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| ☩ |  | *The First* |
| *Letter of* |
| *Peter* |
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# Author

## Arguments for Peter

1. **Peter**
   1. The book says it is by Peter.
      1. In 1:1 “Peter” is the first word.
         1. 1 Pet 1:1, “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the exiles of the Dispersion . . .”
      2. 5:1 refers to experiencing the earthly Christ (it is the only such reference). (van Unnik 763)
         1. 1 Pet 5:1, “Now as an elder myself and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory to be revealed, I exhort the elders among you . . .”
         2. But “eye­witness of the suffer­ings of Christ” may mean Peter’s martyr­dom. (Fuller)
   2. 5:12-13 refers to “Babylon” (= Rome, see Rev 17:3, 9, 18). Peter was associated with Rome.
   3. “One small point may be noticed: in 5:14 the author uses “peace” instead of “grace,” the usual term in the Pauline letters. This is decidedly more Semitic; does it point to a Jewish writer?” (van Unnik 764)
   4. Peter after c. ad 50
      1. Peter’s “whereabouts after the Council of Jerusalem and the meeting with Paul in Antioch [Gal 2:11-14] are unknown.” (van Unnik 762)
         1. Gal 2:11-14, “But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood self-condemned; 12for until certain people came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But after they came, he drew back and kept himself separate for fear of the circumcision faction. 13And the other Jews joined him in this hypocrisy, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. 14But when I saw that they were not acting consistently with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, “If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?””
      2. “He made missionary tours in the company of his wife (I Cor. 9:5), but where and how is hidden.” (van Unnik 762)
         1. 1 Cor 9:5, “Do we not have the right to be accompanied by a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?”
      3. “This gap in our knowledge involves a period of ca. fifteen years!” (van Unnik 762)
   5. relation of Peter and the recipients
      1. “It is nowhere claimed that he was their special apostle . . .” (van Unnik 762)
      2. It is “not clear, either, what induced him to write this letter except the general desire to fortify their faith.” (van Unnik 763)
      3. “He does not defend his personal work or express his personal affection, as Paul often did.” (van Unnik 763)
2. **attestation in the early Church**
   1. c. ad 125: 2 Peter accepts Petrine authorship of 1 Peter.
      1. 2 Pet 3:1, “This is the second letter that I have writ­ten to you . . .”
   2. Apostolic Fathers (1-2 Clement, Ignatius, Barnabas, Didache, Hermas)
      1. “. . . there is no unequivocal testimony about this letter . . .” (van Unnik 760)
         1. (But Polycarp is an Apostolic Father, and van Unnik says below that Polycarp “was clearly quoting this letter” [760].)
         2. “Similarities in expressions which have been adduced are not so striking as to prove familiarity . . .” (van Unnik 760)
         3. They “can easily be . . . derived from common Christian teaching.” (van Unnik 760)
         4. “In view of the small body of literature concerned, this argument from silence does not tell very much; and this is the more true because the writings just mentioned belong to varying times and places.” (van Unnik 760)
      2. c. 125: Papias (of Hierapolis in Asia Minor, ca. 125)
         1. Eusebius (*Hist*. 3.39.17): “The same writer [Papias] has used testimonies drawn from the former epistle of John, and likewise from that of Peter.” (Qtd. in van Unnik 760)
         2. “Since, however, Papias’ works are lost, it is impossible to know in what form he quoted these testimonies (whether under the actual name of the apostle or anonymously, a phrase or two which made Eusebius think of this letter).” (van Unnik 760)
      3. presbyters
         1. By “presbyters” Eusebius means a “group of Asian teachers . . .” (van Unnik 760)
         2. Eusebius (*Hist*. 3.1.3): “Of this [1 Peter] the elders [*peresbyteroi*] of older time have made frequent use, as a work beyond dispute, in their own treatises.” (van Unnik 760)
         3. “The same observation must be made . . .” I.e., since the presbyters’ works are lost, we don’t know whether Eusebius is relating their judgment or his own inference that the elders were using 1 Peter. (van Unnik 760)
      4. c. 125: Polycarp (69-155; bishop of Smyrna, Aegean coast of Anatolia)
         1. “The date of Polycarp’s [*Letter to the Philippians*] is still in dispute . . .” Many scholars say 117; some say 135. (van Unnik 761)
         2. Polycarp “was clearly quoting this letter”: 7 times. (van Unnik 760)
            1. *Philippians* 1:3 = 1 Pet 1:8; 2:1 = 1:15, 21; 2:2 = 3:9; 6:3 = 3:13; 7:2 = 4:7; 8:1-2 = 2:22, 24; 10:2 = 2:12. (van Unnik 760)
         3. “Polycarp, however, does not mention the name of his source, nor does he even give these texts as quotations; they are simply incorporated in the sentences. Striking though this may seem to us, [760] Polycarp does the same with words of Paul; it was usual in antiquity to leave it to the hearers to recognize such citations.” (van Unnik 760-61)
         4. Eusebius (*Hist*. 4.14.9): “Polycarp in the said writing of his to the Philippians, extant to this day, has employed certain testimonies taken from the former epistle of Peter.” (Qtd. in van Unnik 760)
   3. gnostics
      1. c. 125: “Other traces may be found in the writings of Gnostics like Basilides (ca. 125) . . .” (Clem. *Misc*. 4.12.81) (van Unnik 761)
      2. c. 140: “It will be noted that the name of Marcion is missing in this list. This is striking, since he was from Pontus (cf. I Pet. 1:1), but his silence about I Peter can be explained by the assumption that he rejected it because of his distrust of Peter the Jew. That he did not know it is less probable.” (van Unnik 761)
      3. c. 160: Theodotion
         1. Theodotion was an “Eastern disciple of Valentinus . . .” (van Unnik 761)
         2. Clement of Alexandria’s *Excerpts from Theodotion* 12:2 quotes 1 Pet 1:12 (“Peter says,” the first quotation “By its author’s name”). (van Unnik 761)
         3. *Excerpts from Theodotion* 12:3 quotes (“according to the Apostle”) 1 Pet 1:18. (van Unnik 761)
         4. “Since here again it is difficult to determine in these *Excerpts* what belongs to the terminology of Clement, it is unsafe to rely completely upon this expression.” (van Unnik 761)
   4. c. 180: Irenaeus’ *Against Heresies* (c. 180)
      1. There are “some general quotations . . .” (van Unnik 761)
      2. Irenaeus (*Adv*. *Haer*. 4.9.2): “Peter says in his epistle” (followed by 1 Pet 1:18). (van Unnik 761)
      3. See also 4.16.5; 5.7.2.
      4. “Irenaeus lived in Gaul, but he had been born in Asia Minor. There he had known men like Polycarp.” (van Unnik 761)
   5. c. 211: Tertullian (c. 160-c. 225)
      1. Tertullian (*Scorpiace* 12, c. 211): “Peter said to the Pontians” followed by 1 Pet 2:20-21). (van Unnik 761)
   6. pre-215: Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-c. 215)
      1. *Misc*. 4.7.46 cites as a word of Peter 1 Pet 3:14ff. (van Unnik 761)
      2. “This is only one out of a great number of citations.” (van Unnik 761)
      3. “Clement also commented on the letter in his outlines (*Adumbrations*).” (van Unnik 761)
   7. After Eusebius [*HE* 4.14.9] it was considered authentic until the 1800s. (Fitzmyer “First Epistle” 362)
   8. acceptance as canonical
      1. c. 200: 1 Peter is not in the Muratorian Canon. But “the omission may be due to the fragmentary state of this document.” (van Unnik 761)
      2. Origen (d. 253)
         1. Origen (exposition of John 5, quoted by Eusebius *Hist*. 6.25.8): “Peter . . . has left one acknowledged epistle, and, it may be, a second also; for it is doubted.” (Qtd. in van Unnik 761)
         2. “This remark shows that in Origen’s time our letter formed an undisputed part of the canon.” (van Unnik 761)
         3. 1 Peter continued to be accepted as canon “everywhere except for a while in the Syriac church, although it was at last accepted there also, in contrast with II Peter and other Catholic letters.” (van Unnik 761)
   9. conclusions
      1. “From this survey we may conclude that I Peter has good credentials.” (van Unnik 761)
      2. 100-150
         1. Polycarp (with Papias and the Asian presbyters supplementing) show that “ca. a.d. 125 I Peter was well known by leading churchmen in Asia Minor.” (van Unnik 761)
         2. “It makes its first appearance, as far as we can see, in Asia Minor, the area to which it had been sent.” (van Unnik 761)
         3. “It is used without citation of name in the first half of the second century; but the fact that the name is missing does not tell against the attribution of the letter to the apostle, in view of literary habits in antiquity.” (van Unnik 761)
      3. 150-200
         1. “By its author’s name it is first quoted” c. 160 (by Theodotion). (van Unnik 761)
         2. “. . . by 200 this letter was accepted as the work of the apostle Peter by the churches in various countries.” (van Unnik 761)
3. **other arguments**
   1. “. . . no proof in favor of [authenticity] can be derived from a comparison between this letter and the speeches of Peter in Acts (chs. 2-5; 10), since it is yet undecided how far these speeches in Acts reflect the ideas of the author of the Acts of the Apostles and how far they are expressions of a common stratum of early Christian teaching.” (van Unnik 764)
   2. “. . . other writings under the name of Peter show a quite different character.” (van Unnik 760)
   3. “. . . most important of all, no feasible explanation can be given why a forger of the second century should have invented . . . these out-of-the-way countries . . .” (van Unnik 760)
      1. “It is completely obscure why this writing was sent to certain remote areas which, so far as we know, did not play an important part in first-century Christianity. This fact pleads strongly in favor of the authenticity of this salutation, for no reason can be found for the invention of these “sojourners of the dispersion” in, e.g., Pontus and Cappadocia . . .” (van Unnik 763)

## Arguments Against Peter: Stylistic Arguments

1. **Pauline parallels**
   1. 1 Peter is full of Paulinisms; the letter is much more Pauline than the pastorals. (Fuller)
   2. “The phraseology and thought-patterns are strikingly reminiscent of Paul’s letters.” (Fitzmyer “First Epistle” 362)
2. **LXX use**
   1. 1 Peter uses the LXX (Septuagint); that is typical of a Diaspora Jew, not a Palestinian Jew. (Fuller)
   2. “The OT quotations, derived from the LXX, are scarcely what one would expect from a Palestinian such as Peter.” (Fitzmyer “First Epistle” 362)
3. **good Greek**
   1. 1 Peter contains some of the best Greek in the NT. That is unlikely for a Galilean fisherman. (Fuller)
   2. “The language and literary style are too good for a Galilean fisherman . . .” (Fitzmyer “First Epistle” 362)
   3. Eusebius says (*HE* 3.39.15) that Papias “recorded that Peter had to use Mark as an interpreter. How then could he write such excellent Greek?” (Fitzmyer “First Epistle” 362)
4. **genre**
   1. 1 Peter has only “the outward form of a letter . . .” (Fitzmyer “First” 363)
      1. Salutation and conclusion are those of “an ordinary ancient letter . . .” (van Unnik 759)
      2. It has “an opening formula, 1:1-2 . . .” (Fitzmyer “First” 363)
      3. It has a “farewell greeting, 5:12-14 . . .” (Fitzmyer “First” 363)
   2. It is an open letter “for public circulation,” like Senecas’. (van Unnik 759)
      1. The letter has no personal relations between writer and readers. (van Unnik 759)
      2. It “does not enter into questions raised by a particular community” (compare 1-2 Corinthians). (van Unnik 759)
      3. It does not “show close friendship with the recipients” (compare Philippians). (van Unnik 760)
      4. “It has more the general tone of an address.” (van Unnik 760)
      5. A comparison of Rom 13:1-7 and 1 Pet 2:13-17 “shows that Paul has a more personal touch and is less general . . .” (van Unnik 760)

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| Rom 13:1-7 | 1 Pet 2:13-17 |
| Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists authority resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Do you wish to have no fear of the authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive its approval; 4 for it is God’s servant for your good. But if you do what is wrong, you should be afraid, for the authority does not bear the sword in vain! It is the servant of God to execute wrath on the wrongdoer. 5 Therefore one must be subject, not only because of wrath but also because of conscience. 6 For the same reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are God’s servants, busy with this very thing. 7 Pay to all what is due them—taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due. | For the Lord’s sake accept the authority of every human institution, whether of the emperor as supreme, 14 or of governors, as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right. 15 For it is God’s will that by doing right you should silence the ignorance of the foolish. 16 As servants of God, live as free people, yet do not use your freedom as a pretext for evil. 17 Honor everyone. Love the family of believers. Fear God. Honor the emperor. |

1. **rebuttal of stylistic arguments**: **Silvanus**
   1. These stylistic characteristics might be explicable because of Silvanus. (Fuller)
   2. 1 Pet 5:12 mentions a Silvanus.
      1. 1 Pet 5:12, “Through Silvanus, whom I consider a faithful brother, I have written this short letter to encourage you and to testify that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it.”
      2. 1 Pet 5:12 (Fitzmyer’s translation), “I have written to you briefly through [the help of] Silvanus . . .” (Fitzmyer “First Epistle” 362)
   3. Paul had a companion named “Silvanus” (a.k.a. “Silas”).
      1. “Silas or Silvanus [was] in Aramaic probably *Še´īlā*, corresponding to the Hebrew name Saul . . .” (Reicke 69)
      2. Silvanus: the only occurrences are these:
         1. 2 Cor 1:19, “For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not “Yes and No”; but in him it is always “Yes.””
         2. 1 Thess 1:1, 2 Thess 1:1, “Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians . . .”
         3. 1 Pet 5:12, “Through Silvanus, whom I consider a faithful brother, I have written this short letter . . .”
      3. Silas: the only occurrences are 14 mentions in Acts 15-18. Here are the first and last:
         1. Acts 15:22, “Then the apostles and the elders, with the consent of the whole church, decided to choose men from among their members and to send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leaders among the brothers . . .”
         2. Acts 18:5, “When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with proclaiming the word . . .”
      4. what is known of Silvanus
         1. In ad 49 “He was chosen by the Jerusalem congregation . . . to inform the Antioch church of the settlement between the Jewish and the Gentile Christians (Acts 15:22).” (Reicke 69)
         2. “Later he was invited to accompany Paul to Asia Minor and Greece (15:39, etc.).” (Reicke 69)
         3. “He also served as co-author of Paul’s epistles to the Thessalonians . . .” (Reicke 70)
         4. “Obviously he knew Greek very well, and was in fact a Roman citizen (Acts 16:37).” (Reicke 70)
            1. Acts 16:37, “Paul replied, “They have beaten us [Paul and Silas, 16:25] in public, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens . . .””
   4. Probably Paul’s companion is meant in 1 Pet 5:12.
      1. “No other Silvanus is known in the early church.” (Reicke 70)
      2. Peter, leader of the Jerusalem congregation, knew Silvanus from the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:22). Hence “it is plausible to suppose that he later came into contact with Peter in Rome where the epistle was composed . . .” (Reicke 70)
   5. Does 5:12 mean that Silvanus was “Peter’s secretary, his collaborator, or, as many scholars believe, the author of the epistle?” (Reicke 69)
      1. amanuensis
         1. “It was not uncommon in antiquity for letters to be dictated.” (Reicke 69)
         2. “Scribes could write rapidly, and systems of shorthand were known.” (Reicke 69)
         3. “Paul normally used technical assistants to write out his epistles (1 Cor 16:21; 2 Thess 3:17), and once the scribe is mentioned by name (Rom 16:22).” (Reicke 69)
         4. “Such a dictated message was generally in the author’s own words. The fact that Peter did not write the epistle in question with his own hand does not of itself cast doubt on his authorship.” (Reicke 69)
      2. co-author
         1. “Paul sometimes wrote his epistles in collaboration with others. Among them was” Silvanus (1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1). (Reicke 69)
         2. What if “Silvanus was more than a technical stenographer? . . . can he be regarded as co-author of this epistle?” (Reicke 69)
         3. “The theological character and the language of First Peter confirm the assumption that Paul’s fellow-traveler Silvanus gave its content and form a personal stamp.” (Reicke 70)
         4. theological character
            1. 1 Peter “reminds us to an astonishing degree of Paul. Not only is the line of thought characteristic of Gentile Christianity, but a considerable number of phrases correspond to similar expressions in the Pauline epistles; long lists of parallels to the whole Pauline corpus can be produced. That the epistle is intimately related to the Pauline theology and message is inescapable.” (Reicke 70)
            2. “It is difficult, however, to picture Peter as such a thoroughgoing adherent of Pauline thinking. That would mean a complete abandonment of the Jewish-Christian position which, according to Gal 2:11-14, he held during a visit to Antioch sometime in the fifties. A shift from a Jewish-Christian position to a marked Gentile-Christian way of thinking is certainly possible. But would Peter have adjusted himself to Paul’s message and manner of writing so completely as to become an echo of his fellow apostle? This conclusion is not probable in view of what is otherwise known about the relationship of the two men (1 Cor 1:12, 3:22, 15:5; Gal 1:18, 2:1-14).” (Reicke 70)
            3. “It is more reasonable to attribute the striking Pauline characteristics of First Peter to a disciple of Paul, who like Silvanus may later have joined Peter.” (Reicke 70)
         5. language
            1. “First Peter is written in correct and rather elegant Greek without any striking Semitisms. Citations from the Old Testament are to a great extent in the Greek of the Septuagint.” (Reicke 70)
            2. “The unlettered Galilean fisherman Peter would hardly have been the master of this Greek style.” (Reicke 70)
            3. “It is simpler to assume that he had a collaborator steeped in Greek culture, like the Hellenistic Silas-Silvanus, to frame the phrasing of the letter.” (Reicke 70)
      3. Silvanus as sole author
         1. “Some scholars have gone to the other extreme and credited Silvanus with sole authorship of First Peter, holding that it was simply attributed to Peter for prestige.” (Reicke 71)
         2. But “Had there been no association with Peter, one would expect Silvanus to write either in his own name or in that of Paul, the apostle whose disciple he was.” (Reicke 71)
   6. If Silvanus was Peter’s secretary, “as is likely, . . ., then [the stylistic objections to authenticity] are easily answered.” (Fitzmyer “First Epistle” 362)
      1. “. . . the substance of the letter was dictated to him, and he was responsible for its wording and phraseology.” (Fitzmyer “First Epistle” 362)
      2. “Compare 1 Pt 5:10-11 with 1 Thes 5:23-28; 2 Thes 2:13-17.” (Fitzmyer “First Epistle” 362)
         1. 1 Pet 5:10-11, “And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has *called* you to his *eternal* *glory* in *Christ*, will himself restore, support, *strengthen*, and establish you. 11To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.”
         2. 1 Thess 5:23-28, “May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24The one who *calls* you is faithful, and he will do this. 25Beloved, pray for us. 26Greet all the brothers and sisters with a holy kiss. 27I solemnly command you by the Lord that this letter be read to all of them. 28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.”
         3. 2 Thes 2:13-17, “But we must always give thanks to God for you, brothers and sisters beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the first fruits for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and through belief in the truth. 14For this purpose he *called* you through our proclamation of the good news, so that you may obtain the *glory* of our Lord Jesus *Christ*. 15So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by our letter. 16Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and through grace gave us *eternal* comfort and good hope, 17comfort your hearts and *strengthen* them in every good work and word.”
   7. addendum: John Mark
      1. 1 Pet 5:13, “Your sister church in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings; and so does my son Mark.”
      2. The Mark in 1 Pet 5:13 “cannot be other than the evangelist.” (van Unnik 763)
      3. Papias (c. 125; Eusebius *Hist*. 3.39.15) said “that Mark . . . functioned as the “interpreter of Peter”—an activity which was important for the propagation of the gospel, since Peter as a Galilean fisherman would not have been well versed in Greek. This fact also strengthens the case for Peter as the author.” (van Unnik 763)

## Arguments Against Peter: Content Arguments

1. **late citation**
   1. 1 Peter is not quoted until c. 135 (Polycarp of Smyrna, *Ep*. *ad Phil*. 1.3; 2.1; 5.3; etc.). (Fitzmyer “First Epistle” 362)
2. **persecution**
   1. official persecution: “The letter’s emphasis on persecution and suffering demands a later matrix (after the death of Peter, and probably during the persecution by Domitian).” (Fitzmyer “First Epistle” 362)
   2. But see below, under “Date.”

## Conclusions

1. **arguments against Peter**: **conclusions**
   1. “Because of these and similar arguments the letter has been held to be a *pseudepigraphon* (a work published under the name of some revered personage of the past . . .).” (Fitzmyer “First Epistle” 362)
   2. Pseudepigraphy is “a feature not incompatible with inspiration, as can be seen from Dn, Jas, Jude, and 2 Pt.” (Fitzmyer “First Epistle” 362)
   3. “The ascription of a general character to the letter has led some critics to the excision of the opening and closing sections as having been added in a later period to connect this work with the name of Peter.” (van Unnik 760)
      1. But to excise the salutation and conclusion “is entirely arbitrary; it is unwarranted by MS evidence . . .” (van Unnik 760)
2. **conclusions**
   1. “. . . none of the reasons against Petrine authorship has been really convincing . . .” (Fitzmyer “First Epistle” 362)
   2. “Provided that the epistle was composed before the death of Peter (as indicated by 1:1), it is natural to believe that it was written with the knowledge and consent, or even at the direct request of the great apostle.” (Reicke 71)

# Date

## An Early Date

1. **introduction**
   1. 1 Peter lacks “a direct indication about its date . . .” (van Unnik 762)
   2. “Not even the way to a relative chronology through references in contemporary writings is open.” (van Unnik 762)
   3. “One must depend here on inward criteria . . .” (van Unnik 762)
   4. The principal internal criterion is the nature of the persecutions. But first we consider other arguments.
2. **pre**-**ad 64**
   1. “If the epistle were not written before Peter’s death, then it would have been unwise of Silvanus so directly, and without qualification, to admonish the recipients in the name of an apostle whose death must already have been a well-known fact.” (Reicke 71)
   2. “It is true that other epistles may have been published after the death of their alleged originators, as seems to be the case with James and Second Peter. But here the assumption of pseudonymity would imply that the reference to Silvanus was also fictive, and this is not likely.” (Reicke 71)
   3. Reicke and Fitzmyer accept pre-64.
      1. Reicke dates 1 Peter before Peter’s death (c. ad 64). (Reicke 71)
      2. “Admitting the Petrine authorship of 1 Pt in this broad sense [Silvanus actually wrote it], we assign the letter to *ca*. ad 64, before Peter’s death in Rome during Nero’s persecution of that year (see Eusebius, *HE* 2.25, 5).” (Fitzmyer “First Epistle” 362)

## Persecution

1. **official persecution**?
   1. Persecution seems widespread.
      1. 1 Pet 1:6-7, “In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, 7so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.”
      2. 1 Pet 2:12, “they malign you as evildoers . . .”
      3. 1 Pet 2:19-21, “For it is a credit to you if, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly. 20If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God’s approval. 21For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps.”
      4. 1 Pet 3:9, “Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called—that you might inherit a blessing.”
      5. 1 Pet 3:14-18, “But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, 15but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; 16yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. 17For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil. 18For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit . . .”
      6. 1 Pet 4:4, “They are surprised that you no longer join them in the same excesses of dissipation, and so they blaspheme.”
      7. 1 Pet 4:12-19, “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. 13But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ’s sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. 14If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you. 15But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even as a mischief maker. 16Yet if any of you suffers as a Christian, do not consider it a disgrace, but glorify God because you bear this name. 17For the time has come for judgment to begin with the household of God . . . 19Therefore, let those suffering in accordance with God's will entrust themselves to a faithful Creator . . .”
      8. 1 Pet 5:9, “Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering.”
      9. The most important of these texts are 3:14-18, 4:4, 12-16, and 5:9.
   2. Persecution seems severe. (Fuller)
      1. Persecution “is not the consequence of their social status, as in the case of the slaves or the wives (2:18; 3:1 ff), but applies to all.” (van Unnik 762)
      2. “It is not confined to the readers alone, but is shared by all Christians (5:9).” (van Unnik 762)
      3. “The hardship of this ordeal is compared to fire . . .” (van Unnik 762)
      4. it is a refining fire, a sharing in the sufferings of Christ; this comparison sufficiently reveals its heavy character.” (van Unnik 762)
      5. “Since it seems in 4:16 that to bear the name of Christian is itself a crime, as it was in the second century according to the apologists, it has often been thought that [these were] official persecutions by the state authorities . . .” (van Unnik 762)
         1. But 4:15, which refers to crimes, contrasts with 4:16.
         2. 1 Pet 4:15-16, “let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even as a mischief maker. 16Yet if any of you suffers as a Christian, do not consider it a disgrace, but glorify God because you bear this name.”
   3. Persecution seems current.
      1. 4:12-19 and 5:9 refer “to current persecutions . . .” (Reicke 71)
2. **unofficial persecution**
   1. 1 Peter “counsels obedience to civil authorities, even to the emperor (2:13-17).” (Fitzmyer “First Epistle” 363)
      1. 1 Pet 2:13-17, “For the Lord’s sake accept the authority of every human institution, whether of the emperor as supreme, 14or of governors, as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right. . . . 17Honor everyone. Love the family of believers. Fear God. Honor the emperor.”
      2. In 2:13-17 “a very positive relation with the state authorities is implied which is important even if it is part of catechetical instruction; the emperor and the governors are not decried, as in Revelation, and it is supposed that they will praise the Christians as good citizens, since they do good.” (van Unnik 762) 1 Pet 2:14, “governors . . . praise those who do right.”
   2. 1 Pet 5:9, “your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering . . .”
      1. But “all the persecutions before the [200s] were more or less local . . .” (van Unnik 762)
   3. The persecution seems to be “from pagan neighbors who revile and abuse them for the “name of Christ” (4:14).” (Fitzmyer “First Epistle” 363)
      1. There are “recurring references to slander and reviling.” (van Unnik 762)
         1. “The Christians are looked upon as evildoers (2:12) . . .” (van Unnik 762)
         2. “. . . they suffer unjustly (2:20) . . .” (van Unnik 762)
         3. “. . . their good behavior is reviled (3:16-17).” (van Unnik 762)
         4. “The readers are admonished not to “return evil for evil or reviling for reviling” (3:9) . . .” (van Unnik 762)
         5. They should “follow the example of their Master (2:21; 3:18).” (van Unnik 762)
         6. “. . . if one suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed” [4:16].” (van Unnik 762)
      2. “All this amounts to sufferings because of the new life they lead in Christ . . . Because the Christians do not join their pagan fellow men in wild profligacy (4:4), they have become outcasts.” (van Unnik 762)
      3. “. . . the difficult situation of the Christians [was not] brought about by state measures; it had more the character of a pogrom, which can be nerve-racking and hardly less difficult than open, official persecution. Most certainly it was a fierce trial of the faith.” (van Unnik 762)
      4. “The sufferings all belong to the personal sphere; they are the results of evil feelings and hatred against people who do not follow the general line—i.e., a nonconforming minority who have become the victims of suspicion and slander.” (van Unnik 762)
      5. “The epistle does not speak about the extermination of the Christians by imperial decree, but only about slanderous accusations made by heathen leaders, and some routine police investigations by the authorities, 2:12, 3:16, 4:14-15. Such commonplace matters may easily have occurred during Nero’s time without attracting the attention of historians.” (Reicke 72)
   4. “. . . sacrifices to the emperor are not mentioned in First Peter as a problem confronting the Christians. If the epistle had been written during Domitian’s persecution, that well-known, grave issue could not have been passed over (cf. Mart. *Epigr*. 13:4; Plin. Min. *Ep*. 10: 96:5). That this is not the case speaks for an early date of the epistle. Furthermore, as the Pauline character and the use of Peter’s name are most naturally explained by dating First Peter in the time of Nero, the conclusion is that the epistle was probably written shortly before Peter’s death around a.d. 64.” (Reicke 72)
   5. conclusion
      1. “No state persecution in any period is reflected in the letter.” (van Unnik 762)
3. **persecution and date**
   1. if the persecution is official
      1. The three earliest persecutions of Christians were
         1. under Nero (64-68, in Rome only)
         2. under Domitian (c. 9-96, in Asia Minor only)
         3. under Trajan (c. 112, in Asia Minor)
      2. Perhaps 1 Peter was written c. ad 64.
         1. “. . . if the writer was Peter, it may be the persecution under Nero (64) . . .” (van Unnik 762)
            1. But the principal criterion for authorship is the nature of the persecution. To establish Peter as author from the persecution, then establish the persecution from Peter as author, is circular reasoning.
         2. “. . . no persecution of Christians [71] in Asia is mentioned in any secular documents from the time of Nero.” (Reicke 71-72)
         3. “. . . such persecutions did not occur in the sixties. Nero attacked the Christians in connection with the burning of Rome, but this was a local manifestation.” (Reicke 71)
      3. Perhaps 1 Peter was written c. ad 95.
         1. If “Petrine authorship is unlikely on other grounds, it could be [the persecution] under Domitian (95) . . .” (van Unnik 762)
         2. “. . . no official persecution of the Christians in Asia Minor, where the recipients of this epistle reside, is attested in historical documents until about a.d. 95, toward the end of Domitian’s reign.” (Reicke 71)
         3. If the persecution was official, then the first persecution in Asia Minor was under Domitian, c. ad 90-96. (Fuller)
      4. Perhaps 1 Peter was written c. ad 110.
         1. c. 110: many favor this date, since parallels can be detected “between I Peter and the famous letter of Pliny, the governor of Bithynia under Trajan [1 Pet 1:1 mentions Bithynia], about the prosecutions of Christians in that district [Pliny 10.96-97, c. 110] . . .” (van Unnik 762)
         2. Pliny the Younger, “in his letters to the Emperor Trajan (Nos. 96 and 97), describes certain measures taken against the Christians in Bithynia . . .” (Reicke 71)
            1. His measures “are reminiscent of the description in First Peter . . .” (Reicke 71)
            2. His measures were in Bithynia, a provinces in 1 Pet 1:1. (Reicke 71)
   2. If the persecution is unofficial, the date *could* be pre-64.
      1. “. . . once we rule out the possibility of identifying these sufferings with some particular persecution, we are left with no direct indication as to the date. The situation reflected in the letter could have happened at any time in the first or second century wherever a Christian group was found.” (van Unnik 762)
      2. If the persecution was unofficial, then persecution cannot help us in dating, and we are left without a date. (Fuller)

# Provenance

## Rome

1. “**Babylon**”
   1. 1 Pet 5:13, “Your sister church in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings; and so does my son Mark.”
   2. “Practically all commentators regard the word [“Babylon”] as a sobriquet for Rome . . .” (See Babylon [NT].) (van Unnik 764)
      1. Rev 14:8a, “Then another angel, a second, followed, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!””
      2. Rev 16:19b, “God remembered great Babylon, giving it the cup filled with the wine of his fury and wrath.”
      3. Rev 17:5, “on her forehead was written a name, a mystery: “Babylon the great, mother of whores and of earth’s abominations.”” (See also 17:1-6.)
      4. Rev 18:2, “He called out with a mighty voice, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! It has become a dwelling place of demons . . .””
      5. Rev 18:10, “they will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say, “Alas, alas, the great city, Babylon, the mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.””
      6. Rev 18:21, “Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, “With such violence Babylon the great city will be thrown down, and will be found no more . . .””
      7. See also *2 Esdras* 3:1-6; *Sibylline Oracles* 5.143, 152; *Apocalypse of Baruch* 9.1.
2. **Peter is associated with Rome**.
   1. Peter is associated with Rome in *1 Clement* 5 (c. ad 96) and often thereafter.
      1. “The earliest reference to Peter’s death (outside the New Testament, see John 21) is *1 Clement* (a.k.a. *Letter to the Corinthians*), written c. 96. In it Clement, bishop of Rome, says (chapter 5), “Let us take the noble examples of our own generation. Through jealousy and envy the greatest and most just pillars of the Church were persecuted, and came even unto death . . . Peter, through unjust envy, endured not one or two but many labours, and at last, having delivered his testimony, departed unto the place of glory due to him.” (“Saint Peter’s Tomb” *Wikipedia* 2012-09-23)
      2. “Eusebius [*Hist*. *Eccl*.] wrote that Peter “came to Rome, and was crucified with his head downwards,” though he attributes this information to . . . Origen, who died c. 254.” (“Saint Peter’s Tomb” *Wikipedia* 2012-09-23)
   2. Thus, the author of 1 Peter probably supposed that Peter was the founder of the Roman church. (Fuller 156)
   3. “. . . the only name of a dwelling place of Peter known to tradition was Rome . . .” (van Unnik 764)
3. **not Rome**
   1. “Babylon” as Rome is typical of apocalyptic literature. But “elsewhere the writer never uses the cryptic language of apocalyptic writers . . .” (van Unnik 764)
   2. “Babylon” as Rome “is closely linked with the hypothesis of state persecution . . .” (van Unnik 764)

## Babylon?

1. **arguments for Babylon**
   1. “. . . the list of countries in 1:1 runs from E to W,” the perspective of a resident of Babylon. (van Unnik 764)
   2. “. . . our ignorance about Peter’s travels makes it impossible bluntly to declare that a residence in Babylon . . . is excluded.” (van Unnik 764)
   3. Babylon had “large Jewish communities (and Peter was the apostle to the circumcised . . .)” (van Unnik 764)
      1. Gal 2:9, “James and Cephas and John . . . gave to Barnabas and me the right hand of fellowship, agreeing that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.”
2. **argument against Babylon**
   1. But “in the Eastern church nothing is said about a connection between Peter and Babylon (names of other missionaries are mentioned).” (van Unnik 764)

# Addressees

## 1 Pet 1:1

1. **text**
   1. 1 Pet 1:1, “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia . . .”
2. “**exiles**”
   1. 1 Pet 1:17, “If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile.”
   2. 1 Pet 2:11, “Beloved, I urge you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul.”
   3. “The ERV-ASV reads for “exiles” the word “sojourners,” which seems to be preferable, although it must be conceded that the exact meaning of the Greek term is difficult to determine.” (van Unnik 761)
3. “**dispersion**”
   1. In James 1:1 “dispersion” means Christians everywhere. (Fuller)
      1. James 1:1, “James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greetings.”
   2. But 1 Peter’s salutation does not address Christians “in general . . .” (van Unnik 761)
      1. Of course the writer is aware “of the “world-wide” movement . . .” (van Unnik 761)
         1. 1 Pet 5:9, “your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering.”
      2. But he addresses Christians “in a clearly marked part of the world.” (van Unnik 761)
         1. 1 Pet 4:16, “if any of you suffers as a Christian, do not consider it a disgrace . . .”
4. **places**
   1. The places in 1:1 are Roman provinces “in the northern and eastern part of Asia Minor.” (Fitzmyer “First Epistle” 362)
   2. The districts are listed in a “strange order, running from NE through the middle to the W and the NW.” (van Unnik 761)
   3. “It is remarkable that the letter is not dispatched to particular churches in this area.” (van Unnik 761)

## Addressees: Jews?

1. “**dispersion**”
   1. “The word dispersion is well known from Jewish history. It was applied to those Jews who lived outside the Holy Land, among the Gentiles.” (van Unnik 761)
   2. “. . . “dispersion,” taken in its Jewish sense, has long been one of the main arguments for the opinion that the readers had been Jews by birth and were now converts to Christianity.” (van Unnik 761)
2. **inscriptions and texts**
   1. “From inscriptions and literary sources the existence of Jewish communities in these districts is proved.” (van Unnik 761)
3. **OT use**
   1. “Another argument for this view is the extensive use made by the author of the OT, in both direct quotations and allusions . . .” (van Unnik 761) Examples:
   2. 1 Pet 2:9, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”
      1. “. . . “a chosen race” (cf Isaiah 43:20-21) indicates their divine election (Eph 1:4-6) . . .” (nab note on 1 Pet 2:9)
      2. “. . . “a royal priesthood” (cf Exodus 19:6) to serve and worship God in Christ, thus continuing the priestly functions of his life, passion, and resurrection . . .” (nab note on 1 Pet 2:9)
      3. “. . . “a holy nation” (Exodus 19:6) reserved for God, a people he claims for his own (cf Malachi 3:17) in virtue of their baptism into his death and resurrection.” (nab note on 1 Pet 2:9)
      4. “This transcends all natural and national divisions and unites the people into one community . . .” (nab note on 1 Pet 2:9)
   3. 1 Pet 2:10, “Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”
      1. “From being “no people” deprived of all mercy, they have become the very people of God, the chosen recipients of his mercy (cf Hosea 1:9; 2:23).” (nab note on 1 Pet 2:9)

## Addressees: Gentiles?

1. “**dispersion**”
   1. “Dispersion” was “one of the many Jewish words taken over by the early Christians . . .” (van Unnik 761)
   2. It was used “to describe the situation of the new people of God spread in all the world while their homeland was in heaven . . .” (van Unnik 761) E.g.:
      1. James 1:1, “James . . ., To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion . . .”
      2. Phil 3:20a, “But our citizenship is in heaven . . .”
      3. Heb 13:14, “For here we have no lasting city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.”
   3. “This impression is strengthened by the words of 1:17; 2:11, where the readers are spoken of as living in the situation of aliens.” (van Unnik 761)
      1. 1 Pet 1:17b, “live in reverent fear during the time of your exile.”
      2. 1 Pet 2:11, “I urge you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the desires of the flesh . . .”
   4. “The “Diaspora” does not refer to the dispersion of the Jews [as in LXX, Philo, John 7:35] but figuratively denotes Gentile Christians who, as the new “people of God” (2:10), are [362] scattered like strangers in this world, but whose real home is not here.” (Fitzmyer “First Epistle” 362-63)
   5. “The difficulty of this explanation is that “dispersion” is never used for the Christian church in early Christian literature (Jas. 1:1 is an extremely dark text). It is not very feasible to suggest that it was borrowed from the OT, because there it was always linked with the wrath of God against his disobedient people (which would be in flat contradiction with 1:14: “obedient children”).” (van Unnik 761)
2. **texts indicating the recipients were Gentiles**
   * 1. 1 Pet 1:1, “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia . . .”
     2. 1 Pet 1:14, “Like obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires that you formerly had in ignorance.”
        1. “Ignorance” in reference to paganism: Acts 17:30; Eph 4:18; 1 Pet 1:14. Also:
        2. 1 Pet 2:15, “accept the authority of every human institution, whether of the emperor as supreme, 14or of governors, . . . 15For it is God’s will that by doing right you should silence the ignorance of the foolish.”
        3. Esp. Wis 14:22, people “bestowed on objects of stone or wood the name that ought not to be shared. 22Then it was not enough for them to err about the knowledge of God, but though living in great strife due to ignorance, they call such great evils peace.”
     3. 1 Pet 1:18a, “You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors . . .”
        1. “. . . “futile” is a favorite word in the OT for “idols” . . .” (van Unnik 761)
     4. 1 Pet 2:9-10a, “Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people . . .”
     5. 1 Pet 2:12, “Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge.”
     6. 1 Pet 4:3-4, “You have already spent enough time in doing what the Gentiles like to do, living in licentiousness, passions, drunkenness, revels, carousing, and lawless idolatry. 4They are surprised that you no longer join them in the same excesses of dissipation, and so they blaspheme.”
        1. This verse is “especially . . . conclusive.” (van Unnik 761)
3. **conclusion**
   1. The “long-standing opinion” that the recipients were Jewish converts “has been definitely abandoned since the beginning of the twentieth century.” (van Unnik 761)
   2. “All students have reached an agreement that the people addressed had come into the church from paganism.” (van Unnik 761)

## Recipients’ Christianity

1. **recipients**’ **conversion**
   1. “These former pagans have given up their previous way of life and turned to the “living God.”” (van Unnik 761)
   2. “This change was experienced as the consequence of God’s election and mercy (1:2-3; 2:10).” (van Unnik 761)
   3. “It was a redemption by the blood of Christ (1:18-19).” (van Unnik 761)
   4. “This conversion came about by the preaching of the word of God, announced by the OT prophets and “by those who preached the good news to you” (1:12)—the word which, according to Isa. 40:9, abides forever (1:25), and by which they are regenerated.” (van Unnik 761)
   5. “They were “no people, but now [they] are God’s people” (2:10).” (van Unnik 761)
   6. 1 Pet 2:25 is said to slaves but applies to all. (van Unnik 762)
      1. 1 Pet 2:25, “For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.”
   7. “. . . Christ died to “bring us to God” (3:18) . . .” (van Unnik 762)
   8. “. . . just as Noah was saved through water, they have been saved by baptism (3:21).” (van Unnik 762)
   9. “They belong to a world-wide brotherhood (5:9) which is bound together by mutual love (1:22).” (van Unnik 762)
   10. “This religious change meant a break with their own past (1:18) and with the habits of their environment (4:4). Therefore, they have become “aliens” in this world (2:11). Their present condition is not very happy, because they are slandered and abused.” (van Unnik 762)
   11. Yet “A deep tone of joy rings through this whole letter from beginning to end (cf. 1:3; 5:10).” (van Unnik 762)
2. **recipients**’ **evangelists**
   1. “Nowhere are we told who was the first preacher of the gospel among them. The author himself does not seem to have any such special claim in this respect, as Paul asserted in Corinth (I Cor. 4:15).” (van Unnik 762)
      1. 1 Pet 1:12, “those who brought you good news . . .”
      2. 1 Cor 4:15, “I became your father through the gospel.”
   2. “Their conversion came as the gift of God, the writer wishes to stress, and not as a deed of men.” (van Unnik 762)

# Genre

## Treatise?

1. “**It is not a theological or ethical treatise** . . .” (van Unnik 760)
   1. “. . . its salutation is not that of a “catholic letter” to be read by Christians anywhere in the world.” (van Unnik 760)
   2. “. . . the letter was conceived with particular persons in view . . . and deals with a very specific situation.” (van Unnik 760)

## Smaller Literary Forms

1. **first part** (1:3-4:11)
   1. “R. Bultmann regards 2:21-24 as a hymn and 3:18-19, 22 as a credal confession.” (Fitzmyer “First” 363)
      1. 1 Pet 2:21-24, “For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps. 22“He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.” 23When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. 24He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.”
      2. 1 Pet 3:18b-22, “He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, 19in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison [τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν], 20who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah . . . 22[Christ] has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.”
   2. “Similarly, M.-E. Boismard claims to have isolated four baptismal hymns in the letter (1:3-5; 3:18-22; 2:22-25; 5:5-9).” (Fitzmyer “First” 363)
      1. 1 Pet 1:3-5, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”
      2. 1 Pet 3:18b-22, “He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, 19in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison [τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν], 20who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. 21And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.”
      3. 1 Pet 2:22-25, ““He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.” 23When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. 24He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. 25For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.”
      4. 1 Pet 5:5-9, “In the same way, you who are younger must accept the authority of the elders. And all of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” 6Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. 7Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. 8Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. 9Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering.”
2. **Fitzmyer**’**s conclusion**
   1. “It is impossible to determine whether the first part is made up of small units originally composed for another situation.” (Fitzmyer “First” 363)

# Outline of 1 Peter

1:1-2 salutation

1:3-2:10 baptism

1:3-12 rejoice

1:3-9 rejoice in new birth and salvation

1:10-12 prophets foretold salvation

1:13-2:10 be holy

1:13-17 holy conduct

1:18-21 crucifixion, resurrection, ascension

1:22-2:3 new birth

2:4-8 Christ, foundation stone and stumbling stone

2:9-10 God’s people

2:11-4:11 be examples for pagans

2:18-3:8 Haustafel (21-25: Christ, example of innocent suffering)

3:9-17 be examples for pagans

3:18-22 crucifixion, descent into hell, baptism, resurrection, ascension

4:1-9 discipline yourselves

4:10-11c charisms

4:11d doxology

4:12-19 sharing Christ’s sufferings

5:1-6 elders and youngers

5:7-11 be steadfast

5:12-14 Silvanus, purpose, greetings, benediction

# Major Topics

## Exhortation

1. **purpose of 1 Peter**
   1. 1 Pet 5:12: exhort and testify
      1. In 5:12 the author says his intention is “to exhort” and “to testify.” “These two words are a fair description of the contents . . .” (van Unnik 758)
         1. 1 Pet 5:12, “I have written this short letter
         2. to encourage [παρακαλῶν, “beseech, urge, exhort, comfort”] you and
         3. to testify [ἐπιμαρτυρῶν, “bear witness, testify”]
         4. that this is the true grace of God.”
      2. 1 Peter’s purpose is “to give them comfort and exhortation (both are implied in the Greek word παρακαλέω) amid imminent dangers, and to testify to the greatness of their faith triumphing over all hardships (see 5:12).” (van Unnik 760)
   2. baptism and behavior
      1. “The principal topic of the letter is a discussion of the nature of the Christian life, begun in baptism as an experience of regeneration.” (Fitzmyer “First Epistle” 363)
      2. From “the nature of the Christian life, begun in baptism . . ., Peter draws his conclusions about the way the Christian is to conduct himself among pagan neighbors in the face of persecution.” (Fitzmyer “First Epistle” 363)
   3. “The writer, reminding his readers of the greatness of their new life in Christ, wants also to incite them to firmness in their faith and to behavior in agreement with their Christian calling. Surrounded by suspicion, their lives must be a witness of their religion.” (van Unnik 762)
2. **Faith and morals are intertwoven**.
   1. “. . . the sequence of the different parts of the letter is not always clear.” (van Unnik 758)
   2. “. . . dogmatics and ethics, Christian faith and behavior, are interwoven into an indissoluble unity. [758] . . . It is impossible to distinguish as clearly as one can in many of Paul’s letters between doctrinal and ethical sections.” (van Unnik 758-59)
   3. “Its main thoughts are very distinct and are repeated with various modifications . . .” (van Unnik 758)

## Baptism

1. **texts**
   1. 1 Pet 1:3, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead . . .”
   2. 1 Pet 1:18, “You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, 19but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish.”
   3. 1 Pet 1:22-23, “Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart. 23You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.”
   4. 1 Pet 2:2, “Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation . . .”
   5. 1 Pet 2:10, “Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”
   6. 1 Pet 2:21, “For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps.”
   7. 1 Pet 3:21, “And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ . . .”
2. **comments**
   1. The baptismal references show “the crystallization of the liturgy . . . as one of the institutions through which the apostolic tradition was perpetuated after the death of the apostles.” (Fuller 159)
   2. “Baptism is not viewed merely as a rite of initiation into the Christian community but as a source communicating to the believer the life-giving power of the glorified Christ.” (Fitzmyer “First Epistle” 363)
   3. “In baptism the Christian is regenerated to a new life through the very resurrection of Jesus.” (Fitzmyer “First Epistle” 363)
   4. “But the corporate aspects of that regeneration are also emphasized, for by it one becomes part of God’s people, a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation.” (Fitzmyer “First Epistle” 363)
3. **baptismal homily**
   1. history
      1. “. . . it has been thought to be a sermon or homily since the time of A. von Harnack.” (Fitzmyer “First” 363)
      2. “In 1911 the German scholar Perdelwitz . . . distinguished two parts: (a) 1:3-4:11; (b) 1:1-2; 4:12-5:14 . . .” (van Unnik 760)
   2. pro
      1. “. . . there is a clear break between 4:11 and 4:12 . . .” (van Unnik 760)
         1. 4:11 has a doxology and “Amen.” 4:12 has a new address (“Beloved”).
         2. 1 Pet 4:11, “whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.”
         3. 1 Pet 4:12, “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you . . .”
      2. “. . . there is a certain amount of repetition before and after the break . . .” (van Unnik 760)
      3. persecutions before and after the break
         1. Persecutions in 1:6; 3:13-17 “are only a possibility.” (van Unnik 760)
            1. 1 Pet 1:6, “In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to [nab: “you may have to”] suffer various trials . . .”
            2. 1 Pet 3:13-17, “Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? 14But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, 15but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; 16yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. 17For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God’s will, than to suffer for doing evil.”
         2. Persecutions in 4:12 are “actual facts . . .” (van Unnik 760)
            1. 1 Pet 4:12, “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you . . .”
      4. forms of the two parts
         1. 1:3-4:11 are “a homily to newly baptized persons.” (van Unnik 760)
            1. It is said that “the thought “regeneration” that occurs here (1:3, 23; 2:1) [is] an allusion to baptism [Titus 3:5].” (van Unnik 760)
            2. “A number of texts have been adduced either from the NT or from other early Christian literature in which ideas similar to those in I Peter are found in the setting of baptism.” (van Unnik 760)
            3. “. . . the allusions to baptism in the first part (1:3-4:11) are so numerous that this section should be regarded as a baptismal exhortation incorporated into the letter.” (Fitzmyer “First” 363)
         2. 1:1-2; 4:12-5:14 are “a letter to comfort Christians in time of persecution . . .” (van Unnik 760)
            1. “The rest (4:12-5:11) contains epistolary advice to the Christians who are now under the stress of persecution.” (Fitzmyer “First” 363)
   3. against
      1. *as for division*: “The division of the letter into two parts is unnecessary.” (van Unnik 760)
      2. *as for repetition*: “A certain amount of repetition belongs to the style of the writer and can also be found in part 1. He is always moving in the same circle of ideas, but making different applications.” (van Unnik 760)
      3. *as for* “*regeneration*”
         1. “Not the mere moment of baptism, but the whole process of the transition from paganism to life in Christ with all its implications, stands before the writer’s mind.” (van Unnik 760)
         2. “. . . in I Peter the new birth is connected with the resurrection of Christ (cf. also 3:21) and the word of God in the preached gospel (1:23-25; cf. vs. 12).” (van Unnik 760)
4. **baptismal liturgy**
   1. “This idea that the first half of the letter in reality was no letter but a baptismal sermon, following the pattern of a baptismal liturgy, has become influential through commentaries of Windisch-Preisker and F. Beare and the studies of F.L. Cross and Boismard.” (van Unnik 760)
   2. F.L. Cross says “that 1:3-4:11 represents various prayers and homilies—the celebrant’s part—of a Roman baptismal liturgy celebrated at Easter. He interprets the emphasis in 1 Pt on *paschō* (suffer) and *pathēma* (suffering) not as references to persecution but as allusions to the celebration of the Christian Passover (*pascha*).” (Fitzmyer “First” 363)
      1. “He divides the first part of 1 Pt thus . . .” (Fitzmyer “First” 363)
         1. “the bishop’s solemn opening prayer (1:3-12)”
         2. “formal charge to the candidates (1:13-21), followed by actual baptism”
         3. “the bishop’s welcome of the newly baptized (1:22-25)”
         4. “the bishop’s instruction on the fundamentals of sacramental life (2:1-10)”
         5. “the bishop’s address to the newly baptized about the duties of Christian discipleship (2:11-4:11)”
      2. “Finally, he admits with H. Preisker that 4:12-5:11 represents an address to the whole congregation present at the baptismal liturgy.” (Fitzmyer “First” 363)
   3. con
      1. “It is hard to see where baptism would have taken place within the structure of this letter . . .” (van Unnik 760)
      2. “. . . the distribution of the various sections according to a supposed liturgy appears forced. Some “parallels” turn out on closer inspection to be merely superficial. Such parallelism as there is cannot be pressed further than to testify of a common Christian vocabulary connected with the conversion from paganism to Christianity, of which baptism was the visible sign.” (van Unnik 760)
      3. “After a detailed examination of the arguments this view was rejected by C.F.D. Moule, on good grounds.” (van Unnik 760)
      4. “Cross’s suggestions, though attractive and ingenious, have met with strong criticism. To claim that we actually have the shape of a Roman baptismal liturgy in 1 Pt is certainly going too far.” (Fitzmyer “First” 363)
   4. conclusions
      1. van Unnik
         1. “There is, then, no reason to take this letter as other than an ordinary letter written to newly converted Christians in certain parts of the ancient world . . .” (van Unnik 760)
      2. Fitzmyer
         1. The letter is a baptismal homily + an ordinary letter. It is not a baptismal liturgy.
         2. “It seems better, then, to regard 1 Pt as a real letter . . .” (Fitzmyer “First” 363)
         3. Into it “a baptismal exhortation had been incorporated (1:3-4:11), or at least materials that often were used in such an exhortation.” (Fitzmyer “First” 363)
         4. “The second part (4:12-5:11) represents the letter proper and is truly epistolary in form and content.” (Fitzmyer “First” 363)
         5. “In this analysis we are substantially in agreement with F.W. Beare” (*The First Epistle*). (Fitzmyer “First” 363)

## Haustafel

1. **literary form**
   1. The Haustafel was “a current catechetical pattern . . .” (van Unnik 760)
2. **texts**
   1. 1 Pet 2:18-3:8, “Slaves, accept the authority of your masters with all deference, not only those who are kind and gentle but also those who are harsh. 19 For it is a credit to you if, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly. 20 If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God’s approval. 21 For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps. 22 “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.” 23 When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. 24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. 25 For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.
   2. 3:1 Wives, in the same way, accept the authority of your husbands, so that, even if some of them do not obey the word, they may be won over without a word by their wives’ conduct, 2 when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. 3 Do not adorn yourselves outwardly by braiding your hair, and by wearing gold ornaments or fine clothing; 4 rather, let your adornment be the inner self with the lasting beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in God’s sight. 5 It was in this way long ago that the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves by accepting the authority of their husbands. 6 Thus Sarah obeyed Abraham and called him lord. You have become her daughters as long as you do what is good and never let fears alarm you.
   3. 7 Husbands, in the same way, show consideration for your wives in your life together, paying honor to the woman as the weaker sex, since they too are also heirs of the gracious gift of life—so that nothing may hinder your prayers.
   4. 8 Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind.”
3. **comparison with other Haustafeln**
   1. Rom 13:1-7, “Let every person be subject to the **governing authorities**; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God. 2Therefore whoever resists authority resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. 3For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Do you wish to have no fear of the authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive its approval; 4for it is God’s servant for your good. But if you do what is wrong, you should be afraid, for the authority does not bear the sword in vain! It is the servant of God to execute wrath on the wrongdoer. 5Therefore one must be subject, not only because of wrath but also because of conscience. 6For the same reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are God’s servants, busy with this very thing. 7Pay to all what is due them—taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due.”
   2. Eph 5:21-6:9, “Be subject to **one another** out of reverence for Christ. 22**Wives**, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. 23For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Savior. 24Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands. 25**Husbands**, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, 27so as to present the church to himself in splendor, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind—yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish. 28In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, 30because we are members of his body. 31“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” 32This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church. 33 Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband. 6:1**Children**, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2“Honor your father and mother”—this is the first commandment with a promise: 3“so that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.” 4And, **fathers**, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. 5**Slaves**, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as you obey Christ; 6not only while being watched, and in order to please them, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. 7Render service with enthusiasm, as to the Lord and not to men and women, 8knowing that whatever good we do, we will receive the same again from the Lord, whether we are slaves or free. 9And, **masters**, do the same to them. Stop threatening them, for you know that both of you have the same Master in heaven, and with him there is no partiality.”
   3. Col 3:18-4:1, “**Wives**, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. **19Husbands**, love your wives and never treat them harshly. **20Children**, obey your parents in everything, for this is your acceptable duty in the Lord. **21Fathers**, do not provoke your children, or they may lose heart. **22Slaves**, obey your earthly masters in everything, not only while being watched and in order to please them, but wholeheartedly, fearing the Lord. 23Whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord and not for your masters, 24since you know that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; you serve the Lord Christ. 25For the wrongdoer will be paid back for whatever wrong has been done, and there is no partiality. 4:1**Masters**, treat your slaves justly and fairly, for you know that you also have a Master in heaven.”
   4. 1 Peter’s Haustafel has “divergences” from Ephesians’ and Colossians’. (van Unnik 760)
      1. “. . . certain items are left out . . .” (van Unnik 760)
         1. “. . . slaves are mentioned, but not masters . . .” (van Unnik 760)
         2. “. . . in the marriage section nothing is said about children.” (van Unnik 760)
      2. . . . certain additions are found . . .” (van Unnik 760)
         1. “the examples of Jesus and of Sarah” (van Unnik 760)
      3. “The common material has not been taken over automatically, but has been formulated as needs required . . .” (van Unnik 760)

# Descent into Hell

## References in 1 Peter

1. **1 Pet 3**:**18-22**
   1. 1 Pet 3:18b-22, “He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, 19 in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison [τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν], 20 who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah . . . 22 [Christ] has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.”
2. **1 Pet 4**:**6**
   1. 1 Pet 4:6, “they [pagans] will have to give an accounting to him who stands ready to judge the living and the dead. 6 For this is the reason the gospel was proclaimed even to the dead, so that, though they had been judged in the flesh as everyone is judged, they might live in the spirit as God does.”

## Abode of the Dead in Scripture

1. **Old Testament**
   1. “The Hebrews had two words for hell, Sheol and Gehenna, which the Septuagint translated respectively *Haidēs* and *Geenna*.” (Russell 120)
   2. Sheol
   3. Gehenna
2. **New Testament**
   1. “The New Testament makes no clear distinction between Hades and Gehenna . . .” (Russell 120)
3. **Church Fathers**
   1. Among Church Fathers “as a whole a vaguely drawn difference emerged . . .” (Russell 120)
      1. Gehenna
         1. “. . . Gehenna is a place of everlasting torment . . .” (Russell 120)
         2. “Those in Gehenna were vicious sinners who could not be saved, and they remained there after the Passion as they had done before.” (Russell 120)
      2. Hades
         1. “But Hades, under Greco-Roman influence, came to be conceived as a shadowy place of purgation . . .” (Russell 120)
         2. “. . . Hades somewhat resembles the Catholic purgatory.” (Russell 120)
   2. “The distinction [between Gehenna and Hades]—never firm—was further blurred by the translations of both terms by the Latin *inferus* [see English “infernal”] . . .” (Russell 120)
   3. The distinction between Gehenna and Hades was “blurred again in English by the use of the word “hell” . . .” (Russell 120)
      1. The KJV used “hell” for *Sheol*, *Gehenna*, and *Hades*. (Harper)
      2. Hel was the name of “Loki’s daughter, who rules over the evil dead in Niflheim, the lowest of all worlds (*nifl* “mist”) . . .” (Harper)

## Descent into Hell in Scripture

1. **Old Testament**
   1. A descent into hell by an Israelite does not occur in the OT.
   2. But see Isa 14.
      1. Isa 14:4, 9-20, “you will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon: How the oppressor has ceased! How his insolence has ceased! . . . 9 Sheol beneath is stirred up to meet you when you come; it rouses the shades to greet you, all who were leaders of the earth; it raises from their thrones all who were kings of the nations. 10 All of them will speak and say to you: “You too have become as weak as we! You have become like us!” 11 Your pomp is brought down to Sheol, and the sound of your harps; maggots are the bed beneath you, and worms are your covering. 12 How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! 13 You said in your heart, “I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit on the mount of assembly on the heights of Zaphon; 14 I will ascend to the tops of the clouds, I will make myself like the Most High.” 15 But you are brought down to Sheol, to the depths of the Pit. 16 Those who see you will stare at you, and ponder over you: “Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, 17 who made the world like a desert and overthrew its cities, who would not let his prisoners go home?” 18 All the kings of the nations lie in glory, each in his own tomb; 19 but you are cast out, away from your grave, like loathsome carrion, clothed with the dead, those pierced by the sword, who go down to the stones of the Pit, like a corpse trampled underfoot. 20 You will not be joined with them in burial, because you have destroyed your land, you have killed your people. May the descendants of evildoers nevermore be named!”
2. **New Testament**
   1. *descent*
      1. Christ’s descent into hell “was no more than . . . saying that He had passed to Sheol.” (Kelly 380)
      2. Affirmations that Jesus was “raised from the dead” “presuppose that [he] sojourned in the realm of the dead . . .” (*CCC* § 632) E.g.:
         1. Matt 12:39-40, “An evil and adulterous generation asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 40For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so for three days and three nights the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth [ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ τῆς γῆς].”
            1. “Heart of the earth” does not mean grave but underworld. (Ott 191)
         2. Rom 10:6-7, “Do not say in your heart, . . . 7‘Who will descend into the abyss?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).”
   2. *raised dead saints*
      1. “A number of vague NT texts indicate . . . that he took up from below dead saints . . .” (Brown *Introduction* 714)
      2. Matt 27:51-53, “At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. 52The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. 53After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many.”
      3. John 5:25, Jesus says, “the hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.”
      4. Eph 4:8, “When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people.”
      5. Heb 11:39-40, the OT prophets “did not receive what was promised, 40since God had provided something better so that they would not, apart from us, be made perfect.”
   3. *triumphed over demonic powers*
      1. “A number of vague NT texts indicate . . . that he triumphed over the evil angelic powers . . .” (Brown *Introduction* 714)
      2. Phil 2:10, “so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth . . .”
      3. Col 2:15, “He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it.”
      4. Heb 2:14, “through death he [destroyed] the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil . . .”
      5. Rev 1:17-18, Christ says, “I was dead, and see, I am alive forever and ever; and I have the keys of Death and of Hades.”

## Tradition

1. **addition to the Apostles**’ **Creed**
   1. the Old Roman Creed
      1. “One of the earliest of local creeds to take shape and be canonized . . . [was] the ancient Roman baptismal creed . . .” (Kelly 100)
      2. “. . . its conventional description is R . . .” (Kelly 100)
      3. “It became the direct ancestor of all other local creeds in the West, and its influence even on Eastern creeds was marked.” (Kelly 100)
      4. ad 340: at a synod in Rome, Marcellus of Ancyra (bishop of Ancyra in Cappadocia) submitted to Pope Julius I a creed in Greek that was “practically identical” with R. “Practically all scholars” now believe it was “the Pope’s own baptismal confession . . .” (Kelly 103)
   2. 404: Creed of Aquileia
      1. “The first variant of R to exhibit it [“*descendit ad inferna*”] is the Aquileian creed commented upon by Rufinus . . .” (Kelly 378)
      2. “. . . he remarked that the clause was not to be found in either the Roman creed or in Eastern formularies.” (Kelly 378)
      3. But “it is improbable that the clause was a recent addition to the Aquileian creed.” (Kelly 378)
   3. Apostles’ Creed
      1. Apostles’ Creed: “He suffered, was crucified, died, was buried [according to the body] and descended into Hell [according to the soul].” (Ott 150)
      2. “He descended into hell” in that creed is *descendit ad inferna*. (Kelly 378)
      3. “The form *inferos* is nowadays preferred as indicating that the place of the departed, not the damned, is meant: so the Roman Breviary.” (Kelly 378 n. 3)
2. **Why was the descent added to the creed**?
   1. The clause “provided the creed with something which had hitherto been lacking and of which the need may have been keenly, if inarticulately, felt, a mention of the act of redemption wrought by Christ.” (Kelly 383)
   2. No longer merely an assertion that Christ truly died, “the doctrine was coming to be interpreted as symbolizing His triumph over Satan and death, and, consequently, the salvation of mankind as a whole.” (Kelly 383)

## Dogma

1. **dogmatic definition**
   1. “Article 5: “He Descended into Hell on the Third Day He Rose Again”” (*CCC* § 631)
      1. “The Apostles’ Creed confesses in the same article Christ’s descent into hell and his Resurrection [because] it was precisely out of the depths of death that he made life spring forth . . .” (*CCC* § 631)
   2. “After His Death, Christ’s soul, which was separated from His body, descended into the underworld. (*De fide*.)” (Ott 191)
   3. Here is “the defined teaching . . ., see D 429, 462.” (Rahner and Vorgrimler 124)
      1. 1215: Lateran Council IV (D 429): “He descended in soul [*descendit in anima*], and He arose in the flesh, and He ascended equally in both . . .”
      2. 1274: Council of Lyons II (D 462): he “was buried, descended to hell, and on the third day arose again . . .”
2. **purpose of the descent**
   1. theory 1: the descent was ***simply*** Christ after death present ***among the dead***.
      1. “. . . the older tradition [was] that [the descent] was simply the natural corollary of the Lord’s death . . .” (Kelly 381)
      2. “. . . in the earlier period Christ’s death and Descent were understood in terms of the separation of His human soul from His body (so, e.g., Tertullian and Origen).” (Kelly 382)
      3. “If [the descent] secured admittance first in a Syrian-speaking locality, it was . . . no more than a more colourful equivalent of dead and buried.” (Kelly 383)
      4. That it was simply the natural corollary of the Lord’s death “probably explains why it was so often passed over in silence in creed-expositions.” (Kelly 381 n. 9)
      5. “. . . the first meaning given in the apostolic preaching to Christ’s descent into hell [was] that Jesus, like all men, experienced death and in his soul joined the others in the realm of the dead.” (*CCC* § 632)
   2. theory 2: the descent was to “***release*** of the ***Old Testament saints*** . . .” (Kelly 381)
      1. Many Church Fathers “believed that Christ descended not to Gehenna, but to Hades, and that he saved only the just, leaving sinners in hell.” (Russell 120)
      2. “The purpose of the descent into Hell was, according to the general teaching of theologians, the freeing of the just in Limbo by the application of the fruits of the Redemption, that is, by the communication of the Beatific Vision.” (*ST* 3.52.5. *Cat*. *Rom*. 1.6.6) (Ott 192)
      3. “. . . the ancient notion [was] of Christ’s mission to the patriarchs . . .” (Kelly 383)
      4. “. . . Christ was active during the mysterious three days preaching salvation, or else administering baptism, to the righteous of the old Covenant . . .” (Kelly 380)
      5. difficulties
         1. “. . . the Old Testament saints scarcely needed illumination, since they had foreseen Christ’s coming . . .” (Kelly 381)
         2. “. . . it seemed inappropriate that the unconverted should receive a second opportunity for repentance in the other world.” (Kelly 381)
   3. theory 3: the descent was to ***release all the just*** and ***subjugate hell and the devil***.
      1. Whom did Christ save in his descent?
         1. early 200s: “The central point of discussion in Clement’s time [d. 235] was the question of whom Christ favored with his preaching in hell and whom he released. Three general answers were possible . . .” (Russell 120)
            1. “Old Testament patriarchs and all devout Hebrews” (Russell 120)
            2. “all the righteous dead, both pagans and Jews” (Russell 120)
            3. “all the dead, including sinners” (Russell 120)
         2. c. 400: “the Descent was coming to be viewed as the occasion of the redemption, not just of the patriarchs of old, but of mankind in general.” (Kelly 381)
      2. “. . . by the time the Descent became an accepted article in the creed, a rather different complex of ideas was being associated with it according to which Christ’s activity consisted in completely subjugating hell and the ruler of the underworld.” (Kelly 381)
      3. c. 404: Rufinus “argued that Christ consented to die in order that He might spoil death, and expatiated on His victorious combat in the underworld with the Devil. [*Comm*. *in symb*. *apost*. 14-15] For him, it would appear, the underworld meant hell . . .” (Kelly 381)
      4. The theory “which placed the accent on the deliverance of the saints and the defeat of Satan, gained ground and established itself in the West . . .” (Kelly 381)
         1. But see: In the West “the doctrine that Christ had liberated any others than those holy persons, primarily Jews, who had either foreseen His coming or kept His precepts by anticipation, was afterwards branded as heretical.” (Augustine *De haer*. 79; Gregory *Ep*. 15) (Kelly 381)
   4. “. . . some modern churches have deleted the clause as meaningless for contemporary faith.” (Brown *Introduction* 714)
      1. The “description has imaginative elements . . .” (Brown *Introduction* 723)
      2. But to eliminate the article of faith “is an overreaction . . .” (Brown *Introduction* 714)
3. **meaning**
   1. what is not affirmed
      1. “The descent into hell is not a new act of redemption in addition to his death.” (Rahner and Vorgrimler 124)
   2. “what is actually affirmed” (Rahner and Vorgrimler 124)
      1. descent
         1. “. . . the descent into hell is simply Christ’s being dead.” (Rahner and Vorgrimler 124)
         2. “The doctrine of Christ’s descent into hell [draws] its inspiration . . . from the Old Testament Revelation of” Sheol. (Ott 191)
         3. In Christ’s descent, “The underworld in question is not hell but the *sheol* of later Judaism . . .” (Rahner and Vorgrimler 124)
         4. But in death he:
            1. “obediently accepts and realizes death which reduces man to impotence” (Rahner and Vorgrimler 124)
            2. “is exposed to (voluntary) total helplessness,—wholly at God’s disposal” (Rahner and Vorgrimler 124)
      2. raised dead saints
         1. “By dying Jesus entered the company of those who had died before him and in the true sense shared with them what he had achieved.” (Rahner and Vorgrimler 124)
         2. “. . . certainly it is a way of expressing figuratively that Christ’s death affected those who had gone before.” (Brown *Introduction* 715)
         3. “Christ went down into the depths of death so that “the dead . . . will live” [John 5:25].” (*CCC* § 635)
      3. triumphed over demonic powers
         1. “by this means his redemptive obedience wins him power over the universe and history, because his relationship with the whole of creation does not cease in death but rather becomes manifest as existing “at the heart of the world”.” (Eph 4:9, he “descended into the lower parts of the earth [τὰ κατώτερα [μέρη] τῆς γῆς] . . .”) (Rahner and Vorgrimler 124)
   3. “It is pointless to enquire exactly when the descent into hell occurred and how long it lasted . . .” (Rahner and Vorgrimler 124)
      1. “From God’s viewpoint there would be no dimension of time from the death to the resurrection.” (Brown *Introduction* 715 n. 27)
      2. “Consequently in that respect what was happening to Jesus between death and resurrection is a pseudo-problem: According to Christian faith he was with God, even as Christians believe that those who die in God’s love are with God between their death and their resurrection.” (Brown *Introduction* 715 n. 27)
   4. “After Christ’s redeeming act, the just can proceed directly on the road to heaven, but before Christ the road was blocked, so that the just had to be sent to Hades to await the Savior.” (Russell 120)
4. **salvation outside the Church**
   1. Christ’s descent is at least “a way of expressing figuratively that Christ’s death affected those who had gone before.” (Brown *Introduction* 715)
      1. Therefore it has to do with salvation outside the Church.
      2. “. . . it represents a Christian instinct that Christ’s victory affected not only those who followed temporally but also those who preceded—a temporal universality as part of the theology that all are saved through Christ.” (Brown *Introduction* 723)
   2. “. . . Christ’s descent into Hades [bears] testimony to the all-embracing power of the work of Christ, who now reigns over all powers.” (van Unnik 766)
   3. 1 Tim 2:4, God “desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”
5. **reason**
   1. “Christ’s death dissolved the connection between body and soul . . .Christ was therefore during the three days not “man” that is, a compositum [150] of body and soul . . .” (*ST* 3.50.4) (Ott 150-51)

## 1 Pet 3:19-22, 4:6

1. **1 Pet 3**:**18-22**
   1. 1 Pet 3:18b-22, “He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, 19in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison [τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν], 20who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah . . . 22[Christ] has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.”
   2. 3:19
      1. “he went”
         1. “Not to “Hades,” but “to heaven,” as the direction is specified in 3:22, where the same participle (*poreutheis*) is used.” (Fitzmyer “First” 367)
            1. 1 Pet 3:22, Christ “has gone [πορευθεὶς] into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.”
         2. “Christ, exalted in his ascension, passed through “all the heavens” (Eph 4:10); en route he proclaimed his triumph.” (Fitzmyer “First” 367)
            1. Eph 4:10, “He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens . . .”
            2. “The imagery implied here is that of the Seven Heavens . . .” See below under “levels of reality.” (Fitzmyer “First” 367)
      2. “proclaimed”
         1. Some translate “preached,” but “announced” is better. (Fitzmyer “First” 367)
            1. “No object of the vb. *ekēryxen* is given, and it has often been interpreted in terms of *euēggelisthē* (4:6 . . .).” (Fitzmyer “First” 367)

E.g., *CCC* (§ 632, citing 1 Pet 3:18-19): Christ “descended there as Savior, proclaiming the Good News to the spirits imprisoned there.”

* + - * 1. “But there is no reason to introduce “gospel,” or even “conversion,” or “release” into this context. It would be more consonant with Col 2:15 to introduce a proclamation of Christ’s triumph to the imprisoned spirits who are passed along the way.” (Fitzmyer “First” 367)
    1. “imprisoned spirits”
       1. “. . . he proclaimed his triumph . . . even to the disobedient spirits of the period of Noah.” (Fitzmyer “First” 366)
  1. It is questionable whether 1 Pet 3:18-20 “deals with the “harrowing of Hell”; it has often been so interpreted and has supplied imaginative details . . . [But] it is not at all certain that Peter refers to this.” (Fitzmyer “First” 366)
  2. “F. Spitta (1890), E.G. Selwyn, B. Reicke, W.J. Dalton [say that] The Risen Christ proclaimed his triumph to the [366] imprisoned spirits as he passed through the heavens to his exaltation.—We follow this opinion.” (Fitzmyer “First” 366-67)

1. **1 Pet 4**:**6**
   1. 1 Pet 4:6, “the gospel was proclaimed even to the dead, so that, though they had been judged in the flesh as everyone is judged [literally, “according to men”], they might live in the spirit as God does.”
   2. “the dead”
      1. The dead are “Christians who heard the good news either from Christ or from his disciples and have passed on before the writing of this letter (cf. 1 Thes 4:13ff.).” (Fitzmyer “First” 367)
      2. “Christians who accepted the gospel and have since died are alive in God’s eyes (as in I Thess 4:13-18).” (Brown *Introduction* 715)
2. **1 Pet 3**:**18-22 and 4**:**6**
   1. 1 Pet 3:18-22 and 4:6 do not “refer to the same preaching . . .” (Brown *Introduction* 715)
      1. 1 Pet 3:19 has Christ preach to the fathers of the *nephilim*. (Brown *Introduction* 715-16)
      2. 1 Pet 4:6 “does not have Christ do the preaching; rather it refers to the preaching about Christ which is . . . the gospel.” (Brown *Introduction* 715)
      3. The imprisoned spirits of 3:19 “are not the “dead” (*nekroi*) of 4:6.” (Fitzmyer “First” 367)
         1. “In Semitic anthropology “spirits” (as distinct from “shades”) would be an unusual way to [715] refer to the dead; more likely it would refer to the angels.” (Brown *Introduction* 715-16)
         2. “The reference to disobedience in the days of Noah suggests that these are the angels or sons of God who did evil by having relations with earthly women according to Gen 6:1-4, a wickedness that led God to send the great flood from which Noah was saved . . .” (Brown *Introduction* 716)
            1. Gen 6:1-4, “When people began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born to them, 2the sons of God saw that they were fair; and they took wives for themselves of all that they chose. 3Then the Lord said, “My spirit shall not abide in mortals forever, for they are flesh; their days shall be one hundred twenty years.” 4The Nephilim were on the earth in those days—and also afterward—when the sons of God went in to the daughters of humans, who bore children to them. These were the heroes that were of old, warriors of renown.”
         3. “They are rather the well-known angelic spirits imprisoned in the second heaven (cf. *2 Enoch* 7:1-5; *Enoch* 6-36; esp. *Enoch* 21:6; *Enoch* 67:4; *Jub* 10:1; *Jub* 10). Christ’s proclamation to them is merely a way of asserting his triumph (see 3:22).” (Fitzmyer “First” 367) 1 Pet 3:22, Christ “has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.”
   2. two interpretations of Christ’s purpose
      1. to save just humans
         1. “This is the oldest interpretation,” by “at least” early ad 100s. (Brown *Introduction* 715)
      2. to condemn demonic forces
         1. In 1 Pet 3:19 Christ proclaims to the spirits in prison, not to the dead. (Brown *Introduction* 715)
            1. “I Pet 3:19 has the risen Christ go down there to proclaim his victory and crush the Satanic forces.” (Brown *Introduction* 716)
            2. “The imagery is similar to that of John 16:11 . . .” (Brown *Introduction* 716)

John 16:11, “the ruler of this world has been condemned.”

* + - * 1. “The imagery is similar to . . . that of Rev 12:5-13 where when the Messiah is born (through resurrection) and taken up to heaven, the devil and his angels are cast down.” (Brown *Introduction* 716)
      1. “In my judgment this is the most plausible explanation of 3:19.” (Brown *Introduction* 716)

1. **levels of reality**
   1. 3 levels of reality
      1. The “common numbering [of the levels of reality] is threefold; terrestrial, intermediary, and celestial.” (Smith 37)
      2. The terrestrial plane is “the gross, the material, the sensible, the corporeal, the phenomenal, or the human plane.” (Smith 37)
      3. intermediate plane
         1. For Plato “‘the demonic’ [was] a realm ‘intermediate’ between the human level and the divine . . .” (Friedländer, Paul. *Plato* vol. 1: *An Introduction*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958. 41.) (Qtd. in Smith 38 n. 4)
         2. The intermediate plane includes our souls, ghosts, demons, and angels. (Smith 39, 46)
         3. The “popular mind” lodges the intermediate plane’s angels above the earth and its demons below the earth: “the effect can be achieved by rounding the intermediate plane into a circle that envelops the terrestrial plane.” (Smith 46)
         4. Islam says “the throne of the devil [is] between earth and heaven.” (Smith 46 n. 13)
      4. The celestial plane “is the abode of God Transcendent . . .” (Smith 51)
      5. example
         1. Phil 2:10, “so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth . . .”
   2. 2 levels of reality
      1. In the Old Testament, “Rarely is a tripartite system mentioned . . .” (le Goff 27)
      2. “. . . Ephesians presupposes a two-story cosmos of heaven and earth; the passage through Hades is part of the ascent (Eph. 4:8; cf. 2:2; 6:12).” (Robinson 827)
         1. Eph 1:21, God “seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named . . .”
         2. Eph 2:1-2, “You were dead through the trespasses and sins 2in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient.”
         3. Eph 3:10, “so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.”
         4. Eph 4:8-10, “Therefore it is said, “When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people.” 9(When it says, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.)”
         5. Eph 6:12, “our struggle is . . . against the spiritual forces [πνευματικὰ] of evil in the heavenly places.”
         6. “These places are not heaven, where God is.” (Schlier 17)
         7. “They signify the “heavens” which surround and touch upon the material world . . .” (Schlier 17)
         8. “By the heavens we mean the supreme form of material life; it is the Unseen which we nevertheless perceive . . .” (Schlier 17)
         9. “We have here a multiple manifestation of an invisible power which comes from the limit of the natural order, where it abides. The New Testament calls it “spirit”. The word denotes a being of personal power . . .” (Schlier 20)
      3. Phil 2:7-9, Christ “emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, 8he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. 9Therefore God also highly exalted him . . .”
   3. seven heavens
      1. “The imagery implied here [1 Pet 3:18-22] is that of the Seven Heavens . . .” (Fitzmyer “First” 367)
         1. 2 Cor 12:2, “I know a person in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows.
         2. Eph 1:3, 20, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places [ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις] . . . 20raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places . . .”
         3. Col 2:15 njb, “he has stripped the sovereignties and the ruling forces, and paraded them in public, behind him in his triumphal procession.”
            1. In 1 Pet 3:18-22 “Christ is depicted as mounting in triumphant procession to the abode of God in the seventh heaven, as in Col 2:15.” (Fitzmyer “First” 367)
         4. Heb 4:14, “we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens . . .”
         5. Heb 7:26, “it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, . . . exalted above the heavens.”

## Demonic Powers in the New Testament

1. **introduction**
   1. “. . . from the earliest age, the Church’s preaching and professions of faith contained references to what we call “principalities and powers”.” (Schlier 8)
   2. “Any survey of early Christian literature shows that belief in these principalities was firmly established in the apostolic faith of the primitive Church.” (Schlier 8)
   3. “. . . Christian terms [have been ] traced . . . to Jewish or Hellenistic sources, or again beyond these to Babylon or Iran . . .” (Schlier 9)
   4. fiction?
      1. “. . . to us nowadays these phenomena seem strange, and the concepts which the New Testament employs to understand them largely meaningless.” (Schlier 10)
      2. “. . . can it be that no reality at all corresponds to the terms “principalities and powers”? While the New Testament attaches importance to them, it is occasionally suggested that they are merely fictions of the imagery of ancient mythology, perhaps only allegories of a quite different reality, which, so it is said, have unfortunately been retained by the New Testament, although such myths [9] and allegories ought to have been discarded from the Christian Faith long ago.” (Schlier 9-10)
      3. “. . . only exegesis can attempt to solve the problem . . .” (Schlier 10)
2. **names of the devil and demons**
   1. derivations of names
      1. Old Testament: “only in [a] few cases” (e.g., “Satan”). (Schlier 12)
      2. “Hellenistic popular belief contributed little” (except “demon”). (Schlier 13)
      3. “The New Testament names [derive] particularly from Jewish apocalyptic writing.” (Schlier 13)
      4. “Judaism in turn had . . . adopted some of them from neighbouring religions.” (Schlier 13)
      5. This means that these phenomena were also experienced “outside the revelation of the Old and New Testaments.” (Schlier 13)
         1. “. . . way revelation absorbed them from the tradition of universal human experience.” (Schlier 13)
         2. “When they were mentioned by Jesus himself, or by the apostles and the early Church, their hearers, whether Jewish or Gentile, knew what was meant.” (Schlier 13)
   2. many names
      1. The “large number of names [shows] how much Christians of the early Church were preoccupied with these . . .” (Schlier 12)
   3. interchangeable names
      1. “. . . the names given to the powers of evil are [14] . . . not mutually exclusive; they are freely interchangeable.” (Schlier 15)
      2. Interchangeability of names shows:
         1. “that the [NT] is not much concerned with individual names.” (Schlier 16)
            1. Many Jews “sought to know details about demonic forces. (Schlier 13)
            2. The NT “has also no theoretical or speculative interest in them.” (Schlier 13)

It “nowhere gives an exact description . . .” (Schlier 13)

It nowhere arranges the “names or appearances systematically.” (Schlier 13)

* + - 1. that “these names essentially refer to one and the same phenomenon.” (Schlier 16)
         1. “Only one distinction is more accurately drawn, namely that demons, spirits, angels, principalities and powers are subordinate to Satan . . .” (Schlier 16)

Matt 25:41, “depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels”

Mark 3:22, “He has Beelzebul, and by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons.”

* 1. conclusion
     1. In the devil and demons “a phenomenon is being glimpsed which obtrudes intensively upon all men, and especially upon Christians.” (Schlier 17)
     2. “. . . we are dealing with a single phenomenon which is diffused, and which concerns us in various manifestations.” (Schlier 17)

1. **nature of the demonic forces**
   1. personal beings
      1. That is “obvious from the names which they bear . . .” (Schlier 18)
         1. Satan is the prince of this world, the god of the world, the accuser, the tempter, the adversary, the destroyer. (Schlier 18)
         2. Demonic forces “are called gods, princes, and angels.” (Schlier 18)
      2. intellect and will
         1. As personal beings, “they manifest themselves as beings of intellect and will . . .” (Schlier
         2. They “can speak and be spoken to.” (Schlier 18)
   2. created good
      1. “. . . these powers too [are] part of the reality which God called into being, of Creation. . . . Thus these principalities owe their being to God.” (Schlier 37)
         1. Rom 8:38-39, “neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor anything else *in all creation* [Schlier translates, “any other creature” (τις κτίσις)] . . .”
         2. Col 1:16, “in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him.”
         3. “Their origin too is in Christ, and through him and for him. Their source and their final end is not in themselves, but in Jesus Christ, who is God.” (Schlier 37)
      2. “They present themselves now having discarded their divine origin, and become autonomous.” (Schlier 37)
   3. powerful
      1. Rom 8:38, “neither death, nor life, nor angels [ἄγγελοι], nor rulers [ἀρχαὶ], nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers [δυνάμεις], 39. . . will be able to separate us from the love of God . . .”
         1. Paul “enumerates them [demons] in the same breath with such phenomena as life, present, future, height, and depth. Evidently while they are powers of existence, dominating, embracing, determining powers, they have something in common with these other enumerated phenomena. That common element is their nature as power, as threatening superior power.” (Schlier 20)
      2. Eph 1:21, God “seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21far above all rule and authority and power and dominion . . .”
      3. 1 Cor 15:24-26, “Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power. 25For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26The last enemy to be destroyed is death.”
   4. autonomous self-centredness (fall of the angels; rebellion against God)
      1. Jude 6, “the angels who did not keep their own position [ἀρχὴν], but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains in deepest darkness for the judgment of the great Day.”
      2. 2 Pet 2:4, “God did not spare the angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of deepest darkness to be kept until the judgment . . .”
      3. Rev 12
      4. The fall of the angels conveys “that God has ordained and assigned a position of power for these angels—the principalities—which they no longer exercise, nor do they occupy the locality where God had placed them.” (Schlier 38)
   5. characteristics of the demonic powers
      1. Their characteristics are concealment, “destruction, temptation, distortion, and accusation.” (Schlier 39)
      2. concealment
         1. “Their hidden nature . . . is their main characteristic . . .” (Schlier 29)
         2. They are also hidden “because the reason for their presence remains impenetrable for man. No man knows why they single out any particular person, circumstance or time for exercising their influence. . . . This spirit covers the world with a great shroud of mystery, under which there is a perpetual disturbance, . . . demonstrating only the superior power of a transcendent spirit over which he has no control.” (Schlier 30)
         3. Eph 2:2,
            1. Eph 2:2, “You were dead through the trespasses and sins 2in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient.”
            2. Satan is “the prince of the power of this air”.” (Schlier 30)
            3. “Satan’s influence over the world enables him to control the spirit which dominates unbelievers. [30] It is the general spiritual climate which influences mankind, in which men live, which they breathe, which dominates their thoughts, aspirations, and deeds. . . . He gains power over men and penetrates them by means of this atmosphere, which is his realm, the realm of his power.” (Schlier 30-31)
            4. “This domination usually begins in the general spirit of the world, or in the spirit of a particular period, attitude, nation or locality. . . . [Men] pass it on into their institutions and various conditions. In certain situations it becomes concentrated. Indeed, it is so intense and powerful that no individual can escape it. It serves as a norm and is taken for granted. . . . It is “in” this [31] spirit that men encounter the world and affairs, which means that they accept the world as this spirit presents it to them, with all its ideas and values, in the form in which he wants them to find it. [Through “the general spirit of the world” he] imposes his valuation on everything.” (Schlier 31-32)
            5. “An interpretation of this kind will for instance invest idols, which indeed are “nothing”, with the fascination of supremely powerful beings. Some uncanny and numinous quality imbues the very form of idols and emanates from them.” (Schlier 32)
            6. “Such interpretation will also give rise to [32] the totalitarian state with its institutions, claims and actions, and their inhuman consequences and effects. . . . [Rev 12-13] deals with the nature of Satan—the dragon—and of the total political power which he inspires [the beast].” (Schlier 32-33)
      3. destruction, death
         1. “In their nature the principalities present the universe and human life as a world of death. It is by subjecting them that death results. Through their nature they introduce death to the world, and so they show themselves as beings of death.” (Schlier 33)
         2. In Mark 5:1-19 the Gerasene demoniac, “possessed by the “unclean spirit” has a compulsory affinity to death. Not only does he dwell in the desert among tombs, in the place of death, . . . he also has an inner urge to self-destruction . . .” (Schlier 33)
         3. In 1 Cor 10:10 he is called “the destroyer.” (Schlier 34)
         4. In John 8:44 Jesus says, “He was a murderer from the beginning . . .” (Schlier 34)
         5. 1 John 3:7-12
            1. 1 John 3:8, “Everyone who commits sin is a child of the devil; for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The Son of God was revealed for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.”
         6. Heb 2:14-15, Christ “shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death [Schlier (34), “the empire of death’’], that is, the devil, 15and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death.”
            1. “When men consider death as the last and supreme power, this is due to the devil, who thereby causes fear which leads to hatred. Satan’s nature operates by making the universe and all existence appear as a universe and an existence of death, an encounter in anxiety and woes.” (Schlier 34)
      4. temptation
         1. Satan “is the “tempter” as such. Temptation is his inner-most nature.” (Schlier 35)
         2. Matt 4:3, “The tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.”
         3. 1 Thess 3:5b, “I sent to find out about your faith; I was afraid that somehow the tempter had tempted you . . .”
         4. 1 Pet 5:8, “Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour.”
         5. 1 John 3:8, “Everyone who commits sin is a child of the devil . . .”
         6. 1 John 5:18, Christ protects Christians, “and the evil one does not touch them.”
         7. Eph 2:1-3, “You were dead through the trespasses and sins 2in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. 3All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else.”
            1. “Because of the interpreting spirit of evil the whole fullness of ever-changing life—and death—appears enticing and menacing.” (Schlier 34)
            2. Here “to sin is to live according to the standard of that spirit which makes the world and life in the world appear eternal. Sin occurs through man’s self-willed greed for the world and through his acceptance of the world which the devil conjures up as the ultimate ground and object of existence.” (Schlier 35)
         8. “To succumb to the world-reality presented by the devil temptingly either as eternal joy or eternal death, is to assent to his will . . .” (Schlier 35)
            1. “. . . when St. Paul is thinking of the connection between sin and the devil, “sin” itself appears as a power.” (Schlier 35)
            2. “. . . the same is true of death, which is explicitly reckoned among the powers in 1 Cor. 15:26, where it is called the last enemy.” (Schlier 35)

1 Cor 15:26, “The last enemy to be destroyed is death.”

* + 1. falsehood
       1. John 8:44, “You are from your father the devil, and you choose to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”
       2. 2 Cor 11:14, “Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.”
       3. 1 John 4:6, “Whoever knows God listens to us, and whoever is not from God does not listen to us. From this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.”
       4. “He also operates through heresy . . .” (Schlier 36)
          1. 1 Tim 4:1, “Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will renounce the faith by paying attention to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons . . .”
          2. 2 Tim 2:25-26, “God may perhaps grant that they will repent and come to know the truth, 26and that they may escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.”
          3. 2 John 1:7, “Many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh; any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist!”
       5. The “illumination which the nature of Satan produces is really the establishment of the power of darkness . . .” (Schlier 36)
          1. Acts 26:17-18, “I am sending you [to the Gentiles] 18to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God . . .”
          2. Col 1:13, “He has rescued us from the power of darkness . . .”
    2. accusation
       1. Job 1:6, “One day the heavenly beings came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them.”
       2. Zech 3:1, “he showed me the high priest Joshua standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him.”
       3. Rev 12:10, “the accuser of our comrades has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.”

1. “**operations of the principalities**” (Schlier 11)
   1. physical illness
      1. Luke 13:16, “Satan bound [the bent-over woman] for eighteen long years . . .”
      2. Matt 12:22, “Then they brought to him a demoniac who was blind and mute . . .”
      3. “It is often suggested that [demons are] merely the explanations which primitive medicine offered for ailments . . . But this [21] is not the case. These expressions draw attention to what underlies the fact of illness. No matter what physical or psychic causes it may have, illness also is due to a superior evil power.” (Schlier 21-22)
   2. mental illnesses
      1. “This superior power has its being, not only in the impairment of the body, but also in the confusion and ruin of the spirit.” (Schlier 22)
      2. “In so-called spiritual or mental illness . . . we perceive an element of “possession”, that in a wider sense underlies all maladies.” (Schlier 22)
      3. “There are three characteristic expressions in the New Testament for those suffering from spiritual maladies.” (Schlier 22)
         1. “with an unclean spirit,” “troubled by unclean spirits”
         2. “demoniac” (lit. “being demon possessed”)
         3. “having a demon”
      4. The demon dwells “in the man, in his body and in his soul.” (Schlier 22)
   3. The devil and demons influence nature.
      1. Gal 4:3, 9, “while we were minors, we were enslaved to the elemental spirits of the world [τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου]. . . . [9]how can you turn back again to the weak and beggarly elemental spirits [τὰ ἀσθενῆ καὶ πτωχὰ στοιχεῖα]? How can you want to be enslaved to them again?”
      2. “These “elements” are probably the stars under whose influence the Galatians had felt bound to observe certain [Jewish] sidereal [“determined by the stars”] festivals. . . . through those stars and, of course, through other elements of which they have taken possession, the principalities exercise their ominous “influence”. [23] . . . As they resemble the element so closely, it is as “elements” that they themselves have come to be known.” (Schlier 23-24)
   4. The devil and demons influence history.
      1. “Even the circumstances of history fall under this influence, and historical institutions and situations have thus become place and location, means and instruments of those powers.” (Schlier 24)
      2. Rom 8:35, 38, “Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers 39. . . will be able to separate us from the love of God . . .”
         1. The meaning “may well be that the inherent distresses of this life which press upon the world are due to the powers which he mentions . . .” (Schlier 24)
      3. 1 Thess 2:18, “we wanted to come to you . . . but Satan blocked our way.”
      4. influence on politics
         1. Rev 2:10, “Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Beware, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison so that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have affliction.”
         2. Rev 13:2, “And the dragon gave it [the beast] his power and his throne and great authority.”
         3. Rev 13:4, “They worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?””
         4. In Rev 13:2 Satan gives the beasts “his own strength and great power” . . . the beast is the apocalyptic image of the anti-Christian *imperium* . . . the animal nature of the anti-Christian state . . . (NAB note: “the Roman Empire.”) (Schlier 24)
         5. In Rev 13:4 [“Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?”] “the beast has superlative military strength . . .” (Schlier 24-25)
         6. “Satan can thus take possession of public life by so filling the persons, means and organs of government with the will to power, that it inspires them to perform vicious actions . . .” (Schlier 26)
      5. influence on religion
         1. “But the religious sphere too can be seized by that being of intelligent lust for power. It penetrates the world and the hearts of men through the pagan gods, the Jewish Law, and Christian heresies . . .” (Schlier 26)
         2. pagan gods
            1. 1 Cor 8:5, “even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as in fact there are many gods and many lords—6yet for us there is one God . . .”
            2. 1 Cor 8:18b-20, “are not those who eat the sacrifices partners in the altar? 19What do I imply then? That food sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? 20No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be partners with demons.”

“Even Christians are not immune from the influence of these dumb idols if they venture near them, for though the idols are nothing, the demons control them.” (Schlier 27)

* + - * 1. Gal 4:8, “Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to beings that by nature are not gods.”
        2. 1 Cor 12:2, “You know that when you were pagans, you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak.”
        3. Rev 9:20, “The rest of humankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands or give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk.”
        4. “The “demoniacal” power of these idols is so great that . . . “[men] did not do penance from the works of their hands, that they should not adore devils, and idols . . .”” (Schlier 27)
      1. Mosaic Law
         1. “. . . the influence of the wicked angels is asserted even in the Jewish Law . . . In the hands of fallen men even the “holy, and just, and good” commandment (Rom. 7:12) becomes a Law which fosters self-seeking and self-advancement. To this extent the fallen angels speak through the Law, and it conveys the words of the Evil One who tries to master men by secretly and subtly exploiting their self-seeking and self-righteousness.” (Schlier 27)
         2. John 8:44, Jesus to some Jews, “You are from your father the devil, and you choose to do your father’s desires.”
         3. Rev 2:9b, “I know the slander on the part of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.”

“. . . the Jewish synagogue is revealed as the “synagogue of Satan’’ who uses the Jews to persecute Christians.” (Schlier 28)

* + - 1. Christian heresies
         1. “. . . the evil power . . . influences even Christian revelation.” (Schlier 28)
         2. 2 Cor 11:13-15, “such boasters are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. 14And no wonder! Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 15So it is not strange if his ministers also disguise themselves as ministers of righteousness.”
         3. 1 Tim 4:1, “Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will renounce the faith by paying attention to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons . . .”
         4. 1 John 4:1, “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world.”

Here “false Christian prophets . . . are inspired by the spirit of Antichrist . . .” (Schlier 28)

* + - * 1. James 3:15, “if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth. 15Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish.”

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