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Identity, Calling, and Mission:
An Exegetical Study in 1 Peter 2.4-10

By
Jim McKnight

A Project Submitted to
the Faculty of Covenant Theological Seminary
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Masters of Arts in Exegetical Theology

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Abstract

1 Peter 2.4-10 is a foundational passage to the doctrine of the Priesthood of the Believer—a doctrine emphasized by Luther during the Reformation. Over the years scholars have differed significantly on the importance of 1 Peter’s contribution to the Priesthood of the Believer and what it means.

To shed light on it, an original exegetical investigation into the Greek text, situated in its original historical and literary context, follows. The apostle Peter penned the letter to one of the widest audiences of all New Testament epistles. The audience is a persecuted, geographically isolated, minority people who have every reason to isolate themselves from the unreached and often hostile people around them.

Despite the bleak situation, 1 Peter 2.4-10 imparts to its audience rich identities as the “chosen people” of God who are founded on Christ, who is the cornerstone. The resulting contribution to the New Testament doctrine of the Priesthood of the Believer is that New Testament disciples must understand themselves not only as those who have the *privilege* of direct access to God the Father (as only an Old Testament priest would have), but also as those who have the *responsibility* to declare God’s praises, even in the most persecuted contexts.

To Rolinda, my stunning and dedicated wife. No word or thought appears here without your devoted love and support.

In truth, most missionary work was not carried out by the apostles, but rather by the countless and nameless Christians who for different reasons--persecution, business, or missionary calling--traveled from place to place taking the news of the gospel with them.

— Dr. Justo Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity Volume I*

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I. Introduction

In 1 Peter 2.4-10, Peter imparts a corporate identity to the People of God that is distinct in the New Testament.¹ He assigns seven rich identities to the people of God: spiritual household (v. 5), holy priesthood (v. 5), chosen people (v. 9), royal priesthood (v. 9), holy nation (v. 9), people belonging to God (v. 9), and people of God (v. 10).² However, the letter does not focus on establishing identity. It focuses on comforting persecuted and suffering Christians (vv. 1.6, 2.20-25, 3.14, 4.12-19). Peter draws an important link between identity and perseverance through suffering. Personal and corporate identity imparts life-sacrificing motivation to overcome persecution. While the epistle certainly carries a comforting pastoral tone, it is just as much an exhortation to persevere in the mission of God at the hardest of times. Peter concludes his reminder of *who* the people of God are, by insisting *why* they are: “that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness and into his wonderful light” (2.9). The Apostle reaches a powerful apex in 2.4-10. This pericope teaches a corporate identity that instills a high level of missional responsibility to a persecuted people who have every reason to abandon God’s mission.

¹ Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 160.

² There are two other nouns in the pericope that could be identities: living stones (5), and those who have received mercy (10). Living stones, preceded by “as” (ὡς) is adverbial. It does not describe the identity of the People of God, but the way in which the People of God are being built. “Those who have received mercy” (2.10) is a substantival participle, rather than a noun like the aforementioned identities. While these two nouns could certainly be two more identities of the People of God, I do not see them as primary identities, and therefore I will not emphasize them.

II. Historical Context

Author and Date

1 Peter claims the Apostle Peter as its author (1.1). Consequently, the burden of proof rests on those who want to dispute its claim.³ In other words, I contend that the document should be accepted as authentic, because there is no reasonable evidence to the contrary. As a matter of fact, in the case of 1 Peter, both the internal and external evidence uphold Petrine authorship.

J. Ramsey Michaels lists eight attestations from 1st and 2nd century Church Fathers that validate the epistle's claim to Petrine authorship. The most convincing attestation comes from the early Church historian Eusebius (263-339 AD). He claims that both Papias (80-130 AD) and Clement of Alexandria (30-100 AD) testify that the Apostle Peter wrote the letter from Rome, which Peter refers to as Babylon in the text (1 Pet 5.13).⁴

The greatest case against Petrine authorship usually comes from the quality of the Greek in the letter. As the argument goes, an uneducated (ἀγράμματος, Acts 4.13) man like Peter the fisherman could not have personally composed such excellent Greek.⁵ However, Karen Jobes defends Petrine authorship through a careful analysis of

³ Iain Provan, V. Philips Long and Tremper Longman III, *A Biblical History of Israel 2nd Ed.* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015), 99. Provan, Long and Longman take this proper approach to historical documents in general when they say: "We do not require 'positive grounds' for taking biblical testimony about Israel's past seriously. We require positive grounds, rather, for *not* doing so." The same applies here to Peter's letter.

⁴ J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco: Word Books, 1988), xxxii-xxxiv.

⁵ For example, see Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1996), 4-5.

the language across fourteen criteria.⁶ She compares the language in 1 Peter to the ancient Greek authors Polybius and Josephus, among others. Polybius was a highly proficient Greek author, and Josephus was a Semitic background Greek author (like Peter), who achieved extensive Greek abilities as a Roman historian. On a scale from -1 (the norm for native strong composition Greek) to +1 (weak translation Greek), Polybius scores a -1.68, and Josephus scores a -1.38, demonstrating their elite scholastic proficiency beyond the norm for a native speaker.⁷ However, Peter receives an unimpressive .16!⁸ While Peter's Greek is not terrible, it is certainly bad enough to be written by the ἀγραμματος apostle who has been working on his Greek language skills for a few decades. While this is only a short survey of the most critical arguments for Petrine authorship, "attestation is as strong, or stronger, than that for any NT book."⁹

With the vindication of the Apostle Peter's claim to authorship, the possible dates of the letter are very limited. There is relatively strong historical attestation to Peter and Paul's joint martyrdom in Rome in 65 AD.¹⁰ Given the extent of the advance of the Gospel to the five provinces listed in 1 Peter, it is unlikely that Peter arrived in Rome before 60 AD,¹¹ putting the letter as written sometime between 60 and 65 AD. If

⁶ Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 325-338.

⁷ Jobes, 333.

⁸ Jobes, 336.

⁹ Michaels, xxxiv.

¹⁰ Michaels, lviii.

¹¹ D.A. Carson and Douglas Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 646.

Peter is about 20 years old in 32 AD (Matt 17.24-27 in light of Ex 30.13-14), he would be about 53 years old in 65 AD: a very old man by antiquity's standards. Peter's age alone does not support a date much beyond the 70's AD. Given the letter's near obsession with persecution and suffering, it is very likely to have been written during the Neronian persecution (54-68 AD).

Against this suggestion, Jobes and Elliott conclude that the general nature of the persecution in 1 Peter could point to any time in the first two hundred years of Christian experience, and it does not help us narrow down the date.¹² On one hand this is an accurate observation; but on the other hand, no epistle deals with persecution and suffering as extensively and thoroughly as 1 Peter—it is the letter's dominant theme.¹³ Something had to be happening to drive Peter to the sheer volume of suffering content (1.6, 2.20-25, 3.14, 4.12-19). If this is correct, then there is a good chance Peter wrote the letter during the latter part of Nero's persecution of Christians in Rome.

Furthermore, it is not out of the question that Peter has the Roman fire of 64 AD in mind when he writes "fiery" (πυρῳσει) trial (4.12). Nero blamed the massive fire on the Christians for political expediency, and in sending them to their deaths he lit many of them on fire.¹⁴ If this is correct, we can pinpoint the letter to about 64 AD.¹⁵

¹² Jobes, 10; and John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 2000) 98-100.

¹³ Elliott, 109.

¹⁴ Justo L. Gonzalez, *The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation* (New York: Harper Collins, 2010) 43-46.

¹⁵ Elliott, 98-99; and Jobes, 8, dispute the link between Peter's epistle and Nero's fire insisting that the persecution was not Empire wide and that the kind of suffering Peter envisions is happening "throughout the world" (έν κοσμῳ). While I don't dispute the general low grade suffering described in this letter, a

Establishing the Apostle Peter as the author of this epistle enriches its content. He is the Apostle who made the first confession that Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the living God” (ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος, Matt 16.16). Consequently, Jesus dubbed Peter and his confession, “the rock” (πέτρα, Mat 16.18) on which Jesus intends to build his Church. In some ways this epistle, at the end of Peter’s life, is evidence of Jesus fulfilling his promise to Peter. This epistle is carefully constructed to build and embolden Christ’s Church through God’s Holy Spirit.¹⁶

Where Peter was once a brash and rather forceful leader (Mark 9.5-6, Jn 18.10), this epistle highlights the humility God has worked in him over the years. Even though Peter deals extensively with *rock* metaphors in chapter 2.4-10, he mentions nothing of his own possible claim to be “the Rock” on which Christ’s Church is being built. He refers to himself as a “fellow elder” (συμπρεσβύτερος, 5.1) when he clearly could have chosen to assert himself as a Chief Apostle. Now at the end of his life, Peter shows the spiritual maturity to defer and downplay his authority. The Apostle’s humility (1 Pet 5.5-6) colors the way we see the identities that he bestows on the churches to whom he writes. He strengthens the churches’ responsibility and authority for the mission of God and downplays his own authority.

As Peter shepherds those who are undergoing great disappointments and persecutions, he speaks from a pulpit of deep empathy. When he was under pressure to

local acute persecution where Peter is writing explains both the language and concern for suffering everywhere. Peter does not know to what extent the local Roman persecution will spread.

¹⁶ Jobes, 151. Whether the Rock is Peter or his confession, Jesus is promising to use the man *and* his confession in a special way to build His church. The discussion about whether it is Peter himself or his confession is beyond the scope of this paper. Jobes argues that since Peter does not mention himself as the Rock amongst all the other building metaphors, he does not see himself as the Rock.

deny Christ, he caved (Jn 18.25-27, Lk 22.55-61) and wept bitterly (Lk 22.62). Despite his disappointment, he is the disciple who was restored by Christ and exhorted to “shepherd my flock” (ποιμαίνε τὰ πρόβατά μου, Jn 21.16). Peter’s exhortation to the elders in 5.2 to “shepherd the flock of God that is among you” (ποιμάνατε τὸ ἐν ὑμῖν ποιμῶνιοι τοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ, 5.2), must flow from a deep sense of grace and empathy. In the same way that Jesus restored and charged Peter to shepherd His flock despite inadequacies, Peter now empowers the elders to shepherd God’s flock despite any inadequacies they might have. Indeed, as relatively new believers in an expanding movement of the Gospel, this is a primary concern for them. As I will demonstrate later, what began with Peter and is now being passed on to emerging leaders in the five provinces colors the way we will see the identities he tattoos on them, in particular the identity of priesthood (ἱεράτευμα).

Recipients

Peter writes to disciples of Jesus who are “scattered” (διασπορᾶς) throughout five Roman provinces located in modern Turkey: Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia (1.1). Hence, it is “an all-purpose circular letter to a large number of distant congregations largely unknown to the author.”¹⁷ The epistle professes the broadest specific audience of any NT correspondence.¹⁸ One of the arguments for a later date (say 100 AD) for 1 Peter, is that the gospel could not have advanced to these five

¹⁷ Michaels, xxxix.

¹⁸ The epistle James may have a broader audience in mind, but the greeting is so broad “to the twelve tribes scattered among the *nations*” (1.1) that we cannot claim it is to a specific audience, but rather an utterly universal letter. Elliott, 84.

provinces by 64 AD. But these arguments assume a rate of Kingdom growth on par with our modern experience, not the testimony of the New Testament Scriptures. When we consider the “scattered” recipients of the letter, Peter’s admonition to be a people that “declare the praises” (2.9) of their Lord can become daunting!

Paul arrived in Ephesus around 54 AD,¹⁹ and Acts tells us that two years later, “all Asia heard the word of the Lord” (Acts 19.10). Furthermore, we know that during this time, church planters like Epaphras planted at least one other church in the eastern part of the province of Asia: Colossae (Col 1.7)²⁰. He likely planted the one in Laodicea as well (Col 4.15). If an entire province can hear the gospel in two years (albeit not necessarily respond to it) and the apostle Paul delegates the authority to plant churches in new places, there is nothing hindering the gospel from continuing to multiply at the same rate inland from Ephesus until 64 AD when Peter authors the epistle. The chances of this rapid growth only increase in light of Ephesus’s role as a major trade crossroads in the province of Asia. As we consider this testimony about the church planting and evangelism efforts from the church at Ephesus and combine it with the efforts out of the churches in Pisidian Antioch, Lystra, and Derbe (South Galatia) that Paul planted during his first missionary journey (46-47 AD or 47-48 AD),²¹ the potential growth becomes compelling.

Finally, the text of 1 Peter suggests that the recipients of Peter’s epistle did not come to trust Jesus Christ through an incipient, patient modeling of Kingdom life, but

¹⁹ Carson et al., 369.

²⁰ Carson et al., 523.

²¹ Carson et al. 369

rather Peter refers to the “the *preaching* of the gospel” (διὰ τῶν εὐαγγελισαμενων, 1.12, emphasis mine) and “the word which *was preached* to you” (τὸ ῥῆμα τὸ εὐαγγελισθεν εἰς ὑμας, 1.25, emphasis mine). The letter’s recipients are a people who have come to trust Christ through a highly evangelistic, multiplicative, non-ordained led²² movement of the gospel, which was the norm for 1st century Christianity.²³

Stark (a social scientist and not a church historian) confirms this rate of growth through an arithmetic model. He estimates that the total population of Christ’s disciples was about 1400 in 50 AD. He goes on to make a compelling case that the growth rate was about 40% per decade or 3.42% per year, the same rate at which Mormonism has grown in the last 100 years.²⁴ If Stark is correct, then there are about 2200 disciples of Jesus Christ in the Empire in 64 AD when Peter penned his first epistle. Stark admits that these are estimates and that the majority of early growth was in Asia Minor, the destination for 1 Peter. When we assemble the Bible’s testimony about early Christian growth with Stark’s model we should imagine that there were several hundred or a thousand disciples “scattered” (διασπορᾶς) in rural areas meeting in house churches throughout these five provinces.²⁵

²² Beare, 103. “In the earliest times, these were hardly ‘orders’ in any formal sense, for men were not as a rule set apart by stated rites of consecration, or inhibited from the exercise of any function of ministry by the lack of ecclesiastical authorization.”

²³ Jobes, 33.

²⁴ Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 6-7.

²⁵ Stark, 10. John H. Elliott in *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, estimates a much higher concentration of about 40,000 believers in 67 AD. However, he does not describe the same rate of multiplication, suggesting that there are only 80,000 believers by 100 AD. This is a growth rate of 2.1% per year. While the truth is probably somewhere in the middle, it seems much more likely, based on the biblical testimony, that the growth rate was higher and the initial number of believers was lower (New York: Doubleday, 2000) 86-89.

So, while there is a gospel movement afoot, it is still very fragile. The total number of recipients may seem lower than someone might imagine for a circular letter sent to five provinces, this situation is probably exactly what gave occasion to the letter. Gentiles have been engaged with the gospel, some have trusted Christ, foundational discipleship is taking place, and new churches are being formed. Peter is writing to shore up Kingdom gains and propel the young disciples forward against what seems like overwhelming odds.

Karen Jobes argues for another possibility that explains the discrepancy between the breadth of the audience and its early date. She contends that Roman colonization played a significant role in saturating the provinces with believers who had trusted in Christ from other parts of the Empire like Rome.²⁶ If Jobes's detailed hypothesis about Roman colonization is correct, this might explain a higher concentration of disciples in Asia Minor than other parts of the Roman Empire in 64 AD. While we should not rule out the possibility that colonization brought some infusion of Christians into the five provinces mentioned, it is not the simplest explanation of rapid expansion. Furthermore, the Biblical data outlined above supports a first century gospel movement and has no mention of any Roman colonization efforts.

Essential to interpreting the book and the pericope 2.4-10 correctly is understanding the extent to which the intended audience was Jewish, Gentile or mixed. While Eusebius (263-339 AD) interpreted the letter as having been sent to "those of the

²⁶ Jobes, 28-41.

Hebrews of the dispersion,”²⁷ most modern scholars agree that the epistle has a primarily Gentile audience in mind. The clearest evidence for this audience is verse 10: “once you were not a people, now you are the people of God.” Based on the shared cultural and historical understanding of the Jewish people, no Jew would write to another Jew that they were “once not a people.” Surprisingly, in the same paragraph in chapter two, we have citations from four OT texts (Ex 19.6, Is 28.16, Ps 118.22, and Is 8.14) mixed into verses 4-8. What’s more, verse 9 is a powerful reference to Hosea 1.6-10, 2.23. If this letter is to Gentiles, why would Peter litter the passage with multiple and difficult Old Testament citations?²⁸ According to Michaels, “The best explanation of the data is that 1 Peter was written primarily to Gentile Christians in Asia Minor, but the author, for his own reasons, has chosen to address them as if they were Jews.”²⁹ Peter’s declaration that his audience is a “chosen people, royal priesthood, a holy nation” evokes an even more compelling identity shift when it becomes clear these are mostly Gentile believers!

Michaels suggests that Peter couches his epistle in diaspora letter motif because he is trying to retain his call to the Jews and not the Gentiles.³⁰ The suggestion falters on the grounds of historical context. It’s been 15 years since the Jerusalem council.

²⁷ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, quoted in Michaels, 3.4.2-3; cf 3.1.2.

²⁸ Michaels suggests these expressions do double duty “they rehearse the experience both of ancient Israel and the contemporary Gentile Christians in Asia Minor to whom the epistle was actually sent. I share his understanding.

²⁹ Michaels, xlvi. Perhaps Michaels overplays the ethnic implications and it would be better to say “as if they were the People of God included now with the Jews” which is more precisely what Peter is doing.

³⁰ Michaels xlviii.

Matters about Jew and Gentile relations have have a good start toward being solved, at least in Peter's mind. The concern here is no longer Christian and Jewish relations, but now Christian and Roman relations! Peter views *one* people of God, and a hostile world that has taken notice of their infantile, albeit exponential, growth. He expects these new converts to desire the "pure milk of the word" (λογικὸν ἄδολον γάλα) (2.2, KJV), which to them primarily means the Old Testament. His extensive use of the Old Testament is to be expected, because he is instructing the new converts about their place in redemptive history.

Some scholars raise questions about the letter's authorship and date because it seems to defy the agreement between Paul and Peter about their respective turfs: "they agreed that we [Paul and Barnabas] should go to the Gentiles, and they [Peter and James] to the Jews" (Gal 2.10). However, it is better to understand this agreement as a matter of focus and not of absolute boundaries.

When Peter authors his epistle, it's been at least 15 years since the Jerusalem council (AD 48-49),³¹ and things have changed. At some point Peter and John realize that the Gentile mission has grown to such an extent that they need to concern themselves with shepherding the vulnerable and diverse flock.³² Certainly Peter has already had some influence among the Gentiles because some people are following him when Paul writes to the Corinthian church in 55 AD (1 Cor 1.12).³³ What's more, Peter

³¹ Carson et al. 369 estimate 48-49 AD for the Jerusalem Council and there has been a case made above for 64 AD for 1 Peter.

³² Michaels xlviii.

³³ Hans Bayer, *Apostolic Bedrock: Christology, Identity, and Character Formation According to Peter's Canonical Testimony*, (Bletchley, Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2016), 197. Bayer demonstrates that Peter

tells the Jerusalem Council that “God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from *my lips* the message of the gospel” (Acts 15.7, emphasis mine).³⁴ In reality, this letter testifies to the amazing partnership between Peter and Paul in advancing God’s kingdom in the first century.

Finally, a survey of the text itself will help summarize what we can observe about the epistle’s recipients. We have dealt already with the term διασπορά but there is more to be gleaned from the terms “strangers” (παρεπίδημοι, 1.1, 2.11), “sojourners” (παροικία, 1.17), and “foreigners” (πάροικος, 2.11) that Peter uses to describe his audience. Elliott argues that the term παροικίας is a technical term to describe sojourning Roman workers. He suggests that their social status is higher than that of a total foreigner, but still not fully Roman citizens. He argues for a literal and technical sense of the word.³⁵ Achtemeier suggests that there is not sufficient evidence to make such a sharp technical term out of the word παροικίας.³⁶ Jobs sides with Achtemeier and argues for a metaphorical use of the word; however, she synthesizes the two sides saying: “Whatever metaphorical sense these terms carry for the Christian life need not exclude some literal sense related to the letter’s original historical circumstances.”³⁷ While there may be some formal social ostracization happening here, I contend it is

had certainly traveled through Asia Minor and played a role in establishing the churches to which he now writes. Carson et al. make a powerful case from external evidence dating 1 Corinthians very specifically to the fall of AD 55.

³⁴ Michaels xlvi.

³⁵ Elliott, 94.

³⁶ Achtemeier, 98.

³⁷ Jobs, 25. See also Carson et al. 649.

better to interpret παροίκους as a *metaphorically* alienated group of recipients which is in keeping with 2.11: “as aliens and strangers abstain from sinful desires which wage war against your soul.” Abstaining from sinful desires hardly seems to be the solution to a literal social ostracization. However, taken metaphorically as “aliens and strangers *in the world*” (NIV84, emphasis mine), abstaining from sinful desires makes perfect sense.

Implications of the Recipients as Outlined

There are several important implications to note about the audience from what I outlined above. First, the gospel has spread enough by 64 AD for the Christians to be an identifiable entity which to persecute. They are no longer a people that Rome can lump together with Jews as an irrelevant sect. Nero, looking for a scapegoat, did not blame the Jews. He specifically named the Christians.³⁸ Furthermore, Peter gives instructions about how to deal with suffering “as a Christian” (ὡς Χριστιανός, 4.16). The movement is at a fragile point: it has become just large enough to become identifiable, but just small enough to snuff out. The social and political pressure to conform to Roman practices is quickening.

Second, as noted earlier, this epistle aims to comfort and exhort the broadest specific audience in the New Testament. Peter is attempting to unify the “people of God” (λαὸς Θεοῦ, 1 Pet 2.10), but just as importantly he is presenting a unified structure that is submissive, culturally sensitive, yet always prepared “to give a reason for the hope that is in them” (ἀπολογία παντὶ τῷ αἰτοῦντι ὑμᾶς λόγον περὶ τῆς ἐν ὑμῖν

³⁸ Gonzalez, 45.

ἐλπίδος, 3.15) and “to declare” (ἐξαγγείλητε, 2.9) God’s praises to a hostile world in the same way the gospel had been declared to them (1.12, 25). If there was ever a time to tell the Church to forego its overt witness, it was then. But this is not Peter’s way, nor is it Jesus Christ’s. Hence this letter is about how to continue to build up and embolden God’s people toward his mission, in the face of persecution.

Finally, this letter is to a dispersed people. We have previously estimated that there are somewhere between 1,000 and 40,000 believers in the five provinces receiving Peter’s epistle. Elliott estimates that there 8.5 million residents³⁹ in Asia Minor around 17 BC. If this estimate remains relatively static until 64 AD, it means that for every 10,000 people there is somewhere between 1 and 50 disciples of Jesus Christ. This situation might not have felt so bleak if these believers were concentrated in Rome or Antioch, but when they are spread out throughout rural towns across five provinces the size of Montana (129,000 square miles),⁴⁰ the pressure to conform or hide must have been immense. Furthermore, their dispersed nature caused an even greater need for caring and qualified elders. There is not one concentrated flock to oversee. There are many small flocks requiring many competent leaders.

Peter gives us a hint at the purpose of his letter in 5.12 “I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it.” The problem in interpreting his statement is trying to identify what is the “this” to which Peter refers. Clearly, Peter wants his readers to know what the true grace of God

³⁹ Elliott, 84.

⁴⁰ Elliott, 84.

is, and then stand fast in it. Dissecting the letter to distill what constitutes the true grace of God is not so easy.

In light of the historical situation outline above, I suggest that Peter's idea of the true grace of God is: comforting the people of God, providing a comprehensive strategy to persevere as the people of God, exhorting the people of God to stay on mission, and reminding the leaders of God's people (elders)⁴¹ of their sober commitment to the younger people in their flocks.

Now, the prominence of 1 Peter 2.4-10 emerges. It culminates in a section on the identity of the people of God and reminds them of their calling to continue to declare God's praises in light of that identity. It dubs them *priests*, a moniker which carries strong Old Testament language indicating that they are to represent God to the world. The privilege *and* responsibility of representing the God of the universe empowers them as God's people. Their privilege and responsibility is off-set by a call to elders in 5.1-5, establishing a leadership structure that would protect its people, yet advance Christ's Kingdom in spite of their dispersion.

⁴¹ I will demonstrate in the exegesis of v.9 below that the only term 1 Peter knows for separating leaders from a flock that has the identity of priesthood (ἱεράτευμα, 2.5,9) is elders (πρεσβύτερος, 5.1).

III. Literary Context

Structure and Form

Most critical scholars agree that there is a significant shift in Peter's thinking between verses 10 and 11 of chapter 2.⁴² I refer to this shift as a major apex in this letter. It is an apex because it functions as the culmination of Peter's thinking on identity, but it is also the point in the letter around which his exhortation to persevere in the face of adversity hinges. The section of the letter from 1.1-2.10 could be described as birth in Christ (personal and corporate) and the section 2.11-5.14 could be described as behavior in Christ. Peter's call to the believers to submit (2.11-3.12), persevere through persecution (4.12-4.19), and hope in God's rewards in eternity (5.4) all stem from their standing as newborn people (1.3, 1.22, 2.2), God's priests (2.5,9), and his people (2.10).

When Peter concludes the first section of the letter on birth in Christ with "that you may declare (ἔξαγγελιητε) the praises of him who called you out of darkness and into his wonderful light" (2.9), he issues a controlling verb around which to understand the rest of the letter. The declaration of God's praises is both heard and demonstrated. And the message is always declared most clearly and powerfully when the two go hand in hand: the video must match the audio.⁴³ Therefore, the submission, perseverance, and hope that Peter calls for throughout the rest of the letter are all expressions of the

⁴² See Appendix 1 for a chart that compares my survey of this letter with Jobes, Michaels, and Elliott. All agree that there is an unmistakable shift at this point.

⁴³ I will argue later that in 2.9 Peter has most in mind the proclamation of the gospel message because it is the message that leads to the persecution, not the moral behavior.

declaration of God's glory. Peter captures this strategy most succinctly in 3.15 when he says "always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." Peter knows that if the disciples of Christ to whom he writes remain submissive to authorities (2.11-3.12, 5.5), rejoice in the face of persecution (4.13), and above all "love one another deeply" (4.8; cf. Jn 13.35), the pagans around them will be compelled to ask them about what drives them!

There is a second major contrast between the epistle's two sections that will help us properly understand chapter 2.4-10 and its place in the text. This is the contrast between being *chosen* and being *called*.⁴⁴ Peter addresses his epistle *ἐκλεκτοῖς* or "to the chosen ones" (1.1) and then he reiterates their identity as chosen (*ἐκλεκτον*) three times, in a very concentrated way, in chapter 2.4-10. Michaels suggests that this another reason to see 1.1-2.10 as one literary structure because the description of God's people as chosen serves as a literary *inclusio*.⁴⁵ Interestingly, after 2.4-10, Peter mentions the Church's chosen status only once more as a conclusionary remark (5.13).

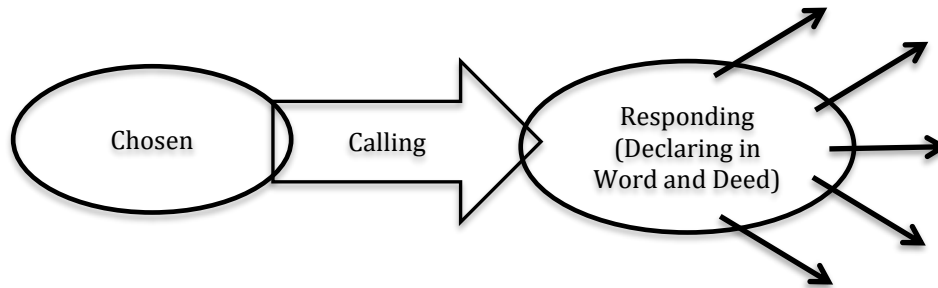
By contrast, Peter weaves the theme of calling (*καλεω* or *παρακαλεω*) throughout the entire book (1.15, 2.9, 2.11, 2.21, 5.1, 5.10, 5.12). Our status as the chosen people of God is critical to our understanding of our identity. But, our chosen-ness is static. Once God does the choosing, there is no undoing it. Calling, by contrast, is much more dynamic: it starts from our chosen-ness and leads to multiple responses or

⁴⁴ Elliott suggests that "Election rather than priesthood is [the passage's] central focus," 451. It is my contention that the election is to a priesthood that contains a critical calling. Emphasizing the election without the calling is likely to yield disciples who know what they are saved *from*, but struggle to grasp what they are saved *for*.

⁴⁵ Michaels, xxxiv.

calls throughout our lifetime; calling flows out of our identity. Five of the seven uses of *καλεω* in the book are divine passives.⁴⁶ That is they are passive constructions with the unnamed actor as God. Peter employs them to link the chosen nature of the people of God to their behavior in a hostile world (see Figure 1).⁴⁷

Figure 1: Identity, Call, Responding



The remaining two instances of calling are both first person active voice uses of the verb *παρακαλέω*, a related cognate of *καλέω*. The former has a broad swath of meanings revolving around the concept of calling. In its most genteel sense, it means “to ask to come and be present where the speaker is” or “to call to one’s side,” but it can just as easily mean to urge, exhort, implore or “to instill someone with courage.”⁴⁸

As we emerge from the apex at 2.10, Peter picks up in verse 11 with “Dear friends, I urge you (*παρακαλῶ*).” This is an unmistakable transition from *ὑμας καλέσαντοσεις* “the one who called you” in 2.9. Peter is bridging the birth of the people of God from 2.4-10 into the behavior of the people of God in the rest of the letter. Here,

⁴⁶ Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 437-438.

⁴⁷ Irving Jensen *Survey of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1978), 83. Jensen makes the sweeping observation that a major theme in Genesis is “a people chosen,” while Exodus it is “a people called.” Looking through the lens of this meta-narrative is significant for 1 Peter 2.4-10. It puts the weight of what Exodus 19.5-6, Peter’s main OT citation, on the call of the people of God, less than their chosen-ness

⁴⁸ BDAG s.v. *παρακαλέω* 765.

we also see the work of God in the divine passive partnered perfectly with his Holy-Spirit-led Apostle, Peter, in the present active first person. The weight of Peter's call to his people is that it has originated from God's call to His people.

Summary of Structure and Form

1 Peter is a letter that defies the linear and logical progression that we would expect in modern western correspondence. The letter works in a circular fashion developing themes like calling, releasing them, and then iteratively returning to them and developing them more deeply. However, given that Peter releases the concept of being chosen after 2.9 (see Appendix 1), but holds on to the theme of calling by God and his Apostle throughout the letter, we can identify that verse 10 is not a climax but an apex or a bridge in Peter's thought from statically being chosen and dynamically being called. Both are critical concepts and should be given equal weight.

Elliott captures the influx of these two concepts well:

“God's calling, like God's electing, with which 'call' is often associated, implies not only an invitation but also a determination of a course of life. It is stressed repeatedly in our letter as a motivation for Christian conduct and a reason for hope.”⁴⁹

However, the main critique of Elliott's synthesis of election and call is that while it details “motivation for Christian conduct and a reason for hope,” it seems to neglect the very explicit motivation for verbally “declaring” (ἐξαγγείλητε) God's praises. It is my suggestion that Peter's call goes far beyond moral behavior and calls a desperate people

⁴⁹ Elliott 440.

to an eternal mission. The goal of Peter's epistle is the advancement of God's kingdom.

Peter sees "Christian conduct and...hope" as a means for that goal.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Elliott, 440, 104. To be sure, Elliott captures the critical call to mission in 1 Peter (440, 104). The critique is merely that the emphasis of his interpretation is far too much on conduct and not nearly enough on mission, which I argue is the great aim of the epistle in spite of its extensive comment on household behavior.

III. Exegesis of 1 Peter 2.4-10

Literary Structure, Form, and Translation

Table 1. Translation

Greek ⁵¹	English
<p>⁴ Πρὸς ὃν προσερχόμενοι, λίθον ζῶντα, ὑπὸ ἀνθρώπων μὲν ἀποδοκιμασμένον, παρὰ δὲ θεῶ ἐκλεκτὸν ἔντιμον.</p>	<p>⁴As you approach toward him, [the] living stone, on the one hand rejected by men but on the other hand chosen by and honored in the sight of God</p>
<p>⁵ καὶ αὐτοὶ ὡς λίθοι ζῶντες οἰκοδομεῖσθε οἶκος πνευματικὸς εἰς ἱεράτευμα ἅγιον, ἀνενέγκαι πνευματικὰς θυσίας εὐπροσδέκτους θεῶ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.</p>	<p>⁵You yourselves, also as living stones, are being built as a spiritual household to be a Holy Priesthood [and] to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.</p>
<p>⁶ διότι περιέχει ἐν γραφῇ· Ἴδου τίθημι ἐν Σιών λίθον ἀκρογωνιαῖον ἐκλεκτὸν ἔντιμον, καὶ ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ' αὐτῷ οὐ μὴ καταισχυνηθῆ.</p>	<p>For it contains in Scripture: See, I lay in Zion a stone, a chosen and honored cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will <i>never</i> be put to shame.</p>
<p>⁷ ὑμῖν οὖν ἡ τιμὴ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν· ἀπιστοῦσιν δὲ λίθος ὃν ἀπεδοκίμασαν οἱ οἰκοδομοῦντες οὗτος ἐγενήθη εἰς κεφαλὴν γωνίας</p>	<p>Therefore, the honor [is] to you who believe. But, to those who do not believe, the very stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner</p>
<p>⁸ καὶ λίθος προσκόμματος καὶ πέτρα σκανδάλου· οἱ προσκόπτουσιν τῷ λόγῳ ἀπειθοῦντες· εἰς ὃ καὶ ἐτέθησαν.</p>	<p>and a stumbling stone and a divisive rock. They stumble, because they disobey the message, for which they also were destined.</p>
<p>⁹ Ὑμεῖς δὲ γένος ἐκλεκτόν, βασιλείον ἱεράτευμα, ἔθνος ἅγιον, λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν,</p>	<p>But you all [are] a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy ethnicity, a people for [God's] possession</p>

⁵¹ Kurt and Barbara Aland, J. Karavidopoulos, C.M. Martini, and B.M. Metzger, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th Edition (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012), 698-699. Text critical markers have been removed from this text. I accept the text as presented by the editors.

ὅπως τὰς ἀρετὰς ἐξαγγείλητε τοῦ ἐκ σκότους ὑμᾶς καλέσαντος εἰς τὸ θαυμαστὸν αὐτοῦ φῶς·	that you might declare the praises of the One who called you out of darkness into his amazing light.
¹⁰ οἱ ποτε οὐ λαὸς νῦν δὲ λαὸς θεοῦ, οἱ οὐκ ἠλεημένοι νῦν δὲ ἐλεηθέντες.	At one point [you all were not] a people. Now [you all are] the people of God. Those who had not received mercy [are] now those who have received mercy.

Modern commentators unanimously agree that 1 Peter 2.4-10 is a united pericope (See Appendix 1). However, they debate its internal structure. Peter’s repetition of building and rock metaphors, weaved together with at least six OT passages, evades being squeezed into a tight structure. The themes are obvious, but Peter’s organization and logic are elusive. What we can say for sure is that verses 4-5 (which allude to Exodus 19.5-6) and verses 9-10 (which quote Exodus 19.5-6) both speak to the corporate identity *and* purpose of God’s people. Verses 6-8 are an aside about the consequences of either rejecting or trusting in Jesus Christ, the living stone (see Appendix 3).⁵² Peter’s flow-of-thought here, as elsewhere in the epistle, is circular. He begins with the identity and purpose of God’s people in Christ (vv. 4-5) and circles back to that identity and purpose (vv. 9-10). Consequently, we must understand Peter’s main message to be the corporate identity and purpose of the people of God because it is the *repeated* message.

Furthermore, the controlling metaphor for the pericope is the people of God as a priesthood (ἱεράτευμα). It is the only title ascribed to God’s people that is repeated between verses 5-6 and 9-10, forming an *inclusio*. Because this title enters the text from

⁵² Michaels identifies this loose structure and calls it a “kind of chiasm” even though he does not give the possible chiasm in the text. For sure, the entire pericope cannot be squeezed into chiasmic form, but verses 6-8 do take chiasmic structure (see below and Appendix 3)

Exodus 19.5-6, a solid interpretation must treat the Exodus passage as the primary OT text around which the others swirl. While Psalm 117:22 LXX is quoted in its entirety, it belongs to the aside of verses 6-8 and is a supporting passage in the exegesis of Peter's epistle.

The structure of verses 6-8 are much more concrete. They form a chiasm that begins with the honor given to people who trust in Jesus Christ, the chief cornerstone (λίθον ἀκρογωνιαῖον), and end with the shame and stumbling assigned to those who reject the "head of the corner" (κεφαλὴν γωνίας). The central thought of the chiasm promises honor to those who trust in Christ. The chiasm is bracketed on each end by the verb τιθημι,⁵³ which has the range of meaning from "I lay," as it does in verse 6, or "I consign, appoint," as it does in verse 8.⁵⁴ In both instances, God is the actor: in the first case in the active voice, and in the second in the passive voice. His sovereignty is apparent: he both lays the cornerstone and superintends mankind's response. The text has been marked to contrast related terms in each line:

Table 2: Chiastic Structure, 1 Peter 2.6-8

A	6	διότι περιέχει	<u>ἐν γραφῇ</u> : ἰδοὺ	<u>τίθημι</u> ἐν Σιών	
B	λίθον	ἀκρογωνιαῖον	ἐκλεκτὸν	ἐντιμον,	
C	καὶ ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ' αὐτῷ οὐ μὴ καταισχυνηθῆ.				
D	7 ὑμῖν οὖν ἡ τιμὴ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν,				
C'	<u>ἀπειθοῦσιν</u> δὲ λίθος ὃν ἀπεδοκίμασαν οἱ οἰκοδομοῦντες,				
B'	οὗτος ἐγενήθη εἰς κεφαλὴν γωνίας ⁸ καὶ λίθος προσκόμματος καὶ πέτρα σκανδάλου				
A'	οἱ προσκόπτουσιν <u>τῷ λόγῳ</u> ἀπειθοῦντες εἰς ὃ καὶ ἐτέθησαν.				

⁵³ Elliott, 434.

⁵⁴ BDAG, s.v. τιθημι; 1003 n1, n5.

In this light, the purpose of the aside in verses 6-8 emerges: to reassure suffering believers that they will be honored, while those who reject the message will receive God's sovereign judgment.

Grammatical Analysis

There are three main actors in this passage. The first is God the Father who, though only mentioned by name twice, is very active through divine passive verbs (vv. 5, 7, 8) and the dative case (vv. 4-5).⁵⁵ The second are those who do not believe (ἀπιστοῦσιν, v. 7). They are described as builders (οἱ οἰκοδομοῦντες, vv. 7-8) who reject the precious stone and stumble. Finally, the people of God, named indirectly four times by an implied second person plural (ὕμεῖς), play an active role only once in verse 9: "that you might declare" (ἐξαγγεῖλητε). The other three times, even though they are grammatically the nominative subject of the sentences, the actions they perform are passive: they receive identity.⁵⁶ Notice the four instances of ὕμεῖς in the left column of Appendix 3.

The nouns in this passage clue us to the doctrine that Peter wants to teach us.⁵⁷ In particular, he wants to teach the identity of the people of God and show the continuity between Israel and the Church. As mentioned in the introduction, there are

⁵⁵ Verse 4 is a dative of agency, "by God chosen and precious." He is acting by making the cornerstone precious. Verse 5 is a pure dative, "acceptable to God." God is acting by receiving spiritual sacrifices. Jesus seems to be acted on more than acting in the passage, but Jesus and the Holy Spirit are certain active in any work of God the Father.

⁵⁶ Notice the four instances of ὕμεῖς in the left column of the grammatical outline in Appendix 2.

⁵⁷ Walter Henrichsen, *Studying, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Lamplighter Books, 1990), 32, 92.

seven key nouns that impart identity to the people of God: “spiritual house” (οἶκος πνευματικός, v. 5), “holy priesthood” (ιεράτευμα ἅγιον, v. 5), “chosen people” (γένος ἐκλεκτόν, v. 9), “royal priesthood” (βασιλείον ιεράτευμα, v. 9), “holy nation” (ἔθνος ἅγιον, v. 9), “people belonging to God” (λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν, v. 9), and “people of God” (λαὸς θεοῦ, v. 10).

Weaved together with these identities are nine finite verbs⁵⁸ in the pericope: “are being built” (οἰκοδομεῖσθε, v. 5), “contains” (περιέχει, v. 6), “lay” (τίθημι, v. 6), “be ashamed” (καταισχυνοῦν, v. 6), “rejected” (ἀπεδοκίμασαν, v. 7), “became” (ἐγενήθη, v. 7), “stumble” (προσκόπτουσιν, v. 8), “are destined” (ἐτέθησαν, v. 8), and “might declare” (ἐξαγγείλητε, v. 9). While the nouns emphasize Peter’s doctrine (what he wants to teach the recipients), the verbs emphasize God’s action throughout history and his audience’s (and our) appropriate responses.⁵⁹ Of these nine finite verbs, seven are indicative and two are subjunctive.

⁵⁸ There are ten participles and one infinitive. The finite verbs are the most important because they drive the main actions, while the participles act adverbially in reference to the finite verbs. Or they act attributively or substantively, virtually abandoning their verbal status. Hence, we focus on the finite verbs to get a glimpse at the action!

⁵⁹ Walter Henrichsen and Gayle Jackson, *Studying Interpreting and Applying the Bible*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 32. Henrichsen and Jackson observe that if a passage is littered with nouns it likely wants to impart doctrine to the reader and if it is littered with verbs it wants to exhort us to action. Here Peter gives us a potent *mélange* of nouns and verbs. The passage teaches a doctrine of identity in Christ that culminates in an exhortation to “declare the praises of him who called you...” I acknowledge that Henrichsen and Jackson may over generalize with this rule of interpretation, but it provides some utility here to see how Peter is using powerful identities (nouns) that result in compelling calls to action (verbs).

Table 3: Finite Verb Analysis

A Grammatical Analysis of the Finite Verbs in 1 Peter 2.4-10					
Ref	Subject	Finite Verb	Voice	Mood	Actor
5	ὕμεις	οἰκοδομεῖσθε	Passive	Indicative	God-Divine Passive
6	αὐτά	περιέχει	Active	Indicative	God-Passive Sense ⁶⁰
6	ἐγώ	τίθημι	Active	Indicative	God
6	ὁ πιστευων	καταισχυθη	Passive	Subjunctive	God-Divine Passive
7	οἱ οἰκοδομοῦντες	ἀπεδοκίμασαν	Active	Indicative	The Builders
7	οὗτος	ἐγενήθη	Passive	Indicative	God-Divine Passive
8	οἱ οἰκοδομοῦντες	προσκόπτουσιν	Active	Indicative	The Builders
8	αὐτά, ὅ	ἐτέθησαν	Passive	Indicative	God-Divine Passive
9	ὕμεις	ἐξαγγείλητε	Active	Subjunctive	The People of God

The indicative verbs can be further subdivided into verbs that describe God’s action and verbs that describe the builder’s action. Five verbs describe God’s action, and two describe those of the builders.

The two subjunctive verbs are very different. The double negative subjunctive expression at the conclusion of verse 6, “will *never* be put to shame” (οὐ μὴ καταισχυθη), functions to remove all doubt, instead of the normal subjunctive suggestion that something is probable.⁶¹ There is no possibility here that those who trust in Jesus Christ, the cornerstone, will *ever* be put to shame.

The final subjunctive verb comes in verse 9: “that you might declare” (ἐξαγγείλητε). As previously mentioned, this is the one time that “you all” (implied

⁶⁰ Michaels suggests that this construction is virtually the same as the perfect passive scriptural formula “it is written” (γεγραπται), and it best translated “it is contained” when it is used intransitively as it is here.

⁶¹ Andreas J. Köstenberger et al, *Going Deeper with New Testament Greek: An Intermediate Study of the Grammar and Syntax of the New Testament*. (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2016), 206.

ὕμεις) is the actor in the passage. When coupled with the subjunctive, we see that in Peter’s mind the one response⁶² that he expects from his audience is in question: that they “*might* declare the praises of the one who called” them (v. 9, emphasis mine). The pericope’s grammar brings out the main application that Peter wants to drive home for his audience: declare his praises!⁶³

The grammar sheds light on what Peter is doing. Across these seven verses in his letter, he knits together the identity of the people of God with the purpose of the people of God: to declare his praises to the world. In this light, the missional emphasis of this passage, motivated through a long-standing identity as the people of God, emerges.

Verse by Verse Analysis

<p>⁴ Πρὸς ὃν προσερχόμενοι, λίθον ζῶντα, ὑπὸ ἀνθρώπων μὲν ἀποδοκιμασμένον παρὰ δὲ θεῷ ἐκλεκτὸν ἔντιμον</p>	<p>⁴As you approach toward him, [the] living stone, on the one hand rejected by men but on the other hand chosen by and precious in the sight of God</p>
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⁶² You can argue that Peter also expects the audience “to offer spiritual sacrifices” (ἀνεύγκαι πνευματικὰς θυσίας, 5). Grammatically, this is not the emphasized action, but the emphasized purpose, because it is an infinitive of purpose. Consequently, offering spiritual sacrifices is the broad application that Peter wants to emphasize for his audience, but the declaration of God’s praises is his more immediate concern.

⁶³ Craig L. Blomberg and Jennifer Foutz Markley, *A Handbook of New Testament Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 251. Blomberg and Markley make the point that if we will hear from God correctly and make appropriate application, we must understand what the application was for the original audience. The conclusion of the grammatical analysis helps us here.

Πρὸς ὃν προσερχόμενοι, λίθον ζῶντα,

The typical English translation of verse 4 “coming to him” (πρὸς ὃν προσερχόμενοι)⁶⁴ misses two important Greek nuances. The first nuance is that the preposition “to” (πρός) occurs twice, not once like in the English translation. In the first instance Peter uses it as a pure preposition combined with a locative dative, and in the second instance as the cognate verb “προσ-ερχόμενοι.” The more common ἐρχομαι⁶⁵ certainly would have done here to communicate “coming,” but Peter wants to say more. Προσερχομαι carries the sense of “approach or enter into a deity’s presence” that ἐρχομαι does not.⁶⁶ Προσερχομαι also carries a connotation associated with the OT sacrificial system. It appears most famously in Hebrews 4.16: “Let us boldly approach (προσερχώμεθα) the throne of Grace.”

The participle is adjectival and it describes the implied subject “you” (ὕμεῖς) of the phrase “you are being built” (οἰκοδομεῖσθε) in verse 5 (See Appendix 2). This should be taken as “As you approach toward him...you are being built.” Because it is a present participle, its action is often contemporaneous with the main verb (“as you approach”).⁶⁷ Coming to Christ necessarily involves him building us into a corporate spiritual household, and no individual person is built spiritually without coming to Christ.

⁶⁴ NASB, HCSB, NKJV, for example.

⁶⁵ In the New Testament προσερχομαι occurs 86 times, while ἐρχομαι occurs 643 times.

⁶⁶ BDAG s.v. προσερχομαι; 878.

⁶⁷ Wallace, 625.

The second nuance is the emphasis that comes with Peter's use of the preposition "πρός." In this case πρὸς refers to a spatial usage, literally "as you approach *toward* him."⁶⁸ Michaels suggests that the use of the double πρὸς "is therefore best understood as a kind of summary of the Christian mission (particularly in Asia Minor): 'as more and more of you come to him.'"⁶⁹ On the other hand, Selwyn suggests that it is best rendered "coming to stay."⁷⁰ Both suggestions are helpful, but tough to defend definitively. There seems to be a lot more merit to Michaels's suggestion because it emphasizes the continuous and plural nature of the participle: two aspects that are unmistakably present in the Greek.

What we can say for sure is that Peter has in mind the direct approach to Jesus by every disciple in the five provinces. An OT view of approaching Christ through a human priest intermediary is ruled out. Peter's emphasis on approaching "him," Christ, directly is synonymous with coming directly to God the Father. Jobes rightly concludes: "For Peter, the [OT] exhortation to 'come to God' is achieved through coming to Jesus Christ through faith."⁷¹ Peter's diction and grammar demonstrate that he has in mind the physical and privileged approach to God that formerly only OT priests had.

Here we begin to see what Peter means by "you are a holy priesthood" (v. 5) and you are a "royal priesthood" (v. 9). For Peter the doctrine of "the priesthood of the

⁶⁸ Wallace, 380.

⁶⁹ J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, World Biblical Commentary vol. 49, (Waco: Word Books, 1988), 96.

⁷⁰ E. G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes and Essays* (New York: St. Marten's Press, 1964), 158.

⁷¹ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 145 (in light of Psalm 38.5 LXX)

believer” is better termed “the priesthood of *every* believer” because it invites “you all” to come directly to God by faith.⁷²

Peter introduces a decisive discontinuity from Old Testament theology. Whereas the descendants of Aaron were the only ones who could directly *approach toward* God in the Old Testament (Nu 16.10, 40),⁷³ Peter fleshes out, in doctrinal form, the teaching he received from his and our Lord on the eve of his crucifixion: “I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf, no the Father himself loves you because you have loved me” (Jn 16.26, NIV). This is the *privilege* of the priesthood. Later, I will demonstrate from this passage that the *responsibility* of the “priesthood” is to represent God to the lost world around them, and this is decidedly continuous with the OT general priesthood.⁷⁴

In truth, this direct approach has been God’s way for the majority of human history. From Cain and Abel (Gen 4.3-5) through the Patriarchs (Gen 22.2, 35.14, Gen 46.1), God’s people made their own sacrifices without a human mediator. Only after the

⁷² Elliott firmly refutes Luther’s doctrine of the Priesthood of the Believer on the grounds that the passage does not emphasize priesthood but the election and holiness of God’s people (449-455). Regardless of the extent to which all believers are personally priests and what that exactly means, one thing we must insist is that each disciple of Jesus Christ may and must appropriate a personal relationship with God, mediated only by Jesus Christ. A reader can establish this doctrine from this passage alone, but it is also affirmed in the rest of the New Testament (Jn 16.26; Heb 4.16, 7.25).

⁷³ In the LXX of Numbers 16.10 the author writes “προσάγω” but in v. 40 he writes “προσερχόμαι.” The sense of approaching God in formal ritual fashion is present in both verses.

⁷⁴ D. A. Hubbard, “Priests and Levites,” *The New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed, edited by J.D. Douglas et al., (Downer’s Grove: IVP Academic, 1996), 961. The NT teaching on priesthood includes coming to God directly through Christ, offering spiritual sacrifices and declaring his praises. *pace* Forbes, 68 who understands the doctrine of the “priesthood of the believer” to only refer to the *privilege* and not the *responsibility*.

Exodus (1445 BC)⁷⁵ and until the crucifixion of Christ (30 AD),⁷⁶ did God's people have a human priest to intercede on their behalf.⁷⁷ One way to look at it is to say that the period of the Levitical Priesthood is discontinuous with the rest of redemptive history.⁷⁸ At any rate, Peter's point here is that if you want to be built into a spiritual house, you will continuously come toward and approach Jesus Christ *directly*.

Finally, in the first half of verse 4, Peter introduces the stone and building metaphors that dominate the passage, when he names Jesus Christ the "living stone" (λίθον ζῶντα). There is a good bit of debate on the origin of Peter's complicated and powerful metaphor. Some suggest that the Jews had an understanding of the Messiah as a chosen cornerstone before the teachings of Jesus Christ, and that the Qumran community applied Old Testament stone passages to themselves.⁷⁹ However, in this case, the simple explanation is the best: "The stone tradition goes back to Jesus's words."⁸⁰ Peter is recalling the clear teaching of his Lord that he is the cornerstone which the builders rejected (Mk 12.10, Matt 21.42, Lk 20.17). Peter has been passing this messianic teaching on from the very outset of his ministry (Acts 4.10). What we will ultimately get in this passage is Peter's full synthesis of all the significant Old

⁷⁵ Irving L. Jensen, *Jensen's Survey of the Old Testament*, (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1978), 98.

⁷⁶ Carson et al., 127.

⁷⁷ It's interesting to note how severely the Covenant Community treated attempts to bypass the tabernacle and High Priest to interact with God. See, for example, Numbers 16 and Joshua 22.16, 23.

⁷⁸ Melchizedek may be an exception here (Gen 14.18; Heb 5-7), but it is hard to say based on so little information in Genesis.

⁷⁹ Jobes, 147. See also Michaels, 96-97 on Qumran's understanding of stone and building language and the teachings of Christ.

⁸⁰ Jobes 146.

Testament passages on stone and building metaphors. He broadens Jesus's application from the Jewish spiritual leaders of his day to all of humanity.

ὑπὸ ἀνθρώπων μὲν ἀποδοκιμασμένον παρὰ δὲ θεῶ ἐκλεκτὸν ἔντιμον

The remainder of verse 4 draws attention to the divisiveness of the person of Jesus Christ set up by the “on the one hand...on the other hand construction (μὲν...δὲ).⁸¹ He details the two polarized views of the stone as either “rejected by men” (ὑπὸ ἀνθρώπων ἀποδοκιμασμένον) or “chosen and honored in the sight of God” (παρὰ θεῶ ἐκλεκτὸν ἔντιμον).⁸² The παρὰ + dative construction is best rendered “in the sight of.”⁸³ The sense here is that two different entities can look on Jesus Christ and come away with radically different views: honored or rejected.

The divisiveness of Jesus Christ marks Peter's missional approach and counsel to the churches in the five provinces. They are to go to great ends to “live in harmony with one another” (3.8), even to the point of submitting to “every authority instituted among men,” recognizing the emperor, who is burning Christians alive in Rome, as “the supreme authority” (2.13). However, the one area on which they must courageously be divisive is the person of Jesus Christ, the “living stone” which is precious in God's sight. Peter emphasizes Jesus's role as the divider of people (cf. Matt 10:32-39; Mk 4.10-12; Lk 2.34-35, 12.51; Jn 1.11-12, 6.66, 7.12-13, 7.43, 9.16, 10.19).

⁸¹ BDAG s.v. μὲν, 629.

⁸² See verse 8 for how Peter uses ἀποδοκιμάζω in Ps 118.22 LXX to strengthen his argument that Jesus Christ is the rejected cornerstone.

⁸³ BDAG s.v. παρὰ, Elliott 417.

The implications of this divisiveness become clear in verse 5.

<p>⁵ καὶ αὐτοὶ ὡς λίθοι ζῶντες οἰκοδομεῖσθε οἶκος πνευματικὸς εἰς ἱεράτευμα ἅγιον, ἀνενέγκαι πνευματικὰς θυσίας εὐπροσδέκτους θεῷ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ·</p>	<p>⁵You yourselves, also as living stones, are being built, as a spiritual household to be a Holy Priesthood [and] to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.</p>
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καὶ αὐτοὶ ὡς λίθοι ζῶντες

The αὐτοὶ here is the intensive usage,⁸⁴ and it emphasizes the implied subject of the verb οἰκοδομεῖσθε. When it is coupled with the adjunctive καί,⁸⁵ it renders “you *yourselves, also* as living stones.” The effect here is to intimately link the divisive stone, Jesus Christ, to his followers (cf. Jn 15.20). By implication now, the persecuted disciples in Asia Minor must be willing to call others to Christ, through their lives and speech, and let God divide them. The result is persecution from those who find themselves on the wrong side of the stone (cf. 1 Pet 2.21 ff, 4.12). Jobes captures this well. Their persecution is the bi-product of effective mission:

The living stones will suffer as the Living Stone has suffered, not in spite of being chosen by God but *because* they are chosen by God. The experience and destiny of those who come to Christ are bound up with the experience and destiny of Christ himself.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Wallace, 349.

⁸⁵ Wallace, 671.

⁸⁶ Jobes, 148.

οἰκοδομεῖσθε οἶκος πνευματικὸς

“You are being built into a spiritual household” (οἰκοδομεῖσθε οἶκος πνευματικὸς) is an interesting expression because of its redundancy and grammar.⁸⁷ The verb οἰκοδομεω could have stood alone to mean being built into a building, without any object.⁸⁸ However, Peter includes οἶκος as the verb’s object. The difficulty is that he includes it in the nominative case instead of the normal accusative (οἶκον) for a direct object.

Best and Elliott resolve this by suggesting that οἶκος is not the object of οἰκοδομεῖσθε, but the subject of a new sentence which needs an implied verb: “You are being built. [You are] a spiritual house.”⁸⁹ However, this explanation forces the Greek language to be less flexible than it really is. Michaels rightly suggests the construction is either a predicate nominative or a nominative in apposition.⁹⁰ Wallace’s advanced grammar supports the nominative in apposition. He holds that it is a common practice to use the passive of some transitive verbs to link subjects as predicate nominatives.⁹¹

This odd usage is not Peter’s less than stellar Greek. He is making two subtle points. First, the nominative in apposition link between the implied subject ὑμεῖς and

⁸⁷ Grammatically, the form οἰκοδομεῖσθε could be an imperative, but the syntactical construction just does not work here. This verb must be an indicative and is best as a passive (Michaels 97, Elliott 409). However, we should not eliminate the possibility of middle voice. The responsibility of “being built” and sanctification is an inseparable God-man task. Peter shows evidence of both sides in the letter (cf. 1.3 and 1.22, 2.1).

⁸⁸ BDAG, s.v. οἰκοδομεω; 696 n1bβ.

⁸⁹ Ernest Best, *1 Peter*, New Century Bible (London: Blundell House, 1971), 101; Elliott, 412.

⁹⁰ Michaels, 100.

⁹¹ Wallace, 41.

οἶκος strengthens their connection. The effect of putting the words in apposition makes them a convertible proposition. It is almost as if there is an equals sign: ὑμεῖς = οἶκος.⁹²

Second, the intransitive use of οἰκοδομεῖσθε (without an object) would not make Peter's point. Peter wants to make sure that his readers understand that they are being built *not* into a building or house, but into a household (cf 2 Sam 7, 1 Cor 3.16). Just like the word *house* does in English, the Greek word οἶκος carries two senses: a building and a family. An example of the latter is "the house of York," by which we mean York's extended family, or household. By attaching the adjective πνευματικὸς, Peter ensures we understand this as an invisible relational description. It is a family household not of flesh and blood, but of Spirit (cf. Jn 3.6).

In this light, I reject interpretations that suggest the people of God are being built into a temple.⁹³ While Elliott champions the understanding of "household" for οἶκος, he overreaches by suggesting that this household refers to the place of the Holy Spirit's dwelling. As admirable as his interpretation is, we must be satisfied to say with Michaels that οἶκος refers to: "a community belonging uniquely to God and to Jesus Christ."⁹⁴

There is no other biblical name for a community belonging uniquely to God than a church. While the Greek word for church, ἐκκλησία, does not appear in 1 Peter, there is no doubt that Peter is building the corporate identity of the Church in this passage.

⁹² Wallace, 41-48.

⁹³ Best, 101; Michaels, 271. The previous context of stones does not mean that οἶκος is a building or a temple. The stones in verse 5 are just as metaphorical as the household.

⁹⁴ Michaels, 100. Also Selwyn, 281-285.

Peter instills both personal and corporate identity. He is in effect saying, “as you *individual* priests come to Jesus you are being built into his *corporate* Church.” Elliott would have us understand identity in this passage as only corporate because the word “priesthood” (ἱερατεῦμα) is a collective term,⁹⁵ but he is splitting linguistic hairs. There are no corporate identities a person holds that are devoid of personal identity. I cannot be part of a family and not a family member, I cannot be in the Church and not a disciple, and I cannot be a member of a priesthood and not a priest.⁹⁶ Identity is both personal and corporate here, as everywhere.

Furthermore, when Peter says οἶκος—community or household—he means the Church universal (cf. 1 Tim 3.15). In 1 Peter 4.17, Peter uses an expression similar to “spiritual household” (οἶκος πνευματικὸς) when he says “For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God”⁹⁷ (του οἴκου του θεου). The judgment here is a judgment of all God’s people. So, when we read the prepositional phrase “with us” it suggests that the household in 4.17 is the people of God as a whole. As Michaels argues, this is our best clue to the extent Peter has in mind when he says “spiritual household”

⁹⁵ John Elliott, *1 Peter*, The Anchor Bible, (New York: Random House, 2000), 420.

⁹⁶ Colin J. Bulley, *The priesthood of some believers : developments from the general to the special priesthood in the Christian literature of the first three centuries*, (Waynesboro, Ga. : Paternoster Press, 2000). Bulley concludes “This survey of the relevant NT material has shown that a priesthood of church leaders separate or different from that of the Christian community is absent from the earliest church’s writings. It has also shown that ideas are present in the NT which tell against the presence of a priestly group within the church”, 48. While Bulley is arguing that there is no place for a special priesthood in the NT, it follows that every disciple must therefore be an individual priest and part of a corporate priesthood.

⁹⁷ My translation.

in 2.5.⁹⁸ Peter is connecting the “scattered” (διασπορᾶς) into a unified corporate identity, and I will demonstrate, he is putting them on a unified corporate mission.

The symbolism of “living stones...being built into a spiritual household” (λίθοι ζῶντες οἰκοδομεῖσθε οἶκος πνευματικὸς), often gets inappropriately mixed into the aside (vv. 6-8) of this pericope. The title “living stone” (λίθον ζῶντα, v. 4) for Christ and “living stones” (λίθοι ζῶντες, v.5) for his followers are metaphors.⁹⁹ Peter takes the title of “living stone” for Christ in v. 4 and expands it into the discussion of the “cornerstone” (ἀκρογωνιαῖον v. 6) and the “head of the corner” (κεφαλὴν γωνίας v. 7) that appear in v.6-8.¹⁰⁰ What we are left with is very complicated language that mixes titles for Christ and His people through metaphor and reality, the visible and the invisible. The chart below untangles the strings:

Table 4: Building Titles for Christ and God’s People in 1 Pet 2.4-10

Ref	Title	Christ	His People	Translation	Relationships?
4	λίθον ζῶντα	X		[the] living stone	Invisible
4	ἐκλεκτὸν ἔντιμον		X	chosen by and honored in the sight of God	Invisible
5	λίθοι ζῶντες		X	living stones	Visible
5	οἶκος πνευματικὸς		X	spiritual household	Invisible
5	ἱεράτευμα ἅγιον		X	holy priesthood	Invisible
6	ἐν Σιών λίθον	X		in Zion a stone	Invisible
6	ἀκρογωνιαῖον ἐκλεκτὸν ἔντιμον,	X		a chosen and precious cornerstone	Invisible

⁹⁸ Michaels, 271-2.

⁹⁹ Technically speaking, “living stones” is a simile because of the “as” (ὡς. v.5). When there is no direct symbolism, but the use of “as” or “like,” the comparison is a simile not a metaphor.

¹⁰⁰ While these are clearly different terms for building stones, the exact difference is unknown. Most likely they both refer to a stone at the foundation of a building that supports the weight. The terms should be considered synonym. See Elliott, 425.

Ref	Title	Christ	His People	Translation	Relationships?
7	λίθος ὃν ἀπεδοκίμασαν οἱ οἰκοδομοῦντες	X		stone the builders rejected	Invisible
7	κεφαλὴν γωνίας.		X	head of the corner	
9	γένος ἐκλεκτόν		X	chosen race	Invisible
9	βασιλείον ἱεράτευμα		X	royal priesthood	Invisible
9	ἔθνος ἅγιον		X	holy nation	Invisible
9	λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν		X	people destined for vindication	Invisible
10	λαὸς θεοῦ		X	People of God	Invisible

The title “living stones” (λίθοι ζῶντες) is a metaphor, but it does express *visible* relationships between stones (the people of God) and *the* cornerstone (Christ). The relationship between stones can be seen in the metaphor. This is the purpose of the metaphor; it gives the churches in Asia Minor something concrete and visible to wrap their minds around. The other titles all express spiritual and relational realities that are *invisible*. For example, we cannot see our shared relationship as the people of God, but it is a *real* relationship.

Although it is tempting to tie the title “spiritual house” (οἶκος πνευματικὸς v.5) into the term “living stones” (λίθοι ζῶντες), because they both refer to buildings, it is hermeneutically unwarranted.¹⁰¹ As noted above, the term here is not a second metaphor for the building of God’s people.¹⁰² Peter means literally God’s *household* or His people.

¹⁰¹ Elliott, 417-418 against Ernest Best, *1 Peter*, The New Century Bible Commentary (London: Blundell House, 1971), 101.

¹⁰² Elliott 417.

Furthermore, the effect of all this is that we must draw clear parallel lines in Peter's thinking between verses 5 and 6, and 8 and 9 (see Appendix 3). Any attempt to connect the building and stone metaphors for Jesus Christ used in the aside of verses 6-8 to a metaphorical identity of God's people as a building or temple is inappropriate exegesis. Verses 9-10 are a specific explanation of general statements presented in verses 4-5 and they should be interpreted virtually devoid of the intervening aside (vv. 6-8).

εἰς ἱεράτευμα ἅγιον, ἀνευέγκαι πνευματικὰς θυσίας εὐπροσδέκτους θεῷ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

The next two phrases in verse 5 reinforce the idea that the spiritual household (οἶκος πνευματικός) is a community of people. These phrases reveal broad purposes for the household: (1) "to be a holy priesthood" (εἰς ἱεράτευμα ἅγιον) and (2) "to offer spiritual sacrifices" (ἀνευέγκαι πνευματικὰς θυσίας). The first of these purposes creatively employs the preposition εἰς. BDAG gives us a range of possible meanings for its use, I have selected the ones that I think are possibilities:¹⁰³

- a. "of entry into a state of being with verbs of going, coming, leading, etc. used in a figurative sense" "to be a holy priesthood" (NIV, ESV, NET)
- b. "of change from one state to another with verbs of changing "becoming a holy priesthood"
- d. "with to vocation, use, or end indicated *for, as*" for [the purpose of being] a holy priesthood (HCSB, NASB)
- e. "with the result of an action or condition indicated *into*" being built into a holy priesthood." Peter uses εἰς this way in 2.2: "grow into salvation."

¹⁰³ BDAG 290, #4

I have selected letter a. as my translation,¹⁰⁴ but it is not a choice against the other possibilities. I suggest that Peter chooses εἰς to bring the full range of the possibilities above. The holy priesthood is something that disciples become at conversion, something they are as they walk with him, and the purpose they fulfill in the mission of God.¹⁰⁵ As Peter introduces the language of priest (ἱεράτευμα) the allusion to Exodus 19.6 and God's covenant with Israel is unmistakable. I will exegete this term more fully in verse 9 where it is repeated. Right now, it is enough to underscore that the term "priest" in Exodus 19.6 (יִהְיֶה, ἱεράτευμα (LXX)) speaks to "Israel's collective identity as the elect and holy people of God the king."¹⁰⁶

The second broad purpose Peter gives to the spiritual household is "to offer spiritual sacrifices" (ἀνενεγκαι πνευματικὰς θυσίας). ἀνενεγκαι is an infinitive of purpose here, driving home why the "spiritual household" exists.¹⁰⁷ However, it is less clear what exactly these spiritual sacrifices are now that the Old Testament sacrificial system has been abolished. Elliott insists that these spiritual sacrifices should be understood as "praise and thanksgiving" in light of 1 Peter 2.9 "that you may *declare the praises of Him...*" He refutes Luther's concept that the sacrifice is of the priest himself in

¹⁰⁴ Forbes, 62; Wallace 369-70. Forbes points out that Peter prefers this "telic" use of εἰς throughout the letter, lending to its credibility as the way he uses it here. Wallace calls this use, more simply, "purpose." To draw out this understanding of εἰς in this context, one could translate "in order to be a holy priesthood." Probably also in 2.9.

¹⁰⁵ Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (New York: American Bible Society, 1994), 619. There are some witnesses that omit εἰς "probably because its presence seemed to imply that the Christians were not already priests" but the overwhelming volume of manuscripts including κ A B and C all testify to its presence. "Thus ἱεράτευμα is not merely synonymous with οἶκος, but designates the purpose for which the 'spiritual house' exists" Michaels, 93. See also Elliott, 418.

¹⁰⁶ Elliott, 419.

¹⁰⁷ Wallace, 590.

consecration to God. But he accepts Romans 12.1 (“offer your bodies as a living sacrifice (θυσία) as a key interpretive verse for “spiritual sacrifice” here. But Elliott stops short by saying this only applies to moral behavior.¹⁰⁸

Best understands “spiritual sacrifices” to be a general term, just as it is in Romans 12.1¹⁰⁹ But Achtemeier offers the best explanation when he suggests that the spiritual sacrifices are the priests declaration of God’s praises to the world around them, appealing to 2.9b as the function of the priesthood. While Elliott recognizes this, he gives the impression that the praises might be our singing about God in the gathered community. While that is not a bad application of what it means to offer “spiritual sacrifices,” it falls short of what Peter has in mind by the word “declare” (ἐξαγγέλλω) in 2.9b. In summary, I suggest understanding spiritual sacrifices as the priests themselves who are giving themselves to the cause of declaring Christ’s Kingdom in the world—and this includes the totality of their character and lifestyle.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Elliott, 421-2.

¹⁰⁹ Best, 104.

¹¹⁰ Scot McKnight, *1 Peter*, NIV Application Commentary, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 107.

<p>⁶ διότι περιέχει ἐν γραφῇ· Ἰδοὺ τίθημι ἐν Σιών λίθον ἀκρογωνιαῖον ἐκλεκτὸν ἔντιμον, καὶ ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ’ αὐτῷ οὐ μὴ καταισχυνηθῆ.</p>	<p>For it contains in Scripture: See, I lay in Zion a stone, a chosen and honored cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will <i>never</i> be put to shame.</p>
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διότι περιέχει ἐν γραφῇ·

Here we begin the aside of verses 6-8 that constitute “the most complete collection of NT references to the stone passages of the OT.”¹¹¹ This aside is designed to instill a deep motivation to persevere in the face of adversity using honor-shame language. Those who trust in Christ receive great honor, and those who disbelieve will be shamed—even if it momentarily appears the opposite is true. The assurance of this promise is the believer’s unity with Christ, who underwent great shame to be raised to great honor.

A literal translation of this first phrase is “For it contains in *writing*.” Peter’s formula for introducing scripture is rarer than the typical language for an Old Testament introduction: γέγραπται (“It has been written”; 67 times in the NT). However, the word γραφῆ almost always refers to the Old Testament, as it does here with Isaiah 28.16, Ps 118.22 [Heb 117.22] and Isaiah 8.14 following. Therefore, it is best to understand the word γραφή as “Scripture.”¹¹²

¹¹¹ Jobes, 153.

¹¹² Elliott, 423; Best 105; Greg Forbes, *1 Peter*, (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2014), 63.

Ἴδου τίθημι ἐν Σιών λίθον ἀκρογωνιάϊον ἐκλεκτὸν ἔντιμον,

Peter begins his citation from the LXX of Isaiah 28.16. There are some minor discrepancies between the LXX as we have it and what Peter quotes here, but they are not so egregious to be explained by small textual variants in the 1st century.¹¹³ λίθος refers to a shaped stone as opposed to πέτρα which is an uncut rock, the word from which Jesus drew to name Simon-Peter (Matt 16.18).¹¹⁴ Peter makes no mention of himself as a rock, even though he could have in light of the name that Jesus gave him. This deference and humility demonstrate how he has grown as a leader in the past decades, and it serves to advance his less-than-hierarchical view of Christian leadership. He will make himself a peer with the other elders in Asia Minor later in the letter more explicitly by describing himself as a “fellow elder” (συμπρεσβύτερος; 5.1).

The term ἀκρογωνιάϊος is an elusive hapax legomena in the Greek NT. It could refer to either a cornerstone built into the foundation of a building or a capstone at its apex. Given that it is something that you stumble on, Peter more likely has a foundational stone in mind. Hence, I translated it “cornerstone.”¹¹⁵ It functions adjectivally to describe λίθος (stone) along with ἐκλεκτός (chosen) and ἔντιμος (honored).¹¹⁶

¹¹³ Elliott, 424. Paul quotes Isaiah 28.16 in Romans 9.33 and has a few slight differences in his text which furthers the case for normal textual variants of the LXX in the 1st century.

¹¹⁴ Elliott, 425 and Best, 100.

¹¹⁵ Jobes, 157 against McKnight, 109.

¹¹⁶ Elliott, 425.

BDAG suggests that ἔντιμος glosses to “valuable, precious”¹¹⁷ but I chose *honored* here and in v.4 because it is in contrast with κατασχύνω, “put to *shame*” at the end of the verse.¹¹⁸

καὶ ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ’ αὐτῷ οὐ μὴ κατασχυνθῆ.

The metaphor becomes clear at this point that the stone laid in Zion is a person, and that stone is the same “living stone” referenced in v.4. The prepositional phrase “in him” ἐπ’ αὐτῷ appears only in the LXX MS A and is absent in the Hebrew text.¹¹⁹ This gives the appearance that ἐπ’ αὐτῷ is a later Christian interpolation and Peter just conveniently chooses it to make his case. However, MS A predates Peter’s letter and shows rather that the Greek speaking Jewish community had already come to regard Isaiah 28.16 as a messianic passage; Peter is simply capitalizing on what the Jews had already seen in the LXX text.¹²⁰

Peter negates κατασχύνω by the strongest possible formula in NT Greek: οὐ μὴ.¹²¹ To bring out its force I translated in italics: you will *never* be put to shame. The

¹¹⁷ BDAG, 340a.

¹¹⁸ Elliott, 427. Elliott demonstrates that the honor-shame culture dominates the Ancient Near East (ANE) and is a predominant theme throughout 1 Peter. For κατασχύνω see BDAG 517a-b. “Put to shame” is one of the glosses that it uses for κατασχύνω and it suggests this gloss for 1 Peter 3.16. However, it specifically suggests “disappoint” for 1 Peter 2.6. Forbes (64) suggests disgrace on the grounds that it makes a more powerful statement. Disgrace is good, but I ultimately sided with Elliott and chose “be ashamed” because of his argument on the honor-shame culture. “Disappoint” is definitely too weak.

¹¹⁹ Elliott, 426

¹²⁰ Michaels, 104.

¹²¹ Andreas Köstenberger, Merkle, and Plummer, *Going Deeper with New Testament Greek*, (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2016), 205.

overall effect is to give the new believers in Asia Minor to take great confidence that their new Lord will honor them as he is honored, and they will “under no circumstance ever” be put to shame.¹²²

<p>7 ὑμῖν οὖν ἡ τιμὴ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ἀπιστοῦσιν δὲ λίθος ὃν ἀπεδοκίμασαν οἱ οἰκοδομοῦντες οὗτος ἐγενήθη εἰς κεφαλὴν γωνίας.</p>	<p>Therefore, the honor [is] to you who believe But, to those who do not believe, the <i>very</i> stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner</p>
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ὑμῖν οὖν ἡ τιμὴ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν

The conjunction οὖν keys the churches that Peter is coming to a transition and logical conclusion.¹²³ Since Christ is honored, so are those who believe in him. In this phrase, the recipients reach the center and highlight of the chiasmic structure of vv. 6-8 (see Figure 3) where “those who believe” (τοῖς πιστεύουσιν) in Christ receive the highest honor. The participle πιστεύουσιν functions substantivally as a dative of advantage. The sense is the honor accrues “*to the benefit of you who believe.*”¹²⁴

In the Greek the finite verb of being is absent but implied by an elliptical construction¹²⁵ so it is in brackets. τιμὴ is related to ἔντιμον and both are translated honor, though they are different words.¹²⁶ The article preceding τιμὴ emphasizes the

¹²² McKnight, 107 n16. By negating κατασχύνω “put to shame” Peter employs a litotes: a deliberate understatement. It’s not just that the disciples will never be put to shame, it’s that they will and are receiving great honor by their union with Christ.

¹²³ Kostenberger et al., 412; BDAG 736b.

¹²⁴ Wallace, 142.

¹²⁵ Forbes, 64.

¹²⁶ Forbes, 64 rightly argues for “honor” suggesting that “precious” (NIV, NRSV, et al.) imports foreign meaning on the term and misses the contrast with κατασχύνω at the end of v. 6. See also Elliott, 428.

connection back to ἔντιμον: “the honour which is accorded to believers is a share in the honour which God has accorded to Christ”.¹²⁷

ἀπιστοῦσιν δὲ

The term ἀπιστοῦσιν is a substantive participle and stands in contrast to πιστεύουσιν before it. Like its predecessors it is a dative of (dis)advantage.¹²⁸

λίθος ὃν ἀπεδοκίμασαν οἱ οἰκοδομοῦντες οὗτος ἐγενήθη εἰς κεφαλὴν γωνίας

Here Peter begins his second citation from the Old Testament, Psalm 118.22 [Heb 117.22]. The logical link between this passage and Peter’s argument in 4b that Christ had to be rejected by men is the word ἀποδοκιμάζω “reject.”¹²⁹

I follow Elliott in supplying the word *very* before “stone” (λίθος) to draw out the antithesis between the those who believe in the stone and those who reject the stone. Grammatically, οὗτος does this later in the verse but to include it here forces an awkward lengthening: “this *very* stone which has become the head of the corner.”¹³⁰

The phrase κεφαλὴν γωνίας “the head of the corner” is best understood as a synonym for ἀκρογωνιαῖος “cornerstone” (v. 6). The different terms arise because Peter is being faithful to the diction in the texts from which he quotes (Is 28.16 and Ps 118.22 [Heb 117.22], respectively). He anticipates that the readers will see the

¹²⁷ Beare, 98.

¹²⁸ Forbes, 65.

¹²⁹ Best, 106.

¹³⁰ Elliott, 428; Forbes, 65.

similarity in the stone imagery and not hold him to high architectural standards.

Whether the κεφαλὴν γωνίας is a capstone at the top of the structure or a cornerstone at the foundation, it is the essential stone without which no building can hold together.

While it would be appropriate to translate κεφαλὴν γωνίας as “cornerstone” (ESV, NIV, NASB, Jobes et al), I have left it “head of the corner” revealing the Greek and asking readers to make the same logical jump that Peter’s had to.¹³¹

<p>⁸ καὶ λίθος προσκόμματος καὶ πέτρα σκανδάλου· οἱ προσκόπτουσιν τῷ λόγῳ ἀπειθοῦντες· εἰς ὃ καὶ ἐτέθησαν.</p>	<p>and a stumbling stone and a divisive rock. They stumble, because they disobey the message, for which they also were destined.</p>
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καὶ λίθος προσκόμματος καὶ πέτρα σκανδάλου

Peter connects his final OT rock citation, Isaiah 8.14,¹³² with the conjunctive καί, “and.” He describes Jesus’s role to unbelievers with two genitives of product:¹³³

προσκόματος “stumble” and σκανδαλου “temptation to sin.”¹³⁴ These genitives give the sense of “which produces”¹³⁵ so Jesus is a “stone which produces stumbling” and a “rock which produces temptation to sin.” The theological implication of this last genitive is that when a person encounters Jesus they only have two choices: receive him as

¹³¹ Jobes, 157 presents the tightest summary of the two different terms for stone imagery and lands on “cornerstone” for the translation of both terms against Elliott, 429.

¹³² Michaels, 106. Peter’s LXX citation here differs significantly from the texts available to us but it is very similar to Paul’s use in Romans 9.33. This means that both were likely drawing from a manuscript that we do not have available to us.

¹³³ Forbes, 65.

¹³⁴ BDAG 882a and 926b-c, respectively

¹³⁵ Wallace, 106-109.

“honored” or receive him as a “cause of offence” in their life.¹³⁶ To bring out this sense, I translated πέτρα σκανδάλου as “divisive rock” not simply “a rock of offense” (ESV, NASB).¹³⁷ The “rejection of Christ is not an amoral decision; it is itself an instance of sin.”¹³⁸ “There is no middle position.”¹³⁹

οἱ προσκόπτουσιν τῷ λόγῳ ἀπειθοῦντες·

Now Peter interprets Isaiah 8.14 it in light of what it means for the churches of Asia Minor. The relative pronoun οἱ must refer back to οἱ οἰκοδομοῦντες “the builders”¹⁴⁰ in verse 7, but it is impossible to translate it with a “who” or “which” because the antecedent is too far away. Therefore, it is best to translate it with the personal pronoun, “they” (NIV, ESV, NASB). By this comparison Peter links the builders who *literally* reject Christ the cornerstone stone (v. 7) to all who *metaphorically* trip on the “stumbling stone” who is also Jesus Christ (v. 8).¹⁴¹

Bypassing τῷ λόγῳ for a moment, the participle form of ἀπειθέω “disobey” functions adverbially modifying the indicative προσκόπτω “stumble.” In this case it is best understood as a causal participle¹⁴² describing why the builders stumble: “because

¹³⁶ Best, 107.

¹³⁷ See Elliott, 431-433 for an in-depth discussion of σκανδάλον.

¹³⁸ Jobes, 154.

¹³⁹ Best, 107.

¹⁴⁰ Forbes, 8.

¹⁴¹ See appendix 2 for the grammatical linkages.

¹⁴² Wallace, 631; Forbes, 65.

they disobey”¹⁴³ (ESV, NASB, NIV). For Peter, to disbelieve (ἀπιστέω, v. 7) is to disobey (ἀπειθέω).¹⁴⁴

The term τῷ λόγῳ is the use of the article *par excellence*:¹⁴⁵ it does not mean that the builders stumble because they disobey any old word, but that they stumble because they disobey the word of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (cf 3.1). So, shame comes from rejecting Christ, but more specifically the *message* of the gospel (τῷ λόγῳ) of Christ. For this reason, I translated λόγος as “message.”¹⁴⁶

Peter has in mind those who disbelieve and subsequently disobey the proclamation of this message. The lost world around the minority churches in the five provinces is not stumbling at the moral behavior (cf 2.12, 3.1-2) of the disciples in their midst; they stumble at the reason for the good behavior: Jesus Christ! This sheds light on what Peter means when he calls the churches a royal priesthood (βασιλειον ιεράτευμα, v. 9) whose purpose is to “*declare the praises*” (τὰς ἀρετὰς ἐξαγγείλητε) of God. Certainly, Peter has in mind a demonstration (cf. 2.11-12) *and* proclamation of the gospel in the five provinces, but the weight of the admonition of *why* they are priests rests on the *proclamation* of the message in this passage. Jobes articulates why the

¹⁴³ Forbes, 65.

¹⁴⁴ Forbes, 65. Elliott, 433. I believe it is possible to say the same thing of Paul’s understanding of disobedience and disbelief, even though he goes to great aims to make sure we understand the difference between faith and earning (compare Rom 1.5, 16.26 with 9.31-33). For the sake of this paper, I will keep the analysis to Peter’s understanding of the gospel in 1 Peter.

¹⁴⁵ Wallace, 223.

¹⁴⁶ Robert H. Mounce, *Basics of Biblical Greek*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 16. NIV 2011 translates λογος as “message” also. Most modern translations prefer “word,” i.e. NASB, ESV.

priests needed to be encouraged with the honor that comes from their belief, because their *message* was offensive to ancient ears, as it is to modern:

First-century Christians were often persecuted and executed not because they worshipped Jesus—in a polytheistic society, what is one more god?—but because of the higher claim of the gospel that only in Christ is the One, True God to be worshipped.¹⁴⁷

εἰς ὃ καὶ ἐτέθησαν.

The preposition εἰς denotes purpose as it did in v.5.¹⁴⁸ A fuller but wordy translation is: “*the purpose* for which they were also were destined.” ὃ is a relative pronoun without antecedent,¹⁴⁹ which makes interpreting it more difficult. One possibility is that it refers to those who disobey the word,¹⁵⁰ rendering: “and this disobedience is the purpose for which they were destined.” This interpretation tilts Peter’s teaching strongly toward the doctrine of reprobation.¹⁵¹

The second and better option is that that ὃ refers to the stumbling: “and this stumbling is the purpose for which they were destined.”¹⁵² This translation implies that people disbelieve and disobey the message and consequently they are destined for stumbling. This seems to fit better with Peter’s overall call to mission and evangelism

¹⁴⁷ Jobes, 162.

¹⁴⁸ Forbes, 65; Wallace 369-70, see note at v.5.

¹⁴⁹ Wallace, 339.

¹⁵⁰ Achtemeier, 162-3.

¹⁵¹ M.R.W. Farrer, “Reprobate,” *The New Bible Dictionary*, J.D. Douglas et al. 3rd ed, (Downer’s Grove: IVP Academic, 1996), 1009. “the idea of divine investigation leading to rejection because of an ineradicable sin.”

¹⁵² Jobes 155-56; Elliott, 434.

in the letter (2.12, 3.1-2).¹⁵³ If Peter viewed even some of the lost in Asia Minor as reprobate, his call “to declare God’s praises” (v. 9) and live a holy life that calls others to trust Christ (vv. 2.11-12, 3.1-2), is not nearly as compelling. Elliott expresses it well: “It is the *result* of disobedience, that is foreordained, not the decision itself.”¹⁵⁴ Even though I prefer and recommend this understanding of εἰς ὃ καὶ ἐτέθησαν, I maintain that the best translation is the one that brings out the ambiguity of the Greek (“for which they were also destined”), and compels the English reader to ask the same questions that the ambiguous Greek presents.

The verb τίθημι bookends the *inclusio* of vv. 6-8 in its divine passive form. God sovereignly “laid” (v. 4) the stone in Zion and those who disobey stumble as “they were destined” (v. 8).¹⁵⁵

<p>⁹ Ὑμεῖς δὲ γένος ἐκλεκτόν, βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα, ἔθνος ἅγιον, λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν,</p>	<p>But you all [are] a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy ethnicity, a people for [God’s] possession,</p>
--	--

Ὑμεῖς δὲ γένος ἐκλεκτόν,

The construction Ὑμεῖς δὲ clues the recipients that a transition is at hand with the adversative δέ.¹⁵⁶ Most importantly, Peter invokes the second person *plural* ὑμεῖς, “you all” which begins the contrast he will make between those who disbelieve and the

¹⁵³ Forbes, 65-66; Beare, 100; Best, 107 makes the helpful comment that the Christian doctrine of predestination normally refers to those who are saved and not those who perish.

¹⁵⁴ Elliott, 434.

¹⁵⁵ Elliott, 434 et al.

¹⁵⁶ Forbes, 68.

honored, believing, obeying recipients of his letter. The verb “are” (ἐστε) is implied by the nominatives in apposition, which is why it is in brackets in the translation. Having established the transition, Peter begins assigning corporate identity to the churches in Asia Minor, drawing from Exodus 19.6 and Isaiah 43.20 LXX.¹⁵⁷

The term γένος refers to people who come from a common descent.¹⁵⁸ Elliott translates “stock”¹⁵⁹ against all modern English translations, but the word really captures the idea of genetic line evoking the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. (cf. Gen 12.1-3, Gen 17.6; Is 43.21, Gal 3.7-9). I avoided it because it makes the people of God sound too much like cattle. I sided with Jobes, who chooses “race,” because it implies the idea of a blood line and is more specific than “people” which most translators choose.¹⁶⁰ Likewise, ἐκλεκτός “chosen” ties the recipients back into the chosen Christ in v. 4. This identity for the people of God comes from Isaiah 43.20 LXX where it is originally used to describe Israel.

βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα,

Peter shifts his OT reference to Exodus 19.6 with the next identity. Βασίλειον could function as a standalone noun (i.e., royal residence)¹⁶¹ or an adjective modifying

¹⁵⁷ Forbes, 68.

¹⁵⁸ BDAG, 194; Forbes 65.

¹⁵⁹ Elliott, 435.

¹⁶⁰ Jobes, 158-9. Jobes makes the bold and hopeful claim that when the people of God embrace their new identity as a “chosen race:” “Here is the foundational cure for the evils of racism in human society.”

¹⁶¹ Elliott, 435-7. Elliott’s argument rests on 1) the frequency by which βασίλειον is used as a noun or adjective in the LXX: 23 times as a noun and 4 as an adjective, and 2) how the word is used in other ancient manuscripts. Elliott’s argument is possible but there is a better alternative: Greg Forbes, *1 Peter*,

ἱεράτευμα “priesthood” (i.e., royal or kingly priesthood).¹⁶² I side with Forbes and the latter understanding because of the pattern in Peter’s identities. In the two-word identities that precede and follow βασιλείον ἱεράτευμα, there is one noun and one adjective. Therefore, it is most likely that Peter has the same construction in mind: βασιλείον “royal” is the adjective and modifies ἱεράτευμα “priesthood.”¹⁶³

The term ἱεράτευμα “priesthood” is the most debated term in all the identities Peter assigns to the people of God, and I will give it extensive treatment here. It is the controlling identity for the people of God in the passage because it is the only one ascribed to God’s people that is repeated between verses 4-5 and 9-10.¹⁶⁴

Elliott downplays the significance of ἱεράτευμα, suggesting that its sense is: “priestly community.” He interprets it in light of “household” in verse 5 because there the purpose of the “spiritual house,” is “to be a holy priesthood.”¹⁶⁵ We should reject this, first of all, because it is not a standalone noun (see above); and second, because

(Nashville: B&H Academic, 2014), 68. Forbes appeals to grammar is more convincing to me and all modern translators (see note below). Elliott addresses the possibility that there is one noun and one adjective, but suggests that to be consistent with the MT and the word order in 1 Peter 2.9, one would have to take βασιλείον ἱεράτευμα as priestly kingdom, reversing which word was the noun and which was the adjective. This latter is more likely than two standalone nouns. Michaels (108) rejects the noun adjective swap on the grounds that Peter is just following the word order in the LXX from which he quotes. Ultimately, I have sided with Forbes and Michaels.

¹⁶² Forbes, 68; Achtemeier 164-5; Michaels 108-9.

¹⁶³ Forbes, 68 and all modern English translations. Forbes expands on his translation: “As a royal priesthood, believers are representing the King, and this priesthood is to be understood as ambassadorial, of mediating God’s presence to the world, not in the sense of the priesthood of all believers (i.e., access to God) as in Hebrews.” However, as I already demonstrated in v. 4, Peter has both senses of priesthood in mind here: ambassadorial *responsibility* and *privileged* direct access. It is best to not limit the understanding of “the priesthood of the believer” to a singular understanding in this pericope.

¹⁶⁴ G.K. Beale and D.A. Carson, eds., *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 1030.

¹⁶⁵ Elliott, 417, 436.

neither the Exodus community, nor Peter's readers, had this understanding of *ιεράτευμα*.¹⁶⁶

Hamilton instructs that for the Exodus community, the term *ιεράτευμα* has two possible meanings: (1) that they would have direct access to God without an intermediary, or (2) that they would have the responsibility of serving as ambassadors to the remaining nations.¹⁶⁷ As Exodus unfolds, we find out that the former understanding of *ιεράτευμα* is not what God has in mind. He sets up a specific priesthood to relate to him directly (eg. Ex 27-29); violators are severely punished (cf. Nu 16.10, 40, 49). So, as Wright explains, Israel was a *ιεράτευμα* in the sense that they were to represent Yahweh to the nations:

So God assigns to his people as a whole community the role of priesthood for the nations. As their priests stood in relation to God and the rest of *Israel*, so they as a whole community were to stand in relation to God and the rest of the *nations*.¹⁶⁸

It's no surprise that Peter wants to use the term *ιεράτευμα* in the same way in his letter. They are a *ιεράτευμα* for a purpose: "that [they] might declare the praises of the one who called [them] out of darkness into his amazing light" (v.9). Hence, I reject Elliott's interpretation that the meaning of *ιεράτευμα* here is a unique way of saying community.

¹⁶⁶ Michaels, 108. Michaels understands βασιλειον *ιεράτευμα* as "King's priesthood" with one noun and one adjective, he just chooses King's as the translation for βασιλειον instead of royal, which a noble and legitimate translation in my estimation because it ties the priesthood back into the specific king in this context: Jesus.

¹⁶⁷ Victor P. Hamilton, *Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 304.

¹⁶⁸ Christopher J.H. Wright, *Knowing Jesus through the Old Testament*, (Downer's Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2014), p. 92. Jobes, 160 says nearly the same thing.

The word “priesthood” comes powerfully loaded and since the time of the Reformation has brought ordained clergy in tension with the laity.¹⁶⁹ I have demonstrated thus far that the “priesthood” that Peter has in mind extends the *privilege* of direct access to God and the *responsibility* to represent that God to the people around them. But, I have not addressed the issue of spiritual authority. Does 1 Peter 2.4-10 teach that since all are members in a *priesthood* that no disciple should have spiritual authority over another?

To answer this question, one must understand a related term for spiritual leadership that Peter uses in 5.1-2: elder (πρεσβύτερος). In 5.2 Peter instructs that elders (πρεσβύτερος) must “shepherd the flock of God among [them], exercising oversight...” (ποιμάνετε τὸ ἐν ὑμῖν ποίμνιον τοῦ θεοῦ, ἐπισκοποῦντες...). The participle “exercising oversight” (ἐπισκοποῦντες) is an adverbial participle that describes how the imperative verb “shepherd” (ποιμάνετε) is to be done. Ἐπισκοποῦντες is a verbal form of the word ἐπίσκοπος which is frequently and correctly translated as “overseer.” However, in the 2nd century the Church began to employ it as bishop, designating an office that was over the office of elder (πρεσβυτερος, 5.1).¹⁷⁰

One way to catch Peter’s apparent problematic usage is to translate 5.1-2 like this: “Therefore, I urge (παρακαλῶ) the elders (πρεσβυτερος) among you...shepherd (ποιμάνετε) the flock of God among you, bishopping¹⁷¹ (ἐπισκοποῦντες) them.” In

¹⁶⁹ Jobes, 160.

¹⁷⁰ Jobes, 10-11; 302-3

¹⁷¹ I recognize that this word does not exist as a verb in English, but I translate the word this way to bring out the contrast in leadership terms that have been used in church history.

these two verses, three possible terms for spiritual leaders emerge: shepherd, elder, and bishop. However, only elder (πρεσβυτερος) is a noun. Shepherd is the indicative and controlling verb of verse 2, and oversee or bishop is an adverbial participle that simply describes how shepherding is to be done. What we're left with then, at least in 1 Peter 5.1-2, is just one term for Christian leaders: elder. And the elder has two functions he is supposed to do: shepherd and oversee.¹⁷²

All this is extremely relevant to our understanding of 2.4-10 because therein is one other leadership term we will have to deal with: priesthood (2.5, 9). To understand it correctly, in particular the degree to which it provides autonomy and the degree to which it does not, we have to consider the other leadership term in this book: elder. At the same time, we do not want to get confused by the terms shepherd (ποιμάνατε) and oversee (ἐπισκοποῦντες) which are functions that elders do. While these are functions that we might typically expect our pastor or shepherd (Eph 4.11) to do, as far as 1 Peter is concerned, they are the duties of the elders.

A piece of this argument rests on the inclusion of ἐπισκοποῦντες as the original reading. There are significant concerns about whether the term oversee actually belongs in the text: Codices Sinaiticus (N*) and Vaticanus (B), two of the earliest and most complete copies of the New Testament, both from the fourth century, omit the word ἐπισκοποῦντες.¹⁷³ On the other hand, three other important witnesses Papyrus

¹⁷² It is just as likely that there is one function for elders that are simply described two different ways by Peter. The distinction between shepherding and overseeing is beyond the scope of this paper.

¹⁷³ NA²⁷, s.v. 706, 1 Peter 5.2.

72 (P⁷²), a later scribal edition of Sinaiticus (Σ²), and Codex Alexandrinus (A) all include the word ἐπισκοποῦντες.

Most critical scholars agree that there is a little more evidence for taking ἐπισκοποῦντες as the original reading of the text.¹⁷⁴ The decision is difficult because the two textual criticism principles of preferring (1) the shorter reading and (2) the more difficult reading, come into conflict.¹⁷⁵ Including ἐπισκοποῦντες, while shorter, is more difficult for a few reasons. First, it complicates leadership terms as we have already discussed. Second, it appears redundant with the term *shepherd*, making us wonder why Peter would include it. As Jobes points out, if it wasn't there originally, it's hard to imagine why someone would add it because it really muddies the waters.¹⁷⁶ Metzger suggests the possible motivation of removing it because the scribe involved wanted to shore up the emerging hierarchical Church government of the second and third century.¹⁷⁷ If an elder can "bishop," then there is no basis for a bishop taking a hierarchical position over an elder.

Including or excluding ἐπισκοποῦντες will affect our interpretation of the leadership structure Peter has in mind—a leadership structure designed to sustain and advance an early movement of the gospel through a dispersed people. Because one must include the term for reasons outlined above, one finds Peter's language does not

¹⁷⁴ Jobes 310, Elliott 824, n665; Metzger, 625.

¹⁷⁵ David A. Black, *New Testament Textual Criticism: A Concise Guide* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 52-53. See also Blomberg, 19.

¹⁷⁶ Jobes, 310.

¹⁷⁷ Metzger, 625.

support a hierarchical structure with bishops overseeing shepherd-pastors who are overseeing elders. Instead, Peter's language reflects a relatively flat structure with "fellow elders" (συμπρεσβυτέρος), urging one another to be faithful to their calling (παρακαλῶ, 5.1). At the same time, we recognize that Peter's language is not devoid of leadership and authority. Instead, it ingeniously provides just enough structure to provide the autonomy and flexibility necessary to expand a movement of the gospel. Peter's letter played its role well. Asia Minor became a stronghold of the Christian faith that contributed to Roman Empire's adoption of Christianity as the State Religion.¹⁷⁸

So, Peter uses the word ἱεράτευμα to refer to the priesthood's *privilege* to have direct access to the Father and their *responsibility* to represent the Father to the world. This leaves us with both continuity and discontinuity with the OT. First, there is a discontinuity between the OT and NT priesthood because all NT believers are priests and may approach God directly (Matt 27.51, Mk 15.38, Lk 23.45, Heb 4.16, Heb 7). Second, there is a continuity between the OT and NT priesthood. The general OT priesthood (Ex 19.6), the nation of Israel, was to represent God to the nations around them, and the general NT priesthood is to represent God to the nations around them.

But, when Peter wants to address spiritual leadership in the churches in the five provinces, he addresses the elders (πρεσβύτεροι). He does not address the priests, the pastors, the shepherds, the apostles, the overseers, the deacons, or the bishops. As far as 1 Peter is concerned, and as far as the doctrine of the priesthood of every believer is concerned, Peter sees from among the priests a group of elders who are to "shepherd

¹⁷⁸ Michaels, lxvi.

the flock,” “serving as overseers.” Rather than take apostolic authority over these elders, Peter includes himself as a “fellow elder” (συμπρεσβύτερος). Peter’s epistle does not teach that “priesthood” means that there is no spiritual authority in the NT church; nor does it teach that there is continuity between the OT special priesthood and the NT pastor.¹⁷⁹ Both approaches undermine the leadership structure that Peter has in mind to embolden a fragile and persecuted people. Eliminating spiritual leadership fractures the movement because there is no way to protect, guide, and organize the priests; implying continuity between the OT Levitical Priesthood and the “pastor” (a term that Peter does not use) diminishes the *privileges* and *responsibilities* that Peter does have in mind for the priests.

ἔθνος ἅγιον,

While γένος “people” is a people from a common descent, ἔθνος “refers to those who share a common culture”¹⁸⁰ so the translation “nation” misses the mark significantly for a modern reader.¹⁸¹ Revealed in the phonology of the Greek word ἔθνος is our modern word *ethnicity*, which is “a social group that shares a common and distinctive culture, religion, language, or the like.”¹⁸² Since this definition is highly congruent with BDAG’s understanding of ἔθνος, I translated ἔθνος as *ethnicity*.

¹⁷⁹ *pace* Jack Collins, “Psalms, Proverbs and Wisdom: Lecture #20,” (Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis, MO, Spring, 2023).

¹⁸⁰ Forbes, 69. BDAG, 276d

¹⁸¹ Beare, 102 reminds us that in the ANE “there was a distinct tendency in the ancient world to think of religion as the essential basis of community, and of common religious observances as the determining feature of nationhood and the one really significant factor of homogeneity”

¹⁸² “Ethnicity” accessed 27 May, 2023, <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/ethnicity>.

When Peter introduces the word ἅγιος he invokes a third reason for the priesthood: to be set apart and consecrated unto God.¹⁸³ Previously, I have introduced the *privilege* of the priesthood to have direct access to God and the *responsibility* to represent God as ambassadors. Here, the responsibility to be set apart as holy surfaces for the priesthood. As Israel was a “holy nation” (Ex 19.6) in the sense that it was to be different than the nations around it, the NT people of God are to be set apart from the lost world around them (2.11, 3.1). This term speaks to the lifestyle of those representing God, and the lifestyle must match the message for the message to be compelling.

λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν

The term λαὸς “people” “refers to a group who has a common purpose or destination.”¹⁸⁴ While Forbes calls it a synonym of γένος, the definitions are different enough to reflect a different word. The best sense here is people, while γένος is better as “race” (see above).

As in 2.5 and 8, εἰς is best understood as the “telic” use, expressing the purpose for which the churches in the five provinces are.¹⁸⁵ An expanded translation reads: “a people who are for the purpose of...” This is the likely choice because Peter has been using his identities to impart purpose up to this point, and it naturally follows he would do the same here. Another possibility is that Peter uses εἰς here to mean “into, in” or

¹⁸³ Jobes, 161.

¹⁸⁴ Forbes, 69.

¹⁸⁵ BDAG, 290c-d; 804c; Elliott, 439.

“become.”¹⁸⁶ This interpretation renders this phrase: “a people that has become [God’s own] possession.”¹⁸⁷ To allow for the ambiguity in the Greek, I translated it “for” which could mean purpose or a change in state.¹⁸⁸

Περιποίησις refers to “that which is acquired”¹⁸⁹. A formally equivalent translation is: “a people for possession.”¹⁹⁰ The question is: who is doing the possessing here? The context suggests that God is acting to acquire this new people who have put their faith in Christ. Consequently, I added [God’s] in brackets.¹⁹¹ Michaels understands this phrase as “a people destined for vindication.” His understanding relies on taking περιποίησις in a future sense as it is in 1 Thes 5.9 and 2 Thes 2.14.¹⁹² However, I reject the novel approach because it does not fit with the immediacy and permanency of the other identities that Peter imparts. The case becomes even stronger in v. 10: “once you were not a people, but now you *are* the people of God” (NIV, *emphasis mine*).

ὅπως τὰς ἀρετὰς ἐξαγγείλητε τοῦ ἐκ σκότους ὑμᾶς καλέσαντος εἰς τὸ θαυμαστὸν αὐτοῦ φῶς·	that you might declare the praises of the One who called you out of darkness into his amazing light.
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¹⁸⁶ BDAG, 290a-b.

¹⁸⁷ 804c.

¹⁸⁸ ESV, NASB; Beare, 105; Jobes, 159.

¹⁸⁹ BDAG, 804c.

¹⁹⁰ Forbes, 69.

¹⁹¹ NIV, NASB; similarly ESV adds “his” special possession.

¹⁹² Michaels, 109.

ὅπως τὰς ἀρετὰς ἐξαγγείλητε

Peter now gives the disciples in the five provinces the purpose for the four aforementioned identities in v. 9 with the ὅπως plus subjunctive of ἐξαγγέλλω: “that you might declare the praises...”¹⁹³ Ἀρετή means excellency or goodness¹⁹⁴ and its exhibition invites recognition, resulting in renown or glory.¹⁹⁵ It was used in ancient Greek to refer to people who were of extremely noble character who expressed that character in benevolent outward acts.¹⁹⁶ Jobes argues that because Isaiah 43.20 is still in view here, it is better to translate “God’s mighty acts.”¹⁹⁷

Understanding this phrase depends on how we understand what Peter means by “declaring his praises.” Michaels argues that LXX authors understood ἐξαγγέλλω to mean declaring God’s praises in the synagogue (i.e., Ps 9.15 [Heb 14] LXX) to the already believing Jews and that it should be therefore understood not as missionary activity, but as worship¹⁹⁸ by song within the community of believers. Elliott suggests that it is yes, praises within the community, but also outside the community, because of Peter’s concern with the witness that the disciples in the provinces are to give in society

¹⁹³ Forbes, 69; Elliott, 439.

¹⁹⁴ Forbes, 69.

¹⁹⁵ BDAG, 130c.

¹⁹⁶ Jobes, 163.

¹⁹⁷ Jobes, 163; Achtemeier, 166.

¹⁹⁸ Elliott, 440. I maintain a broad definition of worship in keeping with the spiritual sacrifices offered in 2.5, understanding Rom 12.1 as the best interpretive lens through which to understand those spiritual sacrifices.

(2.11-5.11).¹⁹⁹ Achtemeier agrees, concluding ἐξαγγέλλω “is to be done both by act and word, and the latter is surely the intention here.”²⁰⁰ I add to Elliott and Achtemeier’s case by pointing out the entire context of this passage. It is fueling motivation for alienated and persecuted Christian believers to persevere in the face of social ostracization, shaming, and in some cases death. Had the new believers taken simply to the well-established synagogue structure and kept their ἐξαγγέλλω to themselves, they hardly would have been faced with the persecution that Peter addresses in the rest of the letter (i.e., 4.12).

τοῦ ἐκ σκότους ὑμᾶς καλέσαντος εἰς τὸ θαυμαστὸν αὐτοῦ φῶς·

The articular (τοῦ) aorist participle of καλέω “call” indicates the participle must be attributive or substantival,²⁰¹ and in this case it is substantival: “the One who called you.” Furthermore, it is a genitive participle modifying “praises.” This leads us to the translation: “the praises of the One who called you” (see Appendix 2 for the grammatical arrangement). The unnamed actor is God who is doing the call, hence I have capitalized “One.”²⁰² The aorist tells the recipients that Peter has in mind a past completed calling. The recipients know that Peter has their conversion in mind in this

¹⁹⁹ Elliott, 439.

²⁰⁰ Achtemeier, 166.

²⁰¹ Wallace, 619.

²⁰² Forbes, 69; Elliott, 440.

calling because of the of out of “darkness” (σκότος) and into “his wonderful light” (θαυμαστὸν αὐτοῦ φῶς) language.²⁰³

Frequently, when people conceive of Luther’s doctrine of the priesthood of every believer, they think of the privilege that every believer has to go directly to God through Christ.²⁰⁴ While this is an admirable understanding of the doctrine, it is incomplete. The doctrine, as it emerges from the exegesis of this passage, emphasizes the privilege *and responsibility* that every believer has to be “approaching toward him” (Πρὸς ὃν προσερχόμενοι), but also to “declare his praises” (τὰς ἀρετὰς ἐξαγγείλητε) to a hostile world. 1 Peter makes one of its primary contributions to NT doctrine here: the *locus classicus* for understanding a disciple’s multi-faceted role as a priest.

Michael Williams captures the interplay between the corporate and the personal when expounds on the doctrine of the Priesthood of the Believer:

The New Testament doctrine of the Priesthood the Believer is not merely about having direct access to God without the intermediary of a human priest, but also the right to act as a priest on behalf of the other members of the body of Christ (Heb 13.15-16). That is *koinonia*.²⁰⁵

The personal responsibility of the priest is not only to have direct access to God but then to responsibly live out their “right to act as priest on behalf of the other members of the body.” Herein we see the fierce interplay of the personal and the corporate. The

²⁰³ Forbes, 69.

²⁰⁴ Luther never wrote a systematic treatise on the Priesthood of the Believer. Nor did he ever give us an exegesis of 1 Pet 2.4-10. His doctrine has to be assembled from several of his writings on related topics. One of the better essays that brings out his thought is Martin Luther, “The Freedom of a Christian,” In *Martin Luther’s Basic Theological Writings 2nd Ed*, edited by Timothy F. Lull (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005) 386-411.

²⁰⁵ Williams, Michael. “Individualism and Biblical Personhood”. *Pro-Rege* 21, no. 3 (March, 1993): 20.

personal “right to act as priest” that we enjoy is for the sake of the corporate: “the other members of the body of Christ”! Williams could go farther. As priests we not only intercede for the other members of the body, we also intercede for and represent Christ to the unreconciled world, as Peter makes clear in v. 9.

Elliott refutes 1 Peter 2.4-10 as the *locus classicus* of the doctrine of the Priesthood of the Believer in an effort to retain the distinction of New Testament priest.²⁰⁶ His assertion has some exegetical holes that we have already noted: *ἱεράτευμα* must be both personal and collective, *πρὸς ὃν προσερχόμενοι* definitely carries the sense of approaching God in a cultic but metaphorical sense, and Peter distinctly chose Exodus 19.5-6 and the word *ἱεράτευμα* to emphasize the missional, ambassadorial role of every disciple of Jesus Christ (cf. 2 Cor 5.20).

<p>¹⁰ οἱ ποτε οὐ λαὸς νῦν δὲ λαὸς θεοῦ, οἱ οὐκ ἠλεημένοι νῦν δὲ ἐλεηθέντες.</p>	<p>At one point [you all were not] a people. Now [you all are] the people of God: those who had not received mercy, but now have received mercy.</p>
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οἱ ποτε οὐ λαὸς νῦν δὲ λαὸς θεοῦ,

Peter connects the allusions to Hosea 1.6, 9; 2.3, 25 in this verse to verse 9 through the word *λαὸς* “people.” Devoid of a verb it relies on the predicate nominative construction to imply the verb *εἰμι* in this phrase and the next one.²⁰⁷ I take *οἱ* as the masculine plural relative pronoun referring back to *ὑμεῖς* “you all” in verse 9, with

²⁰⁶ Elliott, 449-454.

²⁰⁷ Wallace, 40. The predicate nominative implies that the first nominative is part of the second nominative. In this case, “you recipients of the letters” were once “not part of the larger group of the people of God.”

Elliott (see Appendix 3).²⁰⁸ Peter uses ποτε, “at some time or other, once, formerly,”²⁰⁹ to set up the contrast with νῦν δὲ, “but now.” Peter concludes his poetic ellipsis by clinging to λαὸς and now adding Θεός “the people of God.” Where Hosea wrote to give hope to the Israelites in captivity in Babylon, Peter now makes the Gentiles congruent with the exiled Israelites, reminding them that they were once scattered in exile, they have now been included in the people of God.²¹⁰ For all the other identities that Peter uses, this one is the crown. It gives them full status into the people of God, expanding their OT privileges and reinforcing their OT responsibilities.

οἱ οὐκ ἤλεημένοι νῦν δὲ ἐλεηθέντες.

The article οἱ makes the perfect passive participle of ἐλέεω a substantive. The perfect makes the previous status of the disciples in the five provinces even more bleak. It's in the past and over and done with. They are: “those who have not received mercy.” But Peter brings hope with the adversative νῦν δὲ “but now.” Peter returns to the same verb, still alluding to Hosea 1.6 and 2.23, but with the aorist this time. As final as the “not received mercy” in the perfect was, the aorist is just as complete: “they received mercy.”²¹¹ Peter concludes his admonition to be the LORD's priests and declare his

²⁰⁸ Elliott, 441; *pace* Michaels, 112. Forbes, 70 makes the point that it is just as likely that the first οἱ is the relative pronoun, and the second is the article, making the participle of ἐλέεω a clear substantive case. I follow this interpretation.

²⁰⁹ BDAG, 856d.

²¹⁰ Jobes, 164.

²¹¹ Forbes, 70.

praises by reminding them of their corporate identity once more. The identity establishes their security as his people who have his mercy, despite shortcomings.

Conclusion

1 Peter 2.4-10 teaches that God's people, His Church, are priests in two important senses. The first sense is discontinuous from the OT. Every disciple of Jesus Christ has the *privilege* of coming directly to Christ without an intermediary. The second sense is continuous from the OT. Every disciple of Jesus, just like every Israelite, has the privilege and responsibility of representing Yahweh to the lost world around them—by word and deed.

The implications of these privileges and responsibilities are immense and are sometimes ignored by the western church. While Catholic orthodoxy might contradict Peter's teaching, Protestant orthodoxy can do the same thing. Sometimes, professional priests relate to God for us through various formalized means. It can happen that priests rely on "professionals" to perform the work of mission in their stead. This is not in keeping with Peter's exhortation in 1 Peter 2.4-10.

When you pull Peter's structure and grammar apart you find a poetic exhortation to live as a people on a mission. Much has been said about the identities that Peter ascribes to the People of God in 1 Peter 2.4-10; not nearly as much has been said about why God gave them these identities: "to offer spiritual sacrifices" of their lives (v. 5), and to declare the praises of him who called them (v.9). The aside in vv. 6-8 provides the fuel to overcome fear: hope in being honored along with Christ while knowing that those who reject the message will receive God's sovereign justice.

The grammar unwaveringly ascribes identity to God's people and shows that God has been and is the great actor. The only grammatical question is whether God's people will live for their purpose. Praise be to our glorious God and the way He worked

in those first persecuted Christians in Asia-minor: they believed God about their identity, and they lived for his purpose in the face of persecution. It showed, because by the fourth century, Asia Minor was center stage for God's work in the world.

While we should not desire to return to the doctrinal confusion, persecution, or disorganization of the church in the first three centuries, we should desire to have their missional impact. 1 Peter 2.4-10 links identity and mission in an almost unparalleled way in the New Testament. If we are going to have their missional impact, we are going to have to instill the missional identity that Peter did in the five provinces he writes to. On the whole, the western church must avoid practices that create a de-facto elite priesthood and undermine the missional priestly responsibilities of each disciple of Jesus Christ.

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Appendix 1

Survey Chart of 1 Peter

Title	Persevering in Light of Eternity																
Main 1	Birth in Christ					Behavior in Christ											
Main 2	Salvation			Sanctification				Suffering									
Ref	1.1	1.25		2.1		3.12		3.13		5.14							
Sub Title	Chosen		Revealed		Persona 1	Corporate		Submit		Purpose		Hope					
Sub Ref	9				2.3	2.10				4.11	4.12						
Key Center	Born Again Through ἀναγεννησας (1.3) ἀναγεγεννημένοι (1.22)			Now God's People νῦν δὲ λαὸς θεοῦ (2.10)		Follow in His Steps ἐπακολουθήσητε τοῖς ἔχνεσιν αὐτοῦ (2.21)			Arm Yourselves with His Purpose αὐτὴν ἔννοιαν ὀπλισασθε (4.1)		Keep on Rejoicing χαίρετε (4.13)						
Sub Paragraph	the Spirit (1-5)	Faith (6-9)	the Gospel (10-12)	Christ's Blood (13-21)	Who long for the word, growing in Salvation (1.22-2.3)	Who serve as Royal Priests, proclaiming his excellencies (2.4-10)	as citizens (2.11-17)	as a slaves (2.18-20)	as spouses (3.1-7)	as brothers (3.8-12)	to give an answer for your hope (3.13-17)	to intercede for others (3.18-22)	to live for God's will (4.1-6)	to glorify God (4.7-11)	Hoping for his Revelation (4.12-19)	Hoping for a Crown of Glory (5.1-7)	Hoping for Eternal Glory in Christ (5.8-14)
Corporate Identity	Love the brotherhood τὴν ἀδελφόντα (2.17)					Now the people of God "νῦν δὲ λαὸς θεοῦ" (2.10)						Family of God «Οἴκου του Θεου» (4.17)		Your brothers in the world Κόσμῳ ὑμῶν ἀδελφοί (5.9)			
Gospel Preached and Lived	Through the preaching of the gospel διὰ τῶν εὐαγγελισαμενων (1.12) The word which was preached to you τὸ ῥῆμα τὸ εὐαγγελισθεν (1.25)					Declare his praises Τὰς ἀρετὰς εὐαγγελιητε (2.9)		τὴν ἀναστροφὴν ὑμῶν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν...ἐποπτεύοντες δοξάσωσι τὸν θεόν. Your way of life among the Gentiles...seeing it they glorify God (2.12)		Perpetually ready to answer everyone who asks ἐτομοὶ αἰεὶ πρὸς ἀπολογία πάντι τῷ αἰτοῦντι (3.15)		νεκροὶς ἐησυσθη (4.6) The gospel was preached to the dead					
OT Citations			1.16 Lev 11.44-45; 19.2; 20.7	1.24-25 Is 40.6-8	2.5,9 Ex 19.4-6 2.6, 2.7, 2.8 Is 28.16, Ps 118.22, Is 8.14	2.22, 2.24-25 Is 53.9	3.10-13 Psalm 34.12-16 3.14 Is 8.12-13				4.18 Prov 11.31		5.5 Prov 3.34				

Chosen	To the chosen ἐκλεκτοῖς (1.1)		3xChosen ἐκλεκτον (2.4, 6, 9)						συνεκλεκτὴ (5.13)	
Call		The one who called you Καλέσαντ α (1.15)		The one who called you ὑμας καλέσαντοσει ς (2.9)	Παρακαλ ῶ I call/urge (2.11)	For you have been called Γαρ ἐκλήθητε (2.21)			Παρακαλ ῶ I call (5.1)	Called καλέσας Calling παρακαλῶν (5.10, 12)
Leadershi p Office				Priest ιεράτευμα (2.5,9)					Elder Πρεσβυτέρους (5.1)	
Leadershi p Functions				Declare his praises Τὰς ἀρετὰς εξαγγειλιτε (2.9)			If anyone speaks εἴ τις λαλεῖ (4.11)		Shepherd ποιμάνετε Oversee ἐπισκοποῦντες (5.2)	
Transition Words			Therefore, οὖν (2.1)		Dear Friends Ἀγαπητοί (2.11)		Amen ἀμήν (4.11)	Dear Friends Ἀγαπητο ί (4.12)	Amen ἀμήν (5.11)	
Jobes²¹²	A greeting to Christian Diaspora of Asia Minor (1.1-2)	The opening of the letter: reassurance for God's people (1.3-2.10)		As God's People, live godly lives (2.11-4.11)			Consolation for the suffering flock (4.12- 5.11)		The letter closing: final words and greetings (5.12-14)	

²¹² Karen H. Jobes. *1 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 56-57.

Michaels ²¹³	Greeting (1.1-2)	The Identity of the People of God (1.3-2.10)	The Responsibilities of the People of God (2.11-4.11)				The Responsibilities of a Church and Its Elders (4.12-5.11)	Final Greeting and Benediction (5.12-14)
Elliott ²¹⁴	Epistolary Prescript (1.1-2)	I. By God's Mercy Believers are Reborn an Elect and Holy People (1.3-2.10)	II. Transition: Maintain Honorable Conduct Among the Gentiles (2.11-12)	III. Honorable Subordinate Conduct in Civil and Domestic Realms (2.13-3.12)	IV. Doing What Is Right in the Face of Hostility (3.13-4.6)	V. Maintaining the Solidarity of the Household of God to the Glory of God (4.7-11)	VI. Honor and Joy in Suffering, Communal Unity, and Trust in God (4.12-5.11)	Epistolary Postscript (5.12-14)

²¹³ J. Ramsey Michaels *1 Peter*, World Biblical Commentary (Word, 1988), xxxvii.

²¹⁴ John H. Elliott, *1 Peter*, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 82-83.

Appendix 2

A Grammatical Greek Diagram of 1 Peter 2.4-10

³εἰ [ὕμεις] ἐγεύσασθε ὅτι ὁ κύριος [ἐστίν] χρηστός.

μὲν δὲ ⁴πρὸς ὃν προσερχόμενοι
λίθον ζῶντα
ἀποδοκιμασμένον ὑπὸ ἀνθρώπων,
παρὰ θεῶ

⁵ [ὕμεις] οἰκοδομεῖσθε οἶκος πνευματικὸς
καὶ
αὐτοὶ
ὡς λίθοι ζῶντες
εἰς ἱεράτευμα ἅγιον
ἀνενέγκαι θυσίας
πνευματικὰς
εὐπροσδέκτους²¹⁵ θεῶ
διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

⁶διότι [αὐτὰ] περιέχει ἐν γραφῇ.
ἰδοὺ [ἐγὼ] τίθημι λίθον ἐν Σιών
ἀκρογωνιαῖον
ἐκλεκτὸν
ἔντιμον

καὶ ⁷οὖν δὲ ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ' αὐτῷ οὐ μὴ καταισχυθῆ.
ἢ τιμὴ [ἐστίν] ὑμῖν τοῖς πιστεουσιν,
ἀπιστοῦσιν

λίθος
ὃν οἱ οἰκοδομοῦντες ἀπεδοκίμασαν
οὗτος ἐγενήθη εἰς κεφαλὴν γωνίας
⁸καὶ καὶ λίθος προσκόμματος
πέτρα σκανδάλου.
οἱ²¹⁶ προσκόπτουσιν
ἀπειθοῦντες τῷ λόγῳ
εἰς ὃ ἐτέθησαν.
καὶ

⁹δὲ ὑμεῖς [ἐστε]
γένος ἐκλεκτόν,
βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα,
ἔθνος ἅγιον,
λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν,

²¹⁵ εὐπροσδέκτους is a verbal adjective. It describes θυσίας as an adjective but communicates a verbal idea: accepting.

²¹⁶ The referent here is οἱ οἰκοδομοῦντες. Forbes, 65.

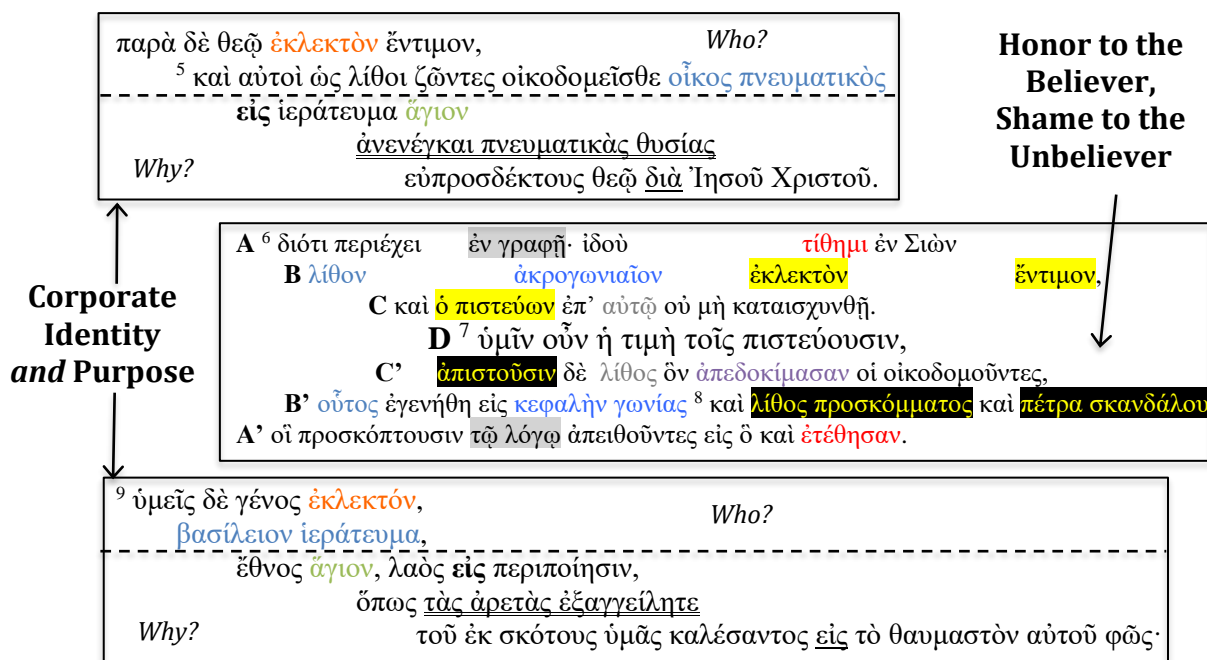
ὅπως [ὕμεις] ἐξαγγείλητε τὰς ἀρετὰς
τοῦ καλέσαντος ὑμᾶς ἐκ σκότους
εἰς τὸ φῶς αὐτοῦ
θαυμαστὸν ·
οἱ [ἦτε] οὐ λαός,
¹⁰ποτε
δὲ [ὕμεις ἐστε] λαὸς θεοῦ,
νῦν
οἱ οὐκ ἠλεημένοι,
δὲ νῦν ἐληθέντες.

Appendix 3

A Structural Greek Diagram of 1 Peter 2.4-10

⁴ πρὸς ὃν προσερχόμενοι **λίθον ζῶντα**
 ὑπὸ ἀνθρώπων μὲν **ἀποδοκιμασμένον**,

**Christ: Rejected by Men,
 Chosen by God**



¹⁰ οἱ ποτε οὐ λαός, νῦν δὲ λαὸς θεοῦ,
 οἱ οὐκ ἠλεημένοι, νῦν δὲ **ἐλεηθέντες**.

**Mankind: Once Rejected, Now Chosen
 by God through Christ**