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Expanding the Apostolic Mission: A Biblical-Theological Analysis of Peter's Epistles as Evidence of His Universal Apostleship Beyond the Jewish Context

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Peter Ireland

Lynchburg, Virginia

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APPROVAL SHEET

Expanding the Apostolic Mission: A Biblical-Theological Analysis of Peter's Epistles as Evidence of His Universal Apostleship Beyond the Jewish Context

Peter Ireland

READ AND APPROVED BY:

Chairperson: _____

Richard A. Fuhr, Ph.D.

Supervising Reader: _____

Jeff S. Kennedy, Ph.D.

Second Reader: _____

Jordan P. Ballard, Ph.D.

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ABSTRACT

Paul's designation of Peter as the apostle to the Jews suggests that Peter's mission was restricted and impacts the interpretation of his Epistles. Scholarly neglect of Peter and critical scholarship's rejection of the Petrine Epistles' authenticity result in the underutilization of the context of Peter's complete life in the analysis of the Petrine Epistles. However, categorizing Peter as always being the apostle to the Jews does not fit the rest of the biblical evidence.

Using a biblical-theological approach to the biblical texts supplemented by extrabiblical evidence to understand the biblical authors' contexts while considering the passage of time, this dissertation argues that the Petrine Epistles reveal a lack of Jewish ethno-religious preference in Peter's mission at the end of his life. Paul's identification that Peter was an apostle to the Jews was accurate for the period immediately after Jesus's ascension. However, Peter's baptism of Cornelius (Acts 10:44–48) and his defense of non-Jew inclusion in the Christian community (Acts 11:15–17 and Acts 15:7–11) indicate a change in Peter's understanding. The Petrine Epistles, which represent Peter whether authored by him or pseudepigraphical, confirm Peter's universal approach to Christianity by the lack of Jewish ethno-religious preference.

ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Yale Bible Commentary Series
ABD	*Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Edited by David Noel Freedman. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
Abr.	*De Abrahamo*
A.J.	*Antiquitates judaicae*
ANF	*The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325.* Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. 10 vols. 1885–1887.
Ann.	*Annales*
AYBRL	Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library
b. Yebam.	Tractate *Yebamot* from the Babylonian Talmud
B.J.	*Bellum judaicum*
BDAG	Danker, Frederick W., Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
BDB	Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs. *The Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977.
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
Bib	*Biblica*
BibInt	*Biblical Interpretation*
B.J.	*Bellum judaicum*
BSac	*Bibliotheca Sacra*
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
C. Ap.	*Contra Apionem*
ca.	about
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
Clem.	Clement
Comm. Jo.	*Commentarii in evangelium Joannis*
CSB	Christian Standard Bible
CSC	Christian Standard Commentary
CurBR	*Currents in Biblical Research*
Dial.	*Dialogus cum Tryphone*
DSD	*Dead Sea Discoveries*
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
ed(s).	editor(s), edited by, edition
En.	Enoch
ESV	English Standard Version
ETL	*Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*
Hist. eccl.	*Historia ecclesiastica*
Hom. Act.	*Homiliae in Acta apostolorum*
Hom. Jo.	*Homiliae in Joannem*
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies

HvTSt	*Hervormde teologiese studies*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JGRChJ	*Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism*
Jos. Asen.	Joseph and Aseneth
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
Jub.	Jubilees
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
Let. Aris.	Letter of Aristeas
LNTS	The Library of New Testament Studies
LXX	Septuagint
m. Qidd.	Tractate *Qiddušin* from the Mishnah
Mos. 1, 2	*De vita Mosis* I, II
MT	Masoretic Text
n.p.	no page
NCB	New Catholic Bible
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NPNF	*A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church.* Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. 28 vols. in 2 series. 1886–1889.
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NSBT	New Studies in Biblical Theology
NT	New Testament
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
OT	Old Testament
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTP	Charlesworth, James H., ed. *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. 2 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1983–1985.
Plant.	*De plantation*
Post.	*De posteritate Caini*
Praem.	*De praemiis et poenis*
PSTJ	*Perkins (Scholl of Theology) Journal*
s.v.	*sub verbo*, under the word
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
ScrB	*Scripture Bulletin*
Sib. Or.	Sibylline Oracles
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
Spec.	*De specialibus legibus*
Strom.	*Stromateis*
T. Mos.	Testament of Moses
TDOT	*Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
trans.	translator, translated by

TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
TWOT	*Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*
TynBul	*Tyndale Bulletin*
UBS	United Bible Societies
v(v).	verse(s)
Vir. ill.	*De viris illustribus*
Virt.	*De virtutibus*
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

CHAPTER ONE: THE CONTEMPORARY TREATMENT OF PETER

Paul's description that Peter was entrusted with the gospel for the circumcised (Gal 2:7–8) leads to the description of Peter as the apostle to the Jews.[1] Paul's criticism of Peter's hypocrisy at Antioch (Gal 2:11–14) for eating separately from non-Jews accentuates the differentiation.[2] The Protestant Church's prioritization of Paul's writings underscores Paul's primacy, and its response to the Roman Catholic Church's emphasis on apostolic succession tracing back to Peter underscores the hierarchical structure within Christianity. The lack of a record of Peter's response to Paul and the modern critical challenges to Peter's authorship of the Petrine Epistles leave Paul's description of Peter's apparent ethno-religious preference unanswered, like a persistent and untreated splinter that hampers one's ability to fully appreciate the individual whom Christ commissioned to lead his church.

The New Testament evidence outside of the Petrine Epistles appears to have been insufficient to remove Peter's labeling as the apostle to the Jews.[3] Peter's vision and subsequent baptism of Cornelius (Acts 10:9–48), Peter's defense of his actions with the Jerusalem leadership (Acts 11:1–18), and his argument regarding non-Jewish Christian inclusion at the Jerusalem

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[1] In 1551, when arguing that 1 Peter was written for the Jews, Calvin writes, "It is nothing strange that he [Peter] designed this epistle more especially for the Jews, for he know that he was appointed in a particular matter their apostle, as Paul teaches is in Gal 2:8." Jean Calvin, *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles*, trans. John Owen (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1855), 25. More recently, in 1997, in his argument regarding the epistle's audience, Stewart-Sykes writes, "One certain historical fact about Peter is that he was the apostle to Jews." A. Stewart-Sykes, "The Function of 'Peter' in I Peter," *ScrB* 27 (1997): 10. Also, in 2008, Witherington writes, "What is perhaps most important is that we must take very seriously what Paul tells us in Galatians 2, that Peter was the major apostle to the Jews. That was the focus of his ministry." Ben Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1–2 Peter* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 53.

[2] I use the term "non-Jews" in contexts like this instead of "Gentiles" as the meaning of "Gentiles" might be ambiguous. I use the term "Gentile" when referring to other works.

[3] The reference to multiple authors using that label supports this claim.

Council (Acts 15:7–11) suggest he had moved on from any favoritism toward the Jews that Paul appears to claim in Galatians (Gal 2:7–8). However, if one accepts that the Petrine Epistles reflect Peter's thoughts, they might reveal evidence about his ethno-religious preference toward the end of his life.

Before analyzing the Petrine Epistles for evidence of any ethno-religious preference, it is appropriate to examine why this topic receives little attention before reviewing this work's argument. Then, after reviewing the most pertinent literature on the subject, an outline of the method employed to argue the thesis is presented.

Scholarship's Lack of Attention to Peter

The Gospels portray Peter as the leader of Jesus's disciples.[4] He is one of the first disciples Jesus calls; his name is almost always first when the text describes multiple disciples, and the resurrected Jesus instructs Peter alone to feed his sheep (John 21:15–19).[5] Paul identifies Peter as the first disciple that the resurrected Jesus met (1 Cor 15:5). Immediately following Jesus's ascension, Peter leads the disciples through replacing Judas (Acts 1:15), and he gives the Pentecost sermon (Acts 2:14–41). Acts continues this portrayal of Peter as the nascent church's leader until he exits the narrative (Acts 12:17), though he returns to defend the inclusion of non-Jewish Christians at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:7–11). Nevertheless, modern scholarship

[4] The Bible uses various names to describe Peter, such as Simon, Cephas, and Simeon. This dissertation uses "Peter" for consistency unless it specifically discusses the various names.

[5] The Synoptic Gospels portray Peter as the first disciple (Matt 4:18–20; Mark 1:16–18; Luke 5:8–11). Also, almost all mentions of multiple disciples that include Peter place him first (Matt 10:2; 17:1; Mark 3:16; 5:37; 9:2; 13:3; 14:33; Luke 6:14; 8:51; 9:28; 22:8; John 20:2, 3; 21:2). John's account has a couple of exceptions, implying that Jesus called Andrew before his brother Peter (John 1:40–42) and mentioning Andrew before Peter in John 1:44.

relegates Peter behind Paul in the formation of the church.[6] Today's church prioritizes the example and teachings of Paul over Peter.[7]

Acknowledging Paul's prioritization while attempting to balance it, Hengel titles his book *Saint Peter: The Underestimated Apostle* because he identifies that Peter's historical and theological importance is underestimated.[8] Green describes Peter as a "lost boy" of Christian theology as he is rarely considered a theological leader.[9] After describing Peter as "playing second fiddle to Paul," Hurtado recognizes that Protestant scholarship has given significantly more attention to Paul than Peter, with the Roman Catholic tradition tending to focus on Peter representing the conferral of Jesus's authority.[10]

One result of the attention on Paul is diminished attention on Peter. Peter's experience of coming to know Christ at his workplace while struggling to make ends meet (Mark 1:16–18) is probably closer to most Christian conversion experiences than Paul's blinding vision (Acts 22:6–

[6] For example, Bird describes Paul thus: "It is not too much to say that Paul—the man, the mission, and the martyr—was arguably the single, most driving intellectual force in the early church, second only to Jesus." Michael F. Bird, *Four Views on the Apostle Paul*, ed. Michael F. Bird (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 9. This quote comes from Bird's introduction to four differing views about Paul. In Nanos's presentation of the Jewish view of Paul, he notes that "traitor," "apostate," "convert," and "deceiver" are "common characterizations of the apostle Paul in popular Jewish imagination" and accepts that "Christians generally celebrate Paul as the champion of faith."

[7] Paul's contribution of more books to the New Testament is one reason for Paul's primacy; a section below explores this. In addition, Paul wrote letters that have become foundational to Protestant theology. Luther writes regarding Romans, "This epistle is really the chief part of the New Testament, and is truly the purest gospel. It is worthy not only that every Christian should know it word for word, by heart, but also that he should occupy himself with it every day, as the daily bread of the soul." Martin Luther, *Luther's Works: Word and Sacrament I*, ed. E. Theodore Bachmann (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960), 35:365. Carson and Moo note that "Romans is the longest and most theologically significant of the letters of Paul." D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 391.

[8] Martin Hengel, *Saint Peter: The Underestimated Apostle*, trans. Thomas H. Trapp (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), ix.

[9] Gene L. Green, *Vox Petri: A Theology of Peter* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2020), 1.

[10] Larry W. Hurtado, "The Apostle Peter in Protestant Scholarship: Cullmann, Hengel, and Bockmuehl," in *Peter in Early Christianity*, ed. Helen K. Bond and Larry W. Hurtado (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), xvi, 1–2.

21).[11] However, the lack of attention to Peter results in gaps in scholarly analysis of his life. For example, scholars have written little about the evolution of Peter's ethno-religious preference after Paul's proposed categorization by Jews and non-Jews in Galatians 2, limiting Peter's missionary activity to Jews.[12] Even less has been written regarding what the Petrine Epistles reveal about Peter's approach to foreigners. The following sections explore the reasons for this lack of attention to Peter and this Petrine motif.

First Reason: Relative Authorship of the New Testament

There are multiple reasons for scholarship giving greater attention to Paul than Peter. First, Paul wrote significantly more of the New Testament than Peter. Tradition recognizes Paul as the author of thirteen epistles, containing one hundred chapters, while Peter is the traditional author of two epistles, containing eight chapters. With the New Testament containing two hundred and sixty chapters, Paul's contribution by chapter is over one-third of the total, while Peter's is less than one-twentieth. Similar ratios of Paul's and Peter's Epistles in the Revised Common Lectionary indicate that Scripture readings of their epistles are proportional to the amount of text in the Bible.[13]

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[11] Perkins argues that Peter's humble background and narratives in the Gospels make him relatable, while Paul's complex arguments make him less so. Pheme Perkins, *Peter: Apostle for the Whole Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 2000), 12–13.

[12] For example, in his defense of a Jewish audience for the Petrine Epistles, Witherington writes, "What is perhaps most important is that we must take very seriously what Paul tells us in Galatians 2, that Peter was the major apostle to the Jews. That was the focus of his ministry." Witherington, *Hellenized Christians*, 53. Elmer describes Peter as a Christian Jew who remains insistent on the Christian church's adherence to the Mosaic law. Ian J. Elmer, *Paul, Jerusalem and the Judaisers: The Galatian Crisis in Its Broadest Historical Context* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 219.

[13] Consultation on Common Texts, "The Revised Common Lectionary (RCL)," https://www.commontexts.org/rcl/; Vanderbilt University Divinity Library, "Citation Canonical Index: Revised Common Lectionary," https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/citationindex.php. Vanderbilt's index of the Revised Common Lectionary showed that the three-year cycle included 550 New Testament readings, of which 176 were from Paul (32%) while 12 were from Peter (2%). The 12 from Peter were verified with the master lists from the

The impact of Paul's writing on the church accentuates their quantity. Luther writes regarding Romans, "This epistle is really the chief part of the New Testament, and is truly the purest gospel. It is worthy not only that every Christian should know it word for word, by heart, but also that he should occupy himself with it every day, as the daily bread of the soul."[14] Brown writes, "The range of Paul's letters to particular communities, plus the depth of his thought and the passion of his involvement, have meant that since his letter became part of the New Testament, no Christian has been unaffected by what he has written."[15]

While it is logical to prioritize Scripture readings based on the volume of Pauline literature, this focus should not overshadow the examination of other notable figures. Jesus did not write any books in the Bible, and he is by far the central focus of the New Testament. In the translator's preface to his translation of Cullmann's landmark study on Peter, Filson remarks that there are hundreds of books on the life of Jesus and scores on the life of Paul but very few on Peter.[16] While Jesus is the most frequently mentioned person in the New Testament, Peter is arguably the next most frequently mentioned, closely followed by Paul.[17] In support of his

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Consultation on Common Texts. These percentages of lectionary from Paul's and Peter's epistles (32% and 2%) are close to their percentages of the New Testament by verse (38% and 3%).

[14] Luther, *Luther's Works*, 35:365.

[15] Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, ed. Marion Soards, Abr. ed., AYBRL (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 148.

[16] Oscar Cullmann, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*, trans. Floyd V. Filson, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), 7.

[17] Hengel argues that Peter, taking into consideration his variety of names (Peter, Simon, Cephas) is mentioned 181 times in the New Testament whereas Paul/Saul appears 177 times. Hengel, *Saint Peter*, 10–11. Bockmuehl supports his statement of Peter's more numerous mentions by stating that Peter is mentioned 156 times, Cephas 9 times, and Paul 158 times. Markus Bockmuehl, *Simon Peter in Scripture and Memory: The New Testament Apostle in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 6n7. While scholars might debate the precise number of mentions, the point is that Paul is not mentioned a significant amount more than Peter.

position regarding the study of Peter, Bockmuehl argues that "Even if the Pauline and Johannine writings enjoy far greater literary prominence in the New Testament, no other individual approaches Simon Peter's personal or constitutional stature in relation to Jesus or to the church as a whole."[18]

Scholars' discourse on Paul places Peter in a more obscure light. Bird writes that Paul "was arguably the single, most driving intellectual force in the early church, second only to Jesus."[19] Horrell describes Paul as "the man-mountain."[20] Porter presents Paul as Christ's most important follower and the person most influential "in the development and spread of Christianity from an initially regionally located sect of Judaism into a movement that came to be recognized, even by the Romans themselves, as a distinctive religious movement."[21] Dunn writes, "Paul was the first and greatest Christian theologian" while conceding in a footnote that "In formal terms Peter has been much the more influential [on the founding of the church]."[22] Perhaps Protestant scholarship is guilty of "robbing Peter to pay Paul."[23] The following section explores the point of Dunn's footnote.

Second Reason: Protestant Reaction to the Roman Catholic Church

A second reason why Protestant scholarship gives Peter less recognition is in reaction to the Roman Catholic Church's position. Hurtado summarizes the situation by suggesting Paul is

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[18] Markus Bockmuehl, *The Remembered Peter: In Ancient Reception and Modern Debate*, WUNT (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 7.

[19] Bird, *Four Views on the Apostle Paul*, 9.

[20] David G. Horrell, *An Introduction to the Study of Paul*, 2nd ed. (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 1.

[21] Stanley E. Porter, *The Apostle Paul: His Life, Thought, and Letters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 3.

[22] James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 2, 3n5.

[23] This colloquial term's original is uncertain.

the Protestant Church's lead apostle while Peter is Roman Catholicism's.[24] Green traces this to the Reformation when Luther moved away from the Roman Catholics' claim that Peter held "the keys to the kingdom" and adopted "Paul as their patron."[25] This division also leads scholars to center their discussion on this debate around Peter's role in the early church and subsequent succession. For example, the first chapter of Hengel's notable work on Peter is an analysis of Matthew 16:17–19, a foundational passage for the Roman Catholic Church's claim of apostolic succession, where Hengel concludes these verses apply to Peter alone and not to other disciples, refuting the Roman Catholic Church's position of Christ's authority being passed on by Peter and his successors.[26]

In contrast, Pheme argues that Peter formed an ecumenical bridge between the different early Christian ideas, placing Peter as "the true centrist in the New Testament tradition" while arguing that "Traditions associated with James, Paul, and John are determined by individual particularities which make them inappropriate as the focus for the unity of the whole Christian community."[27] One might speculate what position Peter would have held in Protestant scholarship if the Roman Catholic Church had not insisted on apostolic succession.

Dunn explains that the diversity of the church, as presented by the New Testament writings and which persists today, leads to "boundary areas" and associated hesitancy for

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[24] Hurtado, "Peter in Protestant Scholarship," 1–2.

[25] Green, *Vox Petri*, 1.

[26] Hengel, *Saint Peter*, 1–14.

[27] Perkins, *Peter*, 5. Perkins cites Dunn who argues that Peter was the early church's focal point for unity because James and Paul each developed their own "brands" of Christianity, while John was too individualistic. James D. G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), 385–86.

scholars to explore.[28] For instance, certain Protestant scholars are hesitant to assert Peter's significant influence due to concerns about being perceived as endorsing his primacy and apostolic succession.

Third Reason: Critical Scholarship's Rejection of Petrine Authorship

The third reason for a reduced focus on Peter is the challenge from modern critical scholarship about his involvement in New Testament writings that tradition has associated with him. Even though there is second-century attestation to Peter's authorship of 1 Peter, and Luther prioritized this letter, critical scholarship has challenged its authenticity since the nineteenth century.[29] The challenges to Peter's authorship of 1 Peter are that the quality of the Greek in the letter is too good for a fisherman like Peter, that the letter's *Sitz im Leben* is consistent with a period after Peter's death in the mid-60s, that the letter exhibits a dependence on Paul that must date it after Peter's death, and that Christianity would not have reached the recipients of the letter before Peter's death.[30]

Doubt about the authenticity of 2 Peter dates back to Eusebius (ca. 260–ca. 339), who accepted 1 Peter as the only authentic Petrine Epistle (*Hist. eccl.* 3.3.1) and listed 2 Peter with

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[28] Dunn, *Unity*, 385.

[29] Jobes argues that quotations of 1 Peter by the early authors that Eusebius mentions, such as Papias (*Hist. eccl.* 3.39.17) and Polycarp (*Hist. eccl.* 4.14.9), indicate their knowledge that Peter was responsible for the letter. Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, 2nd ed., BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022), 18. Luther writes, in reference to John's Gospel, that "the epistles of St. Paul and St. Peter far surpass the other three gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke." He also writes, "In a word St. John's Gospel and his first epistle, St. Paul's epistles, especially Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians, and St. Peter's first epistle, are the books that show you Christ and teach you all that is necessary and salvatory for you to know, even if you were never to see or hear any other book or doctrine." Luther, *Luther's Works*, 35:362. See Soulen and Soulen for an overview of the historical-critical method and historical criticism. Richard N. Soulen and R. Kendall Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*, 4th ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011), 134–37.

[30] Jobes outlines and argues against the critical points that challenge Peter's authorship. Jobes, *1 Peter*, 5–19. Hengel is an example of a scholar who does not accept Petrine authorship, dating 1 Peter to about 95–100 CE.

James, Jude, and 2 and 3 John as disputed (*Hist. eccl.* 3.25.3).[31] Contemporary challenges to Peter's authorship of 2 Peter include dependence on Jude and that Peter would not write a letter with such a large number of *hapax legomena*.[32] These challenges were sufficient for Green to exclude the letter from his theology of Peter, even though Green "leans towards the acceptance of the letter as a work traceable to the apostle."[33]

While tradition associates Mark's Gospel with Peter's teachings because of Eusebius's quotation of Papias (*Hist. eccl.* 3.39.15), critics dismiss Papias as an unreliable witness.[34] Bond explains that critics use internal evidence within Mark's Gospel to make their case that it is inconsistent with an association with Peter.[35]

In comparison, while some scholars deny the authenticity of parts of the Pauline corpus, some are undisputed. Elwell and Yarbrough identify that most scholars accept Romans, 1 and 2

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[31] Eusebius writes, "Peter seems to have preached to the Jews of the Dispersion in Pontus and Galatia and Bithynia, Cappadocia, and Asia, and at the end he came to Rome and was crucified head downwards, for so he had demanded to suffer" (*Hist. eccl.* 3.3.1 [Lake]). Eusebius also writes, " Following them the Epistle of John called the first, and in the same way should be recognized the Epistle of Peter. In addition to these should be put, if it seem desirable, the Revelation of John, the arguments concerning which we will expound at the proper time. These belong to the Recognized Books. Of the Disputed Books which are nevertheless known to most are the Epistle called of James, that of Jude, the second Epistle of Peter, and the so-called second and third Epistles of John which may be the work of the evangelist or of some other with the same name." (*Hist. eccl.* 3.25.3 [Lake]). Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History: Books 1–5*, trans. Kirsopp Lake, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926).

[32] Green explains the main arguments against Peter's authorship of 2 Peter before outlining his case supporting the letter's authenticity. Gene L. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 144–50.

[33] Green, *Vox Petri*, 97.

[34] Eusebius writes, "'Mark became Peter's interpreter and wrote accurately all that he remembered, not, indeed, in order, of the things said or done by the Lord. For he had not heard the Lord, nor had he followed him, but later on, as I said, followed Peter, who used to give teaching as necessity demanded but not making, as it were, an arrangement of the Lord's oracles, so that Mark did nothing wrong in thus writing down single points as he remembered them. For to one thing he gave attention, to leave out nothing of what he had heard and to make no false statements in them.' This is related by Papias about Mark." (*Hist. eccl.* 3.39.15 [Lake]) Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*. Helen K. Bond, "Was Peter behind Mark's Gospel?" in *Peter in Early Christianity*, ed. Helen K. Bond and Larry W. Hurtado (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 46.

[35] Having outlined the critics' argument, Bond argues against their points to support the connection between Mark and Peter. Bond, "Was Peter behind Mark's Gospel?" 47–61.

Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon as Pauline.[36] Such acceptance removes barriers to scholarly analysis of these Pauline epistles.

While many scholars dismantle the critics' points and argue there is insufficient evidence to dismiss the traditional authorship positions of the Petrine Epistles or Mark's Gospel, debate persists, and arguments continue regarding the authenticity of Peter's association with biblical texts. The case for Peter as an authentic author is also muddied with apocryphal works such as the Gospel of Peter or the Apocalypse of Peter, with questions regarding their origin often overshadowing their content.[37]

The challenge by critical scholars on the authenticity of the Petrine Epistles results in less detailed studies of these letters. Any studies that are written need to argue for the legitimacy of their work.

Fourth Reason: F. C. Baur's Legacy

Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792–1860) proposed that there was significant conflict between Peter and Paul in the first century, representing a broad divide between Jewish and non-Jewish Christianity. While Cullmann explains that Baur's thesis "was almost universally rejected," other scholars describe that subsequent authors have followed Baur in characterizing the first-century church as divided between Jewish and Gentile Christians.[38] Hengel refers to

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[36] Walter A. Elwell and Robert W. Yarbrough, *Encountering the New Testament: A Historical and Theological Survey*, 3rd ed., Encountering Biblical Studies (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 239. Bowden shares a similar list. Andrew Bowden, *Desire in Paul's Undisputed Epistles: Semantic Observations on the Use of Epithymeō, Ho Epithymētēs, and Epithymía in Roman Imperial Texts* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2021), 347n1. Baur accepts only Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Romans as uncontested and he rejects Acts. F. C. Baur, *Paul, the Apostle of Jesus Christ: His Life and Work, His Epistles and His Doctrine*, ed. Eduard Zeller, trans. A. Menzies, 2nd ed. (London: Williams and Norgate, 1876), 1:246.

[37] Bockmuehl, *The Remembered Peter*, 78.

[38] Cullmann, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*, 74.

Baur several times when describing the continuing arguments that Peter was a Judaist, and Bockmuehl argues that Baur's legacy lives on in the debates about divided approaches to the gospel.[39] Wright contends that even though Baur has been discredited with ancient Jewish, Christian, and pagan evidence, "like a not-quite-exorcised ghost it [Baur's picture] still haunts the libraries and lecture-halls of New Testament scholarship."[40]

Pheme takes a different approach. While arguing that Baur's position does not consider all of the New Testament's evidence, she identifies that there was diversity, rather than conflict, in early Christianity.[41] A central point of Baur's argument about the tension between the apostles is the Antioch incident, where Paul criticizes Peter for his behavior with Gentiles (Gal 2:11–14).[42] This incident is the fifth reason for scholarship's decreased attention to Peter.

Fifth Reason: The Antioch Incident

When the nascent Galatian church was struggling with Judaizers, Paul explains that his authority comes from Christ alone rather than being appointed by humans (Gal 1:1, 12).[43] In outlining his authority, Paul mentions that he met with Peter for fifteen days in Jerusalem (Gal 1:18), and Paul's language emphasizes his independence from Peter.[44] Having established that authority, he openly criticizes Peter regarding the Antioch incident (Gal 2:11–14). Peter had

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[39] Hengel, *Saint Peter*, 42, 52, 69; Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, xv.

[40] N. T. Wright, *Paul and His Recent Interpreters: Some Contemporary Debates* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2015), 16.

[41] Perkins, *Peter*, 4.

[42] Baur, *Paul, the Apostle of Jesus Christ: His Life and Work, His Epistles and His Doctrine*, 1:128–29.

[43] A section in a later chapter discusses Judaizers.

[44] F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 97–99; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Galatians*, Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 107–8.

stopped eating with non-Jewish Christians when Jews were present. Paul's rebuke of Peter, coming so soon after he established that his authority comes from Christ, reinforces his authority. This criticism comes after Paul's explanation that his mission was to the uncircumcised while Peter's was to the circumcised (Gal 2:8–9). Peter's baptism of Cornelius (Acts 10:44–48) and defense of God cleansing non-Jews by their faith (Acts 15:7–11) appear to place Peter on a trajectory that is beyond a mission to the circumcised.[45]

Peter was no stranger to mistakes. One example is his rebuking of Jesus about suffering many things, which led to Jesus speaking against Satan (Matt 16:21–23; Mark 8:31–33). Peter also required a vision to educate him about food purity rules with Cornelius (Acts 10:9–16). However, in the Gospels and Acts, the authors present Peter's mistakes as teaching moments.[46] The lack of response about Peter's behavior in Antioch or to Paul's proposal to divide missionary activity between the uncircumcised (for Paul) and circumcised (for Peter), coupled with "Peter traveling to another place" in Acts 12:17, leaves the situation open to interpretation.

In his analysis of the Antioch incident, Dunn argues that the episode was so embarrassing that it caused the church fathers to reject the event at face value, with Clement of Alexandria suggesting that Cephas, in this context, was not Peter, or Origen arguing the dispute was a simulation.[47] Dunn's analysis focuses on the incident itself, concluding that Paul's rebuke of Peter was not immediately successful and that it shaped Paul's future, though Dunn did not

[45] There is debate regarding the chronological relationship between these three events (Antioch, Cornelius, and the Jerusalem Council). A subsequent chapter examines the impact of their relative timing on the analysis of Peter's ethno-religious preference.

[46] One of the pillars of this dissertation's argument is that Peter grew from his mistakes, and Chapter Four explores this further.

[47] James D. G. Dunn, "The Incident at Antioch (Gal 2:11–18)," *JSNT* 5.18 (1983): 3.

evaluate Peter's future.[48] Paul's rebuke of Peter's hypocrisy builds on Paul's description of Peter as an apostle to the Jews, and with the authority given to Paul's writings, that image persists.

The Unanswered Question: Did Peter Retain Ethno-Religious Preferences?

The reasons above work together to leave an essential question unanswered. Did Peter retain an ethno-religious preference for Jews, as Paul depicts in Galatians, until the end of his life, or did his mission extend from Jews to all after his revelatory vision prior to baptizing Cornelius, as depicted in Acts? There are varied interpretations of Paul's remarks about Peter in 1 Corinthians, capturing different opinions on their relationship.[49]

The lack of evidence about what Peter did after he "left to another place" in Acts 12 leads to a minimal understanding of Peter's activities after these times. However, if one accepts that Peter had significant influence over the content of the Petrine Epistles, one can assess these writings concerning Peter's residual ethno-religious preferences. These epistles were written decades after Paul wrote Galatians, during which time Peter had accumulated years of experience in the nascent church.

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[48] Dunn, "The Incident at Antioch," 38–39.

[49] Supporting that 1 Corinthians portrays a positive relationship between Paul and Peter, Bockmuehl argues that Paul speaks positively of Peter in his first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 1:12; 3:22–4:2; 9:5; 15:5), written less than five years after his Galatian epistle. Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, 29. He argues that Paul claims his preaching aligns with the other apostles (1 Cor. 15:11). Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, 144. Also, Gibson contrasts Paul's negative depiction of false teachers in Galatians (Gal 1:6–7) with Paul's positive presentation of Peter and Apollos, with them acting in unison and eliminating any divisions (1 Cor 1:12; 3:22). Arguing that 1 Corinthians shows there is conflict, Hengel blames the splitting of the Corinthian community, that Paul refers to, on the "Cephas party" (1 Cor 1:11–12). Hengel, *Saint Peter*, 66. Also, Elmer concludes his analysis of 1 Corinthians that "Paul is responding to a single group of opponents who saw themselves as acting under the authority of Peter, James and the original tradents of the Christian message in Jerusalem." Elmer, *Paul, Jerusalem and the Judaisers*, 175.

This Dissertation's Argument

Before evaluating what the Petrine Epistles show about Peter being an apostle to the Jews, some groundwork must be laid. This includes defining the term "Jew" and three foundational background themes.

Who Was a Jew?

Paul uses multiple Greek terms to describe Jews and non-Jews in Galatians. He refers to the Jews as "περιτομή" (the circumcised, Gal 2:7, 8, 9, 12) and "Ἰουδαῖος" (generally translated as Jew or Jews, Gal 2:13, 14, 15; 3:28). He refers to non-Jews as "ἀκροβυστία" (the uncircumcised, Gal 2:7) and "τὰ ἔθνη" (generally translated as the Gentiles, Gal 1:16; 2:2, 8, 9, 12, 14, 15; 3:8, 14).[50] The first observation is the dualistic nature of Jews and non-Jews. Together, they make up the human race; a person can be either a Jew or a non-Jew, not both.[51]

The term originates from the Hebrew יְהוּדִי (yəhûḏî), describing a member of the tribe of Judah. Judah (יְהוּדִי) translates as Ἰουδαία in the LXX, translated as Judea, hence Ἰουδαῖος meaning Judean. Judah's representation of land and people evolved with the change in Israel's circumstances.[52] Cohen argues that in literature until 2 Maccabees (which includes the Old Testament), Ἰουδαῖος (and יְהוּדִי) means Judean and is a function of the combination of birth and geography. After the Hasmonean revolt, Ἰουδαῖος evolved from a purely ethno-geographic term to include religious, cultural, or political overtones, coinciding with when people joined the

[50] There are more detailed studies of biblical words used for foreigners in later chapters.

[51] Shayne J. D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties*, S. Mark Taper Foundation Imprint in Jewish Studies (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 1.

[52] Keener identifies "Ἰουδαία" (Judea) as "the rest of the Jewish homeland inhabited by Jews" in Acts 1:8. Craig S. Keener, *Acts,* New Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 107.

group in various ways.[53] Cohen argues that this changes its usage from a "Judean" to a "Jew." In the Galatian context, Paul uses the religious meaning, which Cohen defines as "those, of whatever ethnic or geographic origins, who worship the God whose temple is in Jerusalem" and "in contrast with ethnic identity, religious … identities are mutable."[54] The Ἰουδαῖος that Paul refers to are a group defined by a combination of ethnic and religious factors. Thus, the binary distinction between a Jew and a non-Jew becomes ethno-religious.

Evidence That Supports Peter as "Apostle to the Jews"

Peter appears to change his approach to non-Jews at his baptism of Cornelius (Acts 10:44–48). Peter's behavior prior to this point included traits of his ethno-religious preference. The first trait is that Peter's mission in Acts was exclusively to Jews until this event.[55] The second trait was Peter's adherence to Jewish identity markers, such as following the food laws (Acts 10:14) and remaining separate from non-Jews (Acts 10:28).[56] Evidence of such traits in the Petrine Epistles would suggest that Peter still had an ethno-religious preference for the Jews.

Peter's writing using Jewish culture does not necessarily reveal an ethno-religious preference. Barth notes that a common culture is characteristic of an ethnic group but argues that it is "an implication or result, rather than a primary and definitional characteristic of ethnic group organization."[57] Cohen notes the struggle between the Jewish and Greek cultures during the

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[53] Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness*, 70–106.

[54] Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness*, 109–10.

[55] I explore Peter in the Acts account in Chapter Four.

[56] Cohen notes that "from the end of the second century BCE … Greek writers emphasize the Jews' refusal to mix with others or dine with them." Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness*, 135.

[57] Frederik Barth, "Introduction," in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*, ed. Frederik Barth, The Little, Brown Series in Anthropology (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969), 11.

Hasmonean period. With Judeans becoming Greeks and vice versa, the Judean culture became portable.[58] Greeks exhibiting traits of Jewish culture suggest an interest or ethno-religious preference. However, Peter's showing of Jewish cultural traits might be a legacy of his upbringing rather than a showing of ethno-religious preference. When Peter became a Christian, his belief system changed, but his formative years did not, and he retained his Jewish background and knowledge of the Old Testament.

This Dissertation's Thesis

This dissertation argues that the Petrine Epistles reveal a lack of Jewish ethno-religious preference in Peter's mission. Peter's vision prior to baptizing Cornelius suggests that Peter had retained an ethno-religious preference toward Jews until that point by continuing to follow the dietary laws (Acts 10:10–16) and accepting that the Law forbade associating with foreigners (Acts 10:28). Peter's experience with Cornelius suggests that any ethno-religious preference toward Jews began to change. While Peter's subsequent behavior in Acts appears to support this change (Acts 11:1–18; 15:7–11), some scholars argue that he continued to be an apostle to the Jews for the rest of his life. The lack of ethno-religious preferences that Peter exhibits in the Petrine Epistles suggests that his mission toward the end of his life was for both Jews and non-Jews.

Foundational Background Themes

Before examining the text of the Petrine Epistles to investigate this claim, one must clarify three foundational background themes to understand the context. The first theme essential to examining ethno-religious preference is understanding Second Temple Judaism's approach to

[58] Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness*, 134–35.

foreigners. The Torah prescribes treatment and acceptance of foreigners in various circumstances using different Hebrew words for "foreigner." Chapter Two examines the Old Testament's terminology for foreigners and examples of the Jews' approach to them. The chapter also explores other pertinent literature to understand more about Judaism's approach to foreigners in the first half of the first century CE. Likewise, the chapter assesses to what degree the occupation of Israel by foreigners, Hellenization, the Maccabean revolt, and the ongoing occupation by Rome may have influenced the mindset of ethnic Jews like Peter.

Second, Peter's upbringing might have influenced his approach. Being raised in Galilee in the fishing trade, Peter probably had minimal formal education and traveled little. He might have lived in a relatively closed, close-knit community that viewed non-Jews as outsiders and chose to remain separate from them because of their pagan practices. While it is impossible to determine specifics about Peter's approach to foreigners before he met Jesus, it is likely that he would not have experienced foreign culture to a large extent except for localized Hellenization and the influence of the Roman occupiers. This contrasts with Paul, who had already traveled significantly before his Damascus-road experience, having moved from Tarsus to Jerusalem. Paul's travels would have exposed him to other cultures, complementing his years of education.

Third, while the Bible does not describe how Peter changed after the Antioch incident, there are multiple examples in the Gospels and Acts where Peter makes mistakes but self-corrects after being confronted for his behavior.[59] These examples show that Peter had a propensity to learn from his mistakes and change his approach. These texts show that Peter was not set in his ways and was embracing the change that Jesus brought, as best his upbringing and experiences allowed.

[59] I examine the relative timing of the Antioch incident and events in Acts later.

Literature Review

As outlined above, the lack of scholarly attention on Peter contributes to the open question of whether Peter remained an apostle to the Jews until the end of his life. While the literature does not include a detailed discussion of any ethno-religious preference displayed in the Petrine Epistles, this section reviews a representative portion that examines Peter closely.

In July 2013, Edinburgh University's Centre for the Study of Christian Origins held a conference on Peter, with Hurtado and Bond publishing the proceedings. A trigger for the conference was the increase in scholarly works on Peter over the previous decade. The book's opening chapter is Hurtado's assessment of Protestant scholarship's treatment of the apostle Peter, and he identified the three Protestant scholars who had produced the most significant studies of the first-century fisherman turned apostle.[60]

Oscar Cullmann

The first Petrine scholar Hurtado acknowledges is Oscar Cullmann (1902–1999). While Cullmann was Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at the University of Basel, Switzerland, and Professor at the École des Hautes-Études, Sorbonne, Paris, France, he published his study *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr* in 1952 in German and French. A German second edition appeared in 1960, with its English translation in 1962.[61] Cullmann structures his book in two parts, with the first section examining the historical evidence of Peter as "disciple," "apostle," and "martyr," and the second section exegetically and theologically evaluating Matthew 16:17–19, the passage where Jesus tells Peter that he is the rock on which he will build

[60] Hurtado, "Peter in Protestant Scholarship," 1–15.

[61] Cullmann, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*, 8.

his church. This passage is central to the Roman Catholic Church's tradition of apostolic succession.

Finkel, who translated both the first and second editions into English, explains that the second edition includes updates around debated points and that "the book remains the most thorough and informative study of Peter by any Protestant scholar, and the fair-mindedness of the author makes his work a useful aid to scholarly ecumenical discussion."[62] Cullmann displays this fair-mindedness in his balanced approach to the evidence, accepting the biblical record concerning Peter in the Gospels, Acts, Galatians, and 1 Corinthians, though he appears skeptical about the genuineness of the Petrine Epistles.[63]

The questions that the book focuses on reveal the contemporary issues that Cullmann was addressing. The primary issue is the meaning of Matthew 16:17–19 with the associated debate about apostolic succession. A secondary related issue is whether Peter died in Rome. He argues that Peter's theology was close to Paul's, and Peter took a mediating position between Judaizers and Hellenists.[64] Cullmann argues that Peter's departure "to another place" in Acts 12:17 signals his switch from Jerusalem leadership to missionary activities, though the evidence is insufficient to identify Rome or Antioch as destinations.[65] After acknowledging that the sources provide

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[62] Cullmann, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*, 8.

[63] In Cullmann's evaluation of sources to explore Peter's theology, he writes, "In view of the natures of the sources it would be a rash undertaking to try to present a 'theology' of the apostle Peter. Even if one holds that the First Epistle of Peter was written by the apostle himself, the basis for this undertaking is too small." Cullmann, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*, 66. Regarding 2 Peter, Cullmann writes, "This writing, however, like the later apocryphal Petrine literature, does not call for primary consideration here. This is because, in the judgment of the great majority of scholars, it is the latest document included in the New Testament." Cullmann, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*, 84. While Cullmann references the Petrine Epistles in his arguments, his index indicates they are few compared to other biblical books. Cullmann, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*, 248–52.

[64] Cullmann, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*, 66.

[65] Cullmann, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*, 38–42.

scant information about Peter's missionary activity, Cullmann concludes that Peter, having left Jerusalem, led the "Jewish Christian mission."[66] In the context of missionary activity, Cullmann's only reference to the Petrine Epistles is that the introduction to his first epistle (1 Pet 1:1) suggests Peter had visited Asia Minor on mission.[67]

Hurtado observes that Cullmann wrote during Europe's recovery from World War II and the beginnings of the Cold War and that Cullmann's concern was to promote church unity while accepting diversity. Hurtado argues that this influenced Cullmann's work to present Peter as a bridge between different versions of Christianity to help Protestants and Roman Catholics come together.[68] The pressing issues of Cullmann's day and his skepticism about Peter's involvement in the Petrine Epistles meant that he did not evaluate what the Petrine Epistles reveal about Peter's ethno-religious preference.

Martin Hengel

The second Petrine scholar Hurtado acknowledges is Martin Hengel (1926–2009). Hengel was Professor of New Testament and Early Judaism at the University of Tübingen, Germany, and published his study *Saint Peter: The Underestimated Apostle* in German in 2006, with the English translation published in 2009, shortly after his passing. While the book is in two sections, the first section, "Peter the Rock, Paul, and the Gospel Tradition," is the majority of the book and is relevant to the current study.[69]

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[66] Cullmann concludes his section on The Mission in the Service of the Jewish Christian Primitive Church that, after handing over Jerusalem leadership to James, "*[Peter] stands at the head of the Jewish Christian mission.*" (emphasis original), Cullmann, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*, 57.

[67] Cullmann, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*, 54.

[68] Hurtado, "Peter in Protestant Scholarship," 7.

[69] Hengel, *Saint Peter*. The first section is from pp. 1–102. A second section, titled "The Family of Peter and Other Apostolic Families," is from pp. 103–34.

Hengel starts his book by evaluating the importance placed on Peter as a founder of the church. He stresses that Protestant scholarship has underestimated Peter's theology while remaining adamant that Peter did not establish a papal office.[70] In this regard, Hengel demonstrated he was willing to take his research into Dunn's earlier-mentioned "boundary areas" that cause scholarship to hesitate.

While acknowledging the lack of source material regarding Peter, Hengel identifies a basic theological agreement between Paul and Peter, per Cullmann.[71] In contrast to Cullmann, he devotes a significant part of his book to discussing Peter's conflict with Paul.[72] He concludes that "[Peter] forced his way into the Gentile Christian mission territory of Paul" while accusing Luke of failing to write more about Peter's mission trips, about which he would have known.[73] Hengel dismisses the Petrine Epistles as being from Peter.[74]

Even though Hengel dismisses Petrine authorship of his epistles, he cites them a few times. One instance is in his discussion about Peter's activity outside Judea. Regarding the addressees of Peter's first epistle (1 Pet 1:1), Hengel suggests there is an "assumption that the pseudepigraphic apostolic author carried authority in these regions."[75] Hengel's comment suggests that he sees value in the Petrine Epistles in learning about Peter, even though he rejects Petrine authorship. However, his comments about the Petrine Epistles are minimal. Interestingly,

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[70] Hengel, *Saint Peter*, 36, 99.

[71] Hengel, *Saint Peter*, 83. Cullmann, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*, 66.

[72] Hengel, *Saint Peter*, 48–79.

[73] Hengel, *Saint Peter*, 78–79.

[74] In concluding his discussion about Peter's theology, Hengel comments that Peter has not "left us a single sentence that he himself wrote." Hengel, *Saint Peter*, 79.

[75] Hengel, *Saint Peter*, 49.

Hengel asks whether Paul and Peter reconciled and suggests it is possible. While the evidence for this position is weak, and he disputes the authenticity of most of the sources, Hengel looks at the evidence diachronically, recognizing that their time in Rome (early- to mid-60s) was more than a decade after the Jerusalem Council and the Antioch incident.[76] After lamenting that there is almost total darkness about the last sixteen years of Peter's life, Hengel suggests that "We must … assume that the deep and consequential, also very personal, conflict with Paul, in AD 52/53, was a decisive experience for his later activities."[77] In a similar vein to that comment, Chapter Four of this dissertation argues that the biblical evidence in the Gospels and Acts illustrates Peter's propensity to grow from his mistakes, while Chapter Five examines what the Petrine Epistles reveal about any ethno-religious preference.

Marcus Bockmuehl

The third prominent Petrine scholar that Hurtado identifies is Marcus Bockmuehl (1961–). Bockmuehl is Dean Ireland's Professor of the Exegesis of Holy Scripture at the University of Oxford. Bond and Hurtado identified him as "the undisputed guest of honor" at their Edinburgh conference, with most other contributors interacting with Bockmuehl's two recent publications on Peter.[78] The two publications are *The Remembered Peter in Ancient Reception and Modern Debate* (2010) and *Simon Peter in Scripture and Memory* (2012).

Bockmuehl describes his earlier volume as a collection of his "studies on the profile and reception of Simon Peter in second-century Christian memory."[79] The latter volume builds on

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[76] Hengel, *Saint Peter*, 96–97.

[77] Hengel, *Saint Peter*, 96.

[78] Helen K. Bond and Larry W. Hurtado, eds., *Peter in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), xvi.

[79] Bockmuehl, *The Remembered Peter*, v.

this and "also attends more directly and systematically to the New Testament evidence itself."[80] These works arguably present the most comprehensive list of extrabiblical ancient writings relevant to Peter.[81]

Extrabiblical writings and their analysis provide valuable material to complement biblical insight into Peter's background. Also, Bockmuehl's earlier volume's second chapter surveys recent studies by Sanders, Crossan, Wright, and Dunn's studies of Jesus and Paul to assess their portrayal of Peter, though he concludes the results are "somewhat disappointing."[82] The latter volume's examination of the New Testament evidence includes many pages discussing the Gospels and Acts and two case studies discussing the evidence around Peter's birthplace and his becoming a disciple.[83] However, there is less examination of the Petrine Epistles. Bockmuehl sets the tone early when summarizing that the majority of scholars reject their authenticity, though he suggests that, even if Peter's pen did not write them, one can still use them to provide insight into Peter.[84] However, Bockmuehl's five-page discussion of 1 Peter focuses on its authenticity and usefulness and does not touch on what it might suggest about Peter's ethno-religious preference.[85] His three-page discussion of 2 Peter dismisses its value.[86]

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[80] Bockmuehl, *The Remembered Peter*, vi.

[81] Bockmuehl, *The Remembered Peter*, 249–57; Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, 209–13. Regarding these two books, Hurtado writes, "a substantial part of both of his books is devoted to examining the representations of Peter in an impressive list of ancient Christian writings." Hurtado, "Peter in Protestant Scholarship," 13.

[82] Bockmuehl, *The Remembered Peter*, 31–60.

[83] Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, 57–88, 111–26, 131–41, 151–76.

[84] Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, 4, 30–32.

[85] Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, 126–31.

[86] Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, 89–91.

Hurtado questions the result of Bockmuehl's reconstruction of the second-century memory of Peter and its contribution to the historical view of Peter.[87] In his latter work, when commenting that second-century images present Peter in often contradictory ways, Bockmuehl touches on the essential dichotomy of whether Peter was "an observant Jew or a pioneer missionary." However, he concludes that the second-century memory places Peter as a bridge between Paul and Jerusalem.[88] Bockmuehl's introductory statement about the controversy that Protestants attract when arguing for the historicity of Matthew 16:17–19 indicates one of his main themes.[89] That theme continues in his concluding observations, which argue for Petrine succession without authority or institution and challenge the implementation by the Roman Catholic Church.[90] Coupled with his rejection of the Petrine Epistles' authenticity, Bockmuehl provides little that directly impacts this dissertation's arguments, while his material is invaluable in establishing background from ancient sources.

Pheme Perkins

While Hurtado focused on the three Protestant scholars that were most prominent in his opinion, he mentioned the Roman Catholic scholar Pheme Perkins (1945–). Perkins is a Professor of Theology at Boston College, and her book *Peter: Apostle for the Whole Church* was first published in 1994.[91]

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[87] Hurtado, "Peter in Protestant Scholarship," 13.

[88] Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, 37, 150.

[89] Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, xiii.

[90] Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, 182–83.

[91] Perkins, *Peter*, iv.

Pheme supports her titular argument that Peter is for the whole church. She acknowledges that "the sharp dichotomy between Petrine and Pauline Christianity was a staple element in much Protestant Church history in the nineteenth century," and she identifies Cullmann's book (as discussed above) as a foundation for discussion between Protestants and Roman Catholics.[92] She argues that the church's diversity, not conflict, in the first century should be the example that today's church follows, and the Petrine ministry is the model.[93]

Pheme's argument includes the point that Peter had to "learn on the job" in contrast to Paul. This dissertation explores this concept in Chapter Four. However, her description of this learning stops at the "Cornelius episode" in Acts 10.[94] Pheme is clear in her rejection of the Petrine Epistles' authenticity, grouping them with the Petrine pseudepigrapha while arguably giving them less attention than the other works in this category.[95]

Karen H. Jobes

All four above scholars acknowledged by Hurtado deny the authenticity of the Petrine Epistles. The two chapters in Hurtado's book that examine the Petrine Epistles hold similar positions.[96] Perhaps Hurtado's assessment of Petrine scholarship was limited to those who deny

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[92] Perkins, *Peter*, 4.

[93] Perkins, *Peter*, 184–85.

[94] Perkins, *Peter*, 186.

[95] Perkins, *Peter*, 120–26, 132–47.

[96] In Bond and Hurtado's book, Adams and Novenson each wrote a chapter on the Petrine Epistles. In his chapter discussing the tradition of Peter's literacy, Adams argues that the early acceptance of Peter as the author of 1 Peter led to Peter's later depiction as literate, in contrast to Acts. While Adams is careful to avoid stating his authorship position, his argument places Petrine authorship of 1 Peter as a contradiction of the Peter depicted in Acts. Sean A. Adams, "The Tradition of Peter's Literacy," in *Peter in Early Christianity*, ed. Helen K. Bond and Larry W. Hurtado (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 130–45. In the following chapter, Novenson describes six of Paul's letters as "pseudo-Pauline" before grouping 1 and 2 Peter with the *Epistle of Peter to James* and the *Epistle of Peter to Philip* as four pseudonymous letters. Matthew V. Novenson, "Why Are There Some Petrine Epistles Rather

the authenticity of the Petrine Epistles. Therefore, this literature review turns to scholars who accept the authenticity of the Petrine Epistles. The first of those is Karen H. Jobes (1952–). Jobes is Professor Emerita of New Testament Greek and Exegesis at Wheaton College and wrote the volume on 1 Peter in the Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament series. Her first edition was published in 2005, with an updated second edition in 2022. Jobes explains that the three distinctive contributions from her commentary are (1) maintaining that the letter's Christian audience had been converted elsewhere before being displaced to Asia Minor, (2) utilizing the context of the Septuagint that Peter quotes, and (3) arguing that the Greek of the letter suggests the author was Semitic-speaking with Greek as a second language, consistent with Peter.[97]

In her evaluation of the letter's authenticity, Jobes identifies fourteen prominent interpreters who identify the author as pseudonymous and twenty-eight who argue that Peter wrote the letter with an amanuensis.[98] The scholarly divide is accentuated by Jobes not referencing Cullman, Hengel, Bockmuehl, or Hurtado anywhere in her book.[99]

Before her thorough exegesis of the text, Jobes's sixty-one-page introduction explores the context and notes explicitly that Peter frames his letter with the metaphorical allusion to foreignness for the Christian life and argues that Peter's experiences likely triggered such a metaphor.[100] However, Jobes does not discuss in detail what the letter illustrates about Peter's ethno-religious preference.

Than None?" in *Peter in Early Christianity*, ed. Helen K. Bond and Larry W. Hurtado (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 146–57.

[97] Jobes, *1 Peter*, xi–xiv.

[98] Jobes, *1 Peter*, 19.

[99] These names do not appear in the book's Index of Authors. Jobes, *1 Peter*, 359–62.

[100] Jobes, *1 Peter*, 40.

In her book *Letters to the Church: A Survey of Hebrews and the General Epistles*, Jobes examines the evidence regarding the authenticity of 2 Peter and concludes that its authorship debate is unlikely to be settled.[101] However, she posits that this uncertainty does not impede its message, and her analysis describes Peter as the author and offers insight into the apostle.[102] In that analysis, Jobes does not evaluate what 2 Peter says about the evolution of his ethno-religious preference.

Gene L. Green

Dean of Trinity International University in Miami and Professor Emeritus of New Testament at Wheaton College, Gene L. Green (1951–), likewise affirms Petrine authorship of 1 and 2 Peter. In his 2008 commentary on 2 Peter in the Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament series, he concludes his eleven-page discussion about the letter's authorship with an argument that the weight of opinion against authenticity should not outweigh the argument's weaknesses and that "we may reasonably affirm that Simeon Peter, the apostle, authored the book."[103]

Green examines Peter's theology in his 2020 publication of *Vox Petri*. His citing all of the authors mentioned above multiple times suggests thorough research. He dismantles the arguments against Petrine authorship of 1 Peter, which he identifies as (1) it is too Pauline, (2) it lacks the Gospel tradition one would expect from an apostle, (3) the persecution it describes fits the post-apostolic era, and (4) the Greek is too good. He concludes that "1 Peter is an authentic

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[101] Karen H. Jobes, *Letters to the Church: A Survey of Hebrews and the General Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 444.

[102] Jobes, *Letters to the Church*, 428–74.

[103] Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 139–50.

letter of the apostle Peter" and "we … accept 1 Peter as a representative of Peter's theology."[104] However, regarding 2 Peter, Green writes, "Although my assessment of the authenticity of 2 Peter leans towards the acceptance of the letter as a work traceable to the apostle, this study will leave the book to one side given the depth of the controversy surrounding its authenticity."[105] It appears that Green felt it was necessary to exclude 2 Peter from his work to gain scholarly acceptance, and the positive reviews on the book's back cover affirm that acceptance, including statements from Bockmuehl and Adams, who are discussed above as challengers to the authenticity of the Petrine Epistles. Also, Green does not examine whether the Petrine Epistles provide evidence for Peter's ethno-religious preference.

Thomas R. Schreiner

A third prominent scholar who affirms the authenticity of the Petrine Epistles is Thomas R. Schreiner (1954–), the Professor of New Testament Interpretation and Biblical Theology at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. Schreiner wrote a commentary on *1 & 2 Peter and Jude* in the Christian Standard Commentary Series in 2020, updating his 2003 commentary published as part of the New American Commentary series. Schreiner argues for the authenticity of 1 Peter, dismissing the arguments against it as insufficient. Schreiner identifies that the challenges to Petrine authorship include the quality of the Greek, the use of the LXX for Old Testament quotations, the similarity to Paul's theology, the role of Silvanus, the persecution fitting a time after Peter's death, and the lack of references

[104] Green, *Vox Petri*, 77–93.

[105] Green, *Vox Petri*, 97.

to the historical Jesus. In contrast, Schreiner notes that the letter claims Petrine authorship and the early church accepted this, though he does not dismiss the use of an amanuensis.[106]

Regarding 2 Peter, Schreiner acknowledges that it is the letter whose authenticity is most likely to be questioned but he rejects the arguments for pseudonymity and Bauckham's testament thesis. Schreiner argues that the letter's Hellenistic language does not exclude Peter as the author, and he challenges several arguments against Petrine authorship that date the letter after Peter's life (dependency on Jude, the nature of the opponents, the suggestion of a Pauline corpus, commonality with later literature, and the lack of external attestation in the second century CE).[107] However, Schreiner does not analyze what either epistle might reveal about Peter's ethno-religious preferences.

Larry R. Helyer

Larry R. Helyer is Professor Emeritus of Biblical Studies at Taylor University and wrote *The Life and Witness of Peter* in 2012. His book systematically examines the extant evidence of Peter's life, accepting the Petrine Epistles as genuine.[108] He adopts a chronological approach, comparing such a method to that of Brown, Donfried, and Reumann in 1973, but emphasizes that he differs in accepting the historical reliability of the biblical text.[109] While Helyer structures his writing chronologically, his chapters on 1 and 2 Peter do not discuss the impact of time on Peter's attitudes, including his approach to foreigners.

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[106] Thomas R. Schreiner, *1 & 2 Peter and Jude*, CSC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2020), 6–18.

[107] Schreiner, *1&2 Peter and Jude*, 299–323.

[108] Larry R. Helyer, *The Life and Witness of Peter* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 14, 113, 205.

[109] Raymond E. Brown, Karl P. Donfried, and John Reumann, eds., *Peter in the New Testament: A Collaborative Assessment by Protestant and Roman Catholic Scholars* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1973); Helyer, *Life and Witness*, 16, 16n12.

Conclusion

The review highlights the stark divide within Petrine scholarship between those who accept the authenticity of the Petrine Epistles and those who do not. While it was highlighted that Jobes did not reference Cullman, Hengel, Bockmuehl, or Hurtado, one must note that Hurtado does not mention Green or Schreiner at all and includes only singular footnote references to Helyer and Jobes.[110]

The review confirms the reasons for the lack of scholarship presented earlier and indicates that much of the limited scholarship focuses on the implications of Matthew 16:17–19 regarding Peter's succession. With many of the few Petrine scholars rejecting the authenticity of the Petrine Epistles, the lack of attention to Peter's ethno-religious preference toward the end of his life is not unexpected. The following section describes this dissertation's method of arguing its thesis.

This Dissertation's Method

It is essential for this dissertation to outline its methodology as its thesis centers on two biblical letters whose authenticity is rejected by much of scholarship. It is equally important to outline any assumptions the dissertation uses to argue its points. First, the dissertation uses a biblical-theological approach to the biblical texts, accepting the received texts as accurate and inerrant depictions of their inspired authors' intents.[111] Presuppositions are inevitable, and while I

[110] Bond and Hurtado, *Peter in Early Christianity*, 341–48.

[111] For a discussion of various conceptions of inerrancy, see Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 191–93. "Full inerrancy" is the position closest to the one I take. Context and authorial intent remain essential to proper interpretation.

attempt to examine the evidence objectively, the impact of presupposition cannot be zero.[112] The literature review above identifies the divide in acceptance of the authenticity of the Petrine Epistles. I argue that, even if the letters were written by an amanuensis or are pseudepigraphical, they likely still represent Peter's mindset.

Second, since "Context is the number one factor in determining meaning," one must understand the author's context to understand authorial intent. Extrabiblical literature is valuable for understanding biblical authors' ancient historical, literary, and theological contexts.[113]

Third, one must consider the passage of time when examining the evidence. While a diachronic approach usually applies to understanding the temporal aspect of language development and the change of a word's meaning over time, Osborne also uses the term in the context of historical background.[114] One must take a diachronic approach to examine the evolution of Peter's approach to foreigners.[115] As there is uncertainty about the timeline of biblical events and books' authorship dates, one must assess the evidence for different timelines and the relative impact of these differences on the thesis.[116] However, the central point is that

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[112] G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 1–3.

[113] Richard Alan Fuhr Jr. and Andreas J. Köstenberger, *Inductive Bible Study: Observation, Interpretation, and Application Through the Lenses of History, Literature, and Theology* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2016), 180. See also Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 37–56.

[114] Osborne identifies the necessity of a diachronic approach with both grammar and historical context. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 64–65, 158.

[115] While Carson does not include it in his chapter on Presuppositional and Historical Fallacies, I propose that the exegetical fallacy of treating all of the New Testament as occurring at the same time aligns with his intent. D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1996), 125–36. Peter's conversion, his Pentecost sermon, his baptism of Cornelius, the Antioch incident, the Jerusalem Council, and his epistle writing occurred over a span of thirty years. One must consider pertinent changes to context during that time.

[116] Stein provides an exemplary example of presenting the evidence for biblical timelines and selecting the most likely option. See Robert H. Stein, *Jesus the Messiah: A Survey of the Life of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009).

there was a passage of time between Peter baptizing Cornelius (Acts 10:44–48), Paul writing about Peter's commission to the circumcised and his behavior at Antioch (Gal 2:7–14), Peter's participation in the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:7–9), Paul's mention of Peter in 1 Corinthians (1 Cor 1:12; 3:22; 9:5; 15:5), and when Peter wrote his letters.[117] Peter's ability to learn through his experiences, as evidenced in the Gospels and Acts, bodes well for the thesis that between the Antioch incident (Gal 2:11–14) and writing his epistles, Peter would have self-corrected any hint of ethno-religious favoritism.

Having established the context and appreciated the diachronic perspective, an examination of the text of the Petrine Epistles reveals Peter's approach to foreigners, leaving the ethno-religious preference depicted in Acts and potentially alluded to in Galatians as a distant, twenty-year-old memory. This examination evaluates how Peter addresses his recipients, how he cites the Old Testament, uses Jewish motifs, the themes he uses, and potential parallels with other New Testament letters.

While it uses a biblical theology approach, this dissertation seeks to improve the understanding of a non-divine human, the apostle Peter. One might view it as part of a quest to discover the historical Peter rather than understand more about the divine. However, the biblical text remains primary, and increasing the understanding of Peter will improve one's interpretation of the Petrine Epistles as per Osborne's hermeneutical spiral. Osborne explains that the biblical text sets the agenda, and increasing one's understanding of the historical-cultural background reshapes the interpreter's preunderstanding.[118]

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[117] Subsequent chapters discuss the timing of these events.

[118] Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 417–18.

This dissertation presents its argument in four steps. The first step of the argument is understanding Second Temple Judaism's approach to foreigners when Peter grew up (Chapter Two). This chapter includes the study of the Old Testament, Second Temple, and rabbinic literature. This approach probably influenced Peter during his upbringing, and Chapter Three examines the man whom Jesus called to be his lead disciple. Chapter Four explores Peter's changing behavior in the Gospels and Acts, identifying his hastiness and propensity to make mistakes as well as his strength in learning. This chapter also examines what Paul wrote about Peter. Chapter Five examines Peter's epistles and what they demonstrate about Peter's ethno-religious preference and uses that information to compare with the Peter who baptized Cornelius. The dissertation shows that the Petrine Epistles reveal that Peter did not have an ethno-religious preference toward Jews and, at the end of his life, was an apostle for all.

CHAPTER TWO: SECOND TEMPLE JUDAISM'S APPROACH TO FOREIGNERS

This chapter explores Judaism's approach to foreigners during Peter's upbringing.[1] It achieves this with four sections. The first is an outline of the chapter's purpose and method. The second section is a study of the various terminologies used in the Hebrew Bible for foreigners, followed in the third section with a discussion of the approach to foreigners that the Hebrew Bible presents. The fourth section reviews significant groups of early Jewish literature in the Second Temple period to identify the approaches to foreigners.[2] The examination identifies different approaches to non-Israelites. These approaches vary with geography and different groups.

Purpose and Method

This introductory section identifies the need for the chapter's investigation and outlines the method. The need is identified by noting the Greek words used in Peter's biblical context to describe Jews and non-Jews. The New Testament authors were influenced by previous literature, such as the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple literature. Therefore, one examines similar terms in the previous literature to help understand the New Testament authors' intent when using such Greek terms.

[1] As this chapter's analysis highlights, the English word "foreigner" fails to capture the ancient contexts. There are also issues with the term "Gentile," including its meaning evolving from non-Jewish to non-Christian. For simplicity, "foreigner" is used in a broad sense, with the original language used when a specific reference is required.

[2] Peter grew up during the first half of the first century CE. This was during the Second Temple period which spans from 538 BCE, when those returning from the Babylonian exile started to build the Second Temple, to the Temple's destruction by Rome in 70 CE.

Foreigners in Peter's Context

The first step is to define what is meant by "foreigner." Luke describes Cornelius, the Roman centurion, as "a devout man who feared God" (εὐσεβὴς καὶ φοβούμενος τὸν θεὸν, Acts 10:2, CSB).[3] Later in the same chapter, the text of Acts 10:28 describes Cornelius as a "foreigner" (ἀλλοφύλῳ). Other terms used for foreigners in contexts related to Peter include people "in every nation" (ἐν παντὶ ἔθνει, Acts 10:35), "the Gentiles" (τὰ ἔθνη, Acts 10:45; 11:1; Gal 2:9, 14), "no one except the Jews" (μηδενὶ … εἰ μὴ μόνον Ἰουδαίοις, Acts 11:19), and "Greeks" (Ἑλληνιστὰς, Acts 11:20). In his first epistle, Peter uses "Gentile" twice (τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, 1 Pet 2:12 and τῶν ἐθνῶν, 1 Pet 4:3), though Jobes explains that Peter joins Paul in following Jewish thought and using ἔθνη to describe those outside the Christian community of faith.[4] McLaren explains that "Gentile" generally refers to outsiders, though no group would identify itself as Gentiles.[5]

The examples above demonstrate the use of various terms that associate foreigners with "outsiders." However, the variety of words suggests that understanding what constituted being "a foreigner" was neither straightforward nor definitive. Moreover, these texts were written after Peter's formative years. The beginning of the first century CE was during the Second Temple period. This period spans from 538 BCE, when those returning from the Babylonian exile started to build the Second Temple, to its subsequent destruction by Rome in 70 CE.

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[3] Unless otherwise stated, citations of biblical Greek texts are from NA28, Barbara Aland et al., *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012).

[4] Jobes, *1 Peter*, 169.

[5] James S. McLaren, "Introduction," in *Attitudes to Gentiles in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. David C. Sim and James S. McLaren, LNTS 499 (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 2.

Tracing Approaches to Foreigners from the Torah Through to Rabbinic Sources

In order to understand Judaism's approaches to foreigners at the beginning of the first century CE, this chapter seeks to trace those approaches in literature chronologically from the Torah through to rabbinic writings. Uncertainty about the texts' dates makes a strict chronological examination impossible. However, the study aims to understand the overall situation in the first-century, so precise sequencing is not essential. Scholars also examine these texts in specific groupings (e.g., the Apocrypha), and it is convenient to maintain such groupings. The sequencing presented in this chapter is based on the sequence presented by scholars.[6]

However, to examine the texts, one must understand the terminology. The brief survey above of terms used in Peter's New-Testament context suggests that Judaism did not have a single concept of a "foreigner." Hence, this chapter begins by examining the different terms used for foreigners in the Hebrew Bible and the differences in their meanings.

Terminology for Foreigners in the Hebrew Bible

Merriam-Webster defines a "foreigner" as someone associated with a foreign country or someone not native to a place or community and suggests "stranger" as a synonym. It explains "foreign" as belonging to another place or country or being alien in character.[7] However, the Hebrew Bible uses different words to describe foreigners according to their "otherness" or "non-belongingness."[8] It is wise to heed Hays' advice regarding the perils of applying "cultural pre-

[6] Examples of scholarly works that examine Judaism's approach to Gentiles at this time include the following: Terence L. Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles: Jewish Patterns of Universalism (to 135 CE)* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008); David C. Sim and James S. McLaren, eds., *Attitudes to Gentiles in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013); Christine E. Hayes, *Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities: Intermarriage and Conversion from the Bible to the Talmud* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[7] *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed. (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2003), s.vv. "foreigner," "foreign."

[8] Christopher T. Begg, "Foreigner," in *ABD*, ed. David Noel Freedman et al. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 829. Minard discusses the Old Testament words used for Gentiles, and that list is the basis of the choice of

understanding" into the interpretive process and fitting the Bible into "our particular ethnocentric cultural outlook."[9]

In summary, the examination below reveals multiple Hebrew words for foreigners. The meaning of these words ranges from גֵּר (*gēr*), which has a positive connotation for someone interested in Israel's God, to נָכְרִי (*nokrî*), which has a negative connotation and describes non-Israelites who are outside of God's covenant.

Frequently Used Words for Foreigners

The most frequently-occurring words with suggestions of foreignness are the nouns עַם (*ʿam*) and גּוֹי (*gôy*).[10] These words mean "nation" or "people"—usually a group with a common ancestry or sociopolitical identity. The singular forms often refer to Israel (e.g., Josh 5:8 and Exod 8:8), and the plural to either all nations, including Israel (e.g., Exod 34:10), or the non-Israelites (e.g., Lev 20:26). In later Hebrew, the meaning of גּוֹי (*gôy*) became associated with Gentiles.[11] A word with a similar meaning—generally used poetically—is לְאֹם (*lĕʾōm*).[12]

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words in this section. Matthew Minard, "Gentiles," in *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, ed. Douglas Mangum et al., Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014), n.p.

[9] J. Daniel Hays, *From Every People and Nation: A Biblical Theology of Race*, NSBT 14 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 25.

[10] עַם (*ʿam*) occurs 1865 times and גּוֹי (*gôy*) occurs 554 times in the Hebrew Bible. These and subsequent word frequency statistics come from the Bible Word Study application in Logos Bible Study, version 28.3.44. However, von Soden and Lipiński state that עַם (*ʿam*) appears more than 1950 times in the Hebrew Old Testament. The precision of these statistics is not essential to the current analysis, so such discrepancies are not investigated further. Wolfram von Soden and Edward Lipiński, "עַם," in *TDOT*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 163–77.

[11] BDB, s.v. "גּוֹי."

[12] Minard, "Gentiles," n.p. לְאֹם (*lĕʾōm*) occurs 31 times in the Hebrew Bible.

However, only Israel developed the concept of a "nation" in the ancient Near East, with other people groups characterizing membership by common geographical origin or social group.[13]

The next most frequently used word associated with foreigners is the adjective נָכְרִי (*nokrî*) and the associated noun נֵכָר (*nēkār*).[14] These words describe non-Israelite people outside of God's covenant (e.g., 1 Kgs 8:41) or gods other than the God of Israel (e.g., Josh 24:23), often with an underlying negative connotation.[15] These words are closest to the English "foreign" and came to be associated with Gentiles in later Hebrew.[16] The next word is the adjective זָר (*zār*).[17] While this can have a sense of foreignness (e.g., Isa 1:7), the sense is often more of a stranger (e.g., Deut 25:5) or an unauthorized person (e.g., Num 3:4). The adjective עָרֵל (*ʿārēl*) literally describes someone who has a foreskin or is uncircumcised (e.g., Exod 12:48), though it might be used figuratively to describe the unclean (e.g., Ezek 44:7).[18]

The Sojourner

Arguably, the most interesting word that is used to describe foreigners is the noun גֵּר (*gēr*).[19] The verb גור (*gûr*) has a similar meaning.[20] It describes Abraham (Gen 15:13; 23:4) and Moses's son Gershom (Exod 2:22; 18:3). While English translations use words such as alien,

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[13] Wolfram von Soden, *The Ancient Orient: An Introduction to the Study of the Ancient Near East*, trans. Donald G. Schley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 14.

[14] נָכְרִי (*nokrî*) occurs 45 times and נֵכָר (*nēkār*) occurs 36 times in the Hebrew Bible.

[15] Minard, "Gentiles," n.p.

[16] BDB, s.v. "נָכְרִי."

[17] Minard, "Gentiles," n.p. זָר (*zār*) occurs 70 times in the Hebrew Bible.

[18] Minard, "Gentiles," n.p. BDB, s.v. "עָרֵל." עָרֵל (*ʿārēl*) occurs 32 times in the Hebrew Bible.

[19] גֵּר (*gēr*) occurs 92 times in the Hebrew Bible.

[20] גור (*gûr*) occurs 77 times in the Hebrew Bible.

stranger, sojourner, immigrant, or proselyte, the word implies a particular class of someone from a foreign land that is either passing through or seeking to join Israel (e.g., Exod 12:48). The word has a positive sense, as exhibited when the Lord instructed the Israelites to treat the גֵּר (*gēr*) well because they had been גֵּרִים (*gêrîm*) in Egypt (Exod 23:9).[21] How to translate the word into English remains a challenge. Van Houten affirmed the NRSV translators who changed its rendering from "stranger" or "sojourner" to "alien," though her use of "alien" and "strangers" in the title of her two-hundred-page book on the topic indicates the word's complexity. Spina writes about the Israelites being גֵּר (*gēr*), in contrast to Hayes, who discusses the non-Israelite גֵּר (*gēr*) and is content with the translation "resident alien."[22] Olyan recognizes the translation challenges, avoiding "resident alien" in preference for "outsider."[23] In order to avoid mistranslation of this complex word, it is wise to use the Hebrew word's transliteration.[24]

Often used with גֵּר (*gēr*) is the noun תּוֹשָׁב (*tôšāb*), which is a derivate of יָשַׁב (*yāšab*), which means "to dwell or remain."[25] The use of תּוֹשָׁב (*tôšāb*) could emphasize the temporary or dependent nature of habitation.[26] The ordinance of the Passover (Exod 12:42–51) establishes different rules for the *nokrî*, the *gēr,* the *tôšāb*, and the *ʿārēl*, indicating differentiation between

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[21] Minard, "Gentiles," n.p. BDB, s.v. "גֵּר."

[22] Frank Anthony Spina, "Israelites as Gērîm, 'Sojourners,' in Social and Historical Context," in *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. Carol L. Meyers and M. O'Connor, American Schools of Oriental Research Special Volume Series 1 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 321–22; Hayes, *Gentile Impurities*, 21n9.

[23] Saul M. Olyan, *Rites and Rank: Hierarchy in Biblical Representations of Cult* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 68.

[24] This dissertation will revert to primarily using transliterations alone after this section which introduces each Hebrew word. Houston uses a similar argument. Fleur S. Houston, *You Shall Love the Stranger As Yourself: The Bible, Refugees and Asylum* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2015), 70.

[25] Minard, "Gentiles," n.p. תּוֹשָׁב (*tôšāb*) occurs 14 times in the Hebrew Bible, and 10 of those with גֵּר (*gēr*).

[26] BDB s.v. "תּוֹשָׁב."

these terms. In this passage, the Lord decrees that neither נֵכָר (*nēkār*) nor תּוֹשָׁב (*tôšāb*) nor עָרֵל (*ʿārēl*) may eat the Passover (Exod 12:43, 45, 48). However, a גֵּר (*gēr*) may participate after circumcision, resulting in him becoming a native of the land (Exod 12:48). The table below illustrates the strategies used in different translations of this passage and the struggle of English to portray the differences in the Hebrew terms.

Table 1. Translations of *nēkār*, *tôšāb*, and *gēr* in Exodus 12:43–48

Verse	Word	ESV	NIV	NASB	CSB	KJV
43	נֵכָר (*nēkār*)	foreigner	foreigner	foreigner	foreigner	stranger
45	תּוֹשָׁב (*tôšāb*)	foreigner	temporary resident	stranger	temporary resident	foreigner
48	גֵּר (*gēr*)	stranger	foreigner	stranger	alien	stranger

Becoming a נָכְרִי (*nokrî*) or a גֵּר (*gēr*)

Wuench provides insight into the differences between the terms in exploring what a *zār* should do to become a *gēr* rather than a *nokrî*, with the *gēr* viewed positively with privileges and the *nokrî* viewed as a dangerous stranger.[27] Southwood notes that the Hebrew Bible uses לָוָה (*lâvâh*) several times to refer to foreigners "joining Israel."[28] The Hebrew Bible uses it with subjects of *gēr* in Isaiah 14:1, *gôy* in Zechariah 2:11, and *bēn-ha-nēkār* in Isaiah 56:3 and 56:6. Esther uses *lâvâh* to explain that those who had joined the Israelite community must celebrate the Feast of Purim (Esth 9:27). The context of joining to the Lord emphasizes that the essential distinguishing feature is one's relationship with God.

[27] Hans-Georg Wuench, "The Stranger in God's Land - Foreigner, Stranger, Guest: What Can We Learn from Israel's Attitude Towards Strangers?" *Old Testament Essays* 27.3 (2014): 1134.

[28] Katherine E. Southwood, "The 'Foreigner' and the Eunuch: The Politics of Belonging in Isaiah 56:1–8," *BibInt* 30.4 (2020): 442n15.

Van Houten's examination of the LXX's translation of *gēr* concludes that of its seventy occurrences, the LXX translates it as "proselyte" (προσήλυτος) in the vast majority of instances.[29] Isaiah 56 uses *nokrî* rhetorically to capture the foreign proselytes' concerns about inclusion, similar to Ruth's humility before Boaz in Ruth 2:10. Hays argues that the *gēr* have accepted Yahweh while the *nokrî* have not.[30] Jones distinguishes them with the *gēr* being assimilated, nokrî being unassimilated, and both remaining outsiders.[31] Israel had different approaches to foreigners based on their approach to Yahweh.

The Mixed Group

A final word used to describe foreigners is עֵרֶב (*ʿēreḇ*).[32] The BDB explains that this noun refers to a mixed group attached to Israel (Exod 12:38 and Neh 13:3), to Egyptians (Jer 25:20), and to Chaldeans (Jer 50:37).[33] Fabry and Lamberty-Zielinski argue that it "clearly refers to such an ethnically and morally contaminated group without theological identity … mentioned in the same breath as the livestock," using the description of them as a rabble (אַסַפְסֻף, *ăsăp̄·*sŭp, Num 11:4) as justification.[34] Their justification for this strong position is inadequate. Shemesh recognizes that אַסַפְסֻף, (*ăsăp̄·sŭp̄*) is an example of *hapax legomenon* arguing that "it is clear that

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[29] Christiana Van Houten, *The Alien in Israelite Law*, JSOTSup 107 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 181. The LXX translation illustrates Hellenistic Judaism and later in this chapter, there is a discussion of it in the chronological examination of examples of Judaism's approach to foreigners.

[30] Hays, *Biblical Theology of Race,* 69.

[31] Robert Jones, "Outsider, Israelites and The," in *Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016), n.p.

[32] Unlike the other Hebrew words above, Minard does not discuss this word in his article about Gentiles, and it appears nowhere else in the Lexham Theological Wordbook. Minard, "Gentiles," n.p. עֵרֶב (*ʿēreḇ*) occurs 5 times in the Hebrew Bible.

[33] BDB s.v. "עֵרֶב."

[34] Heinz-Josef Fabry and H. Lamberty-Zielinski, "ערב," in *TDOT*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 332.

these were people with a low or average status within society."[35] Feinberg suggests a meaning of "collection," "rabble," or "mixed multitude," describing the usage in Numbers as "the motley collection of people who followed Israel from Egypt."[36] Levine concedes that what the word refers to is unclear, noting that "non-Israelites are blamed for incurring God's wrath, whereas the fault of the Israelites themselves was that they followed suit."[37] Rather than this word clarifying the meaning of עֵרֶב (*ʿēreḇ*), perhaps it indicates a negative attitude toward outsiders in Numbers 11, blaming a "rabble" (of foreigners) for leading the Israelites to complain.

Hays focuses on the likely diversity of ethnicity within this group, arguing that *ʿēreḇ* is a mixed crowd of various ethnicities that the Egyptians had conquered.[38] With the pericope immediately following its use in Exodus describing the different Passover rules for *nokrî*, *gēr, tôšāb*, and *ʿārēl*, these rules suggest the mixture within the *ʿēreḇ*.[39]

Gentiles

This is an appropriate point to discuss the term "Gentiles." Donaldson explains that "the [English] term comes from the Latin *gens*, nation, and receives its sense of "non-Jew" from the fact that in biblical tradition "nations" (גוים, ἔθνη) was commonly used to refer to the nations other than Israel. In time, the term came to apply not only to non-Jewish nations but also to

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[35] Abraham-Ofir Shemesh, "Food, Memory and Cultural-Religious Identity in the Story of the 'Desirers' (Nm 11:4–6)," *HTS* 76.3 (2020): 1.

[36] Charles F. Feinberg, "140f אַסַפְסֻף," in *TWOT*, ed. R. Laird Harris (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 60–61. This is similar to BDB, which describes the word as "camp followers attending Hebrews at the Exodus." BDB s.v. "אַסַפְסֻף."

[37] Baruch A. Levine, *Numbers 1–20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 4A (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 320–21.

[38] Hays, *Biblical Theology of Race*, 67–69.

[39] Brevard S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1974), 202.

individuals. The term is thus one that has meaning only in a Jewish frame of reference."[40] However, as the above analysis shows, Hebrew uses multiple words for non-Jews, and categorizing them as "Gentiles" removes the distinctions.

One of the earliest uses of the word "Gentiles" is by Cicero.[41] In *Topics*, which he penned in 44 BCE, Cicero defined Gentiles as a group with the same name who are free.[42] The Latin word used here for Gentiles is the same as the English translation. Farney writes that "The Roman gens was a grouping of agnatically related individuals who shared the same name (nomen gentilicium), what we might call a family or clan" and further explains that "gens" significantly influenced military grouping and religion.[43] Interestingly, one notes that Jerome's Vulgate, the Latin translation of the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures from the fourth century CE, uses the word "gentum" for what appears in English translations as "Gentiles" (e.g., Rom 2:14). The term "Gentile" was popularized in the King James Version, which also used it to translate words that describe the Greeks (e.g., Rom 3:9).[44]

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[40] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 5.

[41] Gary D. Farney, "Gens," in *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History*, ed. Roger S. Bagnall et al. (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), n.p. Farney observes that the word *gentiles* appears earlier than this in the *Twelve Tables* but believes this instance has the same meaning as "gens." The *Twelve Tables* are legal statutes, the origin of which Roman tradition places between 451 and 450 BCE. They are thought to be the basis of Roman law. Hannah Platts, "The Twelve Tables," in *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History*, ed. Roger S. Bagnall et al. (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), n.p.

[42] Hubbell's English translation reads, "'Gentiles' are those who have the same name in common. That is not enough. Who are sprung from freeborn ancestors. Not even that is sufficient. None of whose ancestors has ever been in slavery. There is still something wanting. Who have never suffered loss of civil capacity. This is probably enough; for I see that Scaevola the pontiff added nothing to this definition" (*Top.* 29 [Hubbell]). Cicero, *On Invention; The Best Kind of Orator; Topics*, trans. H. M. Hubbell, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), 29. Farney notes that Scaevola was from around 100 BCE. Farney, "Gens," n.p.

[43] Farney, "Gens," n.p.

[44] David T. Runia, "Philo and the Gentiles," in *Attitudes to Gentiles in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. David C. Sim and James S. McLaren (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 30.

Also, the meaning evolved. In Peter's First Epistle, he uses "Gentile" two times (τοῖς ἔθνεσιν in 1 Pet 2:12 and τῶν ἐθνῶν in 1 Pet 4:3). Jobes explains that this refers to those outside the Christian community of faith.[45] One understands where Donaldson (and others) is coming from with his description of Gentiles as non-Jews. Arguably, it is the best word.[46] However, it is inappropriate in the current context to use a term that had a different meaning during the period under examination. In this dissertation, I avoid using the term "Gentile" unless I am quoting the Bible or representing other scholars' use of the term. However, one recognizes that using "foreigner" as a blanket term is equally inappropriate. Also, there are issues with the term "non-Jew," as it is unclear at which point a converting *gēr* would change from a non-Jew to a Jew. While I use the term from the original language where possible, some colloquial use of such terms is inevitable, especially when there is no better alternative.

Israelites

The discussions above note the concept of "foreigner" with those outside Israel. To clarify that concept, one must understand the meaning of "Israelite." The phrase בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (*ben-ha-yiśrāʾēl*), meaning "sons of Israel" occurs 529 times in the Old Testament to refer to the descendants of Jacob, suggesting an ethnic connotation. There is also the association of the Israelites as God's people and the apparent possibilities of non-ethnic Israelites becoming part of God's people, suggesting a religious connotation.[47]

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[45] Jobes, *1 Peter*, 169. The vast majority of English translations use the word "Gentile" in these verses.

[46] Other scholars who examine "Gentiles" argue against the word, while using it for convenience. For instance, Runia argues that using the word in the context of Philo's writings is wrong and borrows from the New Testament. McLaren explains that the term should not be taken as "a single, homogenous group," but he uses it as "a way of labeling the various disparate people that fall outside the label of being Jews." Runia, "Philo and the Gentiles," 45. James S. McLaren, "Josephus and the Gentiles," in *Attitudes to Gentiles in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. David C. Sim and James S. McLaren, LNTS 499 (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 61n6.

[47] Phillip J. Long, "Israelites," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016), n.p. In his analysis of Exodus 12:38, Durham writes, "That there were many who became

The divided monarchy led to the name “Israel” referring to the ten northern tribes while the name “Judah” referred to the two southern tribes., though “Israel” sometimes retains its original meaning. The term “Israelite” could describe those of the Northern Kingdom or all of Israel.[48] Hosea 1:10 (MT 2:1) uses בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל (*ben-ha-yiśrāʾēl*) to describe all of Israel while Hosea 1:11 (MT 2:2) uses the same term with בְּנֵי־יְהוּדָה (*ben-ha- yəhûd̲î*) for Judeans to differentiate those from the Northern Kingdom.[49] The term “Judean” also evolved to mean “Jewish.”[50] However, the binary notion of insiders and outsiders remained for the Israelites/non-Israelites and subsequently Jews/non-Jews. Even with the divided monarchy, the people group still identified themselves through their ethnic and religious ties.

Summary of Hebrew Bible Terminology for Foreigners

The words above refer either to groups of people (*ʿam* and *gôy*) or individuals (*nokrî*, *zār, gēr, tôšāb*, and *ʿārēl*). One must be careful when using the word "foreign," which we associate with coming from a different nation today. Nationhood during biblical times differed from today. The common thread among the terms for “foreign” is that they describe those outside of the ingroup (i.e., Israel) defined ethnically and religiously. It also appears that a non-Israelite individual could choose whether they were a *nokrî*, *zār, gēr, tôšāb*, or *ʿārēl*., with Israel differing their approaches to each category. The following sections explore the Israelites' approach to non-Israelites, in particular those who joined their community.

Israelite by theological rather than biological descendancy is many times referred to in the OT.” John I. Durham, *Exodus*, WBC 3 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 172.

[48] For example, Hosea 1:10.

[49] Regarding Hosea 1:10–11 (MT 2:1–2), Stuart writes, “The reference is implicit in the way that ישראל ‘Israel’ is now used to designate the united people in v 1, is explicit in v2.” Douglas Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, WBC 31 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 38.

[50] See the section in the previous chapter titled, “Who Was a Jew?”

Approaches To Foreigners in the Hebrew Bible

Having identified the different words used for foreigners in ancient Hebrew, this section starts the analysis of the approaches to foreigners with a chronological examination of the Hebrew Bible. While recognizing that some pertinent events occurred before the Law's definition, the legal codes are examined before reviewing examples.

With the ultimate goal being to understand the approach to foreigners that Peter grew up with and that influenced his behavior with Cornelius (Acts 10:1–43) and at Antioch (Gal 2:11–14), it is pertinent to examine approaches to individuals rather than large groups of people or nations. The most fruitful results come from the examination of *gēr* and *nokrî*.

Foreigners in the Legal Codes

The use of multiple terms for foreigners in Exodus 12:43–49 illustrates the different approaches to foreigners depending on their relationship with Israel. When used to describe non-Israelites, the *gēr* wish to integrate into the Israelite community in some way. In contrast, the *nokrî* wish to remain separate.

Van Houten provides a comprehensive examination of the laws about the *gēr* in her 1991 book *The Alien in Israelite Law*, based on her PhD dissertation at the University of Notre Dame. While she is critical of Wellhausen and the Documentary Hypothesis, her analysis assumes significant exilic or post-exilic redaction.[51] However, as this examination aims to evaluate the impact of such laws on Peter's upbringing, the authorship and dating of such laws are less impactful than their reception and later interpretation.

[51] Throughout the book, Van Houten discusses authorship, dating, and redaction of the legal passages. One can find a few representative examples in Van Houten, *Alien in Israelite Law*, 11, 13, 21, 72, 74, 77, 109, 113, 117, 155.

Van Houton divides the legal passages into pre-Deuteronomic, Deuteronomic, and Priestly laws. She finds that the pre-Deuteronomic references to *gēr* in the Book of the Covenant (Exod 22:21; 23:9, 12) and the reference in the fourth command of the Decalogue (Exod 20:10) protect them from general abuse, unfair treatment in the courts, and provide inclusion in the Sabbath rest.[52] One can align these with charity, equity, and cultic activity. She identifies eighteen references to *gēr* in Deuteronomic laws, which consistently treat the *gēr* as needy, and she notes that Israel should be generous to the *gēr* because God was generous to the Israelites.[53] In the Priestly laws, she identifies thirty-four references that illustrate a progression from social needs to having rights as an "insider" within the Israelite community.[54]

Three points from Van Houten are particularly pertinent to this study. The first is her hypothesis, building on Meek's, that the meaning of *gēr* changes from immigrant to alien to proselyte in different biblical passages.[55] Her insight that a word has different meanings over time is valuable and underscores the importance of understanding a word's meaning in each context. Second, there is explicit provision for acceptance of *gēr* into the Israelite community, and she cites Numbers 15:14–16 as a typical example of *gēr* being given similar treatment as the Israelites.[56] However, she recognizes incompleteness or ambiguity in certain laws. She uses Deuteronomy 23:2 as an example where "illegitimate birth" was interpreted as a child from the

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[52] Van Houten, *Alien in Israelite Law*, 67.

[53] Van Houten, *Alien in Israelite Law*, 108. Her eighteen references to Deuteronomic laws are Deuteronomy 1:16; 5:14; 10:18, 19; 14:21, 29; 16:11, 14; 23:7; 24:14, 18, 19, 20, 21; 26:11, 12, 13, 27:19. Van Houten, *Alien in Israelite Law*, 13.

[54] Van Houten, *Alien in Israelite Law*, 155. Her thirty-four references to Priestly laws are Exodus 12:19, 48, 49; Leviticus 16:29; 17:8, 10, 12, 13, 15; 18:26; 19:10, 33, 34; 20:2; 22:18; 23:22; 24:16, 22; 25:23, 35, 47; Numbers 9:14; 15:14, 15, 16, 26, 29, 30; 19:10; 35:15.

[55] Van Houten, *Alien in Israelite Law*, 15–16; Theophile James Meek, “The Translation of Gêr in the Hexateuch and Its Bearing on the Documentary Hypothesis,” *JBL* 49.2 (1930): 172–80.

[56] Van Houten, *Alien in Israelite Law*, 138.

marriage of an Israelite to a non-Israelite.[57] This raises the question of whether a *gēr* was ever fully integrated and if some lingering societal attitudes toward "outsiders" persisted. Third, just because the laws existed does not mean they were followed.[58] Solomon marrying many foreign (*nokrî*) wives (1 Kgs 11:2) went against both the law not to intermarry a foreigner (*gôy*, Deut 7:3) and the law that kings not have many wives (Deut 17:17).[59]

Laws concerning the *nokrî* identify them as outside of the community. The law permitted charging interest to *nokrî* (Deut 23:20) and selling carrion to them in contrast to giving it to *gēr* (Deut 14:21). The law prohibited *nokrî* from cultic involvement such as eating the Passover (Exod 12:43) or accepting an animal from a *nokrî* for a sacrifice (Lev 22:25), and it prohibited Israel from making a *nokrî* their king (Deut 17:15). There are also negative references to activities with *nokrî* gods, which break the first commandment, "You shall have no other gods before me" (Exod. 20:3, *nokrî* implied). While not mentioning *nokrî*, Deuteronomy 7:2–5 prohibits intermarrying with seven nations (*gôy*; Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites) when the Israelites enter the Promised Land to avoid the risk of Israelites turning away from God. In Exodus 23:31–33, God prohibits covenants with the land's inhabitants. Deuteronomy 23:3 excludes Ammonites or Moabites from Israel for ten generations because they did not help Israel, while Deuteronomy 23:7–8 allows the third generation of Edomites and Egyptians to enter the assembly. While the law prohibited such activities, it generally does not define the necessary actions to undo them if they had happened.

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[57] Van Houten, *Alien in Israelite Law*, 99.

[58] Van Houten, *Alien in Israelite Law*, 51–52.

[59] However, Van Houten argues that laws pertaining to the king (Deut 17:18–20) were attempts to reform existing institutions after the establishment of the monarchy, rather than the traditional approach that accepts them before the monarchy was established. Van Houten, *Alien in Israelite Law*, 32.

For example, Houston notes that the Torah is silent regarding how to undo illegal intermarriage if it should occur.[60]

In summary, the laws align with the understanding of the words used. The *gēr* were people at some point in a journey of wanting to assimilate into the Israelite community, including worshipping Yahweh, so the Israelites should treat them well as the foreigners' faithfulness would lead to them becoming part of the community. In contrast, *nokrî* describes those who follow *nokrî* gods and who are not interested in worshipping God, thus posing a threat to the integrity of God's covenant community. The following sections explore examples of *gēr* and the Israelite community.

Israelites as גֵּר (*gēr*)

Before examining examples of non-Israelites interfacing with Israelites, reviewing the biblical examples of Israel as a *gēr* is pertinent. First, the Bible describes Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as outsiders (*tôšāb* in Gen 23:4, *gûr* in Exod 6:4). The Psalms reference the patriarchs as outsiders (*gûr* in Ps 105:12 and *gēr* and *tôšāb* in Ps 39:12), as does 1 Chronicles (*gēr* and *tôšāb* in 1 Chr 29:15).[61] Second, the Bible describes the Israelites as outsiders during their Egyptian bondage, either in prophecy (*gēr* in Gen 15:13) or in reminders after the fact (e.g., *gēr* in Deut 10:19, Exod 22:21, Lev 19:34, and Ps 105:23; *gûr* in Isa 52:4).[62]

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[60] Houston, *Love the Stranger*, 126.

[61] Spina, "Israelites as Gērîm," 321.

[62] Spina, "Israelites as Gērîm," 321.

Examples of Foreigners

There are many examples throughout the Hebrew Bible of foreigners becoming part of the covenant community. Joseph married and had children with Asenath, the daughter of an Egyptian priest (Gen 41:45; 48:9). In Exodus 2:15–22, Moses marries the daughter of a Midianite priest with whom he also has children. Israel accepted the non-Israelite Rahab and her household in Joshua 6:25 because she had helped the Israelites. The description of her living amid Israel implies that she initially became a *gēr* and integrated into Israel. In contrast, in an adjoining pericope, Joshua exposes the sin of the Israelite Achan and has him stoned to death because of his sin (Josh 7:16–26), enabling victory at Ai (Josh 8:1–29).[63] These accounts illustrate the priority of a relationship with God over ethnicity. Also, Caleb received his land allocation due to loyalty (Josh 14:14) even though the text repeatedly refers to him as the son of a Kenizzite, a group of people living in Canaan (Gen 15:19–21).[64]

The description of David's adulterous pursuit of Bathsheba describes her husband, Uriah, as a Hittite (2 Sam 11:3), which is an example of an Israelite woman marrying a foreigner (against Deut 7:2–5). However, the narrative presents Uriah as highly loyal to his troops and ultimately dying in battle for Israel, in contrast to the sinful King David.

The book of Ruth presents a foreigner as a model of good behavior, repeatedly describing Ruth as the Moabitess (Ruth 1:22; 2:2, 21; 4:5, 10).[65] The book's narrative climaxes with Boaz marrying Ruth, the foreigner. However, Ruth had previously married the Judahite Mahlon (Ruth

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[63] David G. Firth, *Including the Stranger: Foreigners in the Former Prophets*, NSBT (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019), 18–27.

[64] Firth, *Including the Stranger*, 35–37.

[65] David G. Firth and Lindsay Wilson, eds., *Interpreting Old Testament Wisdom Literature* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 127–29.

1:4; 4:10). Boaz was already a close relative and played the role of kinsman-redeemer (גֹּאֵל, *gōʾēl* Lev 25:25) with the obligation of levirate marriage (Deut 25:5–10). The description of Ruth as David's great-grandmother (Ruth 4:17; Matt 1:5–6) places the events historically before David, though de Villiers argues that Ruth was written polemically after the exile to counter Ezra and Nehemiah's policies against mixed marriage.[66] Nevertheless, the inclusion of the foreigners Rahab and Ruth in David's lineage (Matt 1:5–6) suggests the offspring of *gēr* who married Israelites integrated fully into the community. Finally, in Esther's exilic context, non-Israelites that have joined (*lâvâh*) the Israelites must celebrate the Feast of Purim (Esth 9:27).

In contrast to righteous foreigners, there are examples of Israelites marrying foreigners, which appears to have resulted in the foreigners not joining the covenant community. Esau married a couple of Hittite women.[67] Judah marries a Canaanite (Exod 38:2), with the narrative potentially highlighting the difference between Judah and Joseph.[68]

Finally, Solomon marries many *nokrî* women (1 Kings 11:1–3).[69] In 1 Kings 11:9–13, the Lord confronts Solomon about this sin, but unlike David, Solomon does not repent. Ezra 9:1 and Nehemiah 13:23–27 indicate that Israel believed these intermarriages led to the apostasy that

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[66] Gerda de Villiers, "The 'Foreigner in Our Midst' and the Hebrew Bible," *HvTSt* 75.3 (2019): 4.

[67] In Exodus 26:34, Esau marries two Hittite women, Judith and Basemath. In addition, in Exodus 28:9, he marries Mahalath, Ishmael's daughter. Exodus 36:2–3 indicates he married Adah and suggests Basemath was Ishmael's daughter. It is difficult to reconcile these different accounts. Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1994), 2:204–5.

[68] Wenham discusses various parallels between the Judah and Tamar narrative in Genesis 38 and the surrounding Joseph narrative. Regarding the Judah narrative, he writes, "this story shows that injustice will be righted." The first step that Judah took toward creating a family was marrying a Canaanite. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 2:363.

[69] Interestingly, in Solomon's prayer to dedicate the temple, he predicts that foreigners (*nokrî)* will hear of God's great name and come to his temple (1 Kgs 8:41–43). Perhaps by marrying *nokrî* women, Solomon was trying to help make this a reality.

caused the exile.[70] Blenkinsopp argues that Solomon wrote about the perils of foreign women in Proverbs 1–9 based on his experiences.[71] In these chapters in Proverbs, the word used for foreign women changes from the more neutral *zār* (2:16; 5:3, 17, 20) to the more negative *nokrî* (5:20; 6:24), which could be a rhetorical device to highlight the initial, apparent harmlessness of *zār*. The only other use of *nokrî* in Kings describes Solomon's Temple attracting *nokrî* to the Lord (1 Kgs 8:41–43), though this potentially discusses the end times, which the next section explores.

Foreigners in the End Times

There are multiple references in the prophetic books about "an eschatological future when Gentiles will forsake their idols and their weapons of war and make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to worship the living God and learn his ways."[72] To illustrate his point, Novenson lists several passages that refer to the nations (*gôy*) and the peoples (*ʿam*) coming to the Lord in the future (Isa 2:2–4; 25:6–7; 66:18–20; Mic 4:1–2; Zech 8:22–23). One variation is that it is the survivors of those nations (*gôy*) that worship the Lord (Zech 14:16).[73]

Novenson also includes a reference to Isaiah 56:6–7.[74] Isaiah uses בֶּן־הַנֵּכָר (*ben-ha-nēkār*) in Isaiah 56:3 and 6, the only occurrences of this term in the Hebrew Bible. In this passage, the Lord welcomes eunuchs and foreigners. It might be rhetorical to empathize with foreigners who believe they are *nokrî* when they are actually *gēr*, or the *ben-ha-nēkār* might indicate the *nokrî*

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[70] Hays, *Biblical Theology of Race,* 78–79.

[71] Joseph Blenkinsopp, "The Social Context of the 'Outsider Woman' in Proverbs 1–9," *Bib* 72.4 (1991): 457.

[72] Matthew V. Novenson, "What Eschatological Pilgrimage of the Gentiles?" in *Israel and the Nations: Paul's Gospel in the Context of Jewish Expectation*, ed. František Ábel (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2021), 62.

[73] Novenson, "What Eschatological Pilgrimage," 61–62.

[74] Novenson, "What Eschatological Pilgrimage," 61.

status of the foreigners before they joined themselves to the Lord. However, Novenson's point remains that there are multiple prophetic declarations about the eschatological future of Gentiles and their inclusion in God's people. Moreover, these verses do not describe if there will be a different level of acceptance by God of the Jews and such "Gentiles."

Around the Exile

The accounts of Ezra and Nehemiah are among the latest in the Hebrew Bible. Cyrus's edict permitting Jewish repatriation and rebuilding the temple in Ezra 1:1 places it around 538 BCE. The mention of Darius in Ezra 4:24–6:22 places the account around 519–516 BCE.[75] Ezra 7–10 describes Ezra's return and, among other things, addresses intermarriage.[76] Ezra 7:8 describes his arrival in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes I, which tradition places in 458 BCE.[77] After the close of Ezra, the narrative shifts to Susa, where Nehemiah hears about Jerusalem's walls and gates needing repair, which he subsequently undertakes with other reforms. Fensham identifies Nehemiah's arrival in Jerusalem as governor in 445 BCE but acknowledges the challenges of understanding the relationship between the Jewish leaders Ezra and Nehemiah.[78] That the events occurred after the return from exile is most critical.

The goal of the returnees is a combination of rebuilding the temple (Ezra 1–6), the wall (Neh 2:11–6:19), and a community.[79] The exiles (גּוֹלָה, *gôlâ*) returned to their land, but there is now the dilemma of defining the true Israelites and whether they were the returning exiles or

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[75] F. Charles Fensham, *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 19.

[76] Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah: A Commentary*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988), 40.

[77] Fensham, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 19.

[78] Fensham, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 19–20.

[79] Chingboi Guite, “The Golah Community and the Other in the Book of Ezra: A Literary Study” (Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, PhD diss., 2018), 149.

those who had stayed.[80] Written from the perspective of the returning exiles, those who remained are identified as the "peoples (ʿ*am*) of the lands" (Ezra 3:3; 9:1) and their women as *nokrî* (Ezra 10:2, 10, 11, 14, 17, 18, 44). Viewing Solomon's sinful marriage to *nokrî* women as a cause of the exile (Neh 13:23–27), the returnees would strive to avoid a repeat.[81] That situation was made worse because the children of some of the Israelites who married *nokrî* women (Ezra 10:44) could not speak Hebrew (Neh 13:24). There is a strong link between language and ethnicity, and the returnees are blaming these *nokrî* wives for leading their children sinfully astray to be *nokrî*.[82]

Summary

The above analysis identifies several points from the Hebrew Scriptures to carry forward to the analysis of what may have impacted Peter's approach to foreigners. The first is that words matter, with *gēr* generally meaning something different to *nokrî*. While this distinction is that the *gēr* seeks the Lord, its meaning may have evolved to a proselyte. It appears that *nokrî* is consistently negative, and the portrayal of the *gôy* and the ʿ*am* depends on the context. All these words present people as outsiders, and there is evidence of the development of different attitudes toward foreigners, even with the use of different words.

Second, there are clear provisions and examples that the *gēr* can join Israel. However, it is unclear what standing such people joining Israel would have in comparison to ethnic Israelites. Similarly, the prophets describe the *gôy* and the ʿ*am* coming to the Lord in the future and that Israel will be a light to the *gôy*. Once again, it is unclear what standing the *gôy* and the ʿ*am* will

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[80] Grace Ji-Sun Kim, "Foreign Women: Ezra, Intermarriage and Asian American Women's Identity," *Feminist Theology* 22.3 (2014): 251.

[81] Hays, *Biblical Theology of Race*, 78–79.

[82] Katherine E. Southwood, "'And They Could Not Understand Jewish Speech': Language, Ethnicity, and Nehemiah's Intermarriage Crisis," *JTS* 62.1 (2011): 19; Ji-Sun Kim, "Foreign Women," 246.

have compared to those descended from Jacob. Also, the people did not necessarily follow the guidance provided by the law and the prophets. Third, there is a sense of blame, with suggestions that foreign (*nokrî*) women caused Solomon to sin. Also, after the return from exile, the risk of them eroding Israelite identity by failing to teach their children Hebrew is flagged.

It might have been difficult for Israelites to differentiate between genuine *gēr* and *nokrî*. Even if they could differentiate, the Hebrew Bible did not make it completely clear how Israelites should treat the various categories of foreigners.

Early Jewish Literature's Portrayal of Judaism's Approach to Foreigners

Having reviewed the Hebrew Bible's text, the analysis below examines how other early Jewish literature depicts Judaism's approach to foreigners. One could also describe these texts as Second Temple sources. Scholars present this literature using the following collections: Septuagint, Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran, Philo, Josephus, and rabbinic literature.[83] While it is desirable to present it chronologically, the uncertainty over dates and the grouping of the literature makes such an approach challenging, so a chronological approach is balanced with logical grouping.[84]

[83] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*; John J. Collins and Daniel C. Harlow, *Early Judaism: A Comprehensive Overview* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012). Discussion of the New Testament and Christian literature is deferred until subsequent chapters.

[84] The table below outlines the various rulers and regimes over Palestine to provide context for the text's chronology. This chronology emphasizes that most Jews of this period, in both the diaspora and in Palestine, did not experience complete Jewish sovereignty, with only eighty out of the six-hundred-year period having Hasmonean statehood.

During this timeframe, the Jewish focus was restoring the temple and Jewish religious practice rather than a monarchy.[85] The examination of the literature explores what the text reveals about attitudes. The discussion of the impact of historical events on people's attitudes is deferred to the section on Josephus.

The boundaries between the text groupings are fluid. For example, while one might define the Apocrypha as the contents of the Septuagint that are in addition to the Hebrew Bible, some scholars treat some of this grouping as Pseudepigrapha.[86] However, as this survey aims to identify Jewish approaches to foreigners, neither the precision of the grouping nor the exact chronology is essential.[87] As this literature is substantial, the following sections only discuss texts most relevant to the current discussion. As the analysis shows, the literature suggests the

Chronological Chart of Palestine Rulers and Regimes

Dates	Rulers or Regimes
536–332 BCE	The Persian Period
332–167 BCE	The Hellenistic Period
332–301	The Conquests of Alexander and the Wars of the *diadochi*
301–200	Ptolemaic (Egyptian) rule
200–167	Seleucid (Syrian) rule
167–141 BCE	The Hasmonean Uprising
141–63 BCE	The Hasmonean State
63 BCE–70 CE	Roman Rule (in varying stages and forms)
63–40	Vassal State under Hyrcanus II
40–37	Rule by Antigonus, recognized by the Parthians
37 BCE–6 CE	Herodian Rule
6–66	Direct Roman Rule (Except for Agrippa I, 41–44 CE)
66–70	The Great War

Source: Isaiah Gafni, *The Historical Background*, ed. Michael E. Stone, vol. 2 of *The Literature of the Jewish People in the Period of the Second Temple and the Talmud* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 1–31.

[85] Isaiah Gafni, *The Historical Background*, ed. Michael E. Stone, vol. 2 of *The Literature of the Jewish People in the Period of the Second Temple and the Talmud* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 2.

[86] For example, Charles explains what he has included in his books as the Apocrypha or the Pseudepigrapha, explaining why it is different from what others might consider as these groupings. R. H. Charles, ed., *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 1:iv.

[87] Each section describes the scope of its grouping.

development of multiple attitudes toward foreigners, generally independent of textual groupings or precise chronologies.

As one examines these texts, it is beneficial to consider some introductory comments by other scholars. First, the term "Second Temple Judaism" can be somewhat misleading as it may imply a level of uniformity. Along these lines, after acknowledging differences in opinions regarding approaches to Gentiles within Judaism during the Second Temple period, Donaldson notes that "the various opinions cannot be correlated exclusively or distinctively with identifiable groups (Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, etc.), geographical regions (Diaspora, Judea), degrees of Hellenization, literary genres (e.g., apocalyptic wisdom), or the like."[88] Greek and Roman authors would have likely observed one type of "Judaism," whereas examining the Jewish literature suggests different viewpoints.[89] One example of this is intermarriage. Hayes identifies two different lines of tradition. She argues that Genesis 34, the Priestly code, and Josephus accept the idea of Israelites marrying converted Gentiles, whereas Ezra, Jubilees, Judith, and 4QMMT reject it as corrupting the ethnically pure seed of Jacob.[90] The following analysis reveals other differences.

Septuagint

The first collection of texts presented is the Septuagint. It is a collection of Greek translations of the Hebrew Bible written in the Greek-speaking diaspora of Alexandria, Egypt, in

[88] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 3.

[89] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 8.

[90] Hayes, *Gentile Impurities*, 81–89.

the third century BCE.[91] It is significant in providing insight into life in a Jewish community in the diaspora while depicting Hellenistic Judaism.[92] The Septuagint contains a Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, additions to various books of the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Psalm 151 or multiple Greek additions to Esther), and complete books that are not in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Judith, Tobit).[93] In order to simplify the grouping, this section on the Septuagint limits its examination to the translation of the Hebrew Bible. The following section on the Apocrypha examines the additions to the canon and the complete books of the Septuagint that are not in the Hebrew Bible.

As a Greek translation of the Hebrew text, the LXX involves a level of interpretation.[94] The translators had to choose which Greek words to use for the Hebrew, and their choices provide insight into their understanding. The first of those insights is how they chose to translate גֵּר (*gēr*). Van Houten notes that the Septuagint Pentateuch translates *gēr* as "πάροικος (six times), προσήλυτος (sixty-three times), and γειώρας (once)."[95] In the whole Septuagint, the translators use προσήλυτος for גֵּר (*gēr*, seventy-three times), גּוּר (*gûr*, once), and יָתוֹם (*yātôm*, once).[96] Van Houten's analysis affirms the thesis that the translators preferred to use προσήλυτος for *gēr*, doing so wherever it made sense.[97] Arguing that προσήλυτος did not exist in pre-Jewish or pre-

[91] Ryan E. Stokes, "Early Jewish Literature," in *Behind the Scenes of the Old Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts*, ed. Jonathan S. Greer, John W. Hilber, and John H. Walton (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 145.

[92] Van Houten, *Alien in Israelite Law*, 179.

[93] Henry B. Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek According to the Septuagint* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914), 197.

[94] One recognizes that the Hebrew text that the Septuagint translators used, its Vorlage, differs from the Hebrew Bible that is known today, and such differences in the Hebrew text could have introduced the difference in the Greek translation. However, the analysis remains valid.

[95] Van Houten, *Alien in Israelite Law*, 180.

[96] Rick Brannan, ed., *Lexham Research Lexicon of the Septuagint*, Lexham Research Lexicons (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020), s.v. "προσήλυτος."

[97] Van Houten, *Alien in Israelite Law*, 181.

Christian literature, Van Houten acknowledges the limitations of using the Septuagint to understand its meaning, as it translates *gēr*, the meaning of which appears to have evolved in the Hebrew Bible. However, she notes that sometimes *gēr* translates as πάροικος, which the translators always used for תּוֹשָׁב (*tôšāb*). This use suggests a different understanding of *gēr* to *tôšāb*, with the former being a proselyte and the latter a temporary resident. Van Houten argues that this translation—choosing προσήλυτος over other Greek words for sojourner or alien—confirms that conversion existed in the Alexandrian Jewish community.[98] The later section on Philo examines his definition of προσήλυτος.

The Septuagint translators used ἀλλότριος for נָכְרִי (*nokrî*) thirty times, נֵכָר (*nēkār*) twenty-four times, זָר (*zār*) twenty-six times, and אַחֵר (*ʿaḥēr*) seventeen times when in the context of other gods. They used ἔθνος over four hundred times for גּוֹי (*gôy*) and over one hundred times for עַם (*ʿam*). Finally, the translators used ἀπερίτμητος twenty-three times for עָרֵל (*ʿārēl*). These translations suggest a negative tone associated with ἀλλότριος with a more neutral tone with ἔθνος.

Donaldson examines several differences between the Septuagint and the Hebrew Bible. Comparing 4 Kingdoms 17:34 and 40 LXX to 2 Kings 17:34 and 40, he notes the removal of the negative in verse 34 and a transition from the third to the second person in verse 40. The meaning of the phrase changes from a criticism of the nations (*gôy* from verses 29, translated as ἔθνος) to a warning from the Jews not to follow the *gôy* "in their mixed worship of the God of

[98] Van Houten, *Alien in Israelite Law*, 183. Also, in Palmer's literature survey regarding the meaning of *gēr*, she summarizes that "the above outline clearly shows a marked changed in the term *gēr* from a resident alien to a Gentile convert (or proselyte) to Judaism, from the late Second Temple period and onward." She concludes, "The external evidence suggests that a study of the *gēr* in the DSS will also demonstrate a change in meaning for the term." Palmer's conclusion about the change in meaning being during the late Second Temple period and onward is later than Van Houten's analysis and depends upon rabbinic literature. Carmen Palmer, *Converts in the Dead Sea Scrolls: The Gēr and Mutable Ethnicity*, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 126 (Boston: Brill, 2018), 16.

Israel and the gods of the nations."[99] Once again, the text portrays foreign worship practices as a risk that might lead Israel to sin.

Donaldson also highlights the difference between Isaiah 54:15 LXX ("Behold, proselytes shall come to you through me and shall flee to you for refuge") and the Hebrew Bible ("If anyone attacks you, it is not from me; whoever attacks you will fall before you").[100] The Hebrew contains three forms of *gûr*, which the Septuagint translates as three variations of προσήλυτος. Donaldson preferred "proselytes" over "strangers" in his translation of the Greek. Donaldson argues that this illustrates that the translators thought the foreigners could be proselytes.[101] Donaldson also analyzes differences with Amos 9:12, which changes from "nations (*gôy*) that bear my name" (MT) to "nations (ἔθνος) upon whom my name has been called" (LXX). The phrase "upon whom my name has been called" is usually used to describe God's chosen people, Israel, suggesting a positive attitude to the nations here.[102]

In summary, Van Houten's and Donaldson's analyses suggest that the Septuagint translators portrayed foreigners, particularly *gēr*, as welcome to join their community. Their conclusions align with the LXX written in a diaspora community in Egypt in the third century BCE and lead to Philo's positive portrayal at the turn of the eras.[103]

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[99] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles,* 19.

[100] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles,* 19.

[101] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles,* 19–21.

[102] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles,* 21–22.

[103] A subsequent section examines Philo's writings.

Apocrypha

This grouping covers thirteen books: 1–2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, additions to Esther, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus (also known as the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach, or just Sirach), Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah, additions to Daniel, the Prayer of Manasses, and 1–2 Maccabees. This grouping is sometimes called the Old Testament Apocrypha to distinguish it from a different grouping called the New Testament Apocrypha. The books are not part of the Masoretic Text, but the LXX includes them, and therefore, so did the first Latin Bibles.[104] Since then, their canonical standing has been inconsistent, with the Protestant Church excluding them, while the Roman Catholic Church does include them in their Old Testament, calling them "deuterocanonical Scriptures."[105]

Tobit, written between 350 and 170 BCE, was likely originally written in Aramaic or Hebrew, though the location is uncertain.[106] In its setting of Assyrian exile, Tobit presents a mixed approach to foreigners. On the one hand, its focus on Torah piety emphasizes Israelite separation and exclusivity, while on the other hand, it shows generosity toward foreigners and

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[104] Neusner notes that Roman Catholicism includes the Apocryphal books in the Old Testament but that Judaism does not acknowledge their inclusion in either the written or oral Torah. Jacob Neusner, *Introduction to Rabbinic Literature*, AYBRL (New York: Doubleday, 1994), xx.

[105] D. H. Wallace, "Apocrypha, Old Testament," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell, 2nd ed., Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 80–81; Stokes, "Early Jewish Literature," 143. This section uses the term "Apocrypha" as that is the term used by the scholarly references. One recognizes the value of bias-free language and that the Roman Catholic Church prefers that "Apocrypha" is not used. However, there is also value in using terminology consistent with the scholarship that one is referencing, which in this case, uses the term. Billie Jean Collins, Bob Buller, and John F. Kutsko, eds., *The SBL Handbook of Style*, 2nd ed. (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014), 21.

[106] While Charles dates Tobit between 350 and 170 BCE, Donaldson proposes a narrower timeframe of 225–175 BCE. While the primary source text is the Greek Septuagint, fragments from Qumran support Aramaic or Hebrew as the original language. The place of composition varies from Egypt (Charles), "the eastern Diaspora" (Donaldson), or "quite close to, if not within, Jerusalem itself" (Kiel). Charles, *The Apocrypha*, 1:174–85; Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 39–41; Micah D. Kiel, "Tobit," in *The Apocrypha: Fortress Commentary on the Bible*, ed. Gale A. Yee, Jr. Page Hugh R., and Matthew J. M. Coomber (Philadelphia: Fortress, 2016), 953.

their eschatological destiny.[107] Tobit presents foreigners with roles within God's plan, such as rewarding Tobit with a position within Shalmaneser's Court (Tob 1:12–14) or receiving counsel from God (Tob 4:19).[108] This contrasts with the portrayal of the sinful nature of eating foreigners' (ἐθνῶν) food (Tob 1:10–11). However, this might simply be that such food was non-kosher rather than anything specifically against the foreigner (ἐθνῶν).[109] There is an echo of Ezra's stance against foreign women (e.g., Ezra 10:2 using *nokrî*) in Tobit 4:12, which promotes endogamy.[110] Tobit uses ἀλλότριος for foreigner, contrasting with "descendants of your fathers," which emphasizes the bloodline.[111] Later, Tobit sets an eschatological expectation about the involvement of foreigners (ἔθνος in 13:11 and 14:6), while God will still punish Assyria and Nineveh (Tob 14:4).[112]

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[107] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 39–40.

[108] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 40. Donaldson also highlights the reference to proselytes (προσήλυτος) in Tobit 1:8, arguing that it echoes Deuteronomy 14:28–29, suggesting גֵּר (*gēr*) translates as proselyte in Tobit. His argument continues that when the word is used with the phrase "who had attached themselves to Israel," as in Esther 9:27 (discussed above), it confirms the understanding of converted foreigners within Israel. He notes that his reference is the Codex Sinaiticus and NRSV translation. However, this reference to προσήλυτος does not appear in either the Codex Vaticanus or Codex Alexandrinus. The word προσήλυτος does not appear anywhere else in the Apocrypha.

[109] Hayes, *Gentile Impurities*, 49.

[110] Tobit 4:12 says, "My son, avoid all forms of immorality. Above all, choose a wife from among the lineage of your ancestors. Do not marry anyone who is not descended from your father's tribe, for we are the descendants of the prophets. Remember, my son, that Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, our ancestors from of old, all took wives from their own kindred. They were blessed in their children, and their descendants will inherit the land" (NCB). Moore explains that "Tobit, like the patriarchs, insisted that his son marry within the paternal tribe. That is, Abraham son of Terah had married his own half-sister, Sarah; their son Isaac had married Rebekah, the granddaughter of Nahor, Abraham's brother; and their grandson, Jacob, had married Rachel and Leah, daughters of Laban and great-granddaughters of Nahor." Carey A. Moore, *Tobit*, AB 40A (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 168–69.

[111] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 39–40.

[112] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 42–45; James P. Ware, *Paul and the Mission of the Church: Philippians in Ancient Jewish Context* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 79.

Judith was originally written in Hebrew in Judea in the late second or early first century BCE, though the source is the Greek Septuagint.[113] The author's fictional presentation of Nebuchadnezzar as the Assyrian king (Jdt 1:1, 7) after the return from exile (Jdt 5:19) emphasizes the typological presentation of Judith as the epitome of an Israelite (with Judith being the feminine form of Judah). Regarding foreigners in this narrative, Nebuchadnezzar and Holofernes symbolize foreigner adversaries against the God of Israel, and Achior, a non-Israelite, stands out as someone who recognizes the God of Israel as the one true God. Judith's insistence on eating her own food, prepared by her maid (Jdt 12:2, 19), emphasizes Judith's retention of ritual purity, though there is no issue with her eating with a foreigner.[114] In contrast to the evil foreigners is Achior, whose conversion, involving the three elements of believing in God, circumcision, and joining the house of Israel (Jdt 14:10), demonstrates the reality of a process for conversion.[115] That the author makes the fictitious convert an Ammonite (Jdt 5:5) is unlikely to be random when Deuteronomy 23:3 "explicitly excludes Ammonites … from entering 'the assembly of the Lord,' 'even to the tenth generation.'" and could be representing a contemporary understanding of an idealized future where all foreigners and eunuchs are welcome in the Lord's house (Isa 56:1–6).[116]

Esther in the Septuagint contains 107 verses not in the Hebrew text and was probably written in Egypt in the first century BCE. Based on Jerome, the additions are labeled A to F in

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[113] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 57.

[114] Roger Aubrey Bullard and Howard A. Hatton, *A Handbook on Judith*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 2001), 453.

[115] David C. Sim, "Gentiles, God-Fearers and Proselytes," in *Attitudes to Gentiles in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. David C. Sim and James S. McLaren (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 13.

[116] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 92.

six sections.[117] These additions are not uniform in character or their depiction of foreigners. For example, Esther demonstrates her piety in addition C by praying that she abhors sleeping with the uncircumcised (ἀπερίτμητος) or aliens (ἀλλότριος, Esth 14:15 or C:26).[118] She also emphasizes her refusal to eat non-kosher food (Esth 14:17 or C:28). In contrast, addition E portrays Artaxerxes positively, with him recognizing the Jewish law and that Jews are sons of the living God (Esth 16:15 or E:15). However, rather than converting, the text portrays Artaxerxes as proud of his Persian blood (Esth 16:10 or E:10) and states that he has acted sufficiently as a God-fearer in allowing the Jews to follow their law (Esth 16:19 or E:19), with no suggestion that he should follow the law.[119] These additions present Jews and Persians as distinct "nations" that can live together under the protection of God.[120]

Sirach was written in Hebrew in Judea in the early second century BCE. Sirach, in general, does not exhibit a positive approach to foreigners in, for instance, depicting Wisdom controlling all nations (ἔθνος, Sir 24:6) while choosing to "dwell solely in Israel" (24:1–12).[121] Sirach suggests that associating with a stranger (ἀλλότριος) will lead one away from one's family (Sir 11:34).[122] The Hebrew version of 10:22 implies that גֵּר (*gēr*) and נָכְרִי (*nokrî*) can fear the Lord.[123] The use of *gēr* with *nokrî* suggests *gēr* in this context is more a "resident alien" than a

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[117] Charles, *The Apocrypha*, 1:665–67.

[118] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 36.

[119] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 39.

[120] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 39.

[121] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 46.

[122] Hayes, *Gentile Impurities*, 47. The verse says, “If you invite a stranger into your home, he will stir up trouble for you and will estrange you from your own family” (Sir 11:34, NCB). However, this builds on an earlier warning about bringing anyone (πάντα ἄνθρωπον) deceitful into your house (Sir 11:29).

[123] Qumran discoveries confirmed the reliability of Hebrew manuscripts, indicating the high probability that the Hebrew version of Sir 10:22 is original. Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 46.

"proselyte."[124] One wonders whether the change in meaning in the Greek translation "The rich and the noble and the poor—their honor is the fear of the Lord"[125] was due to the Septuagint translators, with their general understanding of *gēr* as προσήλυτος, struggling to place προσήλυτος alongside *nokrî*. Finally, Sirach's prayer asks God to act against foreign nations (ἔθνη ἀλλότρια, Sir 33:3), wiping them out (Sir 33:9) in favor of the tribes of Jacob (Sir 33:13).

This paragraph examines what the texts of 1 and 2 Maccabees suggest about approaches to foreigners, while a later section on Josephus explores the impact of the historical events around the Maccabean revolt on such attitudes. While both 1 and 2 Maccabees describe the Jewish struggle for religious liberty and independence in the middle of the second century BCE, they are different perspectives of the same period, written toward the end of the second century BCE. While their extant manuscripts are in Greek, 1 Maccabees was originally written in Hebrew. In comparison, 2 Maccabees is a Greek abridgment of other texts (2 Macc 2:23).[126] The different perspectives reveal a divergence of attitudes, with 1 Maccabees written by a Sadducee from a pro-Hasmonean perspective with 2 Maccabees probably written by a Hellenistic Jew along the lines of Pharisaic piety.[127] Both books use the term "nation of the Judeans" (ἔθνος τῶν Ἰουδαίων, e.g., 1 Macc 8:25; 2 Macc 10:8) and present foreigners (ἀλλότριος) negatively (e.g., 1 Macc 1:38; 2 Macc 10:2). The introduction of Antiochus criticizes the Israelites who wished to make treaties with and adopt customs of the nations (ἐθνῶν in 1 Macc 1:10, 14; ἔθνεσιν in 1

[124] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 46.

[125] Rick Brannan et al., *The Lexham English Septuagint*, 2nd ed. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020).

[126] Charles, *The Apocrypha*, 1:59, 125.

[127] Charles, *The Apocrypha*, 1:59, 130–31.

Macc 10:15).[128] Neither book makes any reference to proselytes (προσήλυτος). The treaty with Rome suggests that alliances with foreign nations were acceptable to free Israel from Greek oppression and slavery (1 Macc 8:17–18). While a general theme is God protecting the faithful Jews, he uses foreigners to discipline the Israelites for their sin so they might learn (e.g., 2 Macc 5:17; 6:12).[129] However, when God defends the faithful Israelites, the attacking foreign kings acknowledge God's power with acts of reverence (e.g., 2 Macc 3:35–39; 9:12–17; 13:23).[130] Donaldson argues that the statement of Antiochus becoming a Jew without any additional details (2 Macc 9:17) means that the author "takes it for granted that his readers will know" what is involved in becoming a Jew.[131] However, Donaldson's conclusion is weak and lacks support, and the narrative appears idealized.

Pseudepigrapha

Scholars define this category of literature in multiple ways. There is an acceptance that not all literature in the category is pseudepigraphical. A helpful, concise working definition for the current examination is "Jewish literature from the period bracketed by the Bible and the Mishnah that does not belong to any other identifiable collection or grouping."[132] Charles suggests a timeframe between 200 BCE and 100 CE, though he admits to exceptions.[133] This

[128] The author is very critical of the Hellenists, writing, “Therefore, they built a gymnasium in Jerusalem according to Gentile custom, concealed the marks of their circumcision, and abandoned the holy covenant. Thus, they allied themselves to the Gentiles and sold themselves to the power of evil” (1 Macc 1:14–15).

[129] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 49.

[130] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 50–51.

[131] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 56.

[132] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 78.

[133] R. H. Charles, ed., *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 2:iv.

section examines the literature pertinent to understanding Judaism's approach to foreigners during the Second Temple period that other sections do not cover. While scholars group the works into categories, such grouping is inconsistent and irrelevant to the current discussion. The large quantity of material necessitates selective sampling of the most pertinent works.[134]

Jubilees dates from 161–140 BCE and is a rewriting of Genesis 1 to Exodus 16 as a revelation to Moses on Mount Sinai.[135] While textual fragments from Qumran confirm the original language as Hebrew, today's English translations are from an Ethiopic version, which came via a lost Greek translation.[136] The author wished to present the biblical narrative in a way that ensured a proper understanding of the author's perspective. For instance, the author stresses Torah observance by conveying that the patriarchs, from Noah onwards, followed the Torah.[137] A related theme was the covenant and that God's chosen people needed to remain separate from the nations. The author uses a prediction that failing to circumcise will result in leaving the covenant and becoming like a Gentile (Jub. 15.33–34). The author strengthens prohibitions on exogamy by retelling the narrative of Dinah's rape from Genesis 34 in Jubilees 30.1–26 to emphasize the prohibition on marrying foreigners, which would result in children that defile the pure ethnic line.[138] VanderKam notes that Jubilees reflects the Ezra/Nehemiah approach against endogamous

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[134] Charlesworth follows Charles approximately and identifies fifty-two writings. Brannan lists one hundred and forty-six. Brannan's list is more than a century later than Charles's (2022 vs. 1913), reflecting the discovery of more documents. For example, Brannan includes material from the Dead Sea Scrolls that other scholars place in its own category. *OTP*, 1:xxv; Rick Brannan, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: A Guide* (Bellingham, WA: Faithlife, 2022), §"Introduction."

[135] *OTP*, 2:44; Brannan, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: A Guide*, s.v. "The Book of Jubilees." VanderKam argues for the narrower date range of 160–150 BCE. James VanderKam, *Book of Jubilees* (London: Bloomsbury, 2001), 21.

[136] VanderKam, *Book of Jubilees*, 14–17.

[137] VanderKam, *Book of Jubilees*, 12.

[138] VanderKam, *Book of Jubilees*, 67–69, 125.

marriage.[139] However, as discussed above, Ezra/Nehemiah argued against marrying *nokrî*. Unfortunately, the Hebrew text of Jubilees 30 is unavailable to identify the original wording used, and one must rely on English translations of the Ethiopic, such as Charlesworth's, which uses "Gentiles."[140] However, the overall tone of Jubilees, similar to Ezra/Nehemiah, appears to aim to preserve a pure ethnic bloodline and thus prohibit marriage to anyone not a descendant of Jacob.

The apocalyptic 1 Enoch is a composition of texts with dates ranging from the third century BCE to the first century CE, with Ethiopic text being the primary source for the English translation, which once again hides the original Hebrew words.[141] It has an inclusive tone, declaring that "all the sons of men will become righteous; and all the peoples will worship [God], and all will bless me and prostrate themselves" (1 En. 10.21) and "all humankind will look to the path of eternal righteousness" (1 En. 91.14).[142] It also declares that the Son of Man is the Light of the Gentiles (1 En. 48.2–4). Donaldson notes that the lack of distinction between Gentiles and Jews, the omission of criticism of the Gentiles, and the absence of Jewish boundary markers blur the line between Jews and Gentiles in Enoch, supporting his thesis of eschatological participation.[143] Theophilus criticizes Donaldson's optimistic approach, noting that the reference to righteous Gentiles is in the future, implying that they are currently unrighteous and suffering

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[139] VanderKam, *Book of Jubilees*, 33.

[140] *OTP*, 2:112–13. Even an assessment of the Ethiopic text would most likely reveal little about the type of "foreigner" that was in the original Hebrew, as it was translated via Greek. A search for Jubilees 30 in the Dead Sea Scrolls was unsuccessful. Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J.C. Tigchelaar, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, vol. 1 (Boston: Brill, 1999).

[141] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 77–78.

[142] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 78–80.

[143] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 90.

appropriate consequences (1 En. 21.6b).[144] There are similarities with the depiction of foreigners in the Sibylline Oracles, which uses a Greco-Roman genre that a Jewish author might have used to reach foreigners in the second century BCE. The prophetess declares that all people (including foreigners) should keep the Ten Commandments as written on the two tablets (Sib. Or. 3.257) and that the nations have failed and will be judged (Sib. Or. 3.599–600).[145]

The Letter of Aristeas, the primary source for understanding how the LXX came about, was written in Greek by Aristeas to his brother, Philocrates, in the Alexandrian community in the second century BCE.[146] It presents the author as a non-Jew (Let. Aris. 16) who is complimentary of the Jews and their God, even though the author was most likely Jewish (Let. Aris. 4–7).[147] The letter also implies that foreigners can be "people of God," and Donaldson argues, in support of his universalism thesis, that this is possible without knowledge of Judaism (Let. Aris. 140).[148]

The Testament of Moses, which Charlesworth argues is from the first century CE and before the temple's destruction in 70 CE, presents the nations as instruments of punishment on sinful Israel (T. Mos. 12.11) while subject to their judgment themselves (T. Mos. 1.12–13).[149] Joseph and Aseneth, whose uncertain date of origin ranges from the first century BCE to second century CE, expands on the biblical text of Moses's marriage to Aseneth, the daughter of an Egyptian priest (Gen 41:45). It is one of several works which describes Aseneth's conversion to

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[144] Michael P. Theophilos, "The Portrayal of Gentiles in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature," in *Attitudes to Gentiles in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. David C. Sim and James S. McLaren (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 80.

[145] Theophilos, "The Portrayal of Gentiles," 75–77.

[146] *OTP*, 2:7.

[147] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 107–110.

[148] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 111.

[149] Theophilos, "The Portrayal of Gentiles," 73–75. *OTP*, 1:919–34. As Charlesworth explains, even though the text is believed to be Semitic in origin, the extant text is in Latin.

"the God of the Hebrews" (Jos. Asen. 11.10), helping the author's contemporaries come to terms with Joseph marrying a foreigner by presenting her as a faithful convert.[150]

Other examples from the Pseudepigrapha that scholars use to describe Judaism's approach to Gentiles are late (e.g., 2 Enoch, 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch, Apocalypse of Abraham), or the level of Christian influence on the work is disputed (e.g., Testament of Abraham), so this analysis excludes them. Nevertheless, the above texts reveal various approaches to foreigners that might have been present between 200 BCE and 100 CE.

Qumran

This category refers to the Dead Sea Scrolls, about 900 manuscripts discovered between 1947 and 1956 around Khirbet Qumran.[151] Paleographic dating places the scrolls' origin between the third century BCE and the third quarter of the first century CE.[152] Two points are primarily of note. The first is that it provides evidence of a group within Judaism, often associated with the Essenes, which was neither pro-Hasmonean nor pro-Pharisaic.[153] The existence of this group supports the notion that there was not "one" Judaism at the beginning of the first century CE, and therefore, there might not have been one attitude toward foreigners.

The second point is the separation by the scrolls of foreigners into two categories: כִּתִּיִים (*kittim*) and גֵּר (*gēr*). While "*kittim*" derives from Citium in Cyprus, biblical usage is generally a

[150] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 141–42. *OTP*, 2:202–48.

[151] John J. Collins, "Gentiles in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Attitudes to Gentiles in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. David C. Sim and James S. McLaren (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 46.

[152] John J. Collins, "Dead Sea Scrolls," in *ABD*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 86.

[153] Collins, "Gentiles in the DSS," 46.

designation of foreigners from the West and might have explicitly referred to the Romans.[154] The War Scroll describes the destruction of the *kittim* (1QM 1:9–10) and is an example of the use of *kittim* to "represent militarily hostile Gentiles, and their destiny in the eschatological battle is complete and utter destruction."[155]

This example contrasts with this body of literature's portrayal of the *gēr*. Several texts in this collection describe the *gēr* similar to the Hebrew Bible. For example, 4Q423 includes the *gēr* with native-born regarding whom God will judge.[156] Collins notes that 4Q159 cites laws from the Pentateuch that provide for humane treatment of the *gēr*.[157] Palmer notes the provision for *gēr* in the Temple Scroll, which says, “and you shall make a third courtyard [and surround the central courtyard …] for their daughters and for *gērîm*, who were bor[n in Israel.]” (11QT 15:5–6).[158] The use of *gēr* in the Damascus Document suggests the inclusion of the *gēr* within the community when describing the enlistment process for the assembly of camps should be "priests

[154] Alexander is described as coming from Kittim (1 Macc 1:1). The chapter is critical of Alexander before introducing Antiochus.

[155] Collins, “Gentiles in the DSS,” 49–50. The passage says, “And on the day on which the Kittim fall, there will be a battle, and savage destruction before the God of Israel, for this will be the day determined by him since ancient times for the war of extermination against the sons of darkness. On this (day), the assembly of the gods and the congregation of men shall confront each other for great destruction” (QM1:1:9–10). Martínez and Tigchelaar, *The DSS Study Edition,* 1:114–5.

[156] Collins, “Gentiles in the DSS,” 53–54. Amongst texts describing ordinances, fragment two of them begins with, “And if [… to a] foreigner or the descendant of a [foreign] fam[ily …] in the presence of Is[rael.] They are [no]t to serve gentiles, Martínez and Tigchelaar, *The DSS Study Edition*, 1:311.

[157] Collins, “Gentiles in the DSS,” 54. The text says, “he will visit fathers and sons, [proselyte]s with all natives” Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J.C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (Boston: Brill, 1999), 2:889. For analysis of the text, see Palmer, *Converts*, 55–58.

[158] Palmer, *Converts*, 63.

first, Levites second, Israelites third and the *ger* fourth" (CD 14.3).[159] A similar "fourth lot for the *gērîm*" is found in the fragmentary 4Q279.[160]

While the above references suggest that the *gēr* are like a tribal category that has been accepted as part of Israel, it appears to contradict other scrolls. For instance, 4Q169 associates *gēr* with those who teach falsely and lead people astray.[161] Also, 4Q174, which builds on Exodus 15:17–18, prohibits both the *nokrî* and the *gēr* (along with Ammonites, Moabites, and bastards) from entering the house.[162] This means that the *gēr* are treated in the same way as the *nokrî* and banned from at least the temple and perhaps from joining Israel's community.[163] Also, 4QMMT prohibits marriage between Israelites and even the converted *gēr*, illustrating no validation of conversion.[164]

Various interpretations are offered to explain this apparent contradiction. To rationalize the inclusion of *gēr* in the Damascus Document with other Qumran texts, Gillihan proposes that the converted *gēr* is a form of idealized fiction to satisfy part of the law and that the *gēr* is "a righteous Gentile who accepted his eschatological exclusion from Israel," content with being a

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[159] Collins, "Gentiles in the DSS," 55–56. Palmer, *Converts*, 62–63.

[160] Palmer, *Converts*, 75.

[161] The scroll fragment, which discusses Nahum 3:4, says, "[Its] interpretation [con]cerns those who lead Ephraim astray, who, by their false teaching and their lying tongue and lip of deceit, will lead many astray, kings and princes, priests and people together with the *gēr*. Cities and families will perish through their counsel, n[ob]les and rul[ers] will fall due to the cursing of their tongues." (4Q169 8–10) Palmer, *Converts*, 78–82. Note that the false teaching here is associated with the Pharisees, and the association of *gēr* with Pharisees indicates the criticism of all outsiders. Palmer, *Converts*, 116.

[162] Martínez and Tigchelaar, *The DSS Study Edition*, 1:352–53. Palmer, *Converts*, 82–86.

[163] Collins, "Gentiles in the DSS," 56–57.

[164] Yonder Moynihan Gillihan, "The גר Who Wasn't There: Fictional Aliens in the 'Damascus Rule,'" *Revue de Qumrân* 25.2 (2011): 282–89. Hayes notes the debate regarding the meaning of 4QMMT B75–82 which includes the phrase "it is written that one must not let it [Israel] mate with another species" and concludes that "4QMMT condemns intermarriage between Jews and *converted* Gentiles" because it defiles Israel's holy seed and notes the parallels with Jubilees. Hayes, *Gentile Impurities*, 82–83.

second-class citizen.[165] While Donaldson identifies some positive references to Gentiles in the scrolls and argues that Qumran was prepared to accept the idea of proselytes, he agrees with Gillihan that the tension between the scrolls suggests that "there were proselytes within the Qumran worldview but not within the Qumran community" and that "the proselytes who appear in the texts are probably to be understood as hypothetical figures rather than as real community members. It is unlikely that the community actually incorporated Gentile converts."[166] However, Palmer, whom Donaldson advised for her doctoral dissertation, proposes that the apparent contradiction is due to the presence of two traditions within the Dead Sea Scrolls.[167] She argues that there were the two traditions of Damascus and Serekh within Qumran's sectarian movement.[168] Her position is that texts favorable to *gēr*, such as CD14, 11QT, 4Q159, and 4Q279, correlate with the Damascus tradition, while 4Q169 and 4Q174 correlate with the Serekh tradition.[169] She concludes that the Damascus tradition "accepts Gentile converts to Judaism as members, and considers Judean ethnicity to be mutable and open to Gentiles," whereas in the Serekh tradition, "Judean ethnicity is immutable and closed to Gentiles" and conversion is "fraudulent."[170]

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[165] Gillihan, "The גר Who Wasn't," 300–302.

[166] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 215.

[167] Palmer, *Converts*, ix.

[168] Palmer, *Converts*, 1n2.

[169] Palmer, *Converts*, 97–121.

[170] Palmer, *Converts*, 127.

Philo

Philo was a well-educated, devout, Alexandrian Jew, born to an extremely wealthy family around 20 BCE.[171] He grew up in the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural city of Alexandria, where the three main ethnic groups were Greek citizens, native Egyptians, and the Jewish community, which had grown to such an extent that it was allowed to run its own affairs. With Roman rule coming in the years before Philo was born, the Jewish community had lost its protection, creating tensions that culminated in the anti-Jewish riots of 38 CE.[172]

Philo's works are in the five principal categories of (1) Allegorical Commentaries (39 treatises), (2) Exposition of the Law (12 treatises), (3) Questions and Answers on Genesis and Exodus (6 treatises), (4) Historical and Apologetic (4 treatises), and (5) Philosophical (5 treatises).[173] His work was driven by his hunger to interpret and explain the Jewish Scriptures while being significantly influenced by living in a Hellenized culture where he wished to champion his people's Jewish traditions to the Greeks and Romans. Philo wrote in Greek and preferred the Septuagint translation of the Scriptures.[174] The widespread debate about Philo's audience ranges from primarily Gentiles to fellow Jews, and Donaldson takes an intermediate position, arguing that "the Jewish community to which he addresses himself is clearly one with a significant penumbra of interested Gentiles."[175] These two motivations led to tensions that are evident in his work.

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[171] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 218.

[172] Runia, "Philo and the Gentiles," 28–29.

[173] Carlos Lévy, "Philo of Alexandria," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta and Uri Nodelman (Stanford, CA: Stanford University, 2022), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2022/entries/philo/.

[174] Runia, "Philo and the Gentiles," 29.

[175] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 221.

Philo presents Israel as God's chosen people, "a new race" (καινοῦ γένους ἀνθρώπων) descended from Noah and called a "holy nation" (ἔθνος ἅγιον, Philo, *Abr.* 56–57 [Colson]).[176] He describes Israel as "the chosen race" (τὸ ἐπίλεκτον γένος Ἰσραήλ, Philo, *Post.* 92 [Colson and Whitaker]).[177] On the face of it, this appears as an ethnic division, though one must be careful to avoid reading modern concepts of "race" into Philo's γένος. Philo's explanation that "Israel" means "he who sees God" (*Abr.* 56–57) hints at his attitude. Throughout his works, Philo aims to champion both Moses and Plato, presenting the Hebrew Scriptures in a positive way toward Hellenistic philosophical thought. There is evidence of this in Philo's *Allegorical Interpretation*, where he presents the primary theme of the Pentateuch as "the struggle of the soul to free itself from earthly passions, to acquire virtue, and to arrive at the vision of God."[178]

Philo builds on the Septuagint's positive portrayal of proselytes, stating that those who have joined God's community are given the same status and privileges as the native-born, defining them as those who have "left … their country, their kinsfolk, and their friends for the sake of virtue and religion" (*Spec.* 1.51–52 [Colson]).[179] Philo celebrates the proselyte, exalting him aloft and explaining that God does not consider one's roots while criticizing the apostates of noble birth (*Praem.* 152).[180] Philo shows a lack of emphasis on God's chosen people being from the land of Israel when he emphasizes Abraham's foreign birth, writing, "The most ancient

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[176] Philo, *On Abraham; On Joseph; On Moses*, trans. F. H. Colson, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935).

[177] Philo, *On the Cherubim; The Sacrifices of Abel and Cain; The Worse Attacks the Better; On the Posterity and Exile of Cain; On the Giants*, trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929), 92.

[178] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 218.

[179] Philo, *On the Decalogue; On the Special Laws, Books 1–3*, trans. F. H. Colson, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937), 1.51–52; Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 235–38; Van Houten, *Alien in Israelite Law*, 182.

[180] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 253.

member of the Jewish nation was a Chaldaean by birth" (*Virt.* 179 [Colson]).[181] Philo also exhibits a lack of ethnocentrism when he writes that God chooses "the character that has eyes to see Him and accords Him genuine devotion" (*Plant.* 60 [Colson and Whitaker]), which Runia argues differentiates an ethical category rather than an ethnic grouping.[182]

However, one should assess whether Philo's presentation of proselytes joining Israel represents reality. Donaldson argues that the need to encourage the native-born to welcome the new incomers (*Spec. 1.52*) suggests the reception might not have been so warm.[183] Philo's description of the mixed group leaving Egypt (*ʿērebַ* in Exod 12:38; ἐπίμικτος πολὺς in the LXX) presents a negative portrayal of the children of Egyptian mothers with Hebrew fathers while positively portraying converts (*Mos.* 1.147). This reveals Philo's attitude toward the two non-Jewish groups in Alexandria: his antipathy toward ethnic Egyptians and his affinity for Greeks.[184] Philo showed his understanding of the inclusion of foreigners in the eschaton when he wrote, "I believe that each nation would abandon its peculiar ways, and, throwing overboard their ancestral customs, turn to honouring our laws alone" (*Mos.* 2.44 [Colson]).[185] However, one should consider whether this is just a desire to align with the thoughts of the prophets about the inclusion of all nations in the end times.

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[181] Philo, *On the Special Laws, Book 4; On the Virtues; On Rewards and Punishments*, trans. F. H. Colson, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939), 179.

[182] Philo, *On the Unchangeableness of God; On Husbandry; Concerning Noah's Work as a Planter; On Drunkenness; On Sobriety*, trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1930), 60; Runia, "Philo and the Gentiles," 33.

[183] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 237–38.

[184] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 225–27.

[185] Philo, *On Abraham; On Joseph; On Moses*.

Philo's exaggerated descriptions of the rest of the world's interest in Jewish law suggest a desire rather than a reality. He describes the whole inhabited world as showing interest in no one else's law except the Jewish one (*Mos.* 2.17–24).[186] Following the Letter of Aristeas, he explains that the Egyptian king, Ptolemy Philadelphus, showed such interest in the Hebrew Scriptures that he commissioned the Septuagint translation (*Mos.* 2.25–43).[187]

In summary, Philo presents Israel as God's chosen and separate people, but the distinction is not ethnic. He appears to be strongly motivated to appeal to the Greeks, giving a positive, philosophical presentation of the Pentateuch and presenting a path for proselytes where they will be exalted and equal to the native-born. However, his disdain for Egyptians hints at the strong motivation to appeal to Greeks, and his idealized descriptions of other people's interests in the Hebrew Scriptures suggest he may be presenting idealized Jewish thought rather than reality.

Josephus

Josephus's texts provide an insight into Jewish thought that complements Philo. Born in 37 CE to a prominent Jerusalem priestly family, he wrote four works (*The Jewish War, Jewish Antiquities, Life,* and *Against Apion*) from Rome between 71 CE and the end of the century.[188] Earlier in his life, he had been tasked with leading the Jewish defense of Galilee in the uprising against Rome in 66 CE, losing to Vespasian in 67 CE, but his subsequent allegiance to Vespasian led to his Roman citizenship and patronage in Rome.[189] One must treat Josephus's writings carefully as they likely support his own agenda in Rome, including self-preservation. Also, he

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[186] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles,* 227–28.

[187] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles,* 227–31.

[188] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles,* 281–82.

[189] Chris Seeman, "Josephus, Flavius," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

wrote them after the life of Jesus and the temple's destruction, so his writings might include attitudes that evolved from these events. Nevertheless, his writings provide insight into Judaism's approach to foreigners during Peter's upbringing in two ways: what the texts reveal about Josephus's attitude and the historical events around Judea leading up to Peter's birth.

Josephus wished to present himself as a Jew (*Vita* 418–421), he was critical of recent Greek authors (*B.J.* 1.13–16), and he followed Philo in being complimentary of the Greek philosophers, though he argued that they learned from Moses (*C. Ap.* 2.168).[190] Understandably, he did not write critically of Rome.[191] His depiction of Gentiles correlates with their treatment of Jews, though he presents Rome's role in the destruction of the temple as God's punishing instrument (*B.J.* 6.99–102). He justifies his writing of *Jewish Antiquities* by arguing that he continues the work of the Septuagint translators (*A.J.* 1.5–17), thus illustrating his alignment with the Septuagint and Philo.[192]

Josephus describes multiple conversions to Judaism, which provide insight. In the account of Izates, Izates worshipped God before he was circumcised (*A.J.* 20.34), with the Galilean Eleazar persuading him that circumcision was required to devote himself entirely to Judaism (*A.J.* 20.34–48).[193] The Roman Metilius avoided execution after he promised to become a Jew, even to the point of circumcision (*B.J.* 2.454). The language suggests a range of being

[190] Flavius Josephus, *The Life; Against Apion*, trans. Henry St. J. Thackeray, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926); Flavius Josephus, *Jewish War: Books 1–2*, trans. Henry St. J. Thackeray, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927).

[191] McLaren, "Attitudes to Gentiles," (ed. Sim and McLaren), 64; Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 349–50.

[192] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 286–87.

[193] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 333–38.

Jewish, culminating in circumcision.[194] Hyrcanus coerced the Idumaeans to convert, including circumcision, and Josephus describes the conversion as having transpired (*A.J.* 13.257–258), though subsequently, the Idumaean Costobarus refused (*A.J.* 15.254–255) as did the Arab Syllaeus when it was required for marrying into the Herodian royal family (*A.J.* 16.225).[195] Hayes argues that for Josephus, intermarriage is defined as with an unconverted Gentile; thus, marrying converts was permitted.[196]

However, what status did foreigners attain? Donaldson argues that when Josephus describes Simon as Giora's son (*B.J.* 2.521), "Giora" is a transliteration of the Aramaic for a proselyte, indicating the label continued to at least the second generation.[197] Restrictions on foreigners remained. Even though Eleazar's attempt to ban gifts or sacrifices from foreigners (ἀλλότριος) was overturned (*B.J.* 2.409–417), the fact that he tried illustrates a sentiment. Furthermore, the fact that Josephus argued against it based on universal standards rather than Scripture offers insight into Josephus's perspective.[198] Two extant copies of the warning inscription that separated the temple proper from the Court of the Gentiles are in accordance with Josephus's description of the temple, in prohibiting foreigners "μηδένα ἀλλόφυλον ἐντὸς τοῦ ἁγίου παριέναι" (*B.J.* 5.194).[199]

Josephus shows an idealized Jewish attitude toward foreigners, as found in Philo. Scholars have generally concluded that there is no historical basis for Josephus's description of

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[194] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 292–93.

[195] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 322–24, 327–28.

[196] Hayes, *Gentile Impurities*, 25n24.

[197] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 296–97.

[198] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 290–292.

[199] Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 562–65.

Alexander sacrificing to God in the temple (*A.J.* 11.331–336).[200] His description of Antiochus's piety in sending a tremendous sacrifice, leading to him being called "the Pious," is likely a distortion of a strategic move (*A.J.* 13.242–244).[201] The description of foreigners from the ends of the earth respecting Jerusalem and the temple (*A.J.* 4.262) echoes the optimistic tone of Philo's similar descriptions.[202] Josephus's distortion of Solomon's prayer for the temple (1 Kgs 8:41–43) changes Solomon's request that the temple will attract *nokrî* to know God into a request that the *nokrî* will see the Jews positively (*A.J.* 8.116–117).[203]

While the previous paragraphs describe the insight Josephus's texts provide into his approach to foreigners, his texts also provide valuable historical background. The first of these is his description of multiple groups within Judaism, which he calls philosophies. He compares and contrasts the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes (*B.J. 2*.119–166; *A.J.* 18.11–25). The Essenes are sometimes identified as the group associated with the Dead Sea Scrolls.[204] Josephus also describes the Maccabean uprising and the growth of the Hasmonean dynasty. After Mattathias initiated the Maccabean revolt in 167 BCE (1 Macc 2:25), events led the Hasmonean faction to

[200] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 316.

[201] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 321–22.

[202] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 299–300.

[203] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 311–12. Josephus writes, "And this help I ask of Thee not alone for the Hebrews who may fall into error, but also if any come even from the ends of the earth or from wherever it may be and turn to Thee, imploring to receive some kindness, do Thou hearken and give it them. For so would all men know that Thou Thyself didst desire that this house should be built for Thee in our land, and also that we are not inhumane by nature nor unfriendly to those who are not of our country, but wish that all men equally should receive aid from Thee and enjoy Thy blessings." Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities: Books 7–8*, trans. Louis H. Feldman, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934).

[204] Seeman, "Josephus, Flavius"; Stokes, "Early Jewish Literature," 144.

build a nation, which included taking over control of the high priesthood.[205] In his description of events around this time, Josephus once again describes groups of Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes (*A.J.* 13.171–172) and goes on to describe the internal opposition to Hasmoneans from the Pharisees (*A.J.* 13.288–298).[206] During the rule of Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE), internal conflicts led to the killing of fifty thousand Jews (*A.J.* 13.376) and the crucifying of eight hundred Pharisees (*A.J.* 13.377–387).[207] While Herod the Great rose and dissolved the Hasmonean line after Pompey took control in 63 BCE, various religious groups within Judaism remained.[208]

Josephus's personal experiences contribute to his insightful descriptions of the first century CE. His accounts describe the diversity within Judaism and suggest he was favorable to foreigners, though one cannot dismiss the influence of his Roman benefactors.

Rabbinic Literature

A final source to consider in this examination is rabbinic literature from 200–600 CE. This literature is from rabbinic Judaism, which became the dominant Judaism after the temple's destruction in 70 CE.[209] Rabbinic literature is the canon of "the dual Torah," which captures the two forms (written and oral) of God's revelation on Sinai.[210] The literature includes the Mishnah

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[205] Joel Willitts, "The Maccabean Revolt and Hasmonean Statecraft," in *Behind the Scenes of the Old Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts*, ed. Jonathan S. Greer, John W. Hilber, and John H. Walton (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 245–46.

[206] Willitts, "Maccabean Revolt," 247–48.

[207] Willitts, "Maccabean Revolt," 249.

[208] Willitts, "Maccabean Revolt," 250.

[209] Rachel Klippenstein, "Rabbinic Literature," in *Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

[210] Neusner, *Introduction to Rabbinic Literature*, xx.

from around 200 CE, the Tosefta (supplements to the Mishnah) from around 300 CE, and two commentaries on the Mishnah called the Talmud of the Land of Israel (or Jerusalem Talmud) from around 400 CE and the Talmud of Babylonia from around 600 CE.[211] The literature includes commentaries on the written Torah by sages from the first through sixth century CE.[212] Neusner notes that the Mishnah does not address any issues Christianity would have raised, while the Talmud of the Land of Israel gives such issues systematic attention.[213]

The temple's destruction in 70 CE resulted in "the two main heirs of Second Temple Judaism" as "rabbinic Judaism, successors to the Pharisees, and a Christianity predominantly Gentile in composition."[214] With rabbinic Judaism probably evolving from the Pharisees, it represents only one of the groups of Judaism at the beginning of the first century.[215] The literature captures the oral tradition which complements the Torah. With a significant part of Mosaic law describing temple cultus, the literature provided new guidance after the temple's destruction.[216] Also, rabbinic Judaism evolved by removing obstacles to permit full assimilation of foreigners.[217] However, it also reacted to the Christian community. Ferguson writes that Rabban Gamaliel II,

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[211] Neusner, *Introduction to Rabbinic Literature*, xx–xxi, 9.

[212] More than twenty of these commentaries were written by sages, including Sifra to Leviticus, Sifre to Numbers, Sifre to Deuteronomy, Genesis Rabbah, and Leviticus Rabbah. Neusner, *Introduction to Rabbinic Literature*, xxi.

[213] Neusner, *Introduction to Rabbinic Literature*, xxii.

[214] Dunn explains that there was not a simple break between these two in 70 CE and that there were variations within both the rabbinic Judaism and Christianity that emerged from Jerusalem's destruction. James D. G. Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways: Between Christianity and Judaism and Their Significance for the Character of Christianity*, 2nd ed. (London: SCM, 2006), 302–11.

[215] Bruce D. Chilton, "Rabbinic Literature and the New Testament," in *The World of the New Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts*, ed. Joel B. Green and Lee Martin McDonald (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 413.

[216] Chilton, "Rabbinic Literature," 413–14.

[217] Hayes, *Gentile Impurities*, 11.

Gamaliel's grandson, introduced a curse into the Eighteen Benedictions toward the end of the first century, condemning the Nazarenes and heretics (*minim*) to formalize the break with Christianity.[218] However, he notes Instone-Brewer's argument that *minim* originally referred to the Sadducees before 70 CE.[219]

Graham describes the scholarly debate about using rabbinic literature in New Testament studies, identifying textual problems, a lack of critical editions of rabbinic texts, and misuses by New Testament scholars.[220] Neusner provides multiple reasons to be cautious when using rabbinic texts for a context at the beginning of the first century CE, including the multiple forms of Judaism. He recommends verifying anything found in rabbinic literature with alternate sources.[221] As the analysis above shows, the other Second Temple literature illustrates multiple approaches to foreigners associated with many variables such as religious groups, geographic locations, time, and the authors' biases. Therefore, a comprehensive review of the rabbinic literature is deemed low value for the current study.

A couple of examples provide some insight to the discussion. For instance, the Tractate Qiddušin from the Jerusalem Talmud (closed ca. 400 CE), which describes the betrothal contract associated with marriage, states, "Ten marriage classes returned from Babylonia: Priests, Levites, Israel, desecrated priests, proselytes, freedmen, bastards, dedicated ones, silenced ones, foundlings. Priests, Levites, and Israel are permitted to marry one another. Levites, Israel,

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[218] Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 491.

[219] Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 491n172; David Instone-Brewer, "The Eighteen Benedictions and the Minim Before 70 CE," *JTS* 54.1 (2003): 25.

[220] Michael T. Graham Jr., "Rabbinic Literature and the New Testament," in *Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

[221] Jacob Neusner, *Rabbinic Literature & the New Testament: What We Cannot Show, We Do Not Know* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1994), 13–14.

proselytes, freedmen, and desecrated priests are permitted to marry one another. Proselytes, freedmen, bastards, silenced ones, and foundlings are permitted to marry one another" (*m. Qidd.* 4.1).[222] The text distinguishes between proselytes (*gēr*) and those identified as "Israelites."

In the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Yevamot (composed between 450 and 550 CE) discusses the process of accepting someone who claims to be a convert, that it might be different if inside or outside the land of Israel, and that they must provide evidence of the conversion (*b. Yebam.* 47a–b). It exposes the practicality of handling a supposed convert and identifies the trust issue. However, Sim identifies that this text supports other rabbinic literature in portraying that "the proselyte becomes an Israelite in all respects," though he recognizes that the practical reality was not so simple, as demonstrated by the marriage classes above.[223] The Aphrodisias inscription in Turkey (from the third century CE or later) is an example where the names of proselytes are intermingled with the names of native-born Jews; yet they are identified as proselytes, though Sim advises caution with drawing conclusions.[224]

Summary and Conclusions

The Second Temple sources are diverse, spanning multiple centuries and coming from Israel and the diaspora. While authorship is unclear in some cases, most authors are influenced by their situation, which likely influenced their writings. Each source requires careful handling as it is difficult to determine how representative each is. They all built upon the foundation of the

[222] Heinrich W. Guggenheimer, ed., *Tractate Qiddušin*, Studia Judaica 43 (Boston: de Gruyter, 2008), 1, 344.

[223] Sim, "Gentiles, God-Fearers, Proselytes," 25.

[224] Sim, "Gentiles, God-Fearers, Proselytes," 26; Joyce Reynolds and Robert Tannenbaum, *Jews and Godfearers at Aphrodisias: Greek Inscriptions with Commentary*, vol. 12 of *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society, 1987), 19–24.

Hebrew Bible and continued to present the Israelites as God's chosen, separate people. They used different words to distinguish different types of foreigners, similar to the Hebrew Bible using *gēr* and *nokrî*. In their representation of foreigners, they used Greek words for proselyte (προσήλυτος), foreigner (ἀλλότριος), and "Gentile" (ἔθνος), with additional Hebrew words used to describe hostile foreigners (*kittim*) or heretics (*minim*).

They confirm the concept of the *gēr*/προσήλυτος and that it led to a convert, but there is a broad range of depictions of such a convert within the community, ranging from being treated equally with native-born to being grouped with the *nokrî* and prohibited from integration. The steps required to convert and integrate are also unclear. Some literature indicates the retention of a convert's status as a proselyte through its guidance on marriage, the order in which it lists groups of people, and how it still referred to second-generation converts as proselytes. There is also the concept of a righteous foreigner—one who worships God and receives God's protection while not converting and remaining outside of the Israelite community.

However, the risk of foreigners leading Israelites to sin might have made it difficult for Israelites to trust foreigners. While the Maccabean revolt might have led to nationalistic hope, the Hasmonean nation illustrated that there were sharp divisions within the Israelite community such that they could not trust one another, with political interests superseding religious adherence. While outsiders might have viewed Judaism as one united religion, the evidence of multiple factions with different viewpoints is strong.

It appears that there were multiple approaches in Judaism to foreigners in the first century CE. There are diverse approaches toward foreigners within Israel, with probably a more open approach in the diaspora, most likely driven by necessity. There is a lack of clarity regarding how a Jew should interact with proselytes or converts, especially around marriage, offspring, and

food. In addition to this range of ideas are the Herodians—Idumaeans who converted to Judaism—who showed loyalty to Rome and who governed Israel during Peter's upbringing, which the next chapter examines.

CHAPTER THREE: PETER'S BACKGROUND BEFORE BECOMING A DISCIPLE

The previous chapter explored the broad subject of Judaism's approach to foreigners and its development through the beginning of the first century CE. The volume of primary texts is vast, and this paper's scope limited the examination to a representative subset. The evidence illustrated various positions toward non-Jews and some correlation with different situations in life. This chapter applies those findings to identify how Peter's approach to foreigners formed before he met Jesus.

This chapter achieves its purpose in two parts. The first part identifies Peter's historical context until his biblical account starts in the Gospels, including where and when he lived, his family situation, economic status, and interaction with foreigners. That context is used with the previous chapter's findings to explore what Peter's approach to foreigners might have been before he met Jesus. Peter would probably have developed his understanding of foreigners through a combination of religious teaching, the impact of foreigners on his overall life situation, and his day-to-day interaction with foreigners and their culture.

Method

Whereas the previous chapter had to select representative examples from a large body of literature, this chapter's challenge is at the opposite end of the spectrum. The material is limited. Cullmann dismisses the apocryphal material when evaluating Peter's life before meeting Jesus, relying on just the Gospel accounts.[1] In Gibson's book based on his PhD dissertation, he describes Peter's background from the Gospels in just one page with five points: (1) Peter is

[1] Cullmann, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*, 19.

from Bethsaida and lives in Capernaum (John 1:44), (2) he has a brother who introduced Peter to Jesus (John 1:41), (3) his mother-in-law lives with him (Mark 1:30), (4) Jesus probably lived with him in Capernaum (Mark 1:29–39; 2:1–12), and (5) Peter is a fisherman and owns a boat (Mark 1:16; Matt 4:18; Luke 5:3).[2] With such limited material, it is not unexpected that little is written on the topic. Card lamented the lack of material on Peter in 2003, even within the Roman Catholic Church. He shared his experience with an employee of a Catholic bookstore that did not have a single book on Peter, where he said, "he's supposed to be your guy!"[3] Fortunately, Bockmuehl somewhat fills the void with his previously mentioned pair of books on Peter, published in 2010 and 2012.[4] Bockmuehl analyzes the context behind the Gospel references and assesses the extrabiblical literature, including apocryphal works and those of the church fathers.[5]

Bockmuehl is not alone in the void, and one must also assess other authors' approaches. Helyer recognizes that the Gospel accounts are not primarily about Peter and admits that "reconstructing the life [of] an individual on the basis of materials whose primary purpose is otherwise requires generous amounts of inference and not a little conjecture. In the nature of [this] case, it can hardly be otherwise."[6] Ehrman identifies the challenge of separating history from legend in both the canonical and extrabiblical texts.[7] However, his summary description of

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[2] Jack J. Gibson, *Peter Between Jerusalem and Antioch: Peter, James, and the Gentiles* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 20–21. Peter's boat ownership is a matter of debate, as discussed below.

[3] Michael Card, *A Fragile Stone: The Emotional Life of Simon Peter* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 10.

[4] Bockmuehl, *The Remembered Peter*; Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*.

[5] Bockmuehl provides a comprehensive listing of ancient source material about Peter on his website at Oxford University's Bodleian Library. Markus Bockmuehl, "Simon Peter in Scripture and Memory," 2012, http://simonpeter.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/.

[6] Helyer, *Life and Witness*, 30.

[7] Bart D. Ehrman, *Peter, Paul and Mary Magdalene: The Followers of Jesus in History and Legend* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 6. Even though I believe in the inerrancy of the biblical texts, I agree that it is appropriate for scholarship to challenge their historicity. However, as Ehrman's writing reveals, he approaches

Peter as "an illiterate peasant who spoke Aramaic" illustrates an incomplete assessment of the historical situation, potentially influenced by Ehrman's goal to disprove the authenticity of Peter's speeches in Acts while grouping the Petrine Epistles with the apocryphal literature in Peter's name.[8]

Other authors take alternative approaches. Shelton uses Jowett's description of Peter's visit to Britain in *The Drama of the Lost Disciples* as "an example of the numerous exaggerated claims about the apostles" with "little historical support."[9] Rather than exaggerating claims, other authors avoid the topic. In Bond and Hurtado's *Peter in Early Christianity*, the only chapter examining Peter's background before Jesus is Freyne's "The Fisherman from Bethsaida."[10] Freyne's chapter barely mentions Peter, noting that Simon was a fisherman, that Peter was from Bethsaida, and that his analysis has not helped to shed light on Peter.[11] Hurtado's introduction, which assessed three prominent Protestant Petrine scholars and "warned us that the historical

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texts describing miracles with a presupposition that they must be impossible and therefore a legend, having already accepted the impossibility of the divine. Moreover, he presents fantastical accounts about Peter resurrecting smoked tuna from the apocryphal *Acts of Peter* alongside biblical accounts. Ehrman, *Peter, Paul and Mary*, 3–13.

[8] Ehrman, *Peter, Paul and Mary*, 66.

[9] W. Brian Shelton, *Quest for the Historical Apostles: Tracing Their Lives and Legacies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 72. George F. Jowett, *Drama of the Lost Disciples* (London: Covenant Publishing, 1967), 173–75. Jowett's book is an entertaining read, and that Amazon offers a 15th edition indicates its popularity. Rash's introduction suggests that the author, a "Canadian of British birth," was promoting Britain's Christian heritage, though his claim that Jowett's book is "concerned with facts, not fancies" appears misplaced.

[10] Seán Freyne, "The Fisherman from Bethsaida," in *Peter in Early Christianity*, ed. Helen K. Bond and Larry W. Hurtado (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 19–29. Arguably, some of Williams's chapter on Peter's name could be included in the "pre-Jesus" timeframe, though the majority of her analysis is about the name that Jesus gave him.

[11] Freyne, "The Fisherman from Bethsaida," 19, 28, and 29. When searching for the text "Peter" in the book on archive.org, the display of results shows a conspicuous void in Freyne's chapter in comparison to others. Freyne was more of a Galilean Judaism scholar than a Petrine scholar, as evidenced in his fine book. Seán Freyne, *Galilee, from Alexander the Great to Hadrian, 323 B.C.E. to 135 C.E.: A Study of Second Temple Judaism* (Wilmington, DE and Notre Dame: Glazier; University of Notre Dame Press, 1980).

Peter might prove as elusive as his historical master," indicates either the challenge or the lack of interest in exploring Peter's historical background, though probably both.[12]

There is even a gap in the discussion about Peter's pre-Jesus years in commentaries on the Petrine Epistles by authors who accept Petrine authorship. The paucity of evidence likely influences this. Jobes's *1 Peter* is representative. For example, her only mention of "Capernaum" is in an excursus about the quality of Peter's Greek, in which she does not mention Bethsaida.[13] She does not refer to the Bible verses that describe Peter's background.[14] Her sixty-one-page introduction discusses the situations of the author and audience at the time of the letter but does not explore Peter's pre-Jesus background.[15] Much of her introduction discusses the issues around Petrine authorship, illustrating how that topic distracts from other worthy subjects. Indeed, it is reasonable to consider the influence of Peter's early life experiences on his later life, and hence his first letter.

While one must recognize that Peter's time with Jesus turned his world upside-down, one's early years are called "formative" for a reason. Much of what one learns at that age stays with you for life, hence this chapter's relevance. With that in mind, the first section of this chapter explores Peter's early years, discussing his birth date and location, name, towns where he probably grew up, family, and economic status. The second section builds on the first, using Peter's background to form a picture of what his approach to foreigners might have been, having

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[12] Bond and Hurtado, *Peter in Early Christianity*, xvii.

[13] Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 323–24. According to John 1:44, Peter's hometown was Bethsaida, which suggests he was born there and spent some of his early years there, before moving to Capernaum (Mark 1:21, 29). Both Bethsaida and Capernaum most likely influenced his development.

[14] I searched her book's "Index of Scripture and Other Ancient Writings" for the verses listed by Gibson, as mentioned above, to confirm this absence. Jobes, *1 Peter*, 367–68.

[15] Jobes, *1 Peter*, 1–61.

been shaped by macro-foreign effects (i.e., Hellenistic and Roman influences), cross-cultural experiences, and Judaism.

Peter's Early Years

Little was written in antiquity about Peter's early years. One can surmise additional information with varying degrees of certainty using analysis of the evidence. This section examines what his life might have been like before he met Jesus, recognizing the uncertainties due to the paucity of evidence.

Birth Location and Date

These two topics have different amounts of evidence. John 1:44 states that Peter's hometown was Bethsaida. In contrast, none of the ancient texts provide evidence for the year of Peter's birth. However, the former is not so clear, as this is the only piece of evidence. While Bockmuehl forgives Cullmann (writing in 1952) for reaching such an impactful decision about Peter's birthplace from a single New Testament reference, he criticizes more recent scholars who have not examined any new evidence.[16] However, after Bockmuehl discusses Bethsaida at length, he concludes that it was Peter's birthplace.[17]

The search for Peter's birth year is less satisfying. Many sources, such as Cullmann, Helyer, and Jobes, do not discuss the topic. Internet sources suggest "1 BCE," "1 CE," or

[16] Bockmuehl, *The Remembered Peter*, 158–59. For Cullmann's analysis, see Cullmann, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*, 24.

[17] Bockmuehl, *The Remembered Peter*, 183–87. See also Bockmuehl, "Simon Peter in Scripture and Memory," 21–23. A section explores this further below.

"unknown," with no support offered for either of the first two suggestions. Bockmuehl falls into a similar camp, describing Peter's birth as in the late first century BCE but without any support.[18]

One can estimate it using other evidence. Stein argues that Jesus began his ministry around 27–28 CE, having been born around 7–5 BCE, and most likely was crucified in 30 CE.[19] Thus, Stein's arguments place Jesus's age at thirty-two to thirty-five years old when he started his ministry, in line with Luke's comment that Jesus "was about thirty years old" (Luke 3:23). David was thirty when he became king (2 Sam 5:3–4), as was Joseph when entering Pharaoh's service (Gen 41:46) and Ezekiel when starting to see divine visions (Ezek 1:1).[20] Stein notes that the Qumran community required leaders to be over thirty years old.[21] The Rabbinic treatise *Pirkē Aboth*, or "Sayings of the Fathers," written down around 200 CE and representing Jewish

[18] Bockmuehl, *The Remembered Peter*, 156.

[19] Scholars use multiple sources to determine dates, often resulting in traditionally-accepted dates with various levels of debate. For example, Stein explains the multiple inputs used to determine Herod's death, which helps determine the date of Jesus's birth (Matt 2:1; Luke 1:5). Josephus provides temporal anchors of a lunar eclipse shortly before Herod's death (*A.J.* 17.6.4) and a Passover shortly after (*A.J.* 17.9.3). Astronomical calculations and the Jewish calendar place Herod's death between March 12 and April 11 in 4 BCE. Josephus provides further support in his description of the length of Herod's reign (*A.J.* 17.8.1) which aligns with the Roman calendar, though translating that into the present-day calendar introduces additional complexities as the sixth-century monk who defined this (Dionysius Exiguus) made mistakes. Stein, *Jesus the Messiah*, 52. Filmer reviews the arguments around Herod's chronology, identifying alternative dates for the lunar eclipse, including one on December 29, 1 BCE, and concludes that the evidence is insufficient to determine dates with certainty. W. E. Filmer, "The Chronology of the Reign of Herod the Great," *JTS* 17.2 (1966): 283–98. The proximity of this alternative eclipse to the change in the eras suggests Exiguus might have used it in his calculations. Absolute dating is not essential for this dissertation, which uses the generally-accepted dates for convenience and brevity.

[20] Stein, *Jesus the Messiah*, 51–60.

[21] Stein, *Jesus the Messiah*, 38. Stein references CD 17:5–6, which Schechter identifies in his 1910 book based on the Cairo Genizah collection. Salomon Schechter, *Fragments of a Zadokite Work* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910), 53. Fraade notes that the discovery of multiple manuscripts in Qumran's Cave Four in 1952 led to a renumbering of the columns in the Damascus Document, though he comments that text variations were minor. Steven D. Fraade, *The Damascus Document*, The Oxford Commentary on the Dead Sea Scrolls (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 1–3. Fraade identifies the passage that Stein references as CD 14:6–9, which he translates as, "And the priest who is appointed [head] of the Many shall be from thirty years old until sixty years old, learned in the Book of Hagi and in all of the precepts of the Torah, to proclaim them according to their judgment. And the Overseer for all the camps shall be from thirty t[o] fifty years old," Fraade, *The Damascus Document*, 116.

teaching from the third century BCE, includes some guidance regarding age.[22] It suggests that one should marry at eighteen and pursue a profession at twenty.[23] In the Hebrew Bible, those over twenty years old are included in census data and are required to pay taxes (Exod 30:14; 38:26), can go to war (Num 1:3), and have a different value as a slave (Lev 27:3, 5), supporting the idea of being expected to pursue a profession when at that age.

The reference to Simon's mother-in-law in Mark 1:30 suggests Peter was married at the time and hence over eighteen. That he was a fisherman (Mark 1:16) indicates that he had a profession, suggesting he was over twenty. An age-based leadership hierarchy would suggest Jesus was older than Peter, who was older than his brother Andrew.[24] Andrew could also be over twenty as a fisherman, placing Peter over twenty-one, with an upper age in the low thirties to be younger than Jesus. Peter's ministry leadership after the resurrection (Acts 1:15) suggests he was then at least thirty, born at the end of the first century BCE, which agrees with Bockmuehl's statement and does not disagree with the other evidence.[25]

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[22] Charles, *The Pseudepigrapha*, 2:686.

[23] The translated text of *Pirkē Aboth* 5.21 reads, "At five years of age the study of Scripture; At ten the study of Mishnah; At thirteen subject to the commandments; At fifteen the study of Talmud; At eighteen the bridal canopy; At twenty for pursuit [of livelihood]; At thirty the peak of strength; At forty wisdom; At fifty able to give counsel; At sixty old age." Joshua Kulp, trans., "Pirkei Avot 5:21," *Sefaria*, https://www.sefaria.org/Pirkei_Avot.5.21?lang=bi&with=About&lang2=en. Charles places the passage at the chapter's end at 5.27, noting a textual variant. The main difference with Charles's translation is that he describes age "twenty [is] for retribution." Charles, *The Pseudepigrapha*, 2:710. Danby generally agrees with Kulp. Herbert Danby, *The Mishnah: Translated from the Hebrew with Introduction and Brief Explanatory Notes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933), 458.

[24] Matthew G. Easton, "Easton's Bible Dictionary," in *Illustrated Bible Dictionary and Treasury of Biblical History, Biography, Geography, Doctrine, and Literature* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1893), s.v. "Peter."

[25] I recognize the high level of speculation in these steps to determine Peter's birth year. For the purpose of this dissertation, a precise year is unimportant and undeterminable, and Bockmuehl's position on Peter's birth year is taken for practical reasons in conveying Peter's age.

Peter's Name

The Gospel authors give Peter the name Σίμων (Mark 1:16), Κηφᾶς (John 1:42), Πέτρος (Matt 4:18), Βαριωνᾶ (Matt 16:17), and ὁ υἱὸς Ἰωάννου[26] (John 1:42). Outside of the Gospels, Peter is also called Συμεών (Acts 15:14; 2 Pet 1:1).[27] Cullmann argues that Peter's original name could have been either the Hebrew שִׁמְעוֹן (Simeon, as per the patriarch in Gen 29:33) or the Greek Σίμων, or that he was given both similar sounding Hebrew and Greek names from the outset, "as was customary in the Dispersion."[28] Note that his brother, Andrew, only has a Greek name Ἀνδρέας, which supports Peter's given name being Greek. Their fellow Bethsaidan, Philip, also just had a Greek name (Φίλιππος, John 1:44).[29] Simon and Simeon were popular names at this time, and linking the name to a revolutionary figure is a stretch.[30]

Κηφᾶς is a Greek transliteration of the Aramaic כֵּיפָא (*kêpāʾ*), which means "stone" or "rock."[31] Syriac translations reflect the Aramaic more closely with the name "Simon Kepha," though translation into Greek adds the final "s" to give the word a Greek ending—thus, "Κηφᾶς."[32] It was not a proper name during the Second Temple period, implying it was a nickname or a new name that Jesus gave to Peter, which persisted due to its distinctiveness.[33] The

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[26] The NA28 and CSB indicate Ιωνα as a textual variant.

[27] The CSB identifies that some manuscripts use "Simon" in 2 Peter 1:1.

[28] Cullmann, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*, 19–20. Helyer argues that Peter had both an Aramaic and Greek name, reflecting a bilingual environment with strong Hellenistic influence. Helyer, *Life and Witness*, 19.

[29] Bockmuehl, *The Remembered Peter*, 149.

[30] Bockmuehl, *The Remembered Peter*, 137–40.

[31] Cullmann, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*, 20. BDB, s.v. "כֶּעַס."

[32] Cullmann, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*, 20.

[33] Bockmuehl, *The Remembered Peter*, 149–50. Perkins notes one use of "*Kephāʾ*" in an Aramaic text from Elephantine (ca. 416 BCE), offering it as evidence that *Kephāʾ* might have been a proper name during the first century CE. Perkins, *Peter*, 40. However, Bockmuehl dismisses this example, arguing that "it remains the case that nearly half a millennium of history and culture separates Elephantine from first-century Palestine, where the

bestowal of a new name has precedent in the Hebrew Bible (Abraham for Abram in Gen 17:5, Sarah for Sarai in Gen 17:15, and Israel for Jacob in Gen 32:28), and Jesus called Zebedee's sons the "sons of thunder" (Mark 3:17).[34] One could argue that Jesus's conferral of a new name on Peter is a reciprocation of Peter calling Jesus the Messiah (Matt 16:16–18).[35]

While Cullmann argues that ὁ υἱὸς Ἰωάννου ("son of John," John 1:42) indicates that ωνᾶ in Βαριωνᾶ ("son of Jonah," Matt 16:17) is an abbreviation for John, Bockmuehl argues it is not so clear, though he ultimately agrees. Both dismiss any connection between Peter's father and the prophet Jonah, the Aramaic term for a terrorist, or any link with a nationalistic movement.[36] To conclude, while there is uncertainty about Peter's original name, his brother's Greek name suggests that there might have been a Hellenistic influence on the family. The name "Peter" possibly came from a translation of Peter's Aramaic name. There is insufficient evidence to associate Peter's father with a nationalistic movement.

Bethsaida

The New Testament mentions Bethsaida seven times.[37] John describes Andrew and Peter's hometown (πόλις) as Bethsaida (John 1:44) while mentioning that Philip was from there, and later calling it "Bethsaida of Galilee" (John 12:21). While the Synoptic Gospels are silent

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evidence suggests that Cephas was not current as a name." Bockmuehl, *The Remembered Peter*, 150. Cullmann also identifies ambiguity in the biblical evidence about when Jesus gave Peter the nickname, but for this dissertation, I share his conclusion that the "when" is unimportant. Cullmann, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*, 23.

[34] Cullmann, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*, 21.

[35] Cullmann, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*, 22.

[36] Cullmann, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*, 23–24; Bockmuehl, *The Remembered Peter*, 141–46.

[37] Matthew 11:21; Mark 6:45; 8:22; Luke 9:10; 10:13; John 1:44; 12:21. Markus Bockmuehl, "Simon Peter and Bethsaida," in *The Missions of James, Peter, and Paul: Tensions in Early Christianity*, ed. Bruce D. Chilton and Craig A. Evans (Boston: Brill, 2005), 54.

about Peter's origins in Bethsaida, they mention it in the context of Jesus's ministry. Luke locates Jesus and disciples in the town (πόλις) of Bethsaida before the feeding of the five thousand (Luke 9:10). Mark describes Jesus sending his disciples ahead of him to Bethsaida (Mark 6:45) and later describes Jesus healing a blind man there (Mark 8:22), describing the location as a village (κώμη, Mark 8:23, 26). Even though Jesus performed "mighty works" in Bethsaida and Chorazin, their residents were not receptive (Luke 10:13; Matt 11:21).

Josephus describes that Herod Philip named the city after Caesar's daughter, Julia (*Ant*. 18.28), and that he later died there in 33 CE (*Ant*. 18.108).[38] Josephus explains that Julias is in the lower Gaulanitis (*B.J.* 2.168) by the Jordan and Lake Tiberias, inhabited by a mixture of Jews and Syrians (*B.J.* 3.57).[39] Archaeological evidence suggests two possible locations for Bethsaida on the east side of the Jordan: Et-Tell and El-Araj.[40] The two locations were likely linked.[41] Bockmuehl favors Et-Tell, whose archaeological record suggests Bethsaida was a small,

[38] Philip "raised the village (κώμη) of Bethsaida on Lake Gennesaritis to the status of city (πόλεως) by adding residents and strengthening the fortifications. He named if after Julia, the emperor's daughter." Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities: Books 18–19*, trans. Louis H. Feldman, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), 18.28. "He died in Julias. His body was carried to the tomb that he himself had had erected before he died and there was a costly funeral." Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities: Book 20*, trans. Louis H. Feldman, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), 18.108. James F. Strange, "Beth-Saida," in *ABD*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 692.

[39] Philip built "Julias in lower Gaulanitis" and another city called Julia in Peraea. Josephus, *Jewish War: Books 1–2*, 2.168. Josephus's description of "a mixed population of Jews and Syrians" applies to all of Agrippa's kingdom, so it describes a time after Philip and is not specific to Bethsaida. Flavius Josephus, *Jewish War: Books 3–4*, trans. Henry St. J. Thackeray, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927), 3.57.

[40] In 2010, Bockmuehl provided a comprehensive summary of the status of the argument for either site and recognized the ongoing work, which faces the challenge of instability in the region. Bockmuehl, *The Remembered Peter*, 170–87. Steinmeyer provides an update. Nathan Steinmeyer, "Bethsaida and the Church of the Apostles," *Biblical Archaeology Society*, 5 November 2021, https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/bethsaida-and-the-church-of-the-apostles/.

[41] Archeological evidence suggests the town moved after geological changes, which could explain the two locations. Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, 173–74. Without any supporting evidence or reference, Helyer states that El-Araj was on the west side of the river in New Testament times, with the River Jordan's course having since changed. Helyer, *Life and Witness*, 22. Bockmuehl attributes the position regarding the change in the River Jordan's course as Pixner's and states that Pixner changed his mind in light of new excavations. Bockmuehl, "Simon Peter and Bethsaida," 63n52.

Hellenistic town with few observant Jews.[42] The location was technically not in Galilee but in Golan, part of the Herodian tetrarchy administered by Philip rather than Antipas during Jesus's ministry.[43] However, there is evidence that ancient writers used the term "Galilee" to include settlements around the lake rather than just the province, hence "Bethsaida of Galilee" (John 12:21).[44] The location was close to trade routes linking the region to Damascus in the north.[45]

There is scholarly debate regarding the relative Jewishness of Bethsaida. Freyne argues that it probably did not grow into the city that Philip envisaged when he renamed it Julias.[46] Freyne also notes that religious conservatism and adherence to the written Torah were more likely in rural areas.[47] Peter's subsequent declaration about having "never eaten anything impure and ritually unclean" (Acts 10:14) and his recognizing that "it is forbidden for a Jewish man to associate with or visit a foreigner (ἀλλόφυλος)" (Acts 10:28) suggest a Jewish upbringing with a degree of separation from non-Jews. Bethsaidan Jews would inevitably have had some interface with non-Jews in their daily activities, but the extent is difficult to determine.[48] There is also a debate regarding the relative Greekness of Bethsaida. Ellens notes that Andrew is a purely Greek name, not appearing in written texts as a Jewish name, with Philip appearing in a limited way,

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[42] Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, 173–74.

[43] Philip's portion of the Herodian tetrarchy is described as Ituraea and Trachonitis in Luke 3:1, which describes Herod as the tetrarch of Galilee, referring to Antipas. Josephus describes Batanea, Trachonitis, and Auranitis under Philip with Galilee and Perea under Antipas (*A.J.* 17.11.4).

[44] Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, 22–23, 170.

[45] Mark A. Chancey, *The Myth of a Gentile Galilee: The Population of Galilee and New Testament Studies*, SNTSMS 118 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), xv, 157.

[46] Freyne, *Galilee*, 137.

[47] Freyne, *Galilee*, 322–23.

[48] One fascinating piece of evidence is the small percentage of fish bones in the extant animal bones in the Et-Tell archaeological record, with most of those fish being the non-kosher catfish. Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, 173.

though the Greek names Simon and Peter have Hebrew equivalents.[49] Ellens notes that Philip and Andrew "pass on to Jesus questions from Greek-speaking inquirers" (John 12:21–22), though Strickert argues that the term John uses, Ἕλληνές, "refers to Gentiles, not Ἑλληνισται which would refer to Greek-speaking Jews."[50] While Bockmuehl notes that Peter is not involved in this incident and concludes that Andrew and Philip are more familiar with the locale, his conclusion is somewhat circumstantial, and other reasons could explain this.[51] Finally, Chancey notes the unlikelihood of a dramatic change between Capernaum and Bethsaida when entering Philip's tetrarchy, even though the non-Jewish influence increased.

Capernaum

Mark describes Jesus going "into Simon and Andrew's house" in Capernaum (Mark 1:29) and Matthew recounts that, while in Capernaum, "Jesus went into Peter's house and saw his mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever" (Matt 8:14). Jesus moved to Capernaum from Nazareth after beginning his ministry (Matt 4:13, Mark 2:1). Capernaum had a dominant Jewish population with a large synagogue (Luke 7:2–5).[52] There is no indication of when or why Peter moved to Capernaum from Bethsaida, but the texts above indicate that he is married. Josephus only references the location in describing the fertile region (*B.J.* 3.519) and after he fell off his

[49] J. Harold Ellens, *Bethsaida in Archaeology, History and Ancient Culture: A Festschrift in Honor of John T. Greene* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 218–19. Of the twelve disciples, only these three have Greek names. However, all seven men chosen by the disciples in Acts 6:3 have Greek names, though the text suggests that this was in the context of Hellenistic Jews. Ellens, *Bethsaida*, 226.

[50] Ellens, *Bethsaida*, 218; Frederick M. Strickert, *Philip's City: From Bethsaida to Julias* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2011), 118. BDAG aligns with Strickert, noting that this instance is "used of non-Israelite/gentiles who expressed an interest in the cultic life of Israel." BDAG, s.v. "Ἕλλην."

[51] Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, 168–69. One reason Peter is not involved is that he might have been busy doing other things.

[52] Bockmuehl, *The Remembered Peter*, 73.

horse (*Life* 403).[53] Archaeological evidence supports the above synagogue, though scholars debate the relevance of the grid pattern of streets and residences grouped in *insulae*. Other substantial archaeological finds include a multi-room mausoleum and a Roman bathhouse from the second or third century CE.[54] The evidence to support the claim to have found Peter's house close to the synagogue in Capernaum is weak.[55]

All four Gospels make multiple references to Jesus in Capernaum. In addition to his moving there, Jesus taught in Capernaum's synagogue, where he healed a man with an unclean spirit (Mark 1:21–25), healed a centurion's servant (Luke 7:1), and went there after feeding the five thousand (John 6:17, 24). These suggest that Jesus made Capernaum his center of activities in Galilee.[56] The centurion's involvement in building the synagogue (Luke 7:1–5) suggests that the Jews and non-Jews were friendly with each other.[57] Archaeological material suggests the population was primarily, but not exclusively, Jewish.[58]

Family

The biblical references to Peter's mother-in-law (Mark 1:30, 8:14) and Cephas's wife (1 Cor 9:5) indicate that Peter was married.[59] Clement of Alexandria's mention of Peter and Philip having children aligns with this (*Strom.* 3.6.52, from around 200 CE), and Hengel identifies that

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[53] Chancey, *The Myth*, 101.

[54] Chancey, *The Myth*, 102–3.

[55] Chancey, *The Myth*, 105.

[56] Helyer, *Life and Witness*, 28.

[57] Melton B. Winstead, "Capernaum," in *Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016), n.p.

[58] Amanda Cookson Carver, "Capernaum, Archaeological Overview," in *Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016), n.p.

[59] Helyer, *Life and Witness*, 27.

he wrote about the advantage to mission work of being married.[60] Shelton describes Clement of Alexandria's account of Peter's wife's martyrdom as legendary and believes that popular culture's naming her Perpetua is unsubstantiated.[61]

Clement's record notes that Peter and Philip had children, but in contrast to Philip's children, Clement does not mention any marriage of Peter's offspring (*Strom.* 3.6.52).[62] The second-century CE apocryphal *Acts of Peter* describes Peter's healing of his beautiful daughter's paralysis to prove he could, but then he returned her to her infirmity because it was God's will to protect her from defilement by Ptolemy.[63] Tradition names Peter's daughter Petronilla, who was supposedly buried with Domitilla.[64] Eusebius rejected the authenticity of *The Acts of Peter* (*Hist. eccl.* 3.3.2). Grant mentions that Peter also had a son but without any supporting references.[65]

Helyer speculates whether Peter married one of Zebedee's daughters, forming a family business with fellow fishermen James and John.[66] Easton writes that Peter's "father probably died while he was still young, and he and his brother were brought up under the care of Zebedee

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[60] Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis, Books 1–3*, trans. John Ferguson, The Fathers of the Church 85 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1991), 3, 289. The translation of the text reads, "Are they not criticizing the apostles? Peter and Philip produced children, and Philip gave his daughters away in marriage." It is also cited by Eusebius in *Hist. eccl.* 3.30.2. Hengel argues that Clement of Alexandria's writings demonstrate his viewpoint regarding the advantage of wives to mission work. Hengel, *Saint Peter*, 123.

[61] Shelton, *Quest*, 60–61. Clement of Alexandria *Strom.* 7.11.63, cited by Eusebius *Hist. eccl.* 3.30.2. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3.30.2.

[62] Shelton, *Quest*, 60.

[63] Robert F. Stoops Jr., *The Acts of Peter*, Early Christian Apocrypha 4 (Salem, OR: Polebridge, 2012), 1, 7–8, 41–44. Stoops identifies the singular *Act of Peter* from the Berlin Coptic Codex: BG 8502.4 and discusses the relationship between this text and the broader *Acts of Peter*. See also J. K. Elliott, ed., *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation Based on M. R. James* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 397–98.

[64] Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, 145–46.

[65] Michael Grant, *Saint Peter* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1994), 57.

[66] Helyer, *Life and Witness*, 27.

and his wife Salome."[67] Adams argues that marriages in Second Temple Judea were likely endogamous within the same kinship group for both religious and economic reasons, suggesting that Peter's family would have known his wife's family before the marriage.[68] However, all that the biblical record tells us is that Peter had a wife and a mother-in-law.

Economic Status

Peter was a fisherman, working from the shore with his brother Andrew (Mark 1:16) and from his boat (Luke 5:3) with his business partners, James and John (Luke 5:10).[69] Peter goes fishing in a boat after the resurrection (John 21:3). These passages lead to debates about whether Peter owned a boat or not, reflecting his economic status.[70] Helyer, while conceding that it is difficult to determine, thinks the local economy meant fishermen were appreciated but not highly regarded. Grant suggests that salt helped fishermen to be prosperous.[71]

Biblical descriptions of Peter's house also shed light on his economic status. His house was large enough to give a home to his brother Andrew, his wife's mother, and Jesus, who seems to have lived with them (Mark 1:29). While archeologists might have found Peter's house in Capernaum, revealing several families living in rooms around a court, the evidence is inconclusive regarding Peter's precise economic status.[72] The fact that the families were not poor peasants is inferred by the reference to Zebedee having "hired servants" (Mark 1:20). Peter

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[67] Easton, "Easton's Bible Dictionary," s.v. "Peter."

[68] Samuel L. Adams, *Social and Economic Life in Second Temple Judea* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2014), 23.

[69] The ESV describes James and John as "partners." The Greek word is from κοινωνός, which BDAG describes as "with someone," and suggests a "business" partnership in this context. BDAG, s.v. "κοινωνός."

[70] Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, 23.

[71] Grant, *Saint Peter*, 56.

[72] Helyer, *Life and Witness*, 27–28; Perkins, *Peter*, 38–39.

appears to be in the middle of the economic scale.[73] Bockmuehl observes that the church fathers suggested Peter grew up poor—a view which might persist today and remains popular in people's mental picture of an apostle.[74]

Helyer highlights that the Galilean fishing industry was under state regulation and not part of a free market economy, and Peter would have had to pay various taxes and harbor usage fees to the Herodian Roman client government.[75] However, Peter also had to pay a temple tax (Matt 17:24). While Peter might have begrudged paying taxes, there is no evidence that this would have engendered a negative attitude specific to foreigners as the Herodians and the Jewish leadership drove the taxes (Mark 12:13).

Analysis

The investigation above confirms the lack of definitive evidence regarding Peter's early years. What is most certain is that Peter grew up in upper Galilee in a Jewish household and made his living as a fisherman. It is likely that, as a Jew, he led a life that was somewhat separate from non-Jews. While some interactions with non-Jews would have been an essential part of day-to-day life, it is difficult to determine Peter's cross-cultural exposure. He probably attended

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[73] Helyer, *Life and Witness*, 26–27.

[74] Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, 168. Chrysostom describes Peter as an "uncouth rustic" (*Hom. Act.* 4 on Acts 2:1–2). In Chrysostom's *Homily on John*, he paints fishermen as very poor in his comment about John 1:1: "Of this [John] was, and his father a poor fisherman, so poor that he took his sons to the same employment. Now you all know that no workman will choose to bring up his son to succeed him in his trade, unless poverty press him very hard, especially where the trade is a mean one. But nothing can be poorer, meaner, no, nor more ignorant, than fishermen. Yet even among them there are some greater, some less; and even there our Apostle occupied the lower rank, for he did not take his prey from the sea, but passed his time on a certain little lake. And as he was engaged by it with his father and his brother James, and they mending their broken nets, a thing which of itself marked extreme poverty, so Christ called him" (*Hom. Jo.* 2 [Stupart]). John Chrysostom, *The Homilies of S. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, on the Gospel of St. John*, trans. G. T. Stupart (Oxford: J.H. Parker, 1848), 9–10.

[75] Helyer, *Life and Witness*, 25–26.

the Capernaum synagogue, though the amount of interaction with proselytes or converts there is unknown.

As noted previously, few commentators analyze Peter's background in the context of his apostolic ministry. Cullmann is one of the few. Having noted that Peter "comes from Bethsaida" (John 1:44) and that its location in "Gentile surroundings" means that he would "have been polished by intercourse with foreigners and have had some good Greek culture," Cullman argues that this "could be related to the fact that in the account of Acts, chapters 10 and 11, Peter champions a universalistic point of view and, as we shall see, is not too far removed from Paul in his theology."[76] Cullman makes his argument with a minimal examination of the Petrine Epistles. Bockmuehl argues that "Cullmann clearly overplayed his hand … in suggesting that a direct road leads from Bethsaida to the universalism and openness of the Gentile mission played by the Peter of Acts 10." However, Bockmuehl agrees in principle, noting that "after the vision at Jaffa, Peter embraced the gospel for all nations."[77] Part of Bockmuehl's argument is that "Peter grew up fully bilingual in a Jewish minority setting" in Bethsaida.[78] Bockmuehl insufficiently explains his meaning of "fully bilingual" and fails to examine the difference between the working knowledge of a second language to facilitate trade and his suggested fluency. Also, Bockmuehl's conclusion that Andrew and Philip's apparent familiarity with Bethsaida being greater than Peter's (John 6:8–9) means that Peter had moved to Capernaum "many years earlier" relies on somewhat circumstantial evidence.[79]

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[76] Cullmann, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*, 24.

[77] Bockmuehl, "Simon Peter and Bethsaida," 83–84.

[78] Bockmuehl, "Simon Peter and Bethsaida," 82.

[79] Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, 169.

Helyer's analysis appears more balanced. He concludes his eleven-page discussion of Peter's background with, "There are still many unanswered (and unanswerable) questions, but it [the foregoing analysis] at least provides some understanding of what it means to be a Galilean fisherman in the first century A.D."[80] He suggests that Peter's portrait depends primarily on the episodes in the Gospels that he participates in, which is covered in my next chapter. However, before examining Peter's time with Jesus, the following section concludes the current chapter by discussing what Peter's approach to foreigners might have been before he met Jesus.

Peter's Pre-Jesus Approach to Foreigners

The previous section reviewed Peter's upbringing, family, and economic situation in upper Galilee. Now is the time to combine these topics with the previous chapter on the approaches to foreigners in Judaism to explore what Peter's pre-Jesus attitude toward foreigners might have been.

How Jewish was Galilee?

Matthew's reference to "Galilee of the Gentiles" (Matt 4:15) might suggest a Gentile majority in Galilee. Freyne examines the Hellenization of Galilee and identifies the major Hellenistic foundations on its outer perimeter. Centers such as Ptolemais/Accho and Scythopolis/Beth Shean stem from the Hellenistic period, with Sepphoris, Tiberias, and Decapolis from the Roman period. Freyne argues that each shows different levels of non-Jewish influence.[81] Freyne also notes that "Aramaic remained the most commonly spoken language of

[80] Helyer, *Life and Witness*, 30.

[81] Freyne, *Galilee*, 104–38.

the vast majority," while Greek was also widespread.[82] Chancey argues that the label "Galilee of the Gentiles" is misplaced and that the majority population in Galilee was Jewish, noting that the sixty other mentions of Galilee in the New Testament do not associate Galilee with Gentiles.[83] Matthew is quoting Isaiah 9:1 (8:23 MT), rendering גּוֹיִם (*gôyim*) as ἔθνος, as per the Septuagint. Chancey argues that 1 Maccabees 5:15, in which the author describes foreigners from Galilee as the enemy before Judas rescues the Galilean Judeans (1 Macc 5:17–23), is an allusion to Isaiah but notes that the Septuagint translators chose ἀλλόφυλος.[84] However, the author also uses "ἔθνη" to describe the group they are fighting against (1 Macc 5:19). While the Septuagint frequently uses ἀλλόφυλος to translate פְּלִשְׁתִּי (*pəlištî*), meaning Philistine, this meaning is dismissed in this context.[85] Even with Jewish people in the majority, interactions with non-Jews near the lake were inevitable, and Jesus's interactions in the Gospels illustrate this.[86]

Having identified multiple approaches in Judaism to foreigners in the previous chapter, one wonders whether it is possible to identify which branch of Judaism most likely influenced Peter in Bethsaida and Capernaum. In the previous chapter, we reviewed Josephus's discussion about the four philosophies in Judaism linked with the Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, and Zealots. Cullman notes the presence of Simon the Zealot, one of the twelve apostles (Mark 3:18,

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[82] Freyne, *Galilee*, 144.

[83] Chancey, *The Myth*, 170–74.

[84] BDAG suggests a meaning of "alien, foreign," which, from the Judean viewpoint, would be non-Jews or outsiders. BDAG does not offer a specific meaning for the 1 Maccabees reference. BDAG, s.v. "ἀλλόφυλος." One notes the similarity of ἀλλόφυλος with ἀλλότριος, which the Septuagint often uses to translate נָכְרִי (*nokrî*). As discussed in the last chapter, נָכְרִי (*nokrî*) has a negative undertone about a foreigner. Unfortunately, 1 Maccabees in the original Hebrew language is not available. It appears the nationalistic author of 1 Maccabees might have introduced a more ethnocentric word when alluding to Isaiah 9:1 (8:23 MT).

[85] Chancey, *The Myth*, 38. Chancey also notes that Joel 4:4 LXX suggests this might refer to a part of Galilee near the coast.

[86] Chancey, *The Myth*, 175.

Luke 6:15), suggesting the presence of that faction.[87] John indicates Andrew was a follower of John the Baptist, which might also have included Andrew's brother, Peter (John 1:35–40).[88] Even though some scholars associate John the Baptist with the Essenes due to his eating locusts (among other things), Kelhoffer argues that the evidence does not support such a claim for several reasons, including that locusts were not a distinctive food for the Essenes.[89] There is also debate about whether the Qumran community constituted Essenes.[90] Such debates suggest there were more "philosophies" than the four Josephus mentions. Freyne dismisses a prevalence of Zealots or Essenes in Galilee and argues that, even though Pharisaism seems the most predominant form of Judaism, it did not thrive among the Galilean country-people, with the "holy man" or *ḥāsîḏ* appearing to prevail.[91] Evidence of the approach to foreigners that such holy men would teach is lacking.

Wright and Bird explain that cultural values centered around family, kinship, honor, and purity.[92] Such values would encourage the Jewish communities to remain separate from non-

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[87] Cullmann, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*, 23–24. Some argue that Judas Iscariot could also have been a zealot, but Cullmann dismisses that Iscariot is derived from *sicarius* meaning "bandit." We have already discussed that Cullmann dismisses any link between Peter's description as John's son and a designation as a terrorist.

[88] Cullmann, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*, 25. Cullmann dismisses Peter's description of John's son as referring to John the Baptist.

[89] James A. Kelhoffer, "Did John the Baptist Eat like a Former Essene? Locust-Eating in the Ancient Near East and at Qumran," *DSD* 11.3 (2004): 293–314. Lee-Barnewall notes other points of speculation regarding John the Baptist being an Essene. Michelle Lee-Barnewall, "Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes," in *The World of the New Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts*, ed. Joel B. Green and Lee Martin McDonald (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 225–26. Achtemeier notes the possibility that the author of 1 Peter draws on material from Qumran. He dismisses the link as insignificant, and for the purpose of the current discussion, it is too "late." Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter*, Hermeneia, ed. Eldon Jay Epp (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1996), 13.

[90] Magen Broshi, "Essenes at Qumran? A Rejoinder to Albert Baumgarten," *DSD* 14.1 (2007): 25–33.

[91] Freyne, *Galilee*, 330.

[92] N. T. Wright and Michael F. Bird, *The New Testament in Its World: An Introduction to the History, Literature, and Theology of the First Christians* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019), 112–18.

Jewish neighbors. Associating with non-Jews, including eating, was seen as a risk of defilement, either inadvertently or simply by association with sinners.[93] Wright and Bird argue that most of the ordinary Jews would have been so busy with ordinary life that they would not debate the most current teachings or heresies.[94] Josephus described Galileans as hardworking, kind, and courageous men (*B.J.* 3.2.41–42; *Vita* 16).[95] However, they would still have strived to be "good Jews" and would have respected Pharisaic teaching and followed "the Jewish way of life" without being "reflective theologians."[96] Jesus taught this when he told the crowds and his disciples to follow the instructions of "the scribes and Pharisees [who] are seated in the chair of Moses," though he warned them not to behave like them as they did not practice their teaching (Matt 23:1–3). Also, McKay argues that Josephus's writings indicate that the Sabbath was a day when Jews studied the Law when he wrote about how Moses ordained "that every week men should desert their other occupations and assemble to listen to the Law and to obtain a thorough and accurate knowledge of it" (*C.Ap.* 2.175).[97] While thinking about how to interact with foreigners would not have been at the forefront of Peter's mind, his interaction with them in day-to-day affairs might have raised questions.

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[93] Richard Bauckham, "James, Peter, and the Gentiles," in *The Missions of James, Peter, and Paul: Tensions in Early Christianity*, ed. Bruce D. Chilton and Craig A. Evans (Boston: Brill, 2005), 122–24.

[94] Wright and Bird, *The New Testament*, 137.

[95] Shelton, *Quest*, 60. Shelton incorrectly refers to "J.W. 3.3.2.41–42," inserting an extra "3."

[96] Wright and Bird, *The New Testament*, 137.

[97] Heather Ann McKay, "The Sabbath as a Day of Worship: The Evidence Prior to 200 CE" (University of Glasgow, PhD diss., 1992), 126. Josephus, *The Life; Against Apion*, 2.175.

How Revolutionary was Galilee?

This section investigates whether Peter would have had any anti-foreigner sentiment, which one might initially assume given the history of foreign occupation, but the situation is not that simple. The nationalistic Maccabean uprising about two hundred years earlier, triggered by resistance to forced idolatry and encroaching Hellenism, led to a period of independence under the Hasmoneans. However, infighting and civil war allowed the Roman general Pompey to walk into Jerusalem virtually unopposed in 63 BCE. While Pompey's violation of the temple led to Rome becoming the new great enemy, Israel's leaders were more interested in political harmony with Rome.[98] This situation allowed Herod the Great to rise to power and rule Israel as a Roman puppet from 40–4 BCE. With Rome's trust, he prospered, and his loyalty to Rome prevented direct Roman meddling in Jewish affairs. His construction projects suggest a strong economy, though family dissension led to several executions, and Herod's financial prosperity might have been at the people's expense. Herod was viewed as a half-Jew, with a lax view of the Jewish way of life and a priority to Rome.[99] Also, as discussed in the previous chapter, Herod was an Idumaean—a group Hyrcanus forced to convert—so he was not ethnically Jewish.

Herod bequeathed his kingdom to his three sons. Judea, Samaria, and Idumea went to Archelaus, Galilee and Perea to Antipas, and Batanea, Trachonitis, and Auranitis to Philip.[100] The different styles of the three rulers led to very different results. In Galilee and Perea, Antipas showed sympathy for Jewish ways in avoiding human representation on coins, in contrast to Philip, who, while ruling a mixture of Jews, Syrians, and Arabs, had no hesitation using images

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[98] Wright and Bird, *The New Testament*, 87–95.

[99] Wright and Bird, *The New Testament*, 97.

[100] Wright and Bird, *The New Testament*, 98. This is how Josephus described the allocation (*A.J.* 17.11.4). Luke identifies Galilee under Antipas (whom he calls Herod) and Ituraea and Trachonitis under Philip (Luke 3:1).

of himself or the Roman emperor.[101] However, both Philip and Antipas ruled for over thirty years, covering the entire period of Peter's childhood, and such stability indicates a lack of revolutionary activity.[102] Archelaus lasted ten years to 6 CE due to oppressive measures, especially in Judea, and the instability in Judea led to Rome governing directly rather than through a puppet.[103]

There were two uprisings of note at this time, both associated with a "Judas" and Galilee.[104] In 4 BCE, Judas, son of Hezekiah, used Herod's death as an opportunity to lead a revolt in Sepphoris in Galilee. While this might indicate lingering Hasmonean resistance to Herod in Galilee, it appears to be an isolated incident to which Rome responded by destroying the city.[105] How much resistance lingered after 4 BCE is difficult to determine.[106] A second revolt in 6 CE, led by "Judas the Galilean," suggests a continuity of resistance in Galilee, though the revolt in 6 CE was against the Judean leadership rather than a Galilean affair.[107] Also, the Judas of 4 BCE saw himself as a Messiah, whereas the Judas of 6 CE was opposed to being ruled illegitimately by others.[108] Josephus portrays an image of revolutionary Galileans when describing them as resistant to invasion, hardened for war, and courageous (*B.J.* 3.41), though

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[101] Freyne, *Galilee*, 144.

[102] Wright and Bird, *The New Testament*, 99.

[103] Wright and Bird, *The New Testament*, 99–100. An example of direct rule was Pontius Pilate, who was prefect from 26 to 32 CE.

[104] It is possible that these two "Judas's" were the same person.

[105] Freyne, *Galilee*, 67, 123.

[106] Freyne notes that Josephus presents stability and pro-Roman attitudes, which aligns with Josephus's writing situation. Freyne, *Galilee*, 123–24. Wright and Bird describe how "the threat of revolution remained in the air during the early years of the new century." Wright and Bird, *The New Testament*, 99.

[107] Freyne, *Galilee*, 211.

[108] Freyne, *Galilee*, 218.

such writing is in Josephus's interest as he had led the Galileans against the Romans, lost, and then Rome had adopted him as a citizen.[109]

If there was a revolutionary attitude in Galilee at the beginning of the first century CE, whom was it against? The Maccabean revolt had been against forced worship of idols and Hellenism but had imploded with the Hasmonean civil war. Rome ruled but allowed the puppet Antipas, the Idumaean, to rule Galilee, with the Jerusalem temple led by those who had made peace with Rome.[110] If Galileans were to revolt, whom was it against? A couple of examples might give hints. Firstly, John the Baptist spoke out against the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matt 3:7) before criticizing Antipas for breaking the Law (Matt 14:4), who subsequently executed him.[111] Second, Jesus shows his contempt for the Pharisees and scribes when he calls them hypocrites during their visit to him in Galilee (Matt 15:1–9). Also, after indirectly calling the Pharisees and Sadducees evil and adulterous when they ask for a sign from heaven (Matt 16:1–4), Jesus warns his followers to beware of their teaching (Matt 16:12). While Bockmuehl suggests that Peter may have struggled with balancing nationalistic ideas with multicultural openness, the evidence for both sides of his point is weak.[112]

Did Peter Leave Galilee Before Meeting Jesus?

This section's investigation examines the opportunities for cross-cultural influence from other societies on Peter. The biblical record does not provide information about this for Peter.

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[109] Freyne, *Galilee*, 210.

[110] Wright and Bird, *The New Testament*, 95.

[111] John criticized Antipas for marrying his sister-in-law (Mark 6:18–20), and Antipas executed him in return, though Josephus reports that Antipas feared that John would lead a rebellion (*A.J.* 18.116–118). Wright and Bird, *The New Testament*, 99.

[112] Bockmuehl, *The Remembered Peter*, 186.

The place that one thinks Peter might have traveled to is the Jerusalem temple. While Freyne concludes that Galileans would have maintained a loyalty to the temple, he points out that John the Baptist was preaching forgiveness of sins that did not need the temple, and the Essenes considered their community to be the temple.

While it is uncertain whether Peter visited the temple, it is also uncertain to what extent any such visit would have exposed him to multicultural communities. Jerusalem would have been more Jewish than Galilee. Most likely, there would have been Jewish pilgrims and non-Jewish proselytes who had traveled from various locations (as in Acts 2:5–11), though it is also unclear how much Peter would have associated with others outside of his traveling "bubble" from Galilee.[113] There is little evidence to suggest that any visits outside of Galilee would have contributed to Peter's approach to foreigners.

Summary and Conclusion

Peter grew up in a Jewish family in upper Galilee in an environment where Jews and non-Jews were present. He would have interacted with non-Jews as part of daily life and in his job as a fisherman. However, it is unclear how much cross-cultural exposure he would have had as a Jew who most likely strove to separate from pagans. It is also unknown what experiences Peter would have had with proselytes or converts in the synagogue.

It is unlikely that Peter held any deep-seated animosity toward foreigners. There is little evidence of revolutionary sentiments in this part of Galilee, with John the Baptist and Jesus speaking out against the Jewish leadership rather than any non-Jews. Any animosity around taxes would have been against the Herodian and Jewish authorities rather than foreigners. Peter might

[113] That there was a Court of the Gentiles at the temple and the inscription prohibiting them from entering the temple proper attests to a significant presence of foreigners in Jerusalem. Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 562–65.

have negatively viewed the Jewish leadership's alliance with Rome or the Herodian family of converts who did not prioritize the Jewish way of life.

However, what remains unclear from the previous chapter is how Peter would have interacted with foreigners interested in Judaism and wanting to convert. It is unknown whether there were proselytes or converts in the Capernaum synagogue. One cannot tell whether Peter had any experience associating with proselytes or converts or learning how he should. Even if Peter had sought an answer about how to associate with such foreigners, it is unclear what answer he would have found. For instance, if Peter had sought answers, he might have learned of an approach close to what Philo or Josephus wrote about, welcoming proselytes and treating the convert as equal to the native-born, or it might have been similar to an example from Qumran, where the non-native-born was never at the same level as the native-born, and it was unclear whether a Jew could eat with converts if conversion was illegitimate.

CHAPTER FOUR: PETER'S DEVELOPMENT AFTER MEETING JESUS

The previous chapter examined Peter's approach to foreigners when he met Jesus. Having been raised within Judaism with exposure to foreigners, he was aware of non-Jewish practices, but his religious understanding would have been to remain separate. It is unclear what he would have understood about interacting with converts.

Jesus changed many aspects of Peter's religious understanding, which impacted his behavior during and after Jesus's life. This chapter shows that the Gospel accounts indicate that Peter likely learned little from Jesus about interacting with foreigners. He probably witnessed Jesus's declaration that unclean food does not defile a person (Mark 7:15; also Matt 15:11) and his sharing table fellowship with outcasts (Mark 2:15). Also, the Gospels reveal Peter's impulsiveness and propensity to learn from his mistakes. After Jesus's death, Peter's ministry focused on Jews for the first decade. Events in the 40s CE indicate more involvement with non-Jews after his vision concerning Cornelius, but the Antioch incident indicates that Paul was upset with his hypocritical behavior. Paul's subsequent mention of Peter in 1 Corinthians suggests that any issue between them was shortlived, which Peter's subsequent reference to Paul supports (2 Pet 3:16). However, there is little information about what else Peter did. This chapter examines what Jesus taught Peter about foreigners, Peter's ability to learn from his mistakes, and his life's trajectory before writing his epistles.

Method

Once again, the source material differs from the previous discussions. Whereas the second chapter had to select representative examples from a large body of literature and the third chapter's source material was limited, the current chapter has much of the New Testament as its

source, augmented with a significant amount of secondary literature. In order to build on the previous research to understand Peter's approach to foreigners when he wrote his epistles, I examine the evidence from four perspectives.

The first is to define a chronology of Peter's life from meeting Jesus to his death. While there is debate and uncertainty about many points, this establishes the timeline for the subsequent analyses. The second perspective examines Jesus's teaching of Peter and its impact on Peter's understanding of foreigners. Even though Jesus's primary ministry was to the Jews and Paul was commissioned to lead the mission to the non-Jews, Peter participated in the mission to the non-Jews. The third perspective identifies Peter's propensity to learn from his mistakes. Jesus chose a fisherman to be the first leader of his ministry, and he used their time together wisely to develop Peter's understanding and skills, with Peter's development continuing after Jesus left. The final perspective examines Peter's activities with foreigners after Jesus's ascension.

The evidence for the analysis is the text from the Gospels, Acts, and Paul's letters. Other ancient texts provide background and context. Scholars' multiple viewpoints on this literature provide insight to build these perspectives, forming the picture of Peter's approach to foreigners when he penned his epistles.

The Chronology of Peter's Life

This analysis divides Peter's life into three periods. The first is Peter's time with Jesus, coinciding with the Gospel accounts. The second aligns with Peter in Acts. The third examines what Peter did between his final mention in Acts and his death. Literature on these chronologies centers on specific historical events that anchor the timelines. Such an approach is taken below, identifying the historical anchor points that have greater certainty. This suits the purpose of this analysis: to identify the sequence of events and overall passage of time.

Peter's Time with Jesus

Luke provides the first anchor point when he describes God's word coming to John the Baptist while Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea (Luke 3:1–2), shortly before Jesus's ministry.[1] According to Josephus, Pilate was governor of Judea between 26 and 36 CE.[2] John provides another anchor when mentioning forty-six years of temple rebuilding when Jesus cleansed the temple (John 2:20) shortly after calling the disciples, placing this event in 28 CE, which many scholars accept as the start of Jesus's ministry, and hence when Peter met Jesus.[3]

The most robust arguments place the start of Jesus's ministry in 28 or 29 CE and his crucifixion in 30 or 33 CE.[4] The difference between these is immaterial to the current analysis. I

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[1] Stein, *Jesus the Messiah*, 56–57. While there are references in Luke 3:1–2 to various rulers, the mention of Pilate limits the earliest date.

[2] Helen K. Bond, *Pontius Pilate in History and Interpretation*, SNTSMS (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1. Bond identifies that Pilate succeeded Gratus, who started as governor after Tiberius's accession in 14 CE (*A.J.* 18.32–33) and governed for eleven years (*A.J.* 18.35), placing Pilate's start in 25–26 CE. Pilate spent ten years in Judea before being summoned back to Rome, with Tiberius passing away during his travel (*A.J.* 18.89). Feldman notes that Tiberius died on 18 March 37 CE and that the ten years is probably a round number, though Pilate might have left Judea at the end of 36 CE, resulting in his time in Judea being 26–36 CE. Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities: Books 18–19*. Note my previous chapter's discussion about the determination of absolute dates from Josephus's accounts in the context of Herod's death and Jesus's birth.

[3] Stein, *Jesus the Messiah*, 57–58. Josephus describes the reconstruction of the temple beginning in the eighteenth year of Herod's reign (*A.J. 15.380*) which was about 20–19 BCE, placing the date of the reference to 28 CE.

[4] Pilate's departure for Rome at about the end of 36 CE defines the last possible date for Jesus's death (Matt 27:2; Mark 15:1; Luke 23:1; John 18:29). Also, Mark describes the Last Supper as on the day of sacrificing the Passover lamb (Mark 14:12) and that Jesus died on a day followed by a sabbath (Mark 15:42). Stein argues that the Passover event places Jesus's death on either the fourteenth or fifteenth of the Jewish month of Nisan, the timing of which is determined by the new moon. Astronomical calculations determine the years when the lunar timing coincided with the sabbath as the years 27, 30, 33, and 36 CE, and Stein dismisses 27 as too early and 36 as too late. The challenge with 30 CE is fitting in three years of ministry from 28 CE, and the challenge with 33 CE is fitting in Paul's meeting the Lord in 33 CE. Stein states that most scholars accept 30 CE as the year of Jesus's death. Stein, *Jesus the Messiah*, 59–60. The evidence for the timing of the start of Jesus's ministry and his death is such that there is significant debate. For instance, Steinmann examines John 2:20, including the alternate translation from the CSB (that the temple was built forty-six years ago, rather than it taking forty-six years to build it), which he prefers on syntactical and historical grounds, and dates Jesus's baptism in the summer of 29 CE and his crucifixion in 33 CE. Andrew E. Steinmann, "Did It Take Forty-Six Years or More to Build the Temple in Jerusalem? Reconsidering John 2:20," *JETS* 65.2 (2022): 319–31. Finegan's detailed examination of the evidence identifies discrepancies between the Synoptic and Johannine accounts and results in his favoring the Johannine account and the crucifixion in 33 CE. Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology: Principles of Time Reckoning in the Ancient World and Problems of Chronology in the Bible*, 2nd ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998), 353–69.

use Stein's position of 28–30 CE for convenience. The events described in the Gospels occurred during this period; greater precision is not required.

Peter in Acts

The first anchor point for Peter's post-resurrection chronology is its beginning, which coincides with Jesus's death described above. The second anchor point is Herod's death after Peter escapes from prison and departs to "another place" (Acts 12:17). The description of Herod going from Judea to Caesarea (12:19) and being called a god (12:22) aligns with Josephus's description of Agrippa (*A.J.* 19.343 and 345).[5] Accounts from Josephus and evidence from coins date Agrippa's death (Acts 12:23; *A.J.* 19.350–351) between the end of 43 CE and the beginning of 44 CE.[6] The proximity of the accounts of Peter's escape and Herod's death in Acts does not mean they occurred immediately after one another. Luke might have arranged the narrative to emphasize Agrippa's death as divine retribution, though the events were probably close.[7] Jerome's *Chronicle* from around 380 CE, a translation of Eusebius's *Chronicle* from around 311 CE, supports a tradition that Peter went to Rome in the second year of Claudius, 42 CE.[8]

The method of Stephen's death also suggests a date. That the Sanhedrin (Acts 6:12–15) permitted Stephen to be stoned to death for blasphemy (Acts 7:54–60) indicates a difference in Roman leadership compared to when Jesus was crucified and the Sanhedrin had to take Jesus to

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[5] Finegan, *Biblical Chronology*, 371; Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities: Books 18–19*, 16.345. Keener, *Acts*, 316.

[6] Daniel R. Schwartz, *Agrippa I: The Last King of Judaea*, TSAJ 23 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1990), 107–11. Bock favors 44 CE and notes that this event determines the chronology of Acts. Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 517.

[7] Finegan, *Biblical Chronology*, 373. The forthcoming discussion about the date of Peter's death suggests he left Jerusalem in 42 CE.

[8] Jobes, *1 Peter*, 35; Jerome, *Chronicle*, ed. Roger Pearse, 2005, https://www.tertullian.org/fathers/jerome_chronicle_03_part2.htm.

Pilate (Luke 20:20). Pilate was governor until 36 CE and Agrippa's kingdom was extended to include Judea in 41 CE, so Stephen's stoning was likely 36–41 CE.[9]

Peter's vision at Joppa (Acts 10:9–16), the conversion of Cornelius (Acts 10:23–33), and the Holy Spirit falling on non-Jews (ἔθνη, Acts 10:44–48) appear in Acts between Stephen's stoning (Acts 7:54–60) and Peter's departure (Acts 12:17). The sequencing suggests a date for these events around 40 CE.[10]

Between Acts and His Death

There is little evidence, and hence, much debate, about what happened after Peter left for "another place" in Acts 12:17. While it is inevitable that he eventually dies, where and when is unclear. The *Liber Pontificalis* (The Book of Pontiffs), with Jerome as a potential source, describes Peter as the bishop of Rome for twenty-five years. It says that Peter died thirty-eight years after Christ, and Loomis notes that the author assumed a year of 29 CE for Christ's death, placing Peter's death in 67 CE.[11] Jerome's *Chronicle* states that Peter and Paul died in Nero's fourteenth year, 68 CE.[12] Wenham notes that the twenty-five years between 42 CE and 67 CE support Peter going to Rome in 42 CE.[13] While some doubt the authenticity of Peter's record in

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[9] Finegan, *Biblical Chronology*, 373.

[10] While one cannot assume that Luke presents the events in Acts chronologically, this date is in line with the overall chronology.

[11] Raymond Davis, ed., *The Book of Pontiffs (Liber Pontificalis): The Ancient Biographies of the First Ninety Roman Bishops to AD 715*, Translated Texts for Historians Latin Series 5 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1989), 1–2; Louise Ropes Loomis, ed., *The Book of the Pope (Liber Pontificalis): To the Pontificate of Gregory I* (New York: Octagon Books, 1965), 3–4.

[12] Jerome, *Chronicle*. Both *Chronicle* and *Liber Pontificalis* mention Peter being in Antioch, with the latter stating he was bishop for seven years. Parvis outlines the various challenges to this claim in Paul Parvis, "When Did Peter Become Bishop of Antioch?" in *Peter in Early Christianity*, ed. Helen K. Bond and Larry W. Hurtado (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 263–72.

[13] John W. Wenham, "Did Peter Go to Rome in AD 42?" *TynBul* 23 (1972): 98–99.

Liber Pontificalis and *Chronicle*, Jobes argues that the lack of an alternative position for the founding of the Roman church strengthens the position, though she argues for Peter's death in 65 CE.[14] The approximate timeline is supported by other documents, such as Clement's first letter to the Corinthians, which implies that Peter and Paul died in Nero's persecutions (1 Clem. 5.1–7).[15] Tacitus describes Nero's persecutions against Christians in the aftermath of Rome's great fire in 64 CE (Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.38–44), though it might have taken some time after the fire before Nero could pass laws against Christians.[16] Peter's reference to being in Babylon (1 Pet 5:13) probably meant Rome and places him there when he wrote his first epistle.[17] Eusebius cites Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, writing in about 170 CE that Peter and Paul were in Rome (*Hist. eccl.* 2.26.8).[18] Wenham argues that Paul's reluctance to build on someone else's work in Rome (Rom 15:20–24, written about 57 CE) suggests a specific individual had founded the church in Rome, potentially Peter.[19]

Another anchor that indirectly dates events in Peter's life is the description of Gallio as proconsul of Achaia when Paul appeared before him (Acts 18:12). Archeological remains discovered at Delphi in 1905 and 1910 describe Gallio as proconsul. The inscription's reference to Claudius's twenty-sixth acclamation dates it to the first half of 52 CE. As the typical term for

[14] Jobes, *1 Peter*, 35.

[15] Finegan, *Biblical Chronology*, 375.

[16] Finegan, *Biblical Chronology*, 375–76.

[17] Jobes, *1 Peter*, 13–14, 35–36.

[18] Finegan, *Biblical Chronology*, 376.

[19] Wenham suggests Peter, though Bockmuehl thinks it is possible but unlikely. Wenham, "AD 42?" 100. Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, 142. Carson and Moo, while acknowledging uncertainty, suggest the authorship date of Romans as within a year or two of 57 CE. Carson and Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 394.

a proconsul was one year starting in July, this dates Gallio's term as 51–52 CE.[20] Paul had been in Corinth for one and a half years before appearing before Gallio. When Paul arrived in Corinth, he met Aquila and Priscilla, whom Claudius expelled from Rome with other Jews (Acts 18:1–2). Suetonius, writing in the first half of the second century CE, mentions Claudius's expulsion of Jews associated with "Chrestus" (*The Deified Claudius* 25.4). Around 418 CE, Orosius writes, with reference to Suetonius, that Claudius's expulsion of Jews was in the emperor's ninth year of reign (*Seven Books of History against the Pagans* 7.6.15).[21] Claudius came to the throne in 41 CE.[22] Thus, Paul's arrival in Corinth in 49 CE aligns with Claudius's expulsion of Jews from Rome and Gallio being proconsul eighteen months later. [23]

Two interactions between Peter and Paul occurred around this time: the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:6–21) and the Antioch incident (Gal 2:11–14). There is significant debate regarding whether the visit to Jerusalem that Paul describes in Gal 2:1–10 is the famine relief visit from Antioch (Acts 11:27–30) or the Jerusalem Council visit (Acts 15:6–21). The debate includes whether the council predates or postdates the Antioch incident.[24] The events occurred around 49 CE, and the subsequent discussion evaluates each possible sequence of events. While not suggesting a direct interaction, Paul's allusions to Cephas in 1 Corinthians (1 Cor 1:12; 3:22;

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[20] Finegan, *Biblical Chronology*, 391–93. Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 29–30.

[21] Finegan, *Biblical Chronology*, 393; Paulus Orosius, *Seven Books of History Against the Pagans*, trans. A. T. Fear, Translated Texts for Historians 54 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010), 332.

[22] Jerome, *Chronicle*; Finegan, *Biblical Chronology*, 378–79.

[23] On the chronology associated with Paul's arrival in Corinth and his appearance before Gallio, also see John McRay, *Paul: His Life and Teaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 46–47.

[24] Gibson describes the scholarship on this matter as "immense." Gibson, *Between Jerusalem and Antioch*, 215. The relative dating of these incidents is also tied to the timing of Paul writing Galatians and the letters' recipients, often called the "North Galatian" and "South Galatian" hypotheses. See Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, WBC 41 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), lxi–lxxxviii. Bruce, *Galatians*, 3–18. Schreiner, *Galatians*, 22–31.

9:5; 15:5) indicate a respectful acknowledgment of Peter and could suggest that Peter had visited Corinth given the recipients' existing familiarity with the apostle.[25] The dating of First Corinthians is compounded by the existence of a previous letter (1 Cor 5:9).[26] Thiselton favors 54 CE while identifying arguments ranging from 53–56 CE, while Porter concludes with 55 CE.[27] Paul likely wrote First Corinthians after the Antioch incident and the Jerusalem Council. The lack of mention of Peter when Paul returns to Jerusalem and meets with James and the brothers (Acts 21:17–18) suggests Peter was not in Jerusalem at this time. Porter indicates that this visit was in 57 CE.[28]

Summary of the Chronology of Peter's Life

The prior analysis has dated the following sequence of events. Peter's birth was in the late first century BCE. He met Jesus in 28 CE and took over leadership of the church at Jesus's crucifixion in 30 CE. In 42 CE, Peter left Jerusalem, potentially for Rome. Therefore, the events described in Acts 1–12 most likely occurred between 30 and 42 CE, before Peter left Jerusalem, though the sequence presented by the author of Acts is not guaranteed. The Antioch incident and the Jerusalem Council happened around 49 CE, placing Peter in Antioch and Jerusalem. Paul wrote about Peter in First Corinthians in the mid-50s CE, possibly indicating that Peter had

[25] Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, 142–44.

[26] Wallace identifies the possibility of this being an epistolary aorist where "the author self-consciously describes his letter from the time frame of the audience." Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 562–63. However, Garland rejects this hypothesis in favor of ἔγραψα being "a true preterit" (past tense) and meaning "I wrote," because Paul uses the phrase "ἐν τῇ ἐπιστολῇ" (in this letter) in 2 Corinthians 7:8 when referring to the letter being written. David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 162.

[27] Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 29–32. Porter, *The Apostle Paul*, 57.

[28] Porter, *The Apostle Paul*, 59.

visited Corinth as it implies familiarity with him. Also, Peter appears to be absent from Jerusalem when Paul visits in 57 CE. Finally, Peter died in Rome in the mid-60s CE.

Jesus's Teaching About Foreigners

This section transitions from a chronological discussion to examining what Jesus taught Peter about foreigners. The source material is the canonical Gospels.[29] There is significant debate about what the Gospels portray about Jesus's plan for non-Jews in the kingdom of God, the transition from Jesus's primary mission to Israel, and the church's subsequent mission to everyone else.[30] However, this section discusses what Peter would have learned about how to behave with foreigners rather than Jesus's plan for their inclusion in the kingdom. The examination is in three parts: Jesus's approach to the Law, Jesus's behavior, and Jesus's messages.

Jesus and the Law

As Peter had grown up as an observant Jew, his understanding of the Law would have significantly influenced his attitudes. As he gave up his life to follow Jesus, who reframed his understanding of God, he would have closely watched Jesus's behavior. The Pharisees

[29] Critical examination of the Gospel accounts challenges the authenticity of sections. In particular, some argue that the authors added the descriptions of Jesus's interactions with non-Jews to help with the post-resurrection mission to the non-Jews rather than being factual events. Debates around such passages' authenticity are inconclusive and beyond the scope of the current discussion. As with any examination of historical evidence, there is some uncertainty. For the purpose of this dissertation's argument, these passages are a small part of a broader picture and are not essential to uphold the argument. Chancey notes that though it is possible that the accounts were fabricated, they are "historically plausible, however, given what we know of social conditions in Galilee." Chancey, *The Myth*, 174. For a concise discussion about the authenticity of these passages, see E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 218–21. Bird provides an extended discussion of this and related topics in his PhD dissertation: Michael F. Bird, *Jesus and the Origins of the Gentile Mission* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007).

[30] Bird discusses various positions regarding Jesus's intentions regarding the mission to the non-Jews in the introduction to his dissertation. The topic touches on other highly-debated issues, such as the quest for the historical Jesus and the relationship between Israel and the church in the eschaton (dispensationalism and covenantalism). It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to discuss such topics further. Bird, *Origins*, 1–25.

encouraged Israel to follow their interpretation of the Torah, so Jesus's approach to the Pharisees also provides insight into Jesus's attitude toward the Law.[31]

The Gospels provide evidence of Jesus both supporting and challenging the Pharisees and their interpretation of the Law. First, multiple examples of a positive portrayal of the Mosaic statutes exist. In the sermon on the mount, Matthew recounts Jesus's explanation that he is fulfilling, not abolishing the Law ("Don't think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to abolish but to fulfill," Matt 5:17) and that the Law remains in its entirety ("For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or one stroke of a letter will pass away from the Law until all things are accomplished," Matt 5:18). Jesus describes the scribes and Pharisees as righteous (Matt 5:20). However, the subsequent pericopes describe six antitheses (Matt 5:21–48) which illustrate that righteousness through following the Law is insufficient. Even mere thoughts of murder or adultery are sinful.[32] Later, Jesus acknowledges the authority of the scribes and Pharisees by noting that they "are seated in the chair of Moses" (Matt 23:2) and that one should obey any accurate interpretations of Scripture (Matt 23:3a) but condemns them because of their hypocritical behavior (Matt 23:3b).[33] In Mark's account, Jesus shows respect for the Law after cleansing a leper (Mark 1:40–44) and with Passover observance (Mark 14:12) and agrees with a scribe about the greatest commandment (Mark 12:32). Luke describes Jesus eating with a Pharisee on multiple occasions (Luke 7:36; 11:37; 14:1) and that the Pharisees warned Jesus that Herod wanted to kill him (Luke 13:31). Modern readers risk

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[31] Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 514–19.

[32] D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, rev. ed., The Expositor's Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 218–19.

[33] Michael J. Wilkins, *Matthew*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2004), 774–76. Wilkins also explains that Jesus condemns the Pharisees when their oral tradition incorrectly interprets and inappropriately supplants the written Torah, referencing Matthew 15:1–9.

reading hidden agendas into the Pharisees' actions, assuming they were just all evil hypocrites. However, as Ferguson argues, any life based on laws tends towards hypocrisy.[34] Jervis argues that the Pharisees' interpretation of the Law influenced the early Jerusalem church, including Peter.[35] However, not all accounts of the Pharisees in the Gospels present them as against Jesus. John portrays the Pharisee Nicodemus as interested in Jesus's teaching (John 3:1–9; 7:50; 19:39) and Joseph of Arimathea, who took Jesus's body to the tomb, "was a prominent member of the Sanhedrin" (Mark 15:43, 46).

In Matthew's account, Jesus addresses the Pharisees and scribes as hypocrites (Matt 15:7), which he elaborates on later, outlining their many hypocritical acts (Matt 23:1–36). Jesus challenges the Law itself when he heals on the Sabbath (Matt 12:1–14; Mark 2:23–28; John 5:2–17) and abrogates the food laws (Mark 7:15–19).[36] John writes that Jesus criticized observant Jews for searching the Scriptures to learn about eternal life, but through their lack of love of God, they failed to recognize Jesus (John 5:39–47). In the parable about the rich man and Lazarus, Abraham explains to the condemned, rich man that "if they [his family] don't listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be persuaded if someone rises from the dead" (Luke 16:31). Finally, Mark describes a Pharisee who tried to trap Jesus by asking about the greatest commandment, to which Jesus replied by summarizing the Law as "Love the Lord your God

[34] Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 517.

[35] L. Ann Jervis, "Peter in the Middle: Galatians 2:11–21," in *Text and Artifact in the Religions of Mediterranean Antiquity: Essays in Honour of Peter Richardson*, ed. Stephen G. Wilson and Michel Desjardins, Studies in Christianity and Judaism 9 (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000), 52.

[36] J. Daniel Hays, "Applying the Old Testament Law Today," *BSac* 158.629 (2001): 29. The Sabbath is the only one of the Ten Commandments that is not repeated in the New Testament. The abrogation of food laws is affirmed in Acts 10:9–16.

with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Matt 22:37) and "Love your neighbor as yourself." (Matt 22:39).

In summary, I take a subtly different position from Gibson, who argues that Jesus frequently rebuked the Pharisees' strict adherence to the Law.[37] All the Gospels present Jesus as supporting the Law and most of the Pharisaic interpretation of it while changing certain aspects. However, Jesus strongly criticizes the Pharisees' hypocrisy, illustrating the flaw in a legalistic approach and extolling that love supersedes everything. However, as contemporary literature demonstrates ongoing debates about the applicability of Old Testament law to Christians, Peter would likely have remained unclear about what changes Jesus brought to the Law.[38]

Jesus's Behavior with Foreigners

The focus of Jesus's ministry was Israel (Matt 15:24), and the Gospels' description of his public ministry supports that. Nevertheless, the Synoptic Gospels describe direct interaction between Jesus and non-Jews with some possible allusions.[39]

Matthew presents Jesus's first visitors as wise men from the east (μάγοι ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν, Matt 2:1) desiring to worship him (προσκυνῆσαι αὐτῷ, Matt 2:2), providing an early indication of non-Jew inclusion. Other than this, the Gospels describe two specific encounters between Jesus and non-Jews, while other narratives suggest additional interactions. The first of the specific encounters is Jesus's healing of a centurion's servant in Capernaum, in which Jesus complements the centurion for having more faith than anyone in Israel (Matt 8:5–13; Luke 7:1–

[37] Gibson, *Between Jerusalem and Antioch*, 235.

[38] Hays, "Old Testament Law."

[39] Bird reviews the variety of positions in the history of research regarding Jesus's approach to non-Jews. He notes the false dichotomy between particularism and universalism and evaluates salvation-history, the restoration of Israel, and Jesus initiating the mission to the non-Jews. Bird, *Origins*, 11–23.

10).[40] The second specific encounter is the healing of a Canaanite woman's daughter in the district of Tyre and Sidon (Matt 15:21–28).[41] On this occasion, Jesus explains that he "was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt 15:24).

Other encounters are likely. When Jesus ministers to large crowds, the accounts describe the crowd as including people from non-Jewish locations, suggesting that non-Jews were in attendance among the masses (Matt 4:24–25; Mark 3:7–8; Luke 6:17–19).[42] Jesus's casting out of a demon into pigs suggests that the herdsmen were non-Jews, and perhaps the healed man was too (Matt 8:28–34; Mark 5:1–20; Luke 8:26–39).[43] Jesus would also likely have interacted with non-Jews in Galilee during his day-to-day activities. It appears that Jesus's interactions with non-Jews were unintentional and infrequent.[44] However, his interaction with the Samaritan woman at the well appears more deliberate (John 4:7–26). Jesus emphasizes his support of the Samaritans, whom the Jews despised as pagans, in his parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37).[45]

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[40] The official in Cana, whose son Jesus healed in John 4:46–54, was possibly a non-Jew. Nevertheless, he represented a group of people that ordinary people disliked. Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 643–44. Chancey argues that the centurion was probably not actually Roman, as Herod Antipas ruled this province. Chancey, *The Myth*, 175–76. However, the term ἑκατοντάρχης applied to the Roman army (BDAG, s.v. "ἑκατοντάρχης"). In his account of Jesus's crucifixion, Mark uses κεντυρίων (Mark 15:39, 44–45), borrowed from the Latin *centurio*. Christopher B. Zeichman, "Military Leaders," in *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, ed. Douglas Mangum et al., Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014), n.p. In any case, it is likely that the people would see the centurion as representing Rome, regardless of his origin.

[41] Mark describes the same incident in Mark 7:24–30, through describes the woman as Syrophoenician instead of Canaanite and omits Jesus's statement that he was only sent for the lost sheep of Israel. Also, Mark uses the rarer "Ἑλληνίς" to describe the woman's foreignness.

[42] Mariasusai Dhavamony, "Jesus and the Gentiles," *Studia Missionalia* 51 (2002): 185.

[43] While the accounts differ in some details of this encounter, they share the details about the pigs and herdsmen.

[44] Chancey, *The Myth*, 177, 179.

[45] Dhavamony, "Jesus and the Gentiles," 185–86.

It is possible that Jesus's association with sinners and tax collectors, who are most likely Jewish, would have been interpreted by Peter as similar to associating with non-Jews, as such people did not follow the Law. Jesus is accused of being a friend of sinners and tax collectors (Matt 11:19; Luke 7:34; 15:2) and eats with them after Levi's calling (Mark 2:15–17). He also ate with Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector, but Jesus highlights that Zacchaeus is "a son of Abraham" and therefore a Jew (Luke 19:1–10). Bird suggests that Jesus's frequent table fellowship with social outcasts led to the sharing of meals in early Christianity.[46]

In summary, Jesus appears to interact with non-Jews unintentionally and, while healing them, describes them as more faithful than Israel. His sharing table fellowship with sinners and tax collectors supports table fellowship with outcasts, though it might have remained limited to Jews and with kosher food, even though Jesus abrogated food laws. Associating with outcasts went against the principle of the Pharisees to remain separate from sinners, which the Essenes took further by physically separating themselves. Such association also highlights Jesus's rejection of the Pharisees' oral law.[47]

Jesus's Messages about Foreigner Inclusion

Having discussed Jesus's approach to the Law and his behavior toward foreigners, the analysis now examines what he said about foreigner inclusion, which takes various forms. John describes Jesus explaining that he has flocks of sheep, other than Israel, and that there will be one flock (John 10:16), which the audience might have interpreted as referring to non-Jews, though it echoes Ezekiel 34, which was about unifying Israel and Judah.[48] Also, similar to Jesus's

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[46] Bird, *Origins*, 104.

[47] Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 517–18.

[48] Edward W. Klink III, *John* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 465–66.

compliment of the centurion's faith, but with a greater focus on criticism of Israel, he laments that Jewish cities (Chorazin and Bethsaida) did not repent when foreign cities (Tyre and Sidon) would have done (Luke 10:12–15). Jesus's parable about the great banquet, where invited guests refuse to come and the servants gather people "from the highways and the hedges," could refer to non-Jews (Luke 14:15–24; Matt 22:1–14).[49] The parable of the mustard seed (Matt 13:31–32; Mark 4:30–32) could be using birds to refer to non-Jews joining the kingdom, though birds were rarely used as a metaphor for non-Jews during early Christianity.[50] Jesus suggests that non-Jews will be part of the kingdom in the future when he declares that the gospel must be preached to all nations (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη) before the end of the age comes (Mark 13:10) and that all nations (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη) will be subject to judgment (Matt 25:32.).[51] Moreover, Jesus clearly instructs the eleven disciples "to make disciples of all nations (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη)" (Matt 28:19) and to be his "witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

On the other hand, Jesus also said things supporting Israel's exclusivity. He instructed his disciples to limit their mission to Israel (Matt 10:5–6), though recognized that their path would bring them to non-Jews (ἔθνεσιν, Matt 10:18), possibly suggesting a short-term focus on Israel.[52] He criticized multiple aspects of the way of life of the non-Israelites (Matt 5:47; 6:7; 6:32–33; Luke 12:30–31; Mark 10:42).[53] Regarding an unrepentant brother, Jesus advises to "let him be to you as a Gentile (ἐθνικὸς) and a tax collector," which emphasizes the separateness of Torah-

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[49] David W. Pao and Eckhard J. Schnabel, "Luke," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 340; Jervis, "Peter in the Middle: Galatians 2:11–21," 52.

[50] Bird, *Origins,* 73.

[51] Bird, *Origins,* 25. However, Bird chooses not to use these verses in his argument.

[52] Wilkins, *Matthew,* 406.

[53] Dhavamony, "Jesus and the Gentiles," 184–85.

observant Israel, with the ἐθνικὸς and tax collector (τελώνης.) representing those who consciously rebel against God leading to their exclusion (Matt 18:17).[54] Finally, while the angel's declaration to Mary that Jesus will take the throne of David indicates ruling over Israel (Luke 1:33), this points back to Old Testament promises such as 2 Samuel 7:8–16 and emphasizes Jesus's lordship rather than Israel's exclusivity.[55] Moreover, the Old Testament prophecies indicate that the future king will rule over all nations.[56]

Summary of Jesus's Messages about Foreigner Inclusion

Modern analysis of Matthew identifies the possible *inclusio* about foreigner inclusion with the account of Jesus starting with the wise men from the east (Matt 2:1) and finishing with his instruction to make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:19). However, it is unclear how Peter might have interpreted this. The analysis above suggests that Jesus provided Peter with little new understanding of the inclusion of foreigners in God's kingdom. My previous analyses have shown that Israel welcomed proselytes into the community, and the Law supported this. Jesus supports the Law but criticizes its implementation. Jesus did not go out of his way to reach foreigners; he both praised and criticized them. His teachings support the idea of all nations being present in the eschaton, but it is unclear whether Peter would have interpreted this to impact the near future or how he should behave with non-Israelites in the short term. However, Jesus abrogates the food laws and encourages table fellowship with the outcasts.

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[54] Wilkins, *Matthew*, 642. However, Jesus chose to associate with tax collectors, for example, staying at the house of Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector, and declaring his salvation (Luke 19:2–9).

[55] Pao and Schnabel, "Luke," 260.

[56] "May he rule from sea to sea and from the Euphrates to the end of the earth" (Ps 72:8; also Zech 9:10); "He was given dominion and glory and a kingdom so that those of every people, nation, and language should serve him" (Dan 7:14a).

Peter's Propensity to Learn

The previous section concluded that, while Jesus instructed Peter and the disciples to take the gospel to all nations, there was little direction on how they should behave with non-Jews. However, the Gospels provide multiple other examples of teachable moments involving Jesus and Peter. This examination aims to illustrate that Peter had a propensity to learn and to self-correct. While he was hasty and made mistakes, the Gospels showed that he learned from his errors. While the texts demonstrate that Peter had such a trait during the approximately three years with Jesus, the trait is likely to have been present for the rest of his life. The analysis indicates that Jesus prioritized preparing Peter for ministry leadership rather than a non-Jewish mission.

Peter in Mark's Gospel

I first examine Peter in Mark's Gospel as it is the one most closely associated with Peter. This section also describes the other Gospel accounts when they differ in their description of an event in Mark, and there is a separate section describing events involving Peter that are not in Mark.

The Context of Mark's Gospel

In about 140 CE, Eusebius cited Papias's description that Mark wrote down the teachings of the apostle Peter (*Hist. eccl.* 3.39.15). While the debate continues regarding the relationship between Mark, Peter, and Mark's Gospel, Green summarizes the situation thus: "Moreover, no ancient source suggests that Mark cobbled his Gospel together from independent pericopae, as a form-critical approach would suggest. Rather, at the center of ancient testimony is the principal role Peter's witness played in the composition of this Gospel. Mark's Gospel was based on

Peter's testimony regarding Jesus's life and labor."[57] Scholarship generally accepts that Mark wrote his Gospel in Rome in the late 60s CE, though whether he completed it before or after Peter's death is uncertain.[58] Eusebius wrote that Peter was ambivalent about it (*Hist. eccl.* 6.14.5).[59] Peter's death in the mid-60s gave Peter thirty-five years to reflect on his time with Jesus and how it shaped his life, including Jesus's instruction for him to "feed my sheep" (John 21:15), his leadership of the nascent church at the beginning of Acts, and his activities outside of Jerusalem.

The Gospels share many features with Graeco-Roman biographies.[60] While this genre confirms that the primary focus of the account is Jesus, there is also a focus on the disciples.[61] Such biographies prioritize the message over chronology.[62] Mark prioritizes geography over chronology, indicating that the events might be presented out of sequence. France identifies three parts of the book (Galilee and surroundings, the road to Jerusalem, and Jerusalem), recognizing this as a simplification of Jesus's movements to provide a dramatic climax in Jerusalem.[63] However, Pennington explains that narrative models such as the Freytag Pyramid and Story Line Development place a climax in the middle, which aligns with Peter's confession at Caesarea

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[57] Green, *Vox Petri*, 32. For other discussions regarding the relationship between Peter and Mark's Gospel, see Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, 131–41; R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 43–63.

[58] Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, 131. William L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 25.

[59] Craig L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the New Testament: Countering the Challenges to Evangelical Christian Beliefs*, ed. Robert B. Stewart (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2016), 42.

[60] Richard A. Burridge, *What Are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography*, 3rd ed. (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2020), 211.

[61] France, *Gospel of Mark*, 63.

[62] Jonathan T. Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely: A Narrative and Theological Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2012), 31–32.

[63] France, *Gospel of Mark*, 69.

Philippi.[64] Helyer identifies this event as the hinge point of Mark's Gospel,[65] and France notes that the narrative switches focus at this point to prepare the disciples.[66]

Peter's Call to Discipleship (1:16, 29, 30, 36; 3:16; 5:37)

The first mention of Simon Peter is when Jesus sees him fishing and calls him (Mark 1:16). Simon is the first disciple mentioned, and the mention of his name twice in 1:16 emphasizes him.[67] After Peter accepted Jesus's calling, Jesus rebuked an unclean spirit (Mark 1:25) and healed Peter's mother-in-law from a fever (Mark 1:29–30) during an unparalleled visit to a disciple's home.[68] In the subsequent passage, Peter gets distressed when he cannot find Jesus, who is quietly praying (Mark 1:36). Jesus's introduction to Peter illustrates his power over demons and illnesses while acknowledging the role of a higher power through prayer. It begins Peter's learning about divine power and faith. Mark's narrative builds on the above emphases, mentioning Peter first in the list of disciples (Mark 3:16), emphasized by a name change. Peter's primary role in the three privileged disciples to witness Jesus's most significant miracles (e.g., Jairus's daughter in Mark 5:37) mirrors David's mighty three (2 Sam 23:8).[69] While Jesus establishes Peter's role as leader, Jesus uses this group of three to show Peter not to lead alone, which Jesus amplifies by rarely being alone himself.[70]

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[64] Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely*, 173–74.

[65] Helyer, *Life and Witness*, 40.

[66] France, *Gospel of Mark*, 50.

[67] Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, 133. The verse says, "As he passed alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew, Simon's brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. 'Follow me,' Jesus told them, 'and I will make you fish for people.'"

[68] Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, 24.

[69] Helyer, *Life and Witness*, 37.

[70] France, *Gospel of Mark*, 63.

Helyer suggests that Peter's early acceptance of Jesus as Messiah led to his preeminence among the twelve,[71] but the evidence indicates Jesus chose him from the outset. Jesus knows he can mold Peter's impulsiveness and used his calling into ministry as an example.[72] Jesus had chosen him as a different type of leader than the Pharisees of the day, seeking a humble leader from the artisan class with a lack of privileges rather than someone from the scribal-elite class.[73]

Do other accounts agree? While Peter is first in the lists of disciples in all Gospels, John describes Andrew introducing Simon to Jesus (John 1:35–42), though Matthew explicitly designates Simon as "first" (Matt 10:2).[74] Luke delays Peter's calling until after his mother-in-law's healing (Luke 4:38–39) and dramatizes it by making Peter the boat owner, amplifying Peter's acknowledgment of the miracle through changing his address of Jesus from "master" to "Lord," and emphasizing his leaving everything (Luke 5:11).[75] Luke also changes the identifier of the woman with the flow of blood from "disciples" (Mark 5:31) to Peter (Luke 8:45), perhaps emphasizing Peter's leadership.[76] Finally, Peter is the only disciple Jesus addresses by name in all four Gospels.[77]

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[71] Helyer, *Life and Witness*, 32.

[72] Christa M. Bonnet, "Leading from a Transformed Heart: A Content Analysis of Biblical Pivotal Moments in the Life of the Apostle Peter" (Regent University, PhD diss., 2020), 162.

[73] Bonnet, "Leading," 154.

[74] Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, 25; Helyer, *Life and Witness*, 37.

[75] Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, 24; Timothy Wiarda, *Interpreting Gospel Narratives* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2010), 17.

[76] Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, 118.

[77] Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, 25.

Peter's First Harsh Lesson: Rebuke and Restoration (8:29, 32, 33; 9:2, 5)

Having described Jesus's ministry in Galilee, Mark 8:29 brings focus on Peter, emphasized by its central location in the book. Peter's confession that Jesus is the Christ (Mark 8:29) distinguishes him from the other disciples, but buoyed by overconfidence, Peter rebukes Jesus for describing how he must suffer (Mark 8:32).[78] Peter's understanding of the Messiah remains limited to a Davidic warrior who will restore Israel, leading to Jesus's public rebuke of Peter (Mark 8:33).[79] Jesus's rebuke, "Get behind me, Satan" suggests a need to follow.[80] Having Peter's attention, Jesus explains how one's mind must be on God, not man. This public dressing down of Peter would dampen his self-confidence and cause him to lose face with the other disciples.[81] In a face-saving culture, Jesus's choice to do this publicly amplifies the error and the lesson. After Jesus emphasizes the need to sacrifice life (Mark 8:34–37), the narrative moves to the Transfiguration, where Jesus graciously allows Peter to move on from his embarrassment by renewing his role as lead disciple.[82] Peter shows his acceptance by being the only one of the three who speaks (Mark 9:5). Later in the same chapter, Jesus revisits his impending death (Mark 9:30–32), emphasizing the urgency to train Peter and the disciples.[83]

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[78] Bonnet, "Leading," 159.

[79] Blomberg, *Historical Reliability*, 115.

[80] Finn Damgaard, *Rewriting Peter As an Intertextual Character in the Canonical Gospels* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2015), 21.

[81] Richards and Brian examine the honor/shame nature of the culture at this time. They write, "A critical value in this sort of culture is preserving 'face.'" E. Randolph Richards and Brandon J. O'Brien, *Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes: Removing Cultural Blinders to Better Understand the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 103.

[82] Richard J. Cassidy, *Four Times Peter: Portrayals of Peter in the Four Gospels and at Philippi* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007), 33.

[83] Bonnet, "Leading," 165.

The narrative describes Peter as the first to declare that Jesus is the Messiah but that he misunderstands the mission. As a result, Peter learns the perils of excessive self-confidence, while Jesus emphasizes his divinity and the need for Peter, the leader, to focus on God. While the Jewish understanding of the Messiah included nationalistic hopes, Jesus's rebuke is about his rejection, suffering, and death rather than anything ethnocentric.

Luke retains Peter's confession but omits Jesus's correction of Peter, perhaps to avoid describing an embarrassing altercation (Luke 9:18–20).[84] Matthew includes Jesus's correction and extends his praise of Peter's confession to include the recognition that Peter will lead the nascent church in the future (Matt 16:17–19). In the Transfiguration, Luke describes Peter and the disciples as sleeping (Luke 9:32), which might echo Gethsemane.[85]

Peter's Leadership Development Continues (10:28; 11:21; 13:3)

Mark 10:28 shows that Peter is becoming wiser when responding to Jesus. In response to Jesus's lesson to the rich young man and the need to give away everything (Mark 10:21), Peter suggests that the disciples have already done this. While Jesus replies to Peter encouragingly that the sacrifice is worth it, there is a warning about trying to be first (Mark 10:31) reinforced when Jesus explains the importance of serving in response to James and John's request for special treatment (Mark 10:37, 45).[86] The only noted difference in the Synoptic accounts is Luke's addition of a wife to the list of those one might give up (Luke 18:29).

In Mark 11:21, Peter recalls Jesus's earlier cursing of a barren fig tree (Mark 11:14) and remarks, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered." Jesus uses Peter's memory of

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[84] Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, 118.

[85] Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, 119.

[86] Green, *Vox Petri*, 202.

the fig tree to illustrate faith's power, prayer's importance, and God's forgiveness (Mark 11:22–25). These traits are especially valuable for leadership. Others look to leaders as an example, giving leaders a greater need to trust God and seek God's forgiveness as they forgive others. Matthew paraphrases the same incident while omitting forgiveness (Matt 21:19), and Luke omits it entirely.

Finally, Jesus privately explains signs of the end of the age to Peter, James, John, and Andrew (Mark 13:3). Jesus is preparing Peter for future turmoil and persecution while reminding him of the task of taking the gospel to all nations (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, Mark 13:10) with the power of the Holy Spirit. While English versions often translate ἔθνη as "Gentiles," none of the principal translations do in this case.[87] France identifies this verse as a strong indication "of the universal scope of the good news and therefore of the Christian mission."[88] However, as previously argued, how and when the nations would join the covenant community remained unclear. In the text of this account, Matthew and Luke refer to "the disciples" rather than the specific four in Mark, providing less emphasis on Jesus's preparation of Peter.

Peter Learns about Human Fallibility (14:33, 37)

The Gethsemane narrative illustrates two lessons in human fallibility. The first is where Peter, James, and John witness Jesus's anguish about his future death and his appeal to God through prayer (Mark 14:32–36). While Jesus's prayers might not have made sense at the time,

[87] Interestingly, the Complete Jewish Bible translates it as *Goyim*. Watts does not note any Old Testament reference from this pericope. Rick E. Watts, "Mark," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 223. France notes the repeat of πάντα τὰ ἔθνη from Mark 11:17, which quotes Isaiah 56:7. France, *Gospel of Mark*, 494.

[88] France, *Gospel of Mark*, 494–95.

they would have been clarified after his death and acted as an example for Peter about the criticality of prayer.

The second lesson is Peter's inability to stay awake. Even though other disciples were asleep, Jesus spoke to Peter and addressed him as Simon (Mark 14:37). This is particularly significant in Mark's Gospel as it is the only time Jesus addressed a disciple by name.[89] Reverting to the name Simon also underscored his human fallibility, taking Peter back to before he was a disciple, with Jesus describing how the flesh is weak (Mark 14:38). Peter remembered this by encouraging discipline in his first epistle (1 Pet 1:13; 4:7; 5:8).[90]

Peter's Ultimate Failing and Restoration (14:29, 54, 66, 67, 70, 72; 16:7)

The incidents above illustrate Peter's failing and corrections, probably building his confidence. The self-confident Peter vows his eternal allegiance to Jesus unto death (Mark 14:29), though Jesus informs him otherwise, setting the stage for Peter's dramatic downfall. After Peter alone follows the arrested Jesus, Mark 14:66–72 uses his name four times to recount his denial of Jesus before the rooster's crowing reminds him of Jesus's words, leading him to repentance, which contrasts with Judas.[91] Peter would eternally remember the event, and one can picture Peter preaching with it. It builds on Mark 13:3–13, emphasizing the essentialness of confessing Jesus, regardless of the consequences. However, Mark's earliest manuscripts end by

[89] Cassidy, *Four Times Peter*, 29.

[90] Helyer, *Life and Witness*, 60.

[91] Bonnet, "Leading," 203.

singling out Peter in Jesus's resurrection (Mark 16:7), which illustrates Peter's recall, as at Caesarea Philippi,[92] and indicates the pivot from Jesus's earthly mission to Peter's.[93]

Luke describes Jesus reverting to Peter's pre-calling name with the emphatic doubled "Simon, Simon" and his prayer against Satan in Peter's life (Luke 22:31–32).[94] Luke also adds that Peter would go to prison, which parallels Paul in Acts 21:13.[95] Luke's paraphrase of Peter's threefold denial is amplified by Jesus's convicting glance (Luke 22:61), Peter's empty tomb visit (Luke 24:12), and Jesus's appearance to Simon (Luke 24:34).[96] John describes how "another disciple" (i.e., John) also followed Jesus after his arrest, helped Peter enter the high priest's courtyard (John 18:15–16), and witnessed the crucifixion (John 19:27).[97]

Summary of Peter's Development in Mark's Gospel

The analysis of the twenty-six occurrences of Simon Peter's name in Mark reveals multiple examples of Jesus teaching Peter about leadership. These leadership traits are very different from the leadership expectations of the time that were demonstrated by the Roman occupiers' forcefulness or the Pharisees' pious religiousness. Jesus was ushering in a new covenant that would need a new type of leader, and Peter was the first that he selected. The analysis of the passages shows a sequence of events that uses a literary storyline to provide a

[92] Robyn Whitaker, "Rebuke or Recall? Rethinking the Role of Peter in Mark's Gospel?" *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 75.4 (2013): 666.

[93] Cassidy, *Four Times Peter*, 22.

[94] Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, 120.

[95] Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, 121.

[96] Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, 122.

[97] Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, 26–27.

climax to Peter's confession of Christ while continuing to build the narrative to look forward to Peter's future.

After Jesus had selected Peter, his priority was teaching him who he was. Such teaching is the Galilean ministry's focus, filling the first half of Mark's Gospel, leading to the hinge at Caesarea Philippi. After Jesus's first correction of Peter, he teaches him about divine leadership principles and human fallibility before Peter's development peaks with his denial of Christ. However, Peter recognizes his sin, and after the resurrected Jesus visits him, Peter's denial would provide a possible lifelong motivation for him to lead the nascent church out of the depression of losing their leader on the cross. Moreover, while the author of Mark's Gospel was the author closest to Peter, the following section provides insight into how the other Gospel authors portray Peter's leadership development differently.

Leadership Differences in Other Gospels' Depiction of Peter

With the previous section focusing on Mark's description of Peter, this section examines the other Gospels' descriptions of Peter's activities that Mark omitted. For example, Helyer questions why Mark omitted Peter's walking on water (Matt 14:28–31),[98] and Wiarda identifies Peter as the host in his house for the temple tax pericope (Matt 17:24–27).[99] In addition to Matthew's incidents above in Galilee, there are three differences in the Last Supper account. First, Luke 22:8 identifies Peter and John as the disciples preparing the upper room at the last minute, emphasizing Jesus's desire for some final undisturbed training.[100] Second, Peter's initial

[98] Helyer, *Life and Witness*, 39.

[99] Timothy Wiarda, *Peter in the Gospels: Pattern, Personality and Relationship* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 94.

[100] Helyer, *Life and Witness*, 56–57.

refusal for Jesus to wash his feet (John 13:6–15) is another lesson in servant leadership and undeserved grace.[101] Finally, John further illustrates Peter's lack of understanding of Jesus's mission when asking "the beloved disciple" about the betrayer's identity (John 13:24).[102] Later in the garden, John identifies Peter as the sword-bearing ear-cutter (John 18:10) when Mark kept him anonymous, and Bauckham suggests that Mark's anonymity could have been to protect the perpetrator from a capital offense or John wanted to emphasize Peter's failure of restraint.[103]

A significant difference is John's description of Jesus appearing to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias (John 21:1–18). Jesus's involvement repeats Peter's earlier miraculous haul of fish, leading Peter to dive into the water (John 21:7b), though it was "the disciple, the one Jesus loved" who told Peter that it was Jesus (John 21:7a). After eating together, Jesus calls Peter to lead the church by asking him to "feed my lambs" (John 21:15), "shepherd my sheep" (John 21:16), and "feed my sheep" (John 21:17), each time after Peter affirms his love for the Lord.[104] Peter's threefold declaration of his love for Jesus emphasizes redemption from his denials.[105] Helyer identifies that many criticize Peter for returning to his old way of fishing rather than starting his evangelical commission but argues that he was following Jesus's instruction (Mark 16:7). Also, it illustrates an evolution of Peter's rash impulsiveness while also assuring that God will provide their nutritional needs.[106] Jesus commissions Peter to lead his church using the sheep

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[101] Helyer, *Life and Witness*, 57–58.

[102] Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, 26.

[103] Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017), 159, 167.

[104] Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, 27.

[105] Bonnet, "Leading," 211.

[106] Helyer, *Life and Witness*, 64.

metaphor again, but there is no indication that this is limited to Jews, remembering that Jesus had previously indicated his sheep were more than those in close proximity (John 10:16).

Peter and Foreigners in Acts and the Pauline Epistles

Acts and Paul's letters describe various events in Peter's life; the timeline was established in a previous section. This section examines the events that provide insight into Peter's approach to foreigners.[107]

Peter in Jerusalem

Peter is the dominant human character in Acts 1–12, mentioned fifty-five times.[108] Two aspects of this account provide insight into Peter's development and approach to foreigners. The first aspect is Peter's preaching in Acts 2 around 30 CE. Tradition supports that Luke wrote both his Gospel and Acts.[109] He most likely did not write Acts until at least two years after Paul arrived in Rome (Acts 28:30), i.e., around 62 CE.[110] The "we" narratives in the second half of Acts suggest that the author accompanied Paul; conversely, he was not present with Peter.[111] Luke indicates his practice of using eyewitness accounts in the introduction to his Gospel (Luke

[107] The events and their approximate dates are as follows: ca. 30–42 CE. Peter bases his ministry in Jerusalem; ca. 40 CE. Peter's vision at Joppa (Acts 10:9–16), the conversion of Cornelius (Acts 10:23–33), and the Holy Spirit falling on non-Jews (Acts 10:44–48); ca. 42 CE. Peter flees Jerusalem after his rescue from prison (Acts 12:6–17); ca. 49 CE. Antioch incident (Gal 2:11–14) and Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:6–21); ca. 54 CE. Paul writes about Peter (1 Cor 1:12; 3:22; 9:5; 15:5); Peter appears to be absent from Jerusalem when Paul visits ca. 57 CE (Acts 21:17–18).

[108] Stephen S. Liggins, *Many Convincing Proofs: Persuasive Phenomena Associated with Gospel Proclamation in Acts*, BZNW (Boston: de Gruyter, 2016), 110.

[109] The identity of Acts's author is unimportant to the argument and Luke will be used for convenience. On the authorship of Acts, see Keener, *Acts*, 48–51; J. Bradley Chance, *Acts* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2007), 2–4.

[110] Keener, *Acts*, 46–48.

[111] Keener identifies the "we" passages in Acts as 16:10–17; 20:5–21:18; 27:1–28:16. For a general discussion of the "we" narratives, see Keener, *Acts*, 383–85.

1:1–4).[112] That Luke most likely was not present for the speeches and did not write Acts until more than thirty years later suggests that he did not record Peter's exact words. Moreover, creating speeches to fit a context was a practice of historians during this period.[113] Historians were taught how to paraphrase, but their peers would have called them out for excessive creativity.[114] Luke's influence on the words makes it unwise to examine the speeches closely to gain insight into Peter, though the narrative's description of the location and audience is probably accurate. The audience's identification as "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem" (Acts 2:14) illustrates a continuity of Jesus's mission to the Jewish communities.[115] Proselytes were present in the crowd (Acts 2:10), but the fact that they are identified as separate from the Jews suggests a lack of complete integration. Peter's apparent use of the Hebrew Bible to build his argument suggests a Jewish audience (Acts 2:17–21 using Joel 3:1–5; Acts 2:25–28 using Ps 15:8–11; Acts 2:34–35 using Ps 109:1).[116] The speeches beginning with the phrase "in the last days" (Acts 2:17) echoes Jesus's remarks about all nations being included at the end of

[112] Liggins, *Many Convincing Proofs,* 28.

[113] Padilla highlights an insightful comment by Thucydides in the fifth century BCE, who admitted that "it has been difficult to recall with strict accuracy the words actually spoken, both for me as regards that which I myself heard, and for those who from various other sources have brought me reports." Padilla also shares that in the first century BCE, Dionysius of Halicarnassus argued that the historian's responsibility is to use the combination of facts and fit, where "fit" involves composing dialog appropriate to the character and the situation. Osvaldo Padilla, *The Acts of the Apostles: Interpretation, History and Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 125, 131.

[114] Keener, *Acts,* 4–5.

[115] Strazicich identifies that the Pentecost-setting for Peter's sermon would have excluded non-adherent non-Jews, indicating Peter's message would have been specific for Jews. John Strazicich, *Joel's Use of Scripture and Scripture's Use of Joel: Appropriation and Resignification in Second Temple Judaism and Early Christianity* (Boston: Brill, 2007), 273.

[116] It is generally accepted that these quotations use a version of the Septuagint. However, as the quotations were most likely influenced by Luke, this fact does not provide insight into Peter. For arguments about these verses being quotations from the Septuagint, see Keener, *Acts*, 139; Renee D. Miller, "We Dwell in Hope: An Ecclesiological Reading of Luke's Use of The Psalms in Acts" (Fuller Theological Seminary, Center for Advanced Theological Study, PhD diss., 2019), 44; Andreas M. Goldmann, "The Appropriation of the OT 'Zion'-Motif in Acts: With Special Reference to Acts 1–8" (Trinity International University, PhD diss., 2012), 216.

the age. The quote from Joel includes the reference to "everyone" (Acts 2:21). Even if this is a direct quote of Peter, there is no evidence that Peter linked such words with non-Jews.

The second aspect of the Acts accounts of Peter that provides insight into his approach to foreigners is the description of his activities. The narrative starts by establishing Peter as the leader of the apostles after Jesus's ascension.[117] Peter bases his activities in Jerusalem until he leaves in Acts 12:17. At Pentecost, Peter preaches to Jews ("Fellow Jews and all you residents of Jerusalem," Acts 2:14). Peter then heals a man at the entrance to the temple (Acts 3:7) followed by preaching in the temple (Acts 3:11–26), continuing the focus on Jews. In Acts 4, the focus of the ministry on Jews continues with a description of Peter and John being questioned by the Jewish leadership (Acts 4:5–22). In Acts 5, the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira keep the focus on the Jews (Acts 5:1–10).[118]

However, the narrative moves to include Hellenistic Jews as well as Hebraic Jews in Acts 6:1–6 when the Hellenists complained, which led to seven new Hellenistic leaders: "So they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a convert from Antioch" (Acts 6:6). Keener notes these seven were conspicuously Hellenists and that these "bicultural leaders from the church's current minority, somewhat at home in two different cultural spheres, would form the bridge to the majority of the church's future."[119] Of particular note is the appointment of Nicolaus, a convert (προσήλυτος), as

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[117] Kucicki identifies that Peter's leadership is illustrated by his standing up to speak in Acts 1:15 and his understanding of the need to replace Judas in Acts 1:22. Janusz Kucicki, *The Function of the Speeches in the Acts of the Apostles: A Key to Interpretation of Luke's Use of Speeches in Acts* (Boston: Brill, 2017), 260.

[118] Marshall notes the parallels between this episode and Achan, who was stoned with his family for his disobedience, which had led to defeat at Ai (Josh 7:1–26), and with Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu, whom the Lord consumed for an unauthorized offering (Lev 10:1–2). I. Howard Marshall, "Acts," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 554.

[119] Keener, *Acts*, 225.

one of the seven leaders, which is possibly the first non-ethnic Jew in the church's leadership. The narrative then switches to others, including Stephen and the introduction of Paul (Acts 7), Philip's trip to Samaria, followed by Peter and John (Acts 8), and Paul's experience with the Lord (Acts 9). In the trajectory of the ministry moving away from Jerusalem, Paul's conversion might represent a spread to the diaspora. These events fit the overall structure of Acts, moving from Jerusalem (the symbolic center of Judaism) to Judea and Samaria (Acts 1:8) and ultimately to Rome (the symbolic center of the non-Jewish church).[120]

During this period of approximately ten years (ca. 30–40 CE), Peter remains in the land that was once part of Israel.[121] However, the text mentions some foreigners. Luke introduces Hellenists in Acts 6:1, and Keener notes that this is the beginning of the transition from Peter and the Jerusalem church to Paul and the Gentile mission. However, these Hellenists were bicultural Jews rather than foreigners.[122] It is noteworthy that the disciples chose a proselyte (προσήλυτος), Nicolaus, suggesting his complete integration into the community, though he is still identified as a proselyte. Peter and John's visit to Samaria (Acts 8:14–25) resulted in the Samaritans receiving the Holy Spirit, but there was a unique relationship between the Jews and the Samaritans, and Jesus had rebuked John's desire to destroy them in Luke 9:54–55.[123] However, it is Philip who converts the first true non-Jew, the Ethiopian eunuch who practices the Jewish faith but cannot become a proselyte (Deut 23:1) in Acts 8:26–39. Luke's portrayal of Peter in these chapters

[120] Keener, *Acts,* 85–86; Carl R. Holladay, *Acts: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2016), 32.

[121] Maps of the allocation of the land of Israel identify the relative locations of cities. For example, see John D. Currid and David P. Barrett, *Crossway ESV Bible Atlas* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 107.

[122] Keener, *Acts,* 217.

[123] Keener, *Acts,* 265.

suggests that Peter had continued to focus his ministry on Jews, though with a progression from Hebraic Jews to Hellenist Jews to proselytes to Samaritans to diaspora Jews.[124]

Joppa, Cornelius, and Peter's Departure

After the account of Paul's change, Luke's narrative returns to Peter with Aeneas in Lydda (Acts 9:32–35) and Dorcas in Joppa (Acts 9:36–43). At this time, both of these cities were nearly completely Jewish. These miracles led to the events involving Cornelius the centurion, at Caesarea, a much less Jewish city.[125]

Using a vision, God showed Peter that the food laws no longer apply (Acts 10:9–16). At first, Peter was perplexed (Acts 10:17), even though Jesus had abrogated the food laws (Mark 7:15–19), which suggests Peter did not understand what Jesus had said. Peter's lack of understanding is resolved by the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:19–20) and the arrival of Cornelius's men (Acts 10:21–22). These events led to Peter visiting Cornelius while acknowledging that such association with foreigners is against Jewish law (Acts 10:28–29). Moreover, Peter's visit leads to the Holy Spirit descending upon the uncircumcised, challenging the fundamental requirement of circumcision to enter the covenant community (Acts 10:44–48).[126] The account appears in Acts three times (10:1–48; 11:5–16; 15:7–11), similar to Paul's Damascus-road experience appearing three times in Acts (9:1–18; 22:3–21; 26:9–18).[127] In the second account, Peter reports the incident to "the circumcision party" in Jerusalem, and they specifically accuse him of eating

[124] One cannot discount that Luke contrasted Peter and Paul to emphasize the structure of his account, with Peter representing the mission to the Jews and Paul the mission to the non-Jews. However, it is difficult to assess the impact this might have had on the text, and it is conjecture to argue that something different from the recorded events occurred.

[125] Keener, *Acts,* 289.

[126] Keener, *Acts,* 294.

[127] Keener, *Acts,* 293.

with the uncircumcised (Acts 11:3). As well as accentuating Peter's new understanding of the inapplicability of food laws, this illustrates that the different groups within the Christian community and Peter's leadership had evolved from Acts 2.

The involvement of foreigners in the first half of Acts illustrates the progression of their acceptance. In the Gospels, the disciples were all Israelite Jews, as were most of those who accepted Jesus. Luke expands the recipients of Peter's message to include Jews and proselytes from many countries (Acts 2:9–11) whom Peter addresses as "Men of Israel" (Acts 2:22), thus representing the diaspora.[128] The inclusion of Nicolaus the proselyte as one of the seven introduces a non-ethnic Jew from Antioch into leadership for the first time (Acts 6:5). Philip, Peter, and John extend the group of new Christians to include Samaritans, a group that was generally despised by Jews (Acts 8:5–25). Philip's interaction with the Ethiopian eunuch demonstrates the conversion of a pious person who was unable to become a proselyte (Deut 23:1) and extends the geographical spread to Africa, thus affirming Isaiah 56:1–8 regarding foreigners and eunuchs and confirming anyone can join the covenant community.[129] The progression climaxes with Cornelius, the epitome of non-Jewishness by being a Roman centurion, and his acceptance into the covenant community without circumcision. Cornelius's receiving the Holy Spirit indicates that Jesus has made God available to all who believe, regardless of their circumcised status. Peter has been closely involved in most of this progression.

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[128] Liggins, *Many Convincing Proofs*, 118. Sandt argues that Luke uses this list of nations to represent the whole world, emphasizing "every nation under heaven" (Acts 2:5). While this might be a hint at the future universality of the gospel, it is unlikely that Peter recognized such a hint. Hubertus Waltherus Maria van de Sandt, "The Fate of the Gentiles in Joel and Acts 2: An Intertextual Study," *ETL* 66.1 (1990): 68.

[129] Keener, *Acts*, 272.

The sequence of events narrated by Luke places Peter's reporting the incident to Jerusalem soon after the event itself (Acts 11:1–18), which concludes with the circumcision party declaring, "Then to the Gentiles (ἔθνεσιν) also God has granted repentance that leads to life" (Acts 11:18). The next event involving Peter is his imprisonment by Herod, subsequent rescue, and his departure from Jerusalem (Acts 12:3–17). The sequencing of these events in Acts suggests that the Cornelius incident occurred close to the end of Peter's time in Jerusalem, approximately 40 CE.

Peter's departure from Jerusalem (Acts 12:17) is the turning point in Acts, followed by Paul's missions to foreign lands.[130] Where Peter went is unspecified, though it was likely outside Agrippa's jurisdiction, i.e., beyond Judea.[131] Various scholars argue for a range of locations.[132] As it was beyond Judea, it most likely had a majority non-Jewish population, providing Peter many opportunities to build on his experience with Cornelius if he chose or was led to do so.

The Jerusalem Council

Peter returns for the Jerusalem Council in approximately 49 CE, after Agrippa's death, as recounted in Acts 12:20–23. Luke describes Peter retelling the Cornelius incident (Acts 15:7–11), advocating that God does not require circumcision to enter the covenant community.[133] Peter's recollection that this incident occurred "in the early days" appears to challenge the timeline but without negatively impacting the arguments presented here, emphasizing that the

[130] Keener, *Acts*, 85.

[131] Keener, *Acts*, 322.

[132] Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 31 (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 489. Also Wenham, "AD 42?"

[133] Keener, *Acts*, 365.

passage of time is relevant.[134] James's proposal regarding limited food restrictions (Acts 15:19–21) and the subsequent letter (Acts 15:22–29) suggest alignment with Peter, though Paul's subsequent letter to the Corinthians might suggest he held a different stance later (1 Cor 8:1–13; 10:25–28). Gibson argues that "James, Peter, and Paul all shared congruent views on the Gentiles," which thus required no mediation by Peter between James and Paul, while Jervis argues that the account of the Antioch incident indicates Peter "was caught in the middle between two conflicting views."[135]

If one read only the accounts in Acts about Peter, one would be justified in concluding that Peter embarked on missions to foreign lands, championing Christ to Jews and non-Jews alike. Paul's Damascus-road experience also guided Paul to reach out to both non-Jews (ἐθνῶν) and Jews (children of Israel, Acts 9:15). Jesus had instructed Peter to feed his sheep, which included non-Jews, and it appears Peter obeyed Jesus's command. However, Paul's letter to the Galatians appears to turn such a conclusion upside down.

The Antioch Incident

The incident that Paul reports about in Galatians 2:11–14 has perplexed many, even causing Origen to argue that it was a simulation.[136] There are multiple positions on various aspects of the reported incident. This section summarizes those positions in light of what the passage reveals about Peter's approach to foreigners.

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[134] The proposed timeline is that Peter started the post-ascension ministry in 30 CE, met Cornelius in about 40 CE, left Jerusalem in about 42 CE, and the Jerusalem Council is in 49 CE. "In the early days" might suggest a date for the Cornelius event closer to 30 CE.

[135] Gibson, *Between Jerusalem and Antioch*, 260; Jervis, "Peter in the Middle: Galatians 2:11–21," 45.

[136] Dunn, "The Incident at Antioch," 3. Gibson writes that it is "one of the most intriguing, and most debated, interchanges between two individuals in Scripture." Gibson, *Between Jerusalem and Antioch*, 215.

The first debated topic concerns the date. The authorship date of Galatians, dependent on whether the audience is North or South Galatia, is placed between 49 CE (before or after the Jerusalem Council) and 55 CE.[137] There is also uncertainty regarding the date of the Antioch incident. Paul describes one visit to Jerusalem three years after his return to Damascus (Gal 1:18) and another visit after fourteen years (Gal 2:1), followed by the incident (Gal 2:11). Determining a date remains challenging with uncertainty about the date of Paul's Damascus-road experience, variation in the length of time when presented inclusively, whether the three and fourteen years are inclusive or consecutive, and alignment of events with Acts. Scholars argue for dates ranging from 44 to 49 CE, placing the incident after Peter's interaction with Cornelius and his departure from Jerusalem, while its timing relative to the Jerusalem Council remains uncertain.[138] The evidence suggests that Paul is writing about an incident that occurred several years after Peter learned about the abrogation of food laws and the inclusion of uncircumcised foreigners in the covenant community.

The next debated topic is Paul's statement of the agreement that "we [Paul and Barnabas] should go to the Gentiles (εἰς τὰ ἔθνη) and they [Peter with James and John] to the circumcised (εἰς τὴν περιτομήν)" (Gal 2:9). Interpretations of this statement include geographic separation, ethnic separation, and a difference in message regarding law observance, but each of these face difficulties when aligning with Paul's subsequent preaching in synagogues (Acts 17:2–4), Peter's inevitability of meeting non-Jewish God-fearers in the Jewish communities, and Paul's insistence

[137] Porter, *The Apostle Paul*, 187–93; Bruce, *Galatians*, 43–56; Longenecker, *Galatians*, lxxii–lxxxviii.

[138] Gibson, *Between Jerusalem and Antioch*, 216–19. Gibson reports that Pesch suggests that the Cornelius interaction occurred after the Jerusalem agreements. While such a sequence of events appears more logical, the chronologies and apparent sequence of events in Acts make this unlikely. Gibson, *Between Jerusalem and Antioch*, 257.

on a single gospel (Gal 1:6–7; 2:14–21).[139] Dunn proposes a translation where the preposition εἰς suggests a general responsibility that the parties should act on behalf of the different types of believers.[140] Schreiner argues that such a demarcation might have been a short-term priority, that the delineation was not rigid, and that it was temporary.[141]

The next debated topic is the Antioch incident itself (Gal 2:11–14), described as "the most celebrated and complicated historical problem in the whole epistle—perhaps in the whole of the New Testament."[142] Paul criticizes Peter as he sees him as condemned (καταγινώσκω, Gal 2:11), a word usually used to describe being condemned to death by God or a judge or for the condemnation of a criminal. It is a passive verb, implying Peter condemns himself through his actions.[143] Peter used to eat regularly (συνήσθιεν, the imperfect suggesting a habitual practice) with non-Jews (ἐθνῶν).[144] He stopped when people associated with James in Jerusalem visited (Gal 2:12), which Paul describes as "hypocrisy." Other Jews, including Barnabas, followed Peter's lead (Gal 2:13). Paul reports that he chastised Peter for showing non-Jews (ἔθνη) that they must live like Jews, even though he lived like a non-Jew (ἐθνικῶς, Gal 2:14). Paul's public criticism of Peter, preserved in his letter, is surprising in a collectivist culture that prioritizes saving face.[145] It is unclear whether Paul followed Jesus's guidance of trying to work out

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[139] Gibson, *Between Jerusalem and Antioch*, 222–27. See also Longenecker, *Galatians*, 58–59; Bruce, *Galatians*, 124–25.

[140] James D. G. Dunn, *Beginning from Jerusalem*, vol. 2 of *Christianity in the Making* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 457–58.

[141] Schreiner, *Galatians*, 130–31.

[142] C. K. Barrett, *Freedom and Obligation: A Study of the Epistle to the Galatians* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985), 10; Gibson, *Between Jerusalem and Antioch*, 244.

[143] Gibson, *Between Jerusalem and Antioch*, 244.

[144] Bruce, *Galatians*, 129.

[145] Richards and O'Brien highlight that Paul accused Peter publicly, triggering a community punishment by shaming him. Richards and O'Brien, *Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes*, 117, 136. Bailey's works explore the

differences privately with a brother before announcing them publicly (Matt 18:15–17), yet such harsh criticism does not appear to be "in a spirit of gentleness" (Gal 6:1).[146] This suggests Paul was extremely troubled by the incident.[147]

There is also the question of why Peter withdrew from the non-Jews. This is another question with many answers from different scholars. Gibson reviews six interpretations which include (1) Peter was vacillating through lack of confidence, (2) the Galatians 2:9 agreement obligated Peter to withdraw from non-Jews, (3) Peter believed that non-Jews should be circumcised, (4) Peter was mediating between two sides represented by Paul and James, (5) Peter was concerned about his position in the church, or (6) Peter was concerned about the persecution of Christian Jews in Jerusalem.[148] As discussed above, the alignment between Peter, Paul, and James regarding the admittance of non-Jews into the covenant community discounts most of the

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similarities between people during Jesus's time and Middle Eastern peasants that Bailey had lived with and studied. One observation is the strong culture of saving face and avoiding shame, which is an attribute of collectivistic cultures and less prevalent in the West. His interpretation of The Prodigal Son with this background is particularly insightful. See Kenneth E. Bailey, *The Cross and the Prodigal*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010). Weeden criticizes Bailey's thesis of oral tradition in the Middle East as providing insufficient evidence that it applies to first-century Palestine. Theodore J. Weeden Sr., "Kenneth Bailey's Theory of Oral Tradition: A Theory Contested by Its Evidence: Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus," *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 7.1 (2009): 42–43. Dunn defends Bailey's approach, noting that the support for Bailey's thesis is mostly anecdotal while continuing to see its value. James D. G. Dunn, "Kenneth Bailey's Theory of Oral Tradition: Critiquing Theodore Weeden's Critique: Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus," *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 7.1 (2009): 61–62. Keener also identifies the usefulness of Bailey's work while recognizing the value of considering Weeden's criticism. Craig S. Keener, "Weighing T.J. Weeden's Critique of Kenneth Bailey's Approach to Oral Tradition in the Gospels: Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism," *JGRChJ* 13 (2017): 77–78. For a discussion of the different values perceived by different cultures, see David Livermore, *Leading with Cultural Intelligence: The Real Secret to Success* (Nashville: AMACOM, 2015), 99–133. Note that Jesus also publicly criticized Peter when he rebuked Jesus for predicting his suffering in Mark 8:33.

[146] To the contrary, Schreiner argues that Paul's public admonishment of Peter was appropriate as Peter's sin was public with public consequences, as in 1 Timothy 5:20. Schreiner, *Galatians*, 149. However, 1 Timothy 5:20 discusses those who "persist in sin." Understanding Peter's actions at Antioch as "sin" opens one's eyes to how a legalistic behavior can impact the journey of others to Christ.

[147] Other occasions where Paul appears to bypass the gentle approach are the case of a man sleeping with his father's wife (1 Cor 5:1), his confrontation with the Jewish false prophet Bar-Jesus (Acts 13:6–11), and his criticism of Alexander the coppersmith for opposing his words (2 Tim 4:14–15).

[148] Gibson, *Between Jerusalem and Antioch*, 252–75.

above items. The final point is that Jewish Christians faced persecution in Jerusalem, where the influence of Jewish nationalists and the Pharisees remained strong, and Peter probably withdrew from the non-Jews out of concern for them. However, his Jewish background caused him to underestimate the barrier that following Jewish law was to non-Jews and the message that his withdrawal would send to them.[149] In contrast, Paul had spent years ministering to non-Jewish communities. As identified earlier in this dissertation, Peter had been born and spent his formative years in a Jewish family in upper Galilee, probably somewhat separated from non-Jews, and his confident proclamation that he had "never eaten anything that is common or unclean" before his meal with Cornelius (Acts 10:14) supports a relatively separated life before that encounter.[150]

Perhaps Peter's apparently ambiguous stance in Galatians is due to a lack of experience. There is a difference between being aware of a culture and being cognizant of that culture's perception of your own. However, this suggests that Peter did not have significant interactions with non-Jewish communities between leaving Jerusalem in approximately 42 CE and the Antioch incident in 49 CE, which is somewhat surprising, but evidence is lacking to investigate this further.

Relative Timing

As there is uncertainty about the timing of Cornelius's conversion, the Jerusalem Council, and the Antioch incident, it is wise to assess the impact of their relative sequence on the current discussion. First, Peter declares that he has "never eaten anything impure" (Acts 10:14)

[149] Gibson, *Between Jerusalem and Antioch*, 271–75.

[150] Gibson, *Between Jerusalem and Antioch*, 274.

and identifies how it is forbidden to associate with foreigners (Acts 10:28) before he changes his viewpoint that God accepts anyone who follows him (Acts 10:34–35). It seems most unlikely that he would either have regularly eaten with non-Jews at Antioch (Gal 2:12) or have defended the inclusion of the non-Jews at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:7–11) prior to such an event. The dates identified earlier of the Cornelius incident (ca. 40 CE) with Antioch and the Jerusalem Council (ca 49 CE) align with this sequence.

Longenecker reviews the possible dates for Galatians, noting it is tied to the letter's destination, which is associated with the North and South Galatian hypotheses. The dates suggested range from before the Jerusalem Council through the mid-50s CE.[151] The relevance of the current discussion is the possibility that the Antioch incident happened before or after the Jerusalem Council. If Antioch occurred before the alignment of ideas at the Jerusalem Council, it supports that there was misalignment before the council, and perhaps the council was called to help solve it.[152] Schreiner appears to favor Antioch preceding the council.[153] To support Galatians 2:1–10 being Paul's account of the Jerusalem Council, Dunn proposes that "the 'Jerusalem Council' settled only the circumcision issue, and that the so-called 'apostolic decree' stipulating the limits of table-fellowship reflects a later agreement, an accommodation between Jewish and Gentile believers once the Gentile mission had become well established."[154]

While the sequence has a bearing on understanding the Antioch incident, it has minimal impact on the current discussion. Peter had learned about the inapplicability of the food laws and

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[151] Longenecker, *Galatians*, lxxiii. See also Schreiner, *Galatians*, 31.

[152] Dunn, "The Incident at Antioch," 29.

[153] Schreiner, *Galatians*, 139. Schreiner also identifies the argument that the Antioch incident might have occurred before the narrative of Galatians 2:1–10, though he notes that most scholars argue that Galatians 2:1–10 occurred before Galatians 2:11–14.

[154] Dunn, "The Incident at Antioch," 38.

the inclusion of non-Jews during his vision before Cornelius's baptism. He took the position of non-Jew inclusion to the Jerusalem Council, which agreed with him, so that would not have impacted his position. Peter's incorrect behavior at Antioch, which Paul called out, is the same regardless of the sequence with the Jerusalem Council. The sequence is immaterial to examining Peter's approach to foreigners in his epistles, penned approximately fifteen years later.

After The Antioch Incident

After such sharp criticism from Paul, there is the question of what happened next.[155] Its relevance in the current discussion is whether the incident would have impacted Peter's approach to foreigners. There is no record of Peter's response, though he assuredly received Paul's reprimand.

Earlier in this chapter, it was argued that Peter had the propensity to learn. Those examples involved Jesus as the teacher, whereas Paul is the teacher here. However, once explained, it seems unlikely that Peter would consistently argue that his refusing to engage in table fellowship with non-Jews when Jews were present would not have a detrimental impact on what non-Jews thought was required to be part of the covenant community.[156] That Paul is greeted warmly by James on Paul's return to Jerusalem in 57 CE (Acts 21:17–20) indicates a lack of animosity, but the lack of Peter's mention suggests absence.[157] Perhaps Paul's later writings shed light on any change in Peter's behavior.[158]

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[155] Texts explore who "won." For example, Jervis explores whether Paul "won the day in Antioch," Gibson asks, "Did Paul prevail at Antioch?" and Dunn discusses "this victory of Paul in Galatia." Jervis, "Peter in the Middle: Galatians 2:11–21," 53; Gibson, *Between Jerusalem and Antioch*, 275; Dunn, "The Incident at Antioch," 40.

[156] Gibson, *Between Jerusalem and Antioch*, 281–82.

[157] Gibson, *Between Jerusalem and Antioch*, 278.

[158] It should be noted that Paul might not appear to be completely aligned with the outcome of the Jerusalem Council when he advises that Christians can eat whatever is sold in meat markets with a clear conscience

There is general agreement that Paul wrote 1 Corinthians in about 55 CE, about six years after the Antioch incident and the Jerusalem Council.[159] Paul references Peter four times in this letter. In the first two references, Paul argues against those who follow Paul, Cephas, or Apollos (1 Cor 1:12–13; 3:21–23) and that Christians belong to Christ. While the text reveals divisions within the church, Paul is not critical of Peter, which suggests Paul no longer had the issues with Peter that he had in Antioch.[160] Paul presents Peter in a positive light when using him as an example of taking along his believing wife (1 Cor 9:5). Finally, Paul acknowledges that Peter was the first to see the risen Christ (1 Cor 15:5) and that they preach a common message (1 Cor 15:11).[161] It appears that their differences at Antioch are in the past. Finally, one must be careful not to have one's perspective distorted because the New Testament records Paul's missionary journeys while being silent about Peter.[162] The lack of evidence about Peter's activities in the 50s CE simply means we do not know what he did.

Summary and Conclusion

This chapter examined the evolution of Peter's approach to foreigners after he met Jesus. First, it established an approximate timeline for the pertinent events. While there is uncertainty about the dates, the overall sequence and approximate time between events provide the context

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if they have not been told it was part of a sacrifice (1 Cor 10:25–28), building on his previous advice about food offered to idols (1 Cor 8:1–13). While Paul's guidance appears to dampen the edict from the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:29), it is also possible that guidance has changed between the Jerusalem Council and 1 Corinthians. For instance, the council's guidance might have been temporary until the non-Jews became more mature in the church. Later, Paul might be relaxing the regulation by accepting the theological reality that there is no significance to food sacrificed to idols (1 Cor 8:4–6) but that doing so might lead others astray (1 Cor 8:7), and that the reward of eating such food might not be worth the risk of leading others astray (1 Cor 8: 7–13).

[159] Porter, *The Apostle Paul*, 57.

[160] Gibson, *Between Jerusalem and Antioch*, 279.

[161] Bockmuehl, *Scripture and Memory*, 143–44.

[162] Gibson, *Between Jerusalem and Antioch*, 279.

for the progression in Peter's understanding of foreigners. Second, it examined Jesus's teaching about foreigners. While concluding that Peter learned little new from Jesus about the inclusion of non-Jews in the covenant community, Jesus's abrogation of food laws and his sharing of table fellowship with outcasts should have made a lasting impression on Peter. However, the need for Peter to be reminded by a vision before he converted Cornelius suggests he required another event to understand the inclusion of non-Jews. In contrast, the examination of Peter in the Gospels highlighted his propensity to learn and grow from his mistakes, a trait that likely continued into his post-ascension ministry.

The final section examined Peter after the ascension. Peter's depiction illustrates the progression of the ministry from Jews via proselytes, a foreigner and a eunuch, to the uncircumcised non-Jewish Roman. Peter's reporting of these incidents to the leaders in Jerusalem and his subsequent defense of including non-Jews through grace without their following the Law illustrates his understanding of foreigner inclusion in Christ's kingdom. While Paul's letter to the Corinthians affirms this, his letter to the Galatians sends a very different message. This letter suggests a division in responsibility between Paul and the Jerusalem leadership (including Peter) regarding Jews and non-Jews. This division is amplified by Paul's reporting of Peter withdrawing from table fellowship with Antiochian non-Jewish Christians when Jewish Christians from Jerusalem arrived.

The events above cover the period 28–49 CE. During Peter's time with Jesus (28–30 CE), Peter learned little about foreigners while being developed for leadership and learning that Jesus was the Messiah. During 30–42 CE, Peter's understanding of including non-Jews in the covenant community would have evolved from their participation as proselyte converts who followed Jewish law to their immediate large-scale involvement without needing to follow the Law. His

experiences during this period appear to set him up for a mission to the non-Jews, but Paul's Galatian letter suggests otherwise. Paul's report of the division of responsibility, followed by Peter's poor judgment in Antioch in 49 CE, suggests that Peter's behavior needed to evolve, specifically around mixed groups of Jewish and non-Jewish Christians. However, it seems unlikely that Peter and Paul differed fundamentally regarding the lack of need for Christians to follow the Law for salvation and that the agreement that Paul references regarding a division in responsibility was absolute or lasted a long time. While there is little evidence about Peter's activities in the 50s, it is likely that he would have acted upon Paul's criticism, would have continued to learn, and spent most of this time outside of Jerusalem. During that time, the question remains about whether Peter's approach to foreigners changed. Ultimately, Peter wrote his letters shortly before he died in Rome. The next chapter examines what these letters reveal about Peter's approach to foreigners.

CHAPTER FIVE: ETHNO-RELIGIOUS PREFERENCES IN 1 AND 2 PETER

This chapter brings the dissertation to its culmination in the Petrine Epistles. An understanding of Peter's background, as outlined in previous chapters, enriches the analysis. Chapter Two explored Judaism's possible approaches toward foreigners in the first century CE. It concluded that there was a distinction between those foreigners who were interested in God and those who were hostile. God-fearing non-Jews could join Israel as proselytes, though their path to full integration is unclear, with examples of proselytes continuing to be distinguished from ethnic Jews. However, David is an example of an offspring of a proselyte being fully integrated. The differing levels of welcoming of proselytes between Philo/Josephus and Qumran suggest that a range of attitudes existed during Peter's upbringing, though there is no evidence of Peter's attitude. Chapter Three examined Peter's background before becoming a disciple, identifying that he grew up in upper Galilee and likely had some cross-cultural exposure. There is little evidence of any revolutionary sentiments in this part of Galilee, with John the Baptist and Jesus primarily speaking out against the Jewish leadership. It is unlikely that Peter held any deep-seated animosity toward foreigners.

The fourth chapter investigated Peter's interaction with non-Jews in the Gospels, Acts, and Epistles and established timelines for the events with associated uncertainty. While the Gospel narratives illustrate that Peter had a propensity to learn, his vision before converting Cornelius suggests he did not act upon Jesus's abrogation of food laws and interaction with outcasts. Peter's conversion of Cornelius and his defense to the Jerusalem leadership of the inclusion of non-Jews suggests a lack of ethno-religious preference from that point. While the Antioch incident suggests a lapse in Peter's judgment when interfacing with groups of new Christians with different approaches to Jewish law, Paul's categorization of Peter as the apostle

to the circumcised appears to contradict the accounts in Acts after Cornelius's baptism, though there are few examples.

This chapter examines the Petrine Epistles. After reviewing the literature and discussing the background and contexts, I examine various features of the letters that provide insight into whether Peter's Christian ministry had any ethno-religious preferences when he wrote these letters. Much of the existing scholarship on Peter discusses the letters' audience, and I use those discussions to point toward evidence of preferences in the letters. I also examine Peter's usage of other Scripture and the parallels between the Petrine Epistles and other New Testament works.

Method

In order to investigate whether the Petrine Epistles exhibit any ethno-religious preferences, one must first define the term and then identify what features might suggest such a preference. The following section discusses this, with an overview of the sources and a literature review.

Definition of Ethno-Religious Preferences

One requires care when using terms associated with ethnicity as they can trigger a modern understanding of race and associated bias, which differs from the biblical context. Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary identifies "ethno-" as being derived from the Greek "*ethnos,"* meaning race, people, or cultural group.[1] An example is the Jewish people group, which included proselyte converts who adopted Judaism's religious identity markers and worshipped Yahweh. Therefore, the adjective "ethno-religious" denotes a group of people defined by a combination of their ethnicity and religion, allowing the inclusion of converts. In

[1] Merriam-Webster, Inc., *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, s.v. "ethno-."

the context of the Apostles spreading the gospel, ethno-religious preference denotes favoring one group over another, for example, Jews (including converts) or non-Jews. Scripture suggests that Paul believed God called him to spread the gospel to the "Gentiles" (non-Jews; Acts 13:46–47; Rom 1:14–16; Gal 2:2–9).

Peter's vision prior to converting Cornelius suggests that Peter had retained an ethno-religious preference toward Jews until that point by continuing to follow the dietary laws (Acts 10:10–16) and accepting that the Law forbade associating with a foreigner (ἀλλόφυλος; Acts 10:28). Peter illustrates his change in position by baptizing Cornelius after witnessing the Holy Spirit falling upon him, which he affirms by defending the receiving of the Holy Spirit by uncircumcised non-Jews (Acts 11:1–18). At the Jerusalem Council, his defense that all, including non-Jews, are saved by grace (Acts 15:7–11) further supports Peter's change in ethno-religious preference. However, in his letter to the Galatians, Paul designates Peter as the apostle entrusted to the circumcised (Gal 2:8), meaning the Jewish people group, suggesting an ethno-religious focus on Jewish people in his ministry. For the following decade, the biblical record is silent about Peter, except for Paul's references to him in 1 Corinthians, which suggest that the letter's recipients knew him. However, the Petrine Epistles provide the opportunity to assess Peter's ethno-religious preference toward the end of his life. This dissertation argues that the Petrine Epistles reveal a lack of Jewish ethno-religious preference in Peter's mission.

Features Suggesting Ethno-Religious Preference

To investigate whether the Petrine Epistles indicate that Peter had any ethno-religious preferences, one must identify what features might exhibit such a trait. One can place these into two categories. The first category is Peter's Jewish behaviors before his vision associated with Cornelius. These behaviors include the prioritization of the Law, especially the food laws (Acts

10:14), and remaining separate by not associating with a foreigner (Acts 10:28). The second category is behaviors that indicate a lack of ethno-religious preference, such as welcoming people into Christ's community without the need to adopt Judaism's religious identity markers. Examples of such behaviors include Peter's baptism of Cornelius (Acts 10:48), Peter's report to the Jerusalem leadership about the Holy Spirit descending upon non-Jews (Acts 11:15–17), and Peter's recognition of forgiveness by faith, without consideration of ethnicity (Acts 10:43, 15:9). Paul exhibits this last category with his message of salvation by faith (Rom 10:11; Gal 3:22).

Scholarly literature examines features of the Petrine Epistles to determine whether the audience was Jewish Christian, non-Jewish Christian, or mixed. Examining such features from the author's perspective (i.e., Peter) rather than the audience's is the core of this chapter's analysis.

Sources and Literature Review

The primary source for this chapter is the biblical text of the Petrine Epistles. Various other primary sources are used to explore the context of the letters. The previous chapter established the author's context.

While Elliott lamented about the "relative paucity of monographs and articles" about 1 Peter in his 1976 article that referred to the letter as an "exegetical step-child," he subsequently noted the "sizable body of research on 1 Peter over the past thirty years" in 2000.[2] In 2006, Dubis surveyed the scholarly literature on 1 Peter since 1985, including his list of "a significant number of commentaries on 1 Peter" that had appeared in the previous twenty years.[3] Similarly to Elliott,

[2] John H. Elliott, "The Rehabilitation of an Exegetical Step-Child: 1 Peter in Recent Research," *JBL* 95.2 (1976): 243; John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 37B (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 4.

[3] Mark Dubis, "Research on 1 Peter: A Survey of Scholarly Literature Since 1985," *CurBR* 4.2 (2006): 200.

Snyder identified the scholarly neglect of 2 Peter in his 1979 bibliography of works on the epistle in the hope of stimulating further work.[4] Gilmour provided an updated bibliography in 1999, noting a significant increase in works on 2 Peter.[5] A library search indicates that the publication of works on these epistles has continued.[6]

As identified earlier, when reviewing the literature examining Peter's life, scholarship is divided regarding the authorship of the Petrine Epistles. This division extends to other background topics, such as date, audience, occasion, genre, and literary dependence. Such presuppositions impact the interpretation of the text.[7] I evaluate the text from a neutral stance, evaluating the different positions on background in the following section.[8] In addition, sociological approaches provide valuable perspectives even if one disagrees with their overall approach.[9]

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[4] John Snyder, "A 2 Peter Bibliography," *JETS* 22.3 (1979): 265. Hupper published additions to Snyder's bibliography, and Bauckham published a supplement with additional works. William G. Hupper, "Additions to 'A 2 Peter Bibliography,'" *JETS* 23.1 (1980): 65–66; Richard Bauckham, "2 Peter: A Supplementary Bibliography," *JETS* 25.1 (1982): 91–93.

[5] Michael J. Gilmour, "2 Peter in Recent Research: A Bibliography," *JETS* 42.4 (1999): 673.

[6] A search of the ATLA Religion Database on March 18, 2024, identified 594 works on 1 Peter and 231 works on 2 Peter. To compare with similar-length books, 1 Timothy had 680 works, 2 Timothy had 264 works, 1 Thessalonians had 458 works, 2 Thessalonians had 156 works, and James had 449 works.

[7] I recognize that the standard approach to interpretation is to identify the context (including the audience) before examining the text. In Duvall and Hays's biblical journey, the first question asked is what the text meant to the biblical audience. J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays, *Grasping God's Word: A Hands-on Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 42. In this case, the determination of the audience at first glance is inconclusive. Osborne's approach which "entails a 'spiral' from text to context" is appropriate. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 22.

[8] I recognize that complete neutrality is impossible with some presuppositions inevitable. Nevertheless, neutrality is my goal.

[9] Witherington builds on Elliott's sociological approach to the letters. John H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981); Witherington, *Hellenized Christians*. Osborne outlines several challenges associated with this approach, including multiple criticisms of Elliott's approach, and offers suggestions, including treating the text rather than the background as primary. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 175–80. Buell's approach focusing on ethnic reasoning evaluates topics of interest to this dissertation. However, Buell's priority to "support an interpretation of Christianity that can help end both racism and anti-Judaism" reveals that her primary motivation is other than interpreting the

Background and Context of the Petrine Epistles

The previous chapters explore the background of Peter, the traditional author of these epistles. This section examines the pertinent background of the epistles themselves to support the subsequent exegesis of the text.

Authorship

As I outlined in my opening chapter, there is a significant unresolved debate regarding the authorship of the Petrine Epistles. Comprehensive summaries of the positions are in various commentaries.[10] The arguments against Petrine authorship of 1 Peter are that it is too Pauline, it lacks the Gospel tradition one would expect from an eyewitness, it describes persecution that fits the post-apostolic era when Peter would have been dead, and the Greek is too good.[11] Similarly, for 2 Peter, the arguments are again about the language, the lack of second-century attestation, and features that would suggest a date after Peter's death, such as dependency on Jude, the nature of the opponents, and its suggestion that a Pauline corpus exists.[12] The large quantity of *hapax legomena* in 2 Peter is one of the most compelling arguments. The pertinence of the authorship debate to this chapter is whether the letters' text represents Peter's position. Regarding the authorship of 1 Peter, Elliott analyses the positions of Petrine authorship, the use of an

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biblical text. Denise Buell, *Why This New Race: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), x.

[10] Examples that support Peter's authorship of 1 Peter are Jobes, *1 Peter*, 5–19; Schreiner, *1&2 Peter and Jude*, 4–18. Examples that deny Peter's authorship of 1 Peter are Elliott, *1 Peter*, 118–30; Reinhard Feldmeier, *The First Letter of Peter: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008), 32–39. Examples that support Peter's authorship of 2 Peter are Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 139–50; Carson and Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 659–63. Examples that deny Peter's authorship of 2 Peter are Witherington, *Hellenized Christians*, 260–72; Richard Bauckham, *2 Peter and Jude*, WBC 50 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), 158–62.

[11] Green, *Vox Petri*, 77–93. This reference includes Green's arguments against these points.

[12] Schreiner, *1&2 Peter and Jude*, 299–323. This reference includes Schreiner's arguments against these points.

amanuensis, and whether the letters were pseudepigraphical.[13] While Elliott rejects the first two (which have a definite connection between the text and Peter), his acceptance of pseudepigraphical authorship concludes that "[1 Peter] was ascribed to Peter the Apostle because the group responsible for its composition knew that they were expressing not primarily their own ideas but rather the perspectives and teaching of their foremost leader, the Apostle Peter."[14]

One must recognize that the authenticity of 2 Peter is arguably the most contested of all the biblical books. Michael Green writes, "No book in the canon is so poorly attested among the Fathers, yet no excluded book has nearly such weight of backing as 2 Peter."[15] Gene Green writes, "The contemporary objections to Petrine authorship [of 2 Peter] are not without their weaknesses, and we must not allow the volume of opinion to decide the case."[16] However, proposals for non-Petrine authorship suggest a link to Peter's thinking. Bauckham argues in his apostolic testament hypothesis that the authors would have retained a strong connection to Peter's thought, writing that the author "was representing correctly the message Peter shared with all the apostles."[17] Witherington's proposal of a composite document compiled after Peter's death also retains a similar link to Peter.[18]

Eusebius (ca. 260–ca. 339) accepted 1 Peter's authenticity (*Hist. eccl.* 3.3.1) but identified 2 Peter as disputed (*Hist. eccl.* 3.25.3). Origen (ca. 185–ca. 254) held a similar

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[13] Elliott, *1 Peter*, 118–30.

[14] Elliott, *1 Peter*, 130.

[15] Michael Green, *The Second Epistle General of Peter and the General Epistle of Jude*, TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 13.

[16] Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 150. Ironically, in Green's subsequent book on Peter's theology, he chooses to omit the Petrine testimony of 2 Peter because of "the depth of the controversy surrounding its authenticity." Green, *Vox Petri*, 97.

[17] Bauckham, *2 Peter and Jude*, 160.

[18] Witherington, *Hellenized Christians*, 260–70.

position, writing that Peter's first epistle was acknowledged as genuine while the second epistle's genuineness was doubtful (*Comm. Jo.* 5.3).[19] Jerome (ca. 347–ca. 420) also noted that many considered that Peter did not write his second epistle due to its difference in style compared to the first (*Vir. ill.* 1).[20] However, both books were accepted into the canon by the fourth century CE, indicating that the consensus of the early church believed that the books represented the thoughts of Jesus's foremost apostle.[21]

Whether one identifies the Petrine Epistles' author as Peter (with or without secretarial assistance) or that they were pseudepigraphical (written by someone who had been close to Peter), the writing reflects his thinking. From the evidence above, it is valid to conclude that the epistles' texts provide insight into Peter's thinking and any ethno-religious preference he might have had.[22]

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[19] *ANF* 9.346. Green notes Origen's observation about the doubt but writes that Origen's "own assessment is quite positive. In his *Homilies on Joshua*, he says, 'Even Peter cries out with trumpets in two of his epistles,' and he called the letter '*scriptura'* (*Homilies on Numbers* 6.676)." Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 143.

[20] *NPNF* 2/3.361.

[21] Laird identifies that both Petrine Epistles are included in the canons from the Synod of Laodicea (ca. 363 CE), the Synod of Rome (ca. 382 CE), the Synod of Hippo (ca. 393), and the Council of Carthage (397 CE). He concludes that these canonical lists "are best understood as evidence for a growing consensus on the scope of the canon rather than as pronouncements that played a consequential role in its formation." Benjamin P. Laird, *Creating the Canon: Composition, Controversy, and the Authority of the New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2023), 111–16, 119. Green notes 2 Peter's absence from the Muratorian Fragment but argues that the incompleteness of the extant fragment requires caution in any conclusions. In his discussion about the authenticity of 2 Peter, he writes, "The book found a place in many canons, including those of Laodicea (AD 360), Athanasius (ca. 296–373), Cyril of Jerusalem (ca. 315–387), Mommsen or Cheltenham (AD 359), Apostolic (ca. 350–380), Gregory of Nazianzus (ca. 390), Africa (ca. 393–419), Jerome (ca. 345–420), and Carthage (AD 397)" though Green does not discuss Jerome's comment about the doubt regarding the second epistle's genuineness, noted above. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 142–43.

[22] Having weighed the evidence, I take the position that Peter wrote the Petrine Epistles and use his name as the author.

Date

The earlier chapter on the chronology of Peter's life identified his death as mid-60s CE. The reference to Babylon (1 Peter 5:13) suggests that the first epistle was written in Rome, which Petrine authorship would place in the early 60s CE.[23] In addition to being tied to the authorship debate, the dating of 2 Peter depends on whether 2 Peter 3:1 means that 2 Peter was written after 1 Peter. Also, the relative literary dependence between Peter and Jude associates its dating with Jude.[24] Those who support that the letters are pseudepigrapha propose dates from shortly after Peter's death into the second century CE.[25] However, the date does not have a direct impact on this analysis. The letter represents Peter's position toward the end of his life. If pseudepigraphical, the passage of time between his death and the penning of the letters would probably diminish the correlation with Peter's thought.

Audience

The opening of Peter's first epistle indicates its recipients were in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (1 Pet 1:1), an area in Asia Minor. If 2 Peter 3:1 refers to 1 Peter as the previous letter, the audience is the same, though 2 Peter's audience is difficult to determine if the letters are not connected. The references to Jesus Christ in each letter's introduction suggest a Christian audience.

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[23] Schreiner, *1&2 Peter and Jude*, 19. Most scholars take "Babylon" as code for Rome.

[24] Schreiner, *1&2 Peter and Jude*, 323–25.

[25] Schreiner, *1&2 Peter and Jude*, 19, 324.

Beyond the facts above, there is significant debate about whether the recipients of the letters were Jewish Christians, non-Jewish Christians, or a mixture.[26] Scholarly analyses examine the external and internal evidence, and I defer such examination to later discussions.

Literary Dependence

Two topics about literary dependence should be mentioned, as these potentially challenge that the thoughts expressed in the letters are Peter's. The first topic is whether the epistles are dependent on Paul's writings. This hypothesis is dismissed in favor of a common tradition or shared theology, even though Peter was aware of them (2 Pet 3:15–16).[27] The rejection of this hypothesis means that the text continues to represent Peter's thoughts, and I explore the relevance of textual parallels later in this chapter. The second topic is the dependence between 2 Peter and Jude. Schreiner examines the different dependency options, including interdependence (with the possibility of each book having the priority), dependence on a common source, or dependence on oral tradition, arguing each theory is plausible before suggesting that the most probable is that Peter borrows from Jude.[28] The differences between the letters are sufficient to support an analysis of what such differences suggest about Peter's thinking. This concludes an appropriate level of examination of the background and context.

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[26] Jewish Christian means the person was Jewish before converting to Christianity. This category could include ethnic Jews, first-generation proselytes, descendants of proselytes, or mixed descendants of Jews and proselytes. The non-Jewish Christian refers to a person who was not an ethnic Jew or had not converted to Judaism and includes God-fearers who respected Judaism, and non-Jews who had not shown an interest in Judaism but converted to Christianity. At the time of Peter writing the letters, thirty years after Christ's ascension, there would be second-generation Christians, though whether the timing allows them to be present in the letter's target location is uncertain. Also, Witherington argues that there would have been a high degree of Hellenization of the Jews in Asia Minor. Witherington, *Hellenized Christians*, 27.

[27] Elliott, *1 Peter*, 122; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 11–13.

[28] Schreiner, *1&2 Peter and Jude*, 499–503.

Arguments Supporting a Jewish Audience

Commentators and scholars have argued for a Jewish audience of 1 Peter throughout history. Selwyn notes that the Greek Fathers, such as Origen and Eusebius, maintained that the audience was Jewish, while Latin writers, such as Augustine and Jerome, disagreed.[29] Calvin writes that the audience was Jewish, and various modern scholars have taken this position. This section examines the arguments these scholars use and the associated evidence.[30] It starts with a discussion of the external evidence, followed by various aspects of the internal evidence.

External Evidence

First, one must determine whether Jewish Christians could have been present in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (1 Pet 1:1) in the early 60s CE. Wright and Bird suggest that Jewish pilgrims from the area were in Jerusalem for Peter's Pentecost sermon (Acts 2:9–11) and could have taken their new faith home. Pontus, Cappadocia, and Asia are mentioned in Acts 2:9, and Aquila, the husband of Priscilla, was a Pontus native (Acts 18:2).[31] Jobes argues against this point, identifying that there would have been relatively few pilgrims from this area in Jerusalem and that information is absent regarding Peter converting them or their taking the gospel home.[32] Grudem notes that the thirty years since Pentecost was ample time for the Jewish Christian church to have reached this area.[33] However, Jobes argues that the lack of tradition

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[29] Edward Gordon Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1947), 42–43.

[30] As noted above, the audience of 2 Peter is difficult to determine, unless it was the same as 1 Peter. Regarding 2 Peter, Witherington writes, "Even the audience seems to be of a broad and generic sort." Witherington, *Hellenized Christians*, 18. There is more evidence from 1 Peter to examine than from 2 Peter.

[31] Wright and Bird, *The New Testament*, 761.

[32] Jobes, *1 Peter*, 27.

[33] Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary.*, TNTC 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 45.

associating this area with an apostle suggests that Christianity spread gradually to these remote regions and that it would have taken at least a decade after Peter's death for sufficient adoption to attract the persecution that Peter describes.[34]

Alternatively, Shelton argues that Peter had ministered in this region, noting that Patristic Fathers make a similar claim.[35] Hippolytus (ca. 170–ca. 236 CE) in *Twelve* 1, Eusebius (ca. 260–ca. 339) in *Hist. eccl.* 3.1.2, and Jerome (ca. 347–ca. 420) in *Vir. ill.* 1 state that Peter preached in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, though Jobes argues that this tradition exists only because of the letter.[36] Jobes proposes the colonization theory, which suggests that Claudius relocated Christians from Rome to these provinces in 49 CE after Peter had evangelized them, having arrived in Rome in 42 CE. The group could have included Jewish and non-Jewish Christians.[37]

While there is insufficient evidence for how Jewish Christians came to be in these regions, that they existed is most likely. However, would Peter have written letter(s) specifically for a Jewish Christian audience? Calvin writes, "It is nothing strange that [Peter] designed this Epistle more especially for the Jews, for he knew that he was appointed in a particular manner their apostle, as Paul teaches us in Gal. ii. 8."[38] Witherington writes, "What is perhaps most important is that we must take very seriously what Paul tells us in Galatians 2, that Peter was the

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[34] Jobes, *1 Peter*, 13, 25.

[35] Shelton, *Quest*, 68, 71. The presence of Jews in the region, necessary for any theory of the conversion of local Jews, is supported by Van Rensburg's analysis which estimates that there were between a quarter of a million to one million Jews in this region at this time. F. J. Van Rensburg, "Constructing the Economic-Historic Context of 1 Peter: Exploring a Methodology," *HvTSt* 67.1 (2011): 5.

[36] Jobes, *1 Peter*, 27. Hippolytus, *Twelve* 1 (*ANF* 5:254), Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.1.2 (*NPNF* 2/1:132), Jerome, *Vir. ill.* 1 (*NPNF* 2/3:361). The similarity of the language in these Patristic sources supports Jobes's position.

[37] Jobes, *1 Peter*, 28–43.

[38] Calvin, *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles*, 25.

major apostle to the Jews. That was the focus of his ministry."[39] In Stewart-Sykes's argument in favor of 1 Peter's author addressing the letter to Jews, he writes, "One certain historical fact about Peter is that he was the apostle to Jews."[40] While Paul's Galatian letter suggests that Peter was the apostle to the circumcised (Gal 2:7–9), that applied to that point in time (ca 49 CE).[41] It is the only time Paul mentions Peter's mission.[42] Moreover, the argument that Peter's mission was limited to Jews because of what Paul wrote (Gal 2:7–9) is misplaced as it seems unlikely that such a distinction was either concrete or permanent and probably would not have persisted over a decade later.[43] Elliott dismisses any restriction by Paul in the context of 1 Peter as it would be impractical to restrict any mission to one ethnic group with mixed communities.[44] While Elliott argues for mixed Christian congregations, Witherington supports separate congregations

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[39] Witherington, *Hellenized Christians*, 53.

[40] Stewart-Sykes, "The Function of 'Peter' in I Peter," 10.

[41] Paul uses the perfect tense to describe that he and Peter had been entrusted (πεπίστευμαι, Gal 2:7) and the aorist participle to describe the one that was at work in them (ἐνεργήσας, Gal 2:8). The perfect tense indicates an action completed in the past with an impact on the writer's current time, while the aorist participle usually suggests a time before the main verb. Wallace, *Beyond the Basics*, 555, 573.

[42] Kaiser and Silva argue that doctrine should not rely on a single passage of Scripture, especially when there is a risk of interpretation bias. That logic can be extended to important interpretations, thus making it ill-advised to define Peter as the apostle to only the Jews. Walter C Kaiser and Moisés Silva, *Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics: The Search for Meaning*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 253.

[43] Davids highlights that, immediately after Paul's comment about the different ministries to the Jews and non-Jews (Gal 2:6–10), he describes a mixed church in Antioch (Gal 2:11). Also, Paul preached in synagogues (Acts 13:5, 14–43), though this might have occurred before Paul wrote Galatians. Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 28–29. Jobes posits a similar argument, noting Paul continued to preach to Jews (Acts 17:2, 10; 18:4; 19:8). Jobes, *1 Peter*, 65. deSilva argues that any agreement in Galatians 2:7–9 does not apply in this instance because that agreement concerned evangelizing whereas the letter concerns strengthening disciples. I feel this argument is a stretch and there is sufficient other evidence to build the case of the inapplicability of any ministry division in Gal 2:7–9 at the time of 1 Peter. David A. deSilva, *An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods and Ministry Formation*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2018), 746.

[44] Elliott, *1 Peter*, 122. Regarding mixed communities, Elliott writes, "Sociologically and historically viewed, the assumption of exclusively Gentile-Christian or, for that matter, exclusively Jewish-Christian communities throughout Asia Minor in the time of 1 Peter is preposterous." Elliott uses a combination of internal evidence and population statistics to support this claim. Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 45–46.

but uses Galatians 2:7 as his primary argument.[45] The evidence appears to support the argument for mixed Christian congregations.

Finally, one must consider the audience from the author's perspective. Peter wrote his first epistle to a group of churches distributed over a large area and probably far away from his location. His travels outside of Judea, from 42 CE, would have exposed him to communities with Christians of both Jewish and non-Jewish origin, so he likely considered them both present in the letter's target regions.[46] Hengel notes that any agreement in Jerusalem about the division of ministry between Jews and non-Jews would have proven impractical outside Judea, especially when considering God-fearing non-Jews went to synagogues.[47]

In summary, arguments based on Galatians 2:7–9 to argue that Peter was still the apostle to the Jews, and thus writing to a Jewish audience, are flawed. In addition, the above evidence suggests Peter would have understood Jewish and non-Jewish Christians to be present in the letter's intended locations. Given Peter's previous experiences with non-Jews, it is most improbable that Peter wrote a letter intended for one ethno-religious group. The following sections examine the internal evidence that scholars use to argue that Peter was addressing Christian Jews.

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[45] In the introduction to his analysis of 1 Peter, Witherington writes, "Our assumption, as argued in the first two volumes, will be that the Jewish Christian congregations founded by persons like the Beloved Disciple, Peter, Jude, emissaries of James, and the author of Hebrews basically had a life of their own … The Jewish Christian churches were not amalgamated with or incorporated into the Pauline ones before the late first century." Witherington, *Hellenized Christians*, 17. In an earlier volume in the series, Witherington's primary argument for separate churches is Gal 2:7. Ben Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Titus, 1–2 Timothy and 1–3 John* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 444–45.

[46] J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, WBC 49 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), xlv.

[47] Hengel, *Saint Peter*, 55–56.

Overview of the Words Peter Uses for People

Before evaluating specific verses in Peter's letters, an analysis of the Greek words used is valuable. This complements the study of Hebrew words for foreigners in the second chapter. That study concluded that different Hebrew terms for foreigners had different meanings associated with their relationship to God, with גֵּר (*gēr*) interested in God, נָכְרִי (*nokrî*) not interested, זָר (*zār*) a stranger, עָרֵל (*ʿārēl*) the uncircumcised, and תּוֹשָׁב (*tôšāb*) emphasizing the temporary nature of habitation. In addition, the words גּוֹי (*gôy*) and עַם (*ʿam*) refer to nations or people, with גּוֹי (*gôy*) often referring to nations other than Israel, often known as "Gentiles."

This study of Greek terms examines three different sets of words. The first set is the words that Peter uses for groups of people in the first two chapters of 1 Peter: παρεπίδημος (1 Pet 1:1), παροικία (1 Pet 1:17), and the phrase πάροικος καὶ παρεπίδημος (1 Pet 2:11). A survey of modern translations reveals various translations of the terms using a combination of "exile," "strangers," foreigners," "sojourners," "aliens," and "stay upon the earth."[48] Elliott identified similar inconsistencies and a lack of consensus.[49] In his subsequent detailed analysis of these words and διασπορά, using a study of the words' usage in contemporary literature, he argues that none of these four terms "specifically means 'exiles' or 'exiled persons,'" and that "exile" means a compulsory departure or deportation, which this context does not imply.[50] However, dictionaries define the noun form of "exile" as either forced or voluntary absence from home.[51] If Peter wished to imply forced deportation, he could have used "μετοικεσία" (which is used four

[48] These words represent CSB, ESV, NASB, NIV and RSV translations.

[49] Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 39–41.

[50] Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 46. Grudem makes a similar comment. Grudem, *1 Peter*, 52.

[51] Merriam-Webster, Inc., *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, s.v. "exile." The definition of the verb includes only forced relocation, with "banish" offered as a synonym.

times in Matthew) or ἀποικία/ἀποικίζω (which are used over sixty times in the LXX with nearly thirty occurrences in Jeremiah, but they do not appear in the New Testament) or φυγάς.[52] There is also a risk that using the word "exile" suggests that Peter is referring to the Babylonian exile, which requires further discussion.[53] Elliott concludes that the best translation for παροικία is "alien residence," for πάροικος is "resident alien," and for παρεπίδημος is "visiting stranger."[54]

The second set of words under examination are those used in 1 Peter 2:9, where Peter uses three words that define a group of people: γένος, ἔθνος, and λαὸς.[55] These are consistently translated as "race," "nation," and "people."[56] In his analysis of their usage in classical literature, Jewish literature, and the New Testament, Horrell notes their links with ethnicity and association with the Jewish people (or the opposite thereof).[57] He identifies that this is the only usage of all three terms together in the New Testament, which suggests an emphasis.[58] The terms, especially with the words that Peter associated with them (ἐκλεκτός, ἅγιος, and περιποίησις), typically refer

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[52] Elliott states that the conventional Greek term for exile is φυγάς, though this term appears only two times in the LXX and not in the New Testament

[53] While not suggesting that Peter is using words directly suggesting the exile, commentators discuss the Babylonian exile in this context. They are not necessarily wrong, but care must be taken to avoid inferring that Peter refers to the Babylonian exile simply through his choice of words. For example, Witherington and Winter argue that 1 Peter refers to the exile, immediately after discussing 1 Peter 2:11. Witherington, *Hellenized Christians*, 129; Bruce W Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as Benefactors and Citizens*, First-Century Christians in the Graeco-Roman World (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 17.

[54] Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 47. BDAG offers similar definitions. For example, it explains that "παρεπίδημος" refers to someone who is "staying for a while in a strange or foreign place, sojourning, residing temporarily," whereas "πάροικος" is "being a resident foreigner." BDAG, s.vv. "παρεπίδημος," "πάροικος."

[55] Carson notes that scholars disagree on the level of quotation of or allusion to the Old Testament in this verse. D. A. Carson, "1 Peter," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 1030. Therefore, my analysis focuses on the words rather than possible Old Testament links.

[56] This consistency was confirmed in CSB, ESV, NASB, NET, NIV, and RSV, with the one exception that NIV translates λαὸς as "possession." Horrell also identifies consistency in translation. David G. Horrell, "'Race', 'Nation', 'People': Ethnic Identity-Construction in 1 Peter 2.9," *NTS* 58.1 (2012): 124.

[57] Horrell, "'Race', 'Nation', 'People,'" 125–30.

[58] Horrell, "'Race', 'Nation', 'People,'" 129.

to the Jewish people. A later section discusses Peter's use of terms from Judaism to describe Christians. However, one should be cognizant of the fluid nature of race and ethnicity in this ancient context, in contrast to the modern use of the terms tied to common ancestry or bloodlines. While early Christianity likely used a race/ethnicity definition around religion similarly to others, its use of rebirth aligned it with the concept of descent to define a new γένος (race).[59] The LXX of Isaiah includes "τὸ γένος μου τὸ ἐκλεκτόν" (my chosen people or race, Isa 43:20), which Peter echoes with "ἐκλεκτόν γένος" (1 Pet 2:9). Isaiah uses γένος to describe a group with a shared lineage from Abraham, with Peter reapplying it to those reborn as Christians.[60] I examine further the idea of a new race below.

The third set of words under examination is those used to describe "others." As explored in Chapter 2, terms related to גּוֹי (*gôy*) and עַם (*ʿam*) in the Hebrew Bible became associated with nations or people other than Israel, leading to the English term "Gentile." The Septuagint translators used ἔθνος over four hundred times for גּוֹי (*gôy*) and over one hundred times for עַם (*ʿam*), establishing ἔθνος as the Greek term for "Gentile," though people would not have used the designation on themselves. Both ἔθνος and λαὸς describe the Jews and the non-Jews, with the use of ἅγιος ensuring the meaning of Jews. Elliott notes, "The Greek *ethnē*, which can denote 'peoples' or 'states,' here and in 4:3 is used as a collective term for all non-believing 'outsiders' as differentiated from the Christian believers (as in 1 Cor 5:1; 12:2; 1 Thess 4:5; 3 John 7; Rev [passim]; cf. Matt 6:7, 32; 24:9; 28:18)."[61] Jobes notes, "Both Peter and Paul, following Jewish

[59] Buell, *Why This New Race*, 2–10.

[60] Jobes, *1 Peter*, 159.

[61] Elliott, *1 Peter*, 466.

thought, use the designation ἔθνη (ethnē) to refer to those outside the community of Christian faith." Again, a later section discusses Peter's use of terms from Judaism in the Christian context.

What is noteworthy are the terms Peter does not use. The LXX uses προσήλυτος many times to translate גֵּר (*gēr*) and ἀλλότριος many times to translate נָכְרִי (*nokrî*) and related terms. While the New Testament uses these words, Peter does not. Chapter Two discusses how גֵּר (*gēr*) and נָכְרִי (*nokrî*) represented Judaism's understanding of foreigners who were interested in God and those who were not. In the current context, these Greek terms προσήλυτος and ἀλλότριος could have reflected a Jewish mindset, though evidence of this is lacking, and the weakness of an argument from silence is recognized.[62]

None of the words discussed above appear in 2 Peter. Indeed, the large number of unique words and words found in neither the rest of the New Testament nor the LXX contributes to the challenges of interpreting 2 Peter.[63] However, the author's use of "Συμεὼν" (Simeon) to open the letter stands out (2 Pet 1:1). This is the Semitic version of the Greek "Σίμων" (Simon). The only other use of the word in the New Testament about Peter is by James at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:14).[64] While the use of this Semitic name might suggest things about the background or situation of the author or an amanuensis, it does not provide evidence of an ethno-religious

[62] The New Testament uses προσήλυτος four times (Matt 23:15; Acts 2:10; 6:6; 13:43) and ἀλλότριος fourteen times, though most of these do not have a connotation of foreignness or *nokrî*.

[63] Witherington, *Hellenized Christians*, 264.

[64] Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 172. Green points out that the manuscript evidence might suggest a preference for Σίμων over Συμεὼν, but that the argument that scribes sought to harmonize the name with the more frequently used Σίμων suggests Συμεὼν to be more authentic. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 177.

preference. Its use also appears to stand against the author's use of Hellenistic terminology and concepts.[65]

In summary, the words Peter uses in 1 Peter suggest the new concept of Christians being strangers or foreigners on earth rather than any Jewish-specific meaning. Peter's use of *ethne* to describe non-Christians rather than non-Jews supports Peter's lack of any ethno-religious preference toward Jews. The following sections explore the context of the words further.

To Those Chosen, Living as Exiles Dispersed Abroad (1 Pet 1:1)

Peter opens his first letter by addressing his audience with the words "ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις διασπορᾶς," with ἐκλεκτοῖς and παρεπιδήμοις as substantives in apposition.[66] BDAG explains that ἐκλεκτός refers to those that God has chosen, identifying Old Testament references to Israelites that use the word in the LXX (1 Chr 16:13; Ps 88:4; 104:6, 43; Isa 65:9, 15, 23) and New Testament references to Christians from the Gospels (Matt 22:14; 24:22, 24, 31; Mark 13:20, 22, 27; Luke 18:7), the Pauline corpus (1 Tim 2:10; Rom 8:33; 16:13; Col 3:12; Tit 1:1), and John's writings (2 John 1, 13; Rev 17:14).[67] Peter uses it again later in this letter for the audience (1 Pet 2:9) and for Christ (1 Pet 2:4, 6). There is no evidence that Peter uses this specifically about Jewish Christians.

The second verse includes three prepositional phrases which expand on ἐκλεκτός. God's foreknowledge does not suggest any ethno-religious preference. Peter's reference to the Holy Spirit reminds one of both Pentecost and Cornelius. Peter's reference to God the Father, the

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[65] Green writes, "Language such as 'divine power' (1:3), 'virtue' (1:3), 'knowledge' (1:2, 3, 6, 8; 2:20; 3:18), 'participation in the divine nature' (1:4), and 'eyewitnesses' (1:16) are Hellenistic concepts." Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 145.

[66] Jobes, *1 Peter*, 72.

[67] BDAG, s.v. "ἐκλεκτός."

Spirit, and Jesus Christ suggests a Trinitarian theme.[68] Asumang uses Galatians 4:6 and Philippians 3:3 to argue that Paul uses the Trinitarian theme in his position against Judaizers.[69] It seems unlikely that Peter would forget his revolutionary Holy Spirit experience with Cornelius and his subsequent defense of the Holy Spirit descending upon non-Jews to the Jerusalem leadership (Acts 11:15–17). The third prepositional phrase's mention of "ὑπακοή" (obedience) might suggest adherence to the Law, potentially revealing Peter's clinging to the Law. However, while commentators acknowledge the difficulty in exegeting this passage, they recognize the likely echo of Exodus 24:3–8. "Obedience" and "sprinkling" can be viewed as hendiadys, representing the Mosaic covenant and introducing Christ's new covenant, which the following pericope expands upon (1 Pet 1:3–12).[70] Also, Paul uses ὑπακοή (obedience) in a positive way (Rom 5:19; 6:16; 2 Cor 7:15; 10:5–6; Phlm 21), suggesting it does not need to infer legalism.[71]

Peter uses παρεπίδημος twice in this letter (1 Pet 1:1; 2:11). As identified above, a good translation of this term is "visiting stranger."[72] There is no evidence that Peter uses this to reference Jewish Christians. The word's usage in 1 Peter 2:11 is discussed below.

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[68] Schreiner outlines the debate about the potential meaning of πνεύματος, and his argument that the other prepositional phrases are about God and Jesus, suggesting a Trinitarian theme, seems convincing that the Holy Spirit is in view here. Schreiner, *1&2 Peter and Jude*, 74–75. Furnish also notes the Trinitarian nature of the three prepositional phrases and the centrality of Peter's reference to the Holy Spirit. Victor Paul Furnish, "Elect Sojourners in Christ: An Approach to the Theology of I Peter," *PSTJ* 28.3 (1975): 5.

[69] Annang Asumang, "The Role of the Doctrine of Trinitarian Worship in Paul's Dispute with the Judaizers: Galatians 4:6 and Philippians 3:3 as Test Cases," *Conspectus* 14 (2012): 1. However, Simon argues that "Judaizers were not usually people whose doctrinal scruples led them to reject the Trinity." Marcel Simon, *Verus Israel: Study of the Relations Between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire, AD 135–425*, trans. H. McKeating, Littman Library of Jewish Civilization (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1996), 375.

[70] Carson, "1 Peter," 1016–17; Schreiner, *1&2 Peter and Jude*, 52–54; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 75–77.

[71] Grudem, *1 Peter*, 56. Peter also uses it again in 1 Peter 1:14 and 1:22.

[72] Unfortunately, I could not locate a translation that provided the sense of "visiting stranger," so I retained the CSB translation as the title of this section.

BDAG notes that διασπορά refers to the "dispersion of Israel among the Gentiles" in the LXX (Deut 28:25; 30:4; Jer 41:17; 2 Macc 1:27) and notes three uses in the New Testament (John 7:35; Jas 1:1, and 1 Pet 1:1), suggesting a figurative meaning of Christians living far from their heavenly home.[73] Witherington argues that the usage in 1 Peter 1:1 is the same as in James 1:1 and refers specifically to Jews living outside of Israel, with the subsequent list of locations emphasizing this.[74] Calvin claims that the word "dispersion" can only apply to Jews.[75] However, Jobes suggests that Peter uses this term metaphorically to describe the scattered nature of the Christian church.[76] One cannot determine a metaphorical usage without looking at the context.[77] The use of the terms διασπορά (1 Pet 1:1) and Babylon (1 Pet 5:13) is a possible inclusio. Some commentators hold the position that the mention of the diaspora and Babylon would make Jewish Christians think of their ancestors' exile.[78] Others argue that the concept of being

[73] BDAG, s.v. "διασπορά."

[74] Witherington, *Hellenized Christians,* 65. Jobes writes that it "was a technical term found only in Jewish literature of the Hellenistic period to refer to the Jewish population living outside Palestine since the Babylonian exile." She notes that the term appears in the LXX and the Apocrypha but not in Josephus or Philo. Jobes, *1 Peter,* 68.

[75] Calvin, *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles,* 25.

[76] Jobes, *1 Peter,* 68. Jobes notes that a metaphorical interpretation is the consensus of today's commentators. However, Schreiner's argument uses the presupposition of a non-Jewish audience. Schreiner, *1&2 Peter and Jude,* 47.

[77] Translations might take a stance on the metaphorical usage. While the ESV and RSV use the technical, capitalized term "Dispersion," the title of this section uses the CSB, which uses "dispersed," blurring association with the Jews.

[78] Regarding the word "diaspora," Carson writes, "The word reminds the reader of the impact of the exile under the Assyrian and Babylonian regional superpowers, with countless thousands of Jews still scattered all over the Mediterranean world and beyond." Carson, "1 Peter," 1015. If Peter understood that his letter would reach churches of Jewish and non-Jewish Christians, he might have assumed that the non-Jewish Christians had become familiar with the exilic aspects of Jewish history.

scattered equally applies to Christians on this earth, and many commentators see "Babylon" as code for Rome.[79]

Looking at the combination of these words, Witherington argues, "It is not strange at all that Peter should call Jewish Christians the 'chosen of the Dispersion'" but does not provide any examples of other uses of combinations of these words. Also, the phrase's use to describe Jewish Christians does not discount metaphorical use, and a use without any ethno-religious preference toward Jews is the best explanation. Jobes offers "foreigners" as the translation for παρεπίδημος and suggests that the use of "foreigner" in addition to "diaspora" provides an emphasis, supporting her theory that the audience were displaced Christians from Rome.[80] Furnish identifies that early Christianity borrowed these terms from Judaism and argues that this letter's emphasis on Christians being God's "elect people" suggests that Peter prioritized Christianity over Judaism, demonstrating a lack of ethno-religious preference and a move toward a universalist stance.[81] Scholars propose that this introductory phrase includes controlling metaphors that impact the whole letter.[82] A metaphorical understanding is attractive, given the ambiguity in determining who the readers were and the author's approach to them.[83] The

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[79] Grudem, *1 Peter*, 34–36.

[80] Jobes, *1 Peter*, 66–68. Jobes argues that the term παρεπίδημος was used to designate someone who did not hold citizenship, and therefore it could apply to resident aliens in Rome who were deported. Witherington points out that Jobes' theory about the recipients being deportees from Rome is possible but unlikely with nothing in 1 Peter supporting it. Witherington, *Hellenized Christians*, 66.

[81] Furnish, "Elect Sojourners in Christ," 3.

[82] For example, Mbuvi proposes that "exile" is a controlling metaphor for the whole letter, while Sun proposes that the metaphor is broadly about Christian identity as "elect exiles of diaspora." Andrew M. Mbuvi, *Temple, Exile and Identity in 1 Peter* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007), 22–28; Joyce Wai-Lan Sun, *This Is True Grace: The Shaping of Social Behavioural Instructions by Theology in 1 Peter* (Carlisle, UK: Langham Monographs, 2016), 35–55.

[83] Achtemeier notes the ambiguity of the letter's internal evidence about the letter's intended recipients. He notes that the audience's expected familiarity with the Old Testament and the lack of tension with Jewish Christians supports a Jewish Christian audience but conflicts with references to being unholy before conversion, which suggests non-Jew. He proposes that the controlling metaphor is Israel. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 50–51, 71. Regardless

continuing use of such a metaphor to non-Jewish Christians in modern times validates its validity.[84]

Strangers and Exiles (1 Pet 2:11)

Peter addresses his audience as "παροίκους καί παρεπιδήμους" before imploring them to abstain from sinful desires and to behave honorably among the "Gentiles" (ἔθνεσιν).[85] I discussed παροίκους and παρεπίδημος above. In summary, Peter is most likely addressing these Christians metaphorically as "resident aliens" (πάροικος) and "visiting strangers"(παρεπίδημος) because they are far from their heavenly home.[86]

Elliott and Jobes propose meanings that suggest Peter was excluding some Christians in the letter, which seems unlikely. Elliott proposes that one interprets these words literally, meaning that the addressees are geographically dislocated with their status causing life restrictions, but this would exclude indigenous people.[87] Jobes proposes her Roman colonization hypothesis, arguing that παρεπίδημος was the term used in Rome for foreigners who were

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of the specifics of the metaphor, a metaphorical understanding of terms such as διασπορά is attractive to rationalize Peter's apparent mixed messages regarding his intended audience.

[84] An example is Wiersbe's commentary on 1 Peter, where he explains that Christians are resident aliens like Abraham because "they had their eyes of faith centered on the future city of God (Heb 11:8–16). They were in the world but not of the world (John 17:16)," that Christians are "strange" in the eyes of the world, and that they were "scattered" across the regions that the letter addresses. Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Hopeful*, 2nd ed. (Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook, 2009), 21–22.

[85] The CSB places the title "A Call to Good Works" before 1 Peter 2:11 for the pericope through 1 Peter 2:15. This risks suggesting that Peter is thinking of a works-based theology. Other translations have either "Living Godly Lives in a Pagan Society" (NIV), "Live as Servants of God" (RSV), or they do not have a title at this point (ESV, KJV, NASB). Such titles are an addition by the translators, as they are not in the Greek. The essence of the pericope is an ethical lifestyle (1 Pet 2:11–12) and submission to authorities (1 Pet 2:13–17). Peter writes "καλῶν ἔργων" (good works, 1 Pet 2:12) in the context of being a good example to unbelievers. While Paul argues against salvation through works (ἔργων) in Eph 2:9, he speaks of " ἔργοις ἀγαθοῖς" (good works). Both Paul and Peter promote "good works" without making salvation a result of them.

[86] Again, I quote from the CSB to provide the title for this section, recognizing the imprecision of its translation.

[87] Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 48.

deported and suggests that Peter might use the term to address Christians who had been deported from Rome.[88] Again, it seems unlikely that Peter would exclude some Christians by addressing just the Roman deportees.

Commentators identify that the LXX also includes the phrase "παροίκους καί παρεπιδήμους," which translates *gēr* and *tôšāb,* with Abraham using it to describe himself when looking for a place to bury Sarah (Gen 23:4 LXX). However, this supports two different theories of interpretation. First, there is a long tradition of God's followers being called away from their homes to be aliens.[89] Also, the readers are like Abraham in that they have no permanent home in this world because their home is in heaven.[90] While the allusion to Abraham might suggest a Jewish audience, it is possible that non-Jewish Christians would have learned about Abraham or that Peter would have assumed that they had.[91] This link to Abraham is weak, and the letter's context supports the metaphorical meaning of a Christian's home being with God and Christ in heaven.

Peter's Use of Scripture in 1 Peter

Peter's extensive use of the Old Testament leads some scholars to argue that the audience was Jewish Christians.[92] Given Peter's background, it is unsurprising that he uses the Old

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[88] Jobes, *1 Peter*, 32.

[89] Jobes, *1 Peter*, 168. Interestingly, in Jobes's analysis of this passage, she does not mention the Roman colonization argument that she includes in her book's introduction, and she supports a literal understanding.

[90] Schreiner, *1&2 Peter and Jude*, 128.

[91] Commentators such as Schreiner note that παροίκους and παρεπιδήμους also appear together in Psalm 38:13 LXX. Schreiner, *1&2 Peter and Jude*, 128. However, the connection is less strong in this instance, with the LXX text reading, "ὅτι πάροικος ἐγώ εἰμι ἐν τῇ γῇ καὶ παρεπίδημος."

[92] Witherington argues that the extensive use of the Old Testament in 1 Peter implies a Jewish Christian audience. He writes, "In light of the extensive use of the Old Testament, even John H. Elliott has to admit that there must have been Jewish Christians in the audience." Witherington, *Hellenized Christians*, 32. However, Elliott makes

Testament. However, it is reasonable that he would assume non-Jewish Christians were familiar with the Old Testament, mirroring Paul in the Corinthian letters.[93] The purpose of this section is not to debate the assumed audience but to examine Peter's use of the Old Testament to identify any ethno-religious preference. The analysis prioritizes quotations over allusions and possible echoes.[94]

The first Old Testament quotation is "Be holy, because I am holy" (1 Pet 1:16).[95] This is an exact quotation from Leviticus 19:2 LXX, part of the Holiness Code (Lev 17–26).[96] Peter's application of it to the new covenant fits the context, though Witherington argues that the passage (1 Pet 1:14–16) indicates the audience is Jewish, as the Leviticus passage only applies to Jews and the reference to God's chosen children most likely refers to Jews.[97] The other quotation from this chapter is Isaiah 40:6–8 by 1 Peter 1:24–25. To those familiar with Isaiah, the quotation would remind them of the encouraging words in the context of the Babylonian exile. Even to those unfamiliar with the Old Testament, the uplifting words remind the reader of the eternal security of God's word.[98] Neither of these quotations suggests that the author had any ethno-religious preference.

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this comment in a footnote to his comment, "the internal evidence of 1 Peter indicates that a mixed audience composed of both Gentiles and *Jews* has been addressed." Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 45.

[93] Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 51.

[94] Carson, "1 Peter," 1015.

[95] To identify Old Testament quotations, I used the highlighting and footnotes in translations such as CSB and NET, supplemented by Carson's commentary on the use of the Old Testament in 1 Peter. Carson, "1 Peter," 1015–45.

[96] Carson, "1 Peter," 1017–18.

[97] Witherington, *Hellenized Christians*, 30–31. I examine Peter's use of Jewish motifs on a mixed Christian audience below.

[98] Carson, "1 Peter," 1019–22.

The first of several quotations in the second chapter is of Psalm 34:8 in 1 Peter 2:3, where Peter uses the idea of γεύομαι (tasting) that the Lord is good in a conditional statement. "Tasting" in Jewish literature at this time was sometimes used negatively in association with food laws, for example, when Eleazar spat out pig when forced to eat it (2 Macc 6:20).[99] Most of the fifteen occurrences of γεύομαι in the New Testament are about tasting death (Matt 16:28; Mark 9:1; Luke 9:27; John 8:52; Heb 2:9), a drink (Matt 27:34; John 2:9), or God's goodness (Heb 6:4, 5, 1 Pet 2:3). Paul uses it once when questioning why his readers follow food laws (Col 2:20). Luke uses it when introducing Peter's trance about eating unclean food before he visited with Cornelius (Acts 10:10). However, there is no indication that Peter is using it with any connection to food laws in 1 Peter 2:3.

There follows a series of quotations as Peter develops Jesus's stone metaphor. Peter quotes from Isaiah 28:16 in 1 Peter 2:6, from Psalm 118:22 (Ps 117:22 LXX) in 1 Peter 2:7, and from Isaiah 8:14 in 1 Peter 2:8. Regarding the Isaiah 28 context, Chisholm notes that while "the Lord did intend to make Zion secure someday," that "before this new Zion became a reality, the present leadership had to be removed."[100] Paul uses the same quotations from Isaiah to criticize Israel's pursuit of the Law over faith (Rom 9:32–33). Peter used Psalm 118:22 to condemn the Jewish leadership's rejection of the Messiah in Acts 4:11. Commentators argue that in the current context, Peter directs his criticism toward anyone who rejects Christ.[101]

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[99] Carson, "1 Peter," 1022–23.

[100] Robert B. Chisholm Jr., *Handbook on the Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Minor Prophets* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 73.

[101] Jobes, *1 Peter*, 153; Schreiner, *1&2 Peter and Jude*, 116; Grudem, *1 Peter*, 111; Carson, "1 Peter," 1028.

There is a group of quotations from Isaiah 53 in 1 Peter 2:22–25. The passage's point is to highlight Christ's suffering, perhaps triggered by Peter remembering his rebuke of Jesus saying that the Messiah had to suffer (Matt 16:21–23; Mark 8:31–33), significant both because of his recognition of Jesus as the Messiah, and his learning opportunity after Jesus's reaction to his rebuke.

In 1 Peter 3:6, Peter mentions Abraham and Sarah and declares that Godly women have become Sarah's children. Witherington highlights Elliott's recognition that this supports the case of an audience with a Jewish background.[102] However, Paul uses a similar expression, describing faithful men as Abraham's sons (Gal 3:7). Therefore, such an argument about this verse shows that Peter had as much of an ethno-religious preference as Paul did in Galatians. In 1 Peter 3:10–12, Peter quotes from Psalm 34:12–16 (Ps 33:12–16 LXX). Peter's list of virtues from the Old Testament omits food laws or separation from the ungodly. Jobes builds on Piper's analysis and claims that this quotation supports the command in 1 Peter 3:9, which calls the reader away from legalism.[103] In 1 Peter 3:14, Peter quotes from Isaiah 8:12, encouraging his readers to focus on Christ's holiness rather than fearing humans.[104]

In 1 Peter 4:8, CSB identifies "love covers a multitude of sins" as a quotation from Proverbs 10:12. Carson identifies this as an allusion rather than a quote and that the Proverbs passage is specifically about the effects of speech on others.[105] Peter promotes love in all things.

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[102] Witherington, *Hellenized Christians*, 32. Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 55–56.

[103] Jobes, *1 Peter*, 225; John Piper, "Hope as the Motivation of Love: I Peter 3:9–12," *NTS* 26.2 (1980): 230.

[104] Carson, "1 Peter," 1038.

[105] Carson, "1 Peter," 1039–40. Carson notes that James also quotes from the second half of Proverbs 10:12 but the CSB and NET Bibles do not flag it as such. James's quote is limited to "cover a multitude of sins," and his omission of "love" significantly changes the passage's thrust.

James also uses some of the same quote without the reference to love, and Carson notes the parallels between the love Peter describes and Paul's love (1 Cor 13:4–7).[106] Carson also identifies a quote from Isaiah 11:2 in 1 Peter 4:14. The Isaiah reference promises that the Spirit of the Lord will descend on the Messiah, while Peter applies it to his Christian readers who suffer as Christ suffered.[107] Peter quotes from Proverbs 11:31 LXX in 1 Peter 4:18. The LXX uses "is saved" in place of "is repaid" and uses μόλις to replace "on earth."[108] Translations typically use "scarcely" (ESV, KJV, RSV) or "with difficulty" (CSB, NASB) for μόλις. The standalone verse implies that a righteous person will scarcely be saved or be saved with difficulty. These words suggest that the righteous person has to try harder, potentially invoking a legalistic mindset. However, Schreiner, noting that "with difficulty" is the better translation, argues that the "difficulty envisioned is the suffering believers must endure in order to be saved" and that salvation remains a gift.[109] Peter is also encouraging his suffering readers that it will be worse later for the non-Christians who are inflicting their suffering.[110] Finally, Peter uses Proverbs 3:34 in 1 Peter 5:5, similar to James (Jas 4:6), but both emphasize humility.

The analysis above identifies many Old Testament quotations in 1 Peter without preference for Jewish Christians. An evaluation of the implication of significant usage of the Old Testament is presented after a review of the use of Scripture in 2 Peter, which follows.

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[106] Carson, "1 Peter," 1040.

[107] Carson, "1 Peter," 1040–41.

[108] Carson, "1 Peter," 1042.

[109] Schreiner, *1&2 Peter and Jude*, 264.

[110] Witherington, *Hellenized Christians*, 217.

Peter's Use of Scripture in 2 Peter

The analysis of Peter's use of the Old Testament in 2 Peter is complicated by the similarities between 2 Peter and Jude, the possibility that 2 Peter is borrowing from Second Temple literature, and that Peter potentially only alludes to the Old Testament rather than quotes from it.[111] The CSB and NET Bibles identify only one short quote from the Old Testament.[112] This section explores what this quote and potential allusions say about the author's mindset.[113]

In 2 Peter 1:17, Peter recalls God's words, "This is my beloved son, with whom I am well-pleased." Its source is most likely to be the transfiguration.[114] Peter starts 2 Peter 1:19 with the phrase, "We also have the prophetic word strongly confirmed, and you will do well to pay attention to it," which almost certainly references the Old Testament. The rest of the verse, "as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts," might allude to Psalm 119:105, where the psalmist proclaims that God's word is a lamp for his feet and a light on his path, emphasizing the value of God's word. "Until the day dawns" likely refers to the day of the Lord, and "the morning star" possibly derives from Balaam's fourth oracle in Numbers 24:17, which says, "A star will come from Jacob, and a scepter will arise from

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[111] D. A. Carson, "2 Peter," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 1047.

[112] The CSB and NET note that the phrase, "a dog returns to its own vomit" (2 Pet 2:22) quotes Prov 26:11.

[113] I use Carson's analysis of 2 Peter's use of the Old Testament as the reference for identifying allusions, noting that he prioritizes out of the many possible allusions. Carson, "2 Peter," 1047. Also, one must consider Osborne's comments about Old Testament allusions, which note the possibility that an allusion might imply a presumption of the readers' knowledge but also warn against taking allusion exegesis too far. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 167–69.

[114] While Isaiah 42:1 and Jesus's baptism are also possibilities, Peter recalling the transfiguration where he was present seems likely. Green outlines the textual differences between this verse and the corresponding verses in the Synoptic Gospels (Matt 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35) and suggests that the differences are because, in 2 Peter 1:17, Peter is recalling the occasion from memory rather than a source. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 221–24; Schreiner, *1&2 Peter and Jude*, 374–77.

Israel" which Schreiner argues is a prophecy of Christ.[115] None of these uses of Scripture point toward any Jewish favoritism.

The parallels to Jude start in the second chapter. Relationships between the two books are found in 2 Peter's second and third chapters.[116] Multiple theories explain the relationship between the two texts.[117] The relationship between the two texts does not provide direct insight into Peter's mindset, while the differences between the texts might. Jude references Jewish apocryphal literature that Peter does not. Specifically, Jude quotes or alludes to (1) *The Assumption of Moses* in verse 9 in his reference to archangel Michael, the devil, and the body of Moses, (2) *1 Enoch* in verses 14–15 in his reference to Noah and ungodliness, and (3) an apostolic quote in verse 18 that does not appear in any other extant work.[118] These suggest Peter wished to avoid referencing extrabiblical text that might have been part of Jewish tradition, perhaps because he expected readership with mixed ethnicity.[119] There are also similarities and differences in their overall arguments. Both authors develop their arguments using angels, Sodom and Gomorrah, and Balaam. However, Peter replaces Jude's negative examples of Cain and Korah's rebellion (Jude 11) with the positive examples of righteous Noah and Lot (2 Pet 2:5, 7). This switch from negative to positive also changes the examples to be in chronological order

[115] Schreiner, *1&2 Peter and Jude*, 382–83.

[116] Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 159; Schreiner, *1&2 Peter and Jude*, 499–500.

[117] Schreiner outlines the possibilities as Jude borrowed from 2 Peter, 2 Peter borrowed from Jude, or they both depend on a different oral or written source. While Schreiner favors the hypothesis that 2 Peter borrowed from Jude, he chooses not to base interpretations on that theory. I have the same intent in my argument. Schreiner, *1&2 Peter and Jude*, 501–3.

[118] Andreas J. Köstenberger and Richard D. Patterson, *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation: Exploring the Hermeneutical Triad of History, Literature, and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011), 486.

[119] Witherington, *Hellenized Christians*, 393.

in 2 Peter rather than the topical arrangement preferred by Jude.[120] While the evidence is not compelling, the changes suggest that Peter might have had less ethno-religious preference for Judaism than Jude.[121]

The allusions that Carson identifies in 2 Peter 2:4–10a are angels not being spared (2 Pet 2:4), Noah and the flood (2 Pet 2:5), and Sodom and Gomorrah's contrast with Lot (2 Pet 2:6–8).[122] These allusions are within the protasis of an "if, then" clause. The protasis identifies the wicked that God judged (transgressing angels, the flood generation, and Sodom and Gomorrah) while sparing Noah and Lot, implying the apodosis that God preserves the righteous in the midst of their trials.[123] Later in this chapter, Peter identifies the false teachers as ungodly because the Holy Spirit does not lead them. He compares them to Balaam (2 Pet 2:17) and criticizes them, which includes comparing them to "a dog that returns to its own vomit" (2 Pet 2:22 quoting Prov 26:11) and a washed pig that returns to its mud (potentially quoting the Syriac *Ahiqar* 8:18 from the fifth century BCE).[124] Both pigs and dogs were unclean according to Jewish law, but by using examples from Scripture and a pagan source, perhaps Peter is balancing his sources to try to avoid indicating any ethno-religious preference to his audience.[125] Peter's second mention of the flood in 2 Peter 3:5–6, this time with creation, emphasizes the judgment that God will bring.[126] In

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[120] Köstenberger and Patterson, *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation*, 486.

[121] Bauckham, *2 Peter and Jude*, 50.

[122] Carson, "2 Peter," 1048–55.

[123] Schreiner, *1&2 Peter and Jude*, 401.

[124] Schreiner notes the parallels between the comment about the pig and *Ahiqar*. He quotes from the Syriac version, "You were to me, my son, like a swine which had had a bath, and when it saw a slimy pit, went down and bathed in it." Schreiner, *1&2 Peter and Jude*, 434–35. See also Charles, *The Pseudepigrapha*, 2:715–76.

[125] Witherington, *Hellenized Christians*, 362–63.

[126] Carson, "2 Peter," 1058. Witherington argues that, with references to creation and the flood, the author of 2 Peter seeks to preserve his Jewish theological legacy. Witherington, *Hellenized Christians*, 392.

2 Peter 3:8, Peter's possible reference to Psalm 90:4 defends God's timing regarding the coming of the day of the Lord.[127]

The above analyses of the use of Scripture in 1 and 2 Peter indicate that Peter frequently referred to the Old Testament. However, this is an indication of Peter's background rather than indicating favoritism toward a Jewish audience. Paul's most prominent uses of the Old Testament, introduced by phrases similar to "it is written," such as Galatians 4:27 (quoting Isa 54:1), 2 Corinthians 6:2 (quoting Isa 49:8), and 2 Corinthians 6:16 (quoting Lev 26:12, Isa 52:11, 2 Sam 7:14) do not indicate that Paul's intended audience of Galatians or 2 Corinthians were Jewish Christians.[128] The internal evidence supports the external evidence that Peter was writing without preference for an ethno-religious group.

Other Arguments

The previous section examined words and passages from the Petrine Epistles that commentators use to argue for a Jewish audience. That was a primary focus of this chapter, as such examples were the ones most likely to suggest that Peter held an ethno-religious preference toward the Jews. This section examines the evidence from within the Petrine Epistles that commentators investigate for other arguments. This includes evidence that might support a non-Jewish audience, the themes of the letters, a discussion of applying Jewish motifs to Christians, and the parallels with other parts of the New Testament.

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[127] Carson, "2 Peter," 1058–59.

[128] Witherington argues that Peter's use of "venerable Old Testament figures like Sarah" in 1 Peter 3:6 suggests a Jewish audience, but Paul also references Sarah in Galatians 4:21–31. Witherington, *Hellenized Christians*, 32.

Passages Suggesting a Non-Jewish Audience

In what follows, this research delves into the passages scholars utilize in their arguments regarding a non-Jewish audience.[129] First, a group of passages is uncomplimentary of the audience's past, either their ancestors or earlier in their lives. Peter criticizes "the desires of [their] former ignorance" (1 Pet 1:14), the "empty way of life inherited from your ancestors" (1 Pet 1:18), claims that "once you were not a people, but now you are God's people" (1 Pet 2:10), and criticizes the audience for "doing what the Gentiles choose to do" (1 Pet 4:3). Davids argues that such comments would not have been directed towards Jews, and hence the audience were "largely Gentiles."[130] However, the theme of ignorance (ἄγνοια in 1 Pet 1:14) is also found directed towards Jews in Luke 23:34 (when Jesus asks God to forgive those crucifying him as they did not know what they were doing), Acts 3:17 (also using ἄγνοια for when Peter acknowledged the ignorance of the Jewish people and their leaders in condemnation of Jesus), and Acts 13:27 (where Paul is noting that Jerusalem's Jews and leaders did not understand the prophets and ended up fulfilling the prophecies by condemning Jesus).[131] So, highlighting the audience's ignorance does not preclude them from being Jewish.

When this is coupled with Peter's description of the audience as having an "empty" (CSB) or "futile" (ESV) way of life (1 Pet 1:18) and with his criticism of "doing what Gentiles choose to do" (1 Pet 4:3), Jobes argues that "Diaspora Jews of the first century could never have

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[129] Davids writes, "Perhaps the most unusual things about the Christians to whom Peter wrote is that they were largely Gentiles, as 1:14, 1:18, 2:9–10, 2:25, 3:6, and 4:3–4 show (2:25 and 3:6 are less clear than the other four passages, which could hardly have been used of Jews)." Witherington attempts to dismantle the position that the audience was non-Jewish, with a reference to Davids. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 27; Witherington, *Hellenized Christians*, 28–33.

[130] Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 28.

[131] Witherington, *Hellenized Christians*, 30.

been described in such spiritually bankrupt terms."[132] Peter's use of such words might indicate that the intended audience was exclusively non-Jewish, but as argued above, it seems unlikely that Peter would have excluded Jewish Christians from his writing.[133]

Grudem uses 1 Peter 2:10 in his argument against a Jewish audience, stating that "Once you were no people but now you are God's people" is "something which [Peter] would hardly say of converted Jews."[134] This verse appears to be an allusion to Hosea 2:23 LXX, which says, "I will say to Not My People, 'You are My People."[135] The book's context is that God has already disowned the Northern Kingdom due to their wickedness, and Judah was following them (Hos 1:11). In Deuteronomy, Moses's description of the consequences for disobeying God includes being taken "to a nation (*gôy*) neither you nor your ancestors have known" (Deut 28:36), becoming ridiculed among the peoples (*ʿămmîm*, Deut 28:37), scattered among all peoples (*ʿămmîm*, Deut 28:64), and finding no peace among those nations (*gôyim*, Deut 28:65), suggesting such consequences are for Jews who do not follow the Torah. The name Hosea gave his child, representing Judah, was Lo-Ammi, meaning "not my people" (Hos 1:9). God shows his compassion in Hosea 2:23 when he says to Lo-Ammi (i.e., "not my people") that "you are my people."[136] To Christians without Jewish heritage and familiarity with the Old Testament, "Once

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[132] Jobes, *1 Peter*, 23.

[133] While it is unlikely, Stewart-Sykes suggests that this language is a deliberate reversal, applying the Jewish language, usually critical of the pagans, against the Jews. Stewart-Sykes, "The Function of 'Peter' in I Peter," 11–12.

[134] Grudem, *1 Peter*, 39.

[135] Brannan et al., *The Lexham English Septuagint*, 991. Carson writes, "The context of the book is that God had already disowned the Northern Kingdom for their wickedness and Judah was going down the same path (Hos 1:11). The name Hosea gave his child, representing Judah, was Lo-Ammi meaning "not my people" (Hos 1:9). God shows his compassion in Hosea 2:23 when he says to Lo-Ammi (i.e., "not my people") that "you are my people." Carson, "1 Peter," 1031–32.

[136] Carson, "1 Peter," 1031–32.

you were no people but now you are God's people" is an encouraging message indicating that, as Christians, they are now part of God's people and receive mercy. Grudem's point excludes Jewish Christians from the audience. However, perhaps even Torah-observant Jewish Christians believed that the Israelite nation as a whole suffered exile as a consequence of disobeying God as per Deuteronomy 28, so even Torah-observant Jewish Christians could relate to receiving God's mercy.

A final observation about the letter by Davids that might impact the audience debate, "is that it does not mention ethnic Jews. Much less any Jew-Gentile tension, which was Paul's central concern."[137] Such tension was evident in Paul's letter to the Galatians, written over a decade previously. Achtemeier argues that "for the author of 1 Peter, Israel has become the controlling metaphor for the new people of God, and as such its rhetoric has passed without remainder into that of the Christian community."[138] If Peter's intended recipients of the letter are of mixed ethnicity, as argued earlier, it would appear that Peter believes such tensions are absent, or he chose to ignore discussing them. A later section discusses whether they might have been absent.

Jewish Motifs and Metaphors

Jobes identifies various positions on controlling metaphors in 1 Peter taken by commentators.[139] Some of these positions include the diaspora (Martin), the proselyte (Seland), and Israel as the people of God (Achtemeier).[140] As an example, Achtemeier argues for his

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[137] Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 52n7.

[138] Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 72.

[139] Jobes, *1 Peter*, 24.

[140] Troy W. Martin, "Metaphor and Composition in I Peter" (The University of Chicago, PhD diss., 1990), 416; Torrey Seland, *Strangers in the Light: Philonic Perspectives on Christian Identity in 1 Peter* (Boston: Brill,

position with the claims that Israel as the controlling metaphor (1) clarifies the use of Jewish terminology for a non-Jewish audience, (2) allows proper evaluation of "exiles and aliens," (3) affirms the Christian understanding as the new people of God, and (4) explains why there is no mention of Israel within the letter.[141]

Most commentators treat παροίκους, παρεπιδήμους, and διασπορά metaphorically, despite Elliott's arguments for literal understanding, which mirrored Calvin's position.[142] With a metaphorical understanding, Peter is stating that Christians, as citizens of God's holy nation, are resident aliens and foreigners in the societies in which they live.[143] Such a metaphorical handling aligns with Mbuvi's proposal that exile is the controlling metaphor. Mbuvi argues, "'Exile conjures a state of affairs where the 'exiled' have no choice in the matter, yet somehow are intricately entwined in God's future plan for his people."[144] Peter uses these terms for foreigners to describe the Christian community, which he is part of, rather than outsiders. However, he continues to use the term ἔθνος to identify those outside of the Christian community, distinguishing them from the ἅγιος ἔθνος. Peter has adapted Jewish motifs applicable to the people of God to the Christian community. For example, he uses phrases such as "holy nation" (1 Pet 2:9), "God's household" (1 Pet 4:17), "faithful creator" (1 Pet 4:19), and "day of the Lord" (2 Pet 3:10).

2005), 40; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 69–72. In addition, Mbuvi proposes that the controlling metaphor of 1 Peter is the "idea of exile." Mbuvi, *Temple, Exile and Identity in 1 Peter*, 28.

[141] Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 69–72.

[142] Jobes, *1 Peter*, 22–25; Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 21–58; Calvin, *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles*, 25.

[143] Jobes, *1 Peter*, 168.

[144] Mbuvi, *Temple, Exile and Identity in 1 Peter*, 29.

The debate about which is the controlling metaphor goes beyond the scope of the current analysis, though Peter's use of metaphors is certain. Peter's understanding of whether the church replaces Israel or is grafted on, as per Paul (Rom 11:11–24), is also beyond the scope. The position taken on these items does not impact the analysis of whether Peter's letters show an ethno-religious preference.

The evidence discussed above points toward Peter writing his letters for non-Jewish recipients. As discussed earlier, it was difficult for Peter to know who the readers of his letters would be when directed to such a large geographical area. Peter had probably witnessed a variety of Christian communities between when he left Jerusalem in 42 CE and when he wrote this letter twenty years later. Perhaps he had learned from the challenges he faced with mixed groups (Gal 2:11–14), developing a way to communicate effectively with Christians of Jewish and non-Jewish heritage.[145] However, the evidence suggests that if Peter had any ethno-religious preference in his epistles, it was for the non-Jewish Christians.

Themes of the Letters

Dubis's survey of research on 1 Peter identifies that scholars find many themes in 1 Peter. Some of the themes he identifies are "the righteous sufferer," "new Israel," "non-retaliation," "submission," "saving grace," "holiness," "deference," "Christian responsibility in society," "Jesus's suffering," "abandonment of futile Pre-Christian patterns of socialization," "obedience,"

[145] While I do not agree with some of her points, Perkins concludes that Peter adapted to the large number of non-Jews that joined the church such that "Peter represents a policy of accommodation and adaptation to the changing circumstances of the community." Perkins, *Peter,* 185. Bockmuehl argues that Peter built bridges "between early Christianity's very diverse geographic centers and their churches." Markus Bockmuehl, "Scripture's Pope Meets von Balthasar's Peter," in *Peter in Early Christianity*, ed. Helen K. Bond and Larry W. Hurtado (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 335. One might be tempted to think that the Pope's title "pontiff," with a root of "*pons*" meaning bridge, was somewhat due to Peter being a bridge builder. However, the title is pre-Jesus and "Pontifex Maximus" was a title given to the Roman emperor as the "greatest bridge builder" between the gods and humankind. Nicholas Perrin, "The Imperial Cult," in *The World of the New Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts*, ed. Joel B. Green and Lee Martin McDonald (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 127.

and "suffering."[146] Lapham argues against baptism as a primary theme.[147] When looking for any evidence of Peter's ethno-religious preference, the theme that stands out is "Christian responsibility in society," which Jobes also identifies as a central theme. She writes, "Peter exhorts Christians to engage the world as foreigners and resident aliens, having a healthy respect for the society and culture in which they live while at the same time maintaining an appropriate separation from it."[148] Jobes's theme of engagement applies with either a literal or metaphorical interpretation of "foreigner." Peter's call for Christians to do "good works" among the "Gentiles" (ἔθνεσιν, 1 Pet 2:12) is very different from the Pharisaic approach of remaining separate from sinners. These words suggest that Peter is encouraging Christians to engage appropriately with non-Christians, quite different from the strategy of non-engagement with foreigners that he followed before baptizing Cornelius (Acts 10:17–33).[149]

Achtemeier identifies a theme as hope in the midst of suffering.[150] Green notes that the Petrine Epistles show that Peter, like Paul, understands that "grace" is an essential component of salvation (1 Pet 1:2, 10, 13; 3:7; 4:10; 5:5, 10, 12; 2 Pet 1:2; 3:18), echoing Peter's mention of "grace" to the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:11).[151] Achtemeier also notes the absence of "the idea

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[146] Dubis, "Research on 1 Peter," 211–20. Grudem also identifies a list. Grudem, *1 Peter*, 44–45.

[147] F. Lapham, *Peter: The Myth, the Man and the Writings: A Study of Early Petrine Text and Tradition*, JSNT 239 (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 123–25. Also, Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 60–61.

[148] Jobes, *1 Peter*, 3.

[149] The specific quotation from Peter about engaging with foreigners is, "You know it's forbidden for a Jewish man to associate with or visit a foreigner, but God has shown me that I must not call any person impure or unclean" (Acts 10:28).

[150] Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 64–65. Achtemeier suggests that "hope" is "1 Peter's counterpart to faith." To investigate the theme of hope (ἐλπίς or ἐλπίζω), one might compare the relative frequency of the word in 1 Peter with other biblical books. The result does not appear to help with the relative frequency of these words in 1 Peter considerably less than in other books such as Titus or 1 Thessalonians.

[151] Green, *Vox Petri*, 287–88.

of righteousness by faith apart from the Law" in 1 Peter.[152] Schreiner notes that Käsemann criticizes 2 Peter for its departure from justification by faith, though he argues that assessments like Käsemann's misread the text and are biased against tradition and orthodoxy.[153] Helyer notes that the theological themes of 2 Peter are Christology, God, The Holy Spirit and Holy Scripture, Soteriology, and Redemptive History and Salvation. The themes do not suggest that one will find evidence about Peter's ethno-religious preference, so the next section explores the comparison of the Petrine Epistles with other New Testament works.

Parallels with Other New Testament Works

The comparison of Peter with Paul is a massive topic. This section will barely break the surface to investigate what the parallels between Peter's and Paul's Epistles might suggest about Peter's ethno-religious preferences. Dependency on Paul is one of the arguments used against Petrine authorship.[154] Achtemeier identifies many verses with parallels between 1 Peter and Romans and Ephesians. The longest passages he identifies parallels between are about submitting to the governing authorities (1 Pet 2:13–17 and Rom 13:1–7). Some of the parallels are usages of rare words. Other parallels involve citing similar passages from the Old Testament.[155] Achtemeier presents a similar comparison between 1 Peter and James, Hebrews, and the Johannine literature.[156] Schreiner identifies many themes in 1 Peter that resemble Paul's

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[152] Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 18.

[153] Schreiner, *1&2 Peter and Jude*, 296–97; Ernst Käsemann, *Essays on New Testament Themes*, trans. W. J. Montague (Naperville, IL: Allenson, 1964), 184.

[154] Green, *Vox Petri*, 77–84. As the evidence for dependency is weak, Green writes, "Unsurprisingly, most contemporary commentators do not evoke the *verba Pauli* in 1 Peter to refute Petrine authorship of 1 Peter." Green, *Vox Petri*, 79.

[155] Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 15–19.

[156] Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 19–23.

writings, such as salvation as an eschatological gift (1 Pet 1:3–9; Rom 5:9–10), while also noting that some Pauline themes are absent in Peter, such as justification and the role of the Law.[157] Rather than Peter's Epistles having a literary dependence on Paul, a common tradition between their works is a better explanation.[158] Galatian 1:18–2:14 and Acts 15:6–14 indicate that they spent time together, and Peter's companions, Mark and Silvanus (1 Pet 5:12–13), had traveled with Paul (Acts 12:25; 2 Cor 1:18, 1 Thess 1:1, 2 Thess 1:1). Through these connections, Paul's teaching might have influenced Peter.[159] That 1 Peter develops some Pauline ideas suggests that Peter was improving himself, continuing in the behavior that he showed in the Gospels and Acts, as argued earlier.[160]

Schreiner criticizes the position of the Tübingen school, which "erases the shared theology of Peter and Paul."[161] Guthrie argues that Tübingen's argument that "Peter and Paul represent divergent tendencies which are unlikely to have permitted close liaison between them" has "no basis in the New Testament."[162] Elmer, perhaps representative of Tübingen, dismisses Peter (with James) as a Christian Jew who remains insistent on the Christian church's adherence to the Mosaic law and dismisses Peter's involvement (in favor of Paul) in the initial conversion of non-Jews (Acts 10:34).[163] The biblical evidence does not support such positions.

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[157] Schreiner, *1&2 Peter and Jude*, 17.

[158] Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 18–19.

[159] Green, *Vox Petri*, 79.

[160] Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 19.

[161] Schreiner, *1&2 Peter and Jude*, 17.

[162] Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 4th ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 775.

[163] Elmer, *Paul, Jerusalem and the Judaisers*, 219–20. Perhaps this is an example of the "not-quite-exorcised ghost" of F.C. Baur that Wright identifies as still haunting "the libraries and lecture-halls of New Testament scholarship." Wright, *Recent Interpreters*, 16.

Peter's recognition of the wisdom in Paul's letters (2 Pet 3:15–16) indicates that he was familiar with them and probably learned from them. As Peter grew in his Christian faith between the Jerusalem Council and writing his letters, it appears that he was comfortable sharing ideas that he might have learned from others, such as Paul, and combining them with his ideas. He does this without showing any signs of ethno-religious preference.

Related Arguments from Outside the Petrine Epistles

The previous sections examined the Petrine Epistles' background, context, and text. This section explores a couple of topics that the above examination identified. The first is whether the lack of mention by Peter of ethnic Jews or any conflict between Jewish and non-Jewish Christians was because such conflicts were not present. The second is to explore the concept of Christianity being a new race.

Judaizers

This section investigates the research on "Judaizers" to assess whether tensions between Jewish and non-Jewish Christians were pertinent when Peter wrote his epistles. The term "judaize" comes from ἰουδαΐζω which appears once in the New Testament, where the CSB translates it as "live like Jews" (Gal 2:14). It occurs once in the LXX (Esth 8:17), where it translates מִתְיַהֲדִים (*mityahăḏîm*), which translates in English as "professed themselves to be Jews." However, the English verb, with the associated noun "Judaizers," describes three different categories within first-century Christianity. The first is those who maintained Jewish customs without placing salvific significance on their observance of the Mosaic law. The second is those who placed a social significance on following Jewish practices and maintained social separation from non-Jews. The third category is those who placed salvific significance in observance of the

Law, particularly circumcision, Sabbath observance, and dietary restrictions.[164] Previous discussions illustrated Peter's participation in the social-separation form of judaizing (Acts 10:28, reinforced by Acts 11:1–3; Gal 2:11–14). Paul and Barnabas engaged with the third kind of Judaizer who insisted that Christians circumcise and follow the Mosaic law (Acts 15:1–3; 5).

While the Jerusalem Council appears to have forged an agreement regarding non-Jewish Christians not being required to follow the Mosaic law (Acts 15:19), Paul's letters suggest that he may have continued to face Judaizers who insisted all Christians follow at least some of the Mosaic law. The issues Paul raises in Galatians were at about the same time as the Jerusalem Council in 49 CE. Sanders suggests that Paul argued against Jews and Judaizers in 1 Corinthians (1 Cor 1–2).[165] Carson and Moo date the Corinthian letters to the early- to mid-50s CE and highlight the debate around whether Paul's Corinthian opponents were Judaizers.[166] Sanders also suggests that Paul's Philippian opponents were Jews and Judaizers (Phil 3:2–6), and Paul's letter to the Colossians suggests a similar adversary with its discussion of circumcision and Sabbath (Col 2:4–23).[167] Carson and Moo date both letters to approximately 60 CE and argue that the Philippian opponents were not necessarily Judaizers.[168]

There is also extrabiblical evidence that suggests the presence of Judaizers. Wilken identifies various sources from inside and outside Palestine until the end of the fourth century

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[164] S. Michael Kraeger, "Judaizers," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016), n.p.

[165] E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (London: SCM, 1977), 505–6.

[166] Carson and Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 444–48.

[167] Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 1.

[168] Carson and Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 505–7, 522.

CE.[169] His earliest example is of Justin Martyr from the second century CE, a non-Jewish Christian from Samaria, who writes, "But if, Trypho … some of your race, who say they believe in this Christ, compel those Gentiles who believe in this Christ to live in all respects according to the Law given by Moses, or choose not to associate so intimately with them, I in like manner do not approve of them" (*Dial.* 47).[170] A later example from outside Palestine is the Canons of Laodicea.[171] In the mid-fourth century, these canons were the output of the Synod of Laodicea in Phrygia Pacatiana in Asia Minor. Simon notes several references to judaizing in these canons, including Canon 29, which says, "Christians must not judaize by resting on the Sabbath, but must work on that day, rather honouring the Lord's Day; and if they can, resting then as Christians. But if any shall be found to be judaizers, let them be anathema from Christ" (Canon 29).[172] Wilken concludes that, while the evidence is strong for Judaizers in the fourth century, it is lacking for the second and third centuries, though continuity of Judaizers from apostolic times is likely.

The purpose of this section was not to evaluate the presence of Judaizers during Peter's time but to investigate what Peter's mindset toward them might have been. While one cannot determine whether Peter's intended audience faced a problem with Judaizers, it seems unlikely that Peter would assume it was not a problem, given his experience at Antioch. However, for whatever reason, Peter chose not to include the topic in his letter.

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[169] Robert L. Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews: Rhetoric and Reality in the Late 4th Century* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004), 68–73.

[170] Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 47 (trans. M. Dods and G. Reith, *ANF* 1:218).

[171] Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews*, 72.

[172] Simon, *Verus Israel*, 329n104. "The Canons of the Synod Held in the City of Laodicea, in Phrygia Pacatiana." In *The Seven Ecumenical Councils* 29 (trans. Henry R. Percival, *NPNF* 2/14:148).

A New Race?

Ancient writers commented on the new "γένος" (people, race) that Peter implies (1 Pet 2:9). In approximately the second century CE, the unknown author of the *Epistle to Diognetus* writes, "τί δή ποτε καινὸν τοῦτο γένος" (why this new race, *Epistle to Diognetus.* 1.1 [Ehrman]).[173] In the first half of the second century CE, Suetonius writes in Rome, regarding Nero, "Punishment was inflicted on the Christians, a class of men [*genus hominum*] given to a new and mischievous superstition" (Suetonius, *Nero* 16 [Rolfe]).[174] The Greek philosopher Aristides, also in the first half of the second century CE, writes, "There are three classes of men in this world; these being the worshippers of the gods acknowledged among you, Jews, and Christians" (Aristides, *Apology* 2.2 [Kay]).[175] At the turn of the third century CE in Carthage, Tertullian writes, "We are indeed said to be the 'third race' of men" (Tertullian, *Nat.* 1.8 [Holmes]).[176] Such examples indicate that Peter was not alone in describing Christians as a new γένος, which other authors describe as the third γένος after Greeks and Jews.[177]

If Peter considers Christians a new γένος, it changes his perspective on several things. The "in-people" are fellow Christians, which he also describes as "ἅγιον ἔθνος" (holy nation, 1

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[173] Bart D. Ehrman, trans., *The Apostolic Fathers: Epistle of Barnabas. Papias and Quadratus. Epistle to Diognetus. The Shepherd of Hermas*, 2 vols., LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003). Buell opens her book of the same title with this quote. Buell, *Why This New Race*, 1.

[174] Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars: Claudius. Nero. Galba, Otho, and Vitellius. Vespasian. Titus, Domitian. Lives of Illustrious Men: Grammarians and Rhetoricians. Poets (Terence. Virgil. Horace. Tibullus. Persius. Lucan). Lives of Pliny the Elder and Passienus Crispus.*, trans. J. C. Rolfe, 2 vols., LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914). Jobes explains that this perception led to the alienation of Christians. Jobes, *1 Peter*, 159.

[175] Aristides, *Apology* 2.2 (trans. D. M. Kay, *ANF* 9.264). This is Kay's translation of a Greek fragment, from which Buell also cites. Buell, *Why This New Race*, 36.

[176] Tertullian, *Ad nationes* 1.8 (trans. P. Holmes, *ANF* 3.116).

[177] As discussed earlier, translating this word "race" brings a modern understanding of the term and associated racism. See Buell's Preface for a perspective on the challenges with "race" in today's context. Buell, *Why This New Race*, ix–xiv.

Pet 2:9). The "out-people" are those who do not follow Jesus Christ, those outside of "ἅγιον ἔθνος," or simply "ἔθνος." Peter's understanding of how the new "ἅγιον ἔθνος" (Christians) relate to the old "ἅγιον ἔθνος" (Israel) is inconclusive from the Petrine Epistles and is beyond the scope of this discussion. However, what seems clear is that Peter has a new approach to "foreigners." Rather than foreigners being the "out-people" with which he cannot associate (ἀλλόφυλος, Acts 10:28), he now regards himself and Christians as foreigners, the resident aliens or visiting strangers, "παροίκους καί παρεπιδήμους" (1 Pet 2:11). Saying that all foreigners have become the in-people is too far, as ἔθνος is still present in his writing. However, the evidence suggests that Peter's approach to both ethnicity and religion has changed in favor of the new γένος that is neither Jew nor Greek.[178]

Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has investigated the Petrine Epistles for evidence of Peter's ethno-religious preference. First, it identified what traits in the texts might suggest an ethno-religious preference, and it confirmed that the Petrine Epistles present Peter's thoughts. A literature survey showed the debates around several aspects of the Petrine Epistles, including their audiences. As passages that scholars use to argue their positions regarding the audience might also provide insight into Peter's mindset, an initial position about the audience was not taken.

Examination of the external evidence around the epistles suggests that it would have been difficult for Peter to assume an audience other than one mixed of Jewish and non-Jewish Christians and would likely have written his letters accordingly. Scholars identify Jewish themes in the letters. When these are assessed in the context of the rest of the Petrine Epistles and the

[178] The echo of Paul is intentional (Gal 3:28).

dating relative to Paul writing Galatians, a metaphorical interpretation of these themes seems closest to the author's intent, suggesting a non-Jewish audience. There is also debate about Peter's extensive use of the Old Testament and whether this infers a Jewish Christian audience or whether he would have expected non-Jewish Christians to be familiar with them, having been in a church setting with Jewish Christians. However, Paul's use of the Old Testament in similar ways dissolves this argument completely. Some of the terminologies that Peter uses suggest a non-Jewish audience, such as his description of the audience's "former ignorance" (1 Pet 1:14), the "empty way of life inherited from your ancestors" (1 Pet 1:18) and that they were once not a people (1 Pet 2:10). These passages are the ones closest to showing an ethno-religious preference, but it would be in favor of the non-Jewish Christians. Finally, a comparison with other New Testament authors finds similarities and differences with Paul and other authors such as James, John, and the author of Hebrews, and Peter's development of Pauline ideas aligns with their history and Peter's tendency to improve himself.

I find no firm evidence of Peter showing ethno-religious preferences for Jews in his epistles. I investigated possible associations of his language with food laws or separation from foreigners and found no evidence of preference, with his theme of Christian engagement with society indicating he was advocating against Pharisaic separation. I found Peter's discussion of obedience similar to Paul's, suggesting a similar approach to the Law. There is no mention of the Jewish identity markers such as circumcision, the Sabbath, or food laws. If anything, assuming Peter knew that Jewish Christians would read his letter, he exhibits a bias against Jewish heritage with his criticism of people's backgrounds.

The apparent neutrality of the letters toward their audience strongly suggests that Peter wrote with both Jewish and non-Jewish Christians in mind. He uses quotations from the Old

Testament that would encourage Jewish Christians, while the words without the Old Testament context also uplift non-Jewish Christians. He uses a proverb from the Old Testament alongside one from pagan literature. Excluding references to Jewish traditional literature while keeping Old Testament references would retain the interest of Jewish Christians while not alienating non-Jewish Christians. The Petrine Epistles may demonstrate that Peter had learned how to interact with multi-ethnic Christian churches, growing from his error in judgment at Antioch and using more than a decade of experience outside of Jerusalem to share a unified message with the church. Historical evidence suggests that Judaizers existed at this time, although they did not concern Peter in his letters.

There is evidence of other ancient writers describing Christians as a new, third γένος that is neither Jew nor Greek. While Peter does not explicitly refer to his audience in this way, he describes them as a "ἐκλεκτόν γένος." If Peter were considering Christians this way, it would explain his new approach to foreigners who are outside the group with a new understanding of ἔθνος. Also, it aligns with his reframing of ἀλλόφυλος, with whom engagement was forbidden, to παροίκους and παρεπιδήμους, that society rejects, leading to suffering on behalf of Jesus. It confirms why there is an absence of the ethno-religious preferences that Peter demonstrated prior to Cornelius's baptism.

CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This research seeks to contribute to the scholarly discussion around whether Paul's designation of Peter as the apostle to the Jews in Galatians (Gal 2:7–9) fits Peter's later life. The focus is the identification of Jewish ethno-religious preferences in the Petrine Epistles. The sections below summarize the analysis of the evidence associated with Second Temple Judaism's approach to foreigners, Peter's understanding of foreigners during his upbringing, and how his time with Jesus might have changed that. Peter's approach to non-Jews in Acts and the Pauline Epistles is reviewed before examining the Petrine Epistles for signs of ethno-religious preferences after justifying that these letters suitably represent Peter. After summarizing the research presented in the previous five chapters, I outline the contributions that this research makes and provide recommendations for further study.

The Evidence and Its Analysis

This dissertation uses a biblical-theological approach to the biblical texts, accepting the received texts as accurate and inerrant depictions of their inspired authors' intents. Extrabiblical literature is valuable for understanding biblical authors' ancient historical, literary, and theological contexts. Considering the passage of time is essential when examining the evidence as one can expect changes after a decade or more, as between the Antioch incident around 49 CE and the writing of the Petrine Epistles in the mid-60s CE. While using a biblical theology approach, this dissertation seeks to improve the understanding of a non-divine human, the apostle Peter. One might view it as part of a quest to discover the historical Peter rather than understand more about the divine. However, the biblical text remains primary, and increasing the understanding of Peter will improve one's interpretation of the Petrine Epistles.

This dissertation argues that the Petrine Epistles reveal a lack of Jewish ethno-religious preference in Peter's mission. Paul's identification that Peter was an apostle to the Jews was accurate for the period immediately after Jesus's ascension. Peter's baptism of Cornelius (Acts 10:44–48) and his defense of non-Jew inclusion in the Christian community (Acts 11:15–17 and Acts 15:7–11) indicate a change in Peter's understanding. However, some scholars maintain that Peter remained an apostle for the Jews. Other scholars accept that Peter's mission evolved but have not examined the Petrine Epistles to support that position.

The Contemporary Treatment of Peter

There are several reasons why scholarship has given less attention to Peter's life and the Petrine Epistles than other New Testament authors and works. The first is that the Petrine Epistles contribute less than one-twentieth of the New Testament, while Paul contributes over one-third. Paul's writings have had a significant impact on the church through the ages, which increases the attention on his letters, and such attention can place Peter in the shadows. However, the amount of contribution to the New Testament is not the only thing that drives scholarship, as Jesus did not write any of it, and he attracts plenty of attention. As Peter is the most frequently-mentioned person in the New Testament after Jesus, there must be other reasons for the diminished attention to Peter.

A second reason is the reaction of the Protestant Church to the Roman Catholic Church's position on Peter, especially their position on apostolic succession (Matt 16:17–19). If Protestant scholars write about Peter's influence on the church, they face the risk of being seen to endorse his primacy and apostolic succession. To balance that, they spend time and effort arguing against such positions.

A third reason, which significantly compounds the first two, is critical scholarship's rejection of Peter as the author of the Petrine Epistles. Even though some of the church fathers questioned the genuineness of 2 Peter, both epistles were accepted into the canon at the Synod of Hippo (ca. 393) and the Council of Carthage (397 CE). These groups would not have accepted the Petrine Epistles, which include the declaration that Peter wrote them, if they believed that Peter did not write them. While the volume of scholarship on the Petrine Epistles has increased in the last few decades, scholars remain divided between those who accept that Peter wrote them and those who do not. Those who accept Petrine authorship spend significant time and effort justifying their position. The result is a gap in scholarly material such that there is little analysis of the Petrine Epistles in the light of a detailed study of Peter's background.

A fourth reason is the legacy of F. C. Baur, who proposed that there was conflict between Peter and Paul in the first century, representing a broad divide between Jewish and non-Jewish Christianity. While Baur's thesis has been dismantled and rejected, his ideas persist, and the acceptance of Peter as a Judaist in contrast to Paul, the champion of Protestant faith, continues to discourage research on Peter.

A fifth reason, which compounds the above, is the Antioch incident (Gal 2:11–14). After establishing his authority comes from Christ (Gal 1:1, 12), Paul openly criticizes Peter. While Paul's rebuke of Peter is about his hypocritical behavior with non-Jews rather than his theology, it comes immediately after Paul's explanation that Peter was the apostle to the Jews (Gal 2:7–9). The idea that Peter's mission was restricted to Jews persists, and thus that his writings have less relevance for non-Jews.

Reviewing scholarship identifies a divide. One group is the scholars who study Peter the apostle, which includes Oscar Cullman, Martin Hengel, Marcus Bockmuehl, Pheme Perkins, and

Larry W. Hurtado. However, all of them are skeptical about the genuineness of the Petrine Epistles and give them little attention when examining Peter's life. The other group is those who write about the Petrine Epistles while accepting Peter's authorship, which includes Karen H. Jobes, Gene L. Green, Thomas R. Schreiner, and Larry R. Helyer. However, the works from each group of scholars have few, if any, references to the other group.[1] Combining the research of these two groups is an opportunity.

Second Temple Judaism's Approach to Foreigners

Before evaluating Peter's approach to foreigners in the biblical text, it is valuable to assess what attitudes Peter would have grown up with. Before investigating Peter's circumstances, one must understand what approaches to foreigners existed within Judaism at the beginning of the first century CE. For example, one needs to understand what was special about Cornelius, the Roman centurion introduced in Acts 10:1, whose baptism was a turning point in Peter's mission.

Cornelius was not a Jew. The term "Jew" originates from the Hebrew יְהוּדִי (yəhûḏî), describing a member of the tribe of Judah. Judah's representation of land and people evolved with the change in Israel's circumstances, which included exile, the return from Babylon, and the Hasmonean revolt. These events led to the Greek term Ἰουδαῖος, meaning Jewish, representing a bloodline descended from Jacob and a group of people that worshipped Yahweh and followed the Torah. There was a binary ethno-religious distinction between a Jew and a non-Jew.

The Old Testament is the first text to examine to understand Second Temple Judaism's approach to foreigners. The initial observation is that the Hebrew Bible uses multiple words to

[1] Green's *Vox Petri*, published in 2020, is a recent exception. However, he chose not to consider 2 Peter in his analysis because of the debate regarding its authenticity, even though he believes it is genuine.

depict foreigners, generally with different meanings. The most frequently-occurring words are עַם (*ʿam*) and גּוֹי (*gôy*), meaning "nation" or "people"—usually a group with a common ancestry or sociopolitical identity. The singular forms often refer to Israel and the plural to either all nations, including Israel, or the non-Israelites, with it evolving in later Hebrew to mean non-Jews. Also, the adjective עָרֵל (*ʿārēl*) describes a foreigner who has a foreskin or is uncircumcised. However, two other frequently used words, נָכְרִי (*nokrî*) and גֵּר (*gēr*), include an indication of the relationship to Israel. Words associated with נָכְרִי (*nokrî*) and נֵכָר (*nēkār*) describe non-Israelite people outside of God's covenant or foreign gods, often with an underlying negative connotation. These words contrast with גֵּר (*gēr*), which describes foreigners who were with Israel and included people who were passing through or God-fearers who wished to join the people of Yahweh. Often תּוֹשָׁב (*tôšāb*) is used with גֵּר (*gēr*), emphasizing the temporary or dependent nature of habitation. The Passover instructions from the Lord prohibited נֵכָר (*nēkār*), תּוֹשָׁב (*tôšāb*), or עָרֵל (*ʿārēl*) from eating the food (Exod 12:43, 45, 48) though a גֵּר (*gēr*) could participate after circumcision, resulting in him becoming a native of the land (Exod 12:48). Other laws specify that the גֵּר (*gēr*) are treated as part of the community while נָכְרִי (*nokrî*) are outside with their foreign gods.

The Old Testament includes several examples of foreigners joining Israel, either through marriage like Moses's wife (Exod 2:15–22) or Ruth the Moabitess (Ruth 1:22; 2:2, 21; 4:5, 10), or through helping the Israelites like Rahab (Josh 6:25). In contrast, Solomon married many *nokrî* women (1 Kgs 11:1–3), and Ezra and Nehemiah deplore the marrying of local women after returning from exile (Ezra 9:1; Neh 13:23–27). However, there is explicit provision in the prophets of non-Jews coming to the Lord in the eschatological future (Isa 2:2–4; 25:6–7; 66:18–

20; Mic 4:1–2; Zech 8:22–33). Neither the biblical instructions nor the examples explain the process of foreigner integration beyond male circumcision.

The next text to examine for understanding Judaism's approach to foreigners is the Septuagint, a collection of Greek translations of the Hebrew Bible written in the Greek-speaking diaspora of Alexandria, Egypt, in the third century BCE. The Septuagint translators preferred to use προσήλυτος for גֵּר (*gēr*), with a meaning closer to a convert. Also, they tended to use ἀλλότριος for words related to נָכְרִי (*nokrî*) and ἔθνος for גּוֹי (*gôy*) and עַם (*ʿam*), and the negativity associated with נָכְרִי (*nokrî*) appears to have moved onto ἀλλότριος.

An examination of the Old Testament Apocrypha identifies a mixture of approaches to foreigners, though the absence of the original Hebrew often compounds their examination.[2] In its setting of Assyrian exile, Tobit presents a mixed approach to foreigners. On the one hand, its focus on Torah piety emphasizes Israelite separation and exclusivity, while on the other hand, it shows generosity toward foreigners and their eschatological destiny. Judith, written in Judea around 100 BCE, presents Nebuchadnezzar and Holofernes as foreigner adversaries against the God of Israel and Achior, a non-Israelite, as someone who recognizes the God of Israel and converts. Sirach, written in Judea in the early second century BCE, does not portray foreigners positively. Sirach suggests that associating with a stranger (ἀλλότριος) will lead one away from one's family (Sir 11:34) and Sirach's prayer asks God to act against foreign nations (ἔθνη ἀλλότρια, Sir 33:3), wiping them out (Sir 33:9) in favor of the tribes of Jacob (Sir 33:13). Both 1 and 2 Maccabees present foreigners (ἀλλότριος) negatively (e.g., 1 Macc 1:38; 2 Macc 10:2) and neither book makes any reference to proselytes (προσήλυτος).

[2] The Old Testament Apocrypha covers thirteen Jewish books: 1–2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, additions to Esther, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus (also known as the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach, or just Sirach), Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah, additions to Daniel, the Prayer of Manasses, and 1–2 Maccabees.

The Pseudepigrapha provides further insight.[3] From 161–140 BCE, Jubilees rewrites Genesis through Exodus 16, emphasizing endogamous marriage to preserve Jacob's bloodline. The apocalyptic 1 Enoch, from the third century BCE to the first century CE, is positive toward foreigners in the end times. The Testament of Moses, from before the temple's destruction in 70 CE, presents the nations as instruments of punishment on sinful Israel. Joseph and Aseneth, from the first century BCE to the second century CE, describes the conversion of Aseneth, Moses's wife, to "the God of the Hebrews." These are a representative sample of the variety of approaches to foreigners in this body of literature.

The Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered between 1947 and 1956 around Khirbet Qumran, provide different approaches to foreigners. With their origin between the third century BCE and the third quarter of the first century CE, this literature presents the *gēr* similar to the Hebrew Bible, with 4Q423 representative of several examples by including *gēr* with the native-born regarding whom God will judge and the Damascus Document suggesting the inclusion of *gēr* within the community. In contrast, 4Q169 associates *gēr* with false teachers, and 4QMMT prohibits marriage between Israelites and even the converted *gēr*, illustrating no validation of conversion. One suggestion is that the Dead Sea Scrolls represent two traditions, Damascus and Serekh.

Philo and Josephus were Jewish authors who wrote at the beginning and end of the first century CE. Both showed strong affinity to foreign entities (Philo to Greeks, Josephus to Romans), and there is concern that their accounts are biased toward such relationships. Philo champions both Moses and Plato and praises proselytes who achieve the same status as native-

[3] Scholars define this category of literature in multiple ways. There is an acceptance that not all literature in the category is pseudepigraphical. It was generally written between 200 BCE and 100 CE and covers the Jewish literature from this time that does not fit into another category.

born in the Israelite community. Josephus describes multiple conversions to Judaism, though potentially describes an idealized Jewish attitude toward foreigners rather than reality.

The literature from rabbinic Judaism, from 200–600 CE, represents the dual Torah of God's written and oral revelation on Sinai and includes the Mishnah from around 200 CE, the Tosefta (supplements to the Mishnah) from around 300 CE, and two commentaries on the Mishnah called the Jerusalem Talmud from around 400 CE and the Talmud of Babylonia from around 600 CE. It probably evolved from the Pharisees after the temple's destruction in 70 CE. It also presents a variety of positions toward foreigners, such as the Tractate Qiddušin from the Jerusalem Talmud, which identifies that proselytes have different marrying privileges than Israelites, or Tractate Yevamot from the Babylonian Talmud, which discusses the process of accepting someone who claims to be a convert.

The above sources build on the Hebrew Bible, presenting the Israelites as God's chosen, separate people. They use different words to distinguish types of foreigners and depict various levels of integration of converts into the community, while the steps to convert and integrate are unclear.

Peter's Background Before Becoming a Disciple

Biblical evidence includes accounts of Peter, and extrabiblical evidence such as archaeological finds and Josephus's writings help to understand the environment that Peter grew up in. Peter was born around 1 BCE and met Jesus around 28 CE. His various names in the New Testament yield little information, except he was born into a Hellenistic Jewish environment.[4]

[4] The Gospel authors give Peter the name Σίμων (Mark 1:16), Κηφᾶς (John 1:42), Πέτρος (Matt 4:18), Βαριωνᾶ (Matt 16:17), and ὁ υἱὸς Ἰωάννου (John 1:42). Outside of the Gospels, Peter is also called Συμεών (Acts 15:14; 2 Pet 1:1).

John describes Peter's hometown as Bethsaida (John 1:44), and Mark and Matthew locate Peter's house in Capernaum (Mark 1:29, Matt 8:14), the town from where Jesus based his early ministry. Both towns are by the lake in upper Galilee. Bethsaida was probably more Hellenistic and was in the Herodian tetrarchy administered by Philip rather than Antipas, and there is no evidence of a synagogue in contrast to Capernaum. Peter was a fisherman (Mark 1:16, Luke 5:3) with a wife (1 Cor 9:5) and a mother-in-law (Mark 1:30, 8:14), and the biblical accounts suggest he lived in the middle of the economic scale.

Upper Galilee at this time would have been a mixture of Jews and non-Jews. The synagogue at Capernaum indicates a robust Jewish community. There is no evidence that Peter would have had any nationalistic ideas or held particular animosity toward foreigners, and the Gospel accounts of John the Baptist and Jesus indicate they criticized the Jewish leadership. It is unlikely that Peter traveled out of the region much except for possible trips to the temple in Jerusalem. Before meeting Jesus, Peter would likely have had cross-cultural exposure to non-Jews as part of everyday life, though he would have kept himself separate.[5] It is unknown whether he would have had any experience with converts. It is also unclear which position toward foreigners in Judaism Peter would have been taught or witnessed, though it is most likely he understood to remain separate.

Peter's Development After Meeting Jesus

Peter met Jesus about 28 CE, and Jesus died about 30 CE. Peter's departure to another place (Acts 12:17) was approximately 42 CE, so the events before this in Acts likely occurred

[5] Peter's remaining separate is indicated by his declaration that "I have never eaten anything impure and ritually unclean" (Acts 10:14) and his understanding that it was "forbidden for a Jewish man to associate with or visit a foreigner" (Acts 10:28).

between 30 and 42 CE, with Cornelius's baptism (Acts 10:44–48) about 40 CE. The Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:6–21) and the Antioch incident (Gal 2:11–14) are estimated to be around 49 CE. Peter probably died in Rome in the mid-60s, writing his epistles there shortly before he died.

One primarily uses the Gospel accounts to examine what Jesus taught Peter about foreigners. The three aspects of this are Jesus's approach to the Law, his behavior toward foreigners, and his messages about foreigners. Jesus showed respect for the Law while being very critical of the Pharisees (for instance, calling them hypocrites in Matthew 23:1–36), whom the people likely understood as the authorities on the Law. However, Jesus challenges the Law itself when he heals on the Sabbath (Matt 12:1–14; Mark 2:23–28; John 5:2–17) and abrogates the food laws (Mark 7:15–19). While Jesus was introducing a different approach to legalistic practices, this might have remained unclear to Peter.

During his ministry, Jesus's focus was Israel (Matt 15:24), and the Gospels describe few interactions with foreigners. One encounter is the healing of a centurion's servant in Capernaum, in which Jesus complements the centurion for having more faith than anyone in Israel (Matt 8:5–13; Luke 7:1–10). Another is the healing of a Canaanite woman's daughter in the district of Tyre and Sidon (Matt 15:21–28), during which Jesus explains that he "was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt 15:24). These incidents would not have given Peter any insight into changing his approach to foreigners. Jesus associating with outcasts (Matt 11:19; Luke 7:34; 15:2) went against the principle of the Pharisees to remain separate from sinners, but Peter did not extrapolate this to foreigners (Acts 10:28).

Jesus also spoke about both Israel's exclusivity and foreigner inclusion. He instructed his disciples to limit their mission to Israel (Matt 10:5–6), though he recognized that their path would bring them to non-Jews (Matt 10:18), possibly suggesting a short-term focus on Israel.

Moreover, Jesus clearly instructs the eleven disciples “to make disciples of all nations” (Matt 28:19) and to be his “witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). The Acts accounts indicate Peter did not take his ministry to foreigners until after Cornelius.

While Peter might not have learned much about foreigners with Jesus, the Gospel accounts illustrate that Jesus focused on teaching Peter about his identity and leadership. Peter’s declaration that Jesus is the Messiah (Mark 8:29) is at the center of Mark’s Gospel and is the time when Jesus changes from teaching the disciples his identity to preparing them for the future. Preparing Peter to lead was an essential part of that preparation, and the Gospel accounts describe multiple occasions where Peter made mistakes, Jesus corrected him, and Peter improved. While the first such lesson occurs immediately after Peter’s confession that Jesus is Christ (Mark 8:29) when Peter rebukes Jesus for describing that he must suffer (Mark 8:32), the second half of Mark contains multiple examples of Peter growing from his mistakes. Peter’s journey in Mark climaxes with the ultimate failing of his threefold denial (Mark 14:66–72) yet is followed by his restoration as leader of the disciples (Mark 16:7) before taking over the leadership of the church at the ascension (Acts 1:15).

Jesus had prepared Peter to lead, and Peter led the mission from Jerusalem for the next ten years. The mission starts with a clear Jewish focus illustrated by his preaching to the Jews at Pentecost (Acts 2:14), his healing and preaching at the temple (Acts 3:7–26), and his questioning by the Jewish leadership (Acts 4:5–22). Then, signs of change start to appear. The disciples chose seven Hellenistic Jewish leaders to help, including one convert who was the first non-ethnic Jew in the church’s leadership (Acts 6:6). Peter followed Philip to Samaria to preach to the Samaritans, fulfilling the second step (in all Judea and Samaria) of Acts 1:8.

While Acts describes others spreading the mission and introduces Paul, it climaxes with Peter's vision explaining that food laws no longer apply (Acts 10:9–16) before the Holy Spirit descends upon Cornelius, the non-Jewish Roman centurion (Acts 10:44–48). Acts describes Peter's subsequent defense of non-Jew inclusion with the Jerusalem leadership (Acts 11:5–16; 15:7–11). It is challenging to appreciate the significance of these events. Separation from non-Jews and following the food laws had been a part of Judaism for millennia. Peter knew nothing else until his vision, after which he joined Paul in explaining a universal approach to God through Christ. However, Peter's lack of cross-cultural experience is illustrated in the Antioch incident, described by Paul's account of his public condemnation of Peter's hypocritical behavior of separating himself from non-Jews for meals when Jews were present (Gal 2:11–14). The relative timing of this incident to the Jerusalem Council is uncertain, but that does not impact the long-term perspective. Even though Peter returned to Jerusalem for the council in 49 CE, he had left the city in 42 CE (Acts 12:17), and the biblical record is silent about his activities except for Paul's mention of him in 1 Corinthians (1 Cor 1:12; 3:22; 9:5; 15:5), written in the mid-50s, which suggests Peter had visited the city.

Ethno-Religious Preferences in 1 and 2 Peter

There is the question of whether Peter's mission continued to prioritize Jews after baptizing Cornelius, the Jerusalem Council, and the Antioch incident. Paul designated Peter as the apostle entrusted to the Jews (Gal 2:7–9), and the accounts in Acts before Cornelius suggest this. Peter demonstrated his ethno-religious preference through behaviors such as the prioritization of the Law, especially the food laws (Acts 10:14), and remaining separate by not associating with a foreigner (Acts 10:28). Behaviors that indicate a lack of ethno-religious

preference would have been welcoming people into Christ's community without the need to adopt Judaism's religious identity markers.

Debate about the authenticity of the Petrine Epistles in modern times has discouraged research into them. However, while there is evidence from the church fathers that there were questions about the genuineness of 2 Peter, both epistles were accepted into the canon at the Synod of Hippo (ca. 393) and the Council of Carthage (397 CE), strongly supporting their authenticity. One position of those who deny Petrine authorship is that someone close to Peter wrote them after his death. Whether one identifies the Petrine Epistles' author as Peter (with or without secretarial assistance) or that they were pseudepigraphical (written by someone who had been close to Peter), the writing reflects his thinking. Therefore, their analysis is appropriate for identifying Peter's ethno-religious preference toward the end of his life in the mid-60s CE.

The search for signs of ethno-religious preference is similar to identifying the letters' intended recipients. However, one must avoid assuming Peter is writing to Jews because of Paul's statement about Peter's mission fifteen years earlier (Gal 2:7–9). The first letter is addressed to Christians in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (1 Pet 1:1), an area in Asia Minor, and the second letter probably follows the first (2 Pet 3:1). External evidence suggests that both Jewish and non-Jewish Christians would have been present in these regions, with the Gospel having been brought after Pentecost (Acts 2:9–11), by deportees from Rome, or have spread organically to the region over the previous thirty years. There is no evidence that Peter had visited the area previously, and it does not appear that he wrote his letters to a subset (Jewish Christian or non-Jewish Christian) of the churches.

Peter addresses his recipients of 1 Peter as παρεπίδημος (1 Pet 1:1), παροικία (1 Pet 1:17), and the phrase πάροικος καὶ παρεπίδημος (1 Pet 2:11), translated as "exile," "strangers,"

"foreigners," "sojourners," or "aliens." While some argue for a literal understanding of these terms, a metaphorical meaning of a Christian's home being in heaven with God fits well. Peter also describes his recipients as γένος, ἔθνος, and λαὸς (1 Pet 2:9), translated as "race," "nation," and "people." These words fit with viewing Christians as a new group of people, or race, that is neither Jew nor Greek.

Peter uses a significant amount of the Old Testament in his letters, which is unsurprising given his Jewish background, but his usage is similar to Paul's and does not show ethno-religious preference. He quotes the Old Testament for reasons varying from recognizing that Jesus is the Messiah using the stone metaphor (1 Pet 2:6–8), encouraging women to be godly like Sarah (1 Pet 3:6), to love (1 Pet 4:8), and to remain hopeful while suffering for Christ (1 Pet 4:12–19). There are many parallels between 2 Peter and Jude, and the differences show that Peter removed references to extrabiblical texts that might have been part of Jewish tradition, perhaps indicating less of a Jewish ethno-religious preference than the author of Jude. Peter's use of the Old Testament extends to using Jewish motifs in the Christian context, such as a "holy nation" (1 Pet 2:9), "God's household" (1 Pet 4:17), "faithful creator (1 Pet 4:19), that God protected Noah (2 Pet 4:5), and the coming of the "day of the Lord" (2 Pet 3:10). Similar to Paul, Peter adapts the use of the term ἔθνη (Gentile) from non-Jews to non-Christians (1 Pet 2:12; 4:3; 1 Cor 5:1; 12:2; 1 Thess 4:5), sustaining its meaning to those outside of God's community.

The most non-Jewish feature of the letter is Peter's description of the recipient's previous lives. Peter criticizes "the desires of [their] former ignorance" (1 Pet 1:14), the "empty way of life inherited from your ancestors" (1 Pet 1:18), claims that "once you were not a people, but now you are God's people" (1 Pet 2:10), and criticizes the audience for "doing what the Gentiles choose to do" (1 Pet 4:3). There is no evidence that Peter would be so critical of Jews. Indeed,

these passages are the most substantial evidence in the epistles for an ethno-religious preference, but it is in favor of the non-Jews. Such descriptions of the recipients confirm the lack of any Jewish ethno-religious preference in these letters. Peter's Epistles demonstrate that Peter was no longer an apostle to the Jews and had expanded his apostolic mission to all, per Christ's commands (Matt 28:19–20, Acts 1:8).

Contributions of This Research

The literature survey identifies a divide between two groups of scholars: those who have examined Peter's life and those who study Peter's Epistles. This research combines the work of those groups to provide insight into Peter's "whole life," including what his epistles show about him. Even if one disputes that Peter penned the Petrine Epistles, the case is strong that the letters represent his mindset and provide insight into the last stage of his life, complementing the other biblical accounts of his earlier life.

This research also traces the approach to foreigners from the Old Testament through Second Temple Judaism to some of the latest letters in the Bible. The findings support the transition from Jewish separateness to Christian engagement. While the evidence is strong for converts to ancient and Second Temple Judaism, the process for conversion and integration into the community remains unclear, and Second Temple literature suggests that there were multiple positions regarding converts in the first century CE.

Finally, examining the chronology of the events in Peter's life makes their relative significance more apparent. The chronological approach highlights the significance of Cornelius, the non-Jew receiving the Holy Spirit in 40 CE, after about ten years of Peter's ministry to the Jews. Peter's subsequent defense of including non-Jews in the Christian community confirms his change of perspective. The timing of Paul's letter to the Galatians with respect to these accounts

in Acts remains somewhat enigmatic. Peter had undoubtedly led the apostolic mission to the Jews in the 30s. Peter's inexperience with multicultural engagement contributed to his poor judgment regarding eating with groups of Jews and non-Jews at Antioch. However, the evidence demonstrates that it is wrong to apply Paul's label of Peter as the apostle to the Jews as a strict, sustained division in ministry. While the evidence is insufficient to assess Peter's activities in the 50s and early 60s, Peter's Epistles demonstrate that his apostolic mission had moved beyond the Jewish context to Christ being available for all, regardless of ethnic or religious background.

Recommendations for Further Study

This research took a new approach by examining the whole of Peter's life to improve the understanding of the biblical author's experiences and how they impacted his writing. While this research focused on Peter's approach to foreigners, it could be extended to other aspects of Peter's theology. For instance, while Gene L. Green's *Vox Petri* examines the various testimonies about Peter found in the Bible, it pays little attention to exploring Peter's background and upbringing and how that might have influenced his ministry. However, one must recognize that there is little direct evidence about Peter before his meeting Jesus, and the extrabiblical evidence used to build a picture of Peter's first thirty years should be treated carefully.

Another avenue of research would be to apply the "whole-life" approach to other epistolary authors such as Paul and James. Again, the direct evidence about their early years is meager. However, comparing their lives and letters might reveal links that help understand the authors and provide additional insight into their works. For instance, one could examine the difference between Paul and Peter's upbringing in Tarsus and upper Galilee to identify its influence on their letters.

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