters were 'occasional,' which implies that their writing was prompted by the sender learning of problems and situations among his targeted readers that needed his response.

This reality carries important implications about how to interpret the contents of a letter. The process of interpretation must give serious consideration to the historical identification of the problems and issues being address addressed in the letter. The application of the sender's advice, given to his first readers, to our modern situation is in direct relationship to how similar their problems are to the ones we are facing. The greater the similarity the closer and more direct the application. The greater the difference between then and now the more difficult and less certain it is to make direct applications.

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**
 - **Haustafeln 2:18-3:7**
 - **Social 3:8-12**
- **Persecution 3:13-5:11**
 - **Encouragement 3:13-4:11**
 - **Explanation 4:12-19**
 - **Proper Conduct 5:1-11**

Conclusio: 5:12-14

- **Sender Verification, 5:12**
- **Greetings, 5:13-14a**
- **Benedictio, 5:14b**

⁶²The letter ends in conventional epistolary fashion with a wish for peace (cf. Eph 6:23; Heb 13:20; 3 John 15; and Koskenniemi 1956, 148). Just as the author wished his readers 'peace' at the beginning of his letter (1:2), so he concludes on the same note. 'Peace' (*eirēnē*) thus forms, along with other terms (personal names [Peter, Silvanus, Mark, 5:12-13; 1:1]; grace [5:12; 1:2]; co-elect/elect [5:13; 1:1]; Babylon/Diaspora [5:14; 1:1]; Christ [5:14/1:1]) part of the grand literary inclusion framing the letter as a whole. The greeting contains no verb, but in such formulations its omission is conventional.

⁶³"Peace" (*eirēnē*; Heb. *šālôm*) is the concluding term of the ancient Aaronic benediction ('... and give you peace,' Num 6:24-26). The wishing of peace reflects a conventional Israelite and Christian greeting (cf. 'go in peace,' Mark 5:34; Luke 7:50; 8:48; Acts 16:36; Jas 2:16). 'Peace' was also the salutation of the risen Lord (Luke 24:36; John 20:19, 21, 26). Paul, by contrast, normally used 'grace' as the concluding term in his postscripts, with 2 Cor 13:11 forming a singular exception.⁸²⁴ Peace, the sound state of a person and the prosperity of one's affairs as well as the state of mutual concord, naturally was precious to Israelites and Christians alike. The great sage Hillel taught: 'Be of the disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving your fellow-creatures, and drawing them near to the Torah' (m. 'Abot 1:12).⁸²⁵" [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 891-92.]

⁶³The letter is one of the most common and socially significant kinds of written text from antiquity. Extant letters represent every level of Greco-Roman society from Egyptian peasants to Roman emperors. The letter served the most basic needs of day-to-day communication and the most highly developed art and ideology. The letter is also arguably the most important, and certainly the most prevalent type of literature in early Christianity." [David Noel Freedman, vol. 4, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 290.]

What we have discovered about First Peter is that this letter was composed by Peter while in Rome during the late 50s to middle 60s of the first century, some time prior to his martyrdom by Nero in the mid 60s. He utilized the help of Silas as his writing secretary, and most likely called on the services of John Mark also to assist in the process of composing the letter. This team of writers put together a beautiful expression of encouragement to faithfulness that provides deep insight into the sustaining power of God's grace.

The letter sought to encourage a wide range of Christian groups meeting in house churches in towns and cities scattered through the Roman provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. Included in the readership are folks in very rural settings and also in highly urbanized settings. They came out of a wide diversity of ethnic backgrounds that included Jews, Greeks, Romans, along with localized ethnic heritages. There were very wealthy folks and also very poor folks, as well as a considerable number of slaves in this mixture. They all had grown up in other religious traditions and were first generation believers in this new religion called Christianity.



The churches seem to be stable and relatively free from the influence of heretical teaching at the time of the writing of this letter. But comparison with First and Second Timothy sent to Ephesus in Asia, along with Colossians and Philemon sent to Colossae during the same general time frame paints a different picture for Ephesus and Colossae in Asia. Considerable problems with false teachers and the promotion of heresy existed in these two locations. About a decade or so earlier the churches in the province of Galatia had struggled greatly under the false teaching of the Judaizing influence. Either Peter opted to not address such problems that may have lingered there, or by the writing of First Peter these problems had diminished to such a point that he felt no need to address them. Or, he may have felt that these problems were more isolated and localized to just a few of the provinces and that the writings of Paul had already adequately addressed them. Certainly from Silas and also by this point from John Mark he had learned how Paul had sought to solve these issues of false teachers.

The problems that he did address in the church largely focused on a common issue being experienced in various ways by most all the congregations. That issue revolved around the negative image this new religious movement experienced from non-Christians in the communities. This negative view of Christianity sometimes erupted into persecution ranging from verbal abuse to some physical violence against those identified as Christians. Peter doesn't feel from his sources of information about their situation that many believers were denying their faith in the face of such hostility. But he was aware that they were having to pay a real price for their Christian commitment. Thus the letter is largely centered on helping these believers understand who they actually are in the eyes of God, and what their commitment to Christ has gained for them spiritually both in this life and for all eternity. Out of a strong spiritual self identity they can hopefully utilize to the fullest God's presence with them for coping with the opposition they are facing.

Thus one of the fundamental contributions that First Peter has made over the centuries is to provide a source of inspiration and insight to Christians who are going through really hard times. Especially is this true when they are suffering hostility to their Christian faith from people around them. Peter gives deep insight into both how God looks at His people in Christ, and the extent of His commitment to help them cope with their trials.

2. What did he say about God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit?

The portrait of God that Peter paints in his letter is diverse and rich. The initial strokes in this portrait are painted at the beginning of the letter *in the Adscriptio*: *chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled with his blood*, κατὰ πρόγνωσιν θεοῦ πατρὸς, ἐν ἀγιασμῷ πνεύματος, εἰς ὑπακοὴν καὶ ῥάντισμὸν αἵματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (1:2). The implicit trinitarian affirma-

tion in the letter *Adscriptio* summarizes Peter's conception of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Father chooses; the Spirit makes holy; the Son's blood cleanses.

The initial strokes continue **in the letter Proem** (1:3-12): God who is Father of Christ acts out of His abundant mercy to give spiritual birth (1:3): ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ κατὰ τὸ πολὺ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος ἀναγεννήσας ἡμᾶς. . . . The expression of that mercy is the resurrection of Christ (1:3): δι' ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐκ νεκρῶν. The God's power protects believers for the day of salvation (1:5): τοὺς ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ φρουρουμένους. That final day is defined as a revealing of Christ (1:7): ἐν ἀποκαλύψει Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. The Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Christ made God's salvation plan known to the Old Testament prophets (1:11): ἐδήλου τὸ ἐν αὐτοῖς πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ. This focused on Christ's sufferings and subsequent glory (1:11): τὰ εἰς Χριστὸν παθήματα καὶ τὰς μετὰ ταῦτα δόξας. The evangelists who brought the gospel message to the initial readers were being used by the Holy Spirit to do this work (1:12): διὰ τῶν εὐαγγελισαμένων ὑμᾶς πνεύματι ἁγίῳ ἀποσταλέντι ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ.

Thus with these introductory brushes on the portrait of God in these two beginning segments of the letter, that often serve to set the tone for the rest of the letter, we discover a rich understanding of God in relation to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The central activity of God presented here is His work of salvation for sinful humanity. In the letter body then we can anticipate finding this initial picture 'fleshed out' with more details.

The first section on holy living in 1:13-2:10 begins the amplification of the picture. The beginning detailed stroke in the letter body is the assertion that Jesus Christ's coming again will bring to believers God's grace (1:13): τὴν φερομένην ὑμῖν χάριν ἐν ἀποκαλύψει Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. The God who calls us into salvation is holy and thus expects us as His children to be holy (1:14-16): κατὰ τὸν καλέσαντα ὑμᾶς ἅγιον καὶ αὐτοὶ ἅγιοι ἐν πάσῃ ἀναστροφῇ γενήθητε. This same God impartially judges all humanity as Father on the basis of our actions (1:17): τὸν ἀπροσωπολήμπτως κρίνοντα κατὰ τὸ ἐκάστου ἔργον. Our redemption from sin was accomplished by the precious blood of Christ shed like a sacrificial lamb (1:19): τιμίῳ αἵματι ὡς ἀμνοῦ ἀμώμου καὶ ἁσπίλου Χριστοῦ. The Father planned this out before He created the world and then carried it out through Christ at the end of the world (1:20-21): προεγνωσμένου μὲν πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου, φανερωθέντος δὲ ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν χρόνων δι' ὑμᾶς. . . . Once again God's having raised Jesus from the dead and then having glorified Him is affirmed (1:21): θεὸν τὸν ἐγείραντα αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν καὶ δόξαν αὐτῷ δόντα. As such then God becomes the object of our faith and hope (1:21): ὥστε τὴν πίστιν ὑμῶν καὶ ἐλπίδα εἶναι εἰς θεόν.

Next, what God says lasts forever (1:23, 25): λόγου ζῶντος θεοῦ καὶ μένοντος... τὸ δὲ ῥῆμα κυρίου μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. What God has said that lasts forever is the orally preached gospel of salvation (1:25): τοῦτο δὲ ἐστὶν τὸ ῥῆμα τὸ εὐαγγελισθὲν εἰς ὑμᾶς.

God is in the process of building Himself a new temple on earth: the collection of believers who have 'tasted' His goodness (2:1-8): ἐγεύσασθε ὅτι χρηστὸς ὁ κύριος... αὐτοὶ ὡς λίθοι ζῶντες οἰκοδομεῖσθε οἶκος πνευματικὸς. In this new temple, believers function both as building stones and as priests offering up spiritual sacrifices to God through Christ (2:5): εἰς ἱεράτευμα ἅγιον, ἀνενέγκαι πνευματικὰς θυσίας εὐπροσδέκτους θεῷ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. In that construction process, the believing community now becomes God's new chosen people (2:9-10): Ὑμεῖς γένος ἐκλεκτόν, βασιλείον ἱεράτευμα, ἔθνος ἅγιον, λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν,....

In the second section on relationships with others in 2:11-3:12, God's will becomes the basis for relating properly to both outsiders and insiders in the world around us (2:11-17): οὕτως ἐστὶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀγαθοποιούντας φιμοῦν τὴν τῶν ἀφρόνων ἀνθρώπων ἀγνωσίαν. Through doing what God desires we nullify the criticism of the outside world against us and our God. For Christian slaves (2:18-25), suffering abuse for doing God's will bring His approval (2:20): εἰ ἀγαθοποιούντες καὶ πάσχοντες ὑπομενεῖτε, τοῦτο χάρις παρὰ θεῷ.

The incredible example of Christ's suffering unjustly in his crucifixion (2:21-25) should inspire slaves to follow in His footsteps (21): καὶ Χριστὸς ἔπαθεν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, ὑμῖν ὑπολιμπάνων ὑπογραμμὸν ἵνα ἐπακολουθήσητε τοῖς ἴχνεσιν αὐτοῦ. In this unjust suffering, Christ carried our sins in his body on the cross in order to enable us to live righteously (2:24): ὃς τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἡμῶν αὐτὸς ἀνήνεγκεν ἐν τῷ σώματι αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον, ἵνα ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις ἀπογενόμενοι τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ ζήσωμεν· οὗ τῷ μῶλωτι ἰάθητε. Thus we have returned to Christ, as the Shepherd and Guardian of our very lives (2:25): ἐπεστράφητε νῦν ἐπὶ τὸν ποιμένα καὶ ἐπίσκοπον τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν.

Living by God's will also includes Christian wives with non-Christian husbands (3:1-6). God values in them a quiet dignity flowing outward from within (3:4): ἐν τῷ ἀφθάρτῳ τοῦ πραέως καὶ ἡσυχίου πνεύματος, ὃ ἐστὶν

ένωπιον τοῦ θεοῦ πολυτελής. In putting her hope in God, the Christian wife identifies with Sarah and other wives in the Old Testament (3:5-6). Christian husbands must treat their wives like queens if they expect God to listen to their prayers (3:7). The entire community of believers must live by God's will (3:8-12) since God's stance is positive toward the righteous and negative toward those doing evil (3:12): ὅτι ὀφθαλμοὶ κυρίου ἐπὶ δικαίους καὶ ὤτα αὐτοῦ εἰς δέησιν αὐτῶν, πρόσωπον δὲ κυρίου ἐπὶ ποιοῦντας κακά.

In **the third section, the lengthy discussion on unjust suffering** in 3:13-5:11, certain aspects about God surface as well. One important coping mechanism for facing suffering is to sanctify Christ as Lord (3:15): κύριον δὲ τὸν Χριστὸν ἀγιάσατε ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν. Our good lifestyle is a reflection of spiritual union with Christ (3:16): ὑμῶν τὴν ἀγαθὴν ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστροφήν. Suffering unjustly may on occasion reflect God's will (3:17): εἰ θέλοι τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, πάσχειν.

For a second time the example of Christ suffering unjustly comes to the surface as an inspiration to believers generally (3:18-25). Christ's death, resurrection, and exaltation stand as the means of bringing salvation to repentant sinners (3:18b-25). His once for all death and resurrection is central (3:18): καὶ Χριστὸς ἅπασι περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἔπαθεν, δίκαιος ὑπὲρ ἀδίκων, ἵνα ὑμᾶς προσαγάγῃ τῷ θεῷ, θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκὶ ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι. The inspiration of this by Christ inspires believers to suffer unjustly knowing that God can bring good out of their bad experience, just as He did for Christ.

In light of this, we are to arm ourselves with the same way of thinking that Christ possessed (4:1, 2-6): Χριστοῦ οὖν παθόντος σαρκὶ καὶ ὑμεῖς τὴν αὐτὴν ἔννοιαν ὀπλίσασθε. We are beneficiaries and stewards of the manifold grace of God (4:7-11), which obligates us to service (4:10): ἕκαστος καθὼς ἔλαβεν χάρισμα, εἰς ἑαυτοὺς αὐτὸ διακονοῦντες ὡς καλοὶ οἰκονόμοι ποικίλης χάριτος θεοῦ. In properly expressed service, God receives the glory since it is He working through us, and not we ourselves (4:11): ἵνα ἐν πᾶσιν δοξάζηται ὁ θεὸς διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ᾧ ἔστιν ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων· ἀμήν. He supplies the strength and the words for us to use (4:11).

The experience of unjust suffering is indeed a sharing in the sufferings of Christ (4:13; κοινωνεῖτε τοῖς τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθήμασιν), a sign of divine blessing with the presence of the Holy Spirit in our life (4:14; τὸ τῆς δόξης καὶ τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πνεῦμα ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἀναπαύεται), an occasion for glorying God (4:16; δοξαζέτω δὲ τὸν θεὸν ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τούτῳ), and an opportunity to entrust our life into God's hands as the faithful Creator (4:19; οἱ πάσχοντες κατὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ πιστῶ κτίστη παρατιθέσθωσαν τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν ἐν ἀγαθοποιίᾳ).

Peter reminds his readers that he was a witness to Christ's sufferings (5:1): ὁ συμπρεσβύτερος καὶ μάρτυς τῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθημάτων. The spiritual leaders are commissioned to take care of believers as God's flock, not theirs (5:2): ποιμάνετε τὸ ἐν ὑμῖν ποίμνιον τοῦ θεοῦ.

God's posture of opposing the proud but giving grace to the humble from Prov. 3:34 not only applies to spiritual leaders (5:1-5) but becomes the basis for his final admonitions in 5:6-11. The letter closes with a powerful affirmation of God's all encompassing grace (5:10, ὁ δὲ θεὸς πάσης χάριτος) that will restore, support, strengthen, and establish believers in their experience of suffering.

In the conclusio, we are reminded this all encompassing grace is the true grace of God (5:12): ἀληθὴ χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ. And believers once again are in spiritual union with Christ (5:14): τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ.

Wow! What a beautiful portrait of God that Peter paints in this letter. It is a picture of a God who loves, is kind and caring, but who is holy and expects His people to be so. He has graciously reached out through Christ to provide eternal salvation to all who will come to Him through Christ. And His Spirit comes to sustain and enable believers to live according to His will. But, also, God is the Judge of all mankind with exacting demands upon every person, including His own people. At the coming of Christ, all humanity will face Him in this judgment. Only those who have experienced and followed His sustaining grace will come through this judgment successfully.

These beautiful truths regarding our God never change and thus apply to us, just as they did to the first readers of this letter. From this magnificent picture of our God, we can burst forth in the doxologies of praise prompted by Peter in 4:11 and 5:11.

To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen. (4:11)
ᾧ ἔστιν ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων· ἀμήν.

To him be the power forever and ever. Amen. (5:11)
αὐτῷ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων· ἀμήν.

3. What did he say about the communities of believers that the letter was sent to originally?

The historical picture of the first readers is rather limited.

In the letter *Adscriptio* (1:1), they are defined as exiles of the diaspora located in the Roman provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia: παρεπιδήμοις διασποράς Πόντου, Γαλατίας, Καππαδοκίας, Ἀσίας, καὶ Βιθυνίας. The vast territory covered in these provinces contained a great diversity of ethnic groups of people from



not just Jewish heritage, but Greeks and Romans from the west and Persian and other ethnic groups from the east. Mixed into this melting pot of cultures were a huge variety of local cultures and ethnic groups. They are defined by Peter as *exiles*, παρεπιδήμοις, which carried a highly negative meaning socially in that world as foreign immigrants. Peter turns this negative term into a positive one by using it to highlight that this world is as a foreign land to believers.

But the negative connotation of the term παρεπιδήμοις signals a theme to be developed throughout the letter underscoring how much difficulty these believing communities faced in gaining acceptance from friends and neighbors in the towns and cities where they lived. They are suffering various kinds of trials (λυπηθέντες ἐν ποικίλοις πειρασμοῖς, 1:6). Peter will expand the label παρεπιδήμοις to *foreigners and exiles* in 2:11: παροίκους καὶ παρεπιδήμους. They were living among Gentiles (2:12, ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν), who sometimes were slandering them with labels such as *criminals* (2:12, ἐν ᾧ καταλαλοῦσιν ὑμῶν ὡς κακοποιῶν).

Some of his readers were Christian slaves with abusive owners (2:18-20): Οἱ οἰκέται ὑποτασσόμενοι ἐν παντὶ φόβῳ τοῖς δεσπόταις, οὐ μόνον τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς καὶ ἐπιεικέσιν ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς σκολιοῖς. Some of his readers were Christian wives with non-Christian husbands (3:1-6): Ὅμοίως γυναῖκες ὑποτασσόμεναι τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν, ἵνα καὶ εἴ τινες ἀπειθοῦσιν τῷ λόγῳ διὰ τῆς τῶν γυναικῶν ἀναστροφῆς ἀνευ λόγου κερδηθήσονται.

On occasion some of them faced people demanding answers about their religion (3:15): ἔτοιμοι ἀεὶ πρὸς ἀπολογία πάντι τῷ αἰτοῦντι ὑμᾶς λόγον περὶ τῆς ἐν ὑμῖν ἐλπίδος. Sometimes many of them faced intense efforts to intimidate them into abandoning their Christian faith (3:14): τὸν δὲ φόβον αὐτῶν μὴ φοβηθῆτε μηδὲ παραχθῆτε.

Many of them came out of paganism and an immoral life style into Christianity (4:3): ἀρκετὸς ὁ παρεληλυθὼς χρόνος τὸ βούλημα τῶν ἐθνῶν κατειργάσθαι, πεπορευμένους ἐν ἀσελγείαις, ἐπιθυμίαις, οἰνοφλυγίαις, κῶμοις, πότοις, καὶ ἀθεμίτοις εἰδωλολατρίας. After conversion, their pagan friends were surprised by their refusal to continue joining the friends in immoral living and thus turned on them in defaming the God the believers now worshipped (4:4): ἐν ᾧ ξενίζονται μὴ συντρεχόντων ὑμῶν εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν τῆς ἀσωτίας ἀνάχυσιν, βλασφημοῦντες.

This experience of suffering unjustly was first described in the letter *Proem* as a trial by fire (1:7): διὰ πυρὸς δὲ δοκιμαζόμενου. In the letter body at 4:12, it is amplified as a *fiery ordeal*: τῇ ἐν ὑμῖν πυρῶσει πρὸς πειρασμὸν ὑμῖν γινομένη. For the Gentile believers having to face religious based hostility for the first time, this came as a shock (4:12): μὴ ξενίζεσθε. . . ὡς ξένου ὑμῖν συμβαίνοντος. Probably the Jewish Christians in the churches were already accustomed to experiencing hostility from pagan neighbors.

The spiritual leaders among these communities of faith are labeled as *elders* and told to pastor God's flock under their care as care givers (5:1-4): Πρεσβυτέρους. . . ποιμάνετε τὸ ἐν ὑμῖν ποίμνιον τοῦ θεοῦ, ἐπισκοποῦντες.

These communities of believers have some awareness not only of Peter but also of Silas (5:12) and of John Mark (5:13). Whether the two men had previously visited this region in its entirety or not we do not know. Clearly Silas, from having accompanied the apostle Paul on the second and third missionary journeys had been active in the western provinces mentioned at the beginning of the letter: Galatia and Asia.

Thus we know something about these people historically, although probably not nearly as much as we would like to know.

But the spiritual portrait of these believers is rich and profound. A major objective of Peter in this

letter was to affirm these 'no bodies' as a very special people in the eyes of God. Thus, he spends quite a bit of space asserting their spiritual identity as believers in Christ.

The letter *Adscriptio* begins this affirmation in 1:1-2 with several declarations of the spiritual situation of his first readers. Peter juxtaposes two opposite terms in addressing them as ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις, **chosen exiles**. The choosing of them comes from God and is developed as κατὰ πρόγνωσιν θεοῦ πατρός (**according to God the Father's foreknowledge**), ἐν ἁγιασμῷ πνεύματος (**in sanctification by the Spirit**), and εἰς ὑπακοὴν καὶ ῥαντισμὸν αἵματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (**for obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ**). Thus at the outset Peter addressed their self esteem by affirming the spiritual status granted to them by God in contrast to the negative view of them from the world around them. The label of διασποράς, **diaspora**, carries the subtle tone of being God's people, given its Jewish background of usage.

The letter *Proem* (1:3-12) continues this positive affirmation with an eloquent picture of the mercy of God providing them with **new birth** (ἀναγεννήσας ἡμᾶς), **a living hope** (ἐλπίδα ζωῆς), **an imperishable inheritance** (κληρονομίαν ἄφθαρτον καὶ ἀμίαντον καὶ ἀμόραντον) already reserved for them in Heaven, and **a divine protection of them for final salvation in eternity** (σωτηρίαν ἐτοίμην ἀποκαλυφθῆναι ἐν καιρῷ ἐσχάτῳ). Out of this comes great joy and rejoicing.

Thus with these signals of spiritual status and blessing given in the two opening segments of the letter, we can anticipate amplification of these core ideas coming in the letter body.

In **the first section of the letter body on holy living** (1:13-2:10), the theme of salvation, σωτηρία, so richly expressed in the letter *Proem* is the primary point of expansion in the letter body. In 1:13, it is centered in the expectation of divine grace coming to believers at the return of Christ: ἐλπίσατε ἐπὶ τὴν φερομένην ὑμῖν χάριν ἐν ἀποκαλύψει Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. This σωτηρία initially received in conversion is also a divine call to holy living in this life (1:15): κατὰ τὸν καλέσαντα ὑμᾶς ἅγιον καὶ αὐτοὶ ἅγιοι ἐν πάσῃ ἀναστροφῇ γενήθητε. Without question, the definition of holy living is defined solely by God (1:16).

This σωτηρία is also a spiritual ransoming from immoral living that was accomplished by the blood of Christ (1:18-19): ἐλυτρώθητε ἐκ τῆς ματαίας ὑμῶν ἀναστροφῆς πατροπαραδότου, ἀλλὰ τιμίῳ αἵματι ὡς ἀμνοῦ ἀμώμου καὶ ἀσπίλου Χριστοῦ. The obligation growing out of this is to live in reverence of God all the days of our life (1:17): ἐν φόβῳ τὸν τῆς παροικίας ὑμῶν χρόνον ἀναστράφητε. Thus our faith and hope are focused on God through Christ (1:21): τὴν πίστιν ὑμῶν καὶ ἐλπίδα εἶναι εἰς θεόν.

This σωτηρία is additionally an obedience to the Truth that brings purification of our life (1:22): Τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν ἡγνικότες ἐν τῇ ὑπακοῇ τῆς ἀληθείας. Crucial to this obedience is a profound sacrificial love for our spiritual brothers and sisters in the community of believers (1:22): εἰς φιλαδελφίαν ἀνυπόκριτον ἐκ καρδίας ἀλλήλους ἀγαπήσατε ἐκτενῶς. The foundation of this commitment is set forth again as new birth from God rather than from human effort (1:23-25): ἀναγεννημένοι οὐκ ἐκ σποράς φθαρτῆς ἀλλὰ ἀφθάρτου, διὰ λόγου ζῶντος θεοῦ καὶ μένοντος.

The obligations of this σωτηρία are presented again in 2:1-3 in terms of shedding immoral living in favor of a passionate hunger for the spiritual nourishment that God alone can provide. Closely connected to that is the willingness to allow God to incorporate us as living stones into His new temple where we then serve Him as spiritual priests (2:4-8). As such we enjoy the status, as Jewish and Gentile believers, of being God's new people (2:9-10).

In **the second section of the letter body on obligations** (2:11-3:12), the theme of σωτηρία focuses on developing proper relationships as believers with both non-Christians and with other believers. It is summarized in 2:11-17, in terms of living honorably among the Gentiles (τὴν ἀναστροφὴν ὑμῶν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἔχοντες καλήν) and of expressing sacrificial love to fellow believers (τὴν ἀδελφότητα ἀγαπᾶτε).

To outsiders believers are obligated to show respect for political leaders (1:13b-14, εἴτε βασιλεῖ ὡς ὑπερέχοντι, 14 εἴτε ἡγεμόσιν ὡς δι' αὐτοῦ πεμπόμενοις εἰς ἐκδίκησιν κακοποιῶν ἔπαινον δὲ ἀγαθοποιῶν), and to all people generally (1:17a, πάντας τιμήσατε). Three groups of believers are singled out for specific instruction: Christian slaves with non-Christian owners (2:18-25), Christian wives with non-Christian husbands (3:1-6), and Christian husbands with Christian wives (3:7). All of the instructions given to these three sets of individuals are developed off the foundational obligation in 2:13: Ὑποτάγητε πάσῃ ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει διὰ τὸν κύριον (**show proper respect to every human leader because of the Lord**). These sets of obligations began with the collective responsibility of the Christian community to government leaders (2:13-17) and in 3:8-12 Peter returns to the collective obligations of the community of believers *to one another internally*, again based on

the fundamental obligation in 2:13.

In **the third segment of the letter body on persecution** (3:13-5:11), this σωτηρία from God is essential for successfully coping with hostility to one's religious faith. Throughout the three subunits of material in 3:13-4:11, 4:12-19, and 5:1-11, Peter's focus is upon utilizing God's resources made available through Christ to believers to face opposition to one's faith. Strengthening our commitment to Christ (3:15, κύριον δὲ τὸν Χριστὸν ἀγιάσατε ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν) is the right option rather than becoming afraid and intimidated by threats (3:14). Being prepared to explain this salvation as hope to opponents is important (3:15), but to do it with proper respect of even the opponent is important (3:16-22).

Central to successful coping is to arm ourselves with Christ's thinking toward unjust suffering (4:1). This will enable us to avoid giving in to purely human impulses that typify pagan ways of living (4:2-6). Another dimension is what lies ahead at final judgment of both believers and non-believers (4:4-6), where God will hold everyone strictly accountable for their actions. Additionally, the nearness of the end of all things should prompt believers into serious disciplined ministry to others, especially inside the community of believers (4:7-11).

Our faith commitment to Christ in σωτηρία has identified us with Christ's sufferings on the cross that can and will extend to our personal suffering of persecution (4:12-19). But our suffering because of Christ only binds us closer to the sufferings of Christ and thus becomes a source of joy and rejoicing, rather than shame and embarrassment. The ultimate victory over such suffering is assured because Christ gained victory over them and we share in that victory now, and will share in it for eternity at final judgment. Therefore with confidence we must entrust our lives now and for eternity into the hands of our God (4:19).

The quality of spiritual leadership given in the communities of faith must be high and based on the servant model of leadership (5:1-5), if God's people are to be ready to face persecution. That kind of leadership must be embraced by all in the community of believers. The fundamental source of the spiritual principle for this comes from Prov. 3:34, that Peter quotes in 5:5 as the basis of his appeal to leaders in 5:1-4) and then expands in 5:6-11 with traditional Jewish scripture exposition. Thus Peter closes with believers being called upon to embrace God fully into their lives, to firmly resist the Devil in his efforts to undermine this commitment, and to accept the divine promise of renewal and support growing out of their suffering.

In **the letter Conclusio** (5:12-14), believers are called upon to take their stand in the grace of God (ἀληθῆ χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ· εἰς ἣν στήτε), which Peter described as all encompassing (θεὸς πάσης χάριτος) in 5:10.

What Peter affirms to these suffering believers in the first century continues to have application to us as committed believers in the modern world. And especially is this true when we are called upon to face opposition because of our faith commitment to Christ. Every believer in the modern world needs to remember his or her value to God, no matter what other people may think or say about us. We must never forget that our σωτηρία in Christ has brought us into God's family as His chosen people who share relationship with Him now and will continue to do so throughout eternity. In that final judgment, believers will be separated out from the hostility of non-believers for all eternity and will no longer face criticism for their commitment to serve God through Christ. By God's grace being poured out on believers in final judgment, they will be vindicated for having resisted the pressure to cave into the threats of non-believers in this life. The bonds of community as the family of God in this world enable us to draw strength from one another in order to stand faithful to our Christ.

This is the heart of Peter's message to the suffering believers in ancient Anatolia. And also his enduring message to us today as committed servants of Christ. Hopefully your response and mine is that of Peter's:

“To Him be the power forever and ever. Amen.”