

STEVE CARTER

Restored Order

Subordination and Freedom in 1 Peter

studies in biblical literature | 175

The concept of subordination plays a prominent role in the paranesis of 1 Peter, and it appears too in the context of Christ's victory over the cosmic powers. It seems to presuppose some kind of given natural and social order in which people must live in their allotted place. But the author also sees his readers' subordination as conditioned by their status as free people, which he expounds in several passages.

This investigation aims to clarify the meaning and relationship of the concepts of subordination and freedom in 1 Peter, with reference to the related idea of order. After an introduction that sets out the issues in detail, the first main section examines the three themes in the wider thought of the first century CE, and the second provides detailed exegesis of the key Petrine texts. A final chapter synthesizes this evidence and draws conclusions regarding the conceptuality of subordination and freedom expressed in the letter.

The study presents the idea of "restored order" as a new interpretive key to the teaching and paranesis of 1 Peter and the significant New Testament tradition to which it belongs. It clarifies the important Petrine concepts of subordination and freedom, with that of order, within the letter as a whole and its constituent parts, and it illuminates the exegesis of various disputed texts and passages. Scholars and research students of 1 Peter and the wider New Testament will find here a compelling proposal to stimulate and inform their own engagement with the text.

Steve Carter received his PhD from the University of Aberdeen in 2018, having undertaken his research at Bristol Baptist College. He has worked for twenty years as an editor, writer and manager for various publishers and charities.

ADVANCE PRAISE FOR
*Restored Order: Subordination
and Freedom in 1 Peter*

“In this thoroughly researched and carefully argued study, Steve Carter connects the themes of order, subordination and freedom in 1 Peter and argues that the author’s calls for subordination are not to be seen as part of a subversive strategy, nor as merely pragmatic or apologetic, but are rooted in his theology of restored divine order, such that both subordination and freedom are properly practiced within the God-given structures of state and household. The resulting depiction of 1 Peter as a conservative and socially conformist text may or may not be appealing, depending on the reader’s perspective, but the weighty case that is argued demands serious attention.”

—David G. Horrell, Professor of New Testament Studies and
Director of the Centre for Biblical Studies, University of Exeter, UK

“Dr. Steve Carter has taken his thesis on the relationship of subordination and freedom in 1 Peter and has redone it as a monograph. But is it worth reading? Decidedly, yes. He has carefully defined the focal terms, put them in their first century social context, and discussed them in the light of a thorough examination of the literature. That makes a significant contribution to the study of 1 Peter.”

—Peter H. Davids, Chaplain, Our Lady of Guadalupe Priory,
Georgetown, TX, USA, and Faculty Mentor, Kairos Network

Restored Order

Studies in Biblical Literature

Hemchand Gossai
General Editor

Vol. 175

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Steve Carter

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in 1 Peter



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Series Editor's Preface

More than ever the horizons in biblical literature are being expanded beyond that which is immediately imagined; important new methodological, theological, and hermeneutical directions are being explored, often resulting in significant contributions to the world of biblical scholarship. It is an exciting time for the academy as engagement in biblical studies continues to be heightened.

This series seeks to make available to scholars and institutions, scholarship of a high order, and which will make a significant contribution to the ongoing biblical discourse. This series includes established and innovative directions, covering general and particular areas in biblical study. For every volume considered for this series, we explore the question as to whether the study will push the horizons of biblical scholarship. The answer must be *yes* for inclusion.

In this well documented and cogently argued study Steve Carter explores and relates the relationship between subordination and freedom in 1 Peter. While a number of studies have been done on 1 Peter, Carter's study provides a much more systematic argument including the refined definitions of subordination, freedom and order. While detailing the arguments of the already established studies on 1 Peter, Carter advances the very persuasive arguments that freedom and subordination are not antithetical, but in fact provide the necessary foundation for a divinely instituted restoration of order. Therefore, he argues, subordination

is not designed to be a loss of freedom but the platform of freedom. Indeed, as the author pivots on 1 Peter 2:16, he notes that while this is a principal text that connects both subordination and freedom, with a number questions, a detailed and thorough examination has not been executed. This study provides such an exegetical and interpretive examination.

This excellent study is certain to generate ongoing discourse, particularly given the evidence of the way it is understood and attended to in communities of faith. For an understanding of the Petrine idea of order in both the household and society, this study will be an essential read. This study will certainly invite further conversation.

The horizon has been expanded.

Hemchand Gossai
Series Editor

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Dorothy Mary Carter, a relative, whose legacy made possible the extended career break in which this project was undertaken.

Abbreviations

Primary Sources

Hebrew Bible

Gn	Ru	Ezr	Sg	Jl	Zep
Ex	1 Sm	Neh	Isa	Am	Hag
Lv	2 Sm	Est	Jer	Ob	Zec
Nm	1 Kgs	Jb	Lam	Jon	Mal
Dt	2 Kgs	Ps/s	Ez	Mi	
Jo	1 Chr	Prv	Dn	Na	
Jgs	2 Chr	Eccl	Hos	Hb	

New Testament

Mt	Rom	Phil	2 Tm	1 Pt	Jude
Mk	1 Cor	Col	Ti	2 Pt	Rv
Lk	2 Cor	1 Thes	Phlm	1 Jn	
Jn	Gal	2 Thes	Heb	2 Jn	
Acts	Eph	1 Tm	Jas	3 Jn	

Apocrypha

Tb	Tobit
Jdt	Judith
Rest of Est	Additions to Esther
Ws	Wisdom of Solomon
Sir	Sirach
Bar	Baruch
S of III Ch	Song of the Three Jews
1 Mc	1 Maccabees
2 Mc	2 Maccabees
3 Mc	3 Maccabees
4 Ezr	4 Ezra
4 Mc	4 Maccabees

Pseudepigrapha

<i>Apoc. Abr.</i>	<i>Apocalypse of Abraham</i>
<i>2 Bar.</i>	<i>2 Baruch</i>
<i>1 Enoch</i>	<i>1 Enoch</i>
<i>2 Enoch</i>	<i>2 Enoch</i>
<i>Ep. Arist.</i>	<i>Letter of Aristeas</i>
<i>Exag.</i>	<i>Exagoge (of Ezekiel the Tragedian)</i>
<i>Jos. and As.</i>	<i>Joseph and Asenath</i>
<i>Jub.</i>	<i>Jubilees</i>
<i>Ps-Phoc.</i>	<i>Pseudo-Phocylides</i>
<i>Pss. Sol.</i>	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>
<i>Sib. Or.</i>	<i>Sibylline Oracles</i>
<i>T. Abr.</i>	<i>Testament of Abraham</i>
<i>T. Jud.</i>	<i>Testament of Judah</i>
<i>T. Levi</i>	<i>Testament of Levi</i>
<i>T. Mos.</i>	<i>Testament of Moses</i>
<i>T. Reub.</i>	<i>Testament of Reuben</i>

Classical and Hellenistic Authors

Aristotle	
<i>Eth. Nic.</i>	<i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>
<i>Metaph.</i>	<i>Metaphysics</i>
<i>Pol.</i>	<i>Politics</i>

Arius Didymus

Perip. Eth.

Stoic Eth.

Epitome of Peripatetic Ethics

Epitome of Stoic Ethics

Bryson

Econ.

Management of the Estate

Callicratidas

Estate

On the Happiness of the Estate

Cicero

Acad.

De Fin.

De Leg.

De. Rep.

De Fato

Nat. Deor.

Academics

On Ends

On the Laws

On the Republic

On Fate

On the Nature of the Gods

Dio Chrysostom

Disc.

Discourses

Diogenes Laertius

Vit.

Lives of Eminent Philosophers

Dionysius of Halicarnassus

Ant. Rom.

Roman Antiquities

Epictetus

Disc.

Discourses

Hierocles

Fath.

*On Duties: How to Conduct Oneself
toward One's Fatherland*

Gods

*On Duties: How to Conduct Oneself
toward the Gods*

Hous. Manag.

On Duties: Household Management

Marr.

On Duties: On Marriage

Par.

*On Duties: How to Conduct Oneself
toward One's Parents*

Josephus

Ag. Ap.

Against Apion

Ant.

Antiquities of the Jews

J.W.

Jewish War

Musonius Rufus

Lect.

Lectures & Sayings

Philo

Abr.

On Abraham

Aet. Mund.

On the Eternity of the World

Decal.

On the Decalogue

Ebr.

On Drunkenness

Flacc.

Against Flaccus

Fug.

On Flight and Finding

Heir

Who is the Heir of Divine Things?

Jos.

On Joseph

Leg. All.

Allegorical Interpretation of Genesis 2 and 3

Mos.

On Moses

Omn. Prob. Lib.

Every Good Man is Free

Op. Mund.

On the Creation

Prelim. Stud.

Preliminary Studies

Prv.

On Providence

Quaest. in Ex.

Questions on Exodus

Sacr.

The Sacrifices of Abel and Cain

Somn.

On Dreams

Spec. Leg.

On the Special Laws

Vit. Cont.

On the Contemplative Life

Philodemus

Prop. Manag.

On Property Management

Plato

Leg.

Laws

Polit.

Statesman

Rep.

Republic

Tim.

Timaeus

Plutarch

Bride

Delays

Gener.

Mor. Virt.

Prog. Virt.

State

Superst.

Advice to Bride and Groom

On the Delays of the Divine Vengeance

On the Generation of the Soul in the

Timaeus

On Moral Virtue

How a Man May Become Aware of His

Progress in Virtue

Precepts of Statecraft

Superstition

Ps-Aristotle

Mag. Mor.

Oec.

Great Ethics

The Management of Households

Ps-Melissa

Klear.

Letter to Klearata

Ps-Theano

Eub.

Nikos.

Letter to Eubule

Letter to Nikostrata

Seneca the Younger

Ep.

Ep. Mor.

Nat. Quaest.

Vit. Beat.

Epistles

Moral Essays

Natural Questions

On the Happy Life

Sextus Empiricus

Pyrr.

Outlines of Pyrrhonism

Suetonius

Caes.

Lives of the Caesars

Tacitus

Agric.

Ann.

Germ.

Hist.

Agricola

Annals

Germania

Histories

Xenophon

Oec.

Household Manager

Qumran Literature

1QM

War Scroll

1QS

Rule of the Community

1Q28a

Rule of the Congregation

4Q159

Ordinances

4Q171

Psalms Pesher

4Q174

Florilegium

4Q175

Testimonia

4Q180

Ages of Creation

4Q184

Wiles of the Wicked Woman

4Q201–2, 204–6

Books of Enoch

4Q242

Prayer of Nabonidus

4Q246

Aramaic Apocalypse

4Q403–5

Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice

4Q416

Sapiential Work A^b

5Q515

New Jerusalem

11Q13

Melchizedec

11Q19

Temple Scroll

CD

Damascus Document

Early Rabbinic Literature

Sifre Dt.

Sifre on Deuteronomy

Tg. Neof.

Targum Neofiti I

Mishnah Tractates

M. 'Abot

'Abot

M. B. Mesi'a

Baba Mesi'a

M. Ber.

Berakot

M. Hor.

Horayot

M. Ketub.

Ketubot

M. Ned.

Nedarim

M. Pesach.

Pesachim

M. Rosh Hash.

Rosh Hashanah

M. Sanh.

Sanhedrin

M. Sotah

Sotah

Early Christian Authors

Barn.

Epistle of Barnabas

Clement of Rome

1 Clem.

1 Clement

Did.

Didache

Ignatius

Ign., Eph.

Ignatius, Letter to the Ephesians

Ign., Magn.

Ignatius, Letter to the Magnesians

Ign., Pol.

Ignatius, Letter to Polycarp

Ign., Rom.

Ignatius, Letter to the Romans

Ign., Trall.

Ignatius, Letter to the Trallians

Mart. Isa.

Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah

Mart. Pol.

Martyrdom of Polycarp

Polycarp

Pol., Phil.

Polycarp Letter to the Philippians

Secondary Sources

BDAG

Danker, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*

HR

Hatch and Redpath, *Concordance to the Septuagint*

LN

Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*

LSJ

Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*

NIDNTTE

Silva, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*

NIDOTTE

VanGemeren, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*

TDNT

Kittel and Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*

TDOT

Botterweck, Ringgren, and Fabry, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*

General

diss.

fl.

LXX

NT

OT

dissertation

living

Septuagint

New Testament

Old Testament

Introduction

The first letter of Peter offers its original readers a combination of expository testimony and pastoral paranesis. In light of their difficult circumstances, its author alternately reassures them regarding their experience of God's grace, described in terms of their status and benefits as Christians, and urges them to stand fast in that grace by living in ways that accord with it (5:12).¹ To ensure the effective performance of both tasks he deploys a wide range of relevant concepts.

Within the letter's sections of exhortation the concept of subordination occupies a prominent place. As represented primarily by the verb *ὑποτάσσω*, it appears within the author's instructions for conduct in the state (2:13–17) and the household (2:18–3:7), and the opening imperative *ὑποτάγητε* (2:13) introduces it as the dominant theme of these sections; it also appears in the guidance for life in the Christian community (5:1–5). Many scholars relate it to the language of obedience (*ὑπακούω*, 3:6), honor (*τιμᾶω/τιμῆ*, 2:17; 3:7) and humility (*ταπεινοφροσύνη*, 5:5; cp. 3:8 *ταπεινόφρονες*).² Moreover, a form of *ὑποτάσσω* also occurs within a consolatory section (3:18–22), with reference to the victory of Christ over the cosmic powers (3:22). A clear understanding of the author's idea of subordination will thus contribute significantly to the proper interpretation of the letter, and especially of its paranesis.

In contrast, the theme of freedom appears at first sight to play a relatively minor part in the argument. It is most obviously signified by the *ἐλευθερ-* word-group, but this appears only in the parenetic context of 2:16 (as *ἐλεύθεροι* and *ἐλευθερία*). Yet although the only clearly freedom-related language found elsewhere is that of redemption (*λυτρόω*) in 1:18,³ there are good reasons to believe that this explanatory unit (1:18–21), and the letter’s two other extended christological formulas (2:21–25; 3:18–22), all describe a single process of liberation, and therefore supplement and illuminate the more explicit reference in 2:16. If so, the author’s concept of freedom also bears closely, if more indirectly, on the construal of 1 Peter, and particularly of its expository sections.

These two themes are exegetically related in 2:13–17, which has foundational significance for the letter’s view of both. It is widely believed among commentators that verse 16 (*ὡς ἐλεύθεροι καὶ μὴ ὡς ἐπικάλυμμα ἔχοντες τῆς κακίας τὴν ἐλευθερίαν ἀλλ’ ὡς θεοῦ δοῦλοι*) explains how the command for subordination in verse 13 is to be obeyed.⁴ This link, in such a crucial part of the text, suggests a deeper conceptual relation that underlies the author’s other references to subordination and freedom and may shed further light on his theological convictions and ethical principles.⁵

However, much of the potential for these themes and the connection between them to clarify scholarly understanding of 1 Peter’s exposition and paranesis has yet to be realized. Discussion of the meaning and relationship of subordination and freedom in the letter has raised a wide range of conceptual and exegetical issues, but these remain largely unresolved in the commentaries and other literature. Since the purpose of this work is to bring greater clarity to this somewhat confused picture, it is appropriate to begin by introducing some of the key disagreements.

Issues

State and Household

Commentators on 1 Peter are divided on whether the civil and domestic authority to which subordination is required, and the structures of the state and the household in which it is administered, are viewed by the author as given by God or as merely human and contingent. Many affirm that he sees these structures as divinely created and deriving their legitimacy and consequent authority from God.⁶ With respect to subordination, J.H.B. Masterman writes, “The aim of the

Christian is not to overturn the foundations of society, but to assert the divine claim over all human institutions,⁷ and Ceslas Spicq says that “on s’insère ainsi dans l’ordre qu’Il [God] a établi.”⁸

But many other scholars deny that for the author the state⁹ has been ordained or commissioned by God and bears divine authority;¹⁰ thus John Elliott can write, “The Petrine conception of the function of civil authority is a simple utilitarian one, devoid of divine warrant.”¹¹ Many appeal to a supposed contrast between 1 Peter 2:13–17 and Romans 13:1–7, based mainly on the former’s omission of the Pauline phrases *ὑπὸ θεοῦ* and *θεοῦ . . . διάκονός*, its implicit denial of *φόβος* to the emperor, and its appeal to a functional motive for subordination. Thus Paul Achtemeier states, “[T]he insistence in Romans 13 that rulers bear divine authority is totally absent in 1 Peter 2.”¹² A few authors combine elements of both views.¹³

Exegetically this issue relates most closely to the key phrase *πάση ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει* in 2:13a, which designates the entities to which subordination must be given. Scholars disagree on whether the *κτίσεις* are the products of human¹⁴ or divine creation,¹⁵ and if the latter, whether they are human beings¹⁶ or structures of authority.¹⁷ Since the calls to subordination in 2:13b–3:6 appear to be specific applications of this general command, the phrase relates to the interpretation of these texts too.

Hierarchy and Equality

Most scholars define subordination in 1 Peter as a basically hierarchical concept, involving the conferring or assumption of an inferior place in relation to others. A minority, however, have proposed alternative definitions that downplay or deny this dimension. Charles Cranfield’s understanding of *ὑποτάσσω* provides a good example: “a voluntary subordination of oneself to others, putting the interests and welfare of others before one’s own, preferring to give rather than to receive, to serve rather than to be served . . . a giving oneself to, and for, others.”¹⁸ These authors emphasize “[f]inding and occupying responsibly one’s place in society,”¹⁹ largely without reference to graded relationships or structures.

Different views are also advanced regarding the way in which traditional subordinate relations are affected in 1 Peter by the equality of believers in Christ. Some commentators argue that the author affirms these hierarchies and even extends them to ecclesial relationships, while conditioning their application by the mutuality of Christian relations; subordination is essentially one-sided.²⁰

Others, however, claim that the stated or implied equality and reciprocity of normally inferior and superior partners subverts the principle of hierarchy and entails a more egalitarian practice.²¹

It follows that for some scholars the Petrine²² author's concept of subordination does not include obedience, and a few even draw a sharp exegetical distinction between *ὑποτάσσω* and *ὑπακούω* (1:2,14,22; 3:6). Thus Ramsey Michaels asserts that "'obedience' (*ὑπακοή*) is a primary and radical commitment while *ὑποτάσσειν* represents a secondary and more limited one," and favors understanding the latter as respect or deference.²³ Many other commentators, however, insist that obedience is an integral part of subordination.²⁴

Further related exegetical issues include the possible connection between subordination/*ὑποτάσσω* and two other concepts/terms: honor/*τιμάω* or *τιμή*, especially in 2:17, and humility/*ταπεινοφροσύνη* in 5:5.²⁵ Several authors regard the first imperative (*πάντας τιμήσατε*) in 2:17 as a restatement of *ὑποτάγητε πάσῃ ἀνδρωπίνῃ κτίσει* in 2:13, "for the verb *timao* ('honor') here refers to the status and rights of others. . . Like the verb *hypotasso*, it advocates recognition of relationships."²⁶ And Ehrhard Kamlah presents subordination as an expression of humility (also tying both to 2:17):

Die Aufforderung von 1 Petr 2, 13: "Ordnet euch jedem Geschöpf unter" macht diese Haltung der Demut zur Grundlage des Verhältnisses zu anderen Menschen (vgl. auch 2, 17). Wenn also der Brief Unterordnung gebietet, dann geht es ihm um die Verwirklichung von Demut.²⁷

Such close identification of the concepts is not universal, however.²⁸

Status or Qualities

A question that has received little scholarly attention is whether subordination in 1 Peter is grounded on the political or social position of those to whom it is given or on their natural or moral qualities. There is a general consensus in favor of the former; some scholars argue for it from 2:13–17,²⁹ and the subsequent instruction in 2:18³⁰ to slaves to submit even to harsh masters appears to settle the matter (so also, though less obviously, 3:5–6 and 5:2–5). But no attempt has been made to explore the implications of this view for the author's wider understanding of subordination, and in particular for the status he assigns to those relationships in which it is required.

Motivation

Some scholars argue that the motives offered in 1 Peter for subordination are merely pragmatic; in other words, for the author it is not a goal in itself, but a means to another end. Often this is defined in apologetic and prudential terms; thus Shively Smith writes, “The author commands submission not because it was God’s way but because it was his way of mitigating the conspicuousness of his community and keeping members alive.”³¹ But other writers argue that subordination is also required for missional reasons,³² or to encourage unity and cohesion within the Christian communities.³³

Very few authors deny that such motivations are present in 1 Peter.³⁴ However, many claim that subordination is also presented as a divine imperative;³⁵ that is, required by God as a normative principle of Christian conduct in itself. Thus Howard Marshall writes:

[Christians] must disarm . . . criticism by going out of the way to be law-abiding and to fulfil the responsibilities of their various stations in life. But the motivation goes deeper than mere desire for self-preservation; it has a theological basis: Obedience must be rendered for the sake of the Lord, who has appointed the authorities to carry out his will.³⁶

This disagreement over the motive/s for subordination bears upon the exegesis of some key terms and phrases in the letter. In particular, the verb *ἀγαθοποιέω* and its cognates (e.g. 2:14–15, 20; 3:6) may be held to relate to conduct that is good only according to the standards of society,³⁷ and/or according to the will of God.³⁸ The phrase *τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ* in 2:15a may be connected only to the silencing of the foolish in 2:15b,³⁹ and/or to the subordination (2:13) by which this is achieved.⁴⁰ And the reading of other motivational phrases, such as *διὰ τὸν κύριον* in 2:13, may also be affected by whether such subordination is a divine or solely pragmatic imperative.

Coincident or Conflicting Demands

Perhaps the most famous discussion in recent Petrine studies, the so-called Balch-Elliott debate, asks if the letter’s principal aim is to advocate the readers’ conformity to or distinctiveness from their surrounding society. Beginning with monographs by,⁴¹ and debate between,⁴² David Balch and John Elliott in the 1980s, this has been continued vigorously by various scholars, though no consensus has yet emerged.⁴³ The debate relates to another key

issue concerning subordination: the extent to which the author expects the demands of political and social superiors⁴⁴ to coincide with those of God,⁴⁵ and so how far he envisages that his readers should subordinate themselves to the authorities.

Thus a reading of the letter as mainly advocating conformity to societal norms entails that the requirements of the state and the household are broadly coincident with God's will, while one that takes it as largely a call to distinctiveness implies that these demands will often conflict.⁴⁶ Similarly, the former indicates that the author is primarily concerned to encourage subordination to superiors, while the latter suggests that he must equally want to limit it. Exegetically these differences are most often seen in the rhetorical purpose ascribed to the various divine motivations highlighted above, which some scholars see as principally intended to *strengthen* the call to subordination,⁴⁷ but others present as also or mainly directed to *relativizing* it.⁴⁸

A number of commentators make this question more specific by focusing on the possible pressure faced by the readers of 1 Peter to participate in the imperial cult.⁴⁹ Some suggest that its demands were pervasive and compelling, and were bringing the believers into confrontation with the authorities; David Horrell writes of “a context . . . in which Christians—accused and slandered by their hostile contemporaries—might face the demand to worship the emperor or the gods of Rome.”⁵⁰ But other scholars maintain that there is little or no evidence in the letter of a problem with the cult; thus Elliott asserts “the complete absence in 1 Peter of any explicit reference to emperor worship.”⁵¹

This specific disagreement is sometimes concentrated exegetically on the last two imperatives of 2:17 (*τὸν θεὸν φοβεῖσθε, τὸν βασιλέα τιμᾶτε*). Most authors see these as an adaptation of Proverbs 24:21, intended to imply that fear is properly reserved for God alone; the use of *ἀνθρώπινος* in 2:13 is sometimes read in the same way.⁵² But while some therefore view them as a response to the emperor's demands for divine honors and designed primarily to relativize his authority,⁵³ others interpret them as just a reassertion, appropriately qualified, of the call to be subordinate to the government, and draw no conclusions regarding any supposed conflict with it.⁵⁴

Also related to this issue is the range of questions raised by postcolonial readings of 1 Peter. Such interpretations consider how the circumstances and relationships of colonization determine the perspectives of colonized peoples and their responses to (what they supposedly regard as) disadvantage, marginalization and oppression. Drawing in particular on James C. Scott's famous work on “hidden transcripts,”⁵⁵ postcolonial interpreters argue that while certain documents

may appear on the surface to be wholly conformist both politically and socially, in reality they may also (or instead) critique the dominant imperial order and encourage subtle forms of resistance to it, even perhaps to the point of attempting to subvert it.⁵⁶

Thus for example David Horrell and Travis Williams have recently identified various ways in which 1 Peter may recommend “one way of negotiating existence in the empire, between conformity and resistance.”⁵⁷ Discussing verses such as 1:18; 2:11–12; 2:17 and 4:16, they propose that the author is indirectly devaluing the narratives, structures and practices of the Roman overlords and distancing his readers from them. As a result, while he encourages Christians to respect certain social norms in order to diminish external hostility, he also requires them to challenge certain others.⁵⁸ Williams even claims that the author “works to subtly undermine and cautiously subvert—where practically feasible—the power-base of dominant social and political structures, along with the hegemonic discourse which underlies them.”⁵⁹

This study does not attempt to provide an assessment of postcolonial hermeneutics in general, which would necessarily range far beyond its limited scope. But while this interpretive method wisely encourages the alert reader to look below the surface of the text for critiques of established structures that may not be immediately obvious, its applicability to the letter inevitably depends on the extent to which the author actually regards the authorities of the state (and perhaps also the household) as undesirably dominant or oppressive, and the Roman ordering of government and society as opposed to the normative divine order of the cosmos. Since this work deals with those issues in detail, at various points it has implications for postcolonial approaches, and some of these are highlighted in its notes and conclusions.

Subordination of the Powers

Another issue that is barely raised by Petrine scholars is the possible connection between the author’s various calls for his readers’ subordination and his description in 3:22 of God’s subjection of the powers to Christ.⁶⁰ A verbal parallel (*ὑποτάσσω*) does not necessitate a close conceptual link, and both the context of this verse and the nature of the subordination portrayed there are significantly different from those of the other texts. But the relevance of the concept of order to both the ethical and the cosmic frameworks for subordination suggests that this question is worthy of more attention than it has received so far. It is centered exegetically on 3:18–22.

Moral or Political Freedom

It is widely agreed that the Petrine author's concept of freedom at least includes the readers' liberation from slavery to evil—that is, to the sinful practices of their former life and the wicked spiritual powers that controlled it—in order that they might serve God. Thus John Calvin says that liberty “is simply freedom from sin, and the dominion is taken away from sin, so that men may become obedient to righteousness,”⁶¹ and Norbert Brox writes, “dann lässt sich pauschal von der Befreiung von Einst . . . von den früheren Leidenschaften (1,14), zum Heil und zum neuen Lebenswandel reden.”⁶² Such freedom is entirely independent of the readers' external—including their social and political—circumstances. Many scholars present this as the only meaning of freedom in 1 Peter, including 2:16.⁶³

Other commentators, however, while conceding that this is the view of freedom found in 1:18–19 and perhaps elsewhere, see a reference in 2:16 to a kind of political or civil liberty; as slaves of God, Christians are in some sense free from the structures and laws of wider society.⁶⁴ Thus Mark Dubis suggests that the readers are “free with respect to governing authorities,”⁶⁵ Scot McKnight that “Christians . . . are ultimately free from the jurisdiction of these authorities,”⁶⁶ and Howard Marshall that they “are God's slaves and as such are free from obligation to anyone else.”⁶⁷

Some authors present this political sense as the sole meaning of *ἐλεύθερος* and *ἐλευθερία* in 2:16.⁶⁸ More commonly, scholars seek to combine the political and moral understandings, though it is not always clear how they think these are related; thus Karen Jobes simply juxtaposes them when she writes, “Being free from sin, [the readers] are therefore free to choose to live in a way that honors the God whom they serve before the eyes of a pagan society to whom they have no similar obligation.”⁶⁹ Occasionally it is not even obvious which view is being espoused.⁷⁰

Only some supporters of the political interpretation attempt to explain in what sense Christians are supposedly free of authorities to which they are also told to be subordinate. The most frequent suggestion is that they are to submit only because God so wills, not because their superiors do. Thus Michaels writes:

[The] readers are “free” (*ὡς ἐλεύθεροι*, v. 16) to cooperate or not cooperate with their fellow citizens and rulers, free to resist or comply with the demands of the civil authority. Peter requires cooperation and compliance not because the state requires it, but “for the sake of the Lord.”⁷¹

This relationship between the two concepts may also be defined in terms of a distinction between voluntary and enforced subordination: one that is given on the basis of the authorities' own claim would be compelled, but one given in obedience to God's command is free.⁷²

Some advocates of the political understanding argue that slavery to God is necessarily exclusive,⁷³ and exegete the reference to freedom in 2:16 as therefore *limiting* the readers' subordination to the state.⁷⁴ But supporters of the moral view often assert instead that the reference is primarily intended to *reinforce* the demand for subordination in 2:13; the freedom of the readers from the power of evil and their obligation to obey God requires them to be subordinate to human authorities.⁷⁵

Conclusion

Most of these disagreements regarding the nature of subordination and freedom in 1 Peter do not really constitute a debate or even a discussion. Except on a few issues, such as the Balch-Elliott debate or the meaning of *πάση ἀνθρώπινη κτίσει*, scholars frequently register no awareness of alternative views and seldom engage with them. As shown above, some important questions commonly receive little or no attention, and the treatment of others can be undeveloped or even unclear. There is therefore a need for a detailed study of these two themes that can integrate their various elements and shed further light on their meaning and relationship.

Purpose and Method

This work is written in response to that need, as a conceptual and exegetical investigation of subordination and freedom in 1 Peter, and has a twofold purpose. Firstly, it seeks to define the meaning of the author's two concepts as represented by—though not only by—the verb *ὑποτάσσω* and the *ἐλευθερ-* word-group, and to establish the relationship between them. Secondly, it aims thereby to illuminate the exegesis of those passages of the letter where the themes appear, especially 2:13–17, where they stand in close connection. The study should thus not merely clarify the individual issues outlined above but also provide a broad conceptual framework within which these and related topics can be properly incorporated.

It must be emphasized that this is a *conceptual* and not a *lexical* enquiry. Although the instances of *ὑποτάσσω* and *ἐλευθερ-* provide primary data for

discussion of subordination and freedom in 1 Peter, it will be shown that both concepts (and especially the latter) are grounded in a wider range of terms and texts. So this work does not seek to establish the possible ranges of meaning covered by the words, but rather to set out the author's teaching on the two themes.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, an appendix on *ὑποτάσσω* and *ἐλευθερ-* is included, with the more limited goals of (firstly) demonstrating that the concepts of subordination and freedom are their primary referents and (secondly) establishing a verbal connection between subordination and the third idea to be considered in this study. (See Appendix 1 below.)

Elliott points out that the verb *ὑποτάσσω* is related to the noun *τάξις*, which means "order" (and also to *τάγμα*, "that which has been ordered"). He argues that it presupposes the concept of a hierarchical natural and social order comprising relationships between superiors and inferiors:

The societies of the Greco-Roman period were greatly concerned with the establishment and maintenance of "order" (*taxis*) in all areas of public and private life as a replication of an ordered universe (*kosmos*). The social structure and stratification of society were perceived as manifestations of an order ordained by nature. Superordination and subordination involved the acting out of statuses and roles determined by one's assigned place in the stratified social order.⁷⁷

Pace Elliott, the connection between order and subordination cannot be justified on lexical grounds alone, though it will be argued in Appendix 1 that these do offer modest support for it. But this study will show that in many contexts, and specifically in those exemplified in 1 Peter, the former theme is indeed the basis of the latter. It will further indicate that the idea of freedom (which has no lexical connection with the others) is also closely related to that of order within much of the first-century CE thought-world. So bringing the concept of order in 1 Peter into dialogue with those of subordination and freedom can be confidently expected to clarify them both.

The investigation will demonstrate the particular significance in 1 Peter of the notion of *restored order*: the defeat by Christ of evil and disruptive powers and the consequent re-establishing of divinely given order in the cosmos. Within the work this is relevant primarily to the conceptual and exegetical questions surrounding subordination and freedom. But its explanatory power in this limited field also reveals its potential fruitfulness for research into other aspects of the letter's teaching and paranesis, not least in its elucidation of 1 Peter's place in the wider context of the NT and earliest Christianity.

In summary, then, this work is a conceptual and exegetical enquiry into subordination and freedom in 1 Peter, with reference to the related theme of order. Its approach is based on two main assumptions. Firstly, the Petrine understanding of order, subordination and freedom is properly interpreted within the intellectual world of the late first century CE; it must be comprehensible against that background and represent a reaffirmation, elaboration or criticism of various elements of it. And secondly, that understanding must be derived from and make sense within the text of the letter itself, and especially those units that embody the concepts most directly. Without reference to both these contexts, considered in their own right, the meaning of the themes in 1 Peter cannot be properly grasped.

Thus the first main section of the study outlines the concepts of order, subordination and freedom as these are understood in late first-century CE Greco-Roman (Chapter 2), early Jewish (Chapter 3) and early Christian (Chapter 4) thought, by means of a broad overview of the most relevant texts. The discussion is not limited to documents from this time: Chapters 2 and 3 draw on the conceptual background of each theme in previous epochs to illuminate its later use; and in all three chapters the survey is extended into the early second century, when thought-patterns may still closely resemble those of the earlier period. Particular attention is given to instances of the concepts that are similar to those in 1 Peter, such as subordination within the state and the household, and each chapter concludes with a summary of those points that relate most closely to the interpretation of the letter.

But although the purpose of these chapters is to reconstruct the general environment of thought in which 1 Peter must be interpreted, their conclusions are intended to be only provisional regarding its concepts of subordination and freedom. They present the range of possible options of which the letter's teaching may be an expression or development, or to which it may be a reaction; but they do not seek to posit direct historical connections between the text and any one view, or with particular documents or schools that represent that view, or to settle the question of which one/s the author may be deploying, either positively or negatively. Their focus is deliberately on evidence *external* to the letter.

The second main part of the work then provides exegesis of the key texts from 1 Peter that deal with the themes of subordination and freedom. An introduction to each passage is followed by discussion of its contents, which includes detailed consideration of the key concepts. Chapter 5 contains a careful analysis of the foundational 2:13–17 and also includes a section on the author's understanding of order. Chapter 6 then discusses the other subordination texts (2:18–25; 3:1–7;

5:1–5; 3:18–22) so as further to illuminate the author’s understanding of the theme, and Chapter 7 performs the same function for (what are argued to be) the other freedom passages (1:18–21; 2:21–25; 3:18–22).⁷⁸ A concluding section to each chapter draws together the implications of the text/s for the author’s view of subordination and/or freedom, in relation to the concept of order.

But although these chapters aim to provide a thorough explanation of those elements of the letter that bear upon 1 Peter’s concepts of subordination and freedom, regarding the meaning of these concepts their conclusions too are provisional. They identify what may be learned from the author’s own writing regarding his understanding of the themes, with special reference to his view of order, but they do not seek to settle the meaning of the key verses and passages in relation to the wider intellectual context described in Chapters 2–4. Their focus is deliberately on evidence *internal* to the letter.

The closing Chapter 8 then brings together the external, conceptual background of Chapters 2–4 and the internal, exegetical insights of Chapters 5–7, synthesizing their respective evidence regarding the themes of subordination and freedom—with order—in 1 Peter and using it further to illuminate the relevant texts. It then draws from this synthesis some definite conclusions regarding the author’s understanding of the concepts and the relationship between them, and briefly considers their significance within the letter and the wider NT.

Throughout the approach of the work is determinedly inductive. As far as possible it seeks to begin from individual examples of the themes, or from individual texts, building up from these a composite picture of subordination and freedom as understood in their various contexts, and ultimately in the thought of 1 Peter as a whole. Conversely, it tries to avoid drawing conclusions based on putative grand narratives or theological schemes; in a conceptual and exegetical investigation these risk imposing too great a degree of unity on the material or even distorting it with extraneous categories and agendas.

The work is also not a social-scientific or rhetorical enquiry. Although its conclusions are consistent with a credible hypothesis regarding 1 Peter’s historical context (see below), it does not attempt to establish them by reasoning directly from the social world of the readers. Similarly, while due attention is given to the author’s rhetorical *intent* in the various passages discussed, the details of his rhetorical *strategy* are not considered. These approaches can be immensely informative for the study of 1 Peter,⁷⁹ but arguably they too are not the most suitable starting-places for a conceptual and exegetical exploration. Nonetheless, the following analysis should provide resources with the potential to inform future works of these kinds.

Introductory Questions

A number of the key questions of introduction bear closely upon 1 Peter's view of subordination and freedom. Provisional answers to these must therefore be offered; together they comprise a plausible understanding of the historical context of the letter within which the following investigation can proceed. Although the conclusions of the study are not determined by this framework, they must at least be consistent with it. Only a brief statement is provided here; for more detailed argument, with references and bibliography, see Appendix 2 below.

It is assumed in what follows that the apostle Peter did not write the letter, but that it is a pseudonymous work dating from 70–90 CE, more likely the 80s. The traditional identification of Rome as the place of origin seems to be securely grounded. The letter is addressed to Christian readers across a wide area of Anatolia, who probably represent various socio-economic groups, though the majority may well be relatively impoverished. They are alienated and estranged from pagan society because of their allegiance to Christ, though the majority appear to be Gentiles.

There is no doubt that the believers' faith is provoking hostility that causes them to suffer, perhaps especially because of their social and religious exclusivity. Although the widespread scholarly consensus that the persecution was mainly unofficial and at the hands of their pagan neighbors has recently been strongly challenged, a good case can still be made for it. The primary form seems to have been verbal assault intended to pressurize the readers to return to pagan practice. The letter urges them instead to persevere in their distinctive beliefs and behavior; it does so by testifying to the grace of God and exhorting them to stand fast in it.

The author draws extensively from many different traditions—Christian, Jewish and Greco-Roman—which may include both oral and written sources. He does not merely reproduce these, however, but integrates and refashions them for his expository and parenetic purposes. His use of Peter's name may be intended to authorize and validate this synthesizing work.

Scholars continue to disagree on many of these claims, and only tentative and provisional inferences may appropriately be drawn from them. But supposing that this outline of the historical circumstances of the letter is at least fairly accurate, a few general points may be made regarding the author's possible approach to his task.

Firstly, the likely date of 1 Peter suggests that the Christian community addressed in the letter may need consolidating and stabilizing following both its initial expansion and the convulsions of the late 60s. This second-generation

period is an appropriate context in which to propose strategies for living fruitfully and securely within pagan society in the eschatological interim. And the letter's suggested provenance may make the author especially conscious that the structures of Roman society must be engaged constructively.

Secondly, 1 Peter is addressed to the general problem of anti-Christian hostility; it is sent to vulnerable recipients estranged from wider society and requiring a survival strategy. However, the author seeks to provide this by asserting their status as God's people and exhorting them to live in the light of it. Thus his approach appears at first sight to be both pragmatic *and* principled; it is by living rightly before God that the readers will also maximize their security.

And thirdly, the letter's use of multiple sources and its ascription to Peter indicate the author's concern for the unifying and restatement of diverse Christian traditions. This attitude would be consistent with the desire to promote proper order and cohesion within the Christian community; that is, to safeguard right relationships so as to ensure believers' unity and appropriate response to the challenges that they now face.

As explained above, a convincing interpretation of 1 Peter's concepts of subordination and freedom needs to fit not only within this broad Petrine agenda, but also within the framework of wider first-century CE thought on these themes. A discussion of this may now begin, focusing first on the Greco-Roman background.

Notes

- 1 See J. H. Elliott, *1 Peter* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 83, 877. All Bible references in this chapter are to 1 Peter unless otherwise stated.
- 2 E.g. M. Gielen, *Tradition und Theologie neutestamentlicher Haustafelethik: Ein Beitrag zur Frage einer christlichen Auseinandersetzung mit gesellschaftlichen Normen* (Frankfurt am Main: Anton Hain, 1990), 393–94; M. E. Boring, *1 Peter* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1999), 173; L. R. Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude: A Commentary* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 75; see further below, Chapters 5 and 6.
- 3 The word *δοῦλοι*, the antithesis of *ἐλεύθεροι*, is also present in 2:16.
- 4 E.g. J. R. Michaels, *1 Peter* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1988), 128; N. Brox, *Der Erste Petrusbrief*, 4th ed. (Zurich: Benziger Verlag and Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchner Verlag, 1993), 122; T. R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2003), 131; see further below, Chapter 5.

- 5 It will be argued below (see Chapters 6 and 7) that the concepts also appear together in 2:18–25 and 3:18–22, though the references to freedom are less obvious there.
- 6 E.g. J. E. Huther, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the General Epistles of James, Peter, John and Jude*, trans. D. B. Croom (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1881), 128–30; A. R. C. Leaney, *The Letters of Peter and Jude* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 35–36; W. A. Grudem, *The First Epistle of Peter* (Leicester: IVP, 1988), 118–19; M. Luther, *Commentary on Peter & Jude*, trans. and ed. J. N. Lenker (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Classics, 1990), 116–17.
- 7 J. H. B. Masterman, *The First Epistle of St. Peter* (London: Macmillan, 1900), 107.
- 8 C. Spicq, *Les Épitres de Saint Pierre* (Paris: Gabalda, 1966), 102.
- 9 These authors commonly discuss the issue only in relation to the civil authorities, though the principle could be extended to the household by implication.
- 10 This phrase does not mean that everything done by the state is necessarily God's will, or that its designated role is unlimited. Rather it means that God has given the state a specific task, such that in discharging this it acts with his mandate.
- 11 Elliott, *1 Peter*, 493; see also e.g. F. W. Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter: The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1961), 114; H. Frankemölle, *1. Petrusbrief, 2. Petrusbrief, Judasbrief* (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1987), 47.
- 12 P. J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996), 181; see also e.g. H. Goldstein, "Die politischen Paränesen in 1 Petr. und Röm. 13," *Bibel und Leben* 14 (1973): 92–99; O. Knoch, *Der Erste und Zweite Petrusbrief, Der Judasbrief* (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1990), 78–79.
- 13 Thus Hiebert claims (D. E. Hiebert, *First Peter: An Expositional Commentary* [Chicago, IL: Moody, 1984], 153) that human government originates with God, but that its current institutions are human creations. See also e.g. C. Bigg, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1902), 139.
- 14 E.g. Brox, *Erste Petrusbrief*, 124; R. Feldmeier, *The First Letter of Peter: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, trans. P. H. Davids (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008), 158–60.
- 15 E.g. H. Teichert, "1 Petr. 2:13—Eine Crux Interpretum?" *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 7, no. 4 (1949): 304; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 124.
- 16 E.g. D. G. Horrell, *The Epistles of Peter and Jude* (London: Epworth, 1998), 48–49; E. J. Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2000), 111.
- 17 E.g. K. H. Schelkle, *Die Petrusbriefe—Der Judasbrief*, 4th ed. (Freiburg: Verlag Herder, 1976), 73–74; I. H. Marshall, *1 Peter* (Downers Grove, IL and Leicester: IVP, 1991), 82–84.
- 18 C. E. B. Cranfield, *I & II Peter and Jude: Introduction and Commentary* (London: SCM Press, 1960), 74.

- 19 J. B. Green, *1 Peter* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2007), 73; see also e.g. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 182; E. Waltner, “1 Peter,” in E. Waltner and J. D. Charles, *1–2 Peter, Jude* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1999), 87–88.
- 20 E.g. E. Kamlah, “Υποτάσσεσθαι in den Neutestamentlichen ‘Haustafeln,’” in *Verborum Veritas: Festschrift für Gustav Stählin zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. O. Böcher and K. Haacker (Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 1970), 239–40; L. Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, ed. F. Hahn, trans. and augm. J. E. Alsup (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993), 193; J. Punt, “Subverting Sarah in the New Testament: Galatians 4 and 1 Peter 3,” in *Early Christian Literature and Intertextuality: Exegetical Studies*, vol. 2, ed. C. A. Evans and H. D. Zacharias (London and New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 163–64.
- 21 E.g. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 218–19; P. H. Davids, “A Silent Witness in Marriage: 1 Peter 3:1–7,” in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy*, eds. R. W. Pierce and R. M. Groothuis (Downers Grove, IL: IVP; Leicester: Apollos, 2004), 238; Donelson, *1 Peter*, 72.
- 22 In this work the adjective “Petrine” is used only with reference to 1 Peter.
- 23 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 124; see also e.g. Waltner, “1 Peter,” 87.
- 24 E.g. E. Best, *1 Peter* (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott; Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1982), 112–13; Schreiner, *1 Peter*, 127.
- 25 The only other instance of humility language in the letter, ταπεινόφρονες in 3:8, does not usually appear in discussions of the concept, perhaps because its immediate context—a list of prescribed virtues—sheds little light on its meaning.
- 26 Richard, *1 Peter*, 114; see also e.g. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 187–88.
- 27 Kamlah, “Υποτάσσεσθαι,” 242; see also e.g. E. Schweizer, *Der Erste Petrusbrief*, 3rd ed. (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1972), 57–58.
- 28 See e.g. Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 352–53; Schreiner, *1 Peter*, 133.
- 29 E.g. Beare, *First Epistle*, 115; Spicq, *Épîtres*, 102.
- 30 On this verse see e.g. J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude* (London: A & C Black, 1969), 116; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 517.
- 31 S. T. J. Smith, *Strangers to Family: Diaspora and 1 Peter’s Invention of God’s Household* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016), 165; see also e.g. D. L. Balch, “Hellenization/Acculturation in 1 Peter,” in *Perspectives on 1 Peter*, ed. C. H. Talbert (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1986), 93–96; C. H. Talbert, “Once Again: The Plan of 1 Peter,” in Talbert, *Perspectives*, 146–48.
- 32 E.g. B. Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1–2 Peter*, vol. 2 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP; Nottingham: Apollos, 2007), 140–41; A. G. Padgett, *As Christ Submits to the Church: A Biblical Understanding of Leadership and Mutual Submission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 81–82.

- 33 E.g. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 277–78; K. H. Jobes, *1 Peter* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 299 (though these authors do not see the motives for subordination as *only* pragmatic).
- 34 Though Williams claims (T. B. Williams, *Good Works in 1 Peter* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014], 179–80) that the author expects his readers’ good works, including their subordination, to provoke further conflict, and that their accusers will be silenced only eschatologically.
- 35 The vocabulary of “pragmatic” and “divine” imperatives should not be taken to mean that “pragmatic” motives such as communal self-preservation cannot also be part of the divine will, nor that obedience to “divine” imperatives may not have beneficial practical consequences.
- 36 Marshall, *1 Peter*, 83. See also e.g. J.H. Elliott, *The Elect and the Holy: An Exegetical Examination of 1 Peter 2:4–10 and the Phrase basileion hierateuma* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1966), 179–81; S. A. A. Fagbemi, *Who Are the Elect in 1 Peter? A Study in Biblical Exegesis and Its Application to the Anglican Church of Nigeria* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 137–39; A. P. Joseph, *A Narratological Reading of 1 Peter* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2012), 142–44.
- 37 E.g. Leaney, *Letters*, 36–37; B. W. Winter, “The Public Honouring of Christian Benefactors: Romans 13:3–4 and 1 Peter 2:14–15,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 34 (1988): 92–95; S. McKnight, *1 Peter* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 147.
- 38 E.g. C. F. Sleeper, “Political Responsibility according to 1 Peter,” *Novum Testamentum* 10 (1968): 283; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 175–76; T. B. Williams, *Persecution in 1 Peter: Differentiating and Contextualising Early Christian Suffering* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2012), 258–75.
- 39 E.g. Witherington, *Letters*, 144; M. Dubis, *1 Peter: A Handbook on the Greek Text* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010), 67; Williams, *Good Works*, 178–79.
- 40 E.g. Masterman, *First Epistle*, 108; Kelly, *Epistles*, 110; Schreiner, *1 Peter*, 130.
- 41 D. L. Balch, *Let Wives be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1981); J. H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press; London: SCM Press, 1981).
- 42 See Balch, “Hellenization”; J. H. Elliott, “1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy: A Discussion with David Balch,” in Talbert, *Perspectives*.
- 43 See the review in M. Dubis, “Research on 1 Peter: A Survey of Scholarly Literature since 1985,” *Currents in Biblical Research* 4, no. 2 (2006): 212–14, and other contributions by T. Seland, “‘Conduct Yourselves Honorably among the Gentiles’: Acculturation and Assimilation in 1 Peter,” in *Strangers in the Light: Philonic Perspectives on Christian Identity in 1 Peter* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2005), 150–52, 173–87; J. G. Bird, *Abuse, Power and Fearful Obedience: Reconsidering 1 Peter’s Commands to Wives* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2013), 7–34; D. G. Horrell, “Between Conformity and

- Resistance: Beyond the Balch-Elliott Debate towards a Postcolonial Reading of 1 Peter,” in *Becoming Christian: Essays on 1 Peter and the Making of Christian Identity* (London and New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), *passim*.
- 44 I.e. those within the state and the household respectively.
- 45 The language of “coincident demands” means not only that there is (normally) no conflict between the two sets of requirements, but that submission to the will of one’s superiors is (normally) the will of God. This does not entail, however, that God would *otherwise* command or prohibit everything that the authorities do.
- 46 Despite the attention given in the ongoing debate to the so-called civil and household code (see Dubis, “Research,” 15–16), this obvious conclusion is rarely if ever explicitly drawn in the literature.
- 47 E.g. Huther, *General Epistles*, 128–30; Schelkle, *Petrusbriefe*, 73; N. Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers; Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1992), 78.
- 48 E.g. Goldstein, “Politischen Paränesen,” 104; P. H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 99. Green writes (*1 Peter*, 73), “Peter speaks of Jesus as Lord in [2:13], immediately prior to his reference to the emperor, ensuring the priority of the claims of the Lord Jesus Christ.”
- 49 Almost all scholars believe that the author expected his readers to reject any such demands, but see W. Carter, “Going All the Way? Honoring the Emperor and Sacrificing Wives and Slaves in 1 Peter 2:13–3:6,” in *A Feminist Companion to the Catholic Epistles*, eds. A-J Levine and M. M. Robbins (London and New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 23–31 for a minority view.
- 50 D. G. Horrell, “‘Honour Everyone . . .’ (1 Pt. 2.17): The Social Strategy of 1 Peter and its Significance for Early Christianity,” in *To Set at Liberty: Essays on Early Christianity and Its Social World in Honor of John H. Elliott*, ed. S. K. Black (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2014), 204; see also e.g. T. S. Cauley, “The Title *Christianos* and Roman Imperial Cult,” *Restoration Quarterly* 53, no. 4 (2011): 198–205; Williams, *Persecution*, 245–54.
- 51 Elliott, *1 Peter*, 501; see also e.g. S. Légasse, “La Soumission aux Autorités d’après 1 Pierre 2:13–17: Version Spécifique d’une Parénèse Traditionelle,” *New Testament Studies* 34, no. 3 (1988): 391–93; S. R. Bechtler, *Following in His Steps: Suffering, Community and Christology in 1 Peter* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1998), 51–52; and (more broadly) J. A. Diehl, “Anti-Imperial Rhetoric in the New Testament,” in *Jesus is Lord, Caesar is Not: Evaluating Empire in New Testament Studies*, eds. S. McKnight and J. B. Modica (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013), 45, 54.
- 52 E.g. by Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 182–83; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 489.
- 53 E.g. Horrell, “‘Honour Everyone . . .,’” 204–6; Williams, *Good Works*, 228, 233.
- 54 E.g. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 131–32; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 500–1.

- 55 J. C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990).
- 56 Horrell, “Conformity,” 217–21; Williams, *Good Works*, 24–31. On the sub-discipline of “empire criticism” in NT studies, see S. McKnight and J. B. Modica, “Introduction,” in McKnight and Modica, *Jesus is Lord*, 16–19.
- 57 Horrell, “Conformity,” 222.
- 58 Horrell, “Conformity,” 216, 224–35; Williams, *Good Works*, 206–9, 228–33.
- 59 Williams, *Good Works*, 278.
- 60 But see E. G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes and Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1946), 208; Green, *1 Peter*, 133.
- 61 J. Calvin, *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews and the First and Second Epistles of St. Peter*, eds. D. W. Torrance and T. F. Torrance, trans. W. B. Johnston (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd; Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1963), 272.
- 62 Brox, *Erste Petrusbrief*, 122.
- 63 E.g. E. A. Blum, “1 Peter,” in *Hebrews-Revelation*, ed. F. E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 233; P. Perkins, *First and Second Peter, James, and Jude* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 47–48; D. Senior, *1 Peter* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003), 72.
- 64 See e.g. Spicq, *Épîtres*, 104; Best, *1 Peter*, 115; B. Schwank, “The First Epistle of Peter,” in B. Schwank, A. Stöger, and W. Thüsing, *The Epistles of St Peter, St John and St Jude*, trans. W. Kruppa (London: Sheed & Ward Ltd., 1971), 47. Again, this view is mainly advanced with reference to the state, though it can naturally be applied also to the household.
- 65 Dubis, *1 Peter*, 69.
- 66 McKnight, *1 Peter*, 147.
- 67 Marshall, *1 Peter*, 85.
- 68 E.g. McKnight, *1 Peter*, 147–48; Donelson, *1 Peter*, 74–75.
- 69 Jobs, *1 Peter*, 177; see also e.g. D. L. Bartlett, “The First Letter of Peter: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections,” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible XII* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998), 275; Witherington, *Letters*, 145.
- 70 E.g. Schweizer, *Erste Petrusbrief*, 59–60; Hiebert, *First Peter*, 158.
- 71 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 124; see also e.g. B. Reicke, *The Epistles of James, Peter and Jude* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964), 96; R. B. Vinson, “1 Peter,” in R. B. Vinson, R. F. Wilson, and W. E. Mills, *1 & 2 Peter, Jude* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2010), 115.
- 72 E.g. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 123–24; Knoch, *Erste Petrusbrief*, 75–76. (However, this distinction is also made by some advocates of the moral view, e.g. Beare, *First Epistle*, 118; R. Pesch, *Die Echtheit eures Glaubens: 1. Petrusbrief* [Freiberg: Herder, 1980], 54.)
- 73 E.g. McKnight, *1 Peter*, 147–48; Donelson, *1 Peter*, 74–75.

- 74 E.g. Schwank, “First Epistle,” 47; W. Schrage, “Der Erste Petrusbrief,” in H. Balz and W. Schrage, *Die “Katholischen” Briefe* (Berlin: Evangelisch Verlagsanstalt, 1982), 91–92.
- 75 E.g. Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 187–88; Feldmeier, *First Letter*, 162–63. On this view, if the qualifying phrase *ὡς θεοῦ δοῦλοι* also indicates that the author expects subordination to be limited by a higher loyalty to God, it does so only secondarily and incidentally.
- 76 On this distinction see M. Silva, *Biblical Words and Their Meaning: An Introduction to Lexical Semantics*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 22–28.
- 77 Elliott, *1 Peter*, 486–87.
- 78 Two units (2:21–25 and 3:18–22) appear in both groups. Discussion of these is divided between the two chapters according to the respective focus of each.
- 79 See e.g. Elliott, *Home*; L. Thurén, *Argument and Theology in 1 Peter: The Origins of Christian Paraenesis* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995); B. L. Campbell, *Honor, Shame, and the Rhetoric of 1 Peter* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1998); Williams, *Persecution*.

Order, Subordination and Freedom in Greco-Roman Thought

This chapter provides a summary overview of Greco-Roman understandings of the concepts of order, subordination and freedom around the probable date of 1 Peter's composition in the late first century CE. Since a comprehensive treatment of the origin and development of these concepts in Greek and Roman literature lies beyond the scope of this work, the following discussion has the more modest aim of identifying and describing the most important elements of each theme in the early Roman age, drawing on the conceptual background of the classical and Hellenistic periods to illuminate its later use. This will be done mainly with reference to the major contemporary schools of thought, which include both the principal Greek philosophical traditions and important Roman social and political ideas.¹ But where more popular views are useful for further illuminating the concepts and can be reconstructed with some confidence, as for example regarding the nature of the gods or of political freedom, some reference to these will also be included.

This emphasis on philosophy and political and social thought is justified, indeed required, on several grounds. Firstly, the conceptual nature of this study entails a primarily theoretical approach to its three themes; their practical applications (which could differ considerably)² are relevant only as they shed light upon this. Secondly and similarly, because the teaching of 1 Peter on subordination

and (to a lesser extent) freedom has a normative and prescriptive character, the most relevant Greco-Roman comparison is with literature of the same nature, which addresses what ought to be rather than (merely) what is.

Finally, philosophy and its application to political and social questions were ubiquitous in the early Roman period among the educated classes and those most influenced by them. From the first century BCE the subject became readily accessible and widespread, to the extent that it is reasonable to expect an educated Greek-speaker such as the author (or scribe) of 1 Peter to be conversant with its themes and to use them to articulate and shape the worldview of his readers.³

As a preliminary step, it will be useful to provide a brief historical introduction to the principal Greek and Roman intellectual traditions, as a map on which the various thinkers to be considered may be appropriately placed.

Platonism originated with the Athenian philosopher Plato (c.429–347 BCE),⁴ who was greatly influenced by his predecessor Socrates (469–399 BCE), although his own teaching ranged far more widely and deeply. He founded the Academy, the first philosophical school, in Athens.⁵ In the century after Plato's death, this school embraced versions of the Skeptical philosophy first espoused by Pyrrhon (c.365–275 BCE), and this prevailed until the destruction of the Academy by the Romans in 86 BCE. But in the first century BCE the tradition known as Middle Platonism began to evolve in Alexandria, drawing Plato's ideas together into a coherent philosophical system, and a new edition of Plato's works appeared in Rome; the Roman philosopher and lawyer Cicero (106–43 BCE) also identified himself with the Platonist tradition.⁶ By the late first century CE, Platonism had become a powerful presence in the Roman world; the biographer and moralist Plutarch (fl. 50–120 CE) was one of its leading thinkers.⁷

Aristotelianism, the adherents of which were known as the *Peripatetics*, traced its history back to Aristotle (384–322 BCE), the second great Socratic thinker in fourth-century BCE Athens. Although originally Plato's student, Aristotle devised an extensive and distinctive philosophy of his own, and founded the Lyceum to propagate it.⁸ This school also continued after the death of its founder, but it is reckoned to have gone into decline from at least the mid-third century BCE, and it too was eventually destroyed in 86.⁹ However, by later in the first century BCE the Peripatetic tradition was also experiencing something of a revival, with the publication of a new edition of Aristotle's works in Rome, as well as an *Epitome of Peripatetic Ethics* by Arius Didymus.¹⁰ Though unlike Platonism it had no notable exponent in the late first century CE, its continuing influence is also evident in the work of other schools, not least in their concepts of subordination and freedom.

Stoicism was one of the two dominant philosophies of the Hellenistic age, and its significance for intellectual life in the late Roman republic and early empire is especially noteworthy. Originating with Zeno (335–263 BCE), who taught in Athens, and tracing its origins through the Cynics back to Socrates, it had various affinities with the Platonist and Peripatetic traditions. Cicero was at least sympathetic to it, and the Roman statesman Seneca the Younger (fl. 1 BCE–65 CE) was a committed adherent; Musonius Rufus (fl. 30–102 CE) and his student Epictetus (fl. mid-first to second century CE) were among its leading thinkers in the late first century CE, when it was still one of the most influential schools.¹¹

Epicureanism, the other main philosophy from the Hellenistic period, began with Epicurus (341–270 BCE), another teacher based in Athens. But unlike the Stoics, the Epicureans could claim no intellectual family relationship to Platonists or Peripatetics, and their philosophy represented a much greater conceptual departure from what had gone before. The school maintained a strong presence throughout the early Roman age, though it had no very original thinkers at this time.¹²

Neo-Pythagoreanism was not wholly distinct from Platonism, but comprised “those thinkers in the Platonic tradition who derived Plato’s philosophy from Pythagoras.”¹³ The original Pythagorean school, which predated Plato by around 150 years, had been largely absorbed into Platonism, but in the first century BCE its distinctive teachings were revived, and the philosophy retained its semi-separate identity until around 200 CE, its key thinkers providing interesting variations on Platonist teachings.¹⁴

Other schools included *Skepticism* or *Pyrrhonism*, which existed outside Platonism as well as within, and *Cynicism*, more a way of life than a philosophy, but highly influential in its early years on the more intellectually rigorous Stoic tradition.¹⁵

Roman thought drew extensively on the Greek schools while making its own contributions to the intellectual milieu. Cicero set himself the task of re-articulating Greek philosophy in the Latin language (*De Fin.* I.1–10),¹⁶ while Seneca, Musonius Rufus and Epictetus produced a distinctively Roman version of Stoicism.¹⁷ The Greek historian Dionysius of Halicarnassus (fl. first century BCE) sought to reconcile Greeks to the rule of Rome by emphasizing the continuity between them (*Ant. Rom.* vol. 1), while the histories of Tacitus (fl. c.56–118 CE) and biographies of Suetonius (c.70–c.130 CE) offer additional perspectives on political subordination and freedom. Some Roman concepts were significantly different from their Greek equivalents, and Roman thinkers produced

original ideas in both politics and philosophy (see e.g. Cicero, *De Rep.*; Seneca, *Nat. Quaest.*).

Some of the traditions display much more interest than others in the themes of order, subordination and freedom, but they all make some relevant contributions. This chapter looks first at order, as the primary concept underlying that of subordination in Greco-Roman thought, with special reference to its relationship to ideas of the divine. Subordination and freedom are then examined in turn. The concluding section will summarize the points from the discussion that bear especially closely upon the teaching of 1 Peter.

Order

Plato affirmed the existence of a rational and moral order, eternal and unchanging, and expressed in both natural laws and ethical norms. The Forms, perhaps the most famous element of his metaphysics, were presented as the embodiment and model of this order (*Rep.* 504e–517c; *Tim.* 51b–52d).¹⁸ Antiochus of Ascalon (b. c.130 BCE), the forerunner of Middle Platonism, accepts some version of these Forms (Cicero, *Acad.* 30–35),¹⁹ and his student Cicero speaks of a cosmic rational order or natural law that is *diffusa in omnes, constans, sempiterna* (*De Rep.* III.33).²⁰ The Pythagorean tradition suggests that the order reflects the principles of music and mathematics (*καθ' ἁρμονίαν συνεστάναι τὰ ἅλα*; Diogenes Laertius, *Vit.* VIII.33),²¹ while the Peripatetics also regard it as both a natural phenomenon and an ethical demand.²²

The Stoics' concept of order is secondary to their primary category of nature. According to their teaching, nature is what holds the world together; it is supremely rational and directs everything to good purposes. In this context, order is an attribute of nature that is essential to its perfection. Nature has created the universe in a supremely ordered form; its elements are united and fixed and work harmoniously together (Cicero, *Nat. Deor.* II.81–82; Seneca, *Nat. Quaest.* I.14–15, II.13).²³ Cleanthes states that this natural order (or universal reason) comprises both the fixed and harmonious order of events in the natural world, and the moral order present within both god and humanity (*Hymn*, Stobaeus 1.25.3–27.4).²⁴ Order in the Stoic scheme can thus be understood as the naturally and morally right working of every part of the universe in relation to every other.

All the schools that expound versions of this concept associate it in some way with the divine. But their views are generally distinct from popular Greek and Roman ideas of the gods, who must be invoked for prosperity and protection

through prayer, sacrifice and festivals, who provide portents and oracles, but whose unpredictability and caprice makes their relationship to cosmic order uncertain and problematic.²⁵ In contrast, the god/s of the main philosophical traditions are so defined as appropriately to constitute the foundation of that order and provide its authority. There are different views among and within the schools regarding the nature of the divine: transcendent (Platonists, Peripatetics, neo-Pythagoreans) or immanent (Stoics), monistic or dualistic (earlier and later Stoics respectively), impersonal (Socratics, neo-Pythagoreans, most Stoics) or personal (Plutarch, perhaps Epictetus).²⁶ But these are all consistent with a basically unified understanding of the god/s as the standard, source and sustainer of the cosmic order.

Firstly, the god of Plato is the embodiment of the rational order and of its moral law (*Leg.* 715e–718c), and Aristotle agreed that god epitomizes both the right ordering of the world and the best human life (*Eth. Nic.* 1177a, 1178b).²⁷ Later Platonists and Peripatetics endorse these ideas. Plutarch claims that the universe is as much like god as possible, and that god is also the example of human excellence (*Gener.* 1014a–b); and Cicero observes that the Peripatetics regard reason and natural law as conforming to the nature of the supreme god (*De Fin.* IV.11–12). The Stoics and neo-Pythagoreans assert respectively that god is rational and good, the measure of what accords with nature (Cicero, *Nat. Deor.* II.76–80)²⁸ and the intelligible model on which the universe is constructed.²⁹ Thus all these schools affirm that the god/s provide the definition of the world's proper order.

Secondly, there is broad agreement among the same schools that order, or at least the nature in which order inheres, is originated by or dependent on the god/s. So Plato's god formed the world and was thus the origin of its natural and moral ordering (*Leg.* 896e–899b); the Middle Platonists agree that god formed the cosmos and impressed order upon it (Plutarch, *Gener.* 1014a–c).³⁰ The Stoics present the *λόγος* as the creative source of order in the world (Cicero, *Nat. Deor.* II.57–60).³¹ And the neo-Pythagorean Eudorus (fl. late first century CE) ascribes to god the harmony of the cosmic order.³² Although Aristotle rarely attributed creative activity to the divine, and suggested that this included only the germ of order, he could still claim that the world depends upon god as the one self-dependent being (*Metaph.* 1071b–1074b). His later followers appear not to have developed these ideas further.³³

For the Platonists and neo-Pythagoreans the divine act of creation is the imposition of order on originally disordered material. According to the Platonist Plutarch, the body and soul of which nature is constituted are pre-existent and

were ordered into a *κόσμος* by god, who gave reason and concord to soul and regularity and shape to matter (*Gener.* 1014d–e). And the neo-Pythagorean Numenius (fl. second century CE) also maintains that matter had an independent existence and was constructed and ordered by the divine demiurge.³⁴ (The Stoics, whose view of history is cyclical rather than linear and who see nature as perfect, do not make this point; see Seneca, *Nat. Quaest.* III.30.)³⁵

Thirdly, for all four traditions the divine in some sense rules the world and maintains the order within it. Plato's god controls all things (*Leg.* 715e–718c), and although the Skeptic Carneades (214/3–129/8 BCE) challenges such providentialism, and Cicero recognizes it only in general terms (*De Fato* 11),³⁶ it is strongly affirmed in Middle Platonism. Thus Plutarch, in criticizing atheists, claims that god orders and overrules all things faultlessly (*Superst.* 171a). Aristotle only occasionally attributed the ordering purpose at work in the world to god, but his Peripatetic successors affirm that the universe is ruled by a divine mind and that the god/s exhibit ordered purpose and activity (Cicero, *De Fin.* IV.12).³⁷

The Stoics have a strong doctrine of divine providence: the world is coordinated and ruled by the divine mind, and everything that happens is determined in some sense by the immutable will of god (Seneca, *Nat. Quaest.* II.35–36; Epictetus, *Disc.* I.6.3–11, I.14.2–3, I.16.1–14; Hierocles, *Gods*, Stobaeus 1.3.53–54; 2.9.7).³⁸ And for the neo-Pythagoreans the world is not merely created by god but also animated by it, thus ensuring the preservation and fulfilment of its order.³⁹

Further to the second and third points, Roman thought also characteristically affirms a divinely ordained order of things. The gods who institute and maintain this order are originally the traditional Roman deities, but later they also include the (semi-)divine emperor. Indeed, part of the reason why the emperors were deified is that they were believed to have brought order to a disordered world, which is an activity especially associated with the divine.⁴⁰

There is less agreement over how far the divine order is reflected in nature. Plato and his Socratic contemporary Xenophon (b. c.430 BCE) both argued that the world falls short of its normative order, owing either to the unsuitability of the material at the gods' disposal (Plato, *Tim.* 29a–30b, 46d–e) or to the gods' own imperfections (Xenophon, *Oec.* 17.4).⁴¹ Later Platonists affirm Plato's view: Cicero claims that nature's creative work is incomplete or "in the rough" (*inchoatum*) (*De Fin.* IV.34); and Plutarch asserts that the presence of evil souls leads to cosmic imperfection or "disorder" (*ἀταξία, ἀκοσμία*) (*Gener.* 1014b–e).⁴²

The Peripatetic tradition, on the other hand, has as a starting-point its founder's distinctive teleological perspective. Aristotle understood nature (*φύσις*) not as

the way things are, but as what something is when its growth is complete; order therefore exists in the world to the extent that people and things have realized their *φύσις*. Given that this process is clearly incomplete, however, he implicitly agreed with Plato that the cosmic order was reflected only imperfectly in the world as it is (*Pol.* 1252b). The neo-Pythagorean Numenius also agrees that the world's goodness is limited, by the independence of matter and its evil soul, and his school follows Aristotle in seeing the world's ordering as directed towards a goal.⁴³

But for the Stoics, nature is perfect such that this is the best of all possible worlds, and “embraces both the way things are and the way they should be”;⁴⁴ there is no distinction between these. Evil exists, but they claim that its co-existence with good is necessary within the cosmic order. The will of god by which all things are determined orders everything for the best (Cicero, *Nat. Deor.* II.81–92).⁴⁵

In Greco-Roman thought the individual human soul is widely believed to participate in some sense in the cosmic order. So for the Platonists, Plutarch draws on Plato's *Timaeus* (34c–37c; 42e–44d) in seeing the soul of each human being as a reflection or expression of the soul of the world (*Gener.* 1014d–e; *Mor. Virt.* 441d–442c). The neo-Pythagoreans also follow Plato in presenting the human soul as one in nature with the one supreme god,⁴⁶ and the Stoics posit a unity between the divine and human minds (Seneca, *Ep.* 95.52).

This participation is interpreted in terms of rational and moral norms. Plutarch simplifies Plato's tripartite division of the soul (*Rep.* 440e–441c) into a bi-partite model containing rational and irrational components, of which the former reflects the divine reason; he also presents god as the model for human excellence (*ἀρετή*, often translated “virtue”) (*Gener.* 1014b–e).⁴⁷ The Peripatetics see reason and the binding natural law as conforming to the nature of the supreme god (Cicero, *De Fin.* IV.11–12). Stoicism locates human participation in the divine specifically in reason and virtue (Cicero, *Nat. Deor.* II.76–80; Epictetus, *Disc.* I.3.1–4),⁴⁸ so for Epictetus “human nature is invested with moral norms that are neither arbitrary nor culturally relative but guaranteed and explained by the actions of a supremely beneficent intelligence.”⁴⁹

This sharing of the soul in the rational and moral order entails that the human life should be ordered to reflect it. For Plato, this required that each part of the soul should function properly in relation to the others, with reason in control (*Rep.* 441e–442d, 587a), and in Plutarch's simpler model the orderly, rational part is meant to rule the disorderly, irrational one by imposing order upon it; to be so ordered is essential for moral goodness (*Mor. Virt.* 441d–442c, 443c–d).

Similarly, the Stoics believe that life is properly governed by reason and marked by virtue (Cicero, *De Fin.* III.20–21; Epictetus, *Disc.* I.3–22).⁵⁰

It follows that the desirable goal of human life can be attained only by a right understanding of the divinely given order. For the Platonists this may involve a knowledge of the Platonic Forms or, as Plutarch suggests, of the movements of the heavenly bodies in which cosmic order is manifested (*Delays* 550d–e).⁵¹ For the Peripatetics it entails contemplation of the divinely ordered purpose and activity exhibited by the gods that leads nature towards its proper goal (Cicero, *De Fin.* IV.11–12). And for the Stoics it entails rational investigation into the ordering of the cosmos and a proper comprehension of the god/s who govern it (Cicero, *De Fin.* IV.11–12; Seneca, *Ep.* 95.47–50; Hierocles, *Gods*, Stobaeus 2.9.7).⁵²

This relationship of the soul to the cosmic order defines the normative human task, which for all these schools is to live according to the order within nature. The Stoics, who see nature as already perfect, confine this task to the proper ordering of one's own inward life (Arius Didymus, *Stoic Eth.* 5b2–5, 5k, 5l, 6, 6a, 6e; Cicero, *De Fin.* III.21–25, 31; Seneca, *Ep.* 120.11–12).⁵³ But for the Platonists, who believe that nature is imperfect, it also includes the further ordering of the world in line with divine norms, maintaining and enhancing its order to make it what it is meant to be (Plato, *Rep.* 430e–434c; see also Xenophon, *Oec.* 9.1–10). Thus Cicero writes (*De Fin.* IV.34): *Ut Phidias potest a primo instituire signum idque perficere, potest ab alio inchoatum accipere et absolvere, huic similis est sapientia; non enim ipsa genuit hominem sed accepit a natura inchoatum; hanc ergo intuens debet institutum illud quasi signum absolvere.* (“A Pheidias can start to make a statue from the beginning and carry it to completion, or he can take one rough-hewn by some one else and finish that. The latter case typifies the work of Wisdom. She did not create man herself, but took him over in the rough from Nature; her business is to finish the statue that Nature began, keeping her eyes on Nature meanwhile” [Rackham, LCL].) The Peripatetics, for whom Aristotle had defined moral responsibility teleologically in terms of living so as to realize the true nature of things (*Eth. Nic.* 1094a), understand it as conforming in this fuller sense to divinely given order, and neo-Pythagorean teleology entails the same conclusion.⁵⁴

Because of the intimate connection described above between order and god, several of the schools also define human virtue in terms of the divine. Thus for Plutarch, following Plato (*Leg.* 716a–e), human excellence involves imitating the divine virtue (*Delays* 550d–e); for the neo-Pythagoreans it entails becoming like god or following god; and for the Stoics it means accepting the will of the gods

and emulating their character (Arius Didymus, *Stoic Eth.* 11k; Seneca, *Vit. Beat.* 15–16; Epictetus, *Disc.* I.14.15–16, IV.1.86–98, IV.7.19–24).⁵⁵

The ethical demand for conformity to cosmic order has social and political implications. Greeks and Romans alike posit a close connection between the cosmos, the state and the household. So, for example, Aristotle argued that human nature develops naturally into the household (*οἶκος*) and households coalesce into the city-state (*πόλις*); these communities are therefore part of the ordered *τέλος* of human existence (*Pol.* 1253a). The later Peripatetic tradition (Arius Didymus, *Perip. Eth.*, Stobaeus 147.26–148.12)⁵⁶ and the Stoics (Arius Didymus, *Stoic Eth.* 11d; Cicero, *De Fin.* III.62–63, 68) both affirm this relationship. Cicero draws an analogy between the cosmos and the state (*De Rep.* VI.9–29),⁵⁷ and the neo-Pythagoreans extend this to the household (Callicratidas, *Estate*, Stobaeus 4.28.16, 4.22d.101, 4.28.17–18).⁵⁸

On this basis, many Greco-Roman authors regard certain political and social systems as ideal, or at least preferable to others, and certain structures of authority as divinely normative (see below, “Subordination”). Some Romans go even further: Dionysius argues that their original and specific arrangements were underwritten by the gods (*Ant. Rom.* 2.5–6), while Suetonius believes that these fates direct political events and determine people’s social standing (*Caes.* 4.57; 8.2.9).⁵⁹ The link is most robustly affirmed by the imperial ideology and cult, in which “[Augustus] has been raised, as it were, to cosmogonic stature; the Roman imperial system has been equated with the cosmic structures of the world.”⁶⁰

It is therefore widely agreed that the cosmic order is to be expressed in the life of the state and the household. The Stoics maintain that the city (and by implication the house) should reflect the harmony of the natural order (Arius Didymus, *Stoic Eth.* 11b, 121; Musonius Rufus, *Lect.* 40–43); and Cicero claims that this order should be embodied in appropriate institutions (*De Rep.* IV.3–6; V.6; see also Dio Chrysostom, *Disc.* 48.14–16).⁶¹ The Peripatetics follow their founder in seeing domestic and political relationships as grounded in nature (and therefore in order) (Arius Didymus, *Perip. Eth.*, Stobaeus 147.26, 149.5, 150.1),⁶² and the neo-Pythagoreans conform to the Platonist tradition in arguing that the order of the universe should be reflected in that of the state and household (Callicratidas, *Estate*, Stobaeus 4.22d.101).⁶³ For the Romans, Suetonius repeatedly implies that the emperor should be a person of appropriate ancestry and standing (e.g. *Caes.* 2.1–2; 8.1.1–4) and that his role is to maintain the traditional order and hierarchy (e.g. *Caes.* 2.35–44; 8.1.8).⁶⁴ It is in the outworking of these principles in practice that Greco-Roman teachings on subordination are to be understood.⁶⁵

Subordination

The Platonist and Peripatetic traditions are agreed that proper order in the state and the household involves different roles for different groups of people; these are not only normative but also mutually beneficial (Plato, *Rep.* 431b–c; Aristotle, *Pol.* 1254b). For these two schools, the roles are necessarily hierarchical, involving paired relationships of ruler and ruled. Aristotle claimed that it is fitting in the household for masters to rule over slaves, husbands over wives, and fathers over children, and in the state for the more excellent to rule the less (*Pol.* 1252a, 1253b, 1254b, 1325b). This principle is also reflected in Roman society, which according to Dionysius is tightly ordered and graded, with absolute submission being required of inferiors to superiors (*Ant. Rom.* 2.9–11).

Plato and Aristotle grounded these teachings on perceived differences in human nature. Thus Plato argued that social arrangements should be based on the knowledge and excellence of the respective groups (*Rep.* 430b–c, 590d–591a), and Aristotle claimed that they should reflect distinctions in the reasoning faculty (*Pol.* 1260a); in this he is followed not only by later Peripatetics (Ps-Aristotle, *Oec.* 1343b–1344a) but also by Cicero (*De Rep.* III.4–7).⁶⁶ Aristotle famously wrote (*Pol.* 1260a), *καὶ πᾶσιν ἐνυπάρχει μὲν τὰ μέρη τῆς ψυχῆς, ἀλλ’ ἐνυπάρχει διαφερόντως· ὁ μὲν γὰρ δοῦλος ὅλως οὐκ ἔχει τὸ βουλευτικόν, τὸ δὲ θῆλυ ἔχει μὲν, ἀλλ’ ἄκυρον, ὁ δὲ παῖς ἔχει μὲν, ἀλλ’ ἀτελές.*⁶⁷ (“And all possess the various parts of the soul, but possess them in different ways; for the slave has not got the deliberative part at all, and the female has it, but without full authority, while the child has it, but in an undeveloped form” [Rackham, LCL].)

So those in authority in both state and household are, or at least should be, marked out from others by their greater capacity to reflect the rational and moral norms of the cosmic order. These are the highest values to which society can aspire, and are distinct from the relatively irrational and corrupt standards of those in inferior positions (see e.g. Plato, *Rep.* 431b–c; Aristotle, *Pol.* 1252a–b; Tacitus, *Hist.* 2.95).⁶⁸ This distinction between higher and lower values appears to be a basic assumption of much Greco-Roman teaching on subordination.

The Epicureans and Stoics differ somewhat from the older schools. Epicureanism ignores in theory the social distinctions between men and women, masters and slaves, and notably the Garden (the Epicurean school in Athens) admitted both of the supposedly inferior groups.⁶⁹ As will be shown below, however, this more egalitarian approach is not followed through consistently in the most extended surviving Epicurean treatment of household management,

Philodemus's *On Property Management*, and probably represents an adaptation of traditional hierarchies rather than a complete rejection of subordination.

Stoicism stresses universal humanity, which apparently implies the equality of all people (including male and female, free and slave),⁷⁰ and the necessity of each individual for the proper functioning of the whole. But although the school in general adopts a more egalitarian stance, again this is not worked out thoroughly; in specific cases they seem generally content to commend respect for the established order (see below). The distinctions they draw between people and roles are however less sharp and graded: for example, Musonius Rufus grounds the tasks of husband and wife solely on physical strength, and both he and Hierocles (fl. 117–138 CE) allow some sharing of work (Musonius Rufus, *Lect.* 32–33; Hierocles, *Hous. Manag.*, Stobaeus 4.28.21).⁷¹ Again the practice of subordination is modified but the principle not repudiated.

Subordination in the State

Plato and Aristotle applied their subordinationist ethic to the relationship between the citizen and the state. They considered both the ideal ordering of the πόλις and the best arrangement that is realistically achievable,⁷² acknowledging that in less than perfect conditions the state has to settle for rule by imperfect people, but also arguing that political power should be assigned in proportion to the relative rationality or virtue of the citizens (Plato, *Polit.* 292d–293a, 301c–d; *Leg.* 689c–e, 875d–e; Aristotle, *Pol.* 1281a–1288b).⁷³ If this is done, the authorities will promote a properly ordered life; so complete subordination to them is both part of and a means to that end (Plato, *Polit.* 300a–301a; Aristotle, *Pol.* 1276b–1277b). Such a life is distinct from the social disruption that ensues when the lower human impulses rule the state (Plato, *Rep.* 559d–564a).

In the Hellenistic and Roman periods the proper nature and due claim of political rulers are often discussed within the civil management τόπος called *περὶ πολιτείας*. Among the later Platonists, Plutarch agrees that the role of the statesman is to demonstrate and promote qualities such as concord, peace and humanity, which are linked to his concept of order; though he does not explicitly call for subordination, this is therefore implicit in his teaching (*State* 814a–c, 824d–825b).⁷⁴ Cicero's argument that good statesmen understand the cosmic order of reason (or natural law) and the institutions that embody it implies that the people should recognize the ability of such leaders and obey them (*De Rep.* I.34, 41).⁷⁵ Supporters of the imperial regime understand taking one's place within the cosmic order to include acknowledging the emperor as *paterfamilias* of the whole

empire; subordination is necessarily due to him on the grounds of his elevation to at least an intermediate status between gods and humans.⁷⁶

Neither the Peripatetics nor the Epicureans say much specifically about subordination to the governing authorities. The former can be supposed to take it for granted given their insistence on submission in the household (see below), while detachment from civic life makes the latter indifferent to it.⁷⁷ The Stoics maintain that a properly functioning political system will reflect the harmony of the created order (see above), suggesting that at least in these conditions they regard subordination as appropriate. And Hierocles goes further, saying that one's country is like a second god, to be honored like one's parents and above oneself by obedience to its laws and customs (*Fath.*, Stobaeus 3.39.34–36).⁷⁸

Greco-Roman authors acknowledge that not all statesmen or political arrangements are ideal or even good (e.g. Plato, *Polit.* 297d–299e; Aristotle, *Pol.* 1284b–1286a; Arius Didymus, *Perip. Eth.*, Stobaeus 150.17–151.8; Tacitus, *Agric.* 30–32; cf. *Germ.* 7),⁷⁹ but they seem still to regard deficient or defective authorities as valid and generally to expect subordination to them. For example, Plato probably believed that disregard of constituted authority is potentially more disruptive than submission to a bad ruler (see *Polit.* 300a–301a). Likewise the overthrow of bad political systems such as tyranny is not prescribed; indeed, Tacitus warns against this (*Hist.* 4.74) and explicitly favors submission (*Agric.* 42).⁸⁰ So even when particular governors or regimes fail to exemplify the rational and moral norms of the cosmic order, the hierarchical structures of rulers and ruled apparently remain a normative, if imperfect, expression of those values; thus the demands of divine order and those of even unsatisfactory political (and, by extension, social) superiors and systems are thought at least mainly to coincide.

The more limited option of an appropriate disobedience to particular commands is at least implied, however. The responsibility laid by several traditions on each individual to live in accordance with the ordering of nature (see above) may be expected on occasion to conflict with the requirements of rulers. The commitment of the Stoics in particular to consistent virtue (Seneca, *Ep.* 120.10–22)⁸¹ further suggests that when a governor (or a householder; see below) tells them to do something vicious they should refrain. And the Roman Tacitus, while requiring obedience even to arbitrary rule, distinguishes it from groveling subservience and apparently approves intolerance of abuses (*Agric.* 13; *Ann.* 3.65).⁸² But it is striking how rarely any author clearly asserts the propriety of such responses, suggesting that many regard them as exceptional at most.

Subordination in the Household

Aristotle also saw the household as promoting the good life, for which its proper ordering is required. He claimed that each household should have only one head, whose rule over it is absolute: *καὶ ἡ μὲν οἰκονομικὴ μοναρχία (μοναρχεῖται γὰρ πᾶς οἶκος)* (*Pol.* 1255b; see also *Pol.* 1259a–b; *Eth. Nic.* 1160b–1161a). He is widely regarded as the most important source of the popular *τόπος, περὶ οἰκονομίας*, in which teaching on household relations, and specifically the three relationships of master and slave, husband and wife, and father and child, is often expressed in the Hellenistic and Roman periods (*Pol.* 1253b–1255b, 1259a–1260b).⁸³ His views are very influential not only on the Peripatetic school, but also on the Platonists and others.

In both the Greek and Roman worlds, slavery was pervasive, and the Romans took for granted the absolute power of the master and the total subordination of the slave.⁸⁴ None of the philosophical schools questions the institution, though they differ in the basis they ascribe to it. Aristotle himself notoriously declared that some people are slaves by nature; they are like animals and fit for only physical work.⁸⁵

ὅσοι μὲν οὖν τοσοῦτον διεστᾶσιν ὅσον ψυχὴ σώματος καὶ ἄνθρωπος θηρίου (διάκεινται δὲ τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον ὅσων ἐστὶν ἔργον ἢ τοῦ σώματος χρῆσις καὶ τοῦτ' ἔστ' ἀπ' αὐτῶν βέλτιστον), οὗτοι μὲν εἰσι φύσει δούλοι, οἷς βέλτιόν ἐστιν ἄρχεσθαι ταύτην τὴν ἀρχήν, εἶπερ καὶ τοῖς εἰρημένοις. (*Pol.* 1254b; see also *Pol.* 1254a–1255a)

“therefore all men that differ as widely as the soul does from the body and the human being from the lower animal (and this is the condition of those whose function is the use of the body and from whom this is the best that is forthcoming)—these are by nature slaves, for whom to be governed by this kind of authority is advantageous, inasmuch as it is advantageous to the subject things already mentioned.” [Rackham, LCL]

In this he is echoed by later Peripatetics (Arius Didymus, *Perip. Eth.*, Stobaeus 149.1–5),⁸⁶ and also by the neo-Pythagorean Bryson in his work on household management (*Econ.* 56–57), though all of them acknowledge that not every slave in law is also a slave by nature (including Aristotle, *Pol.* 1255a–b).

Plato implied that in a properly ordered society masters would excel their slaves in reason and virtue, and that in this sense the distinction is grounded in nature, but unlike Aristotle he did not suggest that slaves have a sub-human nature (*Rep.* 431b–c, 433a–b).⁸⁷ The Stoics maintain that slaves too are children

of the gods, belong to universal humanity and share the divine reason; they draw no natural distinctions between slaves and masters (Seneca, *Ep.* 47.10; Epictetus, *Disc.* I.13.3–5).⁸⁸

Despite these variations, all the schools demand or assume the subordination of slaves to masters, although there are some differences of emphasis between them. Plato and Aristotle asserted that slaves are their masters' property and are rightly controlled by them and kept in their place with *τυραννικός* rule and harsh punishments (Plato, *Leg.* 713e–714a; Aristotle, *Pol.* 1253b–1254a).⁸⁹ The later Peripatetics agree that slaves are human chattels with only limited rights and liable to chastisement, although they can also have responsible roles and suitable rewards (Ps-Aristotle, *Oec.* 1344a–b). For the neo-Pythagoreans, Bryson affirms the slaves' humanity at least to the extent of requiring fair treatment for them, though he too sees them as property whose obedience is compulsory (*Econ.* 61–73).⁹⁰

Philodemus expects the Epicurean householder to treat his slaves well, and he discourages the acquisition of gain by the hard labor and death of others. He does however approve of disciplining slaves, though not as severely as the Peripatetics recommend (*Prop. Manag.* IX.26–44, X.15–28; XXIII.3–4).⁹¹ The Stoics also urge moderate and humane treatment of slaves, but they do not generally reject even physical punishment for disobedience, only that administered in anger.⁹² Both schools thus take the principle of slaves' subordination for granted.

Both the Socratic and Stoic traditions affirm elements of equality and reciprocity between husbands and wives (Cicero, *De Fin.* IV.76; Seneca, *Vit. Beat.* 24.3). Indeed, Xenophon apparently argued not only that the wife's contribution to the household is as important as the husband's, but also that within her own sphere she may attain a higher level of understanding and moral quality than he does in his (*Oec.* 3.15, 7.20–28).⁹³ For the Platonists, Plutarch says that the spouses should act by agreement, have everything in common and share each other's concerns, and he attaches importance to mutual qualities such as kindness and loyalty (*Bride* 140e–f, 142f–143a, 145b–e).

The Stoic Musonius Rufus presents a very similar picture of a reciprocal relationship in which the functions of marriage are shared between the partners (*Lect.* 56–57). The wife as well as the husband should study philosophy, and Musonius claims that women have the same inclination and capacity for virtue as men (*Lect.* 28, 31–32).⁹⁴ For the neo-Pythagoreans, Bryson suggests that men and women need the same virtues, in the same quantities, and that these are cultivated mutually through their relationship (*Econ.* 91–92, 94–103).

Nevertheless, the roles of husbands and wives are almost always regarded as fixed and complementary rather than flexible and identical.⁹⁵ The Peripatetics claim that nature has equipped husbands and wives with different abilities to fulfil different tasks, and that they therefore have their distinct spheres within the household (Ps-Aristotle, *Oec.* 1344b–1345a). For the neo-Pythagoreans, “in Bryson the wife is very much the co-owner of the estate, but she should also stay put there.”⁹⁶ Even the Stoics Musonius Rufus and Hierocles agree that men and women have different roles according to nature—outdoor and indoor respectively—although (as shown above) they allow exceptions and overlaps, and Musonius sees the roles as of equal worth (Musonius Rufus, *Lect.* 29–30, 32–33; Hierocles, *Hous. Manag.*, Stobaeus 4.28.21).⁹⁷

And despite their affirmations of equivalence and mutuality, in almost every major tradition the arrangement of the household is clearly patriarchal and the wife is required to be subordinate to the husband.⁹⁸ Plato regarded women as inferior and claimed they should be under male control (*Rep.* 455d), and Plutarch speaks of wives accordingly: ὑποτάττουσαι μὲν γὰρ ἑαυτὰς τοῖς ἀνδράσιν ἐπαινοῦνται, κρατεῖν δὲ βουλόμεναι μᾶλλον τῶν κρατουμένων ἀσχημονοῦσι (*Bride* 142e; see also 139a–140d–e, 143c, 143f–144a); (“if they subordinate themselves to their husbands, they are commended, but if they want to have control, they cut a sorrier figure than the subjects of their control” [Babbitt, LCL]). Bryson too follows Plato, seeing the woman as weaker and with a “tendency towards imperfection” and demanding deference and obedience (*Econ.* 89; see also 82, 86–87, 91–92); other (supposedly female) neo-Pythagorean authors also require subordination (Ps-Melissa, *Klear.* and Ps-Theano, *Nikos.*)⁹⁹

Aristotle strongly affirmed the subordination of wives as normative (*Pol.* 1254b, 1259a–b), and the Peripatetics endorse this hierarchical relationship (Arius Didymus, *Perip. Eth.*, Stobaeus 148.16, 149.5).¹⁰⁰ The Roman Tacitus agrees that women are weak by nature and that wives should remain in subordination (*Ann.* 3:34),¹⁰¹ and the Roman expectation of total subordination of wives to husbands is summarized in Dionysius’s description of Romulus’s law for marriage (*Ant. Rom.* 2.25): οὗτος ὁ νόμος τὰς τε γυναῖκας ἠνάγκασε τὰς γαμετὰς, οἷα δὴ μηδεμίαν ἐχούσας ἐτέραν ἀποστροφὴν, πρὸς ἓνα τὸν τοῦ γεγαμηκότος ζῆν τρόπον, καὶ τοὺς ἀνδρας ὡς ἀναγκαίου τε καὶ ἀναφαιρέτου κτήματος τῆς γυναικὸς κρατεῖν.¹⁰² (“This law obliged both the married women, as having no other refuge, to conform themselves entirely to the temper of their husbands, and the husbands to rule their wives as necessary and inseparable possessions” [Cary, LCL].)

For the Stoics, even Musonius Rufus says that the wife must serve her husband (the reverse is not stated), and that a good man will rule his wife as well

as his children; men are (or are supposed to be) wiser, and they may properly expect women to follow them (*Lect.* 29, 43, 56);¹⁰³ while Hierocles sees the wife's role as providing support for her husband (Hierocles, *Marr.*, Stobaeus 4.22.21–24).¹⁰⁴

However, the type of rule to be exercised by the husband over the wife is often said to differ from that of the master over the slave. Thus Aristotle defined it as *ἀριστοκρατικός* or *πολιτικός* rather than *τυραννικός*, perhaps alluding to the husband's appropriate conferring of some authority on the wife within certain spheres (*Pol.* 1259a–b; *Eth. Nic.* 1160b–1161a).¹⁰⁵ The Peripatetics make the same point and suggest that the justice that governs the wife is more like *πολιτικός δίκαιος* than the *οἰκονομικός δίκαιος* that is used for the slaves, because she is less inferior than they (Ps-Aristotle, *Mag. Mor.* 1344a; also Arius Didymus, *Perip. Eth.*, Stobaeus 148.12–16).¹⁰⁶ Plutarch likens the rule of husband over wife not to that of an owner over property, but to that of the soul over the body (*Bride* 142e), and the neo-Pythagorean Callicratidas describes the husband's power as “political” rather than “despotic,” urging him to gain the wife's respect by showing her love (*Estate*, Stobaeus 4.28.17).¹⁰⁷ Even the Roman *paterfamilias* has only the power called *manus* over his wife, not the *potestas* that he has over slaves.¹⁰⁸ So although subordination is almost universally expected of wives, it is of a different kind from that required of slaves.¹⁰⁹

The third Greco-Roman household relationship is that of fathers and children, especially sons, and subordination of the latter to the former is also generally expected. According to Dionysius, Roman fathers were given almost unlimited authority over their sons and were entitled to administer extreme punishments upon the insubordinate (although in fact this power was limited in practice) (*Ant. Rom.* 2.26–27).¹¹⁰ The Peripatetics regard the son as effectively part of the father until he achieves his majority, and so by implication as wholly subject to the father's will. But they follow Aristotle in again distinguishing between different kinds of rule within the household: the relationship of fathers to sons is *βασιλικός* (Ps-Aristotle, *Mag. Mor.* 1194b; Arius Didymus, *Perip. Eth.*, Stobaeus 148.12–16).¹¹¹ For the neo-Pythagoreans, Bryson declares that sons should honor their parents, serving and obeying them (*Econ.* 142, 146, 150, 158), and Ps-Theano also calls children to respect elders (*Eub.*). And Hierocles the Stoic describes parents as secondary gods or images of gods, though he does not explicitly call for subordination (*Par.*, Stobaeus 4.25.53).¹¹²

One exception to this consensus should be mentioned. Musonius Rufus claims that parents should not be obeyed when they demand what is wrong or prohibit what is right; in such cases the offspring should do what s/he knows to

be good. The fatherhood of god, who commands goodness, trumps that of the father. This example encapsulates the Stoic principle, mentioned above, of the primacy of virtue over human commands. Nonetheless, even Musonius agrees that in general the obedience of children to parents is good (*Lect.* 65–67).

Freedom

In this section the Greek and Roman concepts of freedom will be considered separately, since although they have some common features, they are also significantly different. Moreover, the Greek idea especially changed greatly over time, such that the dominant understanding of freedom in the early Roman period was quite distinct from that of the classical age. A more chronological approach will therefore be appropriate here.

The Greek concept of freedom was originally used in the household, in contrast to slavery. Legally slaves are property and cannot control their own affairs, whereas free people belong to no-one and can therefore govern themselves. The concept never lost this dimension altogether even when it became a philosophical or religious idea, often standing in contradistinction to some kind of slavery. But it soon developed into a political concept too, as free people were recognized as capable of participation in the running of their community or *πόλις*. Freedom and citizenship were thus closely connected.¹¹³

The Persian wars of 499–449 BCE greatly increased the importance of the concept throughout Greece, defining it negatively in terms of release from foreign rule and from slavery to the arbitrary authority of kings, and positively as self-government and autonomy in both domestic and foreign affairs. The city-state became the embodiment of such freedom, but this could be preserved only by means of law, which was closely linked to the idea of order. Law was held to be the principle and guarantee of order in the state, preventing its descent into tyranny or mob rule. But because it also expressed the will of the citizens, it was believed not to destroy their freedom but rather to safeguard it.¹¹⁴

Within this basic framework, individual freedom was understood in different ways in the two leading cities, Sparta and Athens. In Sparta, it was so far subsumed under the freedom of the state that the citizens were tightly controlled in every aspect of their lives. In Athens, however, the citizens demanded as much freedom to live as they liked as possible, and looked to the ordering of the state through the law to guarantee this. Athenian democracy was meant to reconcile the interests of the individual and the state, giving the responsibility for and

authority of the state to every citizen; their freedom should be used under the law and for the good of the community.¹¹⁵

But in the following hundred years the freedom of Athens and other Greek states descended into individualism, self-indulgence and lawlessness.¹¹⁶ They became so weakened internally and so divided among themselves that they were powerless to combat the growing hegemony of Macedonia in the late fourth century BCE and lost their freedom, becoming subject to the kind of tyranny they had so strongly repudiated. During this period the popular idea of freedom as doing whatever one wants was badly discredited; while some still affirmed it,¹¹⁷ it was decisively rejected as license by the Socratic philosophers.¹¹⁸

Plato and Aristotle argued that the truly free citizen belongs to a properly ordered state in which reason holds disruptive elements in check. Both were critical of what they regarded as the wrong kind of political freedom—the unruliness associated with Athenian democracy—and claimed that the state should instead be ordered and the laws framed to promote the right kind. This means not only that the right people must rule (see above, “Subordination”), but also that the freedom to do as one likes must be restricted, so ensuring that the state is governed by reason. This type of freedom, from slavery to those forces in the state that would disrupt its order and prevent its flourishing, is thus not incompatible with fulfilling obligations to political and social authority; on the contrary, it is achieved only by means of such subordination. And since Plato and Aristotle supposed the interests of the state and those of its citizens to coincide, they also presumed that this arrangement is best for individuals as well as for the community as a whole (Plato, *Rep.* 562b–564a; *Leg.* 700b–701b, 713e–714a; Aristotle, *Pol.* 1317b).¹¹⁹

But Plato and Aristotle also introduced a different (though for them still related) concept of freedom—that of self-mastery—which mirrors their view of political freedom. They maintained that it is the person with the properly ordered soul, in which reason controls the passions and appetites (see above, “Order”), who is truly free. Plato suggested that the free person is one who devotes himself (or herself) to the rational pursuit of excellence and who is free from the bondage of irrational compulsion. Such a person should be persuaded of the rational basis for the laws and will then obey them freely (*Rep.* 587a, 590d–591b; *Leg.* 635c–d).¹²⁰ For Aristotle, similarly, individual freedom consists in self-direction to the goals that are rightly discerned by reason. Thus the free man can see both the ends he ought to pursue and the means by which to realize them, and he acts in accordance with this perception in a way that benefits both himself and the state of which he is part (*Eth. Nic.* 1097b–1098a).¹²¹

So for the Socratics, both true political freedom and freedom of self-mastery exist only in the context of order and subordination. People may be free in either sense only by accepting the obligations of the cosmic order and thus taking their subordinate places in the normative relationships of the state (and, by implication, the household). Max Pohlenz writes of Plato's doctrine of freedom:

[B]oth in the whole world, the vast kosmos, and in its individual manifestations, the best and enduring condition will only be achieved where lawfulness, order and harmony prevail. That holds also for man, for his body and for his soul.¹²²

And Richard Mulgan says of Aristotle:

[Aristotle] regards the essence of freedom as being one's own person and as having independent value rather than being, like the slave, merely an instrument for the purposes of others. Such freedom is consistent with restraint and obedience and does not . . . imply an absence of such impediments.¹²³

The Hellenistic and Roman periods saw the partial eclipse of the Greek concepts of political freedom and the creative development, largely by the Stoics, of the idea of freedom as self-mastery. There were two main reasons for this change. Firstly, political freedom as understood latterly in the Greek city-states ceased to exist under the Macedonians and their successors, including the Romans (see below). The relationship between freedom and obligation was therefore recast in terms of the moral order of the universe; freedom, in the sense of independent self-determination, was found in subordination to the law of the *κόσμος*.¹²⁴

Secondly, the loss of political freedom contributed to the growing importance of the concept of fate, articulated poetically by the Greek tragedians in the classical period and taken over by the Stoics in the form of philosophical determinism. The sense of being enslaved by unfolding events that one had no power to control in turn helped to promote the concept of moral freedom, which was entirely independent of external circumstances and made people invincible against fate; nothing that happened to them could take it away.¹²⁵

This idea of freedom is found in some form in all the Hellenistic schools. The Platonists and Peripatetics appear merely to take their respective founders' views for granted and hardly develop these any further.¹²⁶ The Skeptics, who reject philosophical dogma and suspend ethical judgment, offer freedom from confusion (achieved by not assenting to anything) and from extreme emotions caused by the belief that things are evil and good by nature (Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr.* 3.235–38).¹²⁷ For the Cynics, Diogenes calls people to liberate themselves

from conventional judgments and changing fortunes (Diogenes Laertius, *Vit.* VI.71–72).¹²⁸

The Epicureans see control of the passions as essential to their highest goal of pleasure, but they do not characteristically express this in terms of freedom. Epicurus does however promote liberty from mental fears of divine interventions, of pain or desire, or of death, which result from a wrong view of the world and the gods (Diogenes Laertius, *Vit.* X.142). Neo-Pythagoreanism, like its Platonist cousin, adds little to the meaning of the concept, but Bryson recognizes the notion of slavery to one’s passions (*Econ.* 56–57), and the *Pythagorean Sentences* declare that someone who is enslaved and controlled by passions cannot be free (23).

But it is the Stoics who provide by far the most ambitious development of the concept. Although they affirm that all events are part of a necessary sequence of cause and effect, such that humans cannot act otherwise than they do, they also maintain a robust doctrine of freedom as self-determination, which is possessed by those who have conformed themselves to the obligations of the natural and moral order. This idea is famously summarized by Epictetus at the beginning of his extended discourse *On Freedom* (*Disc.* IV.1.1): *Ελεύθερός ἐστιν ὁ ζῶν ὡς βούλεται, ὃν οὔτ’ ἀναγκάσαι ἔστιν οὔτε καλύσαι οὔτε βιάσασθαι, οὐ αἱ ὀρμαὶ ἀνεμπόδιστοι, αἱ ὀρέξεις ἐπιτευκτικαί, αἱ ἐκκλίσεις ἀπερίπτωτοι.*¹²⁹ (“He is free who lives as he wills, who is subject neither to compulsion, nor hindrance, nor force, whose choices are unhampered, whose desires attain their end, whose aversions do not fall into what they would avoid” [Oldfather, LCL].)

The compulsion and hindrance from which the wise and virtuous person is liberated are defined in various ways by the Stoics (Cicero, *De Fin.* III.75–76; Seneca, *Nat. Quaest.* III.16–17; *Ep.* 94.55–59; *Vit. Beat.* 3–9; *Ep. Mor.* III.20; Dio Chrysostom, *Disc.* 49.8–11; 77–78:40–42).¹³⁰ But again it is Epictetus who provides the best and most comprehensive summary:

ὁ ἀκάλυτος ἄνθρωπος ἐλεύθερος, ᾧ πρόχειρα τὰ πράγματα ὡς βούλεται. ὃν δ’ ἔστιν ἢ καλύσαι ἢ ἀναγκάσαι ἢ ἐμποδίσαι ἢ ἄκοντα εἰς τι ἐμβάλειν, δοῦλός ἐστιν. τίς δ’ ἀκάλυτος; ὁ μηδενὸς τῶν ἀλλοτριῶν ἐφιέμενος. τίνα δ’ ἀλλότρια; ἃ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐφ’ ἡμῖν οὔτ’ ἔχειν οὔτε μὴ ἔχειν οὔτε ποιᾶ ἔχειν ἢ πῶς ἔχοντα. οὐκοῦν τὸ σῶμα ἀλλότριον, τὰ μέρη αὐτοῦ ἀλλότρια, ἢ κτήσις ἀλλοτρία. (*Disc.* IV.1.128–30)

(“The unhampered man, who finds things ready to hand as he wants them, is free. But the man who can be hampered, or subjected to compulsion, or hindered, or thrown into something against his will, is a slave. And who is unhampered? The man who fixes his aim on nothing that is not his own. And what are the things

which are not our own? All that are not under our control, either to have, or not to have, or to have of a certain quality, or under certain conditions. Therefore, the body is not our own, its members are not our own, property is not our own.” [Oldfather, LCL]

That is to say, the Stoics locate enslavement in what is outside the individual’s control. Free people aim only at what is wholly within their control; that is, their mental states, and specifically their free exercise of rational choice; to do this is to liberate themselves from all forms of external or internal compulsion or check. This freedom is a gift of nature, which is forfeited only by false judgments or dispositions regarding nature.¹³¹ It is achieved by a right view of the cosmic order and humanity’s place within it, and by then acceding to its demands by accepting whatever happens as divinely predestined fate (Epictetus, *Disc.* I.6.12–22, II.7.5–7, 10–12, IV.1.99–110).¹³²

Stoicism thus provides a view of freedom that decisively divorces the concept from its social and political origins, however far this original sense may influence its metaphorical use. Plato and Aristotle’s idea of freedom as self-mastery remains closely associated with liberty within the state (although it is capable of standing alone), but for the Stoics the liberation of the individual is unrelated to his or her social and political standing. Freedom is merely that of the rational self to determine its course apart from the coercion of external or internal tyranny.

However, in the Roman world the Platonist/Peripatetic and Stoic concepts of moral freedom exist initially in a context where ideas of social and political liberty (*libertas*) are still current, although no conceptual connection appears ever to be drawn between them. For the Romans, *libertas* for the individual “consists in the capacity for the possession of rights, and the absence of subjection,”¹³³ again in contrast to the status of slavery; to be free is to be not under someone else’s control but able to live according to one’s own wishes.¹³⁴ Regarding the state itself, the word is used for its “[s]overeign independence and autonomy”¹³⁵ and as a synonym for the Roman republican constitution in which no individual is dominant. The freedom of the state also guarantees that of the individual.¹³⁶

But the Roman concept of freedom is far from the unconstrained liberty to live as one likes associated with earlier Athenian democracy. It includes personal security, individual rights, equality under the law, considerable religious tolerance, and a fair measure of autonomy in the home. It is however strictly limited by fixed laws, moral ideas and the authority of superior people and groups, and it co-exists with an authoritative political body that exercises close supervision

of citizens, sometimes including their personal lives. It is emphatically freedom under the law, and “a component part of a legal order which had for every individual a proper place in society”;¹³⁷ this order has to be safeguarded by political authority.¹³⁸

For Roman citizens,¹³⁹ *libertas* under the republic also includes the right to participate in political life by passing laws and electing magistrates, but not the right to self-governance.¹⁴⁰ “*Libertas* is not so much the right to act on one’s own initiative as the freedom to choose an ‘auctor’ whose ‘auctoritas’ is freely accepted.”¹⁴¹ Thus for Cicero, the ideal republic is essentially an aristocracy (with elements of monarchy) in which the people have some power but in which they are also subordinate to their rulers. Freedom is consistent with, indeed it requires, strong government that is respected by the citizens (Cicero, *De Leg.* III.17).¹⁴²

The checks and balances of the republican system are intended to prevent the abuse of political authority and the hegemony of one person. But in the first century BCE these finally break down, and absolute power is concentrated in the hands of the emperor.¹⁴³ As a result, the political freedom of citizens is lethally undermined, so that there are soon no effective restraints on the emperor’s misuse of power or overriding of law.

Tacitus describes in many places the ways in which *libertas* has been destroyed under the principate (*Agric.* 2, 15–16, 30–32; *Ann.* 1.7, 75–81; 4.34–35; *Hist.* 4.44.)¹⁴⁴ Although he hates absolutism, he acknowledges that Rome is no longer able to accept full political freedom; monarchy is now a regrettable necessity for the preservation of order.¹⁴⁵ He even recognizes that emperors can be good and that some preserve a measure of *libertas* (*Hist.* 1.16; *Agric.* 3),¹⁴⁶ but the complete dependence of this upon the exercise of imperial power reduces it to no more than a personal benefit resulting from a political and legal order that depends entirely on the arbitrary will of the ruler.¹⁴⁷

C.H. Wirszubski suggests that Tacitus now regards freedom as “the individual will and courage to be free,” “the courage to preserve one’s self-respect in the face of despotism,” “the courage to keep one’s *dignitas* alive.”¹⁴⁸ This understanding may be reflected in his rejection of a subservient attitude in one’s approach to authority, though notably this is conjoined with the expectation of obedience (see above, “Subordination”). It has affinities with Greek ideas of freedom as self-mastery, and may indicate that in the Roman world too the collapse of political freedom is encouraging the redefinition of the concept in terms of a liberty that cannot be subverted by unfavorable external circumstance.

Conclusions

This investigation of Greco-Roman thinking on the concepts of order, subordination and freedom in the first century CE has identified a significant measure of agreement among those schools and traditions most interested in the themes, despite their differences on numerous points of detail. The following points may be highlighted as particularly relevant to this enquiry.

Order is a key concept in most philosophical and socio-political systems of thought in the Greco-Roman world at this time. The world's ordering is believed to be rational and moral, and to comprise the proper relationships, both internal and external, of the various elements of the cosmos. It is therefore a normative quality, relating to how the world should be as well as to how it is, and which all the traditions approve. Although they differ in their understandings of the divine, they agree that the cosmic order is defined by, derivative from and maintained by god or the gods, and it therefore carries divine authority.

The Stoics believe that the cosmos is already ordered as it should be, as the best possible world despite the existence of evil. But for several other traditions, the imposition of divine order on the disordered constituents of the cosmos is incomplete, such that it is only approximately reflected in nature. This may be because matter is independent of god and a less than wholly suitable vehicle for order, or because the world contains an evil soul or souls, or because the gods themselves are imperfect. Many thinkers, notably Aristotle and his followers, see ordering as an ongoing but incomplete process.

It follows that the human task is to live in accordance with the order already present in nature. The human soul shares in the rational and moral norms of the cosmos and in the divine mind or nature in which these are grounded; people can and should therefore structure their own lives accordingly, based on their understanding of that divinely given order. For all these schools this action involves the right inward ordering of one's own soul, and for all except the Stoics it also includes the preserving and advancing of order in the world; that is, the conforming of nature to its divinely given norms. The ordering task may be understood as imitating or following god.

The communities of the state and the household are widely seen as microcosms of the divinely ordered cosmos and are therefore expected to embody it. Ethical conduct is thereby given a corporate dimension: the normative process of ordering involves the bringing and/or holding of individuals within the god-given relationships of civic and domestic life. Often these are discussed using the civil and management *τόποι* called *περί πολιτείας* and *περί οίκονομίας*.

Where these relationships are seen as inherently hierarchical, as by the Platonists and Peripatetics and the Romans, they necessarily require the one-sided subordination of the ruled to the rulers: subjects to civil authorities, slaves to masters, wives to husbands, and children to fathers. Subordination is therefore understood as the right placing of oneself in relation to one's superiors—state authorities and household heads—within the graded order, and the exposition of the concept in its various contexts suggests that it includes such responses as recognition, deference and obedience.

For these thinkers the respective positions and different roles of various groups within the state and the household are properly determined by their rational and moral nature. Thus people of reason and excellence who understand the cosmic order and promote its virtues—which are the highest values of society—are the ideal holders of political and domestic authority, and it should be assigned on the basis of these qualities. The inherent superiority in this respect of husbands over wives and fathers over children is widely assumed. The inferior groups embody a lower and potentially disruptive set of values.

In contrast, the theory of the Epicureans and Stoics affirms the equality of all people, yet they too generally require subordination in practice; they do not abandon the principle but merely modify its application, making the differences between rulers and ruled less sharp and graded. It is also sometimes stated or implied by various authors that some subjects have unworthy governors or live in unsatisfactory political systems, that not all slaves in law are inferior by nature, that certain wives may be at least equal to their husbands, and that on occasion children may be more virtuous than their parents. So while superiority of status is often grounded on perceived superiority of quality, the latter may sometimes be seen as potential rather than actual because of the disordering of nature and society. But apparently not even such people as these are freed from the general ethical obligation to submit.

This probably means that in Greco-Roman thought the bare fact of being in an inferior position within the order entails the imperative of subordination, even if rational and moral distinctions between rulers and ruled are minimized, or are compromised or obliterated in particular cases. So even when the people in authority, or the systems that support them, fail to reflect the norms of the cosmic order as they should, the hierarchical relationships of state and household are apparently still held to embody these, if only imperfectly, and so must still be respected.

Thus subordination is almost always regarded as normative, suggesting that the demands of the divinely given order and those of one's political and social

superiors are believed at least generally to coincide. That the overriding claims of the order and of virtue, especially for the Stoics, may sometimes require rejection of a superior's demands is sometimes implied but rarely asserted, suggesting that subordination may be qualified appropriately, but only exceptionally.

Subordination and dominion may take different forms appropriate to different kinds of relationship. The rule of a master over his slave is sometimes distinguished from that of a husband over his wife (which may be qualified by elements of equality and reciprocity), or the latter from that of a father over his child, and by implication the kind of subordination required is also different. Subordination to the state may be different again, depending on the political arrangements commended by the author/s. The same kinds of relationship may also be worked out on different grounds or in different ways, even if there are some generally common features: the distinction between husband and wife may be located in the reasoning faculty or in physical strength, and the recommended treatment of slaves may be more or less harsh. Subordination may thus be conditioned by the perceived character of specific relations, without the principle's being questioned or undermined.

In light of all this, it is unsurprising that no form of political freedom approved in the main Greco-Roman traditions involves repudiation of the claim of civil authority to subordination and obedience to the law. From at least the time of Plato and Aristotle, such freedom was associated in Greece with the collapse of the city-states, and they rejected it forcefully as license, while the Romans from the beginning understood freedom to exist only under the law. A politically free person must necessarily be subordinate to the authorities—and to his other superiors—within the moral order of the Greek *κόσμος* or the Roman universe.

However, there is also a clear development in the Greek concept of freedom from the initially social and then political sense of the classical period to the self-mastery and inner autonomy represented by the Socratics and Stoics. The loss of political freedom in the Hellenistic period, replicated later in the Roman world, ensures that while by the first century CE the political sense is still current, the philosophical or moral meaning has become the dominant one, whether in its Platonist/Peripatetic or its Stoic form, and may be gaining ground even among Romans.

The Hellenistic evolution of this idea, of which Stoicism is the fullest expression, makes freedom entirely independent of external human constraints and restrictions. One can be legally enslaved to a master or living under an absolutist Roman emperor and still be free in this sense. The idea is moreover not dependent on acceptance of the deterministic Stoic system, nor of its restriction of liberty

to the exercise of rational choice; it makes sense within a Platonist or Peripatetic worldview, and all the other philosophical schools have alternative versions of it.

But the experience of this freedom too requires taking one's place within the natural and moral order. For the Stoics, and perhaps the other schools founded in the Hellenistic period, this comprises holding a right view of one's place in the *κόσμος* and conforming oneself to its obligations, with their implications for life in the state and the household. And for the Platonists and Peripatetics, following their founders, and probably the Romans too, it explicitly necessitates the assumption of one's appropriate roles within the social and political relationships that embody the cosmic order. Thus the freedom of self-mastery, like its political counterpart, demands subordination to one's social and political superiors within the normative order of household and state.

This coherent Greco-Roman intellectual context, inhabited by both the author of 1 Peter and his readers, may confidently be expected to illuminate the letter's teaching on subordination and freedom. But it is only one of the three thought-worlds in which they lived. So the discussion now turns to the contemporary Jewish understanding of these concepts.

Notes

- 1 Although literary works of many kinds, including poetry and drama, may deal obliquely with these themes, priority is also given in what follows to writings that address them most directly.
- 2 See e.g. C. Osiek, "The New Testament Teaching on Family Matters," *Hervormde Teologische Studies* 62, no. 3 (2006): 834–35, on the actual role of women in first-century CE Roman society over against the dominant ideology.
- 3 On the general influence of philosophy on earliest Christianity, see A. Malherbe, ed., *Moral Exhortation: A Greco-Roman Sourcebook* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1986), 11–15.
- 4 All dates are from S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth, eds., *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).
- 5 J. Annas, *Plato: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 19–24. On Plato, see the essays in R. Kraut, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Plato* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
- 6 On Skepticism at the Academy, see A. A. Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy: Stoics, Epicureans, Sceptics*, 2nd ed. (London: Duckworth, 1986), 88–105. On Middle Platonism, see T. Engberg-Pedersen, "Setting the Scene: Stoicism and Platonism in the Transitional Period in Ancient Philosophy," in *Stoicism in Early Christianity*, eds.

- T. Rasimus, T. Engberg-Pedersen, and I. Dunderberg (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 1–4. On Cicero, see M. Schofield, “Writing Philosophy,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Cicero*, ed. C. Steel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 73–87.
- 7 D. A. Russell, *Plutarch* (London: Duckworth, 1973), 63–66.
 - 8 On Aristotle, see the essays in J. Barnes, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
 - 9 D. Ross, *Aristotle*, 6th ed. (London: Routledge, 1995), 1–6; J. Barnes, *Aristotle: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 7–9, 136.
 - 10 On the revival of Aristotelianism, see Engberg-Pedersen, “Setting the Scene,” 2–4. On Arius Didymus’s *Epitome*, see D. L. Balch, “Household Codes,” in *Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament: Selected Forms and Genres*, ed. D. E. Aune (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1988), 40–45.
 - 11 For a general introduction to Stoicism, see Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy*, 107–209. On Cicero and Stoicism, see Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy*, 229–31. For an introduction to Roman Stoicism in general, and to Seneca, Musonius Rufus and Epictetus in particular, see R. N. Thorsteinsson, *Roman Christianity & Roman Stoicism: A Comparative Study of Ancient Morality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
 - 12 For a (hostile) discussion of Epicureanism from the early Roman period, see Cicero, *De Fin.*, Books I and II. For a modern introduction, see Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy*, 14–74.
 - 13 C. H. Kahn, *Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans: A Brief History* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2001), 94.
 - 14 For an introduction to neo-Pythagoreanism, see Kahn, *Pythagoras*, 2001, 94–138.
 - 15 For an introduction to Skepticism, see Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy*, 75–106. On the early Cynics, see M. Pohlenz, *Freedom in Greek Life and Thought: The History of an Ideal*, trans. C. Lofmark (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1966), 71–81. See also A. A. Long, *Epictetus: A Stoic and Socratic Guide to Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 15.
 - 16 Schofield, “Writing Philosophy,” 75.
 - 17 Musonius Rufus and Epictetus were Greek speakers, but the former was based in Rome, and the latter also taught there until 93 CE. See Thorsteinsson, *Roman Stoicism*, 41–42, 55–56.
 - 18 Annas, *Plato*, 83–87.
 - 19 Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy*, 227–28.
 - 20 J. E. G. Zetzel, “Political Philosophy,” in Steel, *Companion*, 191–92.
 - 21 Kahn, *Pythagoras*, 82–84.
 - 22 D. E. Hahm, “The Diaeretic Method and the Purpose of Arius’ Doxography,” in *On Stoic and Peripatetic Ethics: The Work of Arius Didymus*, ed. W. W. Fortenbaugh (Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2002), 20–24.

- 23 P. MacKendrick, *The Philosophical Books of Cicero* (London: Duckworth, 1989), 175; B. Inwood, "God and Human Knowledge in Seneca's *Natural Questions*," in *Reading Seneca: Stoic Philosopher at Rome* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 168–69, 194.
- 24 Reproduced in A. A. Long and D. E. Sedley, eds., *The Hellenistic Philosophers, Vol. 2: Greek and Latin Texts with Notes and Bibliography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 326–27; Long, *Epictetus*, 153–54.
- 25 See Tacitus, *Ann.* 3.18; R. Mellor, *Tacitus* (New York and London: Routledge, 1993), 111; see also N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (London: SPCK, 2013), 259–61.
- 26 Plato, *Tim.* 27d–29a; *Leg.* 896e–899b; Aristotle, *Metaph.* 1070b–1074b; Plutarch, *Delays* 550e–551c; *Superst.* 165b–167d; Cicero, *De Fin.* IV.12; Seneca, *Nat. Quaest.* I Preface 13; Epictetus *Disc.* I. 14.9–10; 16.15–21. On the Socratics, see R. F. Stalley, *An Introduction to Plato's Laws* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), 172–75; J. Barnes, "Metaphysics," in Barnes, *Companion*, 104–5; Ross, *Aristotle*, 184–86. On the neo-Pythagoreans, see Kahn, *Pythagoras*, 126–28. On the Stoics, see A. J. Pomeroy, ed., *Arius Didymus: Epitome of Stoic Ethics* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999), 115; G. B. Kerford, "Two Problems Concerning Impulses," in Fortenbaugh, *Ethics*, 191–92. For the view that Epictetus's god is impersonal, see K. Algra, "Epictetus and Stoic Theology," in *The Philosophy of Epictetus*, eds. T. Scaltsas and A. S. Mason (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 32–55.
- 27 Stalley, *Plato's Laws*, 166–67; J. O. Urmson, *Aristotle's Ethics* (Oxford: John Wiley & Sons, 1988), 120–23.
- 28 MacKendrick, *Cicero*, 175.
- 29 Kahn, *Pythagoras*, 124–25.
- 30 Stalley, *Plato's Laws*, 172–75.
- 31 MacKendrick, *Cicero*, 174–75; Long, *Epictetus*, 145–46.
- 32 Kahn, *Pythagoras*, 96.
- 33 Barnes, "Metaphysics," 104–5; Ross, *Aristotle*, 189–90; Barnes, *Aristotle*, 101–2.
- 34 Kahn, *Pythagoras*, 124–25.
- 35 Inwood, "Human Knowledge," 170–73.
- 36 Stalley, *Plato's Laws*, 166–67; Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy*, 100–1; MacKendrick, *Cicero*, 201.
- 37 Ross, *Aristotle*, 190–91.
- 38 Hierocles citation Wachsmuth/Hense, translated in Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 87–88. See also Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy*, 163–65; Inwood, "Human Knowledge," 158–59, 166–67, 195.
- 39 Kahn, *Pythagoras*, 123–24.
- 40 Wright, *Paul*, 296–300, 305–11.

- 41 L. Strauss and C. Lord, *Xenophon's Socratic Discourse: An Interpretation of the Oeconomicus* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1970), 147–49; R. Kraut, “Introduction to the Study of Plato,” in Kraut, *Companion*, 14.
- 42 Russell, *Plutarch*, 65–69.
- 43 Kahn, *Pythagoras*, 131–32.
- 44 Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy*, 169.
- 45 Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy*, 165–70; MacKendrick, *Cicero*, 175.
- 46 Kahn, *Pythagoras*, 130–31.
- 47 J. Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 124–30; G. R. F. Ferrari, “The Three-Part Soul,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic*, ed. G. R. F. Ferrari (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 165–201.
- 48 MacKendrick, *Cicero*, 175; B. Inwood, “Reason, Rationalization, and Happiness,” in *Reading Seneca: Stoic Philosopher at Rome* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 259, 263–64; B. Inwood, “Getting to Goodness,” in *Reading Seneca: Stoic Philosopher at Rome* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 298.
- 49 Long, *Epictetus*, 188.
- 50 Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy*, 172–77, 187–93.
- 51 Kraut, “Introduction,” 9–10.
- 52 Hierocles citation Wachsmuth/Hense, translated in Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 87–88.
- 53 Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy*, 172–75, 179–85; A. A. Long, “Arius Didymus and the Exposition of Stoic Ethics,” in Fortenbaugh, *Ethics*, 46–47.
- 54 Ross, *Aristotle*, 196; Kahn, *Pythagoras*, 113–14; Hahm, “Arius' Doxography,” 20–24.
- 55 Kahn, *Pythagoras*, 96; R. Kraut, “The Defense of Justice in Plato's *Republic*,” in Kraut, *Companion*, 329–30.
- 56 Wachsmuth/Hense, translated in Balch, “Household Codes,” 41.
- 57 Zetzel, “Political Philosophy,” 191.
- 58 Wachsmuth/Hense, referenced in S. Swain, *Economy, Family, and Society from Rome to Islam: A Critical Edition, English Translation, and Study of Bryson's "Management of the Estate"* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 316–19.
- 59 A. Wallace-Hadrill, *Suetonius* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 1995), 109–10, 202.
- 60 Wright, *Paul*, 327; see also H.-J. Klauck, *The Religious Context of Early Christianity: A Guide to Graeco-Roman Religions*, trans. B. McNeil (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 326–27.
- 61 Zetzel, “Political Philosophy,” 192.
- 62 Wachsmuth/Hense, translated in Balch, “Household Codes,” 41–42.
- 63 Wachsmuth/Hense, referenced in Swain, *Economy*, 318.
- 64 Wallace-Hadrill, *Suetonius*, 101–3, 115–18.
- 65 The Epicureans have not been mentioned in this section only because order is not a key term or concept for them. They agree with other schools that a life rightly

- lived depends upon knowing the nature of the universe and therefore accords with the way things are, and that the gods are examples for the highest form of human life. But they neither express this idea in terms of a cosmic order, nor have any sense of human responsibility for correcting supposed imperfections in nature. See Diogenes Laertius, *Vit.* X.143 (on Epicurus); V. Tsouna, *The Ethics of Philodemus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 244–47.
- 66 Zetzel, “Political Philosophy,” 192–95.
- 67 See also M. Levin, “Natural Subordination, Aristotle on,” *Philosophy* 72, no. 280 (1997): 241–57.
- 68 For brief discussion of this distinction in Roman thought, see D. Nystrom, “We Have No King but Caesar: Roman Imperial Ideology and the Imperial Cult,” in McKnight and Modica, *Jesus is Lord*, 25–27.
- 69 See Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy*, 15, 72.
- 70 See e.g. Seneca’s statement: *Hominibus prodesse natura me iubet. Servi liberine sint hi, ingenui an libertini, iustae libertatis an inter amicos datae, quid refert? Ubicumque homo est, ibi benefici locus est* (*Vit. Beat.* 24.3). See also Thorsteinsson, *Roman Stoicism*, 32–34.
- 71 Hierocles citation Wachsmuth/Hense, translated in Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 98–99.
- 72 Plato’s three political works, *Republic*, *Statesman* and *Laws*, represent points on a scale from the ideal to the real state. See Stalley, *Plato’s Laws*, 9–21; introduction to *Polit.* (by Annas), xv–xx. On Aristotle, see Ross, *Aristotle*, 259–68; C. C. W. Taylor, “Politics,” in Barnes, *Companion*, 243–54.
- 73 T. J. Saunders, “Plato’s Later Political Thought,” in Kraut, *Companion*, 469–76.
- 74 Russell, *Plutarch*, 97–98.
- 75 Zetzel, “Political Philosophy,” 191–94.
- 76 D. A. deSilva, “Ruler Cult,” in *Dictionary of New Testament Background*, eds. C. A. Evans and S. E. Porter (Downers Grove, IL and Leicester: IVP, 2000), 1026–28; Klauck, *Religious Context*, 326–27.
- 77 Balch, “Household Codes,” 32–33.
- 78 Wachsmuth/Hense, translated in Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 89–90.
- 79 Arius Didymus citation Wachsmuth/Hense, translated in Balch, “Household Codes,” 43.
- 80 Tacitus is unusual among Greco-Roman authors in presenting subordination to tyrannical authorities as partly a pragmatic survival strategy, but it is also a principled response for the good of the state (Mellor, *Tacitus*, 97–99).
- 81 Inwood, “Goodness,” 288–93.
- 82 R. Martin, *Tacitus* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 1981), 9; Mellor, *Tacitus*, 106–9.
- 83 See especially Balch, *Wives*, 33–37.

- 84 M. Meynell, *The New Testament and Slavery: Approaches and Implications* (London: Latimer Trust, 2007), 9–11; V. Arena, *Libertas and the Practice of Politics in the Late Roman Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 23–24.
- 85 N. D. Smith, “Aristotle’s Theory of Natural Slavery,” in *A Companion to Aristotle’s Politics*, eds. D. Keyt and F. D. Miller, Jr. (Cambridge, MA and Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), 142–55; Taylor, “Politics,” 254–57; R. Bentley, “Loving Freedom: Aristotle on Slavery and the Good Life,” *Political Studies* 47, no. 1 (1999): 100–13.
- 86 Wachsmuth/Hense, translated in Balch, “Household Codes,” 42.
- 87 Xenophon even says that slaves can rule responsibly in their own sphere (*Oec.* 13.4; see also S. B. Pomeroy, *Xenophon Oeconomicus: A Social and Historical Commentary* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994], 65–67; G. Danzig, “Why Socrates was not a Farmer: Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus* as a Philosophical Dialogue,” *Greece & Rome* 50 [2003]: 69).
- 88 J. T. Fitzgerald, “The Stoics and the Early Christians on the Treatment of Slaves,” in Rasimus, Engberg-Pedersen, and Dunderberg, *Stoicism*, 155–56.
- 89 Smith, “Natural Slavery,” 149–51. The word *τυραννικός* as a description of the master’s rule over slaves is found in Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.* 1260b.
- 90 See also Swain, *Economy*, 262–68.
- 91 See also V. Tsouna, ed. and trans., *Philodemus On Property Management* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), xxiii, xxx, xxxix–xl.
- 92 Fitzgerald, “Slaves,” 156–62.
- 93 See J. K. Anderson, *Xenophon* (London: Duckworth, 1974), 177; Pomeroy, *Xenophon Oeconomicus*, 59. For alternative views on the role of the wife in the *Oeconomicus*, see A. Gini, “The Manly Intellect of His Wife: Xenophon ‘Oeconomicus’ *Ch.* 7,” *The Classical World* 86, no. 6 (1993): 483–86 and L. D. Nee, “The City on Trial: Socrates’s Indictment of the Gentleman in Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus*,” *Polis* 26, no. 2 (2009): 246–70.
- 94 In this Musonius differs from his student Epictetus, who regards women as unworthy of the best teachings (*Disc.* III.7.20; Thorsteinsson, *Roman Stoicism*, 69).
- 95 Plato is a partial exception: he affirms that women can fulfil all the same roles as men, including (in his ideal republic) even the highest one of guardian (*Rep.* 451d–452a, 454de, 455d–457c; *Leg.* 804d–806c; Annas, *Plato’s Republic*, 181–83). But his ethic is still unambiguously subordinationist and patriarchal (see below).
- 96 Swain, *Economy*, 286; also Bryson, *Econ.* 75–76, 80.
- 97 Hierocles citation Wachsmuth/Hense, translated in Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 98–99; Thorsteinsson, *Roman Stoicism*, 49–51.
- 98 The one exception is Epicureanism. Philodemus is critical of the pseudo-Aristotelian *Oeconomica* for its view of the wife as a possession and its claim that a household must be ruled by one person. But he does not develop a positive view of the wife’s role, because he does not believe (again *contra* the Peripatetics) that a

- wife is required for effective household management; rather he sees the marriage relationship as lying outside its sphere. He posits different roles for husbands and wives in the household, but whether he would discard subordination of the latter to the former altogether or modify it as he does the slave-master relationship is unclear (*Prop. Manag.* VIII.2–7, 24–35, VIII.45–IX.9).
- 99 Ps-Melissa is especially notable in identifying subordination with “orderly” (*κοσμία*) behavior and as a law for an “orderly” (*εὐταξία*) wife. For further examples, see Swain, *Economy*, 312–16.
- 100 Wachsmuth/Hense, translated in Balch, “Household Codes,” 42. For a minority, less subordinationist view of Aristotle, see D. J. Stauffer, “Aristotle’s Account of the Subjection of Women,” *The Journal of Politics* 70, no. 4 (2008): 929–41.
- 101 Mellor, *Tacitus*, 25.
- 102 Dionysius also says here that a husband and relatives could have a wife killed for adultery or drunkenness.
- 103 Balch goes so far as to say (“Household Codes,” 31) that the Roman Stoics (and Plutarch) are “egalitarian in theory but Aristotelian in practice.”
- 104 Wachsmuth/Hense, translated in Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 101–2.
- 105 These different kinds of authority reflect the different levels of rationality supposed to exist in slaves and wives (and children); see above.
- 106 Arius Didymus citation Wachsmuth/Hense, translated in Balch, “Household Codes,” 41.
- 107 Wachsmuth/Hense, referenced in Swain, *Economy*, 318.
- 108 Arena, *Libertas*, 23.
- 109 It may also be noted that many of the schools enjoin wives to exercise moderation and restraint in outward adornment, while Plutarch also encourages them to be quiet (Ps-Aristotle, *Oec.* 1344a; Musonius Rufus, *Lect.* 28–30; Epictetus, *Disc.* III.1.41–45; Ps-Melissa, *Klear*; Plutarch, *Bride* 141e, 142b, 142d, 145a–b). It is further expected that the husband will control the family’s religion, which could create difficulties for wives in religiously mixed marriages (Plutarch, *Bride* 140d; Dionysius, *Ant. Rom.* 2.25).
- 110 Arena, *Libertas*, 24–25.
- 111 Arius Didymus citation Wachsmuth/Hense, translated in Balch, “Household Codes,” 41. In contrast, the Roman father has *potestas* over his sons, the same kind of power as he has over his slaves (Arena, *Libertas*, 23).
- 112 Wachsmuth/Hense, translated in Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 91.
- 113 M. Silva, ed., *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis* [NIDNTTE], 5 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 2.172; K. Niederwimmer, *Der Begriff der Freiheit im Neuen Testament* (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1966), 5; Pohlenz, *Freedom*, 3–9.
- 114 G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* [TDNT], 10 vols., trans. G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans

- Publishing Co., 1964–84), II.488–89; Niederwimmer, *Freiheit*, 6–8; Pohlenz, *Freedom*, 10–20.
- 115 Niederwimmer, *Freiheit*, 8–10; Pohlenz, *Freedom*, 21–30.
- 116 Niederwimmer (*Freiheit*, 10) offers the following explanation of their failure: Die Selbstbestimmung des Einzelnen ist als solche nicht geeignet, die Grundlage einer Staatsverfassung zu bilden. Wird die Selbstbestimmung zum Princip erhoben, dann offenbart sie sehr bald ihre zerstörerische Tendenz. Die möglichste Unabhängigkeit des Einzelnen kann zwar innerhalb einer staatlichen Ordnung gewährleistet sein, aber sie kann nicht (und sei es auch nur zum heimlichen) Prinzip des Staates erhoben werden, ohne die staatliche Ordnung zu zerstören.
- 117 For example, the early Cynics such as Diogenes and Crates in their presentation of freedom as a return to the natural state before civilization, of doing what one wants without restraint (Niederwimmer, *Freiheit*, 30; Pohlenz, *Freedom*, 75–79).
- 118 *TDNT*, II.488–91; Pohlenz, *Freedom*, 17–34.
- 119 Stalley, *Plato's Laws*, 113–20; M. Walsh, "Aristotle's Conception of Freedom," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 35/4 (1997): 500–3; R. F. Stalley, "Plato's Doctrine of Freedom," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 98 (1998): 147–48, 157–58.
- 120 C. Bobonich, "Persuasion, Compulsion and Freedom in Plato's *Laws*," *Classical Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (1991): 381–87; A. Laks, "Freedom, Liberality, and Liberty in Plato's *Laws*," *Social Philosophy and Policy* 24, no. 2 (2007): 148–50. Laks, drawing on an unpublished article by Miles Burnyeat, points out (150–51) that Plato only rarely uses *ἐλευθερία* for self-mastery; he attributes mainly to Zeno the application of the word to this concept. On related themes, see N. Blössner, "The City-Soul Analogy," in Ferrari, *Companion*, 364–65; R. D. Parry, "The Unhappy Tyrant and the Craft of Inner Rule," in Ferrari, *Companion*, 390–92; W. K. C. Guthrie, *Plato, the Man and His Dialogues: Earlier Period*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 531–37.
- 121 Urmson, *Aristotle's Ethics*, 18–20; D. S. Hutchinson, "Ethics," in Barnes, *Companion*, 30. See also Walsh, "Aristotle's Conception," who constructs Aristotle's doctrine of freedom from his teaching on natural slavery and democracy.
- 122 Pohlenz, *Freedom*, 91.
- 123 R. Mulgan, "Aristotle's Analysis of Oligarchy and Democracy," in Keyt and Miller, *Companion*, 319.
- 124 *TDNT*, II.493–94; Niederwimmer, *Freiheit*, 28–31; Pohlenz, *Freedom*, 20–21.
- 125 Niederwimmer, *Freiheit*, 31–32; Pohlenz, *Freedom*, 45–50.
- 126 Plutarch does suggest in passing that the practice of philosophy and love of virtue allows someone not to follow the majority in their pursuits (*Prog. Virt.* 78a–e).
- 127 Translated in Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 33–34; see also Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy*, 86–87.
- 128 Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy*, 110.

- 129 See also Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy*, 165–68.
- 130 Inwood, “Reason,” 254; B. Inwood, “Seneca on Freedom and Autonomy,” in *Reading Seneca: Stoic Philosopher at Rome* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 302–21.
- 131 οὐκ ἐνδέχεται τὸ φύσει ἐλεύθερον ὑπ’ ἄλλου τινὸς παραχθῆναι ἢ καλυθῆναι πλὴν ὑφ’ ἑαυτοῦ. ἀλλὰ τὰ δόγματα αὐτὸν ταρασσει (Epictetus, *Disc.* I.19.7–8). See also *Disc.* I.9.18–26, I.19.1–8, III.17.9, IV.1.1–85, 128–31, IV.7.6–18; Arius Didymus, *Stoic Eth.* 11i; Long, *Epictetus*, 27–29, 217–19; M. Dragona-Monachou, “Epictetus on Freedom: Parallels between Epictetus and Wittgenstein,” in Scaltsas and Mason, *Epictetus*, 121–34.
- 132 Long, *Epictetus*, 27.
- 133 C. Wirszubski, *Libertas as a Political Idea at Rome during the Late Republic and Early Principate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950), 1.
- 134 On the basis of this definition, Arena draws a distinction between freedom in law and freedom in the household. Wives and children (though not slaves) may be free in law, but in the household only the (usually male) head does not live under the authority of someone else and is free (Arena, *Libertas*, 23–26).
- 135 Wirszubski, *Libertas*, 4.
- 136 Wirszubski, *Libertas*, 1–6; Arena, *Libertas*, 14–16.
- 137 Pohlenz, *Freedom*, 108.
- 138 Wirszubski, *Libertas*, 9–15, 17–30; Pohlenz, *Freedom*, 108–11.
- 139 Whereas in the Greek city-states all the free people were citizens and all the citizens were free, in Rome only the latter was true; one could be free in law but not a citizen (*NIDNTTE*, 2.172; Arena, *Libertas*, 28–29).
- 140 Wirszubski, *Libertas*, 9–17, 34–35.
- 141 Wirszubski, *Libertas*, 35.
- 142 Wirszubski, *Libertas*, 81–87; Zetzel, “Political Philosophy,” 187–89.
- 143 Wirszubski, *Libertas*, 91–96; Pohlenz, *Freedom*, 108–11.
- 144 Martin, *Tacitus*, 37, 119–20; Mellor, *Tacitus*, 100–4.
- 145 Mellor, *Tacitus*, 89–91.
- 146 Martin, *Tacitus*, 37; Mellor, *Tacitus*, 110.
- 147 Wirszubski, *Libertas*, 169–71.
- 148 Wirszubski, *Libertas*, 164–67. See Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.7; 4:20; *Agric.* 42.

Order, Subordination and Freedom in Early Jewish Thought

This chapter aims to explain the concepts of order, subordination and freedom as these were understood in the Jewish world of the late first century CE. As with their Greco-Roman equivalents in Chapter 2, the limited scope of this project will preclude an all-inclusive examination of their sources and evolution, but it does allow an overview of their key components and a summary of their sometimes diverse expressions.

The literature to be considered here includes the Hebrew Bible and the Greek Septuagint, which have foundational significance in early Judaism;¹ the Greek version, including the books later known as the Apocrypha, was the primary version of the Jewish Diaspora in the Roman empire.² Also to be discussed are the non-canonical texts collectively called the Pseudepigrapha, the Dead Sea Scrolls associated with the Qumran community, and the writings of Philo of Alexandria (c.20 BCE-c.50 CE) and Flavius Josephus (37–c.100 CE).³ Some of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, and the works of Josephus, may be roughly dated to the same time as 1 Peter;⁴ the other texts, though mainly earlier, represent various perspectives that contributed to the diverse Jewish thought-world of the late first century.⁵

Rabbinic Judaism is believed to have originated in the Pharisaism practiced before 70 CE and was in its early stages of development in the immediately

following decades, during which it began to become normative.⁶ While it is not always possible to discern with confidence how far later rabbinic thinking is representative of early tradition, material from the second century up to and including the Mishnah may at least disclose some probable trends in Jewish thought in the late first century CE and will also be considered here, with appropriate caution.⁷

Two major divisions in early Judaism must also be taken into account. Firstly, while the positing of a sharp distinction between “Palestinian” and “Hellenistic” Judaism has been effectively questioned in recent decades, it is undeniable that Jews in the Diaspora⁸ existed in very different religious, political and social circumstances from their counterparts in Judea and Galilee, and these are likely to be reflected in their understanding of (for example) subordination to pagan authorities. Secondly, the failure of the Jewish revolt of 66–73 CE, and the associated destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, was a traumatic experience for the Jewish community, especially in Palestine, and while its implications were only beginning to be worked out in the Flavian period, it can hardly have left early Jewish understandings of subordination and freedom unaffected.

As in Chapter 2, the three concepts will be considered in turn, and a final section will summarize the points of particular relevance to the study of 1 Peter.

Order

Order in the Hebrew Bible is a function of God’s act of creation. God is identified as the creator of the deep and its creatures that represent primordial chaos (Pss 95:5; 104:24–30), but the focus of Genesis 1 is on his shaping that unformed world into an ordered and functioning cosmos. Indeed, some recent authors have seen this as an account of God’s creation of a cosmic temple, which implies by analogy that the world order has a sacred status.⁹ Similarly the wisdom literature portrays the world as a creation in which chaos has been suppressed and order imposed (Prv 3:19–20; cp. 8:22–31).¹⁰ This cosmic order reflects God’s nature, character and will (Pss 139:7–12; 85:10–13).

Early Judaism takes over these ideas. God is said to have made the world out of chaotic and formless matter (Ws 11:17), and various texts describe how it is fixed and ordered according to his will.¹¹ Philo also understands the work of creation primarily in terms of God’s imposition of order on the world: *καὶ γὰρ εἰ πάνθ’ ἅμα ὁ ποιῶν ἐποίει, τάξιν οὐδὲν ἤττον εἶχε τὰ καλῶς γινόμενα· καλὸν γὰρ οὐδὲν ἐν ἀταξίᾳ* (*Op. Mund.* 28);¹² (“For, even if the Maker made all things simultaneously,

order was none the less an attribute of all that came into existence in fair beauty, for beauty is absent where there is disorder" [Colson and Whitaker, LCL]). This order is a reflection of the divine reason and goodness (*Op. Mund.* 22); thus it is not merely sanctioned by God, but also modeled upon him (*Op. Mund.* 16–25).¹³

In the Hebrew Bible, God sustains and reigns over the cosmic order by his providence, preserving and ruling it by the subjugation or harnessing of potentially hostile forces (Jb 26:7–13; Pss 29; 65:5–8).¹⁴ In the wisdom literature, the continuing order of the natural world is attributed to divine wisdom (Jb 38:37–38; 39:26–30; cp. Prv 8:22–31). God's ordering also extends to the course of history (Ps 22:28; Isa 40:9–11; Dan 4:24–26).

Early Jewish wisdom writings also affirm the ordering of the world by divine wisdom (Sir 1:1–10; 24:1–6; Ws 7:24; 8:1),¹⁵ and Philo agrees that God preserves and rules the world according to his will (*Op. Mund.* 9–10).¹⁶ Narrative texts attest to God's overruling of particular historical events (Tb 14:3–7; Jdt 9:7–10; Rest of Est 16:16,21), while in the apocalyptic literature this providential control covers the whole of history (4 Ezr 6:1–6; *1 Enoch* 83–90; 93; 91:12–19).¹⁷ In the Scrolls, similarly, history is divided into periods fixed by God before creation (4Q180 1–3; 11Q13 6–7; 1QS 3–4),¹⁸ and Josephus too insists that God is in complete and invincible control of events (*J.W.* 2.360; 4.297, 622).¹⁹

The ordering of nature and history by God entails that heavenly and earthly orders and events are counterparts of one another, with the former defining the shape of the latter. This idea is implicit in biblical temple theology, but it comes to more explicit expression in early Jewish apocalyptic texts and at Qumran. So, for example, the exaltation of the son of man in Daniel 7:13–14 corresponds to Israel's victory on the earth,²⁰ while at Qumran "the earthly liturgy was intended to be a replica of that sung by the angels in the celestial Temple"²¹ as described in the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* (4Q403–5).²²

The Hebrew Bible sometimes indicates that God exercises his orderly governance of the world through celestial beings, who may meet in council (Jb 1:6; 2:1; Ps 82:1) and who are at God's disposal to accomplish his will (Gn 18–19; Dt 33:2–3; Jo 5:13–15). At least some of these are assigned to particular nations (Dt 32:8; cp. 2 Kgs 18:35), as their representatives (Dan 10:13,20); in Isaiah 24:21 they are also connected with earthly kings.²³ Similarly in some early Jewish works angels are involved in ordering the cosmos (*1 Enoch* 82:7–20; *2 Enoch* 19) and are given the task of overseeing the nations (Sir 17:17; *1 Enoch* 89:59; *Jub* 15:31).²⁴

Another tradition in the Hebrew Bible, however, ascribes the task of ordering the earth to humans (Gn 1:26–27; Ps 8:5–8). The rule of humanity in Genesis 1 reflects that of sun and moon over the day and night and so mediates God's

ordering activity,²⁵ while in Eden the man is called to help God in “ordering the cosmos as sacred space.”²⁶ Isaiah’s association of heavenly beings with earthly kings suggests that this is sometimes seen as particularly the responsibility of those in authority. So humans are also charged with safeguarding the cosmic order, which requires their own conformity to it.²⁷

Many early Jewish writers affirm that human life, and especially that of Israel, is meant to reflect the divine order. The wisdom that governs the world is supremely embodied in Torah (Sir 24:7–23; Bar 3:36–4:4),²⁸ and the order of the heavens is analogous to the life of the righteous on earth (*1 Enoch* 43).²⁹ The ordering of the Qumran community is determined by its status as God’s elect people and eschatological temple, whose law has been disclosed to it from heaven (see CD 3:12–21; 14:3–7; 4Q174 2–7).³⁰

For Philo too the moral law that governs human conduct is a reflection of divine and cosmic laws and perfectly expressed in the Torah:

*ἡ δ' ἀρχή, καθάπερ ἔφην, ἐστὶ θανυμασιωτάτη, κοσμοποιίαν περιέχουσα, ὡς καὶ τοῦ κόσμου τῷ νόμῳ καὶ τοῦ νόμου τῷ κόσμῳ συνάδοντος, καὶ τοῦ νομίμου ἀνδρὸς εὐθὺς ὄντος κοσμοπολίτου, πρὸς τὸ βούλημα τῆς φύσεως τὰς πράξεις ἀπευθύνοντος, καθ' ἣν καὶ ὁ σύμπας κόσμος διοικεῖται. (Op. Mund. 3)*³¹

“His exordium, as I have said, is one that excites our admiration in the highest degree. It consists of an account of the creation of the world, implying that the world is in harmony with the Law, and the Law with the world, and that the man who observes the law is constituted thereby a loyal citizen of the world, regulating his doings by the purpose and will of Nature, in accordance with which the entire world itself also is administered.” [Colson and Whitaker, LCL]

And Josephus also posits both a connection between the natural and moral orders and the embodiment of the latter in the Torah, asserting that Moses “brought the whole of life under the reign of God, thus creating a blissful harmony”³² (*Ag. Ap.* 2.179–81; see also *Ant.* 1.19–25, 192; 3.259; 4.207; *Ag. Ap.* 2.146, 151–52).³³

Yet the Hebrew Bible also indicates that the cosmic order has been disrupted by the failure of God’s vicegerents, human and angelic, to conform themselves to it. Humanity as a whole rejects its vocation (Gn 3:22–24; 11:6–9),³⁴ while Israel in particular fails by not keeping the Torah (2 Kgs 21:10–15; Ezr 9:6–7; Neh 9:26–31), and the heavenly powers neglect to maintain justice and prevent oppression (Ps 82:2–4).³⁵ The afflictions of God’s people in and after the exile prompt further reflection in early Judaism on the cause of this evil and how it might be overcome.

Some authors focus mainly on the human causes of cosmic disruption. 4 Ezra makes human sin the cause of all evil (3:7–10);³⁶ Philo emphasizes human responsibility not to be mastered by pleasures (*Leg. All.* 2.71–78); while Josephus seems content to ascribe wickedness to purely human motives under the overriding control of providence (e.g. *Ant.* 16.395–404). The rabbis locate disorder in the evil inclination of the human psyche (*M. Ber.* 9.5; *M. 'Abot* 2.4–5).³⁷ More specifically, various sources attribute disorder to pagan kingdoms and rulers, though others disagree (see below, “Subordination”).

Other writers develop the biblical idea of “satans” and evil spirits who function as agents of divinely inflicted punishment or distress (1 Sm 16:14; 1 Chr 21:1; Jb 1:12; 2:6), by also ascribing to them the deluding, corrupting and consequent afflicting of human beings (*Jub.* 10:1–9; 11:4–5).³⁸ This idea is prominent at Qumran, where spirits of light and darkness govern the sons of light and the wicked respectively and contend within everyone (1QS 3:17–26, 4:2–14): “Until the eschatological visitation of God destroys all evil, it is taken for granted that an invasive force of evil persists to some degree within every human being.”³⁹

A further tradition posits a primeval explanation for cosmic disorder in the references in Genesis 6 to the *הַאֱלֹהִים בְּנֵי הַבְּרִיאָה* who took human wives for themselves and fathered children by them, and to *הַגִּבּוֹרִים*, renowned heroes and warriors (vv.1–4); their actions may have helped to provoke the flood (vv.6ff.).⁴⁰ In various texts⁴¹ these references are greatly expanded into a detailed account of the influence of these supposed fallen angels (“Watchers”) and their giant children, who cause corruption, misery and disruption on earth.⁴² Although the angels are imprisoned pending final judgment, in either the netherworld or tiered heavens, and the giants are destroyed, the latter live on as evil spirits and continue to contaminate the earth.⁴³

In some places the gods assigned to the nations are also seen as disorderly. In the later chapters of Daniel the angelic princes of Persia and Greece, who are implicitly associated with these nations, cause disruption by threatening God’s purpose for Israel (10–12); and in the Animal Apocalypse the heavenly shepherds of the nations, the counterparts of their earthly rulers, oppress God’s people and later suffer the same judgment as the unruly Watchers (*1 Enoch* 89:60–77; 90:20–27).⁴⁴ Yet as shown above, in the Hebrew Bible these gods are sometimes presented more positively, as agents of divine order, while among early Jewish authors they are nowhere *identified* with the Watchers, and are not obviously connected to them, or to other disruptive powers, anywhere outside *1 Enoch*.⁴⁵ These different perspectives reflect the range of views in early Judaism of the pagan authorities with whom the gods are associated.⁴⁶

However the problem of disorder may be caused, it requires a divine response. One widespread (though contested) biblical understanding of this is that God upholds the moral order by guaranteeing a relationship between deeds and results (Prv 26:27; 1 Kgs 8:31–32), such that those who obey God are rewarded, while those who rebel against him are punished (Ps 37:25; 1 Chr 10:13–14).⁴⁷

Thus Philo can argue that the minds of evil people are enslaved to various passions such that they cannot be happy, while the good person is indifferent to worldly poverty and suffering (*Prov.* 2–16),⁴⁸ and that if good people suffer as a result of destructive natural phenomena, no blame attaches to God’s ordering of the world (*Prov.* 43–58). And Josephus sees Jewish history as the record of God’s rewarding the good and punishing the evil (*Ant.* 1.14–15).⁴⁹ He argues that divine providence has ceased to work in favor of the Jews because of their ungodliness and disregard of the law (*J.W.* 4.314–25; 5.412; 7.320–88; *Ant.* 18.127–28; 20.166).⁵⁰

Another response to cosmic disruption, more central to the Hebrew Bible, is God’s re-establishing of the divine order through his redemptive and liberating acts, supremely the exodus.⁵¹ Israel is to exemplify and testify to that order by its faithfulness to the covenant and Torah (esp. Ex 19–Nm 10), and its political institutions are supposed to serve that purpose (Dt 16:20); its calling is thus to promote the restoration of divine order for all people and all creation.⁵² In some enthronement psalms (e.g. Pss 2, 110) this task is the special responsibility of Israel’s kings (but their role is disputed; see below, “Subordination”). The nation’s failure to fulfil its vocation, which compounds the problem of disorder, does not obliterate the hope, but merely transfers it to the eschaton, when heavenly and earthly forces opposed to God will be destroyed (Isa 24:21–22) and a new creation established (Isa 40:3–4; 60:19–20; 65:17–25).⁵³

Early Jewish writers are also agreed that it is God’s purpose to fulfil his intention for the world by re-establishing its original harmony.⁵⁴ In some texts, notably the Book of Watchers and *Jubilees*, an eschatological resolution of disorder is built into the very structure of the cosmos (*1 Enoch* 10–11; 21–22; *Jub.* 5:12–19; 23:24–31).⁵⁵ Often (though not always) this is achieved through a climactic battle between good and evil, in which powerful human forces or kingdoms opposed to God are defeated and/or hostile heavenly powers are destroyed (e.g. Dan 10–12; *1 Enoch* 10:22; 90:24; 91:15; *1QM passim*).⁵⁶ Also the various New Jerusalem fragments from Qumran (e.g. 5Q515) describe the holy city that emerges from this conflict as a regulated and ordered community. Thus the re-creation of order from chaos appears to be an integral part of Jewish hope in this period.

Subordination

Early Jewish writers seldom discuss issues of subordination and hierarchy in the abstract, and their work therefore contains few general statements about the place of social arrangements relative to the cosmic order.⁵⁷ But they have much to say about how traditionally subordinate relationships should be conducted, especially civil responsibility and marriage, and the status they ascribe to them may be inferred from the language and concepts used. Though these are varied, they appear always to include recognition of others' authority, deference to their judgments and obedience to their commands; thus subordination is inherently one-sided.

A partial exception to the rule is Philo, who does affirm in general terms that within the divine order human relationships are appropriately hierarchical. He holds both that the wise and free people should exercise authority over the others in view of their special relationship to God (*Sacr.* 118–27),⁵⁸ and that the nations should be subordinate to Israel because of the unique revelation given to Moses (*Leg. All.* 3.37–39; *Fug.* 148; *Abr.* 77–80; *Aet. Mund.* 17–19).⁵⁹ These scenarios may be idealized, but they bear upon Philo's practical teaching on specific subordinate relationships, among which he explicitly includes those of subjects to rulers, servants to masters, and young people to elders, including parents (*Decal.* 165–67).⁶⁰ He appears here to be drawing upon the *περὶ οἰκονομίας* tradition stemming from Aristotle (see above, Chapter 2), the influence of which may perhaps also be seen in Josephus (e.g. *Ag. Ap.* 2.199–217).⁶¹

This section will examine these relationships, and that of wives to husbands, in turn. But as early Jewish teachings on subordination to Jewish rulers are distinct from those relating to pagan rulers, they will be addressed in separate sub-sections.

The State (1): Jewish Rulers

Early Judaism displays very diverse views regarding the correct conditions on which rule in Israel is to be exercised. Some of these are rooted in the Hebrew Bible's varied responses to the institution of kingship, which can even appear within the same traditions (e.g. cf. Dt 17:14–20 with 1 Sm 12:12–13, and Prv 16:10,13; 22:11 with 6:6–8; 30:27).⁶²

Some of the debates about kingship in early Judaism relate to particular dynasties. Thus 1 Maccabees is essentially an apologia for Hasmonean rule, climaxing in 13:41–14:49, where Simon is established as the nation's political,

military and religious leader. But for the author of *Psalms of Solomon* 17, the Hasmoneans' lack of Davidic descent disqualifies them from kingship (17:4–9), and their combining in themselves the offices of high priest and king is rejected by the Qumran community (e.g. 1Q28a 2:11–22; 4Q175 9–20).⁶³

Disagreements also occur over the desirable model for kingship: whether Davidic, or more limited, or more popular.⁶⁴ In the Diaspora, the prototypical figure is often Moses, whom Philo presents as a model of godlikeness and virtue whose reign—through the Torah—is ideal and properly universal (*Mos.* 1.148–51, 158–62).⁶⁵ And Philo's pattern for practical rule is Hellenistic in content and exemplified by Joseph, the loyal and competent servant of a pagan state (*Jos.* 54–57, 85–87, 105–15).⁶⁶

Josephus is openly hostile to Israelite kingship. Any king should be subject to God and guided by the high priest and council (*Ant.* 4.23–24; cp. 15.375). But in practice kings become corrupt (especially Herod, *Ant.* 14–17), and Josephus holds that kingship is always second best to “an aristocracy anchored in the hereditary priesthood,” with the high priest only the first among equals.⁶⁷ He claims that this was always the preferred polity among the Jews (*Ant.* 6.36, 84; 11.111; 14.41), and that the law entrusts all administration to the priests (*Ag. Ap.* 2.184–89).⁶⁸

The failure of the biblical kings to realize the hopes vested in them leads to the partial transfer of those hopes to an ideal, eschatological king (*Isa* 9:6–7; 11:1–10; *Mi* 5:2–5),⁶⁹ but even here early Jewish hopes are quite varied. The *Psalms of Solomon* anticipate a universal Davidic king who is God's vicegerent (17:21–43; 18:5–9; cp. *T. Jud.* 24); but in the apocalypses the messiah is less well-defined, as a human figure with some kind of eschatological role (cp. *1 Enoch* 90:37–38 with *4 Ezz* 13 and *2 Bar.* 72); and the Qumran sectarians expect two messiahs, with the royal “messiah of Israel” being subordinate to the priestly “messiah of Aaron” (1Q28a 2:11–22; 4Q175 9–20; cp. *T. Levi* 18:1–12; *T. Jud.* 24).⁷⁰

This diverse picture attests to the intense interest in early Judaism in the nature of regularly constituted political authority within Israel. That subordination should be given to such authority appears never to be questioned, although it would presumably take very different forms according to the wide range of ideals and expectations. It is biblically grounded, on (for example) the Israelite kings' appointment by God (2 Chr 13:5–7), their sacred status (1 Sm 26:9–10) and their ordering of Israel's life (2 Chr 31),⁷¹ and is therefore seen as an imperative of the divine order. The most explicit statement of this principle is found in Josephus, who critiques rebellion against those whom God has appointed, as disruptive of order (*Ant.* 4.36–37), and calls for obedience to the order or harmony of the constitution and submission to the leaders (*Ant.* 4.180–93).

Josephus seems not to allow insubordination even to Jewish rulers whose authority he regards as irregular; rather they are punished by God (*Ant.* 17.164–92) and their own rule destroys them (*Ant.* 5.135). In this respect, however, his view is only one among several in early Judaism. These may best be considered under the related heading of subordination to pagan rulers.

The State (2): Pagan Rulers

Insofar as the Hebrew Bible discusses subordination to pagan government, its approach is broadly positive. Although Israel's ideal condition is seen as that of an independent state under God (Dt 28:1,7–10; Isa 62), the occupation by leading figures of positions of responsibility in foreign courts is presented favorably (Gn 45:9; Neh 2:1–8; Est 4:12–16; Dan 1:18–21), and when Judah is exiled the prophet Jeremiah commends submission to their overlords (Jer 27; 29:7). This strategy reflects the belief that God is working out his purpose through pagan rulers, whether for salvation (Isa 45:6) or judgment (Dt 28:45–57; Jer 5:14–19); in either case they bear divine authority and are thereby worthy of subordination.⁷²

Early Jewish views of Gentile rule, however, fall into two broad classes, and one of these is generally (often sharply) negative.⁷³ This is associated especially with Palestinian Judaism from the 160s BCE until at least 73 CE (see e.g. Dan 7:23–26; *1 Enoch* 62–63; 1QS 5:1–6:23),⁷⁴ but it is shared by some Diaspora authors (e.g. 3 Mc 2:25–30; 3:13–29; *Sib. Or.* 3:162–95; 5:168–178).⁷⁵ It is also reflected outside Palestine in what John Barclay has called “cultural antagonism,” an “oppositional” attitude to Hellenism involving “a defensive or resistant stance.”⁷⁶

On the other hand, some early Jewish conceptions of pagan rule are mainly positive, even in Palestine (see e.g. Sir 10:1–5; 4Q242 5). Regarding Daniel 1–6, for example, John Collins writes:

For the present, Daniel's fidelity to his own God is in no way incompatible with his service to the king. Rather, his God-given wisdom makes him preeminent among the sages of Babylon . . . Despite the political supremacy of the Gentiles, God's in his heaven and all's well with the world.⁷⁷

Similar assessments are found in some Diaspora texts (*Ep. Arist.* 187–294; cp. *Exag.* 68–89, 254–69). And although these probably date from the pre-Roman period, the most positive view of all is found in Josephus, who refers favorably to the character and behavior of the Romans and Gentile rulers generally (e.g. *J.W.* 6.328–50; *Ant.* 1.10–11; 12.33, 46; *Ag. Ap.* 2.73–78).⁷⁸ On this understanding

pagan authorities are not fundamentally opposed to Judaism in either principle or practice.⁷⁹ This is one aspect of what Barclay calls “cultural convergence,” an “integrative” approach expressed by significant involvement in social and civic life.⁸⁰

In Palestine some of those who saw pagan rulers negatively favored the violent zeal of the “Fourth Philosophy” identified by Josephus (*Ant.* 18.23–25) and represented by the phrase “No king but God” (see e.g. 1 Mc 2:39–48; Jdt 9:7–14; *1 Enoch* 90:6–19; 1QM 1:1–3, 9–17). But despite the revolts of 167 BCE and 66–73 (and 132–35) CE, it is very doubtful that this was the default approach even there.⁸¹ In the Diaspora there was one major uprising in various places in 115–17 CE, which may have been at least partly motivated by messianic hopes, but here resistance was even rarer,⁸² and among the literature only the *Sibylline Oracles* (from Egypt) contain highly aggressive content (e.g. 5.414–19).⁸³

Other Jews expressed their hostility to foreign government by withdrawing as far as possible from political and social involvement and devoting themselves to prayer and the meticulous practice of Torah, waiting for God to act rather than taking up arms (see e.g. Dan 9:1–19; 1QS 1:1–9; 5:1–3). In both Palestine (e.g. *T. Mos.* 9:6) and the Diaspora (e.g. 4 Mc 9:1–9) they insisted on maintaining their standard Jewish distinctives, which included the exclusive worship of God, and this commitment might require them to perform acts of dissent.⁸⁴ But these too appear to have been infrequent,⁸⁵ especially among Diaspora Jews, who enjoyed various privileges and the right to appeal to the Roman government against local authorities.⁸⁶

Militant Jews might have counselled temporary subordination to the authorities until the time was right for revolt, but they can hardly have seen this as more than a pragmatic strategy for prudential purposes. Some quietist Jews may have understood submission in the same way, but others echo the biblical idea that pagan rulers are instruments of divine chastisement (e.g. Dan 9:11–14; *T. Mos.* 2:4–3:5; 3:10–14), which implies that subordination is a divine imperative until God intervenes to remove them.

Many of those Jews who regarded Gentile government positively were also committed to maintaining their Jewish identity.⁸⁷ For example, Philo both accepts pagan authority and insists that the Jews will rather die than forgo temple worship, synagogue assembly and the law (*Flacc.* 44–52).⁸⁸ But that limitation on submission seems rarely to have provoked resistance among this group; indeed, a small number of Jews chose actively to work with their overlords in Palestine,⁸⁹ and in the Diaspora many more embraced a cultural and political collaboration in which they were well integrated into social, economic and civic life.⁹⁰

In both contexts the upper classes in particular sought to appease Rome and restrain rather than abet potential violence. Some Diaspora Jews were respected and influential, not least in Asia Minor, where there is also no record of support for the first Jewish revolt (or indeed those of 115–17 and 132–35).⁹¹

These Jews sought to achieve the highest level of subordination to political and social demands permitted by Judaism.⁹² The clearest exposition of a basis for this is found in Josephus.⁹³ His reasons are partly pragmatic: it is a necessary condition of communal self-preservation (*J.W.* 2.350–51).⁹⁴ But he also makes claims that present it as a divine imperative: God has given the world to the Romans (*J.W.* 2.390–91); Vespasian has fulfilled an (unspecified) biblical oracle predicting a king who would rule the world (*J.W.* 6.312–13); to revolt against the Romans is to rebel against God (*J.W.* 3.351–54; 5.378); the Jews must now accept Roman rule (*J.W.* 3.108–9).⁹⁵ Indeed, Josephus’s literary work is largely devoted to demonstrating that “Jews are exemplary citizens of the empire. They are committed to the bedrock values of Greco-Roman civilization”⁹⁶ (e.g. *Ant.* 1.5, 14; 18.23–25; *J.W.* 1.10–11; 2.345–46; 7.358ff; *Ag. Ap.* 2.33–78).⁹⁷

Early Jewish views of Gentile rulers as divinely sanctioned and positively disposed, and the corresponding cultural integration, thus reflect a perception that Judaism shares the fundamental values of the Greco-Roman world, in their higher ethical forms, and that the authorities are generally representative of those ideals. And the conviction that subordination is a divine command indicates that God’s requirements and those of political superiors are believed often to coincide.

So while early Judaism includes a strong rejectionist tradition in which subordination to pagan authority is often a purely pragmatic policy, the influence of this should not be exaggerated. Many Jews view Gentile rule positively, especially in the Diaspora, and believe that submission to it is required by God; even some who regard it more negatively still accept subordination as a divine imperative.

Slaves and Masters

In the Hebrew Bible the institution of slavery appears in the “book of the covenant” (Ex 21:2–11)⁹⁸ and the priestly (Lv 25:39–46) and Deuteronomic (Dt 15:12–18) legislation; occasional references are also made to it elsewhere (e.g. Gn 21:10–13; 1 Kgs 9:20–22; Eccl 2:7; Jer 34:8–22). Distinctions are drawn between chattel slaves, who are their masters’ property (Ex 21:21), forced laborers, who work for the governing authorities (Ex 1:11–14), and bonded servants, whose service is limited and who can be redeemed (Ex 21:2–6; Lv 25:47–52).⁹⁹

Israel's exodus from bondage is determinative for the Hebrew Bible's understanding and practice of slavery. Only foreigners or resident aliens are supposed to be chattel slaves or provide forced labor, and even they must be treated as human (Ex 21:20–21, 26–27). Israelites can be sold only as bonded servants and have additional rights (Ex 21:7–11; Lv 25:39–55; Dt 15:13–14); in particular, they are not to be used harshly (Lv 25:46, 53).¹⁰⁰ But Proverbs adds that slaves must be disciplined and that it is not fitting for them to rule (19:10; 29:19, 21).

Early Jewish writers appear generally to take over the principles of the Hebrew Bible without significantly developing or supplementing them. Thus Sirach calls for *ἄρτος καὶ παιδεία καὶ ἔργον οἰκέτη* (33:25). The slave should be forced to obey the master, with severe discipline if required; but the master should not be overbearing or unjust, and wise slaves should be loved and freed (7:21; 33:25–33). *Pseudo-Phocylides* calls for slaves to be given what is due to them and discourages slandering and branding (223–26), while the Qumran Ordinances forbid Israelites to serve foreigners as slaves and prohibit their sale (4Q159 2–6).¹⁰¹ But slaves who turn against their masters are numbered with the wicked (*Sib. Or.* 2:278).

Philo asserts that no-one is a slave according to nature and that people are equal: *Θεράποντες τύχη μὲν ἐλάττονι κέχρηται, φύσεως δὲ τῆς αὐτῆς μεταποιῶνται τοῖς δεσπότηταις. τῷ δὲ θεῷ νόμῳ κανὼν τῶν δικαίων ἐστὶν οὐ τὸ τῆς τύχης ἀλλὰ τὸ τῆς φύσεως ἑναρμόνιον* (*Spec. Leg.* 3.137); (“Servants rank lower in fortune but in nature can claim equality with their masters, and in the law of God the standard of justice is adjusted to nature and not to fortune” [Cary and Whitaker, LCL]). He appears also to commend the Essenes for rejecting slavery on these grounds (*Omn. Prob. Lib.* 79).¹⁰² But he still accepts the Pentateuchal practice and even suggests that many benefit from being slaves because they are unfit to rule themselves (*Spec. Leg.* 2.122–23; *Omn. Prob. Lib.* 57).¹⁰³ He calls on masters not to be tyrants and limits their power (*Spec. Leg.* 3.137), but the slave remains the master's property (*Spec. Leg.* 3.143). Thus Philo does not view natural equality as undermining relational hierarchy.

Josephus rejects the legal witness of slaves on the grounds of their inherent shortcomings (*Ant.* 4.219), though he seems to see these as moral rather than natural (*Ant.* 4.180–93; 20.166).¹⁰⁴ The Mishnah affirms that all human beings are equal (*M. Sanh.* 4.5) and gives rights to Jewish workers because they are children of the patriarchs (*M. B. Mesi'a* 7.1).¹⁰⁵ Yet the testimony of slaves is still regarded as invalid (*M. Rosh Hash.* 1.8).

The idea of subordination is inherent to slavery in both theory and practice, despite the varied forms it may take and the Torah's bestowing of significant rights

upon the slave.¹⁰⁶ Neither the Hebrew Bible nor early Jewish writers present the institution of slavery as in itself part of the cosmic order or prescribe it as divinely normative. But they do take its existence for granted, see it as one acceptable social expression of properly hierarchical relationships within the Jewish household, and so seem to regard the subordination of the slave as a divine imperative.

Wives and Husbands

In discussions of the subordination of wives to husbands in the Hebrew Bible, much attention has been devoted to the creation and fall narratives of Genesis 1–3. Some scholars interpret these to indicate that a hierarchical relationship between men and women is part of the divine order and that sin and judgment merely distort this into unhealthy domination;¹⁰⁷ others argue that the texts present men and women as wholly equal, in cooperation without subordination, and that male rule is introduced as a judgment rather than an ideal.¹⁰⁸ The discussion continues.¹⁰⁹

However, these chapters represent only a small selection of the biblical perspectives on male-female relationships. Consideration of a wider range of material reveals an established and accepted practice of patriarchy, conjoined with some positive affirmations of the status and roles of women, both of which are reflected in early Judaism.

On the one hand, gender inequality is pervasive in the Hebrew Bible. Women occupy a mainly domestic role (Gn 18:6,9), are subject to the will of men in law and practice (Ex 21:7–11; Nm 30:3–15; Jgs 19:1–30), and have limited rights (Ex 28:1; Lv 12:1–5; Dt 24:1–4).¹¹⁰ They can also be presented as a distraction or snare (Prv 7; Eccl. 7:26; cp. Ezk 23; Hos 3).¹¹¹ Traditional roles in marriage are therefore largely assumed (Prv 12:4).

The relationship between spouses in early Judaism is similarly conditioned by the perceived inequality of men and women. Thus a wife's qualities are defined in relation to her husband (Sir 25:13–26:18); she generally stays at home (Jdt 8:4–5; Sir 26:1–4,13–18); and he is principally responsible for raising their children (Sir 42:9–14). The Qumran *Damascus Document* upholds his right to cancel his wife's oath (CD 16:10–12).¹¹² Josephus (e.g. *Ant.* 1.187–88; 11.184–296) and Philo (e.g. *Abr.* 245–46, 253) downplay the assertiveness of biblical women; Josephus attaches little importance to women in general,¹¹³ while Philo claims that nature has given different and unequal roles to men and women (*Spec. Leg.* 3.169–71).¹¹⁴ The Mishnah endorses some of these inequalities (*M. Ketub.* 1.6–9; 5.5–9; 10–11; *M. Rosh Hash.* 1.8).¹¹⁵

In early Judaism gender inequality is compounded by negative views of women. Ben Sira and the *Testament of Reuben* warn against various threats that they pose (Sir 9:1–9; 25:13–23; 42:11–14; *T. Reub.* 5:1–3).¹¹⁶ The Scrolls present them as a source of impurity, insisting on separation and sexual abstinence for community members (11Q19 45:11–12; 1QM 7:3; cp. 4Q184).¹¹⁷ The Mishnah warns that too much conversation with a woman is troubling, distracting and harmful (*M. 'Abot.* 1.5).

The *Letter of Aristeas* disparages women's reasoning powers and constitution (250–52). Sirach appears to assert that the woman began sin and caused death by claiming rule over the man (25:24),¹¹⁸ and states explicitly that women's virtue is inferior and their vice heinous: μικρά πᾶσα κακία πρὸς κακίαν γυναικός, κλήρος ἀμαρτωλοῦ ἐπιπέσει αὐτῇ . . . κρείσσων πονηρία ἀνδρός ἢ ἀγαθοποιός γυνή, καὶ γυνή καταισχύνουσα εἰς ὄνειδισμόν (25:19; 42:14).

Josephus regards women as deceitful (*Ant.* 5.294).¹¹⁹ He is either dismissive of or surprised by their contributions (*Ant.* 3.5; *J.W.* 2.560; 3.303) and denigrates leading women (*Ant.* 13.430–32; 15 *passim*; 19.276–77). He rejects women's testimony διὰ κουφότητα καὶ θράσος τοῦ γένους αὐτῶν (*Ant.* 4.219).¹²⁰ Philo sees the woman as a secondary creation who brings blame and misery on the man (*Op. Mund.* 151–52) and succumbs to temptation ἀπὸ γνώμης ἀβεβαίου καὶ ἀνδρῦτου συναινέσασαν (*Op. Mund.* 156).¹²¹

It is unsurprising therefore that subordination of wives to husbands is widely accepted in early Judaism as part of the divinely ordained nature of things. According to Sirach, wives should not support or otherwise have power over their husbands (25:22; 33:20–24; cp. 26:1–4, 13–18).¹²² 4Q416 speaks of God making the husband rule over his wife according to his pleasure (4:1–7).¹²³ Josephus appeals to the complete inferiority of women as grounds for a wife's subordination: γυνὴ χείρων, φησὶν, ἀνδρός εἰς ἅπαντα. τοιγαροῦν ὑπακουέτω, μὴ πρὸς ὕβριν, ἀλλ' ἐν ἄρχῃται. θεὸς γὰρ ἀνδρὶ τὸ κράτος ἔδωκεν (*Ag. Ap.* 2.201).¹²⁴ Philo agrees that a husband should not take orders from his wife (*Leg. All.* 3.222), and in his allegorical interpretations he identifies men with reason and women with the senses (*Ebr.* 54–55; *Op. Mund.* 165), because in both cases the former should rule the latter.¹²⁵ Progress in virtue is thus achieved only by repudiating female distinctives in favor of masculine ones (*Ebr.* 60–64; *Quaest. in Ex.* 1.7),¹²⁶ women represent imperfection (*Fug.* 51).¹²⁷

On the other hand, however, in the Hebrew Bible women are included within the covenant, and the law limits the power of men over them (Dt 22:25–29; 29:9–18).¹²⁸ Their opinions are valued; they discharge responsible roles within the household and even take bold initiatives outside it (Gn 21:12; 2 Sm 25:18–19;

Ru 3:6–9; Est 5, 7).¹²⁹ Some women exercise authority and leadership (Jgs 4:49; 2 Kgs 22:14–20).¹³⁰ The wisdom tradition affirms the value of a good wife (Eccl 9:9; Prv 31:10–31) and gives both parents an educative role (Prv 1:8–9).¹³¹

In early Judaism too the dominant patriarchal view should be qualified. Firstly, women are sometimes the central and heroic characters in fictional works, as in Judith, Susanna and 2 Maccabees. The idea of powerful women who outdo their male contemporaries and are honored and used by God thus has a respected place in post-biblical Jewish thinking.¹³² Secondly, there are occasional examples of women's equitable or even privileged treatment. *Pseudo-Phocylides* (195–97) and even Ben Sira (25:1) recommend mutual love and harmony in marriage; the former limits the husband's freedom by the interests of the wife (177, 186, 189); and in the *Testament of Job*, Job's daughters are given a better inheritance than their brothers (46–50).¹³³ Thirdly, in the Mishnah the subordination expected of the wife is limited by the correlative responsibilities laid on the husband (*M. Ketub.* 4.7–12; 5:7), and women can even initiate divorce in some circumstances (*M. Ketub.* 7.10).¹³⁴

Nonetheless, the balance of the above evidence suggests that patriarchy is deeply embedded in the law and life of Israel, in both the Hebrew Bible and early Judaism, such that the subordination of wives to husbands is a standard expectation. Elements of reciprocity between the sexes are also affirmed; outstanding women are acknowledged with approval and occasionally take leading roles; and limits are imposed by the husband's duties. But however flexible and qualified the actual practice may be, male dominance is repeatedly presented as part of the cosmic order and subordination of wives as divinely normative.

Children and Elders

The subordination of children to their parents, and particularly to their fathers as household heads, is taken for granted in the Hebrew Bible. It is seen in the foundational commandment to honor father and mother (Ex 20:12), in the denunciation of rebellious sons, especially in Deuteronomy 21:18–21 (cp. 1 Sm 20:30), and in the discipline required by the wisdom literature (Prv 22:15).¹³⁵

In early Judaism the requirement for children to respect their parents is similarly affirmed (e.g. Sir 3:1–16; Tb 4:3–4); parents must be served as masters (Sir 3:7), and discipline is recommended to discourage disobedience (Sir 30:12; see also 7:23); *Pseudo-Phocylides* is unusual in calling for gentleness and only moderate punishment (207–9). The son should not be given power over his father (Sir 33:20–24).¹³⁶ In 4Q416 parents are likened to God and a human ruler, as those to

be served (3:15–19). The sons of Qumran community members must be enrolled, instructed, and admitted at a certain age (1Q28a 1:6–18; CD 15:5–6); they have no choice in the matter.

Philo asserts the superiority of parents over their children (*ἄπερ γάρ, οἶμαι, θεὸς πρὸς κόσμον, τοῦτο πρὸς τέκνα γονεῖς*; *Spec. Leg.* 2.225–26),¹³⁷ that their parental authority is given by nature, and that their power is the same as that of masters over slaves (*Spec. Leg.* 2.231–33). He expects children to honor, defer to and obey their parents, and also to respect other older people (*Spec. Leg.* 2.234–38; cp. *Ps-Phoc.* 220–22). Josephus agrees that children are to honor parents and that the young must respect all their elders (*Ag. Ap.* 2.206). The Mishnah warns that one’s vows should not adversely affect the interests of one’s parents (*M. Ned.* 9.1), and the early rabbis seem nowhere to challenge the principle of subordination.¹³⁸

Biblical references to “the elders” as the authoritative and representative members of the Israelite congregation (e.g. Ex 3:16; Dt 31:28; Ru 4:2) imply an expectation that others will submit to their authority (see Lam 5:12; cf. Jb 32:6–22). In early Judaism the term refers to “the senior men of the community, heads of the leading families within it, who as such exercise an authority that is informal, representative and collective”¹³⁹ and supervise community affairs;¹⁴⁰ they too are worthy of respect. Thus the rigid hierarchical structure and tight control of the Qumran sect (1QS 5:23; 6:25–27; 7:19; 9:7–8)¹⁴¹ represents only an intensification of the subordination due to elders generally.

The biblical and other grounds for the subordination of children to parents, younger people to older ones, and ordinary Jews to elders, conjoined with its unquestioned status in early Judaism, indicates that it was seen as a divine requirement.

Freedom

The concept of freedom in the Hebrew Bible originates in the creative action of God. The process described in Genesis 1–2 may be understood as the liberation of the cosmos from chaos into order.¹⁴² Freedom is also a goal and effect of God’s gracious election of Israel (Dt 4:37–38; 7:6–8; Ps 105:43; Ezk 20:5–6),¹⁴³ a basic privilege of God’s covenant people;¹⁴⁴ Israel can fulfil its promise and vocation fully only when it is free.

However, biblical freedom is supremely defined by the exodus, an emancipation from slavery to a state (Ex 3:7–10) that becomes an archetype of God’s further acts of deliverance for Israel (Isa 43:16–21).¹⁴⁵ The political liberty of the

nation from foreign powers into their own land and its blessings remains the dominant freedom motif in the Hebrew Bible (2 Kgs 19:14–19; Dt 28).¹⁴⁶

But the biblical concept of freedom also includes deliverance from malevolent individuals (Ps 22), or impersonal harms (Dt 7:14–15),¹⁴⁷ or divine disfavor (Ps 6), or (rarely) the stain of sin (Ps 51).¹⁴⁸ In the Deuteronomic tradition most of these additional liberties are inseparable from national independence, but in these psalms and elsewhere (Ru 4; Jb 42) they sometimes seem wholly to transcend the political context.

Moreover, in the Hebrew Bible freedom is not only liberty *from* certain evils; it is also liberty *for* Israel to serve and worship God as their master, or even to live in subjugation to him as his slaves (Lv 25:55; Dt 6:20–25).¹⁴⁹ Thus it requires faithfulness and obedience to God in the context of his covenant with Israel (Dt 7:6–11).¹⁵⁰ It follows that Israel as God's servants can maintain their covenant blessing of freedom only by, and on the basis of, such loyalty and compliance (Dt 6:10–25). The law defines the content of faithfulness in the context of Israel's common life, the responsibilities of the people set free by God (Dt 5:6ff),¹⁵¹ which are both vertical and horizontal.¹⁵²

However, Israel fails to be faithful, and as a result their political freedom (with its secondary liberties) is first limited (e.g. Jgs 2:11–19), and then lost altogether in exile and slavery to foreign rulers (2 Kgs 17:6–18; Jer 25:1–14).¹⁵³ From that time some of the prophets express hope for the restoration of Judah's freedom and independence (e.g. Isa 49:8–18; Jer 30–31), but the books of Ezra and Nehemiah see the people's slavery as continuing even after some of the exiles have returned to the land (Ezr 9:8–9; Neh 9:36–37). The sense that God's promise of political freedom has yet to be fulfilled persists beyond the Hebrew Bible into early Judaism.

But while some biblical texts (e.g. Ex 3:7–12; 7:16 etc.) imply that this political liberation is necessary for the people to serve God, others from the time of the exile and after (e.g. Jer 29:4–7; Dan 6) suggest that such service is still possible under foreign rule.¹⁵⁴ Indeed, Stefan Seiler has argued that the priestly writers of the Holiness Code respond to the abolition of Israel's political freedom by reinterpreting the concept of freedom in terms of holiness (Lv 20:24; 22:32–33). Israel can be free to serve God by practicing the law even when the nation is under foreign domination and/or away from its land.¹⁵⁵

It will be argued here that a political concept of freedom, inherited from the Hebrew Bible, was the most prominent in early Palestinian Judaism from the mid-second century BCE to around 70 CE, but also that its significance should not be exaggerated; it is also much less important in the Diaspora. Moreover, not

only is this concept multi-faceted, but also (again as in the Hebrew Bible) some of its elements have a life of their own that transcends the prevailing idea or even leaves it behind; the most significant of these is the freedom to serve God.¹⁵⁶ In the years following the first revolt these non-political dimensions of freedom become increasingly important.

Many Jews of the period expected God to depose the present Gentile rulers of Israel. The nations would either repent, or be converted, or be destroyed, while renegade and compromised Jews would be defeated. The present age would give way to a new one, in which God alone would reign over Israel, and the world through Israel, perfectly and for ever.¹⁵⁷ This kind of political hope is represented in a wide range of early Jewish literature¹⁵⁸ and groups.¹⁵⁹

Josephus, despite his favorable view of Rome, also regards freedom as the political liberation of Israel from pagan rule (e.g. *J.W.* 2.345–401; 3.357; 7.323–24; *Ant.* 2.329–33; 14.77–78). He appears to believe that when the nation has repented and returned to God, God will restore it, take power away from Rome and give it to Israel under its messiah (*Ant.* 4.114–17, 125; 10.210, 276).¹⁶⁰ Early rabbinic Judaism too does not abandon hope of an independent Jewish kingdom under a messianic king (*M. Pesach.* 10.4–5) and continues to understand freedom in political terms.¹⁶¹ The coins minted by Bar Kokhba proclaimed the freedom of Jerusalem.¹⁶²

The above account must however be sharply qualified in various ways. Firstly, with the exception of the *Sibylline Oracles* and (partially) of Josephus, all the cited literature is of Palestinian provenance;¹⁶³ the evidence for strong and coherent political hopes in the Diaspora is much more limited.¹⁶⁴ Secondly, the extent of such hopes even in Palestine has been seriously questioned, to the point that Martin Goodman can even say provocatively:

The notion that Jews in the late Second Temple period saw themselves as . . . in need of salvation from the sufferings of exile and Roman domination is a myth expressed particularly by New Testament scholars in order to provide a theological grounding for the mission of Jesus to Israel.¹⁶⁵

This lack of consensus suggests at least that the issue is not clear-cut. Thirdly, Jews hold different views of what political freedom entails: for example, the Sadducees favor Israel's autonomy as a client temple-state of Rome, to protect its liberty against the incursions of a possibly despotic local king.¹⁶⁶

Finally, for at least some strands of early Judaism the expectation of political freedom is not immediate, but located in an indeterminate eschatological

future.¹⁶⁷ This less specific vision is especially evident in the early rabbis,¹⁶⁸ though some of the other cited texts give little or no indication of when the authors' hopes will be realized. Furthermore, various works teach a staged eschatology: either a partial realizing of the new age in the present, as in *1 Enoch* (10:16–18) and *2 Baruch* (53:1–12);¹⁶⁹ or two distinct installments, of messianic reign and new creation, as in *4 Ezra* (7:26–44).¹⁷⁰ Thus political liberation can be a hope for the present age prefiguring something greater to come at the end; but alternatively, this hope can be re-located in the age to come and supplanted by other aspirations for the present.

The first of the other kinds of liberty associated with early Jewish political hopes is freedom from exile. Various sources look to God's promise to gather the scattered people from the nations to the promised land (e.g. *Tb* 13:5,13; *Bar* 2:34–35; *Pss. Sol.* 8:25–29; 11). But although Philo expresses in one place the eschatological hope of a return of the Jews (*Somn.* 1.255–56),¹⁷¹ scholarly opinion is divided as to whether this was a major aspiration in the Diaspora.¹⁷²

A second common theme is freedom from evil. This can be described as the impurity and uncleanness linked to idolatry (*1 Mc* 14:4–15,36), which is removed by the cleansing of the land, destruction of idolatrous kingdoms and rebuilding of the temple (*Dan* 2:44–45; *Tb* 14:5; *1 Mc* 2:48,50; *1 Enoch* 90:28–29; 91:13), or as general human wickedness inspired by demonic activity, which is eradicated at the coming of God's kingdom when hostile cosmic powers are defeated (*1 Enoch* 69:27–29; 107; *1QM* 13; cp. *Tg. Neof.* *Dt* 32:34).¹⁷³ Philo articulates an eschatology of abundant blessedness (*Op. Mund.* 79–81),¹⁷⁴ while the *Eighteen Benedictions* look for the renewal of nature and the release of Israel from disease and lack.¹⁷⁵

It is notable that the hope for freedom from evil sometimes involves no reference to Israel's Gentile rulers. In some works it is described only in the general terms of the wicked and the righteous (*1 Enoch* 1; *4Q171* 2), and even if Gentile rulers are implicitly included here among the former, in other places they clearly belong among the latter (*Dan* 6:23–28; *Ep. Arist.*). Independence from pagan rule may have been a prominent part of the early Jewish vision of freedom from evil, but it was apparently not an integral part, especially in the Diaspora.

A third dimension of early Jewish expectation is freedom from death.¹⁷⁶ By the first century CE most Jews believed in an afterlife, whether immortality after death (as in *Ws* 5:15–16; *4 Mc* 17:12,17; *1 Enoch* 58; *Jub.* 23:31; *T. Abr.* 11–14; *1QS* 4:7) or resurrection from it (as in *2 Mc* 7:9,11,14,23,29; *1 Enoch* 90:32–33);¹⁷⁷ Josephus refers to both (*J.W.* 3.372–375; *Ag. Ap.* 2.218).¹⁷⁸ The early rabbis

also appear to believe in post-mortem recompense (*Sifre Dt.* 307) and/or in resurrection (*Eighteen Benedictions* 2; *Tg. Neof. Gn* 3:19).¹⁷⁹

However, freedom from death also has no *necessary* connection with national restoration or political liberation, particularly (again) in the Diaspora. So while Josephus associates immortality with freedom from the Romans (*J.W.* 7.344–49), Philo teaches it with no political connotations (*Mos.* 2.288; *Heir* 274),¹⁸⁰ and while the resurrection promise in 2 Maccabees is juxtaposed with that of Israel's vindication over pagan oppressors (2 Mc 7:30–38), the hope of immortality in Wisdom of Solomon appears to render earthly political liberation redundant. Moreover, even after the political disaster of 70 CE hope for the heavenly life continues to flourish in the Diaspora in works such as 3 *Baruch* (13–16) and 2 *Enoch* (40:12–42:5).¹⁸¹

A further component of Jewish hope is freedom to serve God. Diverse works look forward to the end of lawlessness in Israel and the flourishing of faithfulness in obedience to the Torah (e.g. Bar 5:1–4; 4 Ezr 6:27–28; *T. Levi* 18:9–14).¹⁸² By entering the Qumran community one is supposedly set free from the rule of Belial to become part of the righteous eschatological remnant (1QS 1:1–17; 2:1–17; 4:20–23; 4Q174). But while here and elsewhere this idea of freedom is linked with hopes for political liberation, it can also exist independently of these (e.g. Ws 9:7–12); as a spiritual and ethical concept it does not presuppose any particular political or social arrangements.

Philo and the early rabbis develop this concept significantly. Philo understands freedom as the liberation of the mind from the control of the passions. Free people are ruled only by God (*Omn. Prob. Lib.* 20), and by their God-determined judgment and will; they cannot be compelled to act otherwise by their own desires or by others (*Omn. Prob. Lib.* 17, 21–25; *Leg. All.* 192–94; *Heir* 68–74).¹⁸³ Philo indicates that this freedom can be attained in the present, though it will also be realized in an eschatological community living in obedience to the law (*Omn. Prob. Lib.* 75–87; *Vit. Cont.* 2–90).¹⁸⁴ Political circumstances are demonstrably irrelevant to this idea of freedom.

The changes to Jewish practice commended by Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai (*M. Rosh Hash.* 4.1–4) after the destruction of the sanctuary,¹⁸⁵ the substituting of temple ritual by rabbinic liturgy, and the equation of assuming the yoke of the kingdom with reciting the Shema,¹⁸⁶ attest to a rabbinic vision of freedom that is also independent of political events. Similarly, the prominent themes of kingship, priesthood and temple in the Mishnah indicate that (and how) Israel is still free to be holy, by obeying the law of the temple in the home and the village.¹⁸⁷ According to Jacob Neusner, in a context where these things have ceased to exist

for the foreseeable future, this material “lays down a practical judgment upon, and in favor of, the imagination and will to reshape reality, regain a system, re-establish that order upon which trustworthy existence is to be built.”¹⁸⁸ Rome may rule the world, but freedom may still be enjoyed in the study and practice of Torah (*M. Abot* 3.5).¹⁸⁹

Conclusions

The above discussion has identified a broad consensus among early Jewish writers on various aspects of order, subordination and freedom. But it has also highlighted significant differences, especially in attitudes to pagan rulers and in hopes for liberation. Both the unity and the diversity yield important insights for this work.

In early Judaism cosmic order is grounded in the creative and providential activity of God. The ordering of nature and history is both the work of God, which bears his authority, and reflective of his nature; God also shapes the cosmos as his own dwelling-place. Its order therefore carries divine authority and has a normative status; it defines how the world ought to be.

The heavenly and earthly realms are held to correspond, such that the ordering of the former defines that of the latter. This principle grounds the ascription, in some early Jewish sources, of God’s ordering rule on earth to the agency of heavenly powers. But elsewhere this task is assigned to humans, whose vocation requires them to conform their own lives to the order, as it finds expression in the moral law and supremely in Israel’s Torah. Because God’s people possess this unique divine revelation, they have a special responsibility to embody and promote God’s order on behalf of the world.

The cosmic order has however been disrupted, although opinions differ in early Judaism over whether primary responsibility for this should be ascribed to its human or angelic guardians. It is widely agreed that humans (including God’s people) have ceased to reflect the divine order themselves and have therefore become agents of cosmic disorder. But some authors attribute this sin to the influence of evil spirits, and others go further in tracing these malevolent powers to a primordial angelic rebellion purportedly recounted in Genesis 6. The gods who oversee the pagan nations, and their earthly counterparts, are sometimes seen as involved in the dislocating activity, but not always.

While God’s moral government of the world is generally held to preserve a good measure of order in the present, early Judaism looks forward to its full

restoration in the eschatological future though his redemptive activity for Israel and all creation. While only some authors understand this in terms of a war against hostile human and angelic powers, it necessarily involves the defeat of all forces of disorder, whether earthly or heavenly, and the liberation of God's people to fulfil their role as mediators and guarantors of the divine order.

Early Jewish authors mostly ground subordinate relationships in this order, often by implication through an appeal to divine motivations, but sometimes more explicitly through the *περι οἰκονομίας* tradition. God requires responses such as recognition, deference and obedience to authorities he has appointed; thus subordination is always one-sided. Sometimes these hierarchies reflect supposed differences in quality: the inferiority of wives to husbands and children to parents is commonly assumed, and rightful Jewish rulers and elders are believed to have characteristics that make them worthy to direct others. Slaves, however, are not generally seen as inherently inferior to their masters; yet here too the hierarchical nature of the relationship appears to be divinely sanctioned, suggesting that this is primarily based not on the quality of one's superior but only on his status. Only the God-given right of pagan or supposedly irregular Jewish rulers to exercise authority is ever widely doubted.

Thus the principle of subordination to God-given authorities usually applies to the relationships of subjects to proper Jewish rulers, slaves to masters, wives to husbands, and children or younger/junior people to parents or elders. For some Jews, especially in the Diaspora, it also embraces that of Jewish subjects to pagan (or irregular Jewish) rulers, even where the latter are regarded negatively. Where they are seen positively, subordination reflects a belief in shared values between Judaism and Greco-Roman society, including its rulers, and in the consequent and extensive coincidence between the demands of God and those of one's human superiors within the state. The many divinely motivated calls for subordination within the household imply that such correspondence exists there too.

Subordination is also a common response among Jews to hierarchical authority even where it is not regarded as divinely sanctioned. But in this case it may best be seen as a practical strategy for national and individual self-preservation, adopted temporarily by the militants and permanently (pending God's eschatological intervention) by some quietists.

However, even principled subordination to political authority is generally limited by the prior claim of obedience to the Jewish law, including its demand that God alone be worshipped. Even a Diaspora Jew such as Philo, with a positive view of pagan rule and well integrated with Greco-Roman society, recognizes that the Torah is non-negotiable, and many normally obedient Jews are prepared

to dissent if required by their rulers to participate or collude in law-breaking, even though in practice they seldom need to do so, especially in the Diaspora. Thus the idea of a relativized subordination is widespread in early Judaism, at least with reference to the state.¹⁹⁰

Subordination in early Judaism also exhibits a certain flexibility. For example, the demands that Jewish rulers can properly place upon their subjects varies according to the model of leadership that each author endorses. Also the submission of slaves and wives is conditioned by the responsibilities laid upon their masters and husbands; some reciprocity in marriage is recommended; and some authors acknowledge the character and even leadership of outstanding women. These qualifications do not subvert the normative status of hierarchy and subordination, but they do allow for some variety in its application.

The claim that national and political freedom resulting from the removal of Israel's pagan and irregular Jewish rulers is the dominant element of early Jewish hopes for liberation in Palestine from the Maccabees to the first revolt can be established from multiple sources. But its questionable extent, diverse forms and eschatological dimensions warn against overstating its importance in early Judaism as a whole. In particular, it appears to occupy a relatively minor place in the Diaspora.

Moreover, Israel's aspiration for political liberation is closely related to other concepts of freedom, most of which—not least the freedom to serve God—extend beyond the political sphere and are sometimes completely separated from it, especially in the Diaspora. So when the expectation of national liberation from pagan rule is given the first of its two devastating blows in 66–73 CE, a coherent concept of freedom can survive to sustain the Jewish communities. There is good reason to think that well before the second blow falls in 132–35 CE, while many Jews still cherish the hope of earthly liberation, quite different views are gaining ground.

So from this time hope for the present age is increasingly vested in the moral freedom to be achieved by the learning and doing of Torah. This change is associated especially with rabbinic Judaism, and it probably reflects the position long held by the moderate Pharisees, who (in Wright's words)

. . . would withdraw into the deeper private study and practice of Torah, creating an alternative mode of Judaism *which achieved its liberation from Rome, and from corrupt Judaism, by living in its own world where neither pagan nor renegade could corrupt it.*¹⁹¹

But variations of this concept are also known in the Diaspora, for example in the wisdom tradition and in Philo, well before the first revolt, even though the disastrous outcome may increase their appeal.

Early Jewish hope for the age to come does not exclude the idea of political freedom and national independence even after 70 (or 135) CE; Josephus and the rabbis attest to the persistence of this, especially in Palestinian Judaism. But the existing practice of locating such freedom in an indeterminate future is extended by these authors, while in the Diaspora the emphasis appears already to be on a heavenly afterlife independent of political change or national restoration. Even in eschatological perspective, the relative importance of political freedom seems to be diminishing.

This study also confirms that Diaspora Judaism has distinctive emphases over against its Palestinian equivalent. It is much more affirming of the authority of pagan rulers and therefore more principled in its subordination to them; and its understandings of freedom give a far smaller place to national and political restoration, often entirely divorcing from it the related ideas of liberation from evil, death and sin.

To complete this outline of 1 Peter's conceptual background, the discussion now moves to early Christianity.

Notes

- 1 The term "early Judaism" refers primarily to "the period between Alexander the Great in the late fourth century B.C.E. and the Roman emperor Hadrian and the Bar Kokhba Revolt in the early second century C.E." (J. J. Collins and D. C. Harlow, eds., *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism* [Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2010], vi). No definitive canon of Jewish Scripture had been fixed by the time of 1 Peter, but many of the books that would later be included were already widely recognized as having divine authority (see E. Ulrich, "Hebrew Bible," in Evans and Porter, *Dictionary*, 455–57).
- 2 The Diaspora in Mesopotamia and Persia, in contrast, used Aramaic Targumim as their vernacular scriptures.
- 3 Birth and death dates are from Collins and Harlow, *Dictionary*.
- 4 4 *Ezr*, 2 *Bar.* and 2 *Enoch* may well date from the late first or very early second centuries; some of the *Sib. Or.* also originate after 70 CE. Josephus's *J.W.* was composed in the 70s CE, and *Ant.* and (probably) *Ag. Ap.* in the 90s. For discussion of dates, see the relevant chapters of J. H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1983, 1985); M. Stone, ed., *Jewish Writings of the*

- Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1984); G. W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1987).
- 5 The contribution may be positive or negative: some strands of late first-century thought may be a reaction to earlier ideas that are now perceived as discredited.
 - 6 See J. D. G. Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways: Between Christianity and Judaism and Their Significance for the Character of Christianity* (London: SCM Press, 1991), 232, 238–39.
 - 7 This material probably includes at least some of the Targumim; see B.D. Chilton, “Rabbinic Literature: Targumim,” in Evans and Porter, *Dictionary*, 903–5; S. D. Fraade, “Targum, Targumim,” in Collins and Harlow, *Dictionary*, 1280. See also E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice & Belief 63 BCE–66 CE* (London: SCM Press, 1992), 10 for comments on the relationship of rabbinic thought to the first century CE.
 - 8 Since all the relevant Jewish literature from this period comes from the imperial Diaspora, the possible views of Jews outside the empire will not be considered here.
 - 9 See especially M. Douglas, *Leviticus as Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 79–80; J. H. Walton, “Creation in Genesis 1:1–2:3 and the Ancient Near East: Order out of Disorder after *Chaoskampf*,” *Calvin Theological Journal* 48/1 (2008): 58–60; J. H. Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2009), 83–91; L. M. Morales, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord? A Biblical Theology of the Book of Leviticus* (Nottingham: Apollos; Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015), 40–42.
 - 10 F. J. Mabie, “Chaos and Death,” in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry and Writings*, ed. T. Longman III and P. Enns (Downers Grove, IL and Nottingham: IVP, 2008), 45–48; D. VanDrunen, “Wisdom and the Natural Moral Order: The Contribution of Proverbs to a Christian Theology of Natural Law,” *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 33, no. 1 (2013): 154–57.
 - 11 See e.g. Sir 42:15–43:33; S of III Ch 35–65; 4 Ezr 6:38–54; 1 Enoch 72–75; *Pss. Sol.* 17:10–12; Aristobulus frag. 2, 10.4; frag. 3, 12.11–13, 13.4. See also J. J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 59–62; G. S. Oegema, “Creation,” in Collins and Harlow, *Dictionary*, 497–98.
 - 12 R. Radice, “Philo’s Theology and Theory of Creation,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Philo*, ed. A. Kamesar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 125–26; G. E. Sterling et al., “Philo,” in *Early Judaism: A Comprehensive Overview*, ed. J. J. Collins and D. C. Harlow (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012), 269–70.
 - 13 P. Borgen, “Philo of Alexandria,” in Stone, *Jewish Writings*, 264–65; Radice, “Creation,” 131–34, 144–45.
 - 14 Mabie, “Chaos,” 47–48; Walton, “Creation,” 54–55.

- 15 Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 175–76; C. Bennema, “The Strands of Wisdom Tradition in Intertestamental Judaism: Origins, Developments and Characteristics,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 52, no. 1 (2001): 72.
- 16 Sterling et al, “Philo,” 269–70.
- 17 Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 109; A. E. Portier-Young, *Apocalypse against Empire: Theologies of Resistance in Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2011), 387–89.
- 18 D. Dimant, “Qumran Sectarian Literature,” in Stone, *Jewish Writings*, 536–38; Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 150–51, 155–57.
- 19 H. W. Attridge, “Josephus and His Works,” in Stone, *Jewish Writings*, 203–6.
- 20 Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 102–4. (The book of Daniel, though part of the Hebrew Bible, can also be seen as part of the early Jewish corpus in view of its [probable] late date.)
- 21 G. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Qumran in Perspective*, 3rd ed. (London: SCM Press, 1994), 156.
- 22 See also E. Tigchelaar, “The Dead Sea Scrolls,” in Collins and Harlow, *Overview*, 217–18.
- 23 P. D. Miller, Jr. “Cosmology and World Order: The Divine Council as Cosmic-Political System,” *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 9, no. 2 (1987): 57–61, 64–65; C. J. H. Wright, *Deuteronomy* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers; Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1996), 307; J. E. Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology, Volume Two: Israel’s Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP; Milton Keynes: Paternoster Press, 2006), 44–45.
- 24 J. J. Collins, *Daniel* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 374–75; A. T. Wright, “Angels,” in Collins and Harlow, *Dictionary*, 330.
- 25 R. S. Hess, “Equality with and without Innocence: Genesis 1–3,” in Pierce and Groothuis, *Biblical Equality*, 81–82.
- 26 J. H. Walton, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve: Genesis 2–3 and the Human Origins Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015), 150. See also J. G. McConville, *God and Earthly Power: An Old Testament Political Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2008), 48–49; VanDrunen, “Wisdom,” 156–57.
- 27 See R. Knierim, “World Order,” *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 3, no. 1 (1981): 75–78, 86–88; McConville, *Earthly Power*, 32–34; Morales, *Who Shall Ascend*, 46–47.
- 28 G. W. E. Nickelsburg, “The Bible Rewritten and Expanded,” in Stone, *Jewish Writings*, 141–42.
- 29 Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 179–81.
- 30 Dimant, “Qumran,” 491–93, 515–16.
- 31 See also *Abr.* 5–6; Sterling et al, “Philo,” 268–69.
- 32 S. Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1992), 70.

- 33 P. Bilde, *Flavius Josephus between Jerusalem and Rome: His Life, His Works, and Their Importance* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988), 120–21; Mason, *Josephus*, 66–67, 79–80.
- 34 On Genesis 3, see especially Walton, *Adam*, 132–44.
- 35 Knierim, “World Order,” 79–80, 94–95; Miller, “Cosmology,” 65–70.
- 36 Oegema, “Creation,” 498.
- 37 H. Maccoby, ed., *Early Rabbinic Writings*, Cambridge Commentaries on Writings of the Jewish & Christian World 200 BC to AD 200 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 57–59, 124–26.
- 38 R. E. Stokes, “Evil,” in Collins and Harlow, *Dictionary*, 614.
- 39 L. T. Stuckenbruck, *The Myth of Rebellious Angels: Studies in Second Temple Judaism and New Testament Texts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2017), 94; see also Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 153–54; C. T. Pierce, “Satan and Related Figures,” in Collins and Harlow, *Dictionary*, 1198–99. Opposed spirits are also found in the Jewish tradition underlying *Mart. Isa.* (1:8–9; 2:1–5; 3:11; 5:1, 15–16).
- 40 In the Hebrew Bible the *בְּנֵי הַמַּלְאָכִים* are “a class of divine beings who are subordinate to the God of Israel,” e.g. Dt 32:8; Jb 1:6; in early Judaism the term is used for angels, e.g. Dn 3:25 (“sons of heaven”); *1 Enoch* 6:2; 1QS 4:22 (R. E. Stokes, “Sons of God,” in Collins and Harlow, *Dictionary*, 1251–52; quote on 1251).
- 41 The fullest accounts are in the Enochic Book of Watchers (*1 Enoch* 6–16), and 4Q201–2, 204–6. Shorter narratives with some variations are found in the Animal Apocalypse (*1 Enoch* 86–89); *Jub.* 5:1–11; *2 Enoch* 7, 18; *2 Bar.* 56:9–16; and CD 2:17–19.
- 42 The relationship between the Watchers and human beings is itself seen as contrary to the divine and normative order (*1 Enoch* 15:4, 9–10; Stuckenbruck, *Myth*, 14–15).
- 43 Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 49–53, 64; D. A. Machiela, “Flood,” in Collins and Harlow, *Dictionary*, 645–46; A. Y. Reed, “Fallen Angels,” in Collins and Harlow, *Dictionary*, 628–29; Stuckenbruck, *Myth*, 13–35. Some later versions of this story place more emphasis on human responsibility (*Jub.* 5:1–11; *2 Bar.* 56:9–13; *T. Reub.* 5:6; Stuckenbruck, *Myth*, 25–29).
- 44 J. E. Goldingay, *Daniel* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996), 292–93; Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 69–70.
- 45 Though see J. Leonhardt-Balzer, “Dualism,” in Collins and Harlow, *Dictionary*, 554, on Dn 8–12.
- 46 They may also be partially related to different views within early Judaism regarding the value of pagan worship (cf. e.g. *Ws* 13–15; *Sib. Or.* 3:545–72 with *Ep. Arist.* 15–20; Artapanus frag. 3, 27.1–6; Philo, *Spec. Leg.* 1.53; Josephus, *Ant.* 4.207); see J. M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE–117 CE)* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 130–32, 141–43, 186–88; G. Gilbert, “Gentiles, Jewish Attitudes toward,” in Collins and Harlow, *Dictionary*,

- 671; R. Goldenberg, "Pagan Religions," in Collins and Harlow, *Dictionary*, 1015. But the gods that superintend the nations are not necessarily the same as those worshipped by the nations.
- 47 Knierim, "World Order," 89–92; J. Blenkinsopp, *Wisdom and Law in the Old Testament: The Ordering of Life in Israel and Early Judaism*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 41–73. The common ascription of a simplistic version of this view to the book of Proverbs has however been challenged by P. T. H. Hatton, "A Cautionary Tale: The Acts-Consequence 'Construct.'" *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 35, no. 3 (2011): 380–83.
- 48 Sterling et al, "Philo," 276.
- 49 Attridge, "Josephus," 218–19.
- 50 Attridge, "Josephus," 220; Mason, *Josephus*, 62–63, 66–67. See e.g. *J.W.* 4.314–25; 5.412; 7.320–88; *Ant.* 18.127–28; 20.166; see also Attridge, "Josephus," 224.
- 51 See in particular the close connection between God's creative and redemptive acts in Deutero-Isaiah (e.g. 51:9–10) and certain psalms (e.g. 77:11–20) (Knierim, "World Order," 98).
- 52 Knierim, "World Order," 98–101; Mabie, "Chaos," 48–50; McConville, *Earthly Power*, 168–73.
- 53 Knierim, "World Order," 101–6; Goldingay, *Theology*, 57–58.
- 54 Sanders, *Judaism*, 415–16; N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (London: SPCK, 1992), 207, 271.
- 55 Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 55–59.
- 56 Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 110–11; Wright, "Angels," 330; Stuckenbruck, *Myth*, 16, 21–24.
- 57 In this respect they reflect the relative silence of the Hebrew Bible and Septuagint. On this issue see O. O'Donovan, *The Desire of the Nations: Recovering the Roots of Political Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 37–41; McConville, *Earthly Power*, 170–71.
- 58 L. E. Galloway, *Freedom in the Gospel: Paul's Exemplum in 1 Cor 9 in Conversation with the Discourses of Epictetus and Philo* (Leuven: Peeters, 2004), 145.
- 59 Borgen, "Philo," 269–73; Sterling et al., "Philo," 272, 275.
- 60 Although the relationship of wives to husbands is not listed here, many other passages in Philo indicate that it could have been (see below).
- 61 See Balch, *Wives*, 54.
- 62 B. Vawter, "A Tale of Two Cities: The Old Testament and the Issue of Personal Freedom," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 15, no. 2 (1978): 266; K. M. Heim, "Kings and Kingship," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books*, ed. B. T. Arnold and H. G. M. Williamson (Downers Grove, IL and Leicester: IVP, 2005), 616–19; P. T. H. Hatton, *Contradiction in the Book of Proverbs: The Deep Waters of Counsel* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2008), 123–26, who argues

- that diverse perspectives may even be found within the Hebrew and Greek texts of the same verses (Prv 6:6–8).
- 63 H. W. Attridge, “Historiography,” in Stone, *Jewish Writings*, 172, 174. Opposition to Hasmonean rule also found practical expression (*Ant.* 13.376; 14.41; A. J. Tomasino, *Judaism before Jesus: The Events and Ideas that Shaped the New Testament World* [Downers Grove, IL and Leicester: IVP, 2003], 201, 207; C. Seeman and A. K. Marshak, “Jewish History from Alexander to Hadrian,” in Collins and Harlow, *Overview*, 47–48). The problem of legitimacy was even greater for the Herodians (K. E. Pomykala, “Kingship,” in Collins and Harlow, *Dictionary*, 862–63).
- 64 See Pomykala, “Kingship,” 863–64, for discussion of the various models.
- 65 Borgen, “Philo,” 267–68; P. R. Trebilco and C. A. Evans, “Diaspora Judaism,” in Evans and Porter, *Dictionary*, 292.
- 66 C. Lévy, “Philo’s Ethics,” in Kamesar, *Companion*, 170–71. See also *Exag.* 68–89, 254–69. The legitimacy of non-Davidic kings of Israel in the pre-messianic age is also endorsed in rabbinic literature (*M. Sotah* 7.8) (Maccoby, *Rabbinic Writings*, 109–10).
- 67 S. Mason, J. S. McLaren, and J. M. G. Barclay, “Josephus,” in Collins and Harlow, *Overview*, 306–7; see also Pomykala, “Kingship,” 864.
- 68 See also Sir 50:1–21; *M. Hor.* 3.8 (Maccoby, *Rabbinic Writings*, 109–10).
- 69 Vawter, “Tale,” 265.
- 70 M. Stone, “Apocalyptic Literature,” in Stone, *Jewish Writings*, 413–14; Sanders, *Judaism*, 295–98, 453–55; C. Rowland, *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity* (Eugene: OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2002), 176–77. The picture is further complicated by the references to a heavenly man or pre-existent divine savior (e.g. Dn 7; *1 Enoch* 48–50) sometimes called the “son of man” (Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 188).
- 71 See further G. H. Haas, “Slave, Slavery,” in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, ed. T. D. Alexander and D. W. Baker (Downers Grove, IL and Leicester: IVP, 2003), 779.
- 72 F. F. Bruce, “Render to Caesar,” in *Jesus and the Politics of His Day*, ed. E. Bammel and C. F. D. Moule (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 255–56; P. H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2006), 168–69.
- 73 Although the following overview of attitudes and responses owes much to the discussions of Sanders (*Judaism*, 280–89) and Wright (*New Testament*, 170–213), these are focused largely on the experience of Palestinian Jews; inclusion of the Diaspora requires a somewhat different taxonomy.
- 74 Dimant, “Qumran,” 498–99; Sanders, *Judaism*, 282–83; Wright, *New Testament*, 189–90.
- 75 Barclay, *Jews*, 195–96, 219, 227.

- 76 See Barclay, *Jews*, 96–97. He places Ws, 3 and 4 Mc, *Jos. and As.* and the Egyptian *Sib. Or.* in this category (181–228, 369–80).
- 77 Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 98; see also 92–98.
- 78 Attridge, “Josephus,” 195–203. Nonetheless, John Barclay (J. M. G. Barclay, “The Empire Writes Back: Josephan Rhetoric in Flavian Rome,” in *Pauline Churches and Diaspora Jews* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011], 307, 313–16; see also J. M. G. Barclay, “Who’s the Toughest of Them All: Jews, Spartans and Roman Torturers in Josephus’ *Against Apion*,” in *Pauline Churches and Diaspora Jews* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011], 327–28; J. M. G. Barclay, “Snarling Sweetly: A Study of Josephus on Idolatry,” *Pauline Churches and Diaspora Jews* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011], 335–38) has argued that there may be elements of “cultural defiance” in Josephus, and that aspects of his presentation of Judaism run contrary to his “public deference” towards Rome (quotes on 307). He makes a persuasive case (grounded in *Ag. Ap.* 2.125–34), which resembles more explicitly postcolonial readings of other ancient texts, but it appears to prove no more than Josephus’s belief in the transience and imperfection of Rome. This conviction leaves room in his thought for Jewish eschatological hope without obviously subverting his generally positive view of Roman rule or the imperative of subordination to it.
- 79 G. W. E. Nickelsburg, “Stories of Biblical and Early Post-Biblical Times,” in Stone, *Jewish Writings*, 77–80; E. S. Gruen, “Judaism in the Diaspora,” in Collins and Harlow, *Overview*, 103–6. Indeed, the Roman imperial government was often the guarantor of Jewish privileges against local authorities (Barclay, *Jews*, 277–78; Trebilco and Evans, “Diaspora Judaism,” 288; M. Pucci Ben Zeev, “Jews among Greeks and Romans,” in Collins and Harlow, *Overview*, 373, 379–81).
- 80 See Barclay, *Jews*, 96–97, 112–17, 320–35. Among Diaspora texts he places in this category the fragments of Artapanus and Aristobulus, the *Exag.*, the *Ep. Arist.*, *Ps-Phoc.* and Philo (127–80, 336–46).
- 81 See M. Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem: The Clash of Ancient Civilizations* (London: Penguin Books, 2008), 397–421 for an extended critique of the view that Judea was continually on the verge of rebellion before 66 CE. For a range of other views see M. Hengel, *The Zealots: Investigations into the Jewish Freedom Movement in the Period from Herod I until 70 A.D.*, trans. D. Smith (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989), 90–103; Sanders, *Judaism*, 280–84; Wright, *New Testament*, 170–81.
- 82 Barclay, *Jews*, 78–81; Trebilco and Evans, “Diaspora Judaism,” 283–84; Gruen, “Diaspora,” 118.
- 83 See Barclay, *Jews*, 227–28.
- 84 Sanders, *Judaism*, 284–85, 288–89; J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003), 267–70; Portier-Young, *Apocalypse*, 387.
- 85 Sanders, *Judaism*, 38–39, 407–11; Goodman, *Rome*, 401–3.

- 86 Trebilco and Evans, "Diaspora Judaism," 282–85. The first two leaders of the early rabbinic academy at Yavneh were from the quietist school of Hillel, which also gained the ascendancy in the codifying of Jewish law. The more militant tradition, represented by the rival school of Shammai, persisted until the second revolt (and in a small way afterwards), but the failure of that uprising permanently marginalized it (G. Alon, *Jews, Judaism and the Classical World: Studies in Jewish History in the Times of the Second Temple and Talmud* [Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1977], 46–47; S. J. D. Cohen, "Judaism to the Mishnah: 135–220 C.E.," in *Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism: A History of Their Origins and Early Development*, ed. H. Shanks [London: SPCK, 1993], 198, 200–1; L. I. A. Levine, "Judaism from the Destruction of Jerusalem to the End of the Second Jewish Revolt: 70–135 C.E.," in Shanks, *Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism*, 132–40, 143–44, 147).
- 87 Though Barclay (*Jews*, 103–12, 321–26) provides examples of Diaspora Jews who abandoned Jewish distinctives altogether.
- 88 Borgen, "Philo," 251; Pomykala, "Kingship," 864–65.
- 89 In this context it is notable that a regular sacrifice was offered in the temple for the well-being of the emperor and the Roman people (Josephus, *J.W.* 2.197).
- 90 This response is encouraged by texts such as Dn 2:14–16, 48–49; Bar 2:20–25; *Ep. Arist.* 176–78, 185.
- 91 Sanders, *Judaism*, 318, 322–23, 328–31, 340; Barclay, *Jews*, 57, 75, 279–81; Trebilco and Evans, "Diaspora Judaism," 283–85.
- 92 Even their refusal to participate in the imperial cult was generally endorsed by the Roman authorities (deSilva, "Ruler Cult," 1028; J. S. McLaren, "Imperial Cult, Jews and the," in Collins and Harlow, *Dictionary*, 762–63).
- 93 Mason, McLaren, and Barclay, "Josephus," 298–99.
- 94 Bilde, *Josephus*, 180.
- 95 Bilde, *Josephus*, 76–77, 186–87; Mason, *Josephus*, 47, 62; Mason, McLaren, and Barclay, "Josephus," 297.
- 96 Mason, *Josephus*, 66.
- 97 Bilde, *Josephus*, 74–75; Mason, *Josephus*, 60–61; A. I. Baumgarten, "Josephus and the Jewish Sects," in *A Companion to Josephus*, ed. H. H. Chapman and Z. Rodgers (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), 282–83. Barclay ("Toughest," 327–28; "Snarling," 335–38) rightly points out that even for Josephus subordination to Rome is limited by the higher claims of Judaism (citing especially *Ag. Ap.* 2.73–78, 225–35). But as Barclay himself demonstrates ("Toughest," 328; "Snarling," 343), even in these passages Josephus also identifies Judaism with the highest Roman values.
- 98 S. Seiler, "Weisungen zur Freiheit: Normen und Werte aus alttestamentlicher Seit," *Zeitschrift für Evangelische Ethik* 57, no. 3 (2013): 203.
- 99 Haas, "Slave," 779–81; see also J. D. Levenson, *The Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament and Historical Criticism: Jews and Christians in Biblical Studies* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993), 137–38.

- 100 Haas, "Slave," 780–82; Seiler, "Freiheit," 203.
- 101 See also *Ant.* 18.18–22 and *Omn. Prob. Lib.* 79; Galloway, *Freedom*, 143; D. W. Chapman, "Family," in Collins and Harlow, *Dictionary*, 632; Sterling et al., "Philo," 276.
- 102 Galloway, *Freedom*, 143–44; Lévy, "Ethics," 168–69.
- 103 Galloway, *Freedom*, 143.
- 104 A. F. Botta, "Slaves," in Collins and Harlow, *Dictionary*, 1232–33.
- 105 Maccoby, *Rabbinic Writings*, 110, 116–17.
- 106 M. Gilbert, "Wisdom Literature," in Stone, *Jewish Writings*, 297–98; Haas, "Slave," 778–79; Botta, "Slaves," 1232–33. Haas points out that the Hebrew term עֶבֶד carries the sense of subjection, and that the general character of slavery in the Hebrew Bible included submission to a master.
- 107 See e.g. R. C. Ortlund, Jr., "Man and Woman," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. D. Alexander and B. S. Rosner (Leicester and Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2000), 651; T. R. Schreiner, "Women in Ministry: Another Complementarian Perspective," in *Two Views on Women in Ministry*, ed. J. R. Beck (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 288–98.
- 108 See e.g. M. J. Evans, "Women," in Alexander and Baker, *Dictionary*, 900; Hess, "Equality," 92–95.
- 109 See e.g. Walton, *Adam*, 80–81, 109–12.
- 110 V. H. Matthews, "Family Relationships," in Alexander and Baker, *Dictionary*, 293–97; R. W. Pierce, "From Old Testament Law to New Testament Gospel," in Pierce and Groothuis, *Biblical Equality*, 96–105; M. J. Evans, "Women," in Arnold and Williamson, *Dictionary*, 991; S. C. Barton, "Marriage, Family, the Bible and the Gospel," *Theology* 119, no. 3 (2016): 168.
- 111 R. G. Branch, "Women," in Longman and Enns, *Dictionary*, 917–18, 920–22; G. C. Heider, "Marriage and Sex," in Longman and Enns, *Dictionary*, 452–53.
- 112 On divorce, see Chapman, "Family," 632; D. Instone-Brewer, "Marriage and Divorce," in Collins and Harlow, *Dictionary*, 916–17.
- 113 D. I. Sly, "1 Peter 3:6b in the light of Philo and Josephus," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 110, no. 1 (1991): 127–29; T. Ilan, "Josephus on Women," in Chapman and Rodgers, *Companion*, 225–32.
- 114 T. Ilan, "Women," in Collins and Harlow, *Dictionary*, 1348–49.
- 115 Chapman, "Family," 632.
- 116 J. J. Collins, "Testaments," in Stone, *Jewish Writings*, 333–34; Gilbert, "Wisdom Literature," 297–98.
- 117 Dimant, "Qumran," 528; Vermes, *Scrolls*, 164; Ilan, "Women," 1347–48.
- 118 So L. J. Eron, "'That Women Have Mastery over King and Beggar' (TJud 15:5)—The Relationship of the Fear of Sexuality to the Status of Women in Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha: 1 Esdras (3 Ezra) 3–4, Ben Sira and *The Testament of Judah*," *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 9 (1991): 54–55, though I. Balla, "The

- Relationship between Husband and Wife according to Sirach 25–26, 36,” in *Family and Kinship in the Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature*, ed. A. Passaro (Berlin and Boston, MA: De Gruyter, 2014), 111 questions whether this verse refers to Eve.
- 119 Ilan, “Women,” 1348; Ilan, “Josephus,” 232.
- 120 Ilan, “Josephus,” 225–32; see also Sly, “1 Peter 3:6b,” 127–29.
- 121 Sterling et al, “Philo,” 152.
- 122 “Ben Sira seems to believe that if a man’s wife or son were to rule over him, it would be a disgraceful reversal of the natural domestic order” (Eron, “‘Women,’” 52).
- 123 Gilbert, “Wisdom Literature,” 297–98; Eron, “‘Women,’” 47, 49; Ilan, “Women,” 1348.
- 124 Mason, *Josephus*, 80; Ilan, “Josephus,” 232.
- 125 Galloway, *Freedom*, 119; Lévy, “Ethics,” 153.
- 126 Galloway, *Freedom*, 126–29.
- 127 Lévy, “Ethics,” 153.
- 128 Evans, “Women” (2003), 898–903; J. M. Sprinkle, “Sexuality, Sexual Ethics,” in Alexander and Baker, *Dictionary*, 742–43; Pierce, “Old Testament Law,” 99–104.
- 129 Evans, “Women” (2003), 900–2; Matthews, “Family Relationships,” 294; Branch, “Women,” 922–24.
- 130 L. L. Belleville, “Women Leaders in the Bible,” in Pierce and Groothuis, *Biblical Equality*, 111–15; Evans, “Women” (2005), 990–94, 996–97.
- 131 Branch, “Women,” 917–22; Heider, “Marriage,” 452–53, 456.
- 132 Ilan, “Women,” 1346–47; also Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 106–8. Trebilco and Evans point out that some women exercised leadership in Diaspora Jewish communities (“Diaspora Judaism,” 287).
- 133 Collins, “Testaments,” 352–53.
- 134 On stronger assertions of patriarchy in later rabbinic literature, see R. A. Stewart, *Rabbinic Theology: An Introductory Study* (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1961), 71–72.
- 135 See also Matthews, “Family Relationships,” 293–94.
- 136 Gilbert, “Wisdom Literature,” 297–98; Chapman, “Family,” 632.
- 137 Lévy, “Ethics,” 168–69.
- 138 In *M. Abot*. 4.20, however, there is disagreement over whether the wisdom of the old is always superior to that of the young (Maccoby, *Rabbinic Writings*, 103–4, 127–29).
- 139 R. A. Campbell, *The Elders: Seniority within Earliest Christianity* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 65.
- 140 Campbell, *Elders*, 54, 65; Trebilco and Evans, “Diaspora Judaism,” 287.
- 141 Dimant, “Qumran,” 503; Sanders, *Judaism*, 365–66.
- 142 Vawter, “Tale,” 268.
- 143 S. Bader-Saye, “The Freedom of Faithfulness,” *Pro Ecclesia* 8, no. 4 (1999): 437.

- 144 W. A. VanGemeren, ed., *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* [NIDOTTE], 5 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 2.240; NIDNTTE, 2.174.
- 145 NIDOTTE, 2.239; NIDNTTE, 2.174; E. A. Seibert, "Salvation and Deliverance," in Arnold and Williamson, *Dictionary*, 852.
- 146 Levenson, *Hebrew Bible*, 137–38; H. F. van Rooy, "Vryheid en Verbond: 'n Ou-Testamentiese Perspektief," *In die Skriflig* 34, no. 1 (2000): 4, 8–10.
- 147 van Rooy, "Vryheid," 8–10; Seibert, "Salvation," 851; McConville, *Earthly Power*, 26–28, 171–73.
- 148 S. McKnight, "Salvation and Deliverance Imagery," in Longman and Enns, *Dictionary*, 710–11.
- 149 G. J. Botterweck, H. Ringgren, and H.-J. Fabry, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* [TDOT], 15 vols., trans. D. E. Green and D. W. Scott (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974–2006), V.117–18; Levenson, *Hebrew Bible*, 146–48; McConville, *Earthly Power*, 171.
- 150 Levenson, *Hebrew Bible*, 145–46; Seibert, "Salvation," 853.
- 151 Levenson, *Hebrew Bible*, 142–45; Bader-Saye, "Freedom," 445–47; van Rooy, "Vryheid," 8–10; Seiler, "Freiheit," 196–98.
- 152 NIDOTTE, 2.239; van Rooy, "Vryheid," 10–12; Seiler, "Freiheit," 198–202, 206–7.
- 153 Bader-Saye, "Freedom," 446; Seibert, "Salvation," 853; McConville, *Earthly Power*, 119.
- 154 NIDOTTE, 2.239; Haas, "Slave," 780
- 155 "Hier erscheint also der Exodus in einem ganz neuen Licht. Entscheidend ist die durch ihn gestiftete 'be-sondere' Gottesbeziehung, die völlig unabhängig vom Land gestaltet werden kann." (Seiler, "Freiheit," 206).
- 156 On the diversity of Jewish views of freedom in the Roman period, see Sanders, *Judaism*, 41, 279–80; Dunn, *Jesus*, 393–98.
- 157 See Sanders, *Judaism*, 289–95, 303; Wright, *New Testament*, 156–57, 212, 285–96, 333; D. C. Allison, Jr., "Kingdom of God," in Collins and Harlow, *Dictionary*, 861.
- 158 This includes fictional tales of biblical times (e.g. Jdt 8:20–23; 9:7–14), rewritten scriptural material (e.g. Bar 4:5–5:9; *Jub.* 23:16–32), historiographical works (e.g. 1 Mc 2, 14), oracles (e.g. *Sib. Or.* 3:194–210, 573–808; 5:162–78, 238–85), apocalyptic literature (e.g. *1 Enoch*, especially the Animal Apocalypse [90:6–42] and the Apocalypse of Weeks [91:12–17]; 4 Ezr 6:18–19, 57–59; *Apoc. Abr.* 27–29), psalms (e.g. *Pss. Sol.* 17:21–46) and Qumran scrolls (e.g. 1QM 11:1–12:15; 17:15–18:7; 4Q246 2). (This classification of literature types is based on Stone, *Jewish Writings*, ix-xvi.)
- 159 Sanders, *Judaism*, 322–23, 368, 415–16; Wright, *New Testament*, 170–71, 200–1, 206–7.
- 160 Bilde, *Josephus*, 187–88.

- 161 Maccoby, *Rabbinic Writings*, 46–47, 188–89, 200–2; Cohen, “Judaism,” 198; L. H. Schiffman, “Early Judaism and Rabbinic Judaism,” in Collins and Harlow, *Overview*, 430–31.
- 162 H. Eshel, “Bar Kokhba Revolt,” in Collins and Harlow, *Dictionary*, 413.
- 163 For discussion of origins, see the relevant chapters of Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*; Stone, *Jewish Writings*; Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*.
- 164 Books such as Ws and 4 Mc do not exhibit much interest in political freedom or national restoration (they are much more concerned with the afterlife; though see Ws 3:8 and Wright’s alternative, political reading of this book [*Paul*, 1274–75]); neither does Philo (J. J. Collins, “Eschatology,” in Collins and Harlow, *Dictionary*, 596).
- 165 Goodman, *Rome*, 194.
- 166 Sanders, *Judaism*, 41, 280–85; Wright, *New Testament*, 210–12; Seeman and Marshak, “History,” 47–48.
- 167 Hengel, *Zealots*, 107–10, 121; Goodman, *Rome*, 203–4.
- 168 Cohen, “Judaism,” 198; Schiffman, “Rabbinic Judaism,” 431.
- 169 J. P. Davies, *Paul among the Apocalypses? An Evaluation of the “Apocalyptic Paul” in the Context of Jewish and Christian Apocalyptic Literature* (London and New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 83–87, 92–96.
- 170 Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 167–70; Collins, “Eschatology,” 597.
- 171 Borgen, “Philo,” 245; Collins, “Eschatology,” 596.
- 172 See e.g. Trebilco and Evans (“Diaspora Judaism,” 293–94) and Gruen (“Diaspora,” 97–98) for different views.
- 173 N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (London: SPCK, 1996), 206; M. McNamara, *Targum and Testament Revisited: Aramaic Paraphrases of the Hebrew Bible*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2010), 202; J. M. Scott, “Restoration,” in Collins and Harlow, *Dictionary*, 1141.
- 174 Borgen, “Philo,” 236.
- 175 Maccoby, *Rabbinic Writings*, 206–11.
- 176 Hopes for extra longevity and freedom from disease are also found (e.g. *Jub.* 23:27–30; 1QS 4:6–7); Dimant, “Qumran,” 541–42; Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 171; Dunn, *Jesus*, 393–94.
- 177 Nickelsburg, “Stories,” 62–63; Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 59–62, 69–70, 112–13, 171–72, 181–83, 238–41, 254–55.
- 178 So also perhaps Dn 12:2–3; Collins, “Eschatology,” 596.
- 179 Maccoby, *Rabbinic Writings*, 206–8; Sanders, *Judaism*, 274, 301–2; McNamara, *Targum*, 203–4.
- 180 Sanders, *Judaism*, 298–99; Collins, “Eschatology,” 596.
- 181 Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 187; Collins, “Eschatology,” 596–97; Gruen, “Diaspora,” 97–98.
- 182 Sanders, *Judaism*, 303; Wright, *New Testament*, 301; Dunn, *Jesus*, 394.

- 183 Philo claims that this kind of life is attained by wisdom, which issues in the dedicated pursuit of self-control and virtue (*Omn. Prob. Lib.* 41–50; *Prelim. Stud.* 2, 63–70).
- 184 Borgen, “Philo,” 248–49; Galloway, *Freedom*, 119–26, 129–34, 136–47; G. A. Keddie, “Paul’s Freedom and Moses’ Veil: Moral Freedom and the Mosaic Law in 2 Corinthians 3:1–4:6 in Light of Philo,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 37, no. 3 (2015): 273.
- 185 See especially his claim that good deeds can take the place of sacrifices (*M. Abot.* 1.2).
- 186 Maccoby, *Rabbinic Writings*, 37, 205–6.
- 187 J. Neusner, *Invitation to the Talmud: A Teaching Book*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1984), 34–36, 53–54.
- 188 Neusner, *Invitation*, 36.
- 189 Hengel, *Zealots*, 121.
- 190 The principle could be extended to the other hierarchical relationships, so that (e.g.) wives should not obey their husbands if required to transgress the Torah, but in early Judaism it appears to have been articulated mainly in political contexts.
- 191 Wright, *New Testament*, 190, italics added.

Order, Subordination and Freedom in Early Christian Thought

This chapter considers early Christian understandings of the concepts of order, subordination and freedom, to provide the third element of the intellectual context within which the teaching of 1 Peter must be understood. Because the author writes as a Christian, his work must make sense within the broader context of first and early second-century Christian thought, and is appropriately interpreted as an echo or development of, or a reaction to, this tradition.

The literature reviewed here comprises the books of the NT and some of the writings of the Apostolic Fathers. Most of these works should probably be dated no later than around mid-second century CE,¹ and the *terminus ad quem* of this chapter is therefore approximately the same as that of Chapters 2 and 3. Particular attention is given to certain passages that have apparently strong affinities with 1 Peter, specifically Romans 13:1–7 and the so-called *Haustafeln* of the deutero-Pauline letters.

The smaller body of material to be discussed allows a somewhat more detailed overview than was possible in Chapters 2 and 3. Where the justification of certain exegetical decisions is nonetheless limited by space, reference is made in the notes to supporting bibliography. As in the previous chapters, the concepts are analyzed in turn to draw out the elements most relevant to the interpretation of 1 Peter; then in the closing section the conclusions are summarized and integrated.

Order

Order is not a major explicit theme in the earliest Christian literature, and it is usually secondary or incidental to other ideas,² or implicit in teaching on subordination. There are no abstract discussions or (in the NT) extended discourses relating to the divine ordering of the cosmos. Nonetheless, order must be seen as an important implicit theme in early Christian thought: it is a basic assumption of various NT teachings, and the primary concepts of christology and salvation both confirm and condition the notion of a divine and normative order.

This section will consider in turn the subjects of created order, its disruption by human sin and the activity of cosmic powers, the restoration of order through the work of Christ, and the ordering of the church as an embodiment of the restored cosmos. The subordination of the powers to Christ is so integral to NT teaching on the re-ordering of creation that it is better addressed here than in the next section.

Created Order

NT views of creation are most clearly and fully articulated with reference to christology. Christ's sovereignty is sometimes located in the past as well as the present and the future, and extended over the old as well as the new creation.³ So NT teaching on cosmic order is principally found in texts that affirm the lordship of Christ over creation, most notably Colossians 1:15–18, John 1:1–5, Hebrews 1:1–3a and 1 Corinthians 8:6b.

In these passages,⁴ Christ is identified with the divine word (*λόγος*) and wisdom (*σοφία*) by which God orders the universe. John explicitly names him as the *λόγος* (1:1,14), and several of the terms applied to him in Colossians are associated with wisdom (*εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ, πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως, κεφαλὴ, ἀρχή, πρωτεύων*; 1:15,18).⁵ Both Hebrews and Paul also reapply teaching about wisdom to Christ, whether as the reflection and representation of God (Heb 1:3) or as God's agent (1 Cor 8:6). And as Richard Bauckham writes, "It is God's wisdom that orders creation for its well-being, God's wisdom that can be perceived in the good order of the natural creation, God's wisdom that ordains good ways of living in the world."⁶ These affirmations thus attest to a rational and moral divine order defined by Christ; by implication it has a normative status and humans are expected to reflect and advance it.

These impressions are confirmed by the same authors' ascription to Christ of the role of agent or mediator of creation. This is stated simply in 1 Corinthians

(8:6), Hebrews (1:2) and John (1:3), and more elaborately in Colossians, where Christ is presented as both the sphere *in* whom and the instrument *by* whom all things were made (1:16). For this reason, and because he exists before all things (1:17), he is also supreme and sovereign over the whole creation (1:16). Thus the divine order mediated through Christ extends throughout the universe and includes the cosmic powers;⁷ again, the latter are implicitly required to promote it.

It follows that Christ's ordering activity is also an ongoing and present event. Hebrews speaks of Christ's sustaining all things (1:3), while Colossians declares that in him everything holds together (1:17). John conveys the related idea that Christ has divine energy in himself, and that by it he communicates the knowledge of God to the world (1:4). All these statements point to the continuing coherence and stability of the cosmos and thus to the divine order guaranteed by Christ.⁸

First Clement is unique among early Christian sources in including an extended account of the created order (19–20). Unlike the canonical texts referenced above, this is theo- rather than christocentric, and it may be indebted more to Stoicism than to biblical theology.⁹ But it confirms the NT picture of a structured cosmos, which functions in submission to God's will and in concord without friction (20.11).

Disrupted Order

The NT teaches in various places that the cosmic order has been disrupted, either by human sin or by the activity of certain "powers." In Romans 1:18–25, Paul explains how humans' godlessness and unrighteousness has affected their place in the divine order: they ignored the revelation of God in creation and effectively declared their independence from him (1:19–21);¹⁰ they "have swapped God's truth for a lie and given allegiance to that which is not God"¹¹ (1:25). Consequently the ordering of their own lives has been disrupted (1:21–24) through God's eschatological wrath (1:18).

Then in Romans 8:18–25, Paul asserts that the whole created order has also been affected by human sin. Because creation is subordinated to humans by God, when humans slide into futility, so too does creation (8:20). Both alike are in bondage to chaos, corruption and dissolution, unable to fulfil their place or destiny within the God-given order. The subjection of creation to futility by God, and its consequent groaning (8:22), indicate that a major disruption of cosmic order has occurred, even if they anticipate something better (8:21).¹²

However, this wickedness and consequent breakdown of order is also ascribed to entities denoted by a wide variety of Greek terms (including *ἄγγελοι*, *ἐξουσίαι* and *δυνάμεις*) and commonly known in scholarly literature as “the powers.” Their nature, character and function has been extensively debated, and space precludes a full discussion of these issues.¹³ Here the key questions are whether the powers are human beings in authority and the structures they represent (such as the state and the household), and/or cosmic and spiritual forces, and what relationship (if any) exists between these two categories: are earthly authorities associated with heavenly ones as agents of disorder?

The book of Revelation appears to posit a direct relationship between these two groups. John attributes cosmic disorder to a spiritual power, “the primeval source of evil in the world, the devil,”¹⁴ represented by the great dragon (12:3–18). But its authority is exercised by the Roman empire (13:2), conceived as “a system of violent oppression . . . both of political tyranny and of economic exploitation,”¹⁵ and appearing in the former aspect as the beast (13:1–8) and in the latter as the whore (17:3–6). Thus here earthly, structural forces of disruption are presented as the instruments or embodiments of heavenly, spiritual ones.¹⁶

Some scholars see a similar connection in the undisputed Pauline letters.¹⁷ Paul refers in various places to non-human forces of evil, which include *ὁ θεός τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου* (2 Cor 4:4), *δαιμόνια* (1 Cor 10:20–21), *στοιχεῖα* (Gal 4:9), and the personified powers of *ἁμαρτία* and *θάνατος* (Rom 5:14,21).¹⁸ But the more usual language for the powers also occurs in Romans 8:38 (*ἄγγελοι, ἀρχαί, δυνάμεις*) and 13:1f. (*ἐξουσίαι ὑπερεχούσαι*), and in 1 Corinthians 2:6,8 (*αἱ ἀρχαί τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου*) and 15:24 (*ἀρχή, ἐξουσία, δύναμις*), and in some of these verses it is often thought to refer to, or at least include, human rulers and/or structures.¹⁹

All but one of the latter references are disputed, however; other scholars read them as denoting only heavenly and spiritual powers.²⁰ Paul seems also to evaluate the various entities differently: negatively where human authorities are clearly not in view (e.g. 1 Cor 10:20–21; 2 Cor 4:4), but very positively in the one place where the reference is unambiguously to civil government (Rom 13:1f),²¹ which he regards as constituted by God as an instrument of order and expects usually to fulfil its role (see below, “Subordination”). Given the uncertain evidence of the other passages, perhaps the most that can be said with confidence is that he sees earthly rulers, like all human beings, as liable to evil and disruptive spiritual influence, and to that extent as sharing in the general human responsibility for disorder. And Romans 13 alone makes it hard to attribute to him an understanding of human rulers, *as such*, as partners or agents of disorderly heavenly powers.

It is clearer and more widely agreed that the powers in Colossians and Ephesians are exclusively heavenly. Both the extent of the cosmic disruption presupposed by Colossians 1:19–20, and the defeat of the *ἀρχαὶ* and *ἐξουσίαι* described in 2:15, suggest that they are spiritual rather than human,²² while the hostile powers in Ephesians 6:12 are explicitly distinguished from *αἷμα καὶ σάρκα* and located *ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις*; they appear also to be under the control of *ὁ ἀρχῶν τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ ἀέρος* (2:2) and *ὁ διάβολος* (6:11).²³ Both letters also take a very positive view of established structures of human authority, seeing them as part of the divinely given order (Col 3:18–4:1; Eph 5:22–6:9; see below). Here the spiritual powers appear to operate independently of earthly rulers.²⁴

So only Revelation provides firm evidence of a close connection in NT thought between human rulers or structures and unruly cosmic powers. In other texts the link is at most uncertain or oblique, and sometimes it is altogether absent, while those in authority are presented as instruments not of disruption but of order. But the corrupting and disordering activity of the heavenly powers is generally acknowledged by the NT writers, not just in the activities ascribed to them (as in Rv 12–13, 17 and the Gospel accounts of demons, e.g. Mk 5:1–20 and pars.), but also in the action that God takes against them.

Restored Order

Various passages describe the process by which the cosmic order is restored in Christ, including a group of texts that appear to reflect an early Christian commentary on Psalms 8 and 110: 1 Corinthians 15:23–28, Hebrews 2:5–9 and Ephesians 1:20–23.²⁵ The subduing of the powers is closely linked in the NT, and especially in these passages, to the exaltation of Christ, though it is also connected to his death (e.g. Col 2:15; Heb 2:9) and even his ministry (e.g. Lk 10:17–18; Acts 10:38).

God's lifting up of Christ to the place of highest authority in the universe is asserted in many places. Paul speaks of Christ's exaltation to the highest place of sovereign rule (Phil 2:9), and Hebrews of his heavenly session in the place of unlimited power (1:3; 2:9). Colossians affirms his reign over the new redemptive order (1:18), and Ephesians' use of Psalm 110 (1:20) denotes "his place of victory and power associated with his exaltation to heaven."²⁶ Revelation 4–5 places him alongside God as the sovereign judge and redeemer.

The result of Christ's exaltation is that the powers are subordinated, although this event is described in various ways. Revelation recounts the victory of Michael's angelic forces over the devil (12:7–9), which marks the beginning of the defeat

of opposition to God's rule (12:10–12), but the destruction of the evil heavenly powers and their earthly counterparts is deferred to the consummation (19:20–21; 20:10), and they remain active in the meantime (12:13–17). Similarly for Paul, Christ's reign lasts until the end, but only then will everything be subjected to him (1 Cor 15:25,27) and the heavenly powers destroyed (1 Cor 15:24).²⁷ Yet because of the future subordination of the powers, both Paul (Rom 8:21) and Revelation (21:1–22:5) look forward to the eventual restoring of harmony and stability to the whole creation.

In Colossians and Ephesians, however, the subordination of the heavenly powers is portrayed as a present reality. Colossians declares that God has already triumphed over them in the cross of Christ (2:15; cp. 2:10) and *εὐδόκησεν . . . δι' αὐτοῦ ἀποκαταλλάξαι τὰ πάντα εἰς αὐτόν* (1:19–20); the reference to their defeat suggests that they are disempowered and pacified rather than reconciled.²⁸ Ephesians too attests that God has set Christ over the powers in the present as well as the future (1:21–22; quoting Ps 8:7). Although they are already subordinated to Christ, here too the powers remain active in opposition to believers (6:10–13). But in both letters (Col 1:20; Eph 1:10) the hope for the restoration of the created order is already realized.

The restoration of the divine order in Christ also includes the liberation of believers from the power of sin and its allies, including hostile cosmic forces (see below, "Freedom"). In Colossians and Ephesians this event is closely connected to the subordination of the powers (Col 2:13–15; Eph 1:20–2:10).

Ordering of the Church

Early Christian writers generally agree that the church's life and relationships must be ordered in particular ways. Thus *τάξις* is commended within the congregation (1 Cor 14:40; Col 2:5), and Clement and Ignatius encourage its unity and harmony and the proper ordering of its gatherings (*1 Clem.* 14–15, 40–41; *Ign., Eph.* 4–5; *Ign., Magn.* 6–7). But some deutero-Pauline authors provide an explicit basis for this concern by presenting the church as a reflection of the cosmos as reordered in Christ.

Thus according to Colossians and Ephesians it is in the church that the restored cosmic order resulting from the defeat of the powers (the *heavenly* source of cosmic disorder) is expressed and experienced in the present. The context of the phrase *ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῦ σώματος τῆς ἐκκλησίας* (Col 1:18) suggests that the church is seen here as a microcosm or model of the universe and as the earthly focus of Christ's current rule.²⁹ Ephesians describes the church not merely as *τὸ σῶμα*

αὐτοῦ but also as *τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν πληρουμένου* (1:23); the fullness of Christ's presence and reign is found among his people, for whose sake his cosmic sovereignty is exercised (1:22).³⁰ First Timothy likewise presents the church (*οἶκος θεοῦ*, 3:15) as "the microcosm or paradigm of a world obedient to God's ordering"³¹ (*οἰκονομία θεοῦ*, 1:4). Consequently it is the place where the *earthly* source of cosmic disorder, namely sin, is also overcome.

The parenthetic sections of these letters may therefore be understood as defining the lifestyle and relations appropriate to the restored order. Colossians and Ephesians include household relationships among these (Col 3:18–4:1; Eph 5:22–6:9), and 1 Timothy's concept of the *οἰκονομία θεοῦ* (1:4) denotes "a divinely organized pattern of life . . . encompassing the whole social, political, and religious world,"³² thus emphasizing external relations more strongly. To the extent that the writers affirm traditional patterns of subordination within the state and the household as part of the church's proper ordering, they must necessarily see these as part of the re-ordered cosmos in the present, even where they also significantly condition them by the equality of believers in Christ.

Subordination

This section considers earliest Christian teaching on subordination, first to the state and then within the household and the church. The second sub-section includes discussion of the three major household relationships, involving slaves, wives and children, and (as a development of the last of these) that of junior members of the church and their elders.

Subordination in the State

Alongside 1 Peter 2:13–17, Romans 13:1–7 is the most focused NT treatment of the subordination of believers to the civil authorities. For Paul, government originates with and is authorized by God (13:1,4); thus he asserts that the political structures of the world are given by God, a claim confirmed by John's Gospel (19:11). The purpose of government is apparently to establish stability and harmony by commending those who promote it and executing God's judgment against those who threaten it (Rom 13:3–4; cp. 2 Thes 2:6–7); the call to prayer for rulers in 1 Timothy similarly implies that the goal of the state is steadiness and peace (2:2).

On this basis Paul exhorts the Roman believers to recognize their subordinate place in relation to the authorities and live it out in deference and obedience (13:1). “Titus” is likewise to remind all his hearers *ἐξουσίαις ὑπερεχούσαις ὑποτασσέσθαι* (3:1), and prayer for rulers (1 Tm 2:1–2; see also Pol., Phil. 12) may be an expression of this subordination. *First Clement* (61.1) and the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* (10.2) also call for submission and honour for rulers because their authority is given by God.³³

Paul’s exhortation is grounded in a pragmatic motive: subordination guarantees the readers against fear of and punishment by the authorities (Rom 13:2–4).³⁴ In 1 Timothy prayer for rulers secures believers “a tranquil life free from the hassles of a turbulent society,”³⁵ which is conducive to a life of godliness and respectability (2:1–2) and to mission (2:4).³⁶ But for Paul subordination is also a matter of principle and conscience, and therefore of divine obligation; it is *owed* to the government, in a variety of forms, including taxes (Rom 13:5–7). God’s servants are not to be resisted; believers must cooperate with them in their task of maintaining stability and harmony; to obey them is to obey God (cp. *1 Clem.* 60.2).³⁷ The call to subordination to the authorities in Titus 3:1–2 is also theologically grounded (3:3–7).³⁸

Paul’s portrayal of the governing authorities appears to reflect a generally positive view of Roman rule.³⁹ The affirming indicative statements of 13:3–4 seem clearly to imply that the state will normally fulfil its function,⁴⁰ and the unqualified call to subordination strongly suggests that there will typically be no conflict between believers’ loyalty to the authorities and their higher loyalty to God; the highest values of society, demanded by the state, will generally coincide with Christian norms.⁴¹ Thus Theissen is broadly right to affirm that “the political structure is accepted without reservation . . . and Paul, being a citizen of Tarsus and of Rome, is fully integrated into the political texture of the Roman Empire.”⁴²

The requirement of subordination to the civil power is also found, in a more oblique and limited form, in the Synoptic account of Jesus’s response to the question of whether it is lawful to pay taxes to Caesar (Mk 12:13–17 and pars.). The stated principle (Mk 12:17) seems to be that Caesar is entitled to receive back (*ἀπόδοτε*) the coin that is his; thus the Jews should not withhold their taxes or resist the Roman authorities.⁴³ However, they should recognize that God also has a due claim on their lives.⁴⁴

The crucial point of the passage for this study is that the obligations to Caesar and to God are usually complementary rather than contradictory.⁴⁵ As R.T. France says:

[F]or Jesus, as well as for Paul and Peter, the *normal* situation is one of compatible loyalties rather than, as the Zealots would have insisted, one of conflict between Caesar and God . . . the way the pronouncement is formulated suggests that such conflict should be expected to be exceptional rather than normal.⁴⁶

A related idea is found in John's Gospel, in Jesus' declaration that his kingdom does not originate in this world and therefore does not operate like the worldly powers, by compulsion (18:36); thus he does not threaten the proper exercising of Roman authority.⁴⁷ Similarly in the book of Acts the church is repeatedly recognized by the authorities as non-subversive (18:14–15; 23:28–29; 25:18–19; 26:30–32).⁴⁸

None of this is to say that the NT writers regard subordination to the state as admitting no exceptions. Since the authorities are *ὐπὸ θεοῦ* (Rom 13:1), their claim is not absolute, and so neither is the loyalty required of believers.⁴⁹ God's claim on his people's lives (*τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ*, Mk 12:17) is also greater than Caesar's, so where there is a conflict of obligation, God's claim is prior.⁵⁰ Yet these ideas are rarely stated explicitly; more often they are merely implicit qualifications to the authors' calls for subordination, suggesting that they are taken for granted but seldom applicable.

Moreover, some political rulers are presented more negatively than those described in Romans 13:1–7. The Herodian dynasty, for example, is often portrayed as vicious and arrogant (Mt 2:3–8,16; Mk 6:14–29; Lk 13:32; Acts 12:1–5,19–23), and the Jewish ruling council as hostile and corrupt (Mt 26:59; Mk 14:65; Acts 4:1–3; 7:54–60). The author of Revelation has a very negative view of Rome (see above).

Yet the duty of subordination to such authorities is only qualified (Acts 4:19; 5:29; *Mart. Pol.* 10), never explicitly denied. Revelation certainly calls its readers to separate themselves morally from the Roman state and refuse to worship it, as an expression of the basic principle that worship is due to God alone (14:7–12; 18:4–8; cp. Mt 4:10).⁵¹ But even here, when believers cannot escape punishment for their dissent they must accept it and not resist or rebel.⁵² So even this text implicitly includes the idea of subordination to the state, despite its clear concern to limit this.

Conclusions regarding the authority of the state and the motive/s for subordination in 1 Peter are sometimes drawn by scholars from the real or supposed differences between Romans 13:1–7 and 1 Peter 2:13–17. The exegesis of the latter passage in Chapter 5 will offer reason to think that these judgments are unwarranted (see also below, Chapter 8), but brief consideration must be given

here to the relationship between the passages and its implications for the content of the Petrine text.

It is generally agreed among NT scholars that Romans 13:1–7 and 1 Peter 2:13–17 stand in some kind of literary relationship. This claim is grounded partly on their common connection to Rome, the destination for Romans, which is also widely believed to be the place of composition for 1 Peter (see above, Chapter 1), and partly on their extended treatment of their theme.

Much the most important reason for positing this relationship, however, lies in the similarities of content across the two texts. For example, they both call for subordination to the political authorities (Rom 13:1a; 1 Pt 2:13a), and describe the functions of those rulers in relation to those who do evil and those who do good (Rom 13:3–4; 1 Pt 2:14). They both provide motivations for obeying their instructions (Rom 13:1b–2,5–6; 1 Pt 2:13b,15–16), and place their exhortations in a wider context of obligation to different groups and to everyone (Rom 13:7; 1 Pt 2:17).⁵³ These parallels appear reliably to indicate some form of association between the passages.

This connection is confirmed by significant verbal parallels. David Horrell has listed seven: in 1 Peter 2:13, *ὑποτάσσω* (“to be subordinate”; par. Rom 13:1) and *πᾶς* (“all”; par. Rom 13:1); in verse 14, the *ἐκδίκ-* word-group (*ἐκδίκησις*, “punishment”; par. Rom 13:4), *ἔπαινος* (“praise”; par. Rom 13:3) and the contrast between *κακός* and *ἀγαθός* (*κακοποιόι* and *ἀγαθοποιόι*, “doers of evil” and “doers of good”; par. Rom 13:3–4); and in verse 17, the *τιμ-* word-group (*τιμάω*, “to honour”; par. Rom 13:7) and *φοβ-* word-group (*φοβέω*, “to fear”; par. Rom 13:3–4,7). Horrell points out that these “are much more extensive than exist between Rom 13 and either 1 Tim. 2.1–4 or Tit. 3.1.”⁵⁴

While the similarities of content could be due to the authors’ common use of a shared tradition, these verbal parallels convince Horrell that the relationship between the two passages cannot be explained simply in these terms.⁵⁵ And while the distinguishing of redaction from tradition is not always straightforward, the cumulative evidence persuades some scholars that the Petrine text is probably a summary or adaptation of the Pauline one.⁵⁶ The likely connection of both documents with Rome may further support the view that the Petrine author was familiar with the text of Romans and may have drawn upon it directly in writing his letter. And if 1 Peter 2:13–17 is indeed a redaction of Romans 13:1–7, then the later author’s omissions from and additions to the earlier text may well signify substantial diversity or disagreement.

So this supposed relationship between the passages is sometimes used as a basis for the view that their authors have diverse views on the nature of civil

authority and the motives for subordination to it. Many scholars note that 1 Peter repeats neither Paul's statement *οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν ἐξουσία εἰ μὴ ὑπὸ θεοῦ, αἱ δὲ οὖσαι ὑπὸ θεοῦ τεταγμέναι εἰσὶν* (13:1), nor his description of the authority as *θεοῦ . . . διάκονός* (13:4), nor his appeal to *συνείδησις* (13:5) or *αἱ ὀφειλάι* (13:7) as reasons for subordination, while also introducing a pragmatic motive unparalleled in Romans, *φιμοῦν τὴν τῶν ἀφρόνων ἀνθρώπων ἀγνωσίαν* (2:15). From this evidence some conclude that the author believes political powers not to be founded by God or bearers of divine authority,⁵⁷ and that his reason for requiring subordination is primarily pragmatic rather than theological, a functional means to an end rather than a divine imperative.⁵⁸

However, the view that the Petrine passage is a redaction of the Pauline one rests on an insecure foundation. The verbal parallels, though striking, are far from exact. Of the words in Horrell's list, only *ἔπαινον* appears in the same verbal form in the two passages, while *πᾶς* qualifies two different nouns (the *object* of subordination in 1 Pt 2:13 and the *subject* in Rom 13:1), and the objects of *τιμάω* and *φοβέω* in 1 Peter 2:17 are distinct from those in Romans 13:3–4,7.⁵⁹ There are also notable verbal differences between the texts, and while the Petrine omissions (as of Rom 13:2,6) and abbreviations (as of Rom 13:3–4) could plausibly be ascribed to editing, significant restatements (such as 1 Pt 2:15) and additions (such as 1 Pt 2:13b–14a, parts of verse 17 and especially verse 16) suggest either the use of additional sources or a less direct dependence on Romans (or both).

The imprecision and imperfection of the verbal connections persuade other scholars that direct borrowing or conscious remodeling are unsatisfactory explanations for the relationship of the Petrine text to the Pauline one.⁶⁰ And despite the parallels, this accompanying diversity leads them to reaffirm the theory of independent use of a shared tradition.⁶¹ In further support of this is the appearance in the Pastoral Epistles of other, more distinct forms of exhortation regarding the civil authorities, which suggests that this theme was not entirely derived from Romans, or necessarily even confined to the Roman sphere of earliest Christianity.⁶²

The arguments on both sides of this debate are sufficiently strong that an intermediate position may be preferable: that Romans has shaped the tradition used by 1 Peter, but that it is not the only or definitive expression of this tradition; writing many years later, the Petrine author is drawing on a broader and more developed pattern of thought. As John Elliott writes:

By the time 1 Peter was written, Paul's letter to the Romans belonged to the body of teaching and traditional exhortation collected at Rome. The author of 1 Peter drew freely from this material, as did subsequent Christians writing from Rome.⁶³

In that case 1 Peter 2:13–17 is not a redaction of Romans 13:1–7, but rather an independent re-modeling of a tradition to which the former was one, but only one, contributor. In such a process the later author's omissions from and additions to the earlier text are more readily explicable in terms not of substantial diversity or disagreement, but of the respective historical contexts of the letters. So Paul's emphatic affirmations regarding the status and due claim of the authorities may be intended to discourage the Roman church from provoking disorder,⁶⁴ while any more cautious statements in 1 Peter may be meant implicitly to remind the readers that their conformity should not extend to participation in the imperial cult of Asia Minor.⁶⁵ And the supposed greater prominence of prudential reasons for submission in 1 Peter may well merely reflect the more insecure status of its readers in wider society,⁶⁶ of which the letter contains plentiful evidence (e.g. 3:13–17; 4:1–6,12–19). So these distinctions, even if real, need not embody different convictions regarding the nature of the state and the motive/s for subordination to it.

This hypothesis also suggests that the principal significance of the two texts lies in the content and purpose of their *common* features. The Petrine author's employment of this Pauline and related material most naturally implies that like Paul in Romans, his primary concern is to encourage subordination to political rulers as part of believers' wider engagement with society. The structure of the passages and their literary contexts tend to confirm this: each is headed by a call to subordination; Paul's follows general instructions (mainly) about relationships with outsiders (Rom 12:14–21);⁶⁷ and 1 Peter's is part of a duty code dealing with structures of authority in the state and the household (2:13–3:7).⁶⁸

Thus the literary relationship of Romans 13:1–7 and 1 Peter 2:13–17 proves to be an insecure ground for positing differences between the authors' views of civil authority and the motives for subordination. It does not prove that the latter's omission of the *ὕπὸ θεοῦ* and *θεοῦ . . . διακονός* formulae indicates denial of the divine origin and authority of the civil power, nor that the author's supposed downplaying of divine in favor of prudential motivations entails a mainly pragmatic view of subordination. In fact, given that on this basis the primary content and purpose of the passages appear to be largely similar, the Petrine author's silence may more naturally be taken to reflect agreement with the broader tradition represented by Romans rather than dissent from it.

This hypothesis will be confirmed by the detailed exegesis in Chapters 5 and 6 below of 1 Peter 2:13–17 and other Petrine subordination texts.

Subordination in the Household / Church

Before the specific household and ecclesial relationships are discussed, some consideration must be given to various general issues that bear upon the interpretation of the relevant NT passages.

Firstly, Paul affirms some measure of equality even across major social distinctions (Gal 3:28; 1 Cor 12:13; cp. Col 3:11) and presents the local congregation as composed of necessary and interdependent parts (1 Cor 12:12–27).⁶⁹ These texts are sometimes read as denying any continued social distinction among God's people between previously unequal groups. Many scholars rightly argue that they have social implications;⁷⁰ they affirm the unity of the various groups in Christ and that in the church these people are to meet and relate as equals.⁷¹ This principle is then sometimes used to interpret the Pauline and wider NT concept of subordination in terms of equality and mutuality.⁷²

This final step is unwarranted. As James Dunn says, “[I]t would be unwise to draw out an applied theology from the principle [of Gal 3:28] without regard for the way in which Paul himself actually theologized in practice.”⁷³ As will be argued below, even for Paul the unity and equality of believers does not abolish all social and hierarchical distinctions, while the deutero-Pauline authors reaffirm these more clearly; indeed, Paul's emphasis on equality is counterbalanced by the Pastorals' evident modeling of the church on the hierarchical pattern of the Greco-Roman household (1 Tm 1:4; 3:4–5,15; Ti 2:2–10).⁷⁴ It will also be seen, however, that the egalitarian principle enshrined in these texts does bear upon the way in which subordination is worked out in practice within hierarchical relationships.⁷⁵

Secondly, the concept of mutual subordination in Ephesians 5:21 (*ὑποτασσόμενοι ἀλλήλοις ἐν φόβῳ Χριστοῦ*) is often used as hermeneutically determinative of the following instructions to wives, children and slaves (5:22–6:9), and perhaps by extension those of the other *Haustafeln*. Counter-claims by some scholars that this verse requires only the one-sided submission of certain classes of people to others (e.g. wives to husbands but not vice versa) do not adequately account for the pronoun *ἀλλήλοις*, which is not used where different groups are respectively the subject and the object of its controlling verb.⁷⁶ But some other commentators therefore see the injunction to wives in 5:22–24 as “a particular *example* of the submission of all believers to one another”⁷⁷ and argue that the

responsibilities of husbands (5:25–32) therefore embody their equivalent subordination to their wives.⁷⁸

This argument is fatally undermined, however, by the fact that neither in Ephesians 5–6 nor in any other subordination text in early Christian literature is a traditionally superior partner in the household told to be subordinate to an inferior.⁷⁹ It is hardly conceivable that such a radical departure from social norms should be presented as a mere inference from a general principle without being spelled out explicitly.

A much more satisfactory explanation is that 5:21 and 5:22ff. call for different *kinds* of subordination, reflecting the combination of egalitarian and hierarchical elements within the restored cosmic order embodied in the church. Thus the (egalitarian) verse 21 is addressed to all believers and requires mutual humility and service and the preferring of each other's interests (cp. Gal 5:13),⁸⁰ while the (hierarchical) verse 22 is addressed to wives and requires respect for and obedience to husbands.⁸¹ On this view, 5:22 is not an example of the mutual subordination of 5:21; rather *ἀλλήλοις ἐν φόβῳ Χριστοῦ* and *αἱ γυναῖκες τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ* are separate and different examples of *ὑποτασσόμενοι*.⁸² Thus mutual subordination and the authority of some groups over others are meant to co-exist; neither should be collapsed into the other.⁸³

Finally, it is not uncommon for appeal to be made to contextual factors supposedly underlying specific subordination texts, as a basis for limiting apparently universal instructions to particular circumstances.⁸⁴ But unless the putative context has left some trace in the text, its suggested influence can be only speculative, and so it is also liable to refutation by the author's explicit statements.

The significance of the literary form in which the subordinationist teachings of (especially) Colossians, Ephesians and 1 Peter appear requires more detailed discussion. Most of the instances of *ὑποτάσσω* in 1 Peter, and the only instances of *ἐλεύθερος/ἐλευθερία*, appear within a form commonly known by NT scholars as a *Haustafel*, or household and civic code (2:13–3:7; possibly also 5:1–5). Variations of this form are found elsewhere in early Christian literature (Col 3:18–4:1; Eph 5:21–6:9; 1 Tm 2:8–15; 6:1–2; Ti 2:1–10; 3:1–2; *1 Clem.* 1.3; 21.6–9; *Did.* 4.9–11; *Barn.* 19.5–7; Pol., Phil. 4.2–6.2),⁸⁵ though scholars distinguish between them in various ways and may assign the title only to some.⁸⁶

These texts are united by the theme, and often the language, of subordination (e.g. Col 3:18; Eph 5:21; 1 Pt 2:13,18; 3:1,5; 1 Tm 2:11; Ti 2:5; 3:2). They call their readers to the fulfilment of their social responsibilities in the context of a graded order comprising unequal relationships, in which the subordination of the inferior partners to the superior ones is the primary concern; where both are

addressed, the inferiors are called to their duty before the reciprocal obligation of the superiors is treated (e.g. Col 3:22–4:1; Eph 5:22–32; 1 Pt 3:1–7).⁸⁷ Thus as Carolyn Osiek says, the codes embody a patriarchal ideology and “reinforced the family values of domestic order in a hierarchical universe.”⁸⁸ They presuppose and express the concept of “ruling and being ruled.”⁸⁹

The form of the NT codes is without exact precedent⁹⁰ and has generated an extended and complex debate regarding its origins. Dominant influences proposed include Stoicism⁹¹ and Hellenistic Judaism,⁹² with some scholars suggesting that these are modified by elements of distinctively Christian ethics.⁹³

In recent years, however, something of a consensus has emerged⁹⁴ in favor of the *περί οἰκονομίας* tradition of household management, stemming primarily from Aristotle and continued by both Greco-Roman and Hellenistic Jewish authors (see above, Chapters 2 and 3).⁹⁵ This is supplemented in certain codes by the parallel tradition of political management (*περί πολιτείας*). Behind these *τόποι* lie the conviction that the household and the state embody the cosmic order and are the basic units of society, with the former being the microcosm of the latter. They provide instructions on appropriate conduct within these domains, including the hierarchical relationships of governors and subjects, masters and slaves, husbands and wives, and parents and children.

Andrew Lincoln identifies in all these traditions

the notion that the male head of the household is intended . . . to rule as husband, father and master, and that not to adhere to this proper hierarchy is detrimental not only to the household but also to the life of the state.⁹⁶

The appropriation of these traditions, in the form of the household and civic codes, by some early Christians involves the absorption of the order of the *οἶκος* and *πόλις* into the internal and external relationships of the Christian community;⁹⁷ the hierarchy of household and state is thus confirmed as divinely given.

Scholarly opinions have also varied on the probable occasion for the appearance of the codes. These include: the delay of the *parousia*;⁹⁸ suspicion by Roman society and the state that the Christian movement was socially and politically disruptive;⁹⁹ syncretistic and pneumatic enthusiasm, especially among socially subordinate groups;¹⁰⁰ and the withdrawal of some believers from their stations in life.¹⁰¹ But although these theories may have explanatory potential in individual cases, none of them is obviously reflected in the *Haustafel* form as such, nor in every instance of it.¹⁰²

These views have generated a similarly wide range regarding the function of the codes, including parenetic, apologetic/missionary, sectarian and nomistic.¹⁰³ In this case, however, the motives on which the exhortations are grounded provide a greater measure of clarity. Some of these are pragmatic: by conforming to social expectations in their relationships, believers will silence hostility and promote the gospel's reputation. But many are theological, suggesting that the authors regard their instructions as matters of principle as well as pragmatism. (For examples of each type, see below.)

Perhaps, therefore, early Christian authors developed the *Haustafel* form/s from the *περι οικονομίας* and *περι πολιτείας* traditions precisely to fulfil this dual purpose. The codes provide a convenient way of articulating the responsibilities of believers in the relationships of everyday life, in terms both of conformity to widespread and elevated social values, and of submission to authority within God-given political and social structures.¹⁰⁴ The authors evidently assume a close correlation between the highest standards of society, represented by the state and the household, and the norms of Christian living, and suppose on that basis that there will normally be no conflict between the demands of God and those of one's human superiors. More detailed consideration of the texts will confirm these conclusions.

The explicitly Christian motivations for the codes shape their specific instructions, especially those for the superior partners, and will thereby affect the outworking of the various relationships.¹⁰⁵ But the authors do not thereby subvert the hierarchical pattern of conventional relationships; rather, each "accepts and even reinforces the basic structures of the patriarchal household."¹⁰⁶ The codes' common theme of subordination, their derivation from the management *τόποι* with their normative hierarchical order, and their dual ethical and pragmatic purpose, all demonstrate their basic political and social conservatism.

The earliest Christian writers appear to take slavery for granted, to the extent that they neither call for its abolition, nor require Christian masters to free their slaves, nor encourage the redemption of slaves by monetary payment.¹⁰⁷ However, they stop short of positively commending it; it is merely one contingent configuring of a divinely given household relationship.¹⁰⁸ Their attitude is best explained by their regarding slavery as irrelevant to one's service of God.

This view is expressed most clearly by Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:17–24, where he says that believers should work out their Christian calling in the circumstances in which they were called (7:17); his underlying principle is that one's social position does not affect one's capacity to fulfil that task. Thus slaves need not be concerned about their status or seek to change it,¹⁰⁹ as they do not have to become

free to serve God (7:21a,24); though if a change of status occurs through manumission, that does not matter either, as they can use their freedom to the same end (7:21b).¹¹⁰ Ignatius argues similarly that slaves should seek to be better slaves, for God's glory, rather than expecting manumission at the church's expense (Ign., *Pol.* 4.3).

Paul's teaching indicates both that social stations are assigned *by* the Lord, including those of slave and free (7:17),¹¹¹ and that those stations are transformed *in* the Lord, such that the person called as a slave is now a freedman and the person called when free is now a slave (7:21–22). This twofold affirmation points again to the co-existence in early Christian thought of hierarchy and equality,¹¹² though here Paul does not attempt to explain what effect the latter should have on the former. This *is* however his concern when writing to Philemon.

Paul asks Philemon to welcome back his newly converted slave Onesimus as a brother in Christ (15–17) and to forgive him (18–19). Paul implies that he would also like Philemon to send Onesimus back to help him in his ministry (13), but there is no consensus among scholars as to whether he wants Onesimus to be freed. Discussion of key verses (16,21) has proved inconclusive, and the uncertainty is increased by the indirectness and imprecision of Paul's entire exhortation.¹¹³ But in light of 1 Corinthians 7, perhaps the most likely explanation is that he considers the matter of no importance; Onesimus's Christian existence and service are unaffected by his legal status. “[I]n the last analysis it is of no significance to the Christian whether he is slave or free.”¹¹⁴ The brotherly love owed by Philemon to Onesimus thus conditions their slave-master relationship without abolishing it.¹¹⁵

This dual affirmation of the hierarchical relationship of master and slave and its shaping by Christian norms is also found in the deutero-Pauline literature, especially the codes.¹¹⁶ So on the one hand, slaves are enjoined to respect their masters and to be subordinate and obedient to them in everything, serving them sincerely and wholeheartedly with pleasing and appropriate attitudes and actions (Col 3:22; Eph 6:5–6; 1 Tm 6:1a; Ti 2:9–10a). In particular, they are not to despise their Christian masters, but to serve them better because they are believers and beloved (1 Tm 6:2).

Apologetic and missional motives appear in the Pastorals—to bring credit to the Christian message and avoid slander (1 Tm 6:2b; Ti 2:10b)—but here and in Colossians and Ephesians the motivation is also christological, soteriological and eschatological, including reverence for the Lord, his saving work, and divine recompense (Col 3:23–25; Ti 2:11–14; Eph 6:6–8). Most notably, as Murray Harris observes, “Obedience to earthly masters is obedience to Christ . . . Service to an

earthly master is service to Christ. To carry out the directives of an earthly master is to do the will of God.¹¹⁷ So while the slaves' relationship to their earthly masters is relativized by their heavenly master, the authors expect their demands normally to coincide.¹¹⁸

On the other hand, slaves are addressed directly in each of these texts, as morally responsible members of the believing community.¹¹⁹ Colossians and Ephesians also give directions to masters: they too are slaves of Christ (who shows no partiality), and so they are to relate to their own slaves accordingly, treating them with justice and equity and forbearing from threats (Col 4:1; Eph 6:9). These features substantially affect the conduct of the slave-master relationship, while not undermining its hierarchical nature.¹²⁰

The place of women within the early Christian communities can be considered here only insofar as it bears upon their subordination. Dunn highlights the involvement of women in the Pauline circle: these appear to include an apostle (Rom 16:7), a house church leader (Rom 16:3–5) and a congregational patron and deacon (Rom 16:1–2), and various hard-working women are also named (Rom 16:6,12).¹²¹ Carolyn Osiek and David Balch have also highlighted the portrayal of women in the Gospels as disciples of Jesus who make significant interventions and fulfil notable functions (e.g. Mk 7:24–30; Mt 26:6–13; Lk 8:1–3). These texts point to a blurring of gender roles in the early church and a significant expansion in women's activities beyond contemporary expectations. These seem, however, to have been both incomplete (Mk 3:14–19)¹²² and contested (1 Tm 2:12).

Elements of equality and mutuality are extended to the marriage relationship in 1 Corinthians. Paul teaches that husband and wife possess each other's body, and that each is to give the other *τὴν ὀφειλὴν*, apparently a reference to sexual relations (7:3–4); here the privilege and responsibility of the partners is exactly balanced. Also he not only expects both men and women to participate in congregational prayer and prophesying (11:4–5), but also affirms their mutual dependence *ἐν κυρίῳ*, anticipated in their reciprocal origins (11:11–12).

Yet even in this passage Paul insists on the maintaining of gender distinctions in clothing and/or hairstyle in the congregation (11:4–6,13–15). And in 14:33b–35 he goes further, calling on women to be silent and subordinate in the assembly.¹²³ This prohibition must refer to speaking that Paul judges to be insubordinate and shameful. Probably some wives were questioning their husbands publicly (perhaps as part of the corporate weighing of prophecies) and/or addressing their enquiries to other men.¹²⁴ If so, then even in a context of (partial)

equality and shared ministry Paul still expects Christian wives to be subordinate to their husbands.

This principle is asserted (more clearly and less controversially) in the Colossian and Ephesian household codes. Wives are to be subordinate to their own husbands (Col 3:18; Eph 5:22) in all things, on the pattern of the subordination of the church to Christ (Eph 5:24). Again, however, the socially superior group is also addressed: husbands are to love their wives and not be bitter towards them (Col 3:19); their love is to be modeled on the self-giving and sacrificial love of Christ for the church (Eph 5:25–30), so transforming the context of the wives’ subordination. Titus 2:5 also requires (younger) women to be subordinate to their own husbands; Clement (1.3) commends the subordination of wives; and Ignatius (Ign., *Pol.* 5.1) calls on husbands to love them.

It is sometimes argued that the use in Colossians and Ephesians of *ὑποτάσσω* for the relationship of wives to husbands, instead of the *ὑπακούω* used for children and slaves, indicates that obedience is not required of wives.¹²⁵ But the analogy of the church and Christ in Ephesians 5:23–32 renders this claim unlikely; if the different word is significant, it more probably emphasizes the special kind of recognition and deference due to husbands, and consequently the different nature and context of obedience within the marriage relationship. The greater responsibility laid upon husbands compared to those of fathers and masters stamps wifely subordination (including obedience) with a different character from that of children or slaves.

In 1 Timothy 2:11–15, women are encouraged to learn *ἐν πάσῃ ὑποταγῇ* (v.11) and to be *ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ* (v.12b). The imperatives are apparently set over against the author’s prohibition of a woman *διδάσκειν . . . οὐδὲ ἀυθεντεῖν ἄνδρος* (v.12a), so these verbs are perhaps best understood to refer generally to teaching and the exercise of authority over men, rather than more specifically to heretical doctrine or autocratic leadership.¹²⁶ If so, this passage goes further than others in the NT in both extending the subordination required of wives to all Christian women and denying certain ministerial functions to them.

These texts are united, however, in the broadly theological basis of their respective exhortations.¹²⁷ Paul and Ephesians both appeal to the headship of the husband over the wife (1 Cor 11:3; Eph 5:23), a concept that most commentators agree entails some idea of authority;¹²⁸ Paul grounds it in the creation story (1 Cor 11:7–9), while Ephesians relates it to Christ’s rule over the church. In 1 Corinthians 14:34 Paul also points to the law. Colossians employs the Stoic idea of what is fitting (*ἀνῆκεν*), which implies “harmony with the natural order of things” (see Chapter 2 above),¹²⁹ and reinforces it with the christological

motivation *ἐν κυρίῳ* (3:18). Ephesians goes further in requiring subordination to husbands *ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ* (5:22). And 1 Timothy also refers to Genesis, to both the creation of man and woman and the woman's deception (2:13–14).

It is therefore implausible to suggest that the rationale of these exhortations is purely apologetic or missional.¹³⁰ There is moreover no textual reason to limit their scope to particular social circumstances;¹³¹ none states or hints that the principles of gender differentiation and subordination are limited to any specific social context.¹³² On the contrary, they all appear to treat these as divine imperatives of universal application and to assume that the demands of God and of husbands will normally coincide.

The teaching of the NT on the subordination of children to parents is brief and relatively uncontroversial. Both the Colossian and the Ephesian household codes require children to obey their parents, and Colossians extends this obedience to all things (Col 3:20a; Eph 6:1a). Ephesians cites the biblical commandment to honor one's father and mother, further requiring deference and care for the parents' needs (6:2–3). First Timothy 3:4 lists the subordination of children to their father among the marks of a good household manager and (hence) church leader.

The codes again include instructions for the socially superior group, in this case fathers (Col 3:21; Eph 6:4). They are not to provoke their children so that the latter become discouraged, or to enrage them; instead they are to raise them by means of Christian instruction, including both education and admonition. The adjective *σεμνότης* in 1 Timothy 3:4 may refer to the father and indicate that the use of his authority should command respect. Once more the responsibilities laid upon the superior class affect the context of subordination for the inferior one. Both the *Didache* (4.9) and the *Epistle of Barnabas* (19.5) also call for children to be raised in the fear of God, and Clement (3.3) expects younger people to submit to their elders.

The basis for the Colossian and Ephesian exhortations to children is again essentially theological. In Colossians, obedience to parents is *εὐάρεστον* . . . *ἐν κυρίῳ* (3:20), and although in Ephesians *ἐν κυρίῳ* is textually uncertain, the author also appeals first to what is right (*δίκαιον*) and then to the Decalogue (6:1–2). So this call to subordination too is presented as a divine imperative, not a mere social accommodation for apologetic or evangelistic reasons.¹³³

But this fairly simple relationship has wider implications for NT teaching on subordination, because of its analogy with that of church leaders and other Christians. In 1 Thessalonians Paul exhorts the readers to respect and defer to their leaders, to regard them highly and express that regard in love (5:12–13).

Similarly in 1 Corinthians he instructs the church to be subordinate to those such as the household of Stephanas and to give them recognition (16:16,18). Hebrews also calls for obedience and submission to present leaders, as well as remembrance and imitation of previous ones (13:7,17).

At this stage the stated basis for the required subordination is the work done by the leaders rather than the position they hold. First Thessalonians 5:12 speaks of labor, benefaction and admonition, 1 Corinthians 16:15 of dedication to the service of the saints, and Hebrews 13:7 of keeping watch over the readers' well-being.

It appears, however, that by the second or third generation leadership in the churches had come to rest with certain household heads. David Horrell refers to

... [t]he pattern seen most clearly in the Pauline epistles . . . in which a resident structure of leadership develops, based upon the structure of the household and with prominent men as the overseers at the top of the ecclesiastical as well as domestic hierarchy.¹³⁴

This structure is most obvious in 1 Timothy, where there is such a close correspondence between household and congregation that the qualifications for overseeing the former are also applied to leadership of the latter (3:4–5).¹³⁵

The relationship between children and parents—broadened to younger people and their elders—becomes the model for that of leaders and led. According to Ceslas Spicq, “[L]’âge et des vertus spécifiées intervenaient dans le choix des chargés de fonction (*1 Tim.*, III, 2–12; *Tite*, I, 7–9) de sorte que petits et grands peuvent correspondre à jeunes et vieux, subordonnés et supérieurs.”¹³⁶ Leaders would generally have been older men, and the designation of (some of) them as *πρεσβύτεροι* (e.g. *Ti* 1:5) confirms the connection;¹³⁷ while John Elliott suggests that the corresponding *νεώτεροι* (e.g. *Lk* 22:26) could designate “members of the community who were differentiated from and subordinate to the leaders”¹³⁸ (see below, Chapter 6).

The analogy suggests that subordination like that of offspring or younger people to their elders is due to the leaders from the led. This principle is very evident in the Apostolic Fathers. The primary goal of *1 Clement* is to restore the church's subordination to its leaders (e.g. 57.1) and thereby to re-create the normative order of the congregation (21.1–6),¹³⁹ while in the letters of Ignatius subordination of the church to its bishop, elders and deacons, as to Christ, is a recurring theme (e.g. *Ign. Eph.* 2–6, 20; *Ign. Magn.* 2–7, 13; *Ign. Trall.* 2–7, 13; cp. *Pol.*, *Phil.* 5.3). Reinforcing and expanding upon the earlier texts, this

teaching signifies and confirms not only the transference of the hierarchical model of the household to the congregation, but also the extension to church leaders of the subordination due to age and seniority, as a divine imperative.¹⁴⁰

Freedom

The early Christian concept of freedom could be conceived in very broad and general terms. The common theme of the entire NT might be seen as God's delivering of humans and the world from various evils, placing them in a state of "freedom," and some of the key terms used for this divine action (such as *σῶζω*) carry connotations of liberation. Yet where more explicit freedom language is used in the NT, its meaning is often more restricted. And the *ἐλευθερ-* word-group in particular appears almost always to have a quite narrow and specific sense.

So, for example, the word *ἄφεσις* appears twice in Luke 4:18, in Jesus's quoting of Isaiah (61:1–2; 58:6) to define the content of his ministry. The word-group is used in the LXX to denote jubilee release (e.g. Lv 25:10; 27:21), but in Isaiah this theme is broadened to include the salvation of Israel from bondage, and in Luke 4 it appears to refer still more widely to the freedom resulting from God's eschatological act of deliverance in Jesus.¹⁴¹ But Luke's understanding of how Jesus fulfils this prophecy is delimited by his account of Jesus's subsequent work and that of the early church, in which the "release" that Jesus provides is effected through forgiveness (the meaning of *ἄφεσις* in most of its other NT instances),¹⁴² healing and exorcism. It thus appears to comprise freedom from sin and from sin's satanic bondage, both spiritual and physical.¹⁴³

Although restoration to the life of the community is one part or result of this release, neither Luke nor the other Gospel writers suggest that Jesus' ministry involves any kind of social or political reform.¹⁴⁴ Indeed, although the Jews expect that the messiah will bring them freedom (Lk 1:74; 2:38), and many understand this in political terms (see above, Chapter 3), Jesus appears to offer an alternative model of liberty, from sin and Satan, that requires no change to the people's external (i.e. political and social) circumstances.¹⁴⁵ That this model (with variations) is the dominant understanding of freedom in the primitive churches is strongly confirmed by the fact that the *ἐλευθερ-* word-group (the one most commonly used to represent the concept) is seldom if ever employed in the NT in a political sense.¹⁴⁶

The one possible and partial exception to this rule is in the rather obscure exchange in Matthew 17:24–27. It arises from the question of whether Jesus pays

the temple tax, and as Davies and Allison state, “Jesus’ words presuppose that the discussion is about a tax levied in the name of God. . . . The whole point is that *God’s children are free* [ἐλεύθεροι] *with respect to God their Father*: he does not tax them.”¹⁴⁷ The “sons” in Jesus’s metaphor are probably Jesus himself and his disciples,¹⁴⁸ and the pericope appears to have originated in a specifically intra-Jewish debate about the ongoing obligations of Christian Jews to the temple and perhaps the other institutions of Judaism.¹⁴⁹ There is no suggestion here or elsewhere in the Gospel that believers are free from the general duty to pay taxes (cf. 22:15–22). However, the principle that believers should exercise their freedom so as not to give offence to others, which leads Jesus to pay even this tax (Mt 17:27), is also found in Paul’s exposition of freedom in 1 Corinthians (see below).¹⁵⁰

Although ἐλευθερ- language appears several times in one section of John’s Gospel (8:31–36), and there are scattered instances elsewhere in the NT and Apostolic Fathers, it is used mainly in the undisputed Pauline letters, and the following discussion of freedom will focus on these. It is divided into two sections, on the nature and responsibility of freedom respectively.

The Nature of Freedom

Paul’s concept of freedom, represented primarily by the ἐλευθερ- word-group and as expounded in Galatians and Romans, presupposes that before the coming of Christ people were enslaved to sin (ἁμαρτία; Rom 6:17,19–20) and its agents or allies.¹⁵¹ The latter include the flesh (σάρξ), human nature in its frailty and mortality (Rom 7:18); the Torah (νόμος) with its regulations (Rom 7:23; Gal 4:10); spiritual or demonic powers (στοιχεῖα and other terms [see above, “Order”]; Gal 4:3,8); and death (θάνατος), the fruit and wage of sin (Rom 6:21,23). These passages indicate that humans were under compulsion to sin, unable to resist their natural appetites and in the control of supra-human forces of evil. The Torah, supposedly the remedy for this slavery, merely compounded it and confirmed God’s sentence of death upon it (Rom 7:9–23).¹⁵²

But Paul declares to the Roman believers, ἐλευθερωθέντες δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας ἐδουλώθητε τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ (Rom 6:18). Having been set free from their previous slavery to sin, such that sin no longer controls what they do, they have now become slaves of righteousness and of God, under his control and able to obey him from the heart (Rom 6:17,22). This freedom is effected by the death of Christ and the life of the Spirit (Rom 8:1–4).

John’s understanding of freedom is very similar. Jesus promises his new Jewish disciples that if they continue in his word they will know the truth and

it will set them free (8:31–32). They claim never to have been slaves, perhaps because they have never willingly yielded to foreign rule (8:33);¹⁵³ but in Jesus’s eyes they are enslaved not politically to Rome but morally to sin (8:34). Jesus as the Son of God can however set them free from this slavery into a new relation to God in which they share in his inheritance (8:35–36).¹⁵⁴

For Paul freedom from sin is accompanied by liberation from sin’s associates. Thus the constraint of the flesh is effectively countered by the power of the Spirit (Gal 5:16). The Spirit sets believers free from the death that is sin’s recompense and guarantees them immortality (Rom 8:2,11);¹⁵⁵ Paul expects that the rest of creation will share this liberty (Rom 8:21). The slavery exercised over believers by cosmic forces hostile to God is broken, and these powers become weak and ineffective in relation to them (Gal 4:9; cp. Col 2:15).

The sense/s in which Christ frees his people from the Torah, and the nature and extent of its continued authority, are the subject of complex debates. The Hagar-Sarah allegory of Galatians 4:21–31 shows beyond doubt that Paul regards law-keeping Jews as enslaved,¹⁵⁶ and in 5:1 the freedom for which Christ has set believers free must therefore include freedom from the law.¹⁵⁷ Scholars have presented this as freedom from legalism,¹⁵⁸ or from law as an external constraint requiring servile rather than free obedience,¹⁵⁹ or from the Torah as a boundary-marking instrument of Jewish nationalism.¹⁶⁰ Some see Galatians 5:1–3 and Romans 8:1–4 as proclaiming freedom from the whole law,¹⁶¹ while others read Romans 8:2 in particular as giving a continued (though different) role to Torah.¹⁶²

These debates cannot and need not be fully considered here. It is generally agreed that whatever else may be involved in freedom from Torah for Paul, believers are at least liberated from it as an instrument of sin and death; that is, from its power to stimulate sin and from the curse and condemnation that it lays on sinners (Gal 3:13; Rom 8:1–2).¹⁶³ Thus freedom from law is an integral part of freedom from sin.¹⁶⁴ And whatever role the Torah may still have in the ethics of God’s people, they are at least freed from the obligation to observe the distinctive and restrictive Jewish practices of circumcision, food laws and sacred calendar (Gal 5:2–3; 2:11–14; 4:9–10), to do whatever is required or permitted by the rubric of *πίστις δι’ ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη* (Gal 5:6).¹⁶⁵

Moreover, Paul claims that the law is in some sense fulfilled by believers. In Galatians he supports an exhortation to love with the statement, *ὁ γὰρ πᾶς νόμος ἐν ἐνὶ λόγῳ πεπλήρωται, ἐν τῷ· ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτὸν* (5:14). Similarly in Romans he says that every commandment of the law is summed up in the same love command, and that love is *πλήρωμα . . . νόμου* (13:10). And in the same letter he declares that *τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ νόμου* is fulfilled in those who live

according to the Spirit (8:4). Thus freedom from sin and its associates (including, in some sense, the law) enables its recipients to meet the requirements of the law and exhibit the kind of life it was intended to produce (Rom 8:2–3).¹⁶⁶

So according to Galatians and Romans, Paul's view of freedom might be broadly defined as the liberty to live according to the will of God, and from all sources of compulsion to do otherwise, with their destructive consequences. Through Christ and the Spirit, believers are set free from their former slavery to sin and its allies and are thus enabled to do only what God demands or allows. But both letters indicate that those who are freed also have a responsibility to maintain their freedom and to live it out in a particular way, and this is explained in more detail in Paul's treatment of the theme in 1 Corinthians.

The Responsibility of Freedom

In Galatians 5:1, Paul asserts that Christ has set the readers free for freedom, and he enjoins them *μὴ πάλιν ζυγῶ δουλείας ἐνέχεσθε*; that is, to the restrictive practices of Torah (cp. 2:4). In Romans 6, he indicates that believers have a choice of two slave-masters, over to whom they can hand themselves and whom they must then obey (6:16). In order not to live in slavery to sin, which leads to death, they must offer themselves instead to obedience (to God in Christ), which leads to righteousness and eternal life (6:22). Thus they are responsible for conserving the freedom from sin and the law that is God's gift to them, and in which alone they can live according to his will.

The Romans passage implies that the believer's freedom is not an unrestrained power of self-determination.¹⁶⁷ Paul warns the Galatians that it is *μὴ τὴν ἐλευθερίαν εἰς ἀφορμὴν τῆ σαρκί* (5:13; cp. Rom 6:20) and must not degenerate into license. And two of his arguments in 1 Corinthians are opposed to his readers' slogan *πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν* (6:12; 10:23), an assertion appropriate to kings (4:8) or the wise (3:18), who supposedly have an unrestricted right to choose for themselves;¹⁶⁸ indeed, the whole of 8:1–11:1 can be seen as his response to this claim.

The idea that as slaves of God believers are obliged to obey him is also found in 1 Corinthians. They have been bought with a price (6:20; 7:23) and belong to God, and so although they are not bound by the Torah, they are still bound to obey God in submitting to the law of Christ (9:21; cp. Gal 6:2). Furthermore, in Galatians Paul calls his readers to use their freedom to serve each other as slaves by means of love (5:13), and in 1 Corinthians he says that because¹⁶⁹ he is free, he has himself become a slave to everyone, including those outside the church (9:19). So freedom is appropriately expressed in slavery to God and other people.

Paul makes himself a slave to outsiders in order to win more of them for Christ (1 Cor 9:19–22). Although this is an expression of freedom in the specific context of his apostolic ministry (1 Cor 9:1), he also commends it to the congregation (1 Cor 10:32–11:1). Within the community, he insists that one’s freedom should be used according to what benefits and edifies others (1 Cor 6:12; 10:23), not to embolden weaker believers to act against their own consciences and so to fall (1 Cor 8:9–13), nor to provoke condemnation from anyone (1 Cor 10:29–30) so as to bring the gospel into disrepute and impede its progress. Thus the goal of freedom is the good of others, believers and unbelievers alike.

In 1 Corinthians Paul also reinforces his understanding of *ἐλευθερία* as freedom from constraint to act contrary to God’s will by setting it over against being mastered by something (*οὐκ ἐγὼ ἐξουσιασθήσομαι ὑπό τινος*; 6:12).¹⁷⁰ The free person is compelled (*ἀνάγκη*) only by God and the gospel (9:16); only in relation to God are his actions constrained (*ἄκων*) rather than unconstrained (*ἐκῶν*; 9:17); his work involves self-mastery (*ἐγκράτεια*) in all things (9:25).¹⁷¹ As Lincoln Galloway has shown, in this passage “Paul is engaging popular philosophical discourse that portrays the *ἐλεύθερος* as one who acts willingly and cannot be compelled, while the slave or unvirtuous person acts unwillingly and is compelled.”¹⁷² Thus Paul here presents *ἐλευθερία* as freedom from compulsion by anyone or anything, except God.

It is in this light that Paul’s paradoxical statement in 1 Corinthians 9:19 (*Ελεύθερος γὰρ ὢν ἐκ πάντων πᾶσιν ἑμαυτὸν ἐδοῦλωσα*) should be understood. He is free from everyone in that no-one can compel him to do what ought not to be done; he is controlled by no-one except God.¹⁷³ But that freedom obliges him to make himself a slave to everyone, in that he is bound to do whatever will benefit others through the gospel, which includes conforming himself to their wishes and preferences (9:20–22; see also Rom 1:14).¹⁷⁴

Thus for Paul freedom is from *compulsion* but not from *obligation*.¹⁷⁵ In this condition believers cannot be compelled by anything or anyone apart from God and so are free to live according to his will. But they are required to preserve their freedom by being slaves of God; that is, by placing themselves under divine constraint and refusing the mastery of sin and its agents. This entails that they not only can but must reject demands from superiors to do what should not be done, though Paul never makes this point explicitly. Moreover, their freedom, and their slavery to God, require them to be slaves of others for their good, and by implication to fulfil whatever other social or political obligations he may lay upon them, such as subordination to the authorities in state and household.

It should finally be noted that the idea of freedom to live according to the will of God, and from the compulsion to act contrary to it, are found in other early Christian authors besides Paul and John, even though they do not use the *ἐλευθερ-* word-group to denote it. It is especially associated with extended descriptions of Christ's saving work, such as Ephesians 2:1–10, Titus 2:11–14 and 3:3–7, and Hebrews 9:11–14; all of these passages include variants of *λυτρόω* or *σώζω* (Eph 2:5,8; Ti 2:14; 3:5; Heb 9:12; see below, Chapter 7).

Conclusions

The above study has identified a significant measure of consensus in early Christian thought on the concepts of order, subordination and freedom, though with some exceptions and differences of emphasis.

The idea of a divine and normative created order is implicit in several of the texts. Various authors affirm that the universe has been structured by God, with Christ as the pattern, agent and sustainer of the cosmic order, to which human and heavenly beings are expected to conform. But that order has also been disrupted, both by human sin, which disorders human life and the relationships within creation, and by the activity of various “powers,” which exercise an evil influence that dislocates or frustrates the divine ordering of the world. Although the identity of these entities is disputed, only Revelation appears clearly to place earthly authorities among them. Elsewhere human rulers are not presented as agents of disorder, and unruly cosmic forces are connected to them doubtfully or obliquely at most: not at all in Colossians and Ephesians.

However, the restoration of cosmic order through the exaltation of Christ to the place of highest authority is also widely affirmed. As a result of this exaltation, the powers are subordinated to Christ—though opinions vary on whether this subordination is a mainly future (e.g. Paul, Revelation) or present (e.g. Colossians, Ephesians) reality—and believers are freed from the control of sin. A general concern for proper order in the church is grounded by some deutero-Pauline authors in the claim that the re-ordered cosmos is currently expressed and experienced there; their paranesis sets out how this is properly to be reflected in believers' lives and in their internal and—especially in 1 Timothy—external relationships.

NT teaching on the state and the household indicates that these established and hierarchical structures of human authority currently retain their place in the restored cosmic order. Thus several NT passages suggest that political structures are given by God for the establishing and maintaining of stability and harmony,

and the same may be inferred of domestic authority, while the civic and household codes of the deutero-Pauline letters reflect the *περι πολιτείας* and *περι οίκονομίας τόποι* and so imply the assimilation of the order of the *πόλις* and *οἶκος* into the relationships of the Christian community. It follows that for believers subordination, as the right placing of oneself in relation to one's superiors, is still due within these graded structures. This often includes responses such as recognition of, and deference and obedience to, their authority, and is nowhere made contingent on their qualities; on the contrary, it appears to be owed merely because of their standing in the hierarchy.

The reasons given for this subordination in both contexts involve both pragmatic avoidance of human hostility and principled fulfilment of divine obligation. This dual motivation, reflected most obviously in the civic and household codes, entails a generally positive view of the authorities (though in respect of the state this is by no means universal, and it is sharply contradicted in Revelation). On this view the demands of one's superiors and those of God are normally coincident; a close correspondence is assumed between the highest norms of society, guaranteed by state and household, and the norms of Christian living. Early Christian authors undoubtedly relativize and limit the demand for subordination, so affirming both the possibility of conflict and the superior claim of God in such circumstances; but they rarely do so directly, suggesting that most see the former as exceptional and take the latter for granted.

Some NT instruction on the household relates to relationships between Christians, but the various statements of believers' equality in Christ merely condition the conduct of those relationships without subverting or abolishing hierarchical distinctions. In other words, hierarchical and egalitarian elements co-exist within the restored divine order; the latter are a mode of expression for the former, not an alternative to them. Again, this understanding is most evident in the codes, which affirm and strengthen patriarchal structures while allowing their application to be shaped by the mutuality of Christian relationships.

So early Christian authors call for forms of conduct suitable for both the egalitarian and the hierarchical elements of normative order. They require the humility, service and preferring of others' interests that is appropriate for the mutually dependent members of Christ's body; Ephesians and *1 Clement* even describe this in the language of mutual subordination. But they (not least these authors) also demand the acknowledgment, deference and compliance that is due from inferiors to superiors within a graded structure; this is one-sided subordination. Although some writers emphasize one set of qualities more than the other, none seems ever completely to collapse one into the other.

These principles are worked out in the specific instructions for the household relationships of slaves and masters, wives and husbands, and children and parents. Subordination is required of the inferior partners (reflecting hierarchy), but responsibilities are also laid on the superior partners (reflecting equality). Thus the form of subordination may be different in the various relationships (though they all appear to include obedience); it is perhaps conditioned by the particular duties required of the superior partner.¹⁷⁶

Some authors also call for subordination to church leaders, at first because of their work, and later because of their position. This relationship is modeled on that of younger people to their elders; deference and obedience to age and seniority are due also to leaders. This extension of the household structure even to ecclesial relationships within the Christian congregation, which is believed to exemplify the restored cosmic order, is further evidence that hierarchical subordination within this structure is seen as a divine imperative.

For the earliest Christians, freedom (especially when denoted by the *ἐλευθερ*-word-group) is that given by God, through Christ and the Spirit, from slavery to sin and hostile cosmic powers.¹⁷⁷ In some texts this includes freedom from sin's other associates (e.g. flesh, law) and/or its destructive consequences (e.g. sickness, death). For Paul, who writes most on this subject, it is thus the freedom to live in accordance with God's will, and from everything that compels people to do otherwise.

But the freedom of believers from compulsion does not amount to a freedom from obligation. On the contrary, they have a responsibility to maintain the freedom they have received by not submitting themselves again to sin, and by not allowing themselves to be mastered by anything or anyone, including, by implication, superiors who direct them to do what they should not. And they are required to obey God, to promote the good of others both within and outside the Christian community, and to fulfil their social and political duties within the restored divine order, which normally include subordination to rulers in the state and the household.

In light of this, it is unsurprising that the language of freedom is never used in early Christian writings (with the possible and limited exception of Mt 17:26) to refer to political liberation. For Paul one's station in life, including its subordinate or superior relations to others, is assigned by the Lord and is the sphere where one is to serve God; but it is also transformed in the Lord, such that it is irrelevant to one's status before God and one's capacity to live for him. That is to say, the freedom given in Christ can be experienced and exercised in any social or political setting, by the slave or the subject of Rome as much as by anyone else.

This survey of early Christian understandings of order, subordination and freedom also demonstrates the interdependence of the three concepts. The restoration of the divine cosmic order under the rule of the exalted Christ requires believers to take their place—including, where appropriate, their subordinate place—within that order as this is now embodied in the Christian community and its relationships. It also allows them to live in liberty from the control of sin and hostile spiritual powers. Moreover, it is because believers are free that they can subordinate themselves appropriately to others; they are able to resist both the temptation to rebel against authority or merely to please themselves, and the pressure of their superiors to do anything displeasing to God. And conversely, it is partly by their due subordination to others that they maintain their freedom, not becoming subject again to the disorderly compulsion of sin and the powers, but faithfully discharging their obligations—including those to their political and social superiors—within the restored order.

This concludes the investigation of the Greco-Roman, Jewish and Christian backgrounds to the concepts of order, subordination and freedom in 1 Peter. Chapters 5–7 will provide an exegesis of the key passages in the letter relating to these themes.

Notes

- 1 On the dating of the Apostolic Fathers, see B. D. Ehrman, ed. and trans., *The Apostolic Fathers, Volume I* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 13.
- 2 G. W. L. Lampe, “The New Testament Doctrine of Ktisis,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 17 (1964): 449–55.
- 3 Lampe, “Ktisis,” 454; M. Barth, “Christ and All Things,” in *Paul and Paulinism: Essays in Honour of C.K. Barrett*, eds. M. D. Hooker and S. G. Wilson (London: SPCK, 1982), 163, 169.
- 4 The following interpretations do not depend on any particular view on whether the texts teach Christ’s pre-existence and deity (see J. D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation*, 2nd ed. [London: SCM Press, 1989], 179–83, 187–94, 206–9, 239–45 and N. T. Wright, “Poetry and Theology in Colossians 1.15–20,” in *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991], 99–136).
- 5 L. L. Helyer, “Cosmic Christology and Col 1:15–20,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 37, no. 2 (1994): 240–41; J. D. G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1996), 89–90.

- 6 R. J. Bauckham, "Where is Wisdom to be Found? Colossians 1:15–20 (2)," in *Reading Texts, Seeking Wisdom: Scripture and Theology*, ed. D. F. Ford and G. N. Stanton (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2003), 132.
- 7 P. Beasley-Murray, "Colossians 1:15–20: An Early Christian Hymn Celebrating the Lordship of Christ," in *Pauline Studies*, ed. D. A. Hagner and M. J. Harris (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980), 171–74.
- 8 See D. J. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and Philemon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; Nottingham: IVP, 2008), 125–26.
- 9 M. W. Holmes, "Clement of Rome," in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, ed. R. P. Martin and P. H. Davids (Downers Grove, IL and Leicester: IVP, 1997), 235.
- 10 On possible references here to humanity's primal sin, see A. J. M. Wedderburn, "Adam in Paul's Letter to the Romans," in *Studia Biblica 1978, III: Papers on Paul and Other New Testament Authors*, ed. E. A. Livingstone (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1980), *passim*.
- 11 N. T. Wright, "The Letter to the Romans," in *The New Interpreter's Bible* 10 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 433.
- 12 This disruption can thus be understood as both the breakdown of an already existing (created) order (as in 1:25) and the failure to realize an ideal future (eschatological) order (as in 8:21).
- 13 Key contributions include those of G. B. Caird, *Principalities and Powers: A Study in Pauline Theology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956); H. Berkhof, *Christ and the Powers*, trans. J. H. Yoder (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1977); A. W. Carr, *Angels and Principalities: The Background, Meaning, and Development of the Pauline Phrase hai archai kai hai exousiai* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); and W. Wink, *Naming the Powers: The Language of Power in the New Testament* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1984).
- 14 R. J. Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 19.
- 15 Bauckham, *Revelation*, 35.
- 16 G. B. Caird, *The Revelation of St John the Divine*, 2nd ed. (London: A & C Black, 1984), 147–48, 164; Bauckham, *Revelation*, 35–36, 89–90; G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1999), 623, 680, 707, 847.
- 17 E.g. Wink, *Powers*, 40–55; Wright, *Paul*, 1311–12, 1317–18.
- 18 J. D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 104–10.
- 19 So (on 1 Cor 2:6–8) Carr, *Angels*, 118–20; G. D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1987), 103–4; (on 1 Cor 15:24) A. C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing

- Co.; Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2000), 1232–33; R. E. Ciampa and B. S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; Nottingham: Apollos, 2010), 768–70; (on Rom 13:1f.) J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9–16* (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1988), 760; D. J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996), 795–96.
- 20 So (on 1 Cor 2:6–8) C. K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 2nd ed. (London: A&CBlack, 1971), 70; D. G. Reid, “Principalities and Powers,” in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. G. F. Hawthorne, R. P. Martin, and D. G. Reid (Downers Grove, IL and Leicester, IVP, 1993), 748; (on 1 Cor 15:24) Caird, *Principalities*, ix; Fee, *First Corinthians*, 754; (on Rom 8:38) C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, vol. I (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975), 442–43; J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8* (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1988), 507 (and most commentators).
- 21 Cullmann’s view (O. Cullmann, *The State in the New Testament*, 2nd ed. [New York: Scribner, 1963], 53–54, 70–83) that even these verses refer also to spiritual powers has won little support. See Carr, *Angels*, 115–16; Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 760.
- 22 Dunn, *Colossians*, 92–93, 102–3; J.-N. Aletti, “Colossiens: Un Tournant dans la Christologie Néotestamentaire: Problèmes et Propositions,” *Liber annuus Studii biblici franciscani* 49 (1999): 216–17.
- 23 P. T. O’Brien, “Principalities and Powers: Opponents of the Church,” in *Biblical Interpretation and the Church: Text and Context*, ed. D. A. Carson (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1984), 135–36; C. E. Arnold, *Ephesians: Power and Magic: The Concept of Power in Ephesians in Light of Its Historical Setting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 64–68; A. T. Lincoln, *Ephesians* (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1990), 62–64.
- 24 See also Arnold, *Ephesians*, 52–54 and *passim*.
- 25 See Barth, “Christ,” 163–64.
- 26 Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 62.
- 27 Phil 2:9–11 also anticipates a future submission of creation to Christ, and Heb 2:8 a future subordination of the powers (see H. W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* [Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1989], 72).
- 28 F. F. Bruce, “Colossian Problems Part 2: The ‘Christ Hymn’ of Colossians 1:15–20,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 141 (1984): 109–10; Bauckham, “Wisdom,” 136. *Contra* Berkhof (*Powers*, 39–43), who suggests that the powers are reconciled in the coming age.
- 29 E. Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1971), 55; Dunn, *Colossians*, 96; *contra* C. E. Arnold, “Jesus Christ: ‘Head’ of the Church (Colossians and Ephesians),” in *Jesus of Nazareth Lord and Christ: Essays on the Historical Jesus and New Testament Christology*, ed. J. B. Green and M. M. B. Turner (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1994), 346–47.

- 30 The cosmic order described in *1 Clem.* 19–20 is also used as a model for the ordering of the church (21.1ff.) (D. G. Horrell, *The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence: Interests and Ideology from 1 Corinthians to 1 Clem.* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996], 255–56).
- 31 Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 69.
- 32 Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 68–69.
- 33 See Horrell, *Social Ethos*, 263. The recurrence of this theme in early Christian tradition (including 1 Pt) counts against the view that Rom 13 is anomalous and wholly context-specific (W. Howard-Brook, “Come Out, My People!” *God’s Call out of Empire in the Bible and Beyond* [Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2010], 464; see also M. Borg, “A New Context for Romans xiii,” *New Testament Studies* 19 [1972–73]: 205). There is in any case no evidence for this in the text.
- 34 The argument of Towner (P. H. Towner, “Romans 13:1–7 and Paul’s Missiological Perspective: A Call to Political Quietism or Transformation?” in *Romans and the People of God: Essays in Honor of Gordon. D. Fee on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, eds. S. K. Soderlund and N. T. Wright [Grand Rapids: MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999], 164–68) that Paul is encouraging engagement with societal structures to effect their transformation depends too heavily on the doubtful argument of Winter (B. W. Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as Benefactors and Citizens* [Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1994], 33–38) that 13:3 uses the language of public benefaction (on this see Williams, *Good Works*, 142–43).
- 35 Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 169.
- 36 Knoch, *Erste Petrusbrief*, 79; Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 169–70.
- 37 Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 771; Horrell, *Social Ethos*, 272–73; Wright, “Romans,” 721.
- 38 I. H. Marshall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 305; *contra* Knoch, *Erste Petrusbrief*, 79.
- 39 Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 773.
- 40 Moo, *Romans*, 802; R. N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2016), 962; *pace* Wright, *Paul*, 1302.
- 41 Tim Carter argues that Paul is being ironic throughout the passage (T. L. Carter, “Violence and the State: Do I Honour, Obey and Pay Taxes? The Irony of Romans 13,” in *Expecting Justice but Seeing Bloodshed: Some Baptist Contributions to Following Jesus in a Violent World*, ed. A. Clarke [Oxford: Whitley Publications, 2004], *passim.*), but the fact that there is (by Carter’s own admission, 88) no irony in 1 Pt 2 tells against this interpretation.
- 42 G. Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity*, ed. and trans. J. H. Schütz (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1982), 36.
- 43 Caesar’s claim is based on the state’s right to levy taxes (Cullmann, *State*, 32–33) or to repayment for the benefits of Roman rule (R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A*

- Commentary on the Greek Text* [Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2002], 468–69).
- 44 Bruce, “Caesar,” 258–61; J. Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53* (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1993), 960–61; Dunn, *Jesus*, 650–51.
- 45 C. K. Barrett, “The New Testament Doctrine of Church and State,” in *New Testament Essays* (London, SPCK, 1972), 9; France, *Mark*, 466. Many arguments against this conclusion center on the coin: the emperor’s image and inscription are idolatrous and blasphemous; Jesus’s questioners are compromised by having one, while he himself does not; he is calling them to divest themselves of the imperial coinage and its implicit loyalty in favor of obedience to God alone (see C. Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark’s Story of Jesus* [Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988], 311–12; Wright, *Jesus*, 503, 506; Howard-Brook, *Come Out*, 404–5). But the pericope does not identify the coin as idolatrous; the image and inscription are cited only to prove that it is Caesar’s property (H. St. J. Hart, “The Coin of ‘Render unto Caesar . . .’ [A Note on Some Aspects of Mark 12:13–17; Matt. 22:15–22; Luke 20:20–26],” in Bammel and Moule, *Jesus*, 241–42). The coins were in widespread use among the Jews, and even Jesus can apparently hold and/or look at one (W. D. Davies and D. C. Allison, Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew*, vol. III [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997], 215–16); his not having a coin can be explained by its high value, and at least in Mk (12:16) and Mt (22:19) even his opponents do not “have” the coin but “bring” it. It is also hardly likely that such a supposedly subversive part of the Jesus tradition would leave so little mark in earliest Christianity.
- 46 France, *Mark*, 466, 469 (italics original).
- 47 C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*, 2nd ed. (London: SPCK; Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1978), 536–37; G. R. Beasley-Murray, *John* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 331.
- 48 Barrett, “Church and State,” 5–6. However, in his important study of Acts C. Kavin Rowe challenges the broad consensus that the book is pro-Roman and presents Christians as good citizens (C. K. Rowe, *World Upside Down: Reading Acts in the Graeco-Roman Age* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2009], *passim*; see esp. 87–89). While he acknowledges that Christianity is not a counter-state, an aspiring replacement for Rome, he denies that this entails its acceptance of the pagan order; on the contrary, the Christian mission undermines and eventually overthrows pagan culture. Constraints of space forbid detailed consideration of Rowe’s careful arguments here, but it is unclear that his reading satisfactorily accounts for either the repeated judgment of Roman authorities that Paul is innocent of *any* wrongdoing, or the complete absence from the narrative of any points of conflict between Roman and divine demands, even such an obvious one as the imperial cult. See further below, Chapter 8.

- 49 Moo, *Romans*, 809–10.
- 50 Barrett, “Church and State,” 9; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol. III, 216–17.
- 51 See Cullmann, *State*, 62; Caird, *Revelation*, 223–24; Beale, *Revelation*, 704–5.
- 52 Cullmann, *State*, 65; Beale, *Revelation*, 705, 898.
- 53 See e.g. D. H. Sang, “First Peter and the State: A Study of the Contribution of 1 Pt. 2:13–17 to the New Testament Teaching on the Christian and the Civil Authorities” (ThM diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1980), 131–32, 135; A. Aejmelaeus, “Pauline Heritage in 1 Peter: A Study of Literary Dependence in 1 Peter 2:13–25,” in *The Early Reception of Paul*, ed. K. Liljeström (Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society, 2011), 131.
- 54 D. G. Horrell, “The Product of a Petrine Circle? Challenging an Emerging Consensus,” in *Becoming Christian: Essays on 1 Peter and the Making of Christian Identity* (London and New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 17. Achtemeier (*1 Peter*, 181) identifies an eighth parallel in the use of *ὑπερέχω* (Rom 13:1; 1 Pt 2:13), while Horrell points out another, *διὰ συνείδησιν*, between Rom 13:5 and 1 Pt 2:19.
- 55 Horrell, “Petrine Circle,” 19–20.
- 56 See e.g. F. J. A. Hort, *The First Epistle of St Peter I.1–II.17: The Greek Text with Introductory Lecture, Commentary, and Additional Notes* (London: Macmillan, 1898), 140–41; Aejmelaeus, “Pauline Heritage,” 130–32, 144.
- 57 Elliott (*1 Peter*, 493) writes, “The Petrine conception of the function of civil authority is a simple utilitarian one, devoid of divine warrant.” See also e.g. Beare, *First Epistle*, 114; Légasse, “Soumission,” 391–92.
- 58 E.g. H. Windisch, *Die Katholischen Briefe*, 3rd ed. (Tübingen: Mohr, 1951), 62–63; Kamlah, “Υποτάσσεσθαι,” 240–41.
- 59 Goldstein, “Politischen Paränesen,” 100–1; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 181.
- 60 See especially Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 180–82.
- 61 See e.g. W. C. van Unnik, “A Classical Parallel to 1 Peter ii.14 and 20,” *New Testament Studies* 2 (1956): 200; Perkins, *First Peter*, 48; and again Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 180.
- 62 1 Tm 2:1–4; Ti 3:1–2. This last point of course depends on the provenance of the Pastorals, which is uncertain on the assumption adopted here that they are post-Pauline. Young says (F. Young, *The Theology of the Pastoral Letters* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994], 23), “It is a good guess that they derive from Pauline churches in Asia Minor . . . but in all honesty, that is only a guess.”
- 63 Elliott, *1 Peter*, 38. See also K. Liljeström, “Approaching the Early Reception of Paul: An Introduction,” in Liljeström, *Early Reception*, 17.
- 64 See Wright, *New Testament*, 354–55; Dunn, *Paul*, 674–75, 679–80.
- 65 Goldstein, “Politischen Paränesen,” 103–4; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 181.
- 66 On this as the background to 2:15, see e.g. Kelly, *Epistles*, 111; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 127–28.

67 Dunn, *Paul*, 674.

68 See D. Lührmann, “Neutestamentliche Haustafeln und antike Ökonomie,” *New Testament Studies* 27 (1981): 94–95.

69 See also *1 Clem.* 37:4–5; Holmes, “Clement,” 235.

70 E.g. K. R. Snodgrass, “Galatians 3:28—Conundrum or Solution?” in *Women, Authority and the Bible*, ed. A. Mickelsen (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1986), 178–81; R. N. Longenecker, *Galatians* (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1990), 156–57.

71 See E. Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (London: SCM Press, 1983), 208–18.

72 E.g. S. Motyer, “The Relationship between Paul’s Gospel of ‘All One in Christ Jesus’ (Gal. 3:28) and the ‘Household Codes,’” *Vox Evangelica* 19 (1989): 43, 45; L. L. Belleville, *Women Leaders and the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 181.

73 Dunn, *Paul*, 593.

74 See Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 57–58, 68–69.

75 Theissen (*Social Setting*, 107–8) famously describes this ethos as “love-patriarchalism.”

76 W. L. Liefeld, *Ephesians* (Downers Grove, IL and Leicester: IVP, 1997), 140–41; I. H. Marshall, “Mutual Love and Submission in Marriage: Colossians 3:18–19 and Ephesians 5:21–33,” in Pierce and Groothuis, *Biblical Equality*, 196–97. For the opposite view see W. A. Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers; Leicester: Apollos, 2004), 196–98.

77 C. S. Keener, *Paul, Women and Wives: Marriage and Women’s Ministry in the Letters of Paul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1992), 157 (italics original).

78 Motyer, “Relationship,” 43; Keener, *Paul*, 157–59, 166–67. The same argument can be extended to the other pairings (6:1–9), although *ὑποτάσσω* is not used for these in Eph.

79 See Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism*, 191. The only other call for mutual subordination is found in *1 Clem.*, explicitly in 37.5–38.2 and implicitly elsewhere (2.1; 19–20). Unlike in Eph 5:21, the idea is spelled out in some detail, and includes some kind of submission by strong to weak, rich to poor, and wise to humble (38.2), but even here it co-exists with the traditional subordination of women and children/younger people (1.3, 3.3, 21.6). See Horrell, *Social Ethos*, 254, 256–57, 261–62, 264–65.

80 Marshall, “Mutual Love,” 197.

81 This distinction has some limited affinities to that proposed by Padgett (*As Christ Submits*, 38–39), though he argues that both verses 21 and 22 refer to his “Type II” (i.e. egalitarian) subordination.

82 See E. Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 516.

- 83 Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 365–67; Best, *Ephesians*, 516–17. Further support for this juxtaposition lies in its placement at the transition between general paranesis (4:1–5:21) and instructions to specific groups (5:22–6:9).
- 84 E.g. on 1 Tm 2:11–15, see B. Witherington III, *Women in the Earliest Churches* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 120–22; Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 438–39.
- 85 Schelkle, *Petrusbriefe*, 96; Balch, *Wives*, 1.
- 86 Balch, “Household Codes,” 45–46; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 162–63; J. P. Hering, *The Colossian and Ephesian Haustafeln in Theological Context: An Analysis of Their Origins, Relationship, and Message* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 7–8.
- 87 J. E. Crouch, *The Origin and Intention of the Colossian Haustafel* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1972), 144–45, 149; D. L. Balch, “Household Code,” in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 3, ed. D. N. Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 318; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 183–84.
- 88 Osiek, “Family Matters,” 835–36 (quote on 836).
- 89 M. Y. MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2000), 160.
- 90 Hering, *Haustafeln*, 59.
- 91 A view associated especially with Dibelius and Weidinger; see Lührmann, “Haustafeln,” 83–84. See also A. Standhartinger, “The Origin and Intention of the Household Code in the Letter to the Colossians,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 79 (2000): 119–22.
- 92 See especially Crouch, *Haustafel*, 120–21.
- 93 E.g. D. W. Brown, “Revolutionary Subordination: A Bible Study of the Haustafeln,” *Brethren Life and Thought* 20 (1975): 160; Motyer, “Relationship,” 42–43; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 173.
- 94 Dunn, *Colossians*, 243; A. T. Lincoln, “The Household Code and Wisdom Mode of Colossians,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 74 (1999): 100; though Hering’s survey (*Haustafeln*, 9–60) suggests that the debate is ongoing.
- 95 See especially Balch, *Wives*, 21–62; see also Lührmann, “Haustafeln,” 85–86; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 503, 505–6.
- 96 Lincoln, “Household Code,” 100.
- 97 See D. G. Horrell, “Leadership Patterns and the Development of Ideology in Early Christianity,” in *Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation*, ed. D. G. Horrell (Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd, 1999), 330–31; Towner, “Romans 13:1–7,” 157.
- 98 Associated with Dibelius; see J. T. Fitzgerald, “Haustafeln,” in Freedman, *Dictionary*, vol. 3, 80.
- 99 E.g. Balch, *Wives*, 81–82.
- 100 E.g. Crouch, *Haustafel*, 123–24, 150–51.
- 101 E.g. Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 176.

- 102 Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 358–59.
- 103 For these categories, see J. T. Fitzgerald, “Haustafeln,” 80; see also Balch, *Wives*, 2–10; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 181–82.
- 104 See Dunn, *Colossians*, 244–45; Lincoln, “Household Code,” 109–10; Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 236.
- 105 Thraede (K. Thraede, “Zum Historischen Hintergrund der ‘Haustafeln’ des NT,” in *Pietas*, eds. E. Dassmann and K. S. Frank [Münster: Aschendorff, 1980], 367) even calls the Col code an “Option für eine verantwortungsvolle μεσότης zwischen Macht und ‘Gleichheit.’”
- 106 A. T. Lincoln, “The Theology of Ephesians,” in *The Theology of the Later Pauline Letters*, eds. A. T. Lincoln and A. J. M. Wedderburn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 123 (referring to the author of Eph).
- 107 M. Davies, “Work and Slavery in the New Testament: Impoverishment of Traditions,” in *The Bible in Ethics: The Second Sheffield Colloquium*, eds. J. W. Rogerson, M. Davies, and M. D. Carroll R. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 338–47.
- 108 See Meynell, *Slavery*, 31–32; Moo, *Colossians*, 308. See also below, Chapter 6.
- 109 Harris (M. J. Harris, *Slaves of Christ: A New Testament Metaphor for Total Devotion to Christ* [Leicester: Apollos, 1999], 60) says that μή σοι μελέτω was a “stock phrase, applied by Stoic philosophers to the irrelevance of one’s external situation to the soul’s freedom.” See above, Chapter 2.
- 110 This interpretation, as defended by Bartchy (S. S. Bartchy, *First-Century Slavery and the Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7:21* [Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2003], 155–59, 173–83) and Osiek and Balch (C. Osiek and D. L. Balch, *Families in the New Testament World: Households and House Churches* [Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997], 179–82), is preferred to the common alternatives of “take the opportunity to become free” (so Fee, *First Corinthians*, 315–18; Horrell, *Social Ethos*, 162–66) and “use your slavery even more” (so Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 170–71). The command in verse 23 (μή γίνεσθε δούλοι ανθρώπων) probably does not refer to literal slavery, but to putting oneself in bondage to those who will exert pressure to pursue a change in one’s worldly status at the expense of serving Christ (Fee, *First Corinthians*, 320; Ciampa and Rosner, *First Corinthians*, 326–27).
- 111 *1 Clem.* also sees social status as ordained by God (38.1–2), though it is not here referring to slaves (Horrell, *Social Ethos*, 260–61).
- 112 See V. P. Furnish, *The Theology of the First Letter to the Corinthians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 63–64.
- 113 J. M. G. Barclay, “Paul, Philemon and Christian Slave-ownership,” *New Testament Studies* 37 (1991): 174; K. P. Donfried and I. H. Marshall, *The Theology of the Shorter Pauline Letters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 184–85; Osiek and Balch, *Families*, 175–76.

- 114 Lohse, *Colossians*, 203.
- 115 Lohse, *Colossians*, 187, 203; Harris, *Slaves*, 58–59.
- 116 Lincoln, *Theology*, 124; J. Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006), 140–41.
- 117 Harris, *Slaves*, 55.
- 118 Lohse, *Colossians*, 161; Best, *Ephesians*, 578.
- 119 Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 420; Dunn, *Colossians*, 252–53.
- 120 See also Ign., *Pol.*, 4.3; *Did.* 4.10–11; *Barn.* 19.7.
- 121 Dunn, *Paul*, 586–88.
- 122 Osiek and Balch, *Families*, especially 128–30, 135–36, 140–43.
- 123 Assuming that these verses are not a later interpolation, *pace* Fee (*First Corinthians*, 699–708), Horrell (*Social Ethics*, 184–95) and others. See the discussions in Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 1148–50; Ciampa and Rosner, *First Corinthians*, 718–19.
- 124 Dunn, *Paul*, 591–92; Ciampa and Rosner, *First Corinthians*, 720–25.
- 125 E.g. Keener, *Paul*, 157, 168–69.
- 126 So G. W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1992), 139–42; Young, *Theology*, 113–14; T. R. Schreiner, “An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15: A Dialogue with Scholarship,” in *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9–15*, eds. A. J. Köstenberger, T. R. Schreiner, and H. S. Baldwin (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995), 130–34; see also H. S. Baldwin, “A Difficult Word: ἀδεντέω in 1 Timothy 2:12,” in Köstenberger, Schreiner, and Baldwin, *Women*, 78–80. For alternative views, see Witherington, *Women*, 121–22; R. C. Kroeger and C. C. Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2:11–15 in the Light of Ancient Evidence* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1992), 88–104; Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 452–60.
- 127 Ti 2:5 has an apologetic motive, but the imperative is also given a theological foundation (2:11–14).
- 128 Although the term κεφαλή may primarily denote “pre-eminence” or “primacy,” such concepts entail some kind of hierarchical order, which in turn entails authority and subordination. See Horrell, *Social Ethos*, 170–71, 176; Ciampa and Rosner, *First Corinthians*, 508–9.
- 129 Dunn, *Colossians*, 248.
- 130 *Contra* e.g. W. L. Liefeld, “Women, Submission and Ministry in 1 Corinthians,” in Mickelsen, *Women*, 140–43; Marshall, “Mutual Love,” 192–93.
- 131 *Contra* e.g. Witherington, *Women*, 120–21; Belleville, *Women Leaders*, 157–58.
- 132 Indeed, 1 Cor 11:16 (and perhaps 14:33b) appears to deny this.
- 133 The relativising of family responsibilities in the Synoptic tradition (e.g. Mk 1:20; 3:34f.; 10:29f.; Lk 9:59f.) underlines that the Christian offspring’s identity ἐν κυρίῳ may restrict their subordination to their parents, but Col and Eph seem again to

- assume that there will normally be no conflict. See Best, *Ephesians*, 570; Osiek, "Family Matters," 838–40.
- 134 Horrell, "Leadership Patterns," 328.
- 135 Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 480–81.
- 136 C. Spicq, "La Place ou le Rôle des Jeunes dans Certaines Communautés Néotestamentaires," *Revue Biblique* 76 (1969): 527.
- 137 See Campbell, *Elders*, 206–7.
- 138 J. H. Elliott, "Ministry and Church Order in the New Testament: A Tradition-Historical Analysis (1 Pt 5,1–5 & plls.)," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 32 (1970): 377.
- 139 Horrell, *Social Ethos*, 255. He also notes (264–65) that for Clement order will be restored in the church through the believers' maintaining of the existing social order in the household and the state (1.3; 21.1–6; 60.2–61.2).
- 140 See Osiek and Balch, *Families*, 165–66.
- 141 J. Nolland, *Luke 1–9:20* (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1989), 197; J. B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 212; J. G. McConville, *Exploring the Old Testament Volume 4: The Prophets* (London: SPCK, 2002), 31.
- 142 See e.g. Lk 1:77; Acts 2:38; Col 1:14; Heb 10:18.
- 143 I. H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1978), 183–84; Nolland, *Luke 1–9:20*, 197; Green, *Luke*, 211–12. The idea of freedom from physical bondage to Satan, i.e. in sickness, is not found outside the Synoptic tradition (and Acts) and is never denoted by *ἐλευθερία*.
- 144 Nolland, *Luke 1–9:20*, 197.
- 145 R. E. Ciampa, "Freedom," in Alexander and Rosner, *Dictionary*, 504.
- 146 *NIDNTTE*, 2.175; Harris, *Slaves*, 73; also A. N. Wilder, "Elutheria in the New Testament and Religious Liberty," *Ecumenical Review* 13, no. 4 (1961): 414–15 (referring to Paul). The word-group *is* used in a social sense (e.g. 1 Cor 7:21–22; Gal 3:28), but then it refers only to people's current social status (except in the figurative sense of 1 Cor 7:22). In Ign., *Rom.* 4:3 the words appear to refer to the author's release by Christ, through his martyrdom, from his current captivity.
- 147 W. D. Davies and D. C. Allison, Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew*, vol. II (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 741 (italics original). See also D. E. Garland, "The Temple Tax in Matthew 17:24–25 and the Principle of not Causing Offense," in *Treasures New and Old: Recent Contributions to Matthean Studies*, ed. D. R. Bauer and M. A. Powell (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1996), 73.
- 148 *Contra* Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol. II, 744–45.
- 149 W. Horbury, "The Temple Tax," in Bammel and Moule, *Jesus*, 271, 283–85; Garland, "Temple Tax," 76–78, 92–97; J. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2005), 726–27; R. T. France, *The*

- Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2007), 666–70.
- 150 See G. N. Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People: Studies in Matthew* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), 141–42; Garland, “Temple Tax,” 90–92.
- 151 A similar idea, contrasted with *ἐλευθερία*, is found in 2 Pt 2:19–20 (A. M. Reimer, “Freedom, Liberty,” in Martin and Davids, *Dictionary*, 383).
- 152 Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 349–50; J. K. Chamblin, “Freedom/Liberty,” in Hawthorne, Martin, and Reid, *Dictionary*, 313; Wright, “Romans,” 546. Ignatius (Ign., *Pol.* 4.3) warns of freed slaves’ becoming enslaved to their own longings.
- 153 So J. R. Michaels, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2010), 506; cf. Barrett, *John*, 345; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 133–34.
- 154 Beasley-Murray, *John*, 134. Rv 1:5 also speaks of freedom from sin through Christ; see further *Barn.* 16:8–9 (Reimer, “Freedom,” 383–84).
- 155 Heb 2:14–15 speaks of the destruction of the devil and release from slavery to the fear of death (Reimer, “Freedom,” 383).
- 156 C. K. Barrett, *Freedom and Obligation: A Study of the Epistle to the Galatians* (London: SPCK, 1985), 28; J. D. G. Dunn, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* (London: A & C Black, 1993), 252–53; E. Tamez, “Hagar and Sarah in Galatians: A Case Study in Freedom,” *Word & World* 20, no. 3 (2000): 268–69.
- 157 Niederwimmer, *Freiheit*, 177; G. W. Hansen, *Galatians* (Downers Grove, IL and Leicester: IVP, 1994), 154. For Gentiles, this is the freedom from both the law’s curse (3:13) and the obligation to assume its yoke as a condition of belonging to God’s people. To do this is to put themselves back in slavery to the *στοιχειά*, by which they were bound in their pre-Christian existence (4:8–9).
- 158 E.g. F. F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Free Spirit*, 2nd ed. (Exeter: Paternoster Press and Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980), 18; Barrett, *Freedom*, 56–62.
- 159 E.g. C. Spicq, *Charity and Liberty in the New Testament*, trans. F. V. Manning (Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1965), 91–93; R. N. Longenecker, *Paul, Apostle of Liberty*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2015), 157–58.
- 160 E.g. Dunn, *Galatians*, 254, 263.
- 161 E.g. G. D. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 529–30; W. Coppins, *The Interpretation of Freedom in the Letters of Paul: With Special Reference to the “German” Tradition* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 151–52.
- 162 E.g. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 435–37; Wright, “Romans,” 576–77.
- 163 Spicq, *Charity and Liberty*, 86–87; Ciampa, “Freedom,” 505; Wright, “Romans,” 576–77.
- 164 See also 2 Cor 3:17. Not all the NT writers would necessarily agree with this view of the law (see Jas 1:25; Mt 5:17), but these verses may refer to a renewed law rather

- than simply to the Torah, and this idea may resemble Paul's law of Christ (Gal 6:2) and the Spirit (Rom 8:2). See P. H. Davids, *Commentary on James* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1982), 99–100.
- 165 See Dunn, *Galatians*, 270–72. Acts 15:29 indicates that liberty from food laws was not always part of Christian freedom in the primitive church (see F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 2nd ed. [Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988], 284–85, 295–96). *Did.* 6.3; 8.1 also imposes dietary restrictions (Reimer, “Freedom,” 384).
- 166 Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 440–41; J. D. G. Dunn, *Christian Liberty: A New Testament Perspective* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1993), 76–77; Fee, *Empowering Presence*, 534–36.
- 167 *NIDNTTE*, 2.176.
- 168 Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 666–67; Galloway, *Freedom*, 202–3; Ciampa and Rosner, *First Corinthians*, 252.
- 169 Taking the participle *ὡν* as causal, following Furnish, *First Corinthians*, 74–75; cf. Coppins *Freedom*, 70–73.
- 170 Fee, *First Corinthians*, 252–53; Galloway, *Freedom*, 4–7.
- 171 Galloway, *Freedom*, 7–9, 178, 195.
- 172 Galloway, *Freedom*, 180.
- 173 In Gal 2:5 Paul recalls how he refused to subordinate himself inappropriately to his opponents in Jerusalem, lest he and his readers be enslaved again.
- 174 See Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 700–1.
- 175 This critical distinction is blurred by Coppins, who says (*Freedom*, 73) that Paul “could not be expected, required or compelled to subject himself to the wishes of others.” Within the categories used by Paul, expectation or requirement, in the sense of obligation, are not the same as compulsion.
- 176 Further elements of equality are seen in the various ministries of women and in Paul's teaching on conjugal relations.
- 177 Paul can also use the language for the freedom of license (Rom 6:20; Gal 5:13), but he sees this not as real freedom but as slavery to sin.

Subordination and Freedom in 1 Peter 2:13–17

First Peter 2:13–17 is foundational for the exegetical section of this study; with regard to subordination and freedom it is the most conceptually significant passage in the letter. Only here are found both the *ὑποτάσσω* and *ἐλευθερία* word-groups; indeed, as noted in Chapter 1, the latter appears nowhere else.¹ The opening imperative, *Υποτάγητε*, is the first instance of *ὑποτάσσω* and introduces subordination as the principal theme of this section; another term often connected to the concept is also used (*τιμήσατε/τιμᾶτε* in 2:17). The verb appears again in participial form in 2:18 and 3:1, suggesting that the two following units (2:18–25 and 3:1–6)—which together account for a further three of the word’s six uses—provide further specific examples of the general command in 2:13a.² Moreover, it will be argued below that the author’s references to freedom in 2:16 are part of his description of how the readers are to be subordinate, and they are thus the most explicit indication of how the two subjects are connected. The instructions in these verses also deal with Christian conduct in relation to the state, and so offer the letter’s initial perspective on existing political and social arrangements and their relation to the restored divine order.

This chapter therefore begins the exegetical section of the work with a detailed study of 2:13–17. The first main section sets the passage in its literary context, discussing the content of its introductory verses (2:11–12) and the character of its

wider unit (2:13–3:12); also included is a brief preliminary investigation of the concept of order in 1 Peter. The following detailed exegesis considers the text consecutively in appropriate divisions. The final section draws out the implications of this analysis for the author’s understanding of subordination and freedom, with some further reference to the idea of order.

Context

First Peter 2:13–17 begins a section of ethical exhortation that extends to 3:12 and comprises the first main division of the entire central part of the letter (to 4:11); all this is prefaced by a short introduction (2:11–12).³ These opening two verses indicate that the following paranesis details the readers’ responsibilities resulting from their status as God’s people in an alien and hostile social context.⁴ Three points from this introduction are particularly relevant to this study.

Firstly, as shown in Chapter 1, the address to the readers as *παροίκους και παρεπιδήμους*⁵ (v.11) implies that their Christian identity has alienated and estranged them from their host society, by putting them out of step with the attitudes and actions of their neighbors and the popular values that underlie these. Moreover, their distinctiveness from pagan society is provoking hostility, mainly in the form of verbal attack and perhaps occasional criminal charges, and with the purpose of shaming and marginalizing them into conforming again to the social practices they have abandoned on their conversion.

But secondly, the readers are also enjoined *ἀπέχεσθαι τῶν σαρκικῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν . . . τὴν ἀναστροφήν ὑμῶν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἔχοντες καλήν*. Here abstention from the self-centered and destructive desires of mortal humanity, exemplified by the disruptive conduct of their pagan neighbors (e.g. 1:14,18; 4:2–4),⁶ includes or is even equated⁷ with living in the ways that Gentile outsiders recognize to be good (e.g. 3:1–4).⁸ That is to say, the conduct to be prescribed in the following section appears *both* to accord with God’s will *and* to reflect social standards; these criteria are fundamentally coincident.

This apparent tension between these two points can best be resolved by positing a distinction between two sets of social standards. The author evidently regards the *popular* values and norms of the surrounding culture as incompatible with Christian existence and generative of persecution; these must be repudiated. But the *best* values and norms of that culture are basically consistent with Christian living, and as the following clause reveals, they may also (largely) guarantee the safety of believers; these must be embraced. This is a crucial distinction,

firmly grounded in Greco-Roman thought (see Chapters 2 and 8) and fundamental to the letter's understanding of subordination.

Thirdly, one goal (or consequence) of this good conduct is *ἵνα ἐν ᾧ καταλαλοῦσιν ὑμῶν ὡς κακοποιῶν ἐκ τῶν καλῶν ἔργων ἐποπτεύοντες δοξάσωσιν τὸν θεὸν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐπισκοπῆς*. Most commentators agree that the *ἡμέρα ἐπισκοπῆς* is the time of eschatological judgment,⁹ but opinions differ on whether the glorifying of God is the willing response of people converted by the witness of the Christians' lives¹⁰ or the unwilling reaction of impenitent critics who are now forced to admit that their former accusations were baseless.¹¹ The letter implies that both outcomes are possible (3:1–2; 4:5), and the author may not intend to be specific here.¹² His point is that in circumstances where hostile outsiders slander the readers as evildoers, their accusations will be discredited in their own eyes by the Christians' good works. This could happen either by their own conversion or by their inability to bring any credible charge to the authorities (see further below on 2:14–15). Either way, on the day of God's visitation they will acknowledge him as the source of the believers' conduct.

Thus these introductory verses seem to require the readers both to distance themselves from their former immoral existence and to live among their neighbors according to the best standards of the surrounding society; the author presents these imperatives as essentially congruent.¹³ The stated goal (or result) is that the false accusations of their critics are silenced, whether by conversion or shaming (3:1,16). Since this conduct is the work of God and leads to the glory of God, however, it cannot be merely a pragmatic strategy to ward off persecution, but must also be a divine requirement. Detailed exegesis of 2:13–17 will confirm and expand on these provisional conclusions.

The greater part of the parenetic section 2:13–3:12 is an example of the *Haustafeln* or civic and household codes discussed in Chapter 4. It was shown there that such codes define Christian conduct in the civil and domestic realms in the context of a graded order of unequal relationships in which subordination is the primary imperative. Probably deriving from the *τόποι* of political and household management, which treat the household and the state as the basic units of society that embody the cosmic order, the codes incorporate their hierarchical (and patriarchal) structures in various ways into the life of the Christian community. They appear to promote a twofold goal: a pragmatic conformity to the best values of society that will disarm antagonism and further the gospel, and a principled acceptance of divine authority within political and social structures. These goals are compatible because there is normally no conflict between the requirements of God and those of one's human superiors.

The NT codes exhibit some variety, and 1 Peter 2:13–3:7 differs from its closest parallels in Colossians 3:18–4:1 and Ephesians 5:21–6:9 in its omission of any address to masters and parents/children, its inclusion of civic responsibility, and its focus on external rather than internal relationships.¹⁴ But its close structural similarities to these passages, its endorsement of hierarchical structures and its consequent calls for subordination suggest that it belongs firmly within the same literary tradition and has the same dual purpose. This conclusion is strengthened if, as some scholars believe, the 1 Peter code is in some way dependent on Pauline tradition.¹⁵

This background suggests *prima facie* that the code in 1 Peter should be read as *both* providing a description of socially acceptable conduct within the state and the household¹⁶ that does not provoke unnecessary offence among unbelievers but is most likely to secure their approval,¹⁷ *and* articulating a God-given and normative ethic that defines proper relationships within these divine structures.¹⁸ The two elements may also be expected largely to coincide. But before testing this hypothesis exegetically against the text of 2:13–17, including its central terms (e.g. *ὑποτάσσω* and *ἐλευθερία*) and concepts (e.g. subordination and freedom), a basic description must be offered of the author’s understanding of order, with which such a reading, if correct, will have to be consistent.

Order in 1 Peter

Order is no more a major explicit concept in 1 Peter than in the rest of the NT, and in fact it is assumed or implied less obviously than in some other texts. As shown in Chapter 4, for several NT authors the theme is secondary to that of christology, and since the christology of 1 Peter is “functional and dynamic rather than abstract and formal,”¹⁹ it is not expressed in major statements entailing a particular view of created order.

There is however good reason to think that the author of 1 Peter endorses the basic affirmations regarding order found elsewhere in the NT. These are largely (though not exclusively) grounded in the texts relating to subordination and freedom, which will be discussed at length in this and the next two chapters, so a separate detailed treatment of order in 1 Peter would be repetitive and redundant. But some brief general comments on the theme in the letter as a whole may be provided here; insofar as they derive from these texts, they will be expounded, developed and justified in the following exegesis.

Explicit references to two aspects of order found in other NT books are missing from 1 Peter. Firstly, in the absence of extended christological statements,

the letter includes little on the person of Christ before his appearing in history or about his prior relationship to creation, and none of the christological texts is connected to the idea of a primordial cosmic order defined or mediated by Christ. And secondly, human sin is not directly presented as a cause of cosmic disruption.

Such sin is however clearly and fundamentally unruly (2:11; 4:2–4), while the reference to the rebellious spirits of Noah's time (3:19–20), their implicit connection to the evil and persecution experienced by God's people (3:13–17), and the subordination of the heavenly powers by Christ (3:22) strongly suggest that the author regards them and their human servants as agents of disorder; moreover, the use of the Watchers tradition implies disruption of an existing, created order (see above, Chapter 3). This impression is confirmed by his description of the devil as adversarial and destructive (5:8).²⁰ The powers appear to be conceived only in spiritual and heavenly terms; they are nowhere connected to political or social structures. Their subordination is also a present reality (3:22), although the devil remains actively hostile to believers throughout the world (5:9).

Whilst only 3:18–22 resembles the NT texts that describe the restoring of cosmic order by Christ's exaltation to heaven, the letter's other descriptions of his work also imply his defeat of the forces of disorder, whether human or cosmic.²¹ Thus the death of Christ is the means of the readers' redemption from a futile inherited lifestyle (1:19) and their separation from sins (2:24), while his resurrection and heavenly journey achieve their moral purification and release from the control of evil spiritual powers (3:21–22). His victory over those powers (3:19) and their subordination to him by God (3:22) therefore include the healing of their destructive work among humans.²² Other evidences of Christ's role in re-instituting order are the inauguration of the end of the ages by his coming (1:19) and its final fulfilment in his future appearing (1:7,13).²³

Christ's function as the foundation and keystone of God's people (2:6–7) is also significant, because of the participation of Christians in the effects of God's ordering work. There are numerous indications that in 1 Peter the Christian community is a reflection of the newly ordered world and the place where sin is overcome.²⁴ Christians are presented collectively as a spiritual house and holy priesthood (2:5), which suggests that they are a new temple, like the old one a microcosm of the cosmos.²⁵ They are also the heirs of the status and privileges of Israel (2:9), as (for example) the household and flock of God (4:17; 5:2); they are therefore his people (2:10), those over whom his reign is established. Moreover, in addition to the passages (cited in the previous paragraph) that recount Christ's work and its results, other texts speak of the readers' sanctification and obedience (1:2), their rebirth (1:3,23) and the holiness prescribed for them (1:13–16).

Thus the new cosmic order is currently manifested and experienced in the believing community, which must therefore express that order in its life together, including its internal and external relationships. The letter's exhortatory sections define what this means; they include among the normative relations those of the state (2:13–17) and the household (2:18–3:7), with their graded structures, and even incorporate the ordering of the household into specifically ecclesial contexts (5:1–5), while conditioning some of these hierarchies by the believers' equality in Christ (e.g. 3:7; 5:5b).²⁶

So an initial reading of 1 Peter confirms that the letter belongs within the broad consensus of early Christian thought regarding the concept of order. Before the coming of Christ, the world was disordered by the activity of evil heavenly powers and by the sin of human beings living under their sway. But Christ's death, resurrection and exaltation have corrected this disorder; the powers have been defeated and subordinated to him, so that members of the Christian community are released from bondage to them and its attendant sinful way of life. The new order is currently manifested in the life of the community, including its hierarchical political, social and ecclesial relationships.

The implications of this overview for the author's understanding of subordination and freedom will be considered briefly in the conclusion to this chapter, and then more fully in Chapter 8 below, after the exegetical examination of these themes has been completed.

Exegesis

Υποτάγητε πάση ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει διὰ τὸν κύριον (v.13a). The verse and section open with the aorist passive²⁷ imperative of the verb *ὑποτάσσω*. The primary referent of this word-group in the linguistic context of 1 Peter is the concept of subordination (see below, Appendix 1), which may involve either bringing someone else into subjection or submitting oneself to others. The word is often associated with structures of authority, possibly reflecting its etymology of *ὑπο* + *τάσσω*, “order under,” though these connections are disclosed by the context rather than by the word alone. Such orders are usually hierarchical, though some early Christian texts cited in Chapter 4 show that the idea of mutual subordination is not oxymoronic. It has also been shown above that the concept of subordination is generally connected with ideas of recognition, deference and obedience (see above, Chapters 2–4), though its relation to the last of these is more controversial in Petrine studies (see above, Chapter 1).

In this verse the author is calling his readers to subordinate themselves to someone else. The aorist tense of the imperative may be constative here, intended to embrace the whole of life. It is notable that no limit is placed on the objects of subordination in respect of their character and actions; indeed, the following sections include specific instructions to submit to harsh masters and unbelieving husbands (see below, Chapter 6). It is a response owed to certain people on the grounds of their status, not their qualities.

The meaning of the unusual dative phrase *πάσῃ ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει* has occasioned much debate. A significant minority of commentators have interpreted the noun *κτίσις* to denote a product of human creation, usually on the supposed grounds that the author does not ascribe a divine origin to the civil authorities.²⁸ But although the word can bear this meaning in Greek literature, in both the LXX and elsewhere in the NT it always refers to something created by God, which persuades most scholars that it carries this sense here.²⁹

As a result, many commentators render *πάσῃ ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει* as “to every human creature”; that is, human being.³⁰ This view apparently implies that the author is calling his readers to subordinate themselves to literally every person, in the same way as he requires them to *πάντας τιμῆσατε* (“honor everyone”) in verse 17.³¹ It may suggest that subordination should here be defined in egalitarian as well as, or instead of, hierarchical terms; thus for example Peter Davids interprets it to mean that “Christians are called to give up striving for power and authority over other human beings and instead to pursue the good of others.”³²

But although “human creature” is a plausible translation of *ἀνθρώπινῃ κτίσει*,³³ the immediate and wider contexts of the phrase present serious problems for this view. Firstly, the use of *εἴτε . . . εἴτε* in verses 13b–14 clearly introduces examples of the general principle in 2:13a, and not only these but all the specific objects of subordination in the letter (2:18; 3:1; 5:5) involve recognized political or social superiors within established hierarchical relationships (see below, Chapter 6).³⁴ Nowhere else in 1 Peter is the language or concept of subordination used in an egalitarian (or reciprocal) sense, and the parallel with *πάντας τιμῆσατε* is questionable on the grounds that unlike *ὑποτάσσω*, *τιμῆ* is used for a relationship of superior to inferior (3:7; cp. 1:7; 2:7; see further below); the *πάντας* in verse 17 is also unqualified, perhaps suggesting a wider reference.

Secondly, the idea implied by this reading, that the author is in effect calling for the extending of the egalitarian dimension of the Christian community to outsiders,³⁵ is contrary to his tendency elsewhere in the letter. It will be argued in Chapter 6 that in 5:1–5 he instead extends the hierarchical structure of the Greco-Roman household even to ecclesial relationships, requiring all Christians (not

just wives and children) to subordinate themselves to certain recognized household heads. And wider comparisons with other NT codes (see below, Chapter 8) will suggest that 1 Peter stands closest to 1 Timothy in its greater emphasis on hierarchy. In such a setting the idea of subordination to every human being sits most uneasily.

Perhaps because of these difficulties, the majority of commentators who advocate this interpretation do not seem fully to follow through its implications. Many are willing to expound all the specific subordinate relationships of 2:13–3:7 (and 5:1–5) in purely hierarchical terms without resolving the apparent tension with their understanding of *πάση ἀνθρώπινῃ κτίσει*.³⁶ Others seem to understand an unspoken qualifier: “Subordinate yourselves to every human creature [to whom subordination is due].”³⁷ But this approach in effect limits the scope of *πάσα* to human beings of a particular kind, which is hard to reconcile with the above reading.

Another group of scholars agree that the reference of *πάσα* must be restricted by its literary context, but while accepting that *ἀνθρώπινῃ κτίσει* denotes the product of divine creation, they understand the phrase to mean “something created by God for humans or in the human sphere,” taking *ἀνθρώπινῃ* to refer to what is characteristically human.³⁸ More specifically, it is held to denote human orders or structures of authority created and set in place by God, “ordinance[s] (of God) applying to human relations,”³⁹ “the established authority that results from a created system or structure.”⁴⁰ While some commentators restrict the scope of the phrase to the political authorities, appealing to the immediate context,⁴¹ others extend it to those of the household.⁴² In view of the close relationship between the calls to subordination in 2:13 and 2:18; 3:1 (see below, Chapter 6), the latter option is to be preferred.

The objections to this view are less compelling than their frequent repetition would suggest. The undeniable claim that the specific objects of subordination mentioned in 1 Peter are all people⁴³ may be answered either by Huther’s observation that the authoritative structures are necessarily instantiated in particular individuals,⁴⁴ or by the simpler expedient of taking the phrase as a local dative of sphere rather than a dative indirect object. And although the statement that there are no other examples in extant Greek literature of the use of *κτίσις* to mean “human order” may well be true, it is also misleading;⁴⁵ the word is acknowledged sometimes to refer to the founding of a city or government, and as BDAG says, since “*κτίσις* is . . . the act by which an authoritative or governmental body is created,” by extension “it is prob. also the result of the act, *the . . . authority itself*.”⁴⁶

Thus the internal evidence of the letter, especially its otherwise uncompromisingly hierarchical character, somewhat favors this interpretation of *πάση ἀνθρώπινῃ κτίσει*.⁴⁷ In the context of the author's understanding of order, outlined above, the God-given and authoritative structures of state and household may be understood as providing a suitable framework for human life that is meant to regulate political and social relationships. Subordination thus involves assuming one's appropriate place below one's superiors in each structure, including the attitude and behavior that goes with it.⁴⁸ So by responding to the imperative *Υποτάγητε* in 2:13, 1 Peter's readers make themselves subordinate not just to certain human beings, but to the divine ordering of human life,⁴⁹ and embody in their relationships the restoring of that order in Christ.⁵⁰

The author's application of the adjective *ἀνθρώπινῃ* to the emperor is often held to imply deliberately that the latter is not divine. This claim is often based on the reading of *ἀνθρώπινῃ κτίσει* as "human being," but even the interpretation preferred above places the emperor within the human sphere; it follows that worship of him as a god is excluded. Some commentators therefore see this verse as an implicit and subtle encouragement to the readers to resist social pressure to participate in the cult of the emperor.⁵¹

But although the author clearly regards the emperor as no more than human, his wording suggests that this is something taken for granted by him and his readers, to which he needs to draw no special attention. He can safely assume that they know the emperor is not a god and not to be worshipped and can therefore be included without comment within the human structures within which subordination is due. So while it might legitimately be inferred from 2:13 that the readers should not join in the imperial cult, this is at most a secondary aspect of the author's intended meaning; his primary purpose is that his readers should submit to all human superiors, including the emperor.⁵²

The following adverbial prepositional phrase *διὰ τὸν κύριον* states the cause of or reason for the prescribed subordination. Opinions vary among commentators as to whether the *κύριος* here is Christ⁵³ or God.⁵⁴ In favor of the former is the author's appeal elsewhere to Jesus as the motive for Christian conduct (especially in 2:21–25).⁵⁵ In favor of the latter is the preceding use of *κτίσει*, which would be well matched by a reference to God as creator, and the references to God in 2:15 and 17.⁵⁶ The term certainly denotes Christ in 1:3 and 3:15, but appears to refer to God in the LXX citations of 1:25; 2:3 and 3:12, though these may be deliberately ambiguous.⁵⁷ The author's close identification of Christ with God and his apparent blurring of the distinction between them suggests that even if only one is denoted, the other is probably implied.

The subordination required from the readers in these verses is therefore based first on Christ and/or on God. The author could still see it as just a pragmatic obligation, in which case the readers are to submit because the Lord wants them to confound their accusers and commend the word (see further below on 2:15). But no such reason is stated in verse 13, and so the immediate impression given is that their subordination of themselves within every human structure is grounded simply on dominical and/or divine authority. In that case, 1 Peter treats subordination to superiors within the political and social structures as part of subordination to the Lord within the divine order, as would be expected on the above reading of *πάση ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει*.

It may reasonably be concluded on the basis of this phrase that the author believes Christ and/or God to have the ultimate claim to obedience, and so where there is a conflict between their demands and those of the readers' superiors in state and household, the readers are by implication to refuse their normal submission.⁵⁸ But although there may be further hints of this principle in other places (for example, see below on vv.16–17), the author never states it explicitly, suggesting that he believes there will be few circumstances where subordination is improper; there will normally be no conflict between the requirements of superiors and the will of God (see below on 2:14–15).⁵⁹ So although *διὰ τὸν κύριον* limits *Υποτάγητε* in principle, the letter seems to envisage that it will hardly need to do so in practice. And the limitation is only implicit; the primary purpose of the phrase is to reinforce the imperative and ensure conformity to the divinely given order.

Like *πάση ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει, διὰ τὸν κύριον* also implies that the authority of political and social superiors is derivative, from God, rather than inherent in the bearers. But it is misleading to claim, with Giesen, that “Die Gehorsam gegenüber jedem menschlichen Geschöpf wird verlangt ‘um des Herrn willen’ (*διὰ τὸν κύριον*) und nicht, weil der Staat es verlangt,”⁶⁰ or to see this idea as straightforwardly diminishing the authority of rulers.⁶¹ Again it does implicitly relativize their claim in the exceptional instances of conflict, but otherwise their holding their authority from God gives Christians *greater* reason to submit to them than if that authority were merely their own. Believers are indeed to be subordinate because the state demands it, because it does so in the name of God.

εἴτε βασιλεῖ ὡς ὑπερέχοντι εἴτε ἡγεμόσιν ὡς δι’ αὐτοῦ πεμπτομένοις εἰς ἐκδίχῃσιν κακοποιῶν, ἔπαινον δὲ ἀγαθοποιῶν. (vv.13b–14). The two dative adverbial phrases linked to the foregoing command and to each other by the correlative conjunctions *εἴτε . . . εἴτε* specify examples of the superiors to whom the readers are to subordinate themselves: specifically, the civil authorities at imperial and

provincial level. The first of these, *βασιλεῖ ὡς ὑπερέχοντι*, refers to the emperor as the supreme authority of government and the head of the political and social pyramid, to whom all citizens owe submission.⁶² The conjunction *ὡς* is probably causal rather than appositional,⁶³ in light of the parallel usage in the next phrase, which appears to provide a reason for subordination to the governors.

The second phrase, *ἡγεμόσιν ὡς δι' αὐτοῦ πεμπόμενοις*, refers to the heads of the provincial administration, who are given the emperor's mandate to act on the ground.⁶⁴ The author may have legates and proconsuls specifically in view,⁶⁵ or "governors" in a more inclusive sense, perhaps connoting all imperially sanctioned political authority.⁶⁶ Because they have been sent through the emperor, a measure of his authority has been delegated to them, and therefore the readers are to be subordinate to them too.⁶⁷

A syntactical point should also be noted. The preposition *διὰ*, used with the genitive to denote agency, normally refers to intermediate rather than ultimate agency;⁶⁸ in the NT the only unambiguous exceptions (e.g. Gal 4:7; 1 Cor 1:9) occur where the ultimate agent is or includes God. Since the rule is not invariable no argument from the preposition can be conclusive; but its use here, by a fairly skilled author of Greek, *may* indicate a belief that the governors are sent *through* the emperor *by* someone else, namely God.⁶⁹ This reading appears to make good sense in the context of a political structure of authority created by God.

The next prepositional phrase denotes the dual purpose for which the emperor has sent the governors: *εἰς ἐκδίκησιν κακοποιῶν, ἔπαινον δὲ ἀγαθοποιῶν*. The first part refers to the authorities' punishment of criminals. The word *ἐκδίκησις* ascribed to the civil government is most naturally understood as a legal and judicial penalty.⁷⁰ It is exacted against certain *κακοποιῶν*, those whose wicked deeds transgress the law and who are thereby insubordinate to the governors.⁷¹

The second part of the phrase speaks of the governors' praise of those who do good, and it has occasioned much more scholarly discussion and disagreement. The verb *ἀγαδοποιέω* with its cognates appears six times in 1 Peter and can claim to be the author's foundational imperative, of which even *ὑποτάσσω* is exegetical. The *ἀγαδοποιῶν* of this verse are clearly contrasted with the *κακοποιῶν*—the adjectives denote two classes of people distinguished by their ethical qualities⁷²—and the BDAG definition "*beneficent, doing good, upright*"⁷³ is generally accepted. But it raises the question of by what standard the author reckons these people to be good.

A common view is that *ἀγαδοποιῶν* are good people according to *both* God's will *and* what is socially approved. The connection of *ἀγαδοποιέω* with *τὸ θελημα τοῦ θεοῦ* in verse 15, and with divine approval elsewhere in the letter (2:20;

3:5–6,17), strongly suggests that *ἀγαθοποιίαι* are those who do what is right in the sight of God.⁷⁴ But since the governors are sent to approve *ἀγαθοποιίαι*, and by doing good (*ἀγαθοποιούοντας*) the readers can hope to silence their critics (see below), the term is naturally understood also to include civil obedience and respect for social mores. Thus *ἀγαθοποιίαι* are good before both God and the state and society.⁷⁵

This view has however been questioned by those who argue for restricting the term to only one of these meanings. For example, Bruce Winter has presented evidence for identifying the good deeds commended in 1 Peter with public benefactions by wealthy Christians. He appeals to the political context of this passage, to the use of *το ἀγαθόν* and *το ἀγαθόν ἔργον* in inscriptions referring to public benefactions, to the notable scale of the acts (such that the authorities are aware of them), and to their intended effect of refuting accusations and strengthening social relationships.⁷⁶ Other commentators either affirm this view in some form⁷⁷ or otherwise maintain that *ἀγαθοποιίαι* refers only to those who do good in the eyes of society.⁷⁸

Winter's argument has been effectively challenged by Travis Williams in an article investigating the economic feasibility of public benefactions on the part of 1 Peter's readers. On the basis of a thorough study of their socio-economic status, he concludes:

The costs of the beneficent acts proposed by Winter . . . would have been outside the financial reach of most communities. What is more, even if the Christian communities were large enough to contribute a sizeable amount (c. 1,000 *denarii*), these donations could not have been made with any degree of frequency.⁷⁹

He claims that only the unlikely help of a very wealthy family could have made such an apologetic strategy effective, and also points out that some of the injunctions to do good in the letter, notably 2:20 (addressed to slaves), cannot refer to public benefactions.⁸⁰

Williams has shown convincingly that Winter's argument is insufficiently strong to restrict the meaning of *ἀγαθοποιίαι* to public benefactors, or even to those who measure well according to the standards of society. But he has also argued for limiting it in the other direction, to those who do the will of God irrespective of social approval. He suggests that the language of "good works" in 1 Peter refers to actions that affect one's standing before God and that conform to his standards and the example of Christ.⁸¹ His rejection of the view that these works reflect contemporary social standards and are likely to be received

positively by non-Christians is based largely on his claim that the author expects them to provoke further hostility.⁸²

But although Williams offers a wealth of evidence for understanding *ἀγαδοποιέω* and related words in terms of God's will, his argument that the readers' good works are not approved by their society is seriously one-sided. It is true that the author acknowledges that suffering for doing good is *possible* (2:20; 3:14,17; perhaps 3:6), and in referring to it three or four times he implies that it does sometimes happen. But it is never presented as *probable* (that is, likely to be experienced by most Christians), let alone *normal*, and 3:13–14 indicates strongly that it is anything but; those who are zealous for good are unlikely to be harmed.⁸³ In order to sustain this interpretation in 2:14–15, Williams also has to argue that the silencing of accusers that the good works are intended to achieve will happen only eschatologically,⁸⁴ which is also unlikely (see below on v.15).

So it would appear that the widespread view of *ἀγαδοποιόι* as those who do good by both divine and human standards is still securely grounded. The author envisages a close correlation between God's will and what is approved by society as represented by the state, and therefore that by doing good his readers can both be faithful to God and deflect unfair accusations.⁸⁵ This confirms that he regards subordination to one's superiors within the authoritative structures of state and household as usually an expression of subordination to God within the divine order.

These conclusions bear upon the other debated issue regarding the phrase *ἔπαινον δὲ ἀγαδοποιῶν*: the nature of the *ἔπαινος* that the authorities are supposed to give. Some scholars interpret this as the bestowing of public honors such as inscriptions and ceremonies,⁸⁶ and others as the more general recognition, approval and promotion of good conduct, which could be expressed in a range of actions.⁸⁷ However, the contrasting of *ἔπαινος* with the preceding *ἐκδίκησις* may indicate that the former too is a legal and judicial term, denoting the protection in law and acquittal of wrong granted by the authorities to those who do good.⁸⁸ The supposed scenario would then be the possible accusation of Christians to the governors by their hostile neighbors for alleged anti-social behavior. By doing good according to God's will and the standards of society, including subordinating themselves to the authorities, the readers can guard themselves against formal charges and confidently expect to be exonerated if any should be brought.⁸⁹

It is true that the author says only that the emperor has *sent* the governors to punish evildoers and praise those who do good, not that they are actually doing so. Some scholars have therefore suggested that he is presenting their role in ideal terms, perhaps affirming the value of the authorities in maintaining public order

without denying that they may be causing problems for the Christians.⁹⁰ But while the use of the word *πεμπομένοις* may conceivably be a tacit acknowledgment that governors' administration of justice is less than perfect, the logic of the passage as so far described requires that this statement be a largely accurate description of what (in the author's view) was really happening.⁹¹ It is hard to see why the author should mention the authorities' role at all except to motivate the readers to be subordinate and live as *ἀγαθοποιόι* in the hope of avoiding punishment and receiving praise.

An alternative view has been offered by Paul Holloway and Travis Williams, who suggest that *ἡγεμόσιν ὡς δι' αὐτοῦ πεμπομένοις εἰς ἐκδίκησιν κακοποιῶν ἔπαινον δὲ ἀγαθοποιῶν* is "a parade example of Roman imperial propaganda,"⁹² "a common *topos* on the appropriate administration of governing authorities."⁹³ Good works *should* be rewarded by the authorities, but in practice they are often not; yet the readers "must continue to practice good works and thus place themselves within the auspices of praise under which the governor should be working."⁹⁴ That is to say, they are "to style themselves *ἀγαθοποιόι* and in so doing to deploy the 'public transcript' to counter and ultimately undermine the accusations of their detractors."⁹⁵

It is entirely possible that the author is quoting a standard Roman statement about the role of civil government, but there is no obvious basis in the text for asserting that he does so ironically. And again it is unclear how the strategy outlined by Holloway and Williams could be expected to work unless the "propaganda" was substantially true; only so could the readers be generally assured of protection and vindication by doing good. Moreover, the very fact that Roman authorities could describe themselves in these terms confirms the idea that the author sees a correlation between the highest values of society and the norms of Christian living, and believes that the (God-given) role of the state is to represent and uphold them, as God's instrument of both retribution and approbation.⁹⁶

ὅτι οὕτως ἐστὶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ ἀγαθοποιούντας φιμῶν τὴν τῶν ἀφρόνων ἀνθρώπων ἀγνωσίαν (υ.15). The next clause appears to be causal (*ὅτι*), giving the reason for the imperative to subordination in verse 13a, in light of the information in verses 13b–14.⁹⁷ There is some doubt, however, as to whether the following adverb *οὕτως* is retrospective, referring to what precedes,⁹⁸ or prospective, referring to what follows⁹⁹ (or possibly both).¹⁰⁰ If the former, then *τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ* is that the readers subordinate themselves within every human structure, and specifically to the civil authorities; if the latter, it is for them to silence the ignorance of the foolish by doing good. Among the most significant of the various arguments for these positions is the retrospective use of *οὕτως* elsewhere in the

letter (3:5) and commonly in the NT.¹⁰¹ But still more importantly, this reading fits better with the argument of the passage to this point.

Thus verse 15 indicates that the author's call to subordination is not a merely pragmatic strategy designed to combat abuse. It certainly has that effect and probably that purpose (see also 3:1–2; cp. 3:13–16), but subordination is in itself *τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ* and is therefore an imperative of the divine order. As verse 13 grounds subordination to the authorities, and to human superiors generally, simply on dominical (and/or perhaps divine) authority (*διὰ τὸν κύριον*), so this verse grounds it simply on divine authority, again as in fitting in the context of *πάσα ἀνθρώπινη κτίσις*.

On this basis the participle *ἀγαθοποιούντας* is best taken as instrumental, and the immediately following infinitive clause to which it relates (*φιμοῦν τὴν τῶν ἀφρόνων ἀνθρώπων ἀγνωσίαν*) as resultant and (perhaps) purposive.¹⁰² It is God's will for the readers to be subordinate, and the consequence of their doing good in this way is to silence the ignorance of foolish people, because the authorities will normally punish evil and praise good. This interpretation fits well with the conclusion drawn above regarding the meaning of *ἀγαθοποιέω*; this refers to action that both conforms to divine standards (subordination, one example of it, is said to be *τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ*) and reflects society's highest values so as to attract official approval and vindication (*φιμοῦν . . . τὴν ἀγνωσίαν*).¹⁰³

It follows that the infinitive *φιμοῦν* probably refers to the silencing of the foolish through the mediation of the civil authorities. This process may be indirect: by their obedience to the laws laid down by the emperor and governors the readers give no basis for their enemies to accuse them before the courts. Or it may be direct: on the (probably rare) occasions when they are brought before a tribunal by their detractors, they are found innocent of wrong and released unharmed. The lack of clear references in the letter to legal proceedings against Christians suggests that the former is mainly in view, but the latter cannot be excluded altogether.¹⁰⁴

Less likely, however, are interpretations that identify the silencing of the slanderers in verse 15 with their eschatological glorifying of God in verse 12.¹⁰⁵ It was argued above that the latter response may well at least include that of converts, who are not obviously in view here. But more importantly, an eschatological perspective would again render irrelevant the reference in verse 14 to the role of the authorities. In this connection the silencing is most naturally viewed as the removing from the accusers of any legal basis for their accusations, thereby rendering their opposition futile or possibly putting them to shame before the governors.

The adjective *ἄφρων* denotes a folly that is both unperceptive and irresponsible, and that is opposed to godliness; the definite article used with *ἀνθρώπων* is probably generic, thus referring to foolish people generally. The noun *ἀγνοσία* refers to ignorance of and alienation from God, and to the evil-speaking that flows from it.¹⁰⁶ The whole noun phrase signifies those who without cause accuse the readers of disregard for the civil order and the law in which this is embodied; besides placing them in opposition to God, it also underlines their disruptive and disorderly character.¹⁰⁷ The baseless nature of their abuse is to be exposed by the readers' doing good in subordinating themselves to the authorities.

ὡς ἐλεύθεροι καὶ μὴ ὡς ἐπικάλυμμα ἔχοντες τῆς κακίας τὴν ἐλευθερίαν ἀλλ' ὡς θεοῦ δοῦλοι (v.16). Verse 16 provides further teaching on how the subordination required of the readers in verse 13a is to be put into effect. The comparative *ὡς* relates the verse to something that precedes it, while the nominative *ἐλεύθεροι* ties it back adverbially to the opening *Υποτάγητε*, introducing a new modification of that command rather than developing that of verses 13b–14 or the rationale of verse 15.¹⁰⁸

As shown in Chapter 1, the principal discussion regarding this verse concerns the nature of the freedom denoted by the words *ἐλεύθεροι* and *ἐλευθερία*. Is this essentially a moral freedom, involving liberation from the readers' former life and the evil cosmic powers that controlled it, and therefore wholly independent of their outward circumstances? Or is it political or social, freeing them in some sense from the jurisdiction of, and obligation to, the authorities of the state (and household)?¹⁰⁹ Much of the internal evidence is found in the other Petrine texts relating to freedom; these will be considered at length in Chapter 7, and that exegesis should not be pre-empted at this point. But some comments on the concept based principally on 2:13–17 may be offered here.

Among the arguments advanced for the second view, three are based largely on this passage. Firstly, the main subject of 2:13–17 is the relationship of believers to the governing authorities; in such a context it is natural to read *ἐλεύθεροι* in a political sense.¹¹⁰ Secondly, the author's supposed reluctance to present the rulers as established by God or to ascribe to them a sacred status implies the relativizing and even subversion of their claims with respect to those of God, and this is implied more explicitly in verse 17 (see below).¹¹¹ Thirdly, the description of the readers as *θεοῦ δοῦλοι* in this verse suggests that believers are answerable only to God and thus free from obligation to their superiors; their duties to the state are imposed only by God and not by the authorities themselves,¹¹² and the subordination required of them is therefore voluntary and not compelled.¹¹³

However, other relevant factors significantly reduce the force of these arguments and cast doubt on the claim that *ἐλεύθεροι* carries a political sense in 2:16. Firstly, despite the political context of 2:13–15,17, the close proximity of the phrase *θεοῦ δοῦλοι* indicates that *ἐλευθερία* is being contrasted with slavery, not with obligation to the authorities. And since some of the readers *were* slaves in a socio-political sense, their freedom is best understood in a different way, most obviously as moral. Furthermore, the reference to freedom comes after the implicit call to do good (not directly after the requirement of subordination), which indicates that it might be misunderstood as undermining this; verse 16 is a better response to that potential problem if freedom is understood non-politically.

Secondly, reasons have been given above to question the view that the author does not regard civil government as appointed by God. The meaning and significance attached to many of the key phrases in verses 13–15 suggest on the contrary that he regards the authoritative structure of the state as God-given and accordingly as having a divine mandate. And so, while this status still entails that in (rare) cases of conflict the readers should submit to God/Christ rather than the state, it otherwise enhances rather than subverts the authority of rulers.

Thirdly, it has already been shown in the discussion of *διὰ τὸν κύριον* that the appeal to divine motives (such as *θεοῦ δοῦλοι*) for subordination also does not diminish the authority of government (again, except by relativizing it); the readers' duty as slaves of God *includes*, not *replaces*, their obligation to political rulers. The association of slavery with exclusive obedience should not be pressed to imply that believers are free from the authorities; the metaphor excludes obedience to rival masters, but not necessarily to subordinate ones.

In any case, it was also shown above that the idea that subordination is required because God commands it and not because the authorities do is conceptually incoherent. If God demands this response to human rulers, then believers are divinely required to do what they say, and their obligation to their superiors is strengthened, not weakened. The validity and significance of the distinction between voluntary and constrained subordination is also doubtful: since the state is part of the divine order and an instrument of divine justice, the power of government to punish and praise is still regarded by the author as a proper incentive for subordination *διὰ τὸν κύριον*, as the reference to it in 2:14 clearly indicates.

It must be concluded from these arguments that the case for a political reading of *ἐλεύθεροι* and *ἐλευθερία* has not been made on the basis of this passage. It appears not to conform to either the use of *θεοῦ δοῦλοι* in verse 16 or the preceding teaching on the authority of the state. Moreover, the interpretation of *ἐλεύθεροι* in terms of moral freedom fits well with the rest of the verse without the need

to appeal to a further level of meaning, as the remainder of this section will demonstrate.¹¹⁴

Having instructed the readers to be subordinate *ὡς ἐλεύθεροι*, the author adds the qualification *καὶ μὴ ὡς ἐπικάλυμμα ἔχοντες τῆς κακίας τὴν ἐλευθερίαν*. There is no evidence from elsewhere in the letter to suggest that this adverbial participial phrase¹¹⁵ is meant as a corrective to actual evil behavior among the readers, though they are clearly facing accusations of being *κακοποιόι* (2:12), a threat to stability and harmony in the household and the state. The author expects that they will silence these foolish charges by doing good, but this depends on their not embracing the wrong kind of freedom: the kind that serves as an excuse for recapitulating the evil deeds of their former life.¹¹⁶ More importantly, such a relapse into old patterns of conduct is incompatible with the divine imperative to subordination.

The word *κακία* is a general one for moral evil.¹¹⁷ It may be identified with the *σαρκικάι ἐπιθυμίαι* of 2:11, the *ἀνθρώπων ἐπιθυμίαι* of 4:2 and the *ἁμαρτίαι* of 4:1 (cp. 2:24) in which these issue (e.g. 4:3–4). So clearly it refers to the kind of license that the readers might substitute for true freedom.¹¹⁸ But the question has been raised of whether it has a more specific focus in the context of this verse and paragraph, and various proposals have been offered.¹¹⁹ The most likely has to do with disrespect for authority: the readers should not adopt the sort of freedom that leads them to reject their obligations in the state (and the household), to disregard the structures and decrees of the God-given order and live exactly as they wish. On the contrary, they are to be subordinate to those in authority.¹²⁰

Having warned the readers not to have the freedom that is a pretext for evil, the author enjoins them to live in a different way: *ἀλλ' ὡς θεοῦ δοῦλοι*. This further adverbial phrase, which provides another reason why they should be subordinate to the authorities, stands in sharp (and clearly deliberate) contrast with the verse's opening *ὡς ἐλεύθεροι*; the freedom that God has bestowed on the readers is to be used in slavery to him. God's releasing them from slavery to their former sinful way of life does not set them free to be their own masters, but rather makes him their master instead.¹²¹

A number of ideas may be bound up in the metaphor of slavery, including dependence, commitment and obedience. But in 2:16 the primary notions appear to be those of ownership and submission: because the readers have been set free by God from their fleshly desires and sinful actions, they now belong to him; so they are no longer to conform to that pattern of life (living in the freedom that is a pretext for evil), but rather are to live in subordination to God.¹²²

As with *διὰ τὸν κύριον*, it is reasonable to infer from the author's use of this metaphor that he expects his readers' subordination to the state to be limited where necessary by their obedience to God. Human powers are not absolute; where the authorities fail to act in line with God's will, Christians are not to submit.¹²³ But this appears to be a secondary theme, appearing as an incidental by-product of the primary one. The emphasis of the imagery, and of the whole verse in the context of 2:13–16, appears to fall not on *qualifying* the required subordination but on *motivating* it.

So the readers are to be subordinate within every human structure because they have been freed from the control of sin and cosmic powers and the consequent evil lifestyle to live for God as their master instead, and the response that he requires of them as his slaves is to submit to his appointed authorities instead of pleasing themselves. The concepts of *ἐλεύθεροι/ἐλευθερία*, understood in the moral sense, and *θεοῦ δοῦλοι* thus serve to define their Christian existence and show them that subordination to their superiors within the authoritative social structures is the appropriate stance for them as God's people.

πάντας τιμήσατε, τὴν ἀδελφότητα ἀγαπάτε, τὸν θεὸν φοβεῖσθε, τὸν βασιλέα τιμᾶτε (v.17). The text of 2:13–16 forms one long and fairly complex sentence, but verse 17 stands alone. Its relation to what precedes, and that of its constituent parts, is one of asyndeton, suggesting here that it is a vivid or emphatic conclusion to the unit.¹²⁴ The impression of closure is reinforced by its use of *βασιλεύς*, which forms a loose *inclusio* with verse 13. At the same time, the verse follows on from verses 13 to 16, setting the previous command for subordination in the context of the readers' wider responsibilities in relation to others.¹²⁵

The verse consists of a sequence of four imperatives with their objects, in which the first verb is aorist and the others present. The relationship between these elements has occasioned much debate. Several scholars have recently defined it in terms of verbal aspect, following Stanley Porter¹²⁶ in arguing that the aorist command is a general summary, of which the present imperatives then provide specific examples. Thus loving the brotherhood, fearing God and honoring the king are particular instances of honoring everyone.¹²⁷

This argument has at least two major weaknesses. Firstly, the inclusion of God within the *πάντας* of the first imperative would entail a use of the word unprecedented not only in 1 Peter but throughout the NT; Wayne Grudem has pointed out that in no other of its 1,244 instances is it used to refer to God and human beings together.¹²⁸ Secondly, the repetition of the verb *τιμᾶω* in the fourth command undermines the claim that the present imperatives are exegetical of the aorist one: loving the brotherhood and fearing God could in principle be seen

as ways in which these persons are to be honored, but to say that one honors the emperor by honoring him is an uninformative tautology.¹²⁹ In any case, it will be argued below that the meaning of *τιμάω* is sufficiently distinct from those of *ἀγαπάω* and *φοβέω* that they should be seen as advances upon it, not applications of it.

An alternative view sees the four imperatives as organized in respect of their objects in an ABB'A¹ chiasm in which the outer commands deal with the readers' external relations, with everyone else and with the emperor, and the inner commands with their internal relations, with each other and with God.¹³⁰ It is however unclear that the *πάντας* of the first imperative can be limited to outsiders. The chiasm is more convincingly grounded in the verbs, in which the actions of the second and third imperatives incorporate but go beyond those of the first and fourth respectively.¹³¹ The structure thus emphasizes what John Elliott calls the readers' "distinction of allegiances,"¹³² the greater responsibilities that they have to the brotherhood and to God.¹³³

As will be shown, this interpretation fits well with the author's choice of the verbs as well as with his arrangement of the nouns. The single aorist imperative can then be seen as constative, stressing the comprehensiveness (*πάντας*) of the deed required, while the multiple present imperatives emphasize the need for the regular repetition of the specified actions.¹³⁴

BDAG defines the verb *τιμάω* as "to show high regard for, *honor, revere*,"¹³⁵ and its cognate noun *τιμή* as "manifestation of esteem, *honor, reverence*."¹³⁶ This honor involves the recognition of an individual's office or of his/her place in society, including the state and household. "*τιμή* is applied to the social order decreed by God: it involves respect for the standing and task of a person who has his or her place in this order";¹³⁷ it is therefore conditioned or graded according to status or role. But the imperative in 2:17 requires the readers to honor everyone (*πάντας*), implying that even those at the foot of the social pyramid are worthy of a certain regard or esteem.¹³⁸

It follows that *τιμάω* should *not* be seen as synonymous with *ὑποτάσσω*, despite the identification suggested by some commentators.¹³⁹ As argued above, subordination in 1 Peter is an inherently one-sided relationship, of inferiors to superiors within the God-given order, whereas honor (even though it is appropriately graded) is to be extended to inferiors and peers as well as to superiors. Subordination could perhaps be seen instead as a particular type of honor, the kind or level that is due from subjects to the authorities, masters to slaves, wives to husbands and *νεώτεροι* to *πρεσβύτεροι*. If so, the first imperative of verse 17 reinforces the command in verse 13ff. to be subordinate, not by restating it, but by

expanding it; the readers are to submit to their superiors, including the emperor and governors, as part of the wider requirement to honor everyone.¹⁴⁰

According to the chiastic structure outlined above, the *πάντας* of the first imperative includes Christians; the author envisages that his readers will honor each other as well as outsiders. The second imperative, *τὴν ἀδελφότητα ἀγαπάτε*, thus includes the idea of honor but goes beyond it.¹⁴¹ The noun *ἀδελφότης* is found in the NT only in 1 Peter (here and in 5:9), and David Horrell suggests that the author may have been the first to use it as a concrete noun for a “brotherhood” (as distinct from an abstract noun meaning “fellowship” or “family affection”).¹⁴² It identifies the relationship between believers as one of kinship, implying an internal solidarity that marks them off from others and requires a higher level of commitment than that shown to outsiders.¹⁴³ Thus this relationship is appropriately expressed in sibling love for one another, as denoted here by the verb *ἀγαπάω*.¹⁴⁴ In addition to honor, the higher quality of love must be shown to the brotherhood.

The third imperative, *τὸν θεὸν φοβεῖσθε*, uses a verb (*φοβέω*) that in both the LXX and NT denotes a basic duty to God, owed to him as God and in his role as creator and judge.¹⁴⁵ It is usually and appropriately translated “fear,” though it signifies not merely dread but also such qualities as reverence, awe and worship.¹⁴⁶ Many scholars suggest that in 1 Peter the only object of this word is God (except in the LXX citation in 3:14);¹⁴⁷ while other instances taken in isolation may be ambiguous (e.g. 2:18), this claim fits well with the probable rhetorical function of this imperative in association with the next.

In his addition of the fourth imperative, *τὸν βασιλέα τιμᾶτε*, the author differentiates the responsibilities of the readers towards God and the emperor. This contrast is evident not only in the chiastic structure of the verse, but also in the author’s apparent citation and modification of Proverbs 24:21 (LXX), which reads *φοβοῦ τὸν θεόν, νιέ, καὶ βασιλέα*.¹⁴⁸ It seems highly probable that he intends to imply that while honor is due to the emperor as the leading human figure, fear is properly reserved for God alone.¹⁴⁹ Like *ἀγαπάω*, *φοβέω* includes the idea of honor (God too is to be honored),¹⁵⁰ while going beyond it.¹⁵¹

However, it should not be concluded that, in the words of Green, “with the pairing of these [first and fourth] directives Peter has flattened the status pyramid of the Roman world.”¹⁵² This can be so only if the fourth command places the emperor on the same level as everyone else. But although it certainly implies that the emperor is no more divine than any other human being, it does not otherwise obliterate human distinctions. As was shown above, honor is determined or ranked according to standing and role, and the first command to honor everyone

(including the emperor) leaves room for such differentiation.¹⁵³ The specific call to honor the emperor thus reinforces the earlier imperative of subordination to him; it does not subvert this by a subtle egalitarianism.

The contrasting third and fourth imperatives also need not imply that the readers were facing a confrontation with the authorities over the giving of divine honors to the emperor.¹⁵⁴ They no more entail that the readers were under pressure to fear (i.e. worship) the emperor than the first two commands suggest that they were being bullied into loving everyone. Still less do they amount to “a cunning attempt to defy the imposing Roman domination”¹⁵⁵ or “a sly defiance of [the readers’] oppressors.”¹⁵⁶ The wording need express no more than a fairly obvious qualification and reassertion of the author’s call to be subordinate to the authorities: (only) God is due the greater response of fear, and the emperor is to be honored.¹⁵⁷ Moreover, the juxtaposition of the two imperatives confirms other indications in the passage that the two activities necessarily belong together.

Implications

A number of the exegetical decisions in the above discussion are inevitably marginal and cautious. It has been shown that scholars have offered various interpretations of many of the key terms in 2:13–17, and so far these have been considered in light only of the passage itself or (in some cases) of the letter as a whole. But the exegesis has nonetheless provided a clear and coherent, if provisional, understanding of the author’s concepts of subordination and freedom, as represented by the *ὑποτάσσω* and *ἐλευθερία* word-groups.

The opening imperative *Υποτάγητε* calls the readers to subordinate themselves to certain others. This action involves recognition, deference and (perhaps) obedience to its objects, a submission of oneself to their judgment and will. Although it might be seen as a particular expression of honor or respect (*τιμὴ*), *τιμάω* is not synonymous with *ὑποτάσσω*; subordination is not due to every person, and in 1 Peter it is always one-sided. Neither does the author’s use of *τιμάω* in 2:17 represent the flattening of social distinctions.

In conjunction with the phrase *πάση ἀνθρώπινη κτίσει*, the command requires the readers to take their inferior places below their superiors within the God-given structures of the state and the household. Subordination “s’agit toujours de prendre sa place exacte dans une hiérarchie fixée par Dieu.”¹⁵⁸ Those interpretations of *ὑποτάσσω* in 2:13 that either downplay or exclude the idea of hierarchy

must therefore be judged insufficient, even if they capture secondary aspects of its meaning.¹⁵⁹ The author proceeds to focus on the civil authorities, and his statement that the governors are sent through (*διὰ*) the emperor may be a further indication that these are established by God. In any event, subordination is due to superiors in virtue of their standing within the divine order rather than because of their personal qualities.

One consequence of the readers' subordination to the authorities is the silencing of accusations of social and political subversion made against them. If the infinitive *φιμοῦν* in verse 15 also has a telic sense, then the author's call to subordination can be seen as a pragmatic device designed for apologetic purposes. By doing what the emperor and governors require, the readers will give their slanderers no basis to accuse them before the authorities, and if any charges should be brought, these will be dismissed. This idea fits with other instructions in the letter that seem intended to reduce outside hostility.¹⁶⁰

But although this motive for subordination is probably expressed in verse 15 and cannot plausibly be excluded from the author's paranesis generally, it is not the only one to which he appeals. The readers are also told to submit to their superiors, and specifically to the authorities, *διὰ τὸν κύριον, ὅτι οὕτως ἐστὶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ* and *ὡς θεοῦ δοῦλοι*, and none of these can obviously be subsumed under an apologetic motivation. And if the authoritative structures of state and household are indeed God-given, subordination to superiors within them is naturally a divine imperative. In fact, the author's repeated appeal to divine motivations for social and political relationships (in this passage and elsewhere)¹⁶¹ strongly confirms that he sees submission within these structures as a normal expression of subordination within the restored divine order.¹⁶² So although subordination can be confidently expected to have beneficial apologetic results, it seems clearly also to be grounded in dominical and divine authority.¹⁶³

This dual motivation indicates that the author sees a correlation between the will of God and what is approved by superiors within the God-given order. This conclusion is further supported by his use of the verb *ἀγαδοποιέω*, which refers to doing good according to both divine and human standards, and it is also reflected in his very positive view of the state. The civil authorities are God's instrument of judgment and commendation, and the logic of the passage demands that they will usually fulfil this function; the texts that could suggest a defiant response to the imperial cult appear rather to support the call to subordination; and the readers are never told outright to withhold their submission. The author appears to believe that there is normally no conflict between the demands of the state and those of God.

It is also notable in this connection that the command for subordination in this and the following sections is set in the context of a civil and household code. In their various NT forms, these codes encourage both a pragmatic compliance with society's (highest) values, represented by the state and the household, and a principled recognition of divine authority in these divinely given structures. This combination within the same political and social context of publicly acceptable conduct and normative Christian ethics also implies that in the author's view the demands of human superiors will generally coincide with those of God.

It was also argued above that the introductory verses 2:11–12 entail a distinction between conduct based on the popular values of society, from which the letter's readers are to abstain, and behavior that reflects the best norms of society, which they are to exhibit; the latter also accords with God's will. It appears that the content and form of 2:13–17 then identifies the authoritative structures of society, and specifically civil government, with the second, positive set of values, and by implication sets them in opposition to the first. State and household are given by God to guarantee those higher standards, against the disruptive and destructive forces represented by the readers' pagan detractors. So by subordinating themselves within these structures, Christians both generally align themselves with the will of God, and make themselves as safe as they can from the harm intended by their persecutors.¹⁶⁴

None of this means that rulers and other superiors *cannot* make inappropriate demands that believers must properly resist out of a higher loyalty to God. The seemingly deliberate contrast in the second pair of imperatives in 2:17 indicates that God has the ultimate claim on the readers and implicitly warns them against worshipping the emperor, so suggesting that such worship might perhaps be demanded of them. This distinction, and the phrases *διὰ τὸν κύριον, τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ* and *θεοῦ δοῦλοι*, are widely and rightly seen as relativizing the authority of the emperor and his deputies, such that where there is a conflict between the demands of government and those of God, it is God whom the readers must obey.

Yet in none of these ways is this principle explicitly stated, and the obliqueness of the allusions suggests that it is something taken for granted by author and readers and needing no direct assertion; even in 2:17 it appears as an obvious and uncontroversial piece of standard paranesis. All the above phrases *qualify* the command for subordination only incidentally; their purpose is rather to *strengthen* it.¹⁶⁵ And the unequivocal call to honor (and hence be subordinate to) the emperor in 2:17, coming directly after a call to fear God, also reinforces the imperative of 2:13 and suggests that these activities properly co-exist.

That the author believes that the authority of God overrides that of human government cannot reasonably be doubted, but he hardly seems disposed to emphasize the point. Instead he assumes that conflicts between their demands will be exceptional, and appeals to divine motivations primarily to reinforce his call for subordination to superiors within authoritative structures. In fact, he may well see these structures, which are part of the God-given order, as largely restraining the disposition of those who administer them to make unacceptable demands; state and household can survive and function only insofar as they guarantee the best norms of society, those that are congruent with the will of God. (See further below, Chapter 8.)

Less may be said about the passage's teaching on freedom apart from detailed consideration of other texts in 1 Peter and the wider conceptual context. But the argument above has shown that even with reference to this text alone the author's uses of *ἐλεύθεροι* and *ἐλευθερία* fit better with a moral than with a political interpretation. On the one hand, the author contrasts the freedom of the readers as *θεοῦ δούλοι* with the freedom that is a pretext for lapsing into evil deeds, probably those of their previous pagan existence; this indicates that God has set them free from bondage to that lifestyle to live for him as their master.

On the other hand, the arguments most commonly advanced for the political understanding seem to misinterpret not only the significance of *θεοῦ δούλοι* but also the relationship of freedom to subordination. Like so much else in this passage, the idea of freedom is introduced primarily to reinforce rather than to limit the imperative of verse 13. It is used, along with *θεοῦ δούλοι*, to demonstrate that the readers' subordination within the given structures is what God requires of them as his people.

This conclusion casts still further doubt on the view that the author is explicitly distancing the Christian community from the demands of the empire, and confirms again that his purpose is rather to ensure conformity to the highest societal norms and respect for civil and domestic authority. His understanding of freedom is thus limited—or, perhaps better, reconfigured—largely within the bounds of authoritative and hierarchical structures.¹⁶⁶ So the readers are not to adopt the kind of *ἐλευθερία* that allows them to reject their obligations to the state; on the contrary, their liberation from unruly impulses and their standing as slaves of God should motivate their subordination.

In the remaining chapters, this summary of the author's view of subordination and freedom as disclosed in 2:13–17 will be tested, clarified and developed with reference to the letter's other relevant texts and the external evidence

compiled in Chapters 2–4. But even at this stage it can be consistently located within the understanding of order in 1 Peter that was outlined above.

In this context, the readers' subordination to their superiors within the God-given structures of state and household is a reflection of the order restored by the work of Christ in subduing the hostile and disruptive cosmic powers. That order undoubtedly both conditions and transcends those traditional hierarchical relations, but it does not undermine or overthrow them; it essentially affirms and builds upon the regulatory political and social arrangements that God has already set in place. In the same way, Christians have also been set free from slavery to the powers and the associated disruptive way of life and are therefore able to live as slaves of God instead. But their new freedom does not liberate them from obligation to their political and social superiors; on the contrary, it both enables and requires their subordination as part of their service to God within the order that he has established. Thus within the author's thought the three concepts of order, subordination and freedom appear to be both consistent and mutually illuminating.

The discussion turns next to the exegesis of the other major subordination texts in 1 Peter.

Notes

- 1 All Bible references in Chapters 5–7 are to 1 Peter unless otherwise stated.
- 2 Goppelt (*1 Peter*, 182) describes this imperative as “the programmatic introduction to the entire station code”; see also Kelly, *Epistles*, 108 on subjection as a constant theme of this section. One of the remaining two instances of the word, in 5:5, also occurs in a context of exhortation that presupposes the teaching of 2:13–17, and Kamlah (“Υποτάσσεσθαι,” 237) argues that the theme controls the whole of the author's paranesis: “in dieser Weise sollen sich die Angeredeten dem Staat gegenüber, die Sklaven gegen ihre Herren, die Ehefrauen gegen ihre Männer und schießlich auch die jüngeren Männer in der Gemeinde gegen die Ältesten (5, 5) verhalten.”
- 3 The precise structure of 1 Peter is disputed. The analysis here incorporates elements from those proposed by Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, x, 169 and Elliott, *1 Peter*, viii-ix, 484–85.
- 4 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 115; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 173; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 456.
- 5 In their literal sense these terms are used for foreigners who are separated from their host communities and have little or no legal status; they refer respectively to permanent residents and temporary sojourners (Selwyn, *First Epistle*, 169; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 173; though Richard differentiates them in terms of political and religious

- responsibilities: E. J. Richard, “Honorable Conduct among the Gentiles: A Study of the Social Thought of 1 Peter,” *Word & World* 24, no. 4 [2004]: 417).
- 6 On these desires see T. Seland, “The Moderate Life of the Christian Paroikoi: A Philonic Reading of 1 Peter 2:11,” in *Strangers in the Light: Philonic Perspectives on Christian Identity in 1 Peter* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2005), 137–44, although his contrast between *σάρξ* and *ψυχή* is more Philonic than is justified by the text.
 - 7 The participle *ἔχοντες* may be instrumental (so Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 172), but even if it is an independent imperative (so Michaels, *1 Peter*, 117), the author’s use of asyndeton suggests that it is not an altogether new instruction but stands in apposition to *ἀπέχεσθαι*.
 - 8 See Kelly, *Epistles*, 104; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 173–77; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 462–66.
 - 9 So Michaels, *1 Peter*, 120; Davids, *First Epistle*, 97; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 178 among others. However, Selwyn (*First Epistle*, 171) and Kelly (*Epistles*, 106) see the visitation as present as well as future, and Elliott (*1 Peter*, 471) views it as entirely present.
 - 10 So e.g. Kelly, *Epistles*, 106; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 471; Horrell, “Conformity,” 229–30.
 - 11 So e.g. Balch, *Wives*, 86–88; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 178; Bechtler, *Following*, 189–90.
 - 12 So G. Wainwright, “Praying for Kings: The Place of Human Rulers in the Divine Plan of Salvation,” *Ex Auditu* 2 (1986): 117–18; Green, *1 Peter*, 69–70.
 - 13 Thuren’s comment (*Argument*, 136) is apposite: “A life dominated by the desires of the flesh violates the high ethical norms of the Gentiles.”
 - 14 Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 164–65; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 507, 510.
 - 15 See e.g. Horrell, “Petrine Circle,” 18.
 - 16 The opening section of the code (2:13–17) relates to the civil realm, and the two following (2:18–25; 3:1–7) to the household.
 - 17 Bechtler, *Following*, 188–89; G. Forster, *Ethics in the Letters of Peter and Jude* (Cambridge: Grove Books, 2007), 22–23; Feldmeier, *First Letter*, 152–57. But *contra* Jobes, *1 Peter*, 174, following Reicke, *Epistles*, 96, the code is probably not intended to counter any existing tendency to rebellion among the readers. There is no other indication of such a tendency in the text, and given the vulnerability of the readers as *παροίκοι* and *παρεπιδήμιοι* (2:11), it seems unlikely to have developed.
 - 18 Hort, *First Epistle*, 138; A. M. Stibbs and A. F. Walls, *The First Epistle General of Peter* (London: Tyndale Press, 1959), 108; Grudem, *First Epistle*, 138. It is unclear why Sleeper (“Political Responsibility,” 284–85) regards a practical purpose and a universal ethic as mutually exclusive.
 - 19 S. J. Kraftchick, “Reborn to a Living Hope: A Christology of 1 Peter,” in *Reading 1–2 Peter and Jude: A Resource for Students*, eds. E. F. Mason and T. W. Martin (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014), 84; see also E. J. Richard, “The Functional Christology of First Peter,” in Talbert, *Perspectives*, 133–39.
 - 20 Williams (T. B. Williams, “The Divinity and Humanity of Caesar in 1 Peter 2,13,” *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 105, no. 1 [2014]: 144) claims that in this verse the author attributes “the present conflict to satanically influenced

forces (5,8), with their ultimate origins deriving from the oppressive Roman regime, to which he assigns the contemptuous title ‘Babylon’ (5,13).” But here the author ascribes the conflict to the devil *without reference* to any human rulers, and neither here nor elsewhere in the letter (notably 2:13–17 and 3:18–22) does he connect disorderly spiritual forces with the political authorities. (The statement in 5:9 that the sufferings of believers are worldwide says nothing about who was inflicting them.)

Some other commentators also see the reference to Babylon as denoting an evil political power, godless, proud, wealthy and oppressive, that is hostile and opposed to God’s people (e.g. Selwyn, *First Epistle*, 304–5; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 63). But this reference appears several verses later, in a different context, and may refer to Rome merely as the capital of the exilic sphere without any more negative undertones. While *Βαβυλῶν* undoubtedly has such connotations in certain early Jewish and Christian apocalyptic works (4 Ezr 3:1–2; 2 Bar. 11:1–2; *Sib. Or.* 5:159–60; Rv 14:8), it should not simply be assumed that the term carries this further sense here, especially given that 1 Peter clearly belongs to a different genre; indeed, other commentators explicitly deny this (e.g. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 311; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 132, 884; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 13–14, 322–23). Ultimately it is the content of the letter, and especially the author’s attitude to the Roman authorities, that must settle the question.

So a postcolonial interpretation of 5:8 that sees it as a subversive attack on the structure of the state (or the household) appears not to be securely grounded in either the text or its wider context. See also (more broadly) S. McKnight and J. B. Modica. “Conclusion,” in McKnight and Modica, *Jesus is Lord*, 212–13.

- 21 On Petrine christology, see among others Michaels, *1 Peter*, lxxviii–lxxiv; R. P. Martin, “The Theology of Jude, 1 Peter, and 2 Peter,” in A. Chester and R. P. Martin, *The Theology of the Letters of James, Peter, and Jude* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 107–17; D. A. Hagner, *The New Testament. A Historical and Theological Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 696–97; Kraftchick, “Reborn,” 88–94.
- 22 Michaels, *1 Peter*, lxix.
- 23 “Christ functions as catalyst both in the sense of inaugurating the new age by his death and resurrection . . . and by bringing it to culmination with his revelation in his glory” (Kraftchick, “Reborn,” 90).
- 24 On Petrine ecclesiology, see among others J. Reumann, *Variety and Unity in New Testament Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 157–58; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 112–15; I. H. Marshall, *New Testament Theology: Many Witnesses, One Gospel* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP; Leicester: Apollos, 2004), 653–54; Green, *1 Peter*, 217–23.
- 25 On the relationship between temple and cosmos in early Jewish thought, see above, Chapter 3.
- 26 On the equality of believers in 1 Peter, see also 1:22; 2:17; 3:8; 4:8–11; 5:9; Marshall, *Theology*, 654–56; Green, *1 Peter*, 219–20.

- 27 Dubis (*1 Peter*, 64) takes it as middle but interprets it in the same way.
- 28 E.g. Beare, *First Epistle*, 114; D. L. Watson, “The Implications of Christology and Eschatology for a Christian Attitude towards the State in 1 Peter” (ThD diss., Hartford Seminary, 1970), 47–50; Hiebert, *First Peter*, 153; Frankemölle, *1. Petrusbrief*, 47; Brox, *Erste Petrusbrief*, 124; Senior, *1 Peter*, 69, 71–72; and Feldmeier, *First Letter*, 158–60. Some others present social institutions and political authorities in purely human terms, though without stating explicitly that these are not created by God (for example J. Moffatt, *The General Epistles of James, Peter and Judas* [London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1928], 122; Reicke, *Epistles*, 96; Schwank, “First Epistle,” 45–46; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 174–78; Green, *1 Peter*, 75).
- 29 E.g. Teichert, “1 Petr. 2:13,” 304; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 124; M. Evang, “‘Jedes menschliche Geschöpf’ und ‘treuer Schöpfer’: Schöpfungstheologische Aspekte in 1.Petr 2,13; 4,19,” in *Eschatologie und Schöpfung: Festschrift für Erich Gräßer zum siebzigsten Geburtstag*, eds. M. Evang, H. Merklein, and M. Wolter (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1997), 58.
- 30 E.g. Cranfield, *1 Peter*, 73–74; Kelly, *Epistles*, 108–9; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 124–25; Davids, *First Epistle*, 98–99; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 183; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 182–83; Horrell, *Epistles*, 48–49; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 489; Richard, *1 Peter*, 111; Schreiner, *1 Peter*, 127–28; Donelson, *1 Peter*, 72.
- 31 Thus according to Michaels (*1 Peter*, 124) the author’s “assumption is that all people, even those who accuse and slander the Christians, are creatures of God . . . deserving of respect and consideration on that ground alone.”
- 32 Davids, *First Epistle*, 99. See also e.g. Horrell, *Epistles*, 48–49; Richard, *1 Peter*, 110–11.
- 33 See especially Williams, “Divinity,” 133–35.
- 34 Evang (“‘Jedes menschliche Geschöpf;’” 56–57) does not properly answer this objection in making his claim that subordination is due also to those who do not hold authoritative positions or even perhaps to those who stand lower in the hierarchy. It also undermines the appeal that is sometimes made to the supposed parallel with Eph 5:21–22, where general and specific forms of subordination are also juxtaposed; as argued in Chapter 4, in Eph the examples of subordination are both egalitarian and hierarchical. On this see also below, Chapter 8.
- 35 On this see especially Donelson (*1 Peter*, 72): “Such a command does not enforce a social order; it *undermines* all order because all Christians, no matter what their social position, are called to submit to every human creature, no matter what their social position.”
- 36 So e.g. Kelly, *Epistles*, 109ff.; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 124ff.; Davids, *First Epistle*, 99ff.; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 183ff.; Richard, *1 Peter*, 112ff. Michaels admits (124–25) that “[t]he transition from ‘every human creature’ to the Roman emperor in particular seems abrupt.”

- 37 Elliott (*1 Peter*, 489) comes close to this view when he writes, “The adjective *pas* applies the injunction to all types of human *authority*” (italics added), and (501) that the emperor “like all creatures, deserves respect *from subordinates*” (italics added). See also Goldstein, “Politischen Paränesen,” 93–95.
- 38 Hort, *First Epistle*, 139–40.
- 39 Huther, *General Epistles*, 129.
- 40 Senior, *1 Peter*, 71; see also Hort, *First Epistle*, 140; Stibbs and Walls, *First Epistle*, 109. These are slightly different from “institutions,” despite the popularity of this term with many translators and commentators. The author does not have institutions such as slavery or marriage in view, so much as the structures of authority by which these relationships are to be governed.
- 41 E.g. Best, *1 Peter*, 112–13; Hillyer, *1 Peter*, 78; Perkins, *First Peter*, 49; McKnight, *1 Peter*, 143–45.
- 42 E.g. Huther, *General Epistles*, 128–30; Hort, *First Epistle*, 139–40; Masterman, *First Epistle*, 106–7; Stibbs and Walls, *First Epistle*, 108–10; Calvin, *First Peter*, 269; Leaney, *Letters*, 35–36; Schelkle, *Petrusbriefe*, 72–73; Pesch, *1. Petrusbrief*, 53; Grudem, *First Epistle*, 118–19; Marshall, *1 Peter*, 82–84.
- 43 So for example Michaels, *1 Peter*, 124; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 182; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 489.
- 44 Huther, *General Epistles*, 129. Surprisingly, this quite simple response to the objection appears seldom if ever to have been addressed, and never answered, in later literature.
- 45 So Teichert (“1 Petr. 2:13,” 304), “Denn weder in profangriechischen Quellen, noch in LXX, noch im rabbinischen Schrifttum gibt es in neutestamentlicher Zeit einen Beleg hierfür.”
- 46 F. W. Danker, ed., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* [BDAG], 3rd ed. (Chicago, IL and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 573 (italics original). Again, critics of the above interpretation have not mounted a convincing refutation of this sensible inference.
- 47 Additional, external evidence for this view will be provided in Chapter 8.
- 48 Marshall, *1 Peter*, 82–84.
- 49 Stibbs and Walls, *First Epistle*, 108.
- 50 This interpretation further subverts the sharp distinction drawn by many scholars between 1 Peter and Romans regarding the origin and authority of political rulers. See below, Chapter 8.
- 51 E.g. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 182–83; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 489; Caulley, “*Christianos*,” 205–6. An interesting challenge to this widespread view has been offered by Warren Carter (“Going All the Way,” *passim*), who argues that since no exceptions are stipulated to the command for subordination, 1 Peter is endorsing rather than resisting pressure to conform to the imperial cult. Fear of God is an inward response that legitimates outward participation; giving one’s heart to Christ ensures that one’s loyalty is not thereby compromised; only immoderate idolatry is forbidden. Carter’s

- case has not won widespread support (see e.g. Horrell, “Conformity,” 231–33 and Williams, *Good Works*, 206–8 for telling critiques), but his ability to make it so coherently and plausibly attests to the striking scarcity of evidence in the text for postcolonial interpretations that read 1 Peter as intentionally subversive of the social and political order.
- 52 Travis Williams, in a recent study of *ἀνδρωπίνην κτίσει*, has acknowledged that 2:13 may not be as straightforwardly anti-imperial as is often assumed. But he still believes there are good reasons to regard the phrase as a subtle critique of the cult, notably its implied contrast of humanity and creatureliness with divinity, its non-use as an honorary title for the emperor, and that in 1 Peter only God is the appropriate object of *φύβος* (except in the LXX citation in 3:14) (“Divinity,” 141–47). These reasons do not obviously meet the objections above; nor is it clear why such subtlety would be necessary.
- 53 So e.g. Selwyn, *First Epistle*, 172; Davids, *First Epistle*, 99; Feldmeier, *First Letter*, 159.
- 54 So e.g. Kelly, *Epistles*, 109; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 182; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 489.
- 55 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 124; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 489.
- 56 Kelly, *Epistles*, 109; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 489.
- 57 A. Barr, “Submission Ethic in the First Epistle of Peter,” *Hartford Quarterly* 2/3 (1962): 32; Elliott, “1 Peter,” 70; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 183–84.
- 58 E.g. Elliott, “1 Peter,” 73–74; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 184–85; Feldmeier, *First Letter*, 159–60.
- 59 Blum, “1 Peter,” 234.
- 60 H. Giesen, “Lebenszeugnis in der Fremde: Zum Verhalten der Christen in der paganen Gesellschaft (1 Petr 2,11–17),” *Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt* 23 (1998): 135; also Gielen, *Haustafelethik*, 400.
- 61 See Michaels, *1 Peter*, 124, 128; Green, *1 Peter*, 75; Williams, “Divinity,” 145.
- 62 Davids, *First Epistle*, 100; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 486–87, 490.
- 63 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 126.
- 64 Beare, *First Epistle*, 115; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 125; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 490.
- 65 So Elliott, *1 Peter*, 490.
- 66 So Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 183–84.
- 67 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 183.
- 68 D. B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 433–34; M. Williams, *The Doctrine of Salvation in the First Letter of Peter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 185.
- 69 Stibbs and Walls, *First Epistle*, 110; Best, *1 Peter*, 114; Campbell, *Rhetoric*, 110.
- 70 BDAG, 301; Bechtler, *Following*, 88–90; G. W. Forbes, *1 Peter* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2014), 79. It is however used elsewhere in the NT in a general sense for divine or human justice or vengeance (e.g. Rom 12:19; Acts 7:24).

- 71 Bechtler, *Following*, 92; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 491. Holloway argues on this basis (P. A. Holloway, *Coping with Prejudice: 1 Peter in Social-Psychological Perspective* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009], 67–68) that the word *κακοποιός* therefore means “criminal” and is equivalent to the Latin *malus homo*, not only here but throughout 1 Peter. But the inference is invalid. The words *κακοποιών* and *ἀγαθοποιών* are anarthrous and need refer only to the *kinds* of people punished and praised by the authorities. Not every evildoer is necessarily punished; not every doer of good is necessarily praised. Nor does the linking of *κακοποιός* to criminal rather than social charges in 4:15 prove that the word has this meaning (*contra* Holloway, *Prejudice*, 71); the sense of this verse could be “as a murderer or a thief or (any other kind of) evildoer, or (even) as a busybody.”
- 72 *TDNT*, I.17–18.
- 73 BDAG, 3 (italics original).
- 74 Martin Williams also observes (*Salvation*, 111) that in 3:13–14 “being zealous for the good” (*το ἀγαθόν*) is synonymous with “righteousness” (*δικαιοσύνη*).
- 75 This dual view is stated explicitly by Sleeper, “Political Responsibility,” 283; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 126; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 492; and Jobes, *1 Peter*, 175–76.
- 76 Winter, “Benefactors,” 92–95 (and *passim*). See also W. C. van Unnik, “The Teaching of Good Works in 1 Peter,” *New Testament Studies* 1 (1954): 92 and van Unnik, “Classical Parallel,” 199–201.
- 77 E.g. McKnight, *1 Peter*, 147; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 175; Witherington, *Letters*, 144–45.
- 78 E.g. Leaney, *Letters*, 36–37; Schreiner, *1 Peter*, 129.
- 79 T. B. Williams, “Benefiting the Community through Good Works? The Economic Feasibility of Civic Benefactions in 1 Peter,” *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism* 9 (2013): 194–95.
- 80 Williams, “Benefiting the Community,” 194–95.
- 81 Williams, *Persecution*, 258–75. Williams has developed these arguments at length in his *Good Works*. See also Senior, *1 Peter*, 72.
- 82 Williams, *Persecution*, 260–69.
- 83 To address the challenge to his case presented by these verses, Williams claims that the author is presenting “the gruesome reality of their current experience” to his readers as an unlikely worst-case scenario for rhetorical and pastoral reasons, which seems very contrived (*Good Works*, 180–83; quote on 183).
- 84 Williams, *Good Works*, 179–80.
- 85 See Horrell, “Conformity,” 230.
- 86 E.g. Spicq, *Épîtres*, 102–3; Schwank, “First Epistle,” 46; Winter, “Benefactors,” 88–92.
- 87 E.g. Selwyn, *First Epistle*, 172–73; Kelly, *Epistles*, 109; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 126–27.
- 88 Best, *1 Peter*, 114; C. G. González, *1 & 2 Peter and Jude* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 62; Williams, *Persecution*, 303–9. This does not entail, however, that the word *ἀγαθοποιός* means someone approved or acquitted by law. See above, note 71.

- 89 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 184; Bechtler, *Following*, 100.
- 90 E.g. D. Senior, “The Conduct of Christians in the World (2:11–3:12),” *RevExp* 79 (1982): 430; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 185–86; Vinson, “1 Peter,” 115.
- 91 Thus Horrell (*Epistles*, 49) writes, “[T]here appears to be here an optimistic and positive view of Roman justice,” and Perkins (*First Peter*, 50) agrees that “this passage presumes a positive verdict by Roman officials.” So also B. Schwank, “‘Wie Freie—aber als Sklaven Gottes’ (1 Petr 2,16): Das Verhältnis der Christen zur Staatsmacht nach dem Ersten Petrusbrief,” *Erbe und Auftrag* 36 (1960): 7; Beare, *First Epistle*, 116; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 176, and others.
- 92 Holloway, *Prejudice*, 12.
- 93 Williams, *Good Works*, 176.
- 94 Williams, *Good Works*, 177.
- 95 Holloway, *Prejudice*, 181. See also Donelson, *1 Peter*, 73; M. H. Schertz, “Nonretaliation and the Haustafeln in 1 Peter,” in *The Love of Enemy and Nonretaliation in the New Testament*, ed. W. M. Swartley (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), 226–27.
- 96 See P. T. Egan, *Ecclesiology and the Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2016), 129–30.
- 97 So Michaels, *1 Peter*, 127–28; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 185; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 484, and others.
- 98 So e.g. Masterman, *First Epistle*, 108; McKnight, *1 Peter*, 146–47; Schreiner, *1 Peter*, 130.
- 99 So e.g. Witherington, *Letters*, 144; Dubis, *1 Peter*, 67; Williams, *Good Works*, 178–79.
- 100 So Campbell, *Rhetoric*, 114.
- 101 Kelly, *Epistles*, 110; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 185.
- 102 The possibility that the silencing of the accusers is intended by God does not necessarily make it the referent of τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ.
- 103 See Michaels, *1 Peter*, 127; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 185; Green, *1 Peter*, 76.
- 104 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 127; Bechtler, *Following*, 100; Williams, *Persecution*, 303–9.
- 105 E.g. Davids, *First Epistle*, 101; Donelson, *1 Peter*, 74; Williams, *Good Works*, 179–80.
- 106 *NIDNTTE*, 4.618; Davids, *First Epistle*, 101; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 495.
- 107 See Elliott, *Home*, 108; Senior, “Conduct,” 431; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 495.
- 108 J. J. H. Price, “Submission-Humility in 1 Peter: An Exegetical Study” (PhD diss., Vanderbilt University, 1977), 53; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 186. Green suggests (*1 Peter*, 73) that the core of 2:13–17 is “‘Be subordinate to every human institution on account of the Lord, as free people, as God’s slaves.’” *Contra* Giesen, “Lebenszeugnis,” 141, who sees a new sentence beginning here and continuing into verse 17.
- 109 The alternative view that ἐλεύθεροι refers to the readers’ legal standing (i.e. as free citizens), either literally (Elliott, *1 Peter*, 496) or metaphorically (T. W. Martin,

- Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter* [Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1992], 192–93), has not been widely supported.
- 110 See Elliott, *1 Peter*, 496–97; Green, *1 Peter*, 74–75; N. E. T. Gay, “Authority and Submission in Some New Testament Letters: Postcolonial Feminist Reading from Myanmar” (PhD diss., University of Birmingham, 2011), 176, 179.
- 111 See Beare, *First Epistle*, 114; Waltner, “1 Peter,” 88; D. Harink, *1 & 2 Peter* (London: SCM Press, 2009), 77.
- 112 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 123–24 (though strangely in his discussion of 2:16 [128–29] he expounds the first view without reference to the second); Schertz, “Nonretaliation,” 270; Bechtler, *Following*, 155.
- 113 Green, *1 Peter*, 75; R. J. Bauckham, *The Bible and Politics: How to Read the Bible Politically*, 2nd ed. (London: SPCK, 2010), 112. Enforced subordination is often described as degrading (Cranfield, *1 Peter*, 78; Schrage, “Erste Petrusbrief,” 90), servile (Schweizer, *Erste Petrusbrief*, 57–58; Boring, *1 Peter*, 116) or slavish (Pesch, *1. Petrusbrief*, 54; Knoch, *Erste Petrusbrief*, 75–76).
- 114 As Calvin comments on this verse (*First Peter*, 272):
The immediate conclusion is that we obtain liberty in order that we may more promptly and more readily obey God. That is simply freedom from sin, and the dominion is taken away from sin, so that men may become obedient to righteousness.
- 115 The participle is best taken as denoting means; this is a way in which the readers are (not) to be subordinate (2:13) and free people (2:16a).
- 116 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 129.
- 117 BDAG, 500; see also 316.
- 118 Price, “Submission-Humility,” 54–55; Balch, *Wives*, 101; Martin, *Metaphor*, 201–3.
- 119 These include: assimilation or “obsequious conformity to all cultural or political demands” (Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 186), which seems unlikely to be a *warning* in the context of an appeal to subordination; contempt for or retaliation against their critics (Michaels, *1 Peter*, 129), which appears intrusive in a call to be submissive to the state; and pretending to do good while not really doing it (Donelson, *1 Peter*, 75), which has at best a tenuous connection to *ἐλευθεροί*.
- 120 Moffatt, *General Epistles*, 123; Gielen, *Haustafelethik*, 400, 417–19; Horrell, *Epistles*, 49. This interpretation sets subordination to the government and superiors generally in opposition to the *κακία* of the readers’ former life, suggesting that the author regards a fleshly, pagan lifestyle (4:2–4) as disorderly. See further below, Chapter 8.
- 121 Selwyn, *First Epistle*, 174; Brox, *Erste Petrusbrief*, 121–22; Harris, *Slaves*, 119–20. Schrage writes (“Erste Petrusbrief,” 91), “Die Freiheit ist der Grund und Modus des Gehorsams. Nicht obwohl, sondern weil und indem sie frei sind, sollen die Christen gehorchen.”
- 122 *NIDNTTE*, 1.770–71; *TDNT*, II.270, 274; I. A. H. Combes, *The Metaphor of Slavery in the Writings of the Early Church: From the New Testament to the Beginning of the Fifth Century* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 68–69, 94; Harris,

- Slaves*, 20, 148. The author may well share the Pauline idea (see above, Chapter 4) that the relationship between believers' slavery under God and their continued freedom from their former lifestyle is one of cause and effect, such that it is only by their living as God's slaves that they can experience that freedom (so e.g. Masterman, *First Epistle*, 109; Goldstein, "Politischen Paränesen," 99; Giesen, "Lebenszeugnis," 142), but he does not express or clearly imply it in 2:16 or elsewhere in the letter.
- 123 Elliott, *Home*, 140; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 186.
- 124 On asyndeton, see Wallace, *Grammar*, 658.
- 125 See Wallace, *Grammar*, 658; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 497; Horrell, "'Honour Everyone . . .,'" 194. If 2:13–17 is the introduction to 2:13–3:12, and 2:13–16 prefaces 2:18–3:6, it is also possible that the author expands on 2:17 in 3:7 and 3:8–12.
- 126 S. E. Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament, with Reference to Tense and Mood* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989), 360.
- 127 E.g. S. Snyder, "1 Peter 2:17: A Reconsideration," *Filologia Neotestamentaria* 41 8 (1991): 211–13 and *passim*; Richard, "Honorable Conduct," 419–20; Horrell, "'Honour Everyone . . .,'" 194–96.
- 128 Grudem, *First Epistle*, 122. So also E. Bammel, "The Commands in 1 Pt. ii.17," *New Testament Studies* 11 (1965): 280; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 130; Forbes, *1 Peter*, 82. Snyder's point that not all NT instances of $\pi\acute{\alpha}\zeta$ are comparable to this one ("1 Peter 2:17," 214), and Horrell's appeal to the application of "honor" language to God in the OT/LXX and NT ("'Honour Everyone . . .,'" 196–98), do not answer this objection.
- 129 Snyder's response ("1 Peter 2:17," 214) to the consequent objection that on his view $\tau\upsilon\mu\acute{\omega}$ must therefore have a different meaning in the fourth imperative from its meaning in the first fails to address this problem of tautology.
- 130 Frankemölle, *1. Petrusbrief*, 48; Bartlett, "First Letter," 275–76; Forbes, *1 Peter*, 83.
- 131 See Kelly, *Epistles*, 112; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 187.
- 132 Elliott, *Home*, 120.
- 133 Légasse, "Soumission," 384; Bechtler, *Following*, 171.
- 134 See Beare, *First Epistle*, 116; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 187–88.
- 135 BDAG, 1004 (italics original).
- 136 BDAG, 1005 (italics original).
- 137 *NIDNTTE*, 4.496. See also Martin, *Metaphor*, 203–4; Senior, *1 Peter*, 69 (honor "implies respect and deference *proper to a person's standing in the community*" [italics added]).
- 138 Selwyn, *First Epistle*, 174; Kelly, *Epistles*, 112; D. A. deSilva, *An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods & Ministry Formation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP; Leicester: Apollos, 2004), 853, 855.
- 139 Schreiner, *1 Peter*, 133; *contra* Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 187; Waltner, "1 Peter," 88–89; Richard, *1 Peter*, 114–15 and others.

- 140 Alternatively, *ὑποτάσσω* may go beyond *τιμάω* in the same way as do *ἀγαπάω* and *φοβέω*.
- 141 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 130–31; see also Selwyn, *First Epistle*, 174; Donelson, *1 Peter*, 75.
- 142 Horrell, “Honour Everyone . . .,” 199.
- 143 Hillyer says (*1 Peter*, 82) that the term “describes family ties established by covenant relationship.”
- 144 Elliott, *Home*, 195, 231; D. G. Horrell, “‘Race,’ ‘Nation,’ ‘People’: Ethnoracial Identity Construction in 1 Pt. 2.9,” in *Becoming Christian: Essays on 1 Peter and the Making of Christian Identity* (London and New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 160; Horrell, “‘Honour Everyone . . .,” 198.
- 145 Kelly, *Epistles*, 113; Wainwright, “Praying,” 119; Horrell, “‘Honour Everyone . . .,” 200.
- 146 Horrell, “‘Honour Everyone . . .,” 200, referencing J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* [LN], 2 vols. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988), 53.58; also Green, *1 Peter*, 76; Donelson, *1 Peter*, 76.
- 147 E.g. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 188; Feldmeier, *First Letter*, 164.
- 148 Beare, *First Epistle*, 117; F. W. Danker, “1 Peter 1:24–2:17: A Consolatory Pericope,” *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 58 (1967): 99; Horrell, “‘Honour Everyone . . .,” 201.
- 149 So Elliott, *Home*, 86, 140; Davids, *First Epistle*, 104; Evang, “‘Jedes menschliche Geschöpf,’” 62–63, and most others. Wilken (R. L. Wilken, “1 Peter 2.13–17 and Martyrdom,” in Black, *Liberty*, 349–52) finds echoes of this distinction in patristic writings, some of which draw explicitly on 1 Peter or on its vocabulary.
- 150 Horrell, “‘Honour Everyone . . .,” 197.
- 151 This distinction indicates that it is only the authoritative *structure* of the state that is part of the cosmic order, not the particular *forms* (e.g. imperial government) in which this is expressed in particular places and times. The author’s implicit denial of divine worship to the emperor suggests that he sees nothing sacred or immutable about the Roman regime. See further below, Chapters 6 and 8.
- 152 Green, *1 Peter*, 76; see also Goldstein, “Politischen Paränesen,” 100; Schrage, “Erste Petrusbrief,” 92; Witherington, *Letters*, 141 and others.
- 153 Bigg, *Epistles*, 141 (“All men are to be honoured, but not with the same honour”); Senior, *1 Peter*, 69; Richard, “Honorable Conduct,” 419.
- 154 Pace Horrell, “‘Honour Everyone . . .,” 204–6. See also above, Chapter 1.
- 155 Williams, *Good Works*, 228.
- 156 Williams, *Good Works*, 233; see also Williams, “Divinity,” 141–47.
- 157 In an important article on the Pauline epistles, Barclay (J. M. G. Barclay, “Why the Roman Empire was Insignificant to Paul,” in *Pauline Churches and Diaspora Jews* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011], *passim*) has challenged the increasingly widespread view that Paul is making a polemical and subversive response to Roman

ideology, perhaps directed especially against the imperial cult. Among his many points, two are especially pertinent to this issue in 1 Peter 2: that most Christians may not have been under pressure to participate in the imperial cult in a way they would have found unacceptable: “It is a mistake to take the exceptional court-room scenarios, where Christians were required to offer sacrifices or to swear oaths to the gods, including the emperors-as-deities . . . as typical of the pressures under which most Christians lived their everyday lives” (373–74); and that there is no evidence of a subversive hidden code in the letters (379–83): “the notion that Paul found it necessary to write in code is without historical foundation; and since the text itself gives no indication of any such thing, we may dismiss the suggestion as a fantasy” (382). If Barclay is right, then the relativising of the emperor’s authority under that of God, as expressed in 1 Peter 2:17, need and should not be located in a context of conflict or understood as a statement of defiance, and he refers to 2:13–17 as a text that does *not* challenge the Roman empire (378).

158 Spicq, *Épîtres*, 101.

159 These include “the choice to *remain* in such societal relationships rather than to withdraw from them” (Senior, “Conduct,” 430 [italics original]); “respectful cooperation with others . . . treating people as valuable” (A. B. Spencer, “Peter’s Pedagogical Method in 1 Peter 3:6,” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 10 [2000]: 110); and “[to] recognize your duty toward every human creature” (Richard, “Honorable Conduct,” 418). See also the brief critique by Schüssler Fiorenza (E. Schüssler Fiorenza, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Study Guide: Reading against the Grain* [London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017], 31–33).

160 Scholars who understand 1 Peter’s calls to subordination in largely apologetic terms include J. H. Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus: Vicit Agnus Noster*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans and Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1994), 188; J. W. Aageson, “Slaves, Wives and the Complexities of Interpretation,” in Levine and Robbins, *Feminist Companion*, 42–48.

161 See further below, Chapter 6.

162 See Beare, *First Epistle*, 118; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 187; Feldmeier, *First Letter*, 162.

163 Many commentators acknowledge this: e.g. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 124; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 182; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 490. See also E. Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Power of the Word: Scripture and the Rhetoric of Empire* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 171–74. The combination of pragmatic and divine motivations is another point of similarity with Romans 13:1–7 (see below, Chapter 8).

164 Campbell (*Rhetoric*, 111) goes so far as to claim that because the governors are sent by God “the justice of their decisions is virtually assured by Peter.” And this positive view of state and household further challenges postcolonial readings such as that of Williams (“Divinity,” 144), who sees the command to abstain from the sinful conduct described in 4:3–4 as an oblique attack on “social and political structures”; on the contrary, in 1 Peter these structures are *opposed* to such disorderly

behavior. It need not be concluded that the author fully endorses the contemporary Roman understanding of these structures; nor is it inconsistent with his regarding them as malign in certain respects: other subordination texts express his conviction that superiors can act inappropriately (2:18; 3:6; 5:2–4). On this see below, Chapters 6 and 8.

165 This important distinction between the intended and incidental significance of the author's paranesis is not always sufficiently acknowledged in postcolonial readings of 1 Peter. Thus for example Horrell ("Conformity," 227–29) argues that the author enjoins his readers to hope for salvation on the basis of their election by God and their status as heirs to the identity of Israel, not on the basis of Roman claims to provide good news and hope. But although he demonstrates conclusively that the author ascribes that salvation to Christ, his argument does not prove that the inference "and therefore not to Caesar" is more than incidental.

166 E. Käsemann, *Jesus Means Freedom*, trans. F. Clarke (London: SCM Press, 1969), 99.

Subordination in Other 1 Peter Texts

Apart from the general call to subordination (*Υποτάγητε*) in 1 Peter 2:13a, the verb *υποτάσσω* appears five times in the letter. The next three instances occur in the two sections immediately following 2:13–17, which continue the civil and domestic code begun there and respectively enjoin Christian slaves to be subordinate to their masters (2:18–25) and Christian wives to be subordinate to their husbands (3:1–7).¹ In 2:18 and 3:1 the middle/passive participial form (*υποτασσομενοι/υποτασσομεναι*) introduces each exhortation, and in 3:5 it is used again to illustrate and support the instructions to wives.

Another instance of *υποτάσσω* (5:5) is found in an appeal concerning relationships within the Christian community (5:1–5), and is a command for subordination (in passive imperative form, *υποτάγητε*) of the same kind as those in the code. The immediate context of the remaining use (3:22), however, is not parenetic, but rather a description of Christ's suffering and victory over evil forces (3:18–22); this form is a passive participle (*υποταγέντων*) denoting the subordination of specified powers to Christ.

This chapter provides an exegetical study of the nature of subordination in these four passages. They require attention not only because they contain the verb *υποτάσσω*, but also (and more importantly) because of their wider conceptual significance for this investigation. Some of them also include the remaining

relevant instances of the other Petrine terms commonly associated with the theme (*ὑπήκουσεν* in 3:6; *τιμὴν* in 3:7; *ταπεινοφροσύνην* in 5:5).²

Each of the sections below includes an introduction, which is followed by an examination of the verse/s relating most directly to subordination, with reference as appropriate to the surrounding texts. Because the social circumstances of the Christian slaves and wives addressed in 2:18–3:7 are similar in important respects, the first main section deals with these groups together, while 3:22 is treated last in view of its different form and literary context. A final section draws out the implications of this study for the author’s understanding of subordination, in relation to the provisional conclusions reached in Chapter 5.

Slaves and Wives (2:18–25; 3:1–7)³

In the late first century CE, a significant proportion of the population in the Mediterranean provinces of the Roman empire was enslaved, and so there were probably many slaves in the congregations addressed by 1 Peter. Slaves occupied the lowest place in the social order and were therefore the most vulnerable members of society. They were regarded as mere property, such that they enjoyed no personal autonomy or legal rights, while the power of their masters over them was nearly absolute and their complete subordination seen as normative. They could be sent away or sold at any time; they could be required to provide sexual services to their masters; and they were liable to discipline by physical force, even to the point of death.⁴

This picture of downtrodden slaves requires some qualification, however. Most slaves received shelter and sufficient care to ensure their continued usefulness, and many were manumitted, though this was not necessarily an unmixed blessing.⁵ Some at least enjoyed fair treatment and could rise to positions of responsibility. This suggests that while the institution of slavery was in some ways extremely severe, its worst aspects were not experienced by all slaves.⁶

In a context where women were seen as inherently deficient in comparison with men, wives were expected to be subordinate to their husbands.⁷ They were treated as inferior in society and the home, and social conventions gave husbands considerable power to bully them; John Fitzgerald contends that they might even suffer physical abuse.⁸ But the disadvantages of wives in the Greco-Roman world at this time should not be exaggerated either; they had some autonomy and were fulfilling a significant and increasing number of roles, “particularly in the public sphere . . . including public benefaction and other forms of influence.”⁹

Nonetheless, slaves and wives were normally required to follow the religion of the head of the household, and wives were not supposed to have social contacts independently of their husbands.¹⁰ Thus Christian converts could come into conflict with pagan masters/husbands by rejecting the gods of the family cult and becoming part of the Christian community.¹¹ The effect of these conversions might also be felt by believers generally: a religious group that failed to respect the foundational and normative relationships of the household was regarded as immoral and potentially seditious; so insubordinate actions by slaves and wives might call into question the loyalty of Christians to prevailing social and political arrangements.¹²

In light of various Petrine texts (see below), it seems likely that 2:18–3:7 is written partly to address these circumstances.¹³ David Balch writes:

The author of 1 Peter exhorted these Christians to live in family relationships which Greco-Roman culture had defined as normal and proper. The author hoped that this would cause Roman masters, husbands and governors to cease criticizing and even to praise persons who had rejected the traditional gods for faith in Christ.¹⁴

While the refusal of slaves and wives to worship the gods of their masters and husbands would inevitably attract some hostility, by acting in accordance with accepted practice in all other respects, including subordination to the household head, they could avoid unnecessary charges and silence those who accused them (and the whole Christian community) of being socially and politically disruptive (2:15). By such good works submissive wives might even win their husbands to the faith (3:1–2).¹⁵

It is notable too that the Petrine code includes no words for masters and a mere 25 for husbands (compared to 97 for wives and 129 for slaves). It is unlikely that there were no masters and few husbands in the Christian communities;¹⁶ instead, most scholars believe that the author regards slaves and wives as paradigmatic for the experience and proper conduct of all the readers in the face of external hostility. These groups (and slaves in particular) are those most likely to suffer unjustly, and the subordination that is required of them in these circumstances is therefore a model for suffering believers generally. The designation of all Christians as “slaves of Christ” (2:16) reinforces their identification with real slaves.¹⁷ Thus these verses imply that by subordinating themselves to their political and social superiors (2:13a), the whole community will deflect and diminish the antagonism directed against it.

Yet it is highly questionable whether the presence of these sections can be adequately explained simply in relation to the challenge posed by conflict in religiously mixed households. This is partly because, as for many slaves and wives, the problem appears not to have been very severe for the readers. Although 1 Peter refers to the suffering of slaves (2:19,20b), only beatings are specifically mentioned (2:20a), and it is implied that only harsh masters will administer these for *good* behavior (2:18).¹⁸ So most of the slaves addressed by the letter appear not to have been suffering the fullest rigors of the system, and within its tight limits many of them may have been well treated. The author acknowledges that wives may be intimidated (3:6), but this could well have been an uncommon experience: some of them would have had Christian husbands (see 3:1), and none of the obvious forms of pressure (verbal abuse, restriction of religious practice, violence) is predicated of the others.

The following exegesis will give several further reasons to think that the motive for the author's exhortation is not purely pragmatic. It will show that in his view the conduct he commends both conforms to society's highest values and fulfils the will of God (see the discussion of *ἀγαθοποιέω* in Chapter 5). As Donelson says, "In all these arguments is an assumption that Christians and non-Christians share sufficient values for non-Christians to recognise the good in the behavior of Christians."¹⁹ By following these instructions, slaves and wives will not only silence hostile criticism arising from their conversion by doing what outsiders acknowledge to be good, but will also live in a way that pleases God.²⁰ And although there are some hints in these sections that the required subordination of slaves and wives is not absolute, the author never says so explicitly, suggesting that there will be few instances where it is inappropriate.

A study of the verses in which subordination language appears, illuminated by these two passages as a whole, will confirm and expand upon these preliminary considerations.

2:18–25

The initial address *Οἱ οἰκέται* is an articular nominative used as a vocative.²¹ The articular form could imply an address to inferiors, except that the same construction is used when addressing the husbands in 3:7.²² Most likely, therefore, it is a "simple substitute for a Semitic noun of address,"²³ which if it has any special significance functions merely to emphasize the description of the people addressed.²⁴ It is at least unusual for slaves to be addressed directly in a household code,²⁵ and the author's approach assumes that he regards them as fully

human, rational, and capable of independent moral judgment and behavior, such that they can responsibly obey his instructions.²⁶ *Οικέται* are probably household slaves, who belong to an *οἶκος* and work as its servants.²⁷

The instruction issued to the slaves, *ὑποτασσόμενοι*, appears to be a participial imperative.²⁸ The construction may have been chosen deliberately to denote a specific example of the imperative in verse 13a, where the readers are told to subordinate themselves *πάσῃ ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει*.²⁹ If the whole of 2:13–17 (in which all the commands are imperatival) is an introduction to the entire section 2:13–3:12, and includes a paradigmatic example of the subordination (and honor) required of the readers, then the use of a participle in 2:18 (and in 3:1 and 3:7) may indicate that the section it governs comprises a further application of the general instructions in those verses.³⁰

If so, the command is probably based on the idea of God-given and authoritative structures in which slaves, as social inferiors, must be subordinate to their masters as their superiors.³¹ This conclusion is supported by the evidently one-sided nature of the subordination (no reciprocal instructions are given to masters) and its involving submission to the masters' will.

Subordination is to be given *ἐν παντί φόβῳ*. As stated above (Chapter 5), many commentators maintain that in 1 Peter only God is the appropriate object of *φόβος* (except in the LXX citation in 3:14), and fear of God is almost certainly the meaning here (and in 3:2) given the proximity of 2:17.³² In that case the deference and obedience to masters required of slaves are an expression of their reverence and regard for God, and (like *διὰ τὸν κύριον* in 2:13) the phrase is therefore intended to reinforce the preceding imperative. Of course it also implies that subordination to masters is limited in principle; slaves are obliged to submit only in matters that do not conflict with their primary loyalty to God.³³ But again the author seems to assume that this limitation will hardly be necessary in practice.³⁴

The subordination is *τοῖς δεσπόταις*, a term that emphasizes the control and authority exercised by the masters,³⁵ though secondarily it may also distinguish them from the slaves' unique *κύριος*.³⁶ And the principle applies *οὐ μόνον τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς καὶ ἐπιεικέσιν ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς σκολιοῖς*. That is, subordination is required by the masters' status within the divinely given order, not by their character; slaves must submit to cruel masters who punish them unjustly just as they do to kind ones who treat them fairly.³⁷

Verses 19 and 20 further clarify the basis and character of the slaves' prescribed subordination. Divine motivations are given for it: approval from God (*χάρις*, divine favor [vv.19,20b], and *κλέος*, divine credit [v.20a]) and awareness of God (*συνειδήσις θεοῦ* [v.19]).³⁸ For slaves with harsh masters, it involves the

submissive endurance of unjust suffering (*εἰ . . . ὑποφέρει τις λύπας πάσχων ἀδίκως* [v.19]); they are to bear the pain of such cruelty or violence without resistance or retaliation (2:21–23; see further below) through their consciousness of God’s will.³⁹ The author points out that such patience is of no value if the beating is prompted by their own sin (*εἰ ἁμαρτάνοντες καὶ κολαφιζόμενοι ὑπομενεῖτε* [v.20a]), but if their suffering is provoked by their good conduct (*εἰ ἀγαθοποιούντες καὶ πάσχοντες ὑπομενεῖτε* [v.20b]), their enduring of it brings them God’s approbation.⁴⁰

Then in verses 21–25 the author further grounds his exhortation to subordination with reference to the sufferings of Christ as the Isaianic Servant of YHWH, by means of a brief commentary on Isaiah 53:4–12.⁴¹ Firstly, he appeals to Christ as an example (*ἵνα ἐπακολουθήσητε τοῖς ἰχνεσιν αὐτοῦ*) for the Christian vocation to undeserved suffering and the proper response to it (v.21): Christ committed no sin or deceit, and he did not retaliate when reviled or threaten when afflicted, but he entrusted himself to God the just judge (vv.22–23).⁴² Secondly, the following verses cite Christ as the savior (*ὁς τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν αὐτὸς ἀνήνεγκεν ἐν τῷ σώματι αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον* [v.24]): the effect of his death is so to heal the readers that they might not now act against God’s will but in line with it; and he is now their shepherd and overseer who enables them to fulfil God’s command (vv.24–25).⁴³ Thus the subordination of Christian slaves to their masters is based on and shaped by the exemplary and salvific sufferings of their Lord. Some scholars also plausibly suggest that the author is exalting the slaves by identifying them with Christ;⁴⁴ by so doing he will strengthen their resolve.⁴⁵

So these verses call household slaves to subordinate themselves to their masters as their authoritative superiors within the God-given order. This subordination is to be given irrespective of the masters’ character, and it may include the patient endurance of unjust suffering. The author’s appeal to divine rather than pragmatic motives for subordination is striking:⁴⁶ fear of God, awareness of God, approval from God (which is withheld from the insubordinate), and the sufferings of Christ as example and redeemer. Admittedly these also limit the slaves’ submission to their masters, but only implicitly and thus (apparently) in exceptional cases. And while the direct address and identification with Christ point to the elevation of slaves’ status within the Christian communities, these serve only to reinforce rather than to subvert the call to subordination.

3:1–7

The opening word of the new section, *Ὁμοίως*, links it to the previous one;⁴⁷ the instructions to wives are a further application of the general requirement in 2:13a

of subordination to superiors within the divine order. Their nature as such is reinforced by the use of another imperatival participle (*ὑποτασσόμεναι*), and by their being one-sided (see below on 3:7) and including obedience to the husband (3:6). The phrase *αἱ γυναῖκες* is another nominative used as a vocative, possibly emphasizing again the unusual direct address to a subordinate group. Although in isolation it could refer to women in general, the object of the imperative, *τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν*, makes clear that wives are in view.⁴⁸ They too are to demonstrate respect for “the natural order of creation”⁴⁹ and authority, in their case by subordinating themselves to their own husbands.⁵⁰

The implication of *καὶ εἴ τινες ἀπειθοῦσιν τῷ λόγῳ* is that some (not all or even necessarily most) of the women were married to pagans, while the reference to the latter’s disobeying (rather than merely disbelieving) the word suggests that they had actively rejected and perhaps opposed the gospel of Christ. Thus some of them might be slandering both their wives and the Christian community in general because of the wives’ refusal to worship the family’s gods. The instruction to wives to be subordinate to their husbands therefore also⁵¹ furthers the pragmatic aim of the code as a whole: silencing the ignorance of the foolish by doing good in the eyes of society (cp. 2:15). In this instance the goal may be achieved partly by the conversion of their husbands (*ἵνα . . . κερδηθῆσονται*).⁵²

The disobedient husbands may be won over *διὰ τῆς τῶν γυναικῶν ἀναστροφῆς*. Subordinate conduct by the wives in everyday domestic life will relieve the husbands’ fear of disruption in the home. But the definition of this conduct in the following verse in terms of purity motivated by fear (*τὴν ἐν φόβῳ ἀγνήν ἀναστροφήν ὑμῶν*) suggests again that it involves conformity to the will of God as well as to the highest values of society, and that these are (normally) congruent.⁵³ Purity is not only an answer to actual or potential charges of immorality provoked by the wives’ religious nonconformity, but is also proper before God (1:22); and the fear is again probably fear of God (see above).⁵⁴ The implied encouragement of silence (*ἄνευ λόγου*) in verse 1 has the same dual basis: the wives’ words in support of the gospel might be more provocative than helpful in a context where society regards their silence as virtuous, but as the following verses show, quietness is also a Christian quality.⁵⁵

In verses 3–4 the author further expounds the nature of good conduct in terms of a contrast between perishable external adornment and imperishable inward character. The outward braiding of hair and wearing of ornaments and clothing, with their connotations of extravagance and sexual provocation, are to be rejected in favor of a gentle and peaceable spirit. Once more, this lifestyle is virtuous according to both Christian and Greco-Roman moral standards: it

is explicitly said to be very precious before God, and it will be effective in both appeasing husbands and answering societal slanders.⁵⁶

As the author continues his instructions to wives, he once again uses the participial form of *ὑποτάσσω* to define the conduct he is prescribing. He justifies his previous call for inward adornment (*γάρ*) by appealing to “the ancient and hence authoritative past”⁵⁷ (*ποτε*), and specifically to *αἱ ἄγναι γυναῖκες αἱ ἐλπίζουσαι εἰς Θεόν*. This is a reference to women from the OT, perhaps especially or exclusively the matriarchs from Genesis, who as members of God’s people continually looked for the fulfilment of God’s promises, and who are therefore “ethical examples for Christian wives”;⁵⁸ again the author offers a divine motivation for the prescribed conduct. These women used to decorate themselves internally (*οὕτως . . . ἐκόσμουσαν ἑαυτάς*) by subordinating themselves to their own husbands (*ὑποτασσόμεναι τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν*).⁵⁹ In the same way, the Christian wives’ inner disposition of gentleness and quietness involves subordination to their husbands within the established order.

The particular OT woman used by the author as an example of subordination is Sarah (v.6), wife of Abraham the father of God’s people.⁶⁰ She is said to have obeyed (*ὑπήκουσεν*) her husband by calling him “lord.”⁶¹ Although subordination to superiors cannot be reduced to that of obedience, this verse demonstrates that for the author obedience is an integral part of it.⁶² The present participle probably indicates a habitual address, instantiated (alone in the biblical texts) in Genesis 18:12.⁶³ For the author, its use implies Sarah’s submission to Abraham’s authority, and emphasizes the peace and harmony that he is seeking to promote within the readers’ households.⁶⁴ It has been suggested that 3:6 presents Sarah as “an ideal Hellenistic wife” whose virtue is to be imitated by Christian wives.⁶⁵

Through their conversion, the Christian wives have become the daughters of Sarah within the people of God of whom she is the mother. But they must demonstrate and maintain that relationship by continuing to do good (including subordination) and not to fear intimidation by hostile husbands. Thus once more the author enjoins them to conduct that both God and society approve, and assumes that these will generally agree; by subordinating themselves as befits Sarah’s children they can hope normally to defuse any actual or potential hostility in the home resulting from their religious nonconformity. But in case they do not,⁶⁶ he also warns them against being intimidated by their husbands, presumably into compromising or abandoning their faith under the pressure of disapproval, however this may be expressed.⁶⁷

The command for subordination in 3:1 is not addressed only to wives with pagan husbands; it is applied to Christian wives without distinction. So the brief

instruction to Christian husbands in 3:7 sheds light on what the author regards as the appropriate context of that subordination within a marriage between Christians.⁶⁸ In its participial form it may be seen as a further outworking of the general instructions in 2:13–17, but in this case in particular the injunction in 2:17a to honor all people, even one's inferiors (*ἀπονέμοντες τιμὴν*);⁶⁹ in their life together the husband is to recognize the status of his wife and to respect her accordingly. This means acknowledging her as a weaker vessel⁷⁰ and treating her with the appropriate consideration as such; but it also means seeing her as sharing with him in God's gift of life and giving her the corresponding esteem. His failure to do this will hinder the couple's prayers. Thus as in the Colossian and Ephesian codes for wives and husbands, elements of equality are introduced into the marriage relationship, but these condition rather than undermine or abolish its patriarchal nature.⁷¹

So this passage requires the subordination of Christian wives to their husbands, including non-Christian husbands. The grounds for this exhortation certainly include the defusing of hostility resulting from the wives' conversion and the possibility of winning their husbands to the Christian faith. But in addition, the author appeals again to the fear of God, and also to the example of holy and godly women from the OT, specifically Sarah, who obeyed her husband and accepted his authority.⁷² He also defines subordinate conduct in terms of qualities that are pleasing both to God and to society (purity and silence, gentleness and peace), assuming their demands generally to coincide; although wives must stand firm against intimidation if necessary, their submission will normally restore peace to the home. This suggests that the call to subordination in these verses is not merely a pragmatic imperative, but also a divine one; it involves the wives' taking their due place below their husbands within the divine order. The hierarchical relationship this implies is only shaped, not subverted, by the elevation of the wife and her new status as a joint heir with her Christian husband.

Νεώτεροι (5:1–5)

In this section of the letter the author turns from instructions relating to the Christian community's relationships with outsiders (4:12–19) to its own internal relations. The passage consists of addresses to two groups, the *πρεσβύτεροι* (5:1–4) and the *νεώτεροι* (5:5a), and a brief exhortation to everyone, the latter supported by a citation from the OT (5:5b).⁷³ Some commentators⁷⁴ extend the section to

5:11, but verses 6–11 relate rather to the readers' relationships with God and with their spiritual adversary the devil.

The immediate literary context of the passage is the suffering brought upon the believers by hostile forces (human or spiritual); this is a principal theme of both the preceding and following sections. The purpose of the exhortation is therefore to strengthen the community in the face of this persecution by promoting good relationships within it. The call to subordination in 5:5 is directed to this goal, alongside the requirements of appropriate leadership and of mutual trust and respect. These characteristics will ensure the unity and cohesion of the readers and enable them to stand firm under pressure.⁷⁵

One of the significant interpretive issues relating to this passage is its relationship, if any, to the household code found in 2:18–3:7. The codes in Colossians and Ephesians both include three sections of reciprocal instructions: to wives and husbands, children and fathers, and slaves and masters (Col 3:18–4:1; Eph 5:21–6:9). The absence of children and parents from 1 Peter raises the question of whether 5:1–5, with its instructions to *πρεσβύτεροι* and *νεώτεροι*, is the missing section, perhaps applied in a modified form to the congregation and its leaders.⁷⁶ Some scholars have also suggested that the author may be drawing on a single formalized code that included material for both the household and the congregation.⁷⁷

In favor of such views are the giving of instructions to each group in turn (reciprocally in 3:1–7 and 5:1–5, though not in 2:18–25), and the command for subordination of the supposedly inferior group to the superior one.⁷⁸ But other commentators have pointed out important differences too: 2:18–3:7 relates mainly to the believers' relationships with their non-Christian superiors, while 5:1–5 is about relations within the Christian community;⁷⁹ the former has a (partly) apologetic function, aiming to deflect criticism from outsiders, while the latter is intended to build up the community;⁸⁰ and 5:1–5 appears much later in the letter, in a place used elsewhere for instructions to leaders.⁸¹

A popular theory that holds these various factors together sees the exhortations of 5:1–5 as modeled on or influenced by the household codes (or by the broader *περὶ οἰκονομίας* tradition of household management of which they are particular expressions), and as applying instruction normally reserved for the home to the whole Christian congregation. Thus they need not have been part of a wider code, or even derived from instructions previously devised for parents and children (although this remains possible),⁸² but they are part of a developing tradition of ministry and leadership that imposes the normatively structured and hierarchical order of the *οἶκος* (and *πόλις*) on the ecclesial relationships of the

community.⁸³ This is a preliminary indication that the call for subordination in 5:5 should be understood in similar terms to those in 2:13–3:7.⁸⁴

By far the most important issue in 5:1–4 relating to the exegesis of 5:5 is the nature and function of the *πρεσβύτεροι* (5:1). In the NT, a *πρεσβύτερος* may be an old or older person (e.g. Acts 2:17; Lk 15:25), a forefather (e.g. Heb 11:2), or a senior member of the Jewish community (e.g. Lk 7:3; Acts 6:12).⁸⁵ Within the Christian community the term may denote absolute or relative age (as in 1 Tm 5:1–2), but it is also used for church leaders (as in Acts 11:30; Ti 1:5).⁸⁶ The latter usage is often believed to derive from eldership in the Jewish synagogue⁸⁷ (though it has been argued that the latter was not an office).⁸⁸

The ascription to the *πρεσβύτεροι* of 1 Peter 5:1–4 of the functions of shepherding (*ποιμάνατε τὸ ἐν ὑμῖν ποίμνιον τοῦ θεοῦ*) and oversight (*ἐπισκοποῦντες*) (5:2) reveals conclusively that its instructions are addressed to church leaders.⁸⁹ However, the use of this particular term, with its contemporary connotations of age and status, may indicate that at this time church leaders were also (at least normally) senior people.⁹⁰ In fact, a strong case has been made for seeing the Petrine *πρεσβύτεροι* as “leaders of the early Christian communities by virtue of their social position as heads of households,”⁹¹ senior men in terms of age and of status in the family and local community.⁹² In a context where churches met in homes and were centered on particular households, it was natural for such people to assume roles of leadership (even though they might also have to be senior in the faith).⁹³

It does not follow, however, that these *πρεσβύτεροι* were holders of a recognized office within the Christian community. Because they were leaders by virtue of their age and position, Elliott is probably right to say, “At this early stage, elders exercised *roles* and *functions* of *traditional* authority rather than ‘offices’ (*legally defined positions* within a specified institutional and bureaucratic order).”⁹⁴ The letter strongly suggests that the word *πρεσβύτερος* has not yet acquired an official status:⁹⁵ at this stage the exercise of the elders’ authority still needs to be defined;⁹⁶ any traditions that lie behind 5:2–3 have apparently not yet assumed a fixed, written form;⁹⁷ and 1 Peter attests to the continued presence, alongside elders, of charismatic activity in which everyone in the congregation might be involved (4:10–11).⁹⁸

This conclusion confirms that the subordination required of the *νεώτεροι* in 5:5 is probably of the same kind as that expected of the slaves in 2:18 and the wives in 3:1,5 (and of everyone in 2:13a). It involves respect not for an ecclesiastical office, but rather for superiors within the God-given and authoritative structures; on the basis of that status they are also leaders of the Christian community.

Indeed, some of the same men will no doubt have received subordination in three capacities: as masters from slaves, husbands from wives, and *πρεσβύτεροι* from *νεώτεροι*.⁹⁹ In this case, however, unlike the masters and husbands, the *πρεσβύτεροι* are all Christians; so the author includes no instructions for dealing with harsh superiors (as in 2:18–20 and perhaps 3:6), presumably in the hope that leaders will follow the instructions he issues (5:1–4) regarding the discharge of their role.

The author bases his instructions for these leaders initially on his own collegial and exemplary role (5:1):¹⁰⁰ he shares their responsibilities as elders; he is a witness to the sufferings of Christ; and he will partake in the glory of Christ's future coming.¹⁰¹ He then calls the *πρεσβύτεροι* to exercise their responsibilities of shepherding and oversight over the flock of God (to whom it belongs), and to do so in particular ways (5:2–3): not under compulsion, for personal gain or domineering over their charges,¹⁰² but willingly (as God requires), eagerly and in an exemplary manner.¹⁰³ Finally he reinforces the exhortation by appealing to the status of Christ as chief shepherd over the flock, and to the promise of lasting glory for those who lead well (5:4).¹⁰⁴

The ethical focus of these directions shapes the context in which the subordination of v.5a is to be given; it requires godly, servant leadership from the *πρεσβύτεροι* in relation to those whom they lead, as an expression of Christ's care for his people.¹⁰⁵ Yet these verses also entrust to these household heads the authoritative roles of shepherds and overseers, and ground these not on the merely pragmatic basis of strengthening the church in the face of persecution (though this is implied by the wider context), but on the lordship and will of God, Christology, eschatology and the author's own status. This suggests that although no reason is given in 5:5 for the required subordination of the *νεώτεροι*, this hierarchical relationship too is based partly on divine imperatives. Exegesis of the verse confirms this conclusion.

The opening word of 5:5, *ὁμοίως*, recalls the same usage in 3:1,7 and represents another minor connection between this passage and the earlier household code.¹⁰⁶ Its purpose is again to join items in a series, in this case the instructions for the *πρεσβύτεροι* and the *νεώτεροι*.¹⁰⁷

The term *νεώτεροι* (“younger people”) is a substantival use of a comparative adjective in a vocative of simple address.¹⁰⁸ Its precise meaning has been disputed. John Elliott has argued that the *νεώτεροι* are new converts; he cites a number of possible parallels from pagan and Jewish writings and the NT and also appeals to the context of 1 Peter as instruction for the recently baptized.¹⁰⁹ On the other hand, Ceslas Spicq has suggested that the word refers to a recognized class of

“younger” people in the early Christian communities, who are defined not only by age but also by function.¹¹⁰

Elliott and Spicq have established convincingly that *νεώτεροι* can refer to a junior rank as well as to a junior age, but their restriction of the term to a subgroup of those who are not elders is less persuasive. The appeal to “all” (*πάντες*) in 5:5b most naturally implies that the two groups previously addressed comprise the whole community.¹¹¹ And given that subordination to superiors is expected of all believers (2:13), and that all slaves and wives are enjoined to it (2:18; 3:1), there is no obvious reason why the command to be subordinate to elders should be more restricted.¹¹²

So the *νεώτεροι* may more credibly be identified with everyone in the congregation apart from the *πρεσβύτεροι*; the term designates all community members in relation to the elders, as their “formal counterpart.”¹¹³ Since the *πρεσβύτεροι* are relatively senior men in terms of age and status, the author uses the corresponding term *νεώτεροι* to designate the others as relatively junior (even though in fact some of them, such as elderly slaves, may have been older than the *πρεσβύτεροι*) and thus to connote their subordinate place in the community. It is all Christians except the elders whom the author calls to subordination.¹¹⁴

As indicated above, the imperative *ὑποτάγητε πρεσβυτέρους*¹¹⁵ is to be understood in a similar way to those in the civic and household code. The *νεώτεροι* are to recognize the superior place of the *πρεσβύτεροι* within the divinely given hierarchy and to maintain the order and unity of the community by deferring to and obeying them.¹¹⁶ Although this subordination might be limited by the readers’ higher loyalty to Christ, the author does not make that point even implicitly in 5:5; perhaps he assumes that there will normally be no conflict on the grounds that most of the elders will follow the instructions in 5:1–4, though the antitheses in verses 2–3 at least raise the possibility that some may lead inappropriately.¹¹⁷

This instruction underlines more unmistakably than any other in the letter the author’s endorsement of the existing, hierarchical structures of the household (and wider society) as part of the divinely given order embodied by the Christian community. If, as argued above, the *πρεσβύτεροι* are heads of households, and have their superior standing within the congregations because of that social position, then the verse assumes the extension of the subordinate relationships of the *οἶκος* even to the relations between leaders and led within the divine institution of God’s people, the *οἶκος θεοῦ* (2:5).¹¹⁸ Thus to command other believers to subordinate themselves to the *πρεσβύτεροι* is to require their acceptance and active promotion of those relationships, as a divine imperative.

The call to mutual humility in verse 5b is formally separate from the imperative of 5a, but it requires some consideration because of its address, and in light of the possible connection between the concepts of humility and subordination.¹¹⁹ The call is directed to *πάντες*, both *πρεσβύτεροι* and *νεώτεροι*, and in this context appears intended partly to govern their (super- and subordinate) relationship with each other; it identifies the manner in which the two groups are to carry out their respective instructions, and excludes both oppressive leading and rebellious following.¹²⁰ Relationships within the groups are included too, however.

The reciprocal pronoun *ἀλλήλοις*, placed in an emphatic position, underlines that this is a mutual obligation. The verb *ἐγκομβώσασθε* may refer to the firm binding on of a slave's apron, implying that humility entails determinedly taking the lowest place in society, that of menial service;¹²¹ in any event, *ταπεινοφροσύνη* involves rating the interests of others as more important than one's own and serving them accordingly.¹²² The author supports his exhortation by quoting Proverbs 3:34; it is God's attitude to the *ὑπερηφάνοι* and the *ταπεινοί* that drives the call to humility (and implied warning against arrogance). Those who claim and seek a high status for themselves in the sight of others are resisted by God, while those who are willing to take a lowly status (by serving others) are blessed with his favor.¹²³

So this passage demands that the members of the Christian community subordinate themselves to certain household heads, who exercise the authoritative leadership role (not "office") of shepherding and oversight in virtue of their position. In so doing it replicates the hierarchical structure of the household (*οἶκος*) within even the ecclesial relationships of the people of God. The author requires the elders to adopt a style of leadership that conveys Christ's concern for his people, and everyone—including the leaders—to take the lowly status of a slave and serve the needs of others above their own. But once again this context merely implicitly conditions the subordinate relationships that the letter explicitly endorses; it does not undermine them. Indeed, the instructions to elders and the reasons given for them confirm that for the author these relationships are part of the divine order, even if they also have the pragmatic purpose of helping Christians to deal with persecution.

Angels, Authorities, Powers (3:18–22)

The final instance of *ὑποτάσσω* in 1 Peter occurs in a section of the letter (3:18–22) that is relevant to its themes of subordination *and* freedom. After this brief

introduction, this chapter provides an overview of the whole passage, followed by a fuller exegetical treatment of verse 22 and its use of the term *ὑποταγέντων*. Verses 18a and 21, which bear mainly on freedom, will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

The section offers a theoretical foundation (*ἔτι*, v.18) for the practical exhortation in verses 13–17 to persevere in doing good through persecution and unjust suffering. It assures the readers that their eschatological salvation and victory is certain: because of Christ's death, resurrection and ascension, and their baptism, believers can be assured that just as he was vindicated after his suffering, so also will they be.¹²⁴ Because their ultimate destiny is therefore certain, they need not fear their oppressors but can stand firm in the face of pressure to renounce their faith.¹²⁵

The author achieves this purpose by means of a description and exposition of Christ's saving work, understood in terms of his journey from the cross to heaven. This is the last of three brief christological statements (1:18–21; 2:21–25; 3:18–22) in the letter that appear to draw on common Christian traditions, whether hymnic or credal, to recount the story of Jesus and its salvific implications.¹²⁶ Verse 22, following references to Christ's suffering (v.18) and resurrection (vv.19,21), thus brings that story to its climax with a description of his exaltation to heaven and victory over hostile forces.¹²⁷

This section of the letter is notoriously difficult with respect to both its overall conception and its exegetical details, and limits of space preclude a thorough consideration of its many controversial issues. But although an interpretive consensus has proved elusive, many contemporary commentators have built on the seminal work of W.J. Dalton,¹²⁸ and the broad outline of this approach is followed here. It is particularly significant for the identity of the *ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύματα* of verse 19 and the time, place and nature of Christ's proclamation to them; as will be shown below, this bears directly on the interpretation of verse 22.

In verse 18 the author presents Christ as the suffering and dying righteous one who is vindicated in his resurrection.¹²⁹ It follows from Christ's passion and its aftermath that he is able now to bring believers to God; that is, to ensure their vindication after the trials that they must currently endure for his sake when he will place them before God's throne. "Christ, the righteous one, can lead them, the unrighteous, to God because by his suffering and resurrection he has overcome all powers that could hinder such access."¹³⁰ His death and consequent vindication are thus the basis of their hope; those who suffer with him will also be blessed in him.¹³¹

The descriptions of Christ's death and resurrection place them in the spheres of *σάρξ* and *πνεῦμα* respectively.¹³² According to Dalton, this distinction

refers to two orders of being, the flesh representing human nature in its weakness, its proclivity to evil, its actual evil once it opposes the influence of God; the spirit representing the consequence of God's salvation, the presence and activity among us of the Spirit of God.¹³³

He takes *πνεύματι* as the antecedent of *ἐν ᾧ* at the beginning of verse 19: it is in the sphere of the spirit—that is, in his resurrected state—that Christ made the proclamation described in verse 19; it took place after his resurrection (*πορευθεὶς ἐκήρυξεν*).¹³⁴

Christ's triumph is evidently typified and effected by this event, but verse 19 is particularly difficult to interpret. The view adopted here is that it refers to his declaration of victory over, and judgment upon, the rebellious and wicked angelic beings of Noah's time, the *רוּחַ הַיָּסוּדִים הַרְשָׁעִים* of Genesis 6:2. These spirits are seen as the original—and probably originating—subset of the spiritual forces opposed to God, which some Jewish tradition held responsible for human evil¹³⁵ (see above, Chapter 3). They are imprisoned pending final judgment; *2 Enoch* 7 makes the place of their confinement the second heaven, and although this work may well post-date 1 Peter, its teaching draws on the same traditions and fits with the idea of a proclamation made after Christ's resurrection (see below on v.22).¹³⁶ Christ has announced to them that the rule of their kind/offspring has now given way to his own.¹³⁷

Verse 20 supports this interpretation in its locating of the spirits' disobedience in the days of Noah.¹³⁸ This also underpins a typological comparison in verses 20–21 of Noah's flood with the coming eschatological judgment, and of its waters, which saved the family of Noah from his evil and doomed world, with the baptism that saves the readers from their unbelieving and disobedient environment. Now as then, the patience of God waits (perhaps in vain) for repentance; Noah's small family represent the small Christian community; and just as the former were saved through water in the ark, so the latter are saved through baptism.¹³⁹

Within this general context, the placing of Jesus Christ at the right hand of God, his having gone into heaven, with angels and authorities and powers in subordination (*ὑποταγέντων*) to him (v.22), should therefore be taken as the climax and culmination of his cosmic victory over hostile spiritual forces, the ultimate guarantee of the readers' salvation and vindication, and the final basis for their

confidence and endurance in the midst of suffering. A detailed discussion of this verse will further clarify its meaning and significance.

The relative pronoun *ὅς* with which 3:22 begins refers back to *Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ* in the previous verse. Grammatically, the verse is therefore an adjectival subordinate clause qualifying *Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*, who is its subject (*ὅς*). It consists of its own main clause and two participial phrases, which articulate three consequences of Christ's resurrection. The participial phrases are logically and temporally prior to the main clause, denoting the events by which Christ's present status was effected, while the positioning of the main clause at the beginning of the verse emphasizes its climactic significance and ties it as closely as possible to the preceding verse: Christ's exalted state is inseparable from his resurrection, as a consequence of it.¹⁴⁰

The main clause of verse 22, *ὅς ἐστὶν ἐν δεξιᾷ Θεοῦ*, is widely held to be derived from Psalm 110:1, which is used in several NT passages (e.g. 1 Cor 15:23–28; Heb 2:5–9; Eph 1:20–23) with reference to Jesus' exaltation (see above, Chapter 4).¹⁴¹ In this psalm the king is raised to a place of honor and power as God's representative, bearing divine authority, and his enemies are subjected to him. The wording may also echo, more distantly, the enthroning of YHWH's anointed in Psalm 2:6–9, by which he receives universal kingship and exercises dominion over the hostile nations.¹⁴²

It follows that this clause refers to "Christ's position of royal dignity and authority alongside God the Father, as a result of his resurrection,"¹⁴³ in which he is given "God's eschatological dominion in relation to the cosmos."¹⁴⁴ The right (hand) of God is a place of his favor and honor, which implies Christ's exercise of divine sovereignty as God's vicegerent; he abides in the presence of God and administers the power of God over all things.¹⁴⁵ The present-tense verb *ἐστὶν* is a general, stative present denoting Christ's continuing state.

The first participial phrase, *πορευθεὶς εἰς οὐρανόν*, designates Christ's going to the presence of God in the highest heaven. His present place at God's right hand presupposes such a prior journey¹⁴⁶ to the place where divine authority is administered.¹⁴⁷ This account of Christ's "ascension" is paralleled in Ephesians 4:8–10, where it is also associated with his rule over the world and the subjecting of his enemies.¹⁴⁸ The reference indicates that the author also stands within the strand of NT tradition that sees the event as distinct from the resurrection (which is mentioned separately in v.21) rather than identical with it;¹⁴⁹ here he posits a temporal sequence of resurrection—heavenly journey—enthroned status.¹⁵⁰

The second participial phrase, *ὑποταγέντων αὐτῷ ἀγγέλων καὶ ἐξουσιῶν καὶ δυνάμεων*, may draw upon Psalm 8 (in addition to Psalms 2 and 110), which

is used elsewhere in the NT to refer to the subjection of all things to Christ in his place of divine authority.¹⁵¹ But whether or not a conscious allusion is intended,¹⁵² the phrase declares the prior subordination of the *ἄγγελοι καὶ ἐξουσίαι καὶ δυνάμεις* to Christ as a further presupposition of his current position of authority.¹⁵³

In light of verse 19, these three terms most likely refer to cosmic spiritual powers opposed to God, of which the spirits in prison are the primal archetype and origin, and which are the ultimate cause of the readers' experience of persecution and hostility at the hands of their pagan neighbors.¹⁵⁴ There is no evidence elsewhere in the letter that the author sees these forces as anything more or different, and he never identifies them with human beings or authorities, whether political or social, despite having a ready opportunity to do so in 2:13ff.¹⁵⁵ The link with verse 19, and the rhetorical purpose of the whole section, also undermine the claim that the forces need not be evil or hostile.¹⁵⁶ Although each of the words has its own nuance, the author does not differentiate the spirits any further and so may not see them as three distinct groups; he probably uses the threefold designation as a comprehensive term for all such hostile powers.¹⁵⁷

The whole phrase is a genitive absolute construction employing a passive participle. This indicates that Christ is not the (ultimate) agent of the subordination, and the participle should probably be understood as a "divine passive" in which God is the subordinating agent;¹⁵⁸ this interpretation also fits with Psalm 8, in which it is YHWH who puts all things under the feet of human beings.

The occasion of the subordination is most naturally taken as the heavenly journey of Christ mentioned in the previous phrase. The author appears to be working with the Jewish tradition of tiered heavens; Christ has ascended through the lower heavens, which are the realm of supernatural powers in enmity to God, in order to reach the highest heaven, the dwelling-place of God. That is to say, he has visited the realm of the *ἄγγελοι καὶ ἐξουσίαι καὶ δυνάμεις*, where these forces were subordinated to him, on the way to his position of divine authority.¹⁵⁹

This understanding is supported by its close correspondence with the interpretation of verse 19 proposed above. It means that the participle *πορευθεὶς* refers to the same event in both verses: it is in his ascension that Christ proclaimed and effected the final defeat of the imprisoned spirits; and in that announcement—which has the force of a performative royal proclamation—God has also brought all other hostile spiritual forces into subjection under Christ's control.¹⁶⁰

The above studies on the meaning of subordination in 2:13,18; 3:1,5; 5:5 suggest that when *υποτάσσω* appears in sections of exhortation and in the middle or passive voice, it enjoins the readers to recognize the divinely given order and voluntarily to subordinate themselves to their superiors within it. But in 3:22, in a didactic section with God as the implied subject of the passive participle, the term denotes the involuntary subordination of the hostile spiritual forces to Christ.¹⁶¹

This means that through Christ's heavenly journey and his proclamation of victory, the *ἀγγελοι και ἐξουσία και δύνამεις* have been forcibly returned to their places within the divine order, so as to be in subjection to Christ as God's vicegerent. This subordination is not deferred until his final revelation; it is an accomplished fact that follows inevitably from his triumph over the forces of cosmic disorder in his suffering and resurrection.¹⁶² It also does not point to the redemption of the powers;¹⁶³ the construction *υποταγέντων* not only implies involuntary subordination, but may also connote a subjection to be followed by their eventual destruction.¹⁶⁴

This interpretation of 3:22 is further confirmed by the rhetorical intention of 3:18–22 as outlined above. The resurrection and exaltation of Christ have restored the cosmic order; in these events he has triumphed over the evil spiritual forces opposed to God and broken their power. The subordination of those forces to Christ entails that they now operate only by his permission and in subservience to his saving purpose.¹⁶⁵ In the present the struggle continues between God's people (2:10) and their persecutors, who are agents of the cosmic forces (5:8–9), but its outcome is already determined; the victory won by Christ will be shared by his followers when he is revealed (4:12–19).¹⁶⁶ Just as he has suffered unjustly and then been exalted, so also the suffering Christians will be exalted in the future; in baptism their destiny has been joined to his.¹⁶⁷ His subordination of the hostile spirits thus guarantees the salvation of his people and encourages them to stand firm in the face of hostility.¹⁶⁸

So this passage describes the subordination to Christ of the evil cosmic powers that are opposed to God and ultimately responsible for the readers' trials. This event has taken place as the climax of Christ's saving work, on the occasion and as a means of his exaltation to the place of divine and universal authority, when he passed through the realm of the imprisoned spirits of Noah's time and proclaimed his victory to them. It involved God's forcibly bringing all hostile spiritual powers under Christ's dominion and thereby restoring the cosmic order. Its effect is to make certain the ultimate salvation of Christians; thus it provides a basis for their persevering in doing good.

Implications

The investigation of these texts confirms the provisional conclusion of Chapter 5 that the author requires subordination to one's superiors within hierarchical and authoritative structures. This includes that of slaves to masters, wives to husbands, and "younger" or junior church members to "elder" household heads who exercise leadership in the Christian community because of their position. In all these contexts it appears to involve the recognition of others' higher status and the deference and obedience due to it (obedience is explicitly included in 3:6), and is therefore one-sided; thus it is different from honor, which may be given from superiors to inferiors, and from humility, which is a mutual obligation. The motivations to which the author appeals in exhorting his readers suggest that as with the subordinate structure of the *πόλις* in 2:13–17, he sees that of the *οἶκος* as ordained by God; indeed, 5:1–5 indicates that he has even assumed it into the ecclesial relationships of the divinely ordained household (*οἶκος*) of God.¹⁶⁹

The subordination is required because of the superiors' position within the divine order, not because of their individual qualities. The author acknowledges (explicitly) that some masters may be harsh and (implicitly) that some husbands may be intimidating, and the instructions to elders in 5:2–4 suggest at least that some may lead with the wrong motives. Thus the normative status of the hierarchical order exists independently of the character of any individual within it.

It is widely acknowledged that the subordination required in these passages has apologetic, missionary and pastoral purposes. Respect for the superior position of masters and husbands is clearly intended to reduce hostility, not only to slaves and wives but to the Christian community as a whole, and not only within the home but within society generally; at least in the case of husbands, this process may extend even to their conversion. And the submission of the *νεώτεροι* will also promote the unity and cohesion of the Christian communities and enable them to stand firm in the face of persecution. Some scholars therefore see these calls to subordination as a purely pragmatic device for the purpose of community self-preservation and growth.¹⁷⁰

However, such a view fails to take sufficient account of the extensive evidence from the passages that the author also regards these forms of subordination as a divine imperative. Whether in the various words and phrases employed, or in the appeal to Christ's sufferings and the examples of OT women, or in the defining of submission in terms of qualities pleasing to God, or in the grounding of the role of elders on Christian norms, he indicates that subordination is something required by God as well as by society. And while these factors in principle also

relativise his calls for subordination to human authorities, such qualifications are only implicit at most.¹⁷¹ He appears to assume a close correlation between God's will and what society approves, according to its best norms guaranteed by the established structures; this is confirmed by his repeated use of *ἀγαθοποιέω* (2:20; 3:6) and his employment of the *Haustafel* form (see above, Chapter 5). Therefore there will usually be no conflict between the demands of God and those of one's superiors, such that insubordination to the latter, even if sometimes necessary, will be exceptional.

Undoubtedly the wider content of the author's exhortations require their outworking in a distinctively Christian way:¹⁷² the address to slaves and wives as fully responsible people, the wives' status as joint-heirs of the grace of life, the duties laid on husbands and elders, and the call to mutual humility. But these elements only condition the hierarchical relationships that he commends; they do not undermine them.¹⁷³ Any elements of equality co-exist alongside a continuing subordination of inferiors to superiors as something expected by God.

Alongside these similar uses of *ὑποτάσσω* (and *ὑπακούω*), the statement in 3:22 of the subordination of the hostile cosmic powers to Christ stands somewhat apart. Not only is its immediate context non-parenetic; it also relates to heavenly rather than earthly agents, and to involuntary rather than voluntary subjection. Unlike the other passages, moreover, it is intended to provide reassurance to the readers that the evil forces that drive their persecutors have been defeated and that their final salvation is therefore secure.

But the common language of subordination and its underlying conceptuality of order strongly suggest that this passage should not be seen in isolation from those (including 2:13–17) that require the subordination of the readers to their political and social superiors. Christ's subjection of the evil cosmic forces has restored the God-given order, and since God's people are called to reflect and embody that order, not least in their internal and external relationships (see above, Chapters 4 and 5), the author's commands to be subordinate are most naturally understood as a means to this end.

This conclusion is reinforced by the purpose of 3:(18–)22, which is to support the preceding exhortation (3:13–17) to persevere in doing good (*ἀγαθοποιέω*); in 2:13–15 this has been shown to include the practice of subordination. That is to say, the subordination of the heavenly powers to Christ demands that of the readers to their political, social and ecclesial superiors. By taking their appropriately inferior places (subjects to rulers, slaves to masters, wives to husbands, "younger" to elders) within the structures of the state, the household and the Christian community, the readers also take their proper subordinate place below Christ in

his position of divine authority within the restored cosmic order.¹⁷⁴ Thus all the instances of *ὑποτάσσω* in 1 Peter are united by the theme of the restoration and maintenance of God-given and authoritative order.

Chapter 7 will complete the exegesis of key passages in 1 Peter by considering those—apart from 2:13–17—that relate to the concept of freedom.

Notes

- 1 Although only 3:1–6 is addressed to the wives, the address to husbands in 3:7 bears upon the wives' subordination and so must also be considered here.
- 2 *ὑπακοή*, a cognate noun of *ὑπακούω*, is found in 1:2, 14, 22, but there it refers to obedience to God. *ταπεινόφρονες*, a cognate adjective of *ταπεινοφροσύνην*, is found in 3:8; see above, Chapter 1, note 25.
- 3 Parts of this section and the chapter conclusion appeared in a reworked form in S. Carter, "A Charter for Domestic Violence? The Subordination of Slaves and Wives in 1 Peter," in *The Bible on Violence: A Thick Description*, eds. H. Paynter and M. Spalione (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2020), and are reprinted by kind permission of the publisher.
- 4 Kelly, *Epistles*, 115; Barclay, "Christian Slave-ownership," 166–67; Davies, "Work and Slavery," 338–40; J. T. Fitzgerald, "Early Christian Missionary Practice and Pagan Reaction: 1 Peter and Domestic Violence against Slaves and Wives," in *Renewing Tradition: Studies in Texts and Contexts in Honor of James W. Thompson*, ed. M. Hamilton, T. H. Olbricht, and J. Peterson (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2007), 36–42; Meynell, *Slavery*, 9–11; Feldmeier, *First Letter*, 168.
- 5 Manumission deprived slaves of the benefits of their former status while often leaving them still obligated to their former masters (Schelkle, *Petrusbriefe*, 78–79; Barclay, "Christian Slave-ownership," 169).
- 6 Barclay, "Christian Slave-ownership," 167–69; Hillyer, *1 Peter*, 87–88; J. G. Nordling, "A More Positive View of Slavery: Establishing Servile Identities in the Christian Assembly," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 19, no. 1 (2009): 64.
- 7 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 206–7.
- 8 Fitzgerald, "Missionary Practice," 32–33.
- 9 Green, *1 Peter*, 92; see also Senior, *1 Peter*, 84.
- 10 Jobes, *1 Peter*, 185–86, 203.
- 11 Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 219; B. J. Bauman-Martin, "Women on the Edge: New Perspectives on Women in the Petrine *Haustafeln*," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 123 (2004): 265–67. Krull (W. Krull, "Sur un Lien entre la 1^{ière} Épître de Pierre et la Théologie de la Libération: La Question du Rapport entre Souffrance et Identité Chrétien," *Théophilyon* 3, no. 2 [1998]: 485) suggests that in addition to suffering the hardships

- common to slaves *and* those common to Christians, the Christian slaves would also have struggled severely with the incompatibility of these two statuses. “Il s’agit bien d’un conflit qui comporte le risqué de perdre la foi, ou bien en se conformant à l’environnement païen, ou bien en le fuyant et en s’enfermant dans un monde sectaire.”
- 12 Balch, *Wives*, 118–19; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 157; Fitzgerald, “Missionary Practice,” 26–29.
 - 13 However, there is no evidence from the letter that Christian slaves were pursuing their freedom, or Christian wives an expanded role, within the church or outside it, on the basis of their Christian faith (Balch, *Wives*, 106–7). The claims of Bird (*Abuse*, 136) that “the author is pulling in the reigns [*sic*] on active, powerful and influential wives/women,” and of Corley (K. E. Corley, “1 Peter,” in *Searching the Scriptures, Volume 2: A Feminist Commentary*, ed. E. Schüssler Fiorenza, A. Brock, and S. Matthews [New York: Crossroad, 1994], 351) that “Christian women in Asia Minor were among those exhibiting more ‘liberated’ social behavior,” while not impossible, do not follow from the instructions given to the wives. And although 1 Peter certainly treats the freedom of licence as a danger to be avoided (2:16) (see E. Stagg and F. Stagg, *Women in the World of Jesus* [Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1978], 203–4), the author seems more concerned to forestall this than to correct an existing problem (4:1–4). The suggestion of Reicke (*Epistles*, 98–100) that 2:18–20 is intended to warn slaves against strikes and sabotage also goes well beyond the content of the text.
 - 14 Balch, *Wives*, 108.
 - 15 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 208; McKnight, *1 Peter*, 182–83; Aageson, “Slaves,” 42. See also 2:12; 3:9,16; 4:4,14.
 - 16 D. G. Horrell, “Aliens and Strangers? The Socio-Economic Location of the Addressees of 1 Peter,” in *Becoming Christian: Essays on 1 Peter and the Making of Christian Identity* (London and New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 127–29.
 - 17 Bartlett, “First Letter,” 280–81, 292; Horrell, *Epistles*, 51; J. K. Brown, “Silent Wives, Verbal Believers: Ethical and Hermeneutical Considerations in 1 Peter 3:1–6 and Its Context,” *Word & World* 24, no. 4 (2004): 396; Nordling, “Slavery,” 70–71.
 - 18 Moxnes’ claim (H. Moxnes, “The Beaten Body of Christ: Reading and Empowering Slave Bodies in 1 Peter,” *Religion and Theology* 21, no. 1–2 [2014]: 131) that even good masters are expected here to administer beatings for bad conduct goes beyond the evidence of this text. The “not only . . . but also” construction (οὐ μόνον . . . ἀλλὰ καὶ) does not prove that the two groups are exhaustive, especially if καὶ is translated as “even”; so the author *may* see the good and gentle master as one who abstains from violence against any of his slaves. For some modest evidence for this view, see Carter, “Domestic Violence,” 177–78.
 - 19 Donelson, *1 Peter*, 90.
 - 20 E. Krentz, “Order in the ‘House’ of God: The *Haustafel* in 1 Peter 2:11–3:12,” in *Common Life in the Early Church: Essays Honoring Graydon F. Snyder*, ed. J. V. Hills

- (Harrisburg, PN: Trinity Press International, 1998), 282, 285; D. G. Horrell, *1 Peter* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2008), 81–82; Horrell, “Conformity,” 230.
- 21 Beare, *First Epistle*, 121.
- 22 See Wallace, *Grammar*, 57. It would also be uncharacteristic of the author’s approach in the letter as a whole for him to address all the groups (slaves, wives and husbands) as inferior to himself in respect of his supposed apostolic authority.
- 23 Wallace, *Grammar*, 57.
- 24 Wallace, *Grammar*, 56, quoting J. H. Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek, vol. 1: Prolegomena*, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1908), 70.
- 25 Albert Harrill contests the view that the NT household codes are unique in this respect, claiming that in their direct address to slaves they reflect the practice of ancient agricultural handbooks (J. A. Harrill, *Slaves in the New Testament: Literary, Social and Moral Dimensions* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 2006), 86). But the example he cites is that of the elite slave or *vilcius*, and the NT parallel he draws is with the instructions to *masters* in the Colossian and Ephesian codes (103). He does not demonstrate that an address to ordinary slaves is other than extraordinary.
- 26 Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 193, 219; Yoder, *Politics*, 171–72; Waltner, “1 Peter,” 90.
- 27 So e.g. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 138; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 513.
- 28 Wallace, *Grammar*, 650–51.
- 29 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 135; Davids, *First Epistle*, 98, though they take the participle as adverbial; Williams (T. B. Williams, “Reconsidering the Imperative Participle in 1 Peter,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 73 [2011]: 76–77) argues persuasively that this view assumes grammatical modification over too long a distance. Less plausibly, Martin (*Metaphor*, 130, 204–6) and Achtemeier (*1 Peter*, 194) link ὑποτασσόμενοι to the different verb τιμήσατε in 2:17a.
- 30 So Campbell, *Rhetoric*, 123–24, though he too sees the participle as adverbial; he also identifies the introductory section as 2:11–17.
- 31 Huther, *General Epistles*, 134–35; Calvin, *First Peter*, 273–74; Bartlett, “First Letter,” 280–81. See above, Chapter 5.
- 32 See e.g. Stibbs and Walls, *First Epistle*, 114; Spicq, *Épîtres*, 107–8; Davids, *First Epistle*, 104.
- 33 R. L. Richardson, Jr., “From ‘Subjection to Authority’ to ‘Mutual Submission’: the Ethic of Subordination in 1 Peter,” *Faith and Mission* 4, no. 2 (1987): 72; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 517; Green, *1 Peter*, 79.
- 34 So Luther’s bold statement (*Commentary*, 125), “What your master or mistress commands you, that God himself has commanded you,” appears to be true for the author as a general rule, though not as one admitting no exceptions.
- 35 BDAG, 220.
- 36 See Donelson, *1 Peter*, 80.
- 37 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 195; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 517; Padgett, *As Christ Submits*, 82.

- 38 Although the meaning of these terms is disputed, the above seem to be those most widely accepted; see e.g. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 139–41; Marshall, *1 Peter*, 88–89; G. M. Zerbe, *Non-Retaliatio in Early Jewish and New Testament Texts: Ethical Themes in Social Contexts* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 289–90; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 196–98; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 518–21; S. Tracy, “Domestic Violence in the Church and Redemptive Suffering in 1 Peter,” *Calvin Theological Journal* 41 (2006): 288.
- 39 See Schertz, “Nonretaliation,” 267–68; Glancy, *Slavery*, 149–50.
- 40 J. W. Thompson, “‘Be Submissive to your Masters’: A Study of 1 Peter 2:18–25,” *Restoration Quarterly* 9 (1966): 71–72; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 135–36; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 512, 522.
- 41 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 135–36; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 193; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 512–13.
- 42 Schertz’s suggestion (“Nonretaliation,” 264–65, 269–71) that both 2:21–25 and 2:11–3:12 are chiasmic, with 2:23 as the mid-point that provides the controlling theme of the sections (non-retaliation), appears forced at many points, though she correctly identifies the exemplary significance of this motif.
- 43 Bechtler, *Following*, 193.
- 44 Krull, “Sur un Lien,” 489–90; B. J. Bauman-Martin, “Feminist Theologies of Suffering and Current Interpretations of 1 Peter 2:18–3:9,” in Levine and Robbins, *Feminist Companion*, 72; Nordling, “Slavery,” 71–72.
- 45 This passage, and verses 24–25 in particular, are discussed in much more detail in Chapter 7 with reference to the theme of freedom.
- 46 Zerbe, *Non-Retaliatio*, 290.
- 47 Here and in 3:7 and 5:5 the word has the sense of “for your part” (Michaels, *1 Peter*, 288), implying not that the requirements are identical for all the groups, but that each has responsibilities within the order (see Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 330).
- 48 *Contra* Richard, *1 Peter*, 125–26.
- 49 Schwank, “First Epistle,” 62; see also Knoch, *Erste Petrusbrief*, 88–89.
- 50 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 157, 167; J. R. Slaughter, “Submission of Wives (1 Pet 3:1a) in the Context of 1 Peter,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 153/609 (1996): 68; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 553–54. In maintaining that the order in view is divine and not human, Schelkle (*Petrusbriefe*, 88) writes, “In dieser Schöpfungsordnung ist auch der Mann das Haupt der Familie.”
- 51 Blum (“1 Peter,” 236) even takes *καὶ* in this sense: “the evangelistic motivation is added to the general necessity of the divine order.” See also Leaney, *Letters*, 42–43.
- 52 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 157; W. J. Webb, *Slaves, Women and Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001), 106–7; Green, *1 Peter*, 94–95; D. G. Horrell, “Fear, Hope and Doing Good: Wives as a Paradigm for Mission in 1 Peter,” *Estudios Bíblicos* 73, no. 3 (2015): 412.
- 53 Marshall, *1 Peter*, 98–101; Brown, “Silent Wives,” 396–97.
- 54 Moffatt, *General Epistles*, 130; not fear of annoying the husband, *contra* J. Wesley, *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament* (London: Charles H. Kelly, 1900), 880.
- 55 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 157–58; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 558–59; Green, *1 Peter*, 95–96.

- 56 Balch, *Wives*, 101–2; J. W. Thompson, “The Submission of Wives in 1 Peter,” in *Essays on Women in Earliest Christianity*, ed. C. D. Osburn (Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Company, 1993), 387–89; J. R. Slaughter, “Winning Unbelieving Husbands to Christ (1 Pet 3:1b-4),” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 153, no. 610 (1996): 208–10; Davids, “Silent Witness,” 229–31; A. J. Batten, “Neither Gold nor Braided Hair (1 Timothy 2.9; 1 Peter 3:3): Adornment, Gender and Honour in Antiquity,” *New Testament Studies* 55, no. 4 (2009): 498.
- 57 Elliott, *1 Peter*, 568.
- 58 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 164. See also Windisch, *Katholischen Briefe*, 67–68; Senior, “Conduct,” 435; J. R. Slaughter, “Sarah as a Model for Christian Wives (1 Pet 3:5–6),” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 153, no. 611 (1996): 357–59; J. Piper, “The Beautiful Faith of Fearless Submission (1 Pet 3:1–7),” *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 13 (2008): 49.
- 59 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 213–14. In this instance the participle is certainly adverbial, and it could be one of means or one of result (Wallace, *Grammar*, 627–30, 637–39).
- 60 Balch (*Wives*, 105), appealing to Philo, points out that Sarah was also supposed to be the first woman proselyte and to have led Abraham to know God; Boring agrees (*1 Peter*, 125–26) and also sees her as a stranger (2:11). Punt’s view (“Subverting Sarah,” 165–66) that Sarah is an example of marriage to an abusive husband seems unlikely to be that of 1 Peter in the absence of explicit indications in the text.
- 61 The participle here is taken as an adverbial participle of means. The (or one) way in which Sarah expressed her obedient subordination to Abraham was by calling him “lord.”
- 62 *Contra* Richard, *1 Peter*, 133–34, who claims that *ὑπήκουσεν* should not be understood as obedience but as showing respect for someone of greater honor. This view assumes without adequate evidence that the verb is synonymous with *ὑποτάσσω*.
- 63 Huther, *General Epistles*, 157–59; Hiebert, *First Peter*, 189–90; Schreiner, *1 Peter*, 156–57. Because this verse does not show Sarah obviously in subordination to Abraham (she is referring to him rather than addressing him, and is laughing at YHWH’s promise of a son), some scholars have looked for an alternative reference. These include Gn 12 and 20 (M. Kiley, “Like Sara: The Tale of Terror behind 1 Peter 3:6,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 105 [1987]: *passim*; Spencer, “Pedagogical Method,” 112–19; C. C. Kroeger, “Toward a Pastoral Understanding of 1 Peter 3:1–6 and Related Texts,” in Levine and Robbins, *Feminist Companion*, 85), *T. Abr.* (T. W. Martin, “The TestAbr and the Background of 1 Peter 3,6,” *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 90 [1999]: *passim*; Senior, *1 Peter*, 83), oral interpretive tradition (F. Manns, “Sara, Modèle de la Femme Obeissante: Étude de l’Arriere-plan Juif de 1 Pierre 3, 5–6,” *Bibbia e Oriente* 26/2 [1984]: *passim*), Jewish exegetical method (M. Misset-van de Weg, “Sarah Imagery in 1 Peter,” in Levine and Robbins, *Feminist Companion*, 58–61) and a lost Jewish text (Schwank, “First Epistle,” 61). These theories are all possible but difficult to prove, and van Rensburg’s

- simpler view (F. J. van Rensburg, “Sarah’s Submissiveness to Abraham: A Socio-historic Interpretation of the Exhortation to Wives in 1 Peter 3:5–6 to Take Sarah as Example of Submissiveness,” *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 60, no. 1–2 [2004]: 252, 257) may be right: that the author has simply ignored the wider context of Gn 18:12 and focused on the one word (so also Campbell, *Rhetoric*, 158–59). Donelson (2010, 92) argues that Sarah’s calling Abraham “lord” in this verse may connote her hiding her true self and laughing, but this appears an unlikely allusion in light of 1 Peter’s concern to encourage order and harmony in the household.
- 64 Balch, *Wives*, 103–5; Feldmeier, *First Letter*, 182.
- 65 Davids, “Silent Witness,” 234; also Sly, “1 Peter 3:6b,” 129; van Rensburg, “Sarah’s Submissiveness,” 256.
- 66 This part of the verse is illuminated by the similar but more general idea in 3:13–14. By their subordination, the wives will *as a rule* keep themselves out of trouble with their unbelieving husbands; *in some* (rare) *cases* they may not, but then they are not to be afraid. It is thus misleading for Bauman-Martin (“Feminist Theologies,” 73) to say that the “women are praised for doing good and encouraged to continue the conflict”; the author wants to avoid or calm conflict, not to promote it.
- 67 Beare, *First Epistle*, 130–31; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 224–25; Horrell, “Fear,” 417; D. G. Horrell, “Ethnicisation, Marriage and Early Christian Identity: Critical Reflections on 1 Corinthians 7, 1 Peter 3 and Modern New Testament Scholarship,” *New Testament Studies* 62, no. 3 (2016): 454–55.
- 68 A few scholars (e.g. Reicke, *Epistles*, 102; Waltner, “1 Peter,” 98) have suggested on the basis of the more general term *τῶ γυναικείῳ* that the verse relates to men’s relationships with all the women in the household. But while this view is lexically possible, the context strongly favors confining the reference to wives.
- 69 *Pace* some commentators (e.g. Masterman, *First Epistle*, 122; Cranfield, *1 Peter*, 91; Frankemölle, *1. Petrusbrief*, 54), the husband is *not* told, even implicitly, to subordinate himself to his wife. If such a radical departure from normal practice were intended (e.g. as an outworking of 2:13a), it is unthinkable that this would not be clearly articulated in 3:7.
- 70 This may be a reference to the woman’s supposedly weaker nature (Grudem, *First Epistle*, 144; Perkins, *First Peter*, 59), or more specifically to her generally weaker physical body (Kelly, *Epistles*, 133; Horrell, *Epistles*, 60). Green (*1 Peter*, 100) and Waltner (“1 Peter,” 99–100) suggest that it denotes merely her lesser social status and power, but the word *σχεῦος* implies an ontological rather than relational meaning.
- 71 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 217–18; Davids, “Silent Witness,” 237–38; Punt, “Subverting Sarah,” 163.
- 72 The appeal is not explicitly based on the wife’s supposed inferiority as an *ἀσθενεστερός* *σχεῦος*; this phrase does not occur in connection with subordination.
- 73 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 277; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 321; Donelson, *1 Peter*, 140.
- 74 Notably Elliott, *1 Peter*, 809.

- 75 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 277–78; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 322; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 299.
- 76 See Pesch, *1. Petrusbrief*, 102; Feldmeier, *First Letter*, 237–38.
- 77 E.g. Kelly, *Epistles*, 204–5; Price, “Submission-Humility,” 273; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 289. Elsewhere in early Christian literature the relationship of parents and children is analogous to that of leaders and led (see above, Chapter 4).
- 78 Bechtler, *Following*, 172–73; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 278.
- 79 Feldmeier, *First Letter*, 231.
- 80 See above, Chapter 4 for different views on the functions of the NT codes.
- 81 Elliott, “Ministry,” 370–71, 389. He cites the other examples of 1 Cor 16:15–16; 1 Thes 5:12–15; Heb 13:7,17.
- 82 So Elliott, *Home*, 263.
- 83 See Horrell, “Leadership Patterns,” 330–31; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 810–11; Green, *1 Peter*, 162. Bechtler writes (*Following*, 172), “More clearly than anywhere else in the letter—including the household code—5:1–4 presupposes and implicitly endorses the replication within the Christian communities of the hierarchical social structure that characterized the larger society.” See further above, Chapter 4.
- 84 Kamlah (“Υποτάσσεσθαι,” 239–40) claims that it is this application of the patriarchal ordering of the household, in which all know their place, to the Christian community that accounts for the prominence of subordination in early Christian paranesis generally.
- 85 Towner (*Timothy and Titus*, 245) says that in Hellenistic Judaism the term “denoted status and prestige rather than function,” although such standing also gave elders a leadership role within the community.
- 86 D. A. Mappes, “The ‘Elder’ in the Old and New Testaments,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 154, no. 1 (1997): 85–86.
- 87 B. W. Powers, “Patterns of New Testament Ministry: 1. Elders,” *Churchman* 87, no. 3 (1973): 167–69; Mappes, “The ‘Elder,’” 88–92.
- 88 Campbell, *Elders*, 20–66 (summary conclusion at 65; see above, Chapter 3).
- 89 Elliott, *Home*, 69; D. E. Hiebert, “Counsel for Christ’s Under-Shepherds: An Exposition of 1 Peter 5:1–4,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 139, no. 556 (1982): 331; C. Lynch, “In 1 Peter 5:5, Who are the *πρεσβύτεροι* and What is Said about Their Role?” *Expository Times* 123, no. 11 (2012): 530, 532. On these functions, see also W. Nauck, “Probleme des Frühchristlichen Amtsverständnisses (1 Ptr 5,2f.),” *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 48 (1957): 201–7; Powers, “Patterns,” 170–73; D. A. Mappes, “The New Testament Elder, Overseer, and Pastor,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 154, no. 2 (1997): 163–64.
- 90 Price, “Submission-Humility,” 276–77; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 277. A few commentators (e.g. Leaney, *Letters*, 70; Richard, *1 Peter*, 201–2) take the reference to age as primary and that to leadership as secondary.
- 91 Horrell, “Aliens,” 127.
- 92 Campbell, *Elders*, 206–7; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 842; Horrell, “Aliens,” 127–28.

- 93 As suggested by Horrell, “Leadership Patterns,” 326 and Elliott, *1 Peter*, 842.
- 94 Elliott, *1 Peter*, 842 (italics original); see also J. H. Elliott, “Elders in 1 Peter and the Early Church,” *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 64, no. 2 (2008): 689; *contra* Mappes, “New Testament Elder,” 169–70 (though he does not base his claim that eldership was an office on the evidence of 1 Peter).
- 95 *Contra* Campbell, *Elders*, 196–203, who sees the elders as office-holders, and even suggests that they may be “town-overseers,” single church leaders within particular towns. While this pattern of leadership may be found in the Pastorals (though even this is disputed; see Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 246–47), for the above reasons it seems much too developed for 1 Peter. A similar criticism may be made of Nauck (“Probleme,” 200–1, 212), who sees the section as an *Amtsanweisung* (described by Elliott [“Ministry,” 372] as “a primitive Christian instruction for office”) and argues that its terminology points to an established hierarchy of clergy and laity. Such a view is inconsistent not only with the internal evidence of the letter but also with any probable dating of it.
- 96 Jobes, *1 Peter*, 307–8.
- 97 Elliott, “Ministry,” 373; *contra* Nauck, “Probleme,” 200.
- 98 Elliott, *1 Peter*, 843–44. Boring (*1 Peter*, 163–64) sees the letter as combining Pauline/Gentile charismatic ministries with Jewish eldership/church leadership.
- 99 Horrell, “Aliens,” 127–29.
- 100 Elliott, *1 Peter*, 841.
- 101 Cranfield, *1 Peter*, 125; Calvin, *First Peter*, 315; Hillyer, *1 Peter*, 138–39.
- 102 The *ἐλῆροι* in 5:3 are often understood as the individual congregations committed to particular elders (see e.g. Bigg, *Epistles*, 188–89; Cranfield, *1 Peter*, 127).
- 103 D. E. Hiebert, “The Suffering and Triumphant Christ: An Exposition of 1 Peter 3:18–22,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 139, no. 554 (1982): 336–37; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 842; Lynch, “1 Peter 5:5,” 535–37.
- 104 Hiebert, “Suffering and Triumphant Christ,” 339; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 842.
- 105 Jobes, *1 Peter*, 299; Green, *1 Peter*, 169.
- 106 Selwyn, *First Epistle*, 233; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 339. Davids (*First Epistle*, 182) calls it “a stylistic throwback to the earlier structure.”
- 107 Elliott, *1 Peter*, 836.
- 108 For this usage, see Wallace, *Grammar*, 67–68.
- 109 See especially Elliott, “Ministry,” 379–86; also Elliott, *1 Peter*, 838–40.
- 110 Spicq, “Jeunes,” 518.
- 111 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 331.
- 112 Nevertheless, some commentators still maintain that the reference is only to young people (e.g. Schelkle, *Petrusbriefe*, 130; Grudem, *First Epistle*, 192–93; Richard, *1 Peter*, 209–10). For arguments against the older view that the *νεώτεροι* are junior clergy or some other official group within the Christian community, see Michaels,

- I Peter*, 288–89; Achtemeier, *I Peter*, 331. (For a more recent defense of this view, see Hillyer, *I Peter*, 141.)
- 113 Goppelt, *I Peter*, 339; so also Michaels, *I Peter*, 289; Achtemeier, *I Peter*, 331–32; Green, *I Peter*, 169 and others.
- 114 A few scholars claim that the *πρεσβύτεροι* in verse 5 are older people in general, not just church leaders (e.g. Stibbs and Walls, *First Epistle*, 169; Cranfield, *I Peter*, 131–32; Hiebert, *First Peter*, 290–91). But a change of meaning in such close proximity and connection to 5:1 seems most unlikely.
- 115 The anarthrous *πρεσβυτέροις* may be generic, denoting *πρεσβύτεροι* as a class; this is a general rule, applicable not only to the elders currently in position, but to all elders.
- 116 Barr, “Submission Ethic,” 29; Kelly, *Epistles*, 205; Elliott, “Elders,” 690–91.
- 117 There is no evidence in the letter that the *νεώτεροι* were dissatisfied with or rebelling against the *πρεσβύτεροι* (Michaels, *I Peter*, 289; *contra* Beare, *First Epistle*, 175–76), or that junior leaders were pressing for a more radical strategy that might endanger the community (*contra* Davids, *First Epistle*, 184).
- 118 As Kamlah (“Υποτάσσεσθαι,” 240) writes, “Die patriarchalische Ordnung des Hauswesens war ja auch die soziale Grundlage des urchristlichen Lebens.” This principle applies only insofar, of course, as the household heads themselves belong to the Christian community; while slaves are required to submit to their non-Christian masters and wives to their non-Christian husbands, there is no suggestion that these masters and husbands have any authority within the congregation as a whole.
- 119 On this see especially Kamlah, “Υποτάσσεσθαι,” 241–43.
- 120 Selwyn, *First Epistle*, 234; Michaels, *I Peter*, 289; Jobes, *I Peter*, 308–9. However, subordination should not here be *identified* with humility (*contra* Padgett, *As Christ Submits*, 34–35) or seen as its necessary expression (*contra* Kamlah, “Υποτάσσεσθαι,” 242–43). Superiors, including *πρεσβύτεροι*, are never told to subordinate themselves to inferiors, but they must still be humble towards them. The author’s concept of mutual humility may well be much the same as that of mutual subordination in Ephesians (see Richardson, “‘Submission,’” 77) and *I Clem.* (see above, Chapter 4), but it is surely significant that he does not use *υποτάσσω* to denote it.
- 121 Kelly, *Epistles*, 206; Goppelt, *I Peter*, 352; Feldmeier, *First Letter*, 241. For other views see Selwyn, *First Epistle*, 234 and Beare, *First Epistle*, 176.
- 122 Kelly, *Epistles*, 206; Goppelt, *I Peter*, 353–54; Donelson, *I Peter*, 146. Elliott (“Elders,” 691) describes this as Christ-like humility.
- 123 Davids, *First Epistle*, 185; Achtemeier, *I Peter*, 333–34; Green, *I Peter*, 171.
- 124 W. J. Dalton, *Christ’s Proclamation to the Spirits: A Study of I Peter 3:18–4:6*, 2nd ed. (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1989), 127; C. T. Pierce, *Spirits and the Proclamation of Christ: 1 Peter 3:18–22 in Light of Sin and Punishment Traditions in Early Jewish and Christian Literature* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 223–25; K. Marcar, “In the Days of Noah: Urzeit/Endzeit Correspondence and the Flood

- Tradition in 1 Peter 3–4,” *New Testament Studies* 63 (2017): 566. Beasley-Murray’s claim (G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* [Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997], 257–58) that the author is seeking to illustrate the universal scope of Christ’s redemption and proclamation arguably puts the emphasis in the wrong place; the passage declares Christ’s universal *victory*, in virtue of which he is able to save his people completely from cosmic powers that might otherwise control and harm them.
- 125 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 243–44; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 638; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 237. The exemplary significance of Christ’s sufferings is not emphasised here (cf. 2:21–23), though in view of the *ὅτι καὶ* in v.18 it may at least be implied (see B. Reicke, *The Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism: A Study of 1 Peter III.19 and Its Context* [Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1946], 127–30; S. E. Johnson, “The Preaching to the Dead (1 Pt 3,18–22),” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 79 [1960]: 50).
- 126 See Michaels, *1 Peter*, 63; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 123–24, 126; Horrell, *1 Peter*, 40–41; and below, Chapter 7.
- 127 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 218; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 243–45; Horrell, *1 Peter*, 40, 67.
- 128 Dalton, *Christ’s Proclamation* (first published 1965). Among those who have accepted the broad lines of his interpretation are Michaels, *1 Peter*, 199–201; Marshall, *1 Peter*, 123–28; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 245–46; Horrell, *Epistles*, 71–72; Waltner, “1 Peter,” 126–29; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 689; Richard, *1 Peter*, 155–56; Schreiner, *1 Peter*, 184–93; Senior, *1 Peter*, 101–4; Pierce, *Proclamation of Christ*, 204–38.
- 129 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 196–97, 199; Dalton, *Christ’s Proclamation*, 133–34; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 638, 689.
- 130 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 246; see also Dalton, *Christ’s Proclamation*, 187.
- 131 Selwyn, *First Epistle*, 318; Dalton, *Christ’s Proclamation*, 134–35; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 689. See also below, Chapter 7.
- 132 This supposes that *σάρκι* and *πνεύματι* are datives of sphere, which is how Dalton renders them (1989, 141), though he calls them “adverbial datives” or “datives of reference,” which are not the same (see Wallace, *Grammar*, 729–30). So also Marshall, *1 Peter*, 121; Senior, *1 Peter*, 203.
- 133 Dalton, *Christ’s Proclamation*, 138.
- 134 Dalton, *Christ’s Proclamation*, 145, 161–63, 177–84; so also Kelly, *Epistles*, 152; Horrell, *Epistles*, 71.
- 135 Dalton, *Christ’s Proclamation*, 164; see also Schreiner, *1 Peter*, 189–90.
- 136 Selwyn, *First Epistle*, 353; Dalton, *Christ’s Proclamation*, 159–61, 180–81; Horrell, *1 Peter*, 12, 34–35. *Contra* Reicke, *Disobedient Spirits*, 115–18 and others, who argue that the preaching took place in an underworld prison between Christ’s death and resurrection.
- 137 R. T. France, “Exegesis in Practice: Two Samples,” in *New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods*, ed. I. H. Marshall (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1977), 276, 278; Dalton, *Christ’s Proclamation*, 152–58,

- 164; D. G. Horrell, “‘Already Dead’ or ‘Since Died’? Who are ‘the Dead’ and when was the Gospel Preached to Them?” in *Becoming Christian: Essays on 1 Peter and the Making of Christian Identity* (London and New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 74.
- 138 This renders unlikely the suggestion of Pierce (C. T. Pierce, “Apocalypse and the Epistles of 1, 2 Peter and Jude,” in *The Jewish Apocalyptic Tradition and the Shaping of New Testament Thought*, ed. B. E. Reynolds and L. T. Stuckenbruck [Minneapolis, MI: Fortress Press, 2017], 312–13) that the author sees the proclamation as having been made to all kinds of evil cosmic beings, though he does think that it has an effect upon them and their human representatives (see below and Chapter 7).
- 139 Reicke, *Disobedient Spirits*, 137–43; A. T. Hanson, “Salvation Proclaimed: I. 1 Peter 3:18–22,” *Expository Times* 93 (1982): 102; Dalton, *Christ’s Proclamation*, 191–96; Pierce, *Proclamation of Christ*, 227–29. For a much fuller treatment of this comparison, see below, Chapter 7.
- 140 See Elliott, *1 Peter*, 682.
- 141 Dalton, *Christ’s Proclamation*, 215–16; Davids, *First Epistle*, 146; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 273.
- 142 Elliott, *1 Peter*, 682–83; Pierce, *Proclamation of Christ*, 217–18.
- 143 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 219.
- 144 Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 272.
- 145 Beare, *First Epistle*, 150; Reicke, *Epistles*, 115; Kelly, *Epistles*, 164; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 683–84; Feldmeier, *First Letter*, 209.
- 146 The aorist *πορευθεῖς* should probably be taken as a temporal participle of means qualifying *ἔστιν*, indicating that Christ’s journey to heaven preceded and effected his present enthroned status.
- 147 Davids, *First Epistle*, 146; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 275.
- 148 Dalton, *Christ’s Proclamation*, 183–84.
- 149 Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 273–74; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 273. By contrast, they cite Hebrews 10:12 and other verses from that letter as attesting to a single resurrection-exaltation event without reference to an ascension.
- 150 Selwyn emphasizes (*First Epistle*, 315) that the ascension is to be seen as a real journey.
- 151 As in 1 Cor 15:27, Eph 1:22; Heb 2:6–8. See Pierce, *Proclamation of Christ*, 217–18.
- 152 See Elliott, *1 Peter*, 687 and Michaels, *1 Peter*, 219–20 for the opposing views.
- 153 Dalton, *Christ’s Proclamation*, 185. The aorist participle *ὑποταγέντων* is perhaps best taken as another temporal participle of means, qualifying *ἔστιν* and matching *πορευθεῖς* in the previous clause. It then implies that the subordination of these various forces preceded and accomplished Christ’s position of authority and coincided with his going into heaven. It is possible that *ὑποταγέντων* is instead a participle of purpose or result, but this would render the temporal sequence of the verse

- extremely awkward, and it disregards the probable link between Christ's heavenly journey and the subjugation of the forces; on this see further below.
- 154 See above, Chapter 3 on the relationship in some Jewish tradition between the fallen angels of Gn 6 and the evil spirits that corrupt human life in the present.
- 155 See Michaels, *1 Peter*, 220. Thus the claim of Schwank ("First Epistle," 79–80), Evang ("Jedes menschliche Geschöpf," 61–62) and Pierce (*Proclamation of Christ*, 236–37) that human or political powers are included is insecurely grounded in the text.
- 156 As argued by, e.g., Green, *1 Peter*, 125 and Feldmeier, *First Letter*, 209.
- 157 Reicke, *Disobedient Spirits*, 131–32; Selwyn, *First Epistle*, 208; Dalton, *Christ's Proclamation*, 215–17.
- 158 Elliott, *Home*, 159; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 688.
- 159 Kelly, *Epistles*, 164; Best, *1 Peter*, 148–49; Dalton, *Christ's Proclamation*, 216.
- 160 Dalton, *Christ's Proclamation*, 182; Pierce, *Proclamation of Christ*, 220; Horrell, "Already Dead," 74–75.
- 161 See NIDNTTE, 4.462 on voluntary and involuntary subordination.
- 162 Selwyn, *First Epistle*, 206–7; Dalton, *Christ's Proclamation*, 95; Horrell, *Epistles*, 73–74.
- 163 See Balch, *Wives*, 134–35; *contra* Frankemölle, *1. Petrusbrief*, 59; Richard, *1 Peter*, 164, who suggest that the powers are redeemed and/or become Christ's obedient subjects. Boring thinks (*1 Peter*, 140–41) that the statement may point to universal salvation.
- 164 So e.g. Dalton, *Christ's Proclamation*, 185.
- 165 The relationship between the subordination of the powers and their continuing activity is not explicitly articulated in the text, but this explanation appears most consistent with the data. So Reicke, *Disobedient Spirits*, 131–32, 198–201; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 688–89; Pierce, *Proclamation of Christ*, 233–36.
- 166 Davids, *First Epistle*, 147; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 274; Green, *1 Peter*, 125–26; Pierce, "Apocalypse," 315–16.
- 167 Feldmeier, *First Letter*, 210; Pierce, "Apocalypse," 316.
- 168 Dalton, *Christ's Proclamation*, 187; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 257–58; Pierce, *Proclamation of Christ*, 237–38.
- 169 It should be noted that while this understanding of subordination does imply God's approval of patriarchy, it does not entail a positive divine endorsement of slavery (*contra* Moxnes, "Beaten Body," 134–35). It is the subordinate relationships of everyone else in the *οἶκος* to the male head that are part of the cosmic order, not the precise social and legal arrangements by which these relationships are regulated in particular contexts. Like other NT writers (see above, Chapter 4), the author neither requires Christian slave-owners to free their slaves nor encourages other Christians to redeem them; to this extent he may be said to accept slavery. But it

- may not be inferred from this that his demand for slaves to be subordinate confers a holy and unchangeable status on the institution. See further below, Chapter 8.
- 170 See e.g. Yoder, *Politics*, 189–90; Tracy, “Domestic Violence,” 285–91; Padgett, *As Christ Submits*, 82–84.
- 171 It is notable that all the divine motivations, qualities and norms are used principally to strengthen the calls to subordination rather than to subvert them. Quite contrary to this evidence is the postcolonial reading of Williams (“Divinity,” 144), in which “the author’s uncompromising commitment to the religious independence of slaves and wives (politely) undercuts the power-base of the standard hierarchy of household management (2,18–3,7).” Rather 1 Peter merely places the authority of the household heads below the supreme authority of God, while strongly affirming it as divinely given.
- 172 Thompson, “‘Be Submissive,’” 67, 78; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 182, 184, 186.
- 173 In fact by addressing inferior partners as human, rational and moral the author reinforces his exhortation by underlining their capacity to obey it.
- 174 See Selwyn, *First Epistle*, 208. To be sure, “human subordination to human institutions is derivative of, and so superseded by, subordination of all to Christ” (Green, *1 Peter*, 133), so if their claims conflict, the demand of Christ as the cosmic ruler must take precedence. But as has been shown repeatedly, the author seems to regard these circumstances, though possible, as extraordinary.

Freedom in Other 1 Peter Texts

In Chapter 1 it was noted that the vocabulary and concept of freedom in 1 Peter are limited and secondary by comparison with those of subordination. The *ἐλευθερία* word-group appears only in 2:16 (cf. the six instances of *ὑποτάσσω*), which, although it significantly illuminates the author's understanding of freedom in the context of 2:13–17 (see above, Chapter 5), is a very small foundation on which to build a hypothesis. Moreover, while the idea of subordination is foundational to the author's parenesis and reflects his view of authoritative divine order, the reference to freedom in 2:16 appears merely to modify the first call to subordination in 2:13 and is not further developed in the immediate context.

There is however one other clear use of freedom-related language in the letter, namely the reference to redemption (*ἐλυτρώθητε*) in 1:18. Although the author elaborates on this only briefly, it further develops his idea of freedom and may clarify the meaning of 2:16. It also forms part of the first of the three “formulaic Christological statements”¹ in the letter (1:18–21; 2:21–25; 3:18–22; see above, Chapter 6) that draw on traditional material to narrate and interpret the story of Jesus and so support the author's parenesis.² There is reason to think that all these sections provide material from which the author's view of freedom can be constructed and inferred, and more specifically that certain verses from them

(1:18–19; 2:24–25; 3:18,21–22) recount a single process that can properly be described as one of liberation.

This chapter offers an exegetical investigation of these verses in the context of the three christological texts, which is intended to define the contribution they make to the author’s concept of freedom. As in the previous chapter, an introduction to each section is provided; this will not only outline its teaching but also demonstrate the similarities of content, function and form between the three passages that justify their being treated together. In each case there will follow a detailed discussion of the specified verses, illuminated as necessary by the wider passage; in explaining their message this will also establish the reasons for regarding them as varied descriptions of the same basic event. On the basis of these exegetical arguments, a concluding section will summarize the ways in which the texts fruitfully supplement and elucidate 2:16 as further expressions of the author’s understanding of freedom.

1:18–21

First Peter 1:18–21 is part of a longer section (1:13–21) that draws out the ethical implications of the author’s preceding statements. In verses 3–12 he has described the Christian hope, and from verse 13 he calls on his readers to work this out in a transformed way of life. Thus where previously they have been at home with the passions that drive much of their society, they are now alienated from it (*παροικία*, v.17) by their conversion and must live in a different way (vv.13–14).³ Their lives must be characterized by a holiness (vv.15–16) and reverent fear (vv.17–21) that expresses proper obedience to God as his children.⁴

But this longer section does not consist solely of exhortation; the author also includes elements of proclamation, of which verses 18–21 are the prime example.⁵ This passage supports the preceding parenthesis with reference to various elements of early christological confession—Christ’s pre-existence, eschatological appearing, resurrection, exaltation, and especially his redeeming death⁶—and explains their salvific implications for the readers.

The statement is somewhat formalized and is widely believed to draw extensively on common Christian traditions, which are in turn partly dependent on OT language and concepts; the traditions may have formed part of basic Christian instruction for converts.⁷ But commentators appear generally less confident of the earlier view that the fragments belonged to fixed liturgical units, or at least that it is possible to reconstruct these with any confidence.⁸ The author’s

creative recasting and interweaving of diverse material here and elsewhere suggests that this passage (and 2:21–25 and 3:18–22) is best read as a unified whole.⁹

Verse 18 contains the freedom-related concept of ransom or redemption (*ἐλυτρώθητε*), and with verse 19 it describes the nature of the bondage from which, and the means by which, the readers have been liberated. Verses 20 and 21 then set this divine redemption in the wider context of the totality of God's action in Christ.

In line with the above comments, the opening perfect participle of verse 18, *εἰδότες*, is best understood causally, “because you know.” The christological statements that follow, including those relating to the readers' redemption/liberation, provide the reason for the author's immediately preceding appeal (v.17), and perhaps for his whole exhortation from verse 13. Verses 18 and 19 fulfil this function by contrasting the readers' former life with the reverence and holiness to which they are now called, and by declaring their freedom from that life through Christ's death. The verb of knowing suggests that the content of these verses is familiar and uncontroversial to the readers and points to its grounding in pre-Petrine tradition.¹⁰

The aorist verb *ἐλυτρώθητε* should probably be taken as consummative, stressing the cessation of the action and implying its completion; the passive form has God as its implied subject.¹¹ The word *λυτρόω* has a range of related meanings. In Greco-Roman literature it can be used for the ransom of prisoners of war, the freeing of indebted slaves, and the procedure of sacral manumission (“involving a fictive ‘sale’ to a deity, return of the price to the owner, and freedom for the slave”).¹² In the LXX it may denote the redeeming of property (Lv 25:26,33,48–49), payment for faults (Ex 21:30), the ransoming of the firstborn (Ex 13:12–13) and the atonement price (Ex 30:12–16);¹³ some of these uses may also be found in Philo and Josephus.¹⁴ In all these cases the redemption (and sometimes liberation) of the person or property is achieved by the payment of a price.¹⁵

However, the LXX also employs *λυτρόω* in a metaphorical sense, to refer to salvation from enemies, sin and death (Pss 106:2; 129:8; 33:23), and particularly for God's rescue of Israel from slavery in Egypt (e.g. Ex 6:6; Dt 8:8) and his promised deliverance of the people from exile in Babylon (e.g. Isa 45:13; 52:3).¹⁶ In these cases, where God is the actual or implied subject of the verb, the idea of a ransom-price is usually lost, and in Isaiah 52:3 the future redemption is specifically said *not* to involve the payment of a price: *ὅτι τὰδε λέγει κύριος Δωρεάν ἐπράθητε καὶ οὐ μετὰ ἀργυρίου λυτρωθήσεσθε*.¹⁷ Verse 18 probably includes a deliberate allusion to this statement.

The verb *λυτρόω* appears in only two other places in the NT (Lk 24:21 and Ti 2:14), but its cognates and related concepts are often used metaphorically, and Christ's death is frequently presented as a means of redemption (e.g. Mk 10:45; Rom 3:24–25; Heb 9:12).¹⁸ This suggests that the author is drawing on a pre-existing Christian tradition, and that the most probable background for his use of *λυτρόω* is its metaphorical reference to the OT deliverance of Israel from restriction and confinement, and specifically from their Egyptian bondage and Babylonian captivity.¹⁹ The allusion to Isaiah 52:3 confirms this connection, through the association of this text with Israel's return from exile²⁰ and its statement that the readers' redemption takes place without the payment of a monetary price,²¹ but also by its linking the divine act of liberation to the suffering of the Isaianic servant who dies on behalf of his people (Isa 53:4–12).²² The author thus combines in this verse the idea of his readers' freedom from an enslaved and imprisoned past²³ with that of Christ's blood as a ransom-price paid to secure that freedom.²⁴ The rest of verses 18 and 19 expands on these themes.

The prepositional phrase immediately following *ἐλυτρώθητε* indicates the nature of the imprisonment from which the readers have been separated (*ἐκ*) and thus freed by Christ: *ἐκ τῆς ματαίας ὑμῶν ἀναστροφῆς πατροπαραδότου* (v.18b). The noun *ἀναστροφή* is defined by BDAG as “conduct expressed according to certain principles *way of life, conduct, behavior*”;²⁵ it refers to the entire pattern of conduct associated with the readers' former ignorance (v.14), to the pagan lifestyle that stands in sharp contrast to the holiness and reverence for God that is now required of them.²⁶

The first adjective used to describe this lifestyle, *μάταιος*, may have a particular reference to Greco-Roman religious traditions, specifically participation in the idolatrous pagan cults.²⁷ As J.N.D. Kelly comments:

It is scornfully applied in the LXX to the gods of the heathen, in contrast to the one living and true God (e.g. Lev. xvii. 7; 2 Chron. xi. 15; Jer. viii. 19; x. 15), or else to those who have never known Him (e.g. Wis. xiii. 1) or have apostatized from Him (e.g. Jer. ii. 5). NT usage is in line with this; cf. Acts xiv. 15; Rom. i. 21; viii. 20; I Cor. iii. 20; Eph. iv. 17 (the Gentiles walk “in the futility [*ματαiotῆς*] of their minds”).²⁸

If so, it suggests the uselessness and dishonorable nature of the pagan gods and their associated worship; these have no value for salvation (or anything else) and confer no hope on their devotees.²⁹ But the possibility that the author is

extending the Jewish language of anti-pagan critique to pre-Christian Jewish traditions should not be excluded.³⁰

But if *μάταιος* is a negative term used by Jews and Christians in anti-pagan polemic, the second adjective qualifying *ἀναστροφή*, namely *πατροπαράδοτος*, is normally a positive term used by pagans for their own practices. The term is employed in Hellenistic rhetoric to denote what is traditional, venerable and trustworthy, reflecting the widespread conviction in the ancient world that a pattern of conduct handed down from one's ancestors is wise and right, and even binding on present and future generations. But 1 Peter redeploys the word in a negative sense; the author regards inherited "Greco-Roman paganism and its associated unethical practices"³¹ as futile and shameful, a lifestyle from which God has freed the readers through Christ.³²

At the same time, the identification of this lifestyle as "the *whole* of behavior determined by their former cultural values,"³³ or as "*high* hellenistic culture and its values,"³⁴ is seriously misleading. Chapters 5 and 6 have provided reasons to think that the author sees a general congruence between Christian values and the *highest* norms of society, which are guaranteed by the structures of state and household.³⁵ The latter must be carefully distinguished from the mores of pagan society at large, denoted in 1:14 by the phrase *ταῖς πρότερον ἐν τῇ ἀγνοίᾳ ὑμῶν ἐπιθυμίαις* and briefly described in 4:2–4 under the rubric of *ἀνθρώπων ἐπιθυμίας*. In contrast these are wholly *inconsistent* with Christian imperatives as well as fundamentally *disorderly*, and—given the close connection of 1:14 and 1:18—it is they from which the readers have been liberated. (For further reflections on this critical distinction, see below, Chapter 8.)

The statement identifying the bondage from which the readers have been freed is enclosed by two instrumental dative phrases that indicate the means by which this freedom was achieved: *οὐ φθαρτοῖς, ἀργυρίῳ ἢ χρυσίῳ . . . ἀλλὰ τιμίῳ αἵματι ὡς ἀμνοῦ ἀμώμου καὶ ἀσπίλου Χριστοῦ*. The author contrasts metals,³⁶ which are material and transitory³⁷ and so cannot produce permanent effects, with Christ's blood, which achieves a lasting deliverance for the readers and is therefore more valuable. Silver and gold may be regarded as precious, but they are defective and inferior relative to the blood of the flawless and faultless lamb.³⁸ The purpose of the contrast is to highlight the value of the readers' liberation through Christ by underlining the price at which it was achieved, a price that by comparison renders the costliest metals of no worth.³⁹

According to the OT, blood has atoning and salvific significance (e.g. Lv 4:25–26; 16:15–19; 17:11; Ezk 43:18–20), and this concept is applied by the author (and other NT writers) to Christ's suffering and death. In this context it

probably stands for a purification offering that cleanses from sin,⁴⁰ and specifically that sets the readers free from their sinful and idolatrous pagan lifestyle.⁴¹ Christ's blood has this effect (and is therefore precious) because of who he is, an unblemished and spotless lamb.⁴²

In light of the clear allusion to Isaiah 52:3 in verse 18a, the mention of a lamb (*ἀμνός*) is probably to be traced first to the following chapter of Isaiah and the suffering servant of YHWH, who is likened to a lamb (*ἀμνός*) (Isa 53:7) and whose representative suffering makes his people righteous (Isa 53:11). The use in this passage of the language of the sin-offering (*περὶ ἁμαρτίας*, Isa. 53:10 LXX) and the Petrine author's choice of the adjective *ἄμωμος* (see below) suggest a further reference to the OT sacrificial system in which pure lambs were offered as purification for sin (Lv 4:32–35; 14:10–20; Nm 6:14).⁴³

In view of the exodus imagery of redemption, many scholars also see here an allusion to the lamb of the Passover offering.⁴⁴ But this is more debatable: van Unnik's point that the Passover lamb did not effect Israel's deliverance from Egypt is well made,⁴⁵ and as Achtemeier adds, "The blood of the lamb had apotropaic rather than redemptive value."⁴⁶ Moreover, the allusion of the redemption language in 1:18 is not necessarily confined to the exodus (see above). So while it may be hard to deny some reference to the Passover lamb in 1:19, it seems wise to conclude that it is neither exclusive nor primary.⁴⁷

The purity of Christ is expressed in the two adjectives *ἄμωμος* and *ἄσπιλος*. The first of these is a cultic term associated with the flawless character of acceptable Israelite sacrifice, while the second (which is not used in cultic contexts) is a physical and then moral term denoting a faultless condition and character.⁴⁸ Their complementary but distinctive meanings fit well with the suggested double allusion of *ἀμνός* to the pure sacrifice of the sin-offering and the innocent sufferer of Isaiah 52–53, both of whose deaths provide cleansing from sins. This reading of verse 19 as a whole also confirms the above interpretation of verse 18b as referring to the liberation of the readers from their sinful pagan lifestyle.⁴⁹

In verses 20–21 the author further grounds his appeal to the readers in the wider act of God in Christ of which their redemption is part. Christ has had a predestined role in the divine plan from before creation (v.20a),⁵⁰ and he has now appeared⁵¹ in the final period of history because of believers (vv.20b–21a);⁵² the purpose of his disclosure is evidently their liberation through his blood described in verses 18–19. He has also been raised and exalted by God, so as to be a secure basis for their faith and hope in God (v.21b),⁵³ by which that liberation is appropriated. Their life as God's people is thus to be determined by the story of Christ narrated in these verses, because the freedom on which

that life is grounded is the fruit of God's primeval and eschatological purpose realized in him.⁵⁴

So 1:18–21 can rightly be taken as a component part of the Petrine author's understanding of freedom. It declares that the readers have been decisively liberated from the bondage of their past through a ransom-price that was paid on their behalf. That past is defined as the useless and disreputable lifestyle inherited from their ancestors, of which pagan idolatry and its attendant sinfulness lie at the heart. That price is defined not in the monetary terms of precious metals, but as something so valuable that it renders even these of no worth: the blood of Christ, whose death as a flawless sacrificial lamb and as God's righteous servant purifies his people from their sins. The worth of their freedom is further underlined by its location within God's total purpose, fulfilled in Christ, from before creation to beyond consummation.

This passage thus supports the author's exhortation to reverence and holiness from his readers by a concise statement of the nature and value of the freedom that is theirs through Christ. That statement is further illuminated by the two parallel sections to be discussed below, but it is clear enough already that the author's understanding of freedom in these verses is essentially moral, involving deliverance from a sinful lifestyle governed by the futility of paganism; it neither requires nor involves any change in the readers' political or social circumstances. Moreover, the precious means and eternal context of divine redemption as described may well indicate that this is the author's *fundamental* conception of freedom, to which any other dimensions must inevitably be secondary.

2:21–25

As discussed in Chapter 6, the second christological formula in 1 Peter is part of a longer section (2:18–25) that exhorts slaves to be subordinate to their masters, even in the face of harsh and unjust treatment at their hands. Verses 18–20 set out the principle and provide the first set of motives, which comprise fear and awareness of God and the desire for his favor. Then in verses 21–25 the author provides a further reason for subordination: God approves the slaves' (and other believers') acceptance of unjust suffering because it is part of their Christian calling, based on the exemplary and salvific⁵⁵ suffering of Christ as the servant of YHWH described in the book of Isaiah, specifically 53:4–12.⁵⁶

So like 1:18–21, 2:21–25 includes elements of christological confession and focuses on Christ's death, though in the context of his general sufferings rather

than that of God's eternal purpose. Again, it highlights the saving consequences of these events for the readers, particularly in relation to sins, though it expounds these also in terms of righteousness, healing and turning to Christ rather than faith and hope. And it supports a preceding section of parenthesis, though in this case by an appeal to Christ's example as well as to his saving work.

Again as with 1:18–21, it is no longer common for scholars to identify this section as a citation (or citations) from an established creed or hymn.⁵⁷ But like its forerunner, the text is partly formalized (if only by the author), and there is widespread agreement that it incorporates traditional materials, of which the most obvious in this case are elements from Isaiah 53.⁵⁸ The passage also displays knowledge of the passion story and its interpretation, specifically Jesus' character and actions as disclosed there; according to David Horrell, these provide "a character sketch and a concise Passion Narrative, both of which are expressed using a framework of phrases drawn from scripture."⁵⁹ Thus the author articulates and "scripturalizes" this early Christian tradition in terms of the Isaianic servant to draw out its significance for the readers.⁶⁰

Horrell's categories of character sketch and passion narrative helpfully highlight the dual appeal of this section, to Christ as both model and enabler for the prescribed conduct of the slaves, both the pattern and the basis for Christian living, and specifically to his sufferings as both exemplary and salvific.⁶¹ Within this appeal, verses 21–23 relate to Christ as example, and verses 24–25 to Christ as savior; the latter describe how his sufferings are effective for salvation. The various similarities with 1:18–21 raise the strong possibility that this passage too may shed light on the author's concept of freedom, though it is in its second section (which contains the closest parallels) that any teaching on this theme is most likely to be located. The following exegesis will therefore focus mainly on these two verses.

The conjunction *γάρ* (v.21a) indicates that verses 21–25 are the basis for the preceding exhortation to the slaves to be subordinate. They are called to endure unjust suffering inflicted on them by harsh masters (*τούτοις*; cp. v.20) because Christ also suffered for them.⁶² Some commentators claim that the phrase *ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν* identifies Christ's death as an atoning sacrifice;⁶³ if so, this verse as well as verses 24–25 would bear directly on the theme of freedom. But given that the most probable reading of the preceding verb is *ἔπαθεν* rather than *ἀπέθανεν*,⁶⁴ others have argued persuasively that atonement should not be read into the passage at this point. It may be hard to exclude any representative sense⁶⁵—that Christ suffered on behalf of the slaves (and all Christians)—but its significance here is that he therefore suffered unjustly, because of their sins rather than his own.⁶⁶ It

is because his circumstances resemble theirs in this respect that he is an example for them in their adversity.⁶⁷

In any event, the significance of verses 21b–23 is explicitly exemplary: Christ is said to leave the readers an example (*ὑπογραμμὸν*) by his suffering so that they might endure it in the same way (*ἵνα ἐπακολουθήσητε τοῖς ἔχουσιν αὐτοῦ*).⁶⁸ The author draws on Isaiah 53:9 to demonstrate that Christ was innocent in both conduct and speech, so underlining that his suffering was undeserved.⁶⁹ His consistent responses were not to repay reviling in kind and not to threaten divine vengeance for his suffering;⁷⁰ instead he entrusted judgment⁷¹ to God, the just judge who guaranteed him vindication over his persecutors.⁷²

The material in these verses is not obviously or directly connected to the author's concept of freedom. At the beginning of verse 24, however, he leaves behind his presentation of Christ as an example for the readers and begins to explain the salvific significance of Christ's suffering. His first move is to combine elements of Isaiah 53:4 LXX (*τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἡμῶν*) and 53:12 LXX (*αὐτὸς [ἀμαρτίας πολλῶν] ἀνήνεγκεν*) to describe Jesus' representative act in terms of the Isaianic servant of God. The combination of these verses serves to personalize the quotation for the readers.⁷³

The switch from second to first-person address⁷⁴ in this verse has occasioned some comment. It has been suggested that the author is expanding his reference from the slaves to all believers⁷⁵ or to everyone,⁷⁶ or that he is including himself with the readers,⁷⁷ or Jews with Gentiles.⁷⁸ There may be no more reason for the change than the use of the first person in Isaiah 53,⁷⁹ but the retention of this appears to express the author's belief that Christ's suffering is effective for all his people.

The statement *ὅς τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἡμῶν αὐτὸς ἀνήνεγκεν* may be understood as cultic language, portraying Christ as a sacrificial victim who acts on behalf of sinners, taking the consequences of their sins upon himself in suffering and death and thereby carrying those sins away.⁸⁰ Thus his passion is both representative of and effective for others.⁸¹ This interpretation reflects the wider context of the Isaiah verses, in which the sacrificial language of sin-offering and purification are found (53:7,10–11).⁸² The reference in verse 22 to Christ's having committed no sin and spoken no deceit, although primarily exemplary, may also allude to his unblemished nature and consequent acceptability as a sacrifice.⁸³

Christ's act of sin-bearing is qualified by two prepositional phrases: *ἐν τῷ σώματι αὐτοῦ* and *ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον*. Both of these recall the reference in Deuteronomy 21:23 to not leaving the body of an executed criminal on the tree overnight, and could thus be interpreted as connoting punishment and curse.⁸⁴ But unlike Paul

in Galatians 3:13–14, the Petrine author does not incorporate these concepts in any positive way into his understanding of Christ’s death;⁸⁵ he seems concerned only to show that this seemingly shameful episode was actually the means of salvation. So the first phrase underlines that Christ carried away the sins of others through his bodily suffering and death, thus reinforcing the Isaianic and sacrificial allusions of the main clause, and the second identifies that experience with his crucifixion.⁸⁶

The purpose of Christ’s bearing of our sins is then stated: *ἵνα ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ἀπογενόμενοι τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ ζήσωμεν*. The participial phrase *ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ἀπογενόμενοι*⁸⁷ is the clearest reference in the passage to the concept of freedom and explicitly articulates the idea of the carrying away of sins implicit in the preceding sacrificial imagery. The effect of Christ’s death is to remove sins from the sinners so as to separate the one from the other.⁸⁸ The remainder of verses 24–25 provides three reasons to think that this separation denotes cleansing from the power of sin rather than forgiveness of its guilt.

Firstly, the participle *ἀπογενόμενοι* is dependent on the verb in the following clause *τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ ζήσωμεν* and is most naturally taken as causal: because Christ’s death has separated the readers from their sins, they may now live justly in accordance with God’s will; that is, they are now free to live a new life dedicated to righteous conduct. In other words, the goal of Christ’s suffering is that sinners might be freed to renounce wrongdoing and to do what is right instead.⁸⁹ It is “freedom from the control of sin . . . resulting in the power of a transformed life,”⁹⁰ or a righteousness that belongs “to the new life of freedom.”⁹¹ This act of liberation, associated with the death of Christ, so closely resembles that described in different terms in 1:18–19 that they are most naturally seen as the same event.

Secondly, in the final part of verse 24 the author quotes again from Isaiah 53, this time from verse 5: *οὗ τῷ μώλωπι ἰάθητε*. He reverts here to the second-person address of verses 18–21, perhaps in order to re-focus on the slaves whom he is particularly addressing;⁹² it is possible that his choice of this verse with its reference to a *μώλωψ* (a bruise or welt caused by blows or a whip) is intended to reflect their experience of beatings (v.20), and even to connect it to the whipping of Jesus.⁹³ In any event, the purpose of the clause is apparently to restate the previous assertion in appropriate language drawn explicitly from Isaiah, where the sinless sin-bearer makes many righteous (53:11) by healing them.⁹⁴ In the context of this verse the metaphor of healing probably refers to what Green calls “cleansing for holiness,”⁹⁵ or restoration to the moral health of righteousness from the moral sickness of sins.⁹⁶ It therefore serves as another appropriate description of the freedom bestowed on the readers through Christ’s suffering and death.

And thirdly, in verse 25 the author indicates that the healing of the readers results from (γάρ) their proper orientation to Christ. Their past estrangement from God is described using the imagery of straying sheep (ἦτε . . . ὡς πρόβατα πλανώμενοι), which is employed in Isaiah 53:6 directly after the statement that the servant's wounds effect healing.⁹⁷ It implies a lack of proper direction or purpose, which in the Isaianic context must be taken as specifically moral.⁹⁸ Opinions vary as to whether the construction is periphrastic or appositional, but either way the sense is much the same.⁹⁹

But now the readers have been turned away¹⁰⁰ from their unbelief and sin and towards τὸν ποιμένα καὶ ἐπίσκοπον τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν.¹⁰¹ Most scholars identify this figure with Christ because of the messianic associations of the shepherd metaphor,¹⁰² though some include God within it.¹⁰³ Among the various images connoted by the language, those of protective care and guiding oversight appear to be dominant.¹⁰⁴ By his defense and leadership Christ prevents the readers from wandering again into evil and directs them into ways of righteousness; the adjectival phrase τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν probably denotes the whole person or life.¹⁰⁵ That is to say, having turned to Christ the readers are now enabled by him to live out the new life of freedom that his death has secured for them.

In light of this evidence, most Petrine scholars have understood the process of separation from sin outlined in these verses as effecting freedom from the power of sin.¹⁰⁶ It is therefore also reasonable to see it as equivalent to the readers' redemption from the realm of sinful conduct in which they were previously enslaved; that is, as the release from captivity to a sinful pagan lifestyle described in 1:18–19. Marie-Louise Lamau links the two passages accordingly:

Le verb ἀπογίνομαι utilisé par Pierre est un *hapax* biblique; il signifie la séparation, le départage . . . Elle est l'expression la plus profonde de la libération acquise par le croyant, grâce 'au sang précieux de l'agneau sans reproche et sans tache, le Christ (1, 19).¹⁰⁷

So there is good reason to believe that 2:24–25 attests to another part of the Petrine author's understanding of freedom; indeed, that it recounts the same process of liberation as that described in 1:18–19, albeit without using the freedom term ἐλυτρώθητε. This conclusion is grounded partly in the formal similarities between 1:18–21 and 2:21–25: their character as christological confession, their specifying of its salvific implications, their support for preceding ethical exhortation, and their formalizing of traditional material. But it is also based on the conceptuality of emancipation embedded in the argument of these two verses.

The author's language of representative sin-bearing drawn from Isaiah 53 presents Christ as a sacrificial sin-offering who purifies all his people by carrying their sins away through his suffering and death on the cross. By this means they have been separated from those sins, set free from their controlling power to live in a manner approved by God; they have been healed, liberated from the disease of sinfulness into moral well-being. They have entered into that freedom through their turning to Christ, their shepherd and overseer, whose protection and rule allows them to live in it.

Putting the two passages together, then, 2:24–25 can be seen as further explaining how the slaves addressed in this passage, and the readers generally (for whom their experience is paradigmatic), as part of God's total purpose, have been redeemed from their futile inherited paganism into obedience to God, through the ransom-price of the sanctifying blood of Christ, who is both atoning sacrifice and suffering servant, and are enabled to actualize that liberty by his care and supervision of them. In this context even 2:21–23 can perhaps have a related function, of defining certain elements of the life into which they are set free. But be that as it may, the passage confirms the view drawn from 1:18–21 that the author's basic understanding of freedom is moral, and independent of the readers' social and political conditions.

3:18–22

An introduction to and initial exegesis of this passage have already been provided in Chapter 6, focusing mainly on the use of *ὑποτάσσω* in 3:22. This section recapitulates some general points from that discussion that are especially relevant to this one, while the following exegesis concentrates primarily on verses 18a and 21, with some further reference to verse 22.

The passage shares with 1:18–21 and 2:21–25 certain features of content, function and form. Like them, it is a christological formula focusing on various events in Christ's story, in this case his journey from the cross to heaven, in which he has triumphed over all hostile spiritual powers. Again, these events have salvific implications: by subordinating those forces to Christ, God has ensured his people's vindication after the trials that they must currently endure for his sake. And this eschatological section too serves to ground an exhortation (3:13–17), here to persevere through unjust suffering and persecution; because the readers' ultimate salvation is certain, they can stand firm in the face of pressure. (It is also the basis for a subsequent parenthetic section in 4:1–6.)

Moreover, this passage too is widely regarded as a creative and partly formalized combination of Jewish and early Christian tradition. The author draws on Psalms 2, 8 and 110 from the LXX, on Jewish traditions regarding the flood, especially that of the imprisoned spirits found in the Enochic literature, and on common Christian teachings relating to Christ's death, resurrection and exaltation to the place of authority.¹⁰⁸ Thus while these verses were also probably not a preformed unit, like the earlier passages they draw on traditional elements to recount and explain the key gospel events.¹⁰⁹

These close resemblances between the three passages suggest that 3:18–22 may also shed light on the author's understanding of freedom. There are certainly some links between the description in these verses of Christ's salvific work and those in the earlier sections, where it was presented as emancipatory, even though the language of freedom does not appear (not even indirectly as in the use of *ἀπογενόμενοι* in 2:24). Verse 18a picks up the language of the sin offering and representative righteous sufferer from Isaiah 53 that is found in both 1:18–21 and 2:21–25. Verse 21, although it is complex and difficult to interpret, can be read as reflecting and expanding upon the conception of freedom implied by the first two passages by relating it to baptism, in which Christ's liberating work is appropriated by the believer. And the description of Christ's victory over the cosmic forces of evil in verse 22 and its implications for the readers may entail their liberation from the powers in some sense. The following exegesis will confirm these connections.

The opening *ὅτι* of verse 18a indicates that this section provides the reason for the exhortation in verses 13–17: the readers are not to fear their persecutors but to resist attempts to bully them into renouncing their faith, because of the work of Christ on their behalf.¹¹⁰ The conjunction *καί* suggests a comparison between the sufferings¹¹¹ of Christ and those of believers who are ill-treated for doing good, which gives the verse an exemplary significance similar to that of 2:21.¹¹² But here this must be seen as only a secondary theme, since the rest of the verse is focused on the uniqueness of Christ's afflictions.¹¹³

The statement that these sufferings are *ἅπαξ* underlines their completeness and sufficiency for their given purpose.¹¹⁴ They are also *περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν*, language that again recalls both the Isaianic servant (Isa 53:10) and the sin-offering that makes atonement for the people (Lv 5:6).¹¹⁵ A further Isaianic reference is found in the phrase *δίκαιος ὑπὲρ ἀδίκων* (Isa 53:11–12), which points once more to the representative significance of Christ's work; he is the innocent servant who suffers on behalf of the sinful (a group that included the readers in their pre-Christian

state).¹¹⁶ Verse 18a is therefore a restatement and elaboration of both 2:21 and 2:24a and refers to the same liberating event.¹¹⁷

The purpose of Christ's sufferings was *ἵνα ὑμᾶς προσαγάγη τῷ θεῷ*. The verb *προσάγω* suggests a reference to the bringing of the readers before God's throne in glory; this interpretation also reflects the language of verse 22, where Christ is said to have gone into heaven and to be beside God.¹¹⁸ If this is correct, then the clause denotes the readers' final salvation, when they will fully share in Christ's victory over the cosmic powers and their own persecutors; it refers to their future journey to heaven, following Christ.¹¹⁹ It will be shown below that this reading also fits well within the passage as a whole.

It was argued in Chapter 6 that verses 18b–20 refer to Christ's proclamation, in his resurrected state, to the rebellious angels from Noah's time. In light of verse 22, this was held to have taken place during Christ's exaltation to heaven and to have comprised the announcement of his victory over all hostile cosmic powers. The placing of the spirits' disobedience in Noah's time (verse 20) allows the author to posit a typological relationship between various elements of the flood story and the readers' experience of salvation in Christ. For example, it implies that in each case divine judgment threatens, God waits patiently, but only a few people are saved. The most detailed parallel, however, is drawn between the waters of the flood and the water of baptism, and this is worked out in verse 21.

The syntax of the first part of this verse, *ὁ καὶ ὑμᾶς ἀντίτυπον νῦν σώζει βάπτισμα*, is particularly awkward and has generated numerous alternative readings.¹²⁰ Constraints of space forbid a detailed consideration of the options. The interpretation followed here is that of Achtemeier, which not only appears textually and grammatically sound, but which also generates a coherent meaning for the statement.

This verse is joined to its predecessor by the relative pronoun *ὁ*, which, together with *ἀντίτυπον* ("antitype") and *βάπτισμα* ("baptism") serve as a compound subject of the verb *σώζει*. It is the interrelationship of the pronoun and the two nouns that constitutes the syntactic problem of the first phrase of the verse. If, as seems likely, the relative pronoun is the subject of the verb, then the two remaining nouns stand in apposition to it.¹²¹

Thus the basic sense of the syntax is that "as Noah and his family were saved through water, so Christians are saved through the water of baptism,"¹²² that baptism being related to the flood waters as an antitype (see further below).

Two significant objections to this line of interpretation have been voiced by Elliott and Pierce.¹²³ The first, that the uncertain relation of the two nouns *ἀντίτυπον* and *βάπτισμα* necessitates the addition in translation of a linking term (such as “as”) that is not in the text, is not compelling, since an exegetical relationship between substantives is also acceptably translated “which is” or “namely.”¹²⁴ More serious is Elliott’s claim “that this construction of a relative pronoun with an exegetic substantive introducing a new idea has no Greek precedent”; but this may be countered by appeal to the entire statement’s acknowledged straining of the normal rules of syntax. In any case, the counter-interpretation of Elliott and Pierce requires recourse to a textual amendment (of the nominative pronoun *ὁ* to the dative *ᾧ*) that has minimal manuscript support. Nevertheless, their taking of *ἀντίτυπον* as an adjective qualifying *βάπτισμα* renders much the same sense as Achtemeier’s reading.¹²⁵

There is also some disagreement over the antecedent of the relative pronoun *ὁ* with which the verse begins. Its agreement with the neuter *ὑδατος* at the end of verse 20, and the obvious connection of water with baptism, persuade many commentators that this noun is the antecedent.¹²⁶ Others, perhaps concerned not to have the author ascribe salvific efficacy to water, have argued that the antecedent is the whole event of salvation through water mentioned in the previous statement.¹²⁷ But the concern is probably misplaced given the appositional relation of *ὁ* to *βάπτισμα*; if the antecedent of *ὁ* is *ὑδατος*, this is a synecdoche standing for the *event* of baptism, and it is to this, not to the water in itself, that the author attributes salvation.

Another objection to this view is that water cannot be viewed as the means of salvation in verse 21 since *δι’ ὑδατος* in verse 20 is locative and not instrumental; in other words, Noah and his family were saved *through* the flood waters in a spatial sense, not *by* them in an instrumental sense.¹²⁸ But this presupposes that the author sees Noah as being saved from the flood, whereas the context of the verse, and particularly its relationship to verse 21, suggest that he has in view the salvation of Noah from his sinful world, in which case *δι’ ὑδατος* is properly taken as instrumental.¹²⁹

The term *ἀντίτυπον* is drawn from the language of typology, which presupposes that there is a correspondence or continuity in God’s dealings, and that OT phenomena and events are therefore models or counterparts of NT ones.¹³⁰ It can refer to an inferior copy of an original (as in its other NT usage in Heb 9:24),¹³¹ but it may also denote a fuller reality foreshadowed by something in the past.¹³² The second sense appears more likely in this context: the author is establishing a correlation between the past (*ποτε*) salvation of Noah and his family through

water and the present (*νῦν*) salvation of believers through baptism, and the former is the lesser (proto)type that points to the latter as “antitype.”¹³³

This technical discussion suggests that the author probably intends to make a connection between the nature of salvation in the two events as well as the means by which it was effected. As Noah was delivered from his sinful world, so Christians are delivered from theirs; their baptism guarantees their ultimate salvation from affliction and oppression at the hands of their opponents, both cosmic and human, when Christ is revealed.¹³⁴

Given that this salvation is achieved through new birth (1:3–5; 2:2), and that both new birth and baptism are said to be empowered by the resurrection of Christ, it seems likely that the two events are connected as result and means.¹³⁵ And since new birth is supposed to generate a transformed lifestyle (1:13–17, 22–25), the author probably also sees baptism as the event in which the liberation described in 1:18–19 and 2:24–25 is made effective: it accomplishes the believers’ freedom in the present from their futile and inherited pagan lifestyle, their separation from the governing power of their sins into a new life of righteousness under Christ’s lordship.¹³⁶

This tentative conclusion finds further support in the next part of 3:21, which describes, by means of two appositional phrases, how baptism carries out its salvific (and liberating) function. The first statement is negative: *οὐ σαρκὸς ἀπόδεις ῥύπον*. The basic idea here is that baptism is not an external cleansing of the body as distinct from an internal change.¹³⁷ This point might seem too obvious, but the reference may well be to Jewish and pagan ritual acts of cleansing, and be intended to distinguish these from the moral purification and liberation effected in baptism.¹³⁸

The author then describes baptism positively as *συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς ἐπερώτημα εἰς θεόν*. This phrase presents two exegetical difficulties, of which the first is the meaning of *ἐπερώτημα*. The word-group originally referred to an enquiry, and then to a request or appeal, and some commentators argue that it should be taken in this sense here, as an appeal for (or from; see below) a good conscience.¹³⁹ But its use as a technical term in later contracts, to refer not only to the contractual question but to the transaction as a whole, convinces many that its meaning here is “pledge.”¹⁴⁰ France and Elliott offer the weightiest argument for the second view: that the identification of baptism as an appeal or petition to God is unparalleled in the NT or the early church, whereas it was seen as a pledge at an early stage, and possibly even in the NT (Rom 10:9; 1 Tm 6:12).¹⁴¹

The second exegetical question presented by this phrase is whether *συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς* should be taken as a subjective or an objective genitive. The noun *συνειδήσις*

does not refer merely to conscience as a moral compass,¹⁴² but (in Achtemeier's words) to "a good and loyal attitude of mind that eventuates in sound behavior . . . a consciousness of what God wants that will lead one to do it."¹⁴³ While some commentators claim that the pledge (or appeal) is made by or out of a good attitude of this kind (subjective genitive),¹⁴⁴ it is more commonly seen as made for or to the end of a good consciousness (objective genitive).¹⁴⁵ The fact that baptism is characteristically prospective rather than retrospective is a strong argument for this latter view; the pledge looks forward to a particular kind of life rather than being based upon it.¹⁴⁶ The words *εις θεόν* indicate that the pledge is made to God.¹⁴⁷ The whole phrase may therefore be rendered, with Dalton, as something like "a pledge made to God to maintain a right attitude,"¹⁴⁸ which generates an appropriate lifestyle.

Finally, the author adds an adverbial prepositional phrase asserting that the saving power of baptism comes *δι' ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*. Although some commentators suggest that it unites believers with the risen Christ,¹⁴⁹ this Pauline idea is not obviously present in 1 Peter. However, it is clearly the resurrection power of Christ that enables believers to fulfil their pledge made in baptism; and it probably does so by mediating through the rite the rebirth mentioned in 1:3,23 and the consequent freedom from the power of sin.¹⁵⁰ Salvation may be through baptism, understood as a human pledge of a good consciousness, but it is still an emancipatory act of God through the resurrection of Christ.¹⁵¹ Or to put the same point differently, "the event of Christ's resurrection is present and active in the rite of baptism."¹⁵²

Seen in the light of this reading of the passage, the concluding statement in verse 22 of Christ's subordination of the evil cosmic forces (see above, Chapter 6) further attests to, and expands upon, the liberation of the readers. Since the author sees these powers as lying behind the persecution that the Christians are enduring,¹⁵³ he must also regard the former as the inspiration of the latter's previous sinful lifestyle. It follows that the readers' liberation from that lifestyle, by the power of Christ's resurrection effective through their (new birth in) baptism, includes freedom from the moral control of the powers that determine it. Christ's dominion in the heavenly sphere entails that the powers are now incapable of preventing those who pledge themselves to maintain a right consciousness of God from successfully renouncing their former ways and living in obedience to God's commands.¹⁵⁴

Any interpretation of a passage so full of exegetical problems must properly be cautious. But according to the above reading, the text may most plausibly be read as a guarantee of the readers' eschatological vindication and triumph over

their cosmic and human enemies (which 1 Peter denotes by the verb *σώζω* in 3:21). This assurance is threefold: firstly, Christ's suffering as the innocent Isaianic servant and sufficient sin-offering, on behalf of the sinful, to make atonement for them (v.18a); secondly, the readers' baptism, not as a mere ritual cleansing but as a pledge to maintain a proper consciousness of God's will, by which they access Christ's resurrection power to fulfil it (vv.20b–21); and thirdly, Christ's own exaltation to heaven, in which he proclaims his victory to evil cosmic powers and God thus subordinates them to him, so freeing the readers from their moral control (vv. 18b–20a,22).

If this interpretation is at least on the right lines, then this passage both confirms and expands upon the author's understanding of freedom articulated in 1:18–21 and 2:21–25. The atoning suffering of Christ (v.18a) and the baptism of the readers (v.21) may be seen as respectively the basis and the instrument of both their redemption from their futile inherited lifestyle (1:18–19) and their separation from sins to live for righteousness, their moral healing to live under Christ (2:24–25). That freedom is further articulated here in terms of God's subordination to Christ of the cosmic powers that determined their former existence, but which are now no longer able to control their behavior (v.22). There is therefore good reason to think that this text recounts the same liberating event as do the other two, albeit in different language and with some different emphases. And like them, it contains no references, explicit or implicit, to freedom from political or social authorities.

Implications

The three passages considered above have been shown to possess various common features of content, function and form. Between them they include all the key elements of Christ's work; they spell out the salvific significance of these events for the readers; and they support the parenthesis that immediately precedes (or follows) them (1:13–17; 2:18–20; 3:13–17; also 4:1–6). Moreover, they are all fairly formalized (though probably not preformed) christological statements, and they draw extensively on early Christian traditions. It is very likely that three such similar passages have some major themes in common.

The first passage, 1:18–21, includes the only unambiguous use of freedom language in the letter apart from 2:16: *ἐλυτρώθητε* in 1:18. With 1:19, this verse describes the freeing of the readers, through Christ's death, from a previous way of life controlled by sin. The second text, 2:21–25, while using different terms,

evidently describes the same liberating event, which here includes the readers' separation or healing from sins to live in a way pleasing to God and obedient to Christ (2:24–25). In the third section, 3:18–22, the idea of freedom is only implicit, but it may reasonably be inferred from the references to Christ's atoning death (3:18a), the saving efficacy of baptism (3:21), and the subordination of the cosmic powers to Christ (3:22). These close conceptual affinities, conjoined with the common features listed above, strongly suggest that all three passages reflect elements of the author's understanding of the freedom identified in 1:18.

In view of the different interpretations of the *ἐλευθερία* language in 2:16 (see above, Chapter 5), the most significant point to be drawn from this investigation is that the freedom described in these sections is entirely moral. It is freedom from a worthless inherited way of life (1:18), from sins and their attendant moral sickness (2:24), and from the control of evil cosmic powers (3:22); it is freedom for righteousness (2:24), for life under Christ's leadership (2:25), and for the maintaining of a proper consciousness of God (3:21). This understanding fits well with the apparent purpose of 2:16, to encourage the readers to resist their disorderly impulses and to render obedience to God by subordinating themselves within divinely created structures.

There is also evidence in these texts that the author regards this moral liberation as fundamental to his view of freedom. Firstly, he grounds it explicitly in the gospel events recounted in christological confessions: the suffering and death of Christ (1:19; 2:21,23–24; 3:18) and his resurrection and exaltation (e.g. 1:21; 3:18–19,21–22). Secondly, he sets it in the wider context of God's primordial and eschatological purpose expressed in the predestination and exaltation of Christ (1:20–21). And thirdly, he appears to see it as a precondition and means of the readers' ultimate salvation, their exaltation to God's presence (3:18,21–22). Any other concept of freedom found in the letter is therefore likely to be secondary to this one.

However, the moral freedom articulated in these passages is clearly independent of the readers' outward circumstances and needs no specific social or political conditions for its fulfilment.¹⁵⁵ And the only sense in which it can be seen as liberating Christians from those in authority, in the state or the household, is by enabling them to resist demands to do what they should not (demands that the author in any case appears to regard as exceptional; see above, Chapters 5 and 6). There is no suggestion in any of these texts (or anywhere, including 2:16) that the readers are free from obligation to the authorities as such, or of any political or social dimension to freedom that would justify reading the words *ἐλεύθεροι* and *ἐλευθερία* accordingly.

Of course the other freedom texts do not prove conclusively that the *ἐλευθερία* word-group *cannot* bear a political meaning in that one verse. But they do show that there is no reason outside 2:13–17 to interpret it in this way, and that to do so leaves it as a loose end, unrelated to all the other freedom conceptuality in the letter. This is a further argument for understanding it in a moral rather than a political sense.

This chapter completes the exegetical section of the work. Chapter 8 will bring together the conceptual and exegetical material and draw some conclusions about the meaning, interrelationship and significance of subordination and freedom in 1 Peter.

Notes

- 1 Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 114.
- 2 Horrell (*1 Peter*, 40) suggests that these “focus in sequence on the pre-existence and coming of Christ (1:21), his suffering and death (2:21–25) and his resurrection and ascension to glory (3:18–22).”
- 3 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 124.
- 4 Green, *1 Peter*, 35–36; Holloway, *Prejudice*, 164–65; Horrell, “Conformity,” 216.
- 5 Donelson (*1 Peter*, 39) describes the section as “a complex interweaving of ethical calls and theological warrants.”
- 6 Frankemölle, *1. Petrusbrief*, 38.
- 7 See Kelly, *Epistles*, 73; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 369.
- 8 See Michaels, *1 Peter*, 53, 63; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 377–78 for cautionary comments.
- 9 See Elliott, *1 Peter*, 693–97, and below on 2:21–25 and 3:18–22.
- 10 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 126; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 369; Williams, *Salvation*, 81–82.
- 11 See Wallace, *Grammar*, 438, 559.
- 12 Elliott, *1 Peter*, 369–70 (quote on 370); see also Windisch, *Katholischen Briefe*, 57; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 126–27.
- 13 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 127.
- 14 Williams, *Salvation*, 84, with references.
- 15 Williams, *Salvation*, 83–85.
- 16 Kelly, *Epistles*, 73; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 369; Senior, *1 Peter*, 44.
- 17 Beare, *First Epistle*, 77–78; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 63; Williams, *Salvation*, 85–87.
- 18 Elliott, *1 Peter*, 369–70; Senior, *1 Peter*, 44; Williams, *Salvation*, 87.
- 19 This is not to deny that the verse may also be a conscious echo of Greco-Roman practices of manumission with which 1 Peter’s readers were familiar (see Moffatt, *General Epistles*, 106–7; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 63.). But the author’s dissociation of the redemption from monetary payment suggests that this background is only secondary.

- 20 Egan (*Ecclesiology*, 82) perhaps goes too far, however, in his connection of this theme with the readers' sojourn in the land of exile. He may be right that the allusion assures them that God is at work for them outside their own homeland, but the theme of redemption is not directly tied here to escape from their own exilic condition. And although the motif of exile *can* also have connotations of empire (see Horrell, "Conformity," 224–27), it is doubtful whether this connection is present in 1 Peter. The author appears instead to reappropriate the theme to refer to life within the disrupted cosmic order dominated by hostile spiritual powers and the popular values of society in which this is reflected. It is within this order, not the political and social structures of the Roman empire, that the readers are not at home.
- 21 The distinction drawn here is between payment in money and payment in something more valuable (see further below), not (*pace* D. W. Kennard, "Petrine Redemption: Its Meaning and Extent," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 30, no. 4 [1987]: 400) between payment of a price to someone else and payment to no-one. The question of to whom, if anyone, the ransom is paid has occupied some scholars (see e.g. Cranfield, *1 Peter*, 54–55; Best, *1 Peter*, 88–90; González, *1 Peter*, 37), but perhaps it is best simply to acknowledge that the author provides no answer (Hort, *First Epistle*, 80).
- 22 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 127; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 369.
- 23 Stibbs and Walls, *First Epistle*, 91; Davids, *First Epistle*, 71; Green, *1 Peter*, 45. Van Unnik (W. C. van Unnik, "The Redemption in I Peter I 18–19 and the Problem of the First Epistle of Peter," in *Sparsa Collecta: The Collected Essays of W.C. van Unnik*, vol. 2, ed. J. Reiling, G. Mussies, and P. van der Horst [Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1980], 32–33) challenges this interpretation on the grounds that the readers' pre-Christian existence is described in verse 18 as futile and inherited (see below), but not as a state of slavery to sin. But this criticism perhaps gives too little weight to the close association of *λυτρόω* with the great liberating events in Israel's history and the evidence of this text that the author had these in mind. The mere fact, attested here and elsewhere in the letter, that the readers are delivered from their former way of life by Christ's death strongly suggests that they were unable to escape from it otherwise, while the omission of any reference to slavery may simply underline that the author's understanding of freedom is not determined only by exodus imagery.
- 24 Kelly, *Epistles*, 74; Schelkle, *Petrusbriefe*, 48–49; Williams, *Salvation*, 87–89. Beare points out (*First Epistle*, 78) that when describing the means of redemption the author uses instrumental datives rather than genitives of price, and argues that Christ's blood should therefore not be seen as a ransom-price. But the contrast drawn between this blood and monetary metals clearly suggests that the former is understood as a price (see Williams, *Salvation*, 87–89). Also the genitive of price is rare in the NT, especially outside the narrative literature (see Wallace, *Grammar*, 122), and there seems no reason why the dative of means should not be used to convey the idea

of price as part of a broader instrumental meaning. The use of sacrificial language in verse 19 (see below) tends to confirm this interpretation.

25 BDAG, 73 (italics original).

26 Pesch, *1. Petrusbrief*, 37; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 64–65; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 370. Thus González writes (*1 Peter*, 38):

In the same way that Moses led the people of Israel from bondage in Egypt to freedom in the promised land, so Christians are freed from bondage to sin and called to be God's people, living according to the laws of the new covenant.

27 See Balch, *Wives*, 88.

28 Kelly, *Epistles*, 74. See also Bechtler, *Following*, 62–63.

29 Elliott, *Home*, 119; Davids, *First Epistle*, 71–72; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 370.

30 See Calvin, *First Peter*, 248.

31 Forbes, *1 Peter*, 43. Again, if Jewish Christians are also in view, the statement implies a low view of Jewish ancestral worship and practice (see Bigg, *Epistles*, 119).

32 Marshall, *1 Peter*, 54–55; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 117; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 370–71.

33 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 124 (italics added).

34 Boring, *1 Peter*, 1999, 82 (italics added).

35 This is not to deny that the reflection of these norms in the structures of state and household may be less than perfect; see above, Chapter 5. But such congruence entails that the author's negative description in this verse of pagan practice does not subvert his call for subordination to one's superiors within the God-given political and social order.

36 Michaels (*1 Peter*, 65) and Achtemeier (*1 Peter*, 128) both suggest that the metals may connote the readers' former idolatry. But this may over-complicate the author's contrast, which relates to the means of redemption rather than the objects of devotion, and which is sufficiently expressed with reference to silver and gold coins and the blood of Christ.

37 Forbes points out (*1 Peter*, 43) that *φθαρτός* here indicates that the metals are temporary rather than that they are subject to decay.

38 Kelly, *Epistles*, 74; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 128; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 372–73. This interpretation of the (inexact) contrast between “perishable” metals and “precious” blood, followed with minor variations by most modern commentators, is a sufficient answer to van Unnik's objection (“Redemption,” 27–28) to this translation of *φθαρτός* as “perishable.” For his proposed alternative of “blemished” and therefore unacceptable to God he can claim (37–40) the support of only one verse from the LXX (Lv 22:25), which might be interpreted differently; this view has unsurprisingly won little support.

39 Davids, *First Epistle*, 72; Donelson, *1 Peter*, 47.

40 Morris writes (L. Morris, *The Cross in the New Testament* [Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1988], 322), “Christ's blood is at one and the same time the offering of a sacrifice which avails for men, and the payment of a price which avails for men.” See

- also L. Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 3rd ed. (London: Tyndale Press, 1965), 39–40.
- 41 There is some disagreement over whether *αἷμα* refers to the life of Christ released through his death (so Beare, *First Epistle*, 78–79) or to his death itself (so Williams, *Salvation*, 93–97). In favor of the former is the effect of the blood in freeing the readers from their former life; in favor of the latter is the probably sacrificial context of the blood. The two meanings are not incompatible, and both may be implied.
- 42 Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 116; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 373; Green, *1 Peter*, 41–42.
- 43 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 65; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 373–75; Egan, *Ecclesiology*, 82–83. Feldmeier (*First Letter*, 117–18) suggests a more specific reference to the Day of Atonement and its sacrifice that effects reconciliation.
- 44 Among many others, see Hort, *First Epistle*, 77–79; Best, *1 Peter*, 90–91; Williams, *Salvation*, 90–93.
- 45 Van Unnik, “Redemption,” 40–41.
- 46 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 128.
- 47 So Michaels, *1 Peter*, 66; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 128–29.
- 48 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 65–66; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 373–74.
- 49 Van Unnik’s difficulties with various parts of this interpretation lead him to relate these verses to the sacrifice offered by the proselyte from paganism to Judaism (“Redemption,” 41–52); he also claims to find many other traces of proselytism in the letter (53–68). This kind of interpretation is supported by Schüssler Fiorenza (*Power of the Word*, 39–43), and also by Reicke (*Epistles*, 85–86) and (more cautiously) Elliott (*1 Peter*, 375) as a supplement rather than an alternative to more mainstream views. Van Unnik’s lengthy argument cannot be addressed in detail in this context, but apart from its exegetical problems (such as the reading of *φθαρτός*; see above) and limited supporting evidence, it is undermined by the ending of the practice of proselyte sacrifice after 70 CE, probably before 1 Peter was written (van Unnik, “Redemption,” 52).
- 50 It is possible that the author’s reference to Christ in verse 20 as *προεγνωσμένου . . . πρό καταβολῆς κόσμου* is intended to assert the “unparalleled antiquity” (Green, *1 Peter*, 37) of Christ, whose pedigree far exceeds that of the readers’ ancestral customs. So also Richard, *1 Peter*, 66; Harink, *1 Peter*, 59–60; Williams, *Salvation*, 96.
- 51 The language of disclosure (*φανερωθέντος*) may indicate that the author believes Christ to be pre-existent (Schreiner, *1 Peter*, 87–88; Forbes, *1 Peter*, 44–45).
- 52 Hort, *First Epistle*, 80–81; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 123–24; Forbes, *1 Peter*, 44–45.
- 53 Hort, *First Epistle*, 84–86; Forbes, *1 Peter*, 45.
- 54 See A. Hultgren, *Christ and His Benefits: Christology and Redemption in the New Testament* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1987), 113; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 52–53.
- 55 None of the English words commonly used to denote this second aspect of Christ’s suffering (salvific, redemptive, atoning) can claim a Greek equivalent in the text; they are all used as a convenient shorthand for the ideas expressed in verses 24 and

25. “Redemptive” is avoided here so as not to beg the question, in advance of the exegesis, of whether and how far this passage relates to freedom. The use of “salvific” and its cognates should also not be taken as a prejudgment of the relationship between 2:24–25 and 3:18a,21–22, especially the verb *σώζω* in 3:21 (see further below).
- 56 Thompson, “‘Be Submissive,’” 77; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 198; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 512–13, 523.
- 57 Goppelt (*1 Peter*, 207), Jobes (*1 Peter*, 193) and Donelson (*1 Peter*, 83–84) are among many recent commentators to reject this view; *contra* Kelly, *Epistles*, 118–19.
- 58 Thompson (“‘Be Submissive,’” 75) and Jobes (*1 Peter*, 192–93) point out that this extended use of Isaiah 53 in relation to Jesus’ suffering and death is unique in the NT.
- 59 D. G. Horrell, “Jesus Remembered in 1 Peter? Early Jesus Traditions, Isaiah 53, and 1 Peter 2.21–25,” in *James, 1 & 2 Peter and Early Jesus Traditions*, eds. A. J. Batten and J. S. Kloppenborg (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), 143. See also D. G. Horrell, “Tradition and Innovation: Reassessing 1 Peter’s Contributions to the Making of Christian Identity,” in *Muted Voices of the New Testament: Readings in the Catholic Epistles and Hebrews*, eds. K. M. Hockey, M. N. Pierce and F. Watson (London and New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017), 17.
- 60 Elliott, *1 Peter*, 523; Horrell, “Jesus Remembered,” 130, 141–43, 149–50; D. G. Horrell and W. H. Wan. “Christology, Eschatology and the Politics of Time in 1 Peter,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 38, no. 3 (2016): 265. Achtemeier (*1 Peter*, 193, followed by Jobes, *1 Peter*, 194 and Green, *1 Peter*, 85) suggests that the author’s use of Isa 53 has been shaped to follow the sequence of the passion narrative.
- 61 Senior, “Conduct,” 433–34; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 523; Green, *1 Peter*, 85.
- 62 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 142, Forbes, *1 Peter*, 89. It is perhaps pressing the parallel too far to refer to Christ’s own subordination (Blum, “1 Peter,” 235), since his relation to his persecutors is not the same as that of slaves to their masters. But his acceptance of suffering is still a model for *their* subordination.
- 63 E.g. Hillyer, *1 Peter*, 89; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 525–26; Schreiner, *1 Peter*, 141–42.
- 64 So Michaels, *1 Peter*, 134; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 189; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 524, and most commentators.
- 65 The suggestion that the phrase means no more than “for your benefit,” i.e. to leave you an example (Michaels, *1 Peter*, 143; Williams, *Salvation*, 99–100), is possible, but perhaps less likely in view of the author’s use of *ὕπερ ὑμῶν* in the context of Christ’s sufferings (cp. 3:18).
- 66 On this see especially C. Breytenbach, “‘Christus litt euretwegen’: Zur Rezeption von Jesaja 53 LXX und anderen frühjüdischen Traditionen im 1. Petrusbrief,” in *Deutungen des Todes Jesu im Neuen Testament, Vol. 2 Auflage*, eds. J. Frey and J. Schröter (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 440–44, who also appeals to a possible parallel in Isa 53:4, where the similar phrase *περι ἡμῶν* means “on the grounds of the people’s sin.” See also Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 198–99; Forbes, *1 Peter*, 89–90.

- 67 J. R. Michaels, "St. Peter's Passion: the Passion Narrative in 1 Peter," *Word & World* 24/4 (2004): 390–91. There is thus no need to agree with Schreiner (*1 Peter*, 142) that *ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν* implies that the suffering of slaves and all believers is representative or vicarious.
- 68 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 199; Davids, *First Epistle*, 110; Forbes, *1 Peter*, 89–90.
- 69 See Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 199–200; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 528–29.
- 70 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 146–47; Forbes, *1 Peter*, 91. The emphasis on sins of speech may reflect the principal form of hostility faced by the readers (Horrell, *Epistles*, 53).
- 71 The verb has no object, and scholars have suggested that Christ instead entrusted to God his cause (Kelly, *Epistles*, 121), or his enemies (Michaels, "Passion," 392), or himself (Horrell, *Epistles*, 53). But the material difference is slight; in every case judgment and vindication are in view.
- 72 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 200–1; Schreiner, *1 Peter*, 144; Green, *1 Peter*, 87–88.
- 73 Selwyn, *First Epistle*, 180; Bechtler, *Following*, 193; Horrell, "Jesus Remembered," 139–40.
- 74 A very few sources, including B, have *ὑμῶν* instead of *ἡμῶν*, but this is probably an error assimilating verse 24 to verse 21.
- 75 Elliott, *1 Peter*, 533.
- 76 Kelly, *Epistles*, 122.
- 77 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 147.
- 78 Davids, *First Epistle*, 113.
- 79 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 203.
- 80 Taylor (V. Taylor, *The Atonement in New Testament Teaching*, 2nd ed. [London: Epworth, 1945], 29) and Windisch (*Katholischen Briefe*, 65) see here a further reference to the ritual of the scapegoat in Leviticus 16, although as Achtemeier (*1 Peter*, 202) and Elliott (*1 Peter*, 532) point out, the scapegoat was not killed but released into the wilderness. But this may be another example of the author's creative interweaving of diverse traditions.
- 81 Beare, *First Epistle*, 124; Kelly, *Epistles*, 123; Green, *1 Peter*, 89. However, *contra* e.g. Breytenbach, "Christus," 447 and Williams, *Salvation*, 105, the language here is not obviously penal.
- 82 Selwyn, *First Epistle*, 181; Davids, *First Epistle*, 112.
- 83 So Green, *1 Peter*, 89.
- 84 E.g. by Selwyn, *First Epistle*, 181; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 197; Williams, *Salvation*, 108–9.
- 85 *Contra* Schreiner, *1 Peter*, 145.
- 86 Elliott, *1 Peter*, 534. Some commentators (e.g. Donelson, *1 Peter*, 85; Egan, *Ecclesiology*, 145–46) have suggested that the phrase *ἐπι τὸ ξύλον* conjoined with the verb *ἀνήνεγκεν* alludes to the wood of the sacrificial offering, with Christ's cross being seen as an altar on which sins are laid; it thus connects the Isaianic suffering servant with the sacrificial code. But this is probably to push the cultic imagery of the passage too far: nowhere in the OT are sins laid on the altar,

- and nowhere in the NT is the cross presented as one (Achtmeier, *1 Peter*, 202; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 532).
- 87 ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις is best understood as a dative of reference (Forbes, *1 Peter*, 92).
- 88 Kelly, *Epistles*, 123; Achtmeier, *1 Peter*, 202–3; Green, *1 Peter*, 89.
- 89 See Achtmeier, *1 Peter*, 202–3; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 532, 534–36; Williams, *Salvation*, 112.
- 90 Forbes, *1 Peter*, 92.
- 91 Masterman, *First Epistle*, 117.
- 92 Beare, *First Epistle*, 124; Achtmeier, *1 Peter*, 203; Jobs, *1 Peter*, 198.
- 93 “So, while the specific vocabulary is drawn from Isaiah 53, knowledge of the tradition that Jesus was whipped provides a reason to select this particular depiction of the Servant’s sufferings” (Horrell, “Jesus Remembered,” 140). See also Kelly, *Epistles*, 124; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 536.
- 94 Egan, *Ecclesiology*, 146–47.
- 95 Green, *1 Peter*, 90.
- 96 Pesch, *1. Petrusbrief*, 63; M.-L. Lamau, “Exhortation aux Esclaves et Hymne au Christ Souffrant dans la Première Épître de Pierre,” *Mélanges de Sciences Religieuses* 43, no. 3 (1986): 128–29; Waltner, “1 Peter,” 94. Williams’ suggestion (*Salvation*, 114) that healing involves forgiveness of sins and restoration of fellowship with God introduces ideas not obviously found in this verse, although the latter may be connoted by verse 25.
- 97 Achtmeier, *1 Peter*, 203–4; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 537–38.
- 98 See Hillyer, *1 Peter*, 87; Green, *1 Peter*, 85.
- 99 See Forbes, *1 Peter*, 93–94 and Egan, *Ecclesiology*, 139 for different views.
- 100 Taking the verb ἐπεστράφητε as a divine passive (Elliott, *1 Peter*, 538), though “[t]he pass. form of this vb. can be used in an act. sense” (Forbes, *1 Peter*, 94), i.e. “you have turned.”
- 101 Grudem, *First Epistle*, 132.
- 102 E.g. Selwyn, *First Epistle*, 182; Kelly, *Epistles*, 124–25.
- 103 E.g. González, *1 Peter*, 79–80.
- 104 Davids, *First Epistle*, 114; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 539.
- 105 Achtmeier, *1 Peter*, 204; González, *1 Peter*, 80.
- 106 Thus Windisch writes (*Katholischen Briefe*, 65), “Dem Vf. kommt es weniger auf die Vergebung als auf die Beseitigung der Sünden an.” See also, among others, Beare, *First Epistle*, 124; Reicke, *Epistles*, 99; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 148–49; Knoch, *Erste Petrusbrief*, 86–87; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 214; Achtmeier, *1 Peter*, 202–3; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 534–36. Richard (*1 Peter*, 123) helpfully identifies the sins with the fleshly desires of 2:11 that are said to wage war against the soul. Other scholars (e.g. Davids, *First Epistle*, 113; Horrell, “Petrine Circle,” 19) have seen a connection with the Pauline concept of death to sin (e.g. from Rom 6:11,18). But although the

underlying ideas are certainly similar, the Petrine metaphor is different and should not be absorbed into its Pauline counterpart.

- 107 Lamau, “Exhortation,” 129; see also Harink, *1 Peter*, 84.
- 108 Kreitzer (L.J. Kreitzer, “On Board the Eschatological Ark of God: Noah-Deucalion and the ‘Phrygian connection’ in 1 Peter 3:19–22,” in *Baptism, the New Testament and the Church: Historical and Contemporary Studies in Honour of R.E.O. White*, eds. S. E. Porter and A. R. Cross [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999], *passim*) argues that 1 Peter’s use of the Noah story may be occasioned by traditions that placed the grounding of the ark in Phrygia and the parallel Greek flood story of Deucalion and Pyrrha, on which the author may also have drawn elsewhere, but these influences are less certain than those listed above.
- 109 For references for these two paragraphs, see above, Chapter 6.
- 110 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 246; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 639.
- 111 Although the textual evidence is more ambiguous here than in 2:21 (see B. M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. [Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994], 619–20, 622–23), most scholars favor the reading *ἤπαθεν* rather than *ἀπέθανεν* (see e.g. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 247; Breytenbach, “Christus,” 444–45; *contra* Kelly, *Epistles*, 147–48); this also parallels more closely the experience of the readers (Dalton, *Christ’s Proclamation*, 131–33).
- 112 So Windisch, *Katholischen Briefe*, 70–71; Waltner, “1 Peter,” 125; Senior, *1 Peter*, 99–100 and most commentators.
- 113 *Contra* Reicke, *Disobedient Spirits*, 127–30; Schwank, “First Epistle,” 74–75.
- 114 González, *1 Peter*, 106; Forbes, *1 Peter*, 121.
- 115 Leaney, *Letters*, 48–49; Dalton, *Christ’s Proclamation*, 130–31; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 641.
- 116 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 202–3; Dalton, *Christ’s Proclamation*, 133–34; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 642.
- 117 Harink (*1 Peter*, 84) also connects the verse with 1:18; see further below.
- 118 Masterman, *First Epistle*, 130–31; Dalton, *Christ’s Proclamation*, 134–35; Forbes, *1 Peter*, 122. For these reasons it seems less likely that a primary reference to past conversion or present reconciliation is intended (*pace* Michaels, *1 Peter*, 203; Horrell, *Epistles*, 69–70), but since these are necessary steps to the goal of final glorification a secondary reference to them cannot be excluded.
- 119 Senior, *1 Peter*, 107–8; see also Michaels, *1 Peter*, 203.
- 120 France, “Exegesis,” 273 provides a helpful summary of the key points of dispute.
- 121 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 266; so also Huther, *General Epistles*, 196; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 266; Donelson, *1 Peter*, 110.
- 122 France, “Exegesis,” 273.
- 123 Elliott, *1 Peter*, 669–71; Pierce, *Proclamation of Christ*, 231–32.
- 124 See Wallace, *Grammar*, 95.
- 125 So also Reicke, *Disobedient Spirits*, 145; Dalton, *Christ’s Proclamation*, 198.

- 126 So Dalton, *Christ's Proclamation*, 196–97; Davids, *First Epistle*, 143; R. F. Satta, “Baptism Doth Now Save Us: An Exegetical Investigation of 1 Peter 3:20–21,” *Evangelical Journal* 25, no. 2 (2007): 154–55 and many others.
- 127 Beare, *First Epistle*, 148; Hiebert, “Suffering and Triumphant Christ,” 154–55; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 266.
- 128 Beasley-Murray, *Baptism*, 259.
- 129 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 272; Pierce, *Proclamation of Christ*, 228–29.
- 130 France, “Exegesis,” 273–74; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 267; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 670–71.
- 131 Satta, “Baptism,” 68–69; Donelson, *1 Peter*, 110.
- 132 Kelly, *Epistles*, 160–61; Dalton, *Christ's Proclamation*, 198; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 266.
- 133 R. E. Averbeck, “The Focus of Baptism in the New Testament,” *Grace Theological Journal* 2, no. 2 (1981): 299; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 668–69; D. F. Watson, “Early Jesus Tradition in 1 Peter 3.18–22,” in Batten and Kloppenborg, *Early Jesus Traditions*, 163–65. *Contra* Hanson (“Salvation Proclaimed,” 102), it is the flood water and not the ark that is presented as the type.
- 134 On the future focus of salvation in 1 Peter, see 1:5,9; 2:2. See also Satta, “Baptism,” 66, 71–72 on salvation as physical deliverance from personal enemies and from an environment hostile to God. In view of the quotation from Proverbs 11:31 in 4:18, it is sometimes suggested that the typology includes deliverance from divine condemnation on the sinful world (see Marcar, “Days of Noah,” 553–55), but this idea is not developed in 3:18–22.
- 135 This connection is never made explicit in the letter (Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 268), but in support of it is the reference to Christ's purification offering in 3:18, which is associated with moral cleansing in the previous two passages (see above), and the close link between water/washing/baptism and new birth/life elsewhere in the NT (Jn 3:5; Ti 3:5; Rom 6:3–4; Col 2:11–13). See also Selwyn, *First Epistle*, 206; Pesch, *1. Petrusbrief*, 85–86; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 267.
- 136 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 272; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 673–75; Green, *1 Peter*, 137–38.
- 137 Reicke, *Disobedient Spirits*, 173; Beare, *First Epistle*, 149–50; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 679; *contra* D. Hill, “On Suffering and Baptism in 1 Peter,” *Novum Testamentum* 18, no. 3 (1976): 187–88; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 254–55 and others, who take *σάρξ* here in a moral rather than a physical sense. But although the adjective *σαρκικός* is used in this way in 1 Peter (2:11), the noun *σάρξ* always refers to the physical body (1:24; 3:18; 4:1,2,6). Moreover, by interpreting 3:21 in this way these authors effectively divorce baptism from the initial cleansing of impurity, which appears to diminish its stated saving efficacy and seems unlikely in light of its connection with the resurrection. See Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 268–69; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 677–78.
- 138 Beasley-Murray, *Baptism*, 260–61; J. E. Colwell, “Baptism, Conscience and the Resurrection: A Reappraisal of 1 Peter 3:21,” in Porter and Cross, *Baptism*, 216–17; Donelson, *1 Peter*, 114. However, the suggestion of Dalton (*Christ's Proclamation*, 199–206), followed by Kelly (*Epistles*, 161–62), that the reference is to circumcision

- has not won general support: the key terms are used for this rite nowhere else, and the author shows no other interest in contrasting Jewish and Christian practice. See Elliott, *1 Peter*, 678–79.
- 139 E.g. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 217; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 268–71; Feldmeier, *First Letter*, 207–8.
- 140 See Reicke, *Disobedient Spirits*, 185; Selwyn, *First Epistle*, 205–6; Kelly, *Epistles*, 162–63; Hiebert, “Suffering and Triumphant Christ,” 156; Dalton, *Christ’s Proclamation*, 206–10; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 271–72; Beasley-Murray, *Baptism*, 260–61; Green, *1 Peter*, 137; Satta, “Baptism,” 71–72, and others. Nickelson’s view (R. L. Nickelson, “First Peter 3:21, Daniel 4:14[17] and the Ordo Salutis,” *Stone-Campbell Journal* 3 [2000]: 237–39) that an ἐπερώτημα is a positive verdict on the Christian gospel is not widely affirmed.
- 141 France, “Exegesis,” 274–75, 281; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 680. It is possible, however, that the word could refer to an “appeal” in a secondary sense: the baptized person makes a pledge and asks God to enable him/her to fulfil it.
- 142 *Contra* C. A. Pierce, *Conscience in the New Testament: A Study of Synecidesis in the New Testament; in the Light of Its Sources, and with Particular Reference to St. Paul: with Some Observations regarding Its Pastoral Relevance Today* (London: SCM Press, 1955), 98 and *passim*.
- 143 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 270. A similar view is taken by Dalton, *Christ’s Proclamation*, 210–12; Colwell, “Baptism,” 216–17; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 255, and others.
- 144 E.g. Selwyn, *First Epistle*, 205; Beare, *First Epistle*, 149; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 216–18.
- 145 Dalton, *Christ’s Proclamation*, 212–13; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 162–63; Green, *1 Peter*, 137.
- 146 So France, “Exegesis,” 275–76. Averbeck writes (“Baptism,” 299), “[T]he water rite could not be rightly thought of in isolation from a divinely oriented and empowered lifestyle.”
- 147 Dalton, *Christ’s Proclamation*, 213–14.
- 148 Dalton, *Christ’s Proclamation*, 214.
- 149 E.g. France, “Exegesis,” 275–76; Davids, *First Epistle*, 144; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 676.
- 150 France, “Exegesis,” 275–76; Beasley-Murray, *Baptism*, 261–62; Colwell, “Baptism,” 218.
- 151 Beasley-Murray, *Baptism*, 261–62; Watson, “Early Christian Tradition,” 164.
- 152 Dalton, *Christ’s Proclamation*, 199.
- 153 This connection is not made explicitly, but it is implied by the purpose of the passage, which is to provide the basis for the author’s exhortation to stand firm in the face of hostility. It is also implicit in 5:8–9. However, as shown in Chapter 6, he does *not* link the powers to the governing authorities, or to political and social superiors in general.
- 154 Moffatt, *General Epistles*, 143–44; Reicke, *Disobedient Spirits*, 198–201; Pierce, *Proclamation of Christ*, 233–36.
- 155 See Wilder, “Elutheria,” 414–16 (with reference to Paul).

Synthesis and Conclusions

The first main section of this work (Chapters 2–4) examined the concepts of subordination and freedom in the Greco-Roman, early Jewish and early Christian thought of the first century CE, in conjunction with the related topic of order. Their use by the author of 1 Peter must be intelligible against this background and represent a restatement, development or critique of its component parts. The second section (Chapters 5–7) provided detailed exegesis of the texts from the letter that address these two themes most explicitly, again with some reference to that of order, to sketch a provisional view of the author’s usage. This final chapter synthesizes the external and internal evidence and draws conclusions regarding the conceptuality of subordination and freedom expressed by the letter.

The synthesis will be set out in three sections below, one for each of the three concepts.¹ Each of these relates the background materials to the exegesis, both to clarify the themes of subordination and freedom in 1 Peter and further to illuminate the relevant texts. A final section then summarizes the findings of the work regarding the meaning and interrelationship of the concepts and reflects briefly on their significance within the letter and the wider NT.

Order

Cosmic Order

The concept of order appears prominently in all three of the intellectual traditions that shape the thought-world of 1 Peter. Although it is most explicitly and systematically developed in Greco-Roman writings, early Jews and Christians also affirm or presuppose that the various elements of the cosmos are ordered both rationally and morally. Most Greco-Roman schools also relate this order to their ideas of the divine, and in Judaism and Christianity it is deemed to derive from, depend upon, and reflect the nature of God and/or Christ; it therefore bears divine authority.

It follows that this cosmic and divine order is held to have a normative status; it defines how the world ought to be as well as how it is. Moreover, in both Greco-Roman and Jewish schemas the divine and human realms correspond, such that the human task or calling is to conform to the order given by nature and g/God; this seems also to be assumed by early Christian authors. The work involves the shaping of one's own life in line with the existing order, and usually the preservation and (sometimes) advancement of that order in the world. The idea is expanded in various ways, but in early Judaism it is related especially to the particular responsibility of God's people Israel to live according to his law. Some Jewish sources also extend the task of promoting the order to heavenly powers; again, this idea is also implicit in some early Christian texts.

There are good reasons to suppose that the author of 1 Peter accepts this idea of cosmic order, in a Jewish and Christian form. Firstly, it is pervasive and largely uncontested in the first-century CE world: in Greco-Roman writings most of the principal schools affirm it strongly and none denies it, while for early Judaism and Christianity it is grounded in the Hebrew Bible, acknowledged in a wide range of literature, and (among Christians) related to the key themes of christology and soteriology.

Secondly, although in the absence of extended christological statements (which provide the context for most NT reflection on the theme) the author never explicitly articulates the notion of a divinely created order, at no point does he deny it, directly or indirectly. More significantly, his acceptance of the other elements of early Christian teaching on order strongly suggests that he simply assumes this one.² This combination of external and internal evidence indicates that he believes in a rational and moral cosmic order, created and sustained by God and embodying his character, and therefore divinely normative,

which human beings (especially God's people) and angelic powers are required to reflect and promote.³

Disrupted Order

In much Greco-Roman thought, however, the divine order is reflected only incompletely or imperfectly in nature, owing to limitations or failings in the cosmos or the gods. Early Jewish and Christian sources go further, claiming that the cosmic order has been disrupted by the wickedness of human beings and angelic powers who influence them. Since both are called to be agents of God's ordering rule on earth, their failure properly to reflect the divine order has made them into instruments of cosmic disturbance and futility instead. The existence of evil and unruly heavenly powers is sometimes ascribed, especially within the apocalyptic traditions, to a primeval angelic revolt supposedly described in Genesis 6; the fallen angels (or Watchers) are now imprisoned, but their offspring are still active in the world as evil spirits that cause disorder.

The subordinate gods who have been appointed by God to rule over the pagan nations are included by some early Jewish authors among the disruptive cosmic powers, along with the human kingdoms and authorities that are their earthly counterparts. But this connection is by no means universal in Judaism, and it is not found among authors whose views of pagan authority are generally positive. While the author of Revelation includes earthly authorities among the powers, nowhere else in early Christian writings are these associated so clearly or directly with unruly spiritual forces, and in some places (notably the deutero-Pauline Colossians and Ephesians) there appears to be no link at all. In fact, in early Christianity human rulers are mainly seen as agents of order, not disorder.

The author of 1 Peter evidently shares the widespread view of all the traditions that the cosmic order is currently deficient or defective, and the conviction of many early Jews and Christians that it has been dislocated by both human evil (such as that described in 4:2–4; cp. 2:11) and angelic rebellion in the time of Noah (3:19–20,22; cp. 5:8). This dual responsibility is further clarified in his implicit linking of the disruptive spirits with the persecution experienced by his readers at the hands of their pagan neighbors (by connecting 3:13–17 with 3:18–22); again he endorses the Jewish and Christian view that sinful human beings live under the control of evil heavenly powers.

But 1 Peter never includes the heavenly rulers of the nations among these powers; on the contrary, the author's very positive attitude to Gentile government appears to align him with those Jewish authors who do *not* present these gods as

disruptive. And as in Colossians and Ephesians, the evil forces are never identified with human authorities either; there is no reason to think that the author sees them as more or other than supra-human spiritual powers. For him as for many early Christians, political and social structures as such are bulwarks *against* disorder, not complicit in it.

Restored Order

The divine restoration of the cosmic order is both anticipated in early Judaism and affirmed in early Christianity. In the former, this involves the overcoming of all disorderly forces, both earthly and heavenly, and the liberation of Israel from their control. In the latter, it results from the exaltation of Christ to share God's reign, in which the unruly powers are subordinated to him and believers are liberated from slavery to sin. While some Christian authors place this subordination primarily in the future, Colossians and Ephesians portray it as a present reality, even if the powers continue to be active.

Various Petrine texts (e.g. 1:18–19; 2:24) indicate that the author shares this early Christian belief in Christ's defeat of the forces of disorder, but it is expressed most clearly and explicitly in 3:18–22. In his death, resurrection and ascension (3:18–19), Christ gains the victory over hostile spiritual powers: he proclaims his triumph to the disobedient spirits of Noah's time (3:19), and God subordinates all such authorities to him (3:22). As a result their destructive effects are undone among believers, who are liberated in baptism from their control and its attendant moral impurity (3:20–21). As in the two deutero-Pauline texts, the subjection of the powers has already taken place; conflict continues (5:8–9), but its outcome is already settled (4:12–19).

Thus it may safely be concluded on the basis of this passage that for the author of 1 Peter a "new order [is] established in the cosmos as a result of Christ's resurrection,"⁴ that in Christ's exaltation "heavenly order has been reestablished."⁵ This affirmation of restored order locates him firmly within both early Jewish and early Christian tradition on this subject, and it also serves as a basis for his practical exhortations, including those requiring subordination to political and social superiors.

Order among God's People

In early Judaism, the liberating of God's people as part of the coming restoration of the divine order will enable them to fulfil their role as its guarantors and

agents. And for some deuterio-Pauline authors, the cosmos as re-ordered in Christ is currently manifested and accessed in the community of believers, including its relationships within itself and with outsiders.

First Peter also stands in this early Jewish and Christian tradition in presenting the Christian community as the place where the restored cosmic order is at present reflected and experienced. The extensive evidence for this claim includes the close connection of ecclesiology with christology (2:6–7), believers' corporate identity as a new temple (2:5) and therefore a microcosm of the cosmos, their status as God's people over whom he reigns (2:9–10; 4:17; 5:2),⁶ and their corresponding privileges and responsibilities (e.g. 1:2–3, 13–16), not least their liberation from the powers and from sin.

The various parenetic sections of the deuterio-Pauline letters that instantiate this view are naturally understood as defining the conduct and relationships that belong to the restored order. The same is true for 1 Peter, and the author stands closest to 1 Timothy in his emphasis on the relations of believers with those outside the community,⁷ which underlines that the order is to be expressed in the political and social as well as the ecclesial spheres.

Subordination

State and Household

Within Greco-Roman thought before and in the first century CE the *πόλις* and the *οἶκος* are widely regarded as microcosms of the divinely structured and normative cosmic order and are therefore supposed to embody it. Human responsibility for order thus includes the proper placing of individuals within god-ordained civic and domestic relationships. These ideas are often expressed within the civic *τόπος* of *περὶ πολιτείας* and the parallel Aristotelian *περὶ οἰκονομίας* tradition of household management.

The *περὶ οἰκονομίας τόπος* is also found in early Judaism, and although most Jewish authors have a less articulated theory of state and household, their frequent appeals to divine motivations for subordination to political and social superiors confirm that they too generally see these as bearing divine authority. Several NT texts affirm that government is established by God, and this principle may be extended by implication to the household; again, divine motives for submission are often cited in both contexts. Moreover, the *Haustafel* form used in the deuterio-Pauline writings is often believed to reflect the *περὶ οἰκονομίας* and *περὶ*

πολιτείας traditions, and effectively absorbs the order of the household and the state into the relationships of the church. It seems that for many early Christians the subordinate relationships within these established structures have a continuing role in the restored cosmic order.⁸

The Petrine author appears to accept not only the general conviction of the three traditions that civil and domestic authority is given by God (as evidenced by his repeated appeals to divine motives for subordination), but also the specific Greco-Roman understanding of state and household. By adopting the *Haustafel* form for his exhortations to subordination (2:13–3:7, perhaps also 5:1–5), he both implies that these structures are ordained by God as an integral part of the cosmic order and confirms “that the new life in Christ is to be lived within the framework of existing natural and social orders.”⁹

The author’s apparent acceptance of Greco-Roman views of state and household also sheds further light upon the exegesis of the difficult phrase *πάση ἀνθρώπινῃ κτίσει* in 2:13. It was argued in Chapter 5 that the internal evidence of the text marginally favors a reference to human structures of authority set in place by God. This interpretation is rendered much more probable by the implications of the *Haustafel* form, which attributes a divinely normative status to particular structures and portrays them as part of the framework for relationships within the cosmic order. So the structural reading is better integrated than its alternatives with the conceptuality that underlies the passage and is to be preferred for this reason too.¹⁰

Romans 13

However, the idea that 1 Peter requires subordination to “created entities in accordance with the position that God has given them,”¹¹ and in particular that “civil authority may be considered as instituted by God . . . the state is viewed as deriving from God’s appointment,”¹² is often dismissed by scholars because of perceived differences between Romans 13:1–7 and 1 Peter 2:13–17. As indicated in Chapter 4, these lead many to conclude that for the Petrine author political powers are not founded by God and do not bear divine authority, and that his motives for subordination are primarily functional rather than theological.

But in addition to the points already made, this study has provided three further reasons to suppose that the differences between these two passages are frequently overstated and misinterpreted. Firstly, the above investigation of Greco-Roman, Jewish and Christian backgrounds to 1 Peter uncovered few precedents in first-century CE thought for a merely functional interpretation of civic

responsibility, and none at all for the placing of the state (or society) into a secular space unrelated to the divine. In any case, 1 Peter's calls for subordination are replete with divine and not merely pragmatic motivations (see below).

Secondly, it was argued in Chapter 4 that the literary relationship between Romans 13 and 1 Peter 2 is not one of redaction, but the remodeling by the latter of a tradition to which the former was only one contributor. Thus their principal significance lies in their common features, and their differences are explicable by their respective historical contexts without appeal to different conceptions of the state or the basis of subordination to it. Thirdly, the drawing of this sharp distinction between the passages is at best an argument from silence, which is a weak basis for countering the positive arguments advanced above. And if the exegesis in Chapter 5 is correct, then the supposed Petrine silence is illusory anyway: like Paul's *ἐξουσίαις ὑπερεχούσαις . . . ὑπὸ θεοῦ τεταγμέναι* (Rom 13:1), the phrase *πάση ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει* refers to structures of authority ordained by God; and again, like Paul the author appeals to divine motivations for subordination alongside pragmatic ones. So in fact a comparison of 1 Peter 2:13–17 with Romans 13:1–7 reinforces rather than undermines the view that for the Petrine author the established political and social structures bear divine authority¹³ and provide part of the context for normative Christian living within the cosmic order as restored in Christ.¹⁴

Hierarchy

It is further assumed in much Greco-Roman thought of the time that the state and the household embody inherently hierarchical relationships, requiring the submission within each of the ruled to the rulers. Subordination is therefore understood as the right placing of oneself in relation to one's superiors within these graded systems. This appears to be universally expected in early Judaism and early Christianity too.

The above exegesis of 1 Peter's subordination texts reveals that the author shares this general view; he requires his readers to take their inferior places below their superiors within the hierarchical structures of the state and the household. Thus they must all submit to the governing authorities (2:13b–14), slaves to masters (2:18), and wives to husbands (3:1,5). The call for subordination of *νεώτεροι* to *πρεσβύτεροι* (5:5) anticipates the Pastorals in its assumption of the *οἶκος* into even the ecclesial relationships of the household of God; subordination to leaders within the Christian community is to certain household heads who exercise that leadership in virtue of their position. When these exhortations are placed in the

context of such established and graded relationships, interpretations of subordination (and the *ὑποτάσσω* word-group) in entirely non-hierarchical terms must be seen as highly implausible.¹⁵

Thus although “subordination” appears never to be formally defined in the literature of the time, in all three traditions it includes such responses as recognition of the authority of one’s superiors and deference to their judgment. Despite the various suggestions to the contrary, there is also no good reason to exclude from it the idea of obedience; even in Colossians and Ephesians, where *ὑποτάσσω* is used for wives and *ὑπακούω* for slaves and children, the former probably highlights the different nature and context of obedience within marriage rather than allowing wives to dispense with it.

The Petrine author’s understanding of subordination appears to include the standard elements of acknowledgment and deference within hierarchical relationships. Here, however, there should be no doubt that obedience is also part of it: the godly OT wives who are presented as examples of subordination (*ὑποτασσόμεναι τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν*; 3:5) include Sarah, who obeyed (*ὑπήκουσεν*; 3:6) her husband Abraham. But subordination is not the same as either honor or humility, which are due to equals and inferiors as well as to superiors.

Equality

In Greco-Roman, Jewish and most Christian writings subordination is entirely one-sided, reflecting its hierarchical nature. In Ephesians and 1 Clement, however, the authors call for mutual subordination within the Christian community, while at the same time continuing to require the usual one-sided kinds. It was argued in Chapter 4 that this idea reflects the new principle of the equality of believers in Christ, and that this conditions, but does not subvert or obliterate, the traditional hierarchical distinctions. The wider background confirms this conclusion.

In all three traditions, prescribed subordination is not always of exactly the same sort. It is often shaped by the character of specific relationships, and even the same kind of relationship may be configured in different ways or on different grounds. So expectations of subordination are sometimes flexible, according to (for example) the correlative responsibilities of superiors and even particular circumstances. These traditions thus provide a context in which hierarchy and subordination are normative but also conditioned by other factors.

In the same way, the equality of believers in Christ in early Christian thought co-exists with the hierarchies of state and household and becomes a mode for

their expression. The deutero-Pauline codes in particular affirm and even reinforce patriarchal structures, but develop these with reference to the mutuality of Christian relationships. Conduct appropriate to the restored cosmic order contains egalitarian principles such as humility and service (designated by Ephesians and *1 Clement* as mutual subordination) and therefore involves responsibilities for superiors as well as inferiors. But it also includes hierarchical norms such as acknowledgment and compliance and therefore still requires the one-sided subordination of inferiors to superiors.

First Peter reflects its context in affirming both the requirement of subordination and its conditioning by Christian norms, and aligns itself with the deutero-Pauline configuring of hierarchy and equality. Thus the author elevates the status of wives and slaves by his direct address and particular statements to them (e.g. 2:18; 3:1), lays duties on husbands and elders (3:7; 5:2–3), and calls for honor for all and mutual humility (2:17; 5:5). But despite the transformative potential of these injunctions, they do not subvert the unequal character of the structures; rather they co-exist with the continuing and divinely normative subordination of inferiors to superiors.¹⁶

As was noted in Chapter 5, scholars who interpret *πάση ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει* in 2:13a universally (as “every human being”) sometimes draw a parallel between this passage and Ephesians 5. In that chapter general subordination to one another in v.21 is juxtaposed with specific submission of wives to husbands in v.22ff., just as in 1 Peter (on this view) general subordination to everyone in 2:13a leads straight into specific submission to rulers in 2:13b–14.¹⁷ And since the subordination in Ephesians 5:21 is mutual, this parallel might suggest that subordination in 2:13a should also be understood in egalitarian rather than, or as well as, hierarchical terms.

The parallel is imprecise, however. Most obviously, subordination to one another within the church is not the same as subordination to every human being, whether Christian or not. But more significantly, as argued in Chapters 4 and 5, the basic (participial) instruction *ὑποτασσόμενοι* in Ephesians 5:21 is followed by *both* egalitarian (*ἀλλήλοις ἐν φόβῳ Χριστοῦ*) and hierarchical (*αἱ γυναῖκες τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ*) examples, while the examples of the foundational Petrine imperative *Υποτάγητε πάση ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει*, both in 2:13b–14, and elsewhere in the letter, are *all* hierarchical; every one is located in a traditionally unequal relationship. It follows that the subordination of v.13a is best understood as only hierarchical, not egalitarian. (In Chapter 5 this was also a primary argument for the structural reading of *πάση ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει*.)

This difference suggests that 1 Peter moves beyond Ephesians to reflect the greater emphasis on hierarchy found in 1 Timothy. By *not* using the language of egalitarian (or mutual) subordination, the author emphasizes the one-sided character of the concept,¹⁸ and by more clearly designating the authoritative relationships of state and household as divine creations, he reinforces the claims of their superior partners to obedience. His expectation that the graded character of the divinely ordained household will be replicated within even the ecclesial relationships of the house of God confirms this conclusion (5:1–5).

Status not Qualities

In much Greco-Roman thought, the relative positions of individuals within the normative structures are supposed to be determined by nature. Authority in state and household should ideally be held by those who excel in reason and virtue. Although this principle is expressed less directly in early Judaism, rightful Jewish rulers are held to have qualities that entitle them to govern the people. In both traditions husbands and fathers are often assumed to be inherently superior to wives and children and therefore to have the right to their subordination.

Some philosophical schools theoretically affirm that all people are equal, and many Greco-Roman and Jewish authors acknowledge that sometimes those in authority are no better rationally or morally—and perhaps worse—than those whom they rule, while particular political systems may also be seen as defective. Yet it is striking how rarely these perspectives are allowed to subvert or even qualify the requirement of subordination; the mere holding of an inferior position in the order usually demands this response, even if the qualitative distinctions between rulers and ruled are minimized, compromised or eradicated.¹⁹ Similarly, in early Christian writings subordination is never said to be conditional on the qualities of rulers; it is due to them because of their status within the hierarchical structures.

First Peter is as clear as any contemporary document in its grounding the duty of subordination in the standing of superiors in the divinely given order rather than in their personal qualities. It indicates explicitly that some masters may treat their slaves harshly (2:18), implies that some husbands may intimidate their wives (3:6), suggests that some elders may exercise their oversight for the wrong reasons (5:2–4), and probably hints that the emperor may ask for responses due only to God (2:17); yet in every case it still requires their inferiors to be subordinate. For the author, as for most of his contemporaries, the normative status

of the structures exists independently of the character of those who administer them; even when superiors fail as individuals to embody the norms of the cosmic order, the hierarchical relationships of state and household still do so (if only imperfectly) and must be honored accordingly.

Dual Motivation

Many in early Judaism have a negative view of pagan and irregular Jewish rule. For some of them (especially the militants), although they may frequently practice subordination to authority, this can scarcely be seen as more than a practical and prudential strategy. Pragmatic motives for subordination to superiors are also found in various early Christian sources, including the civil and household codes, where it is presented as a means of avoiding human hostility.

First Peter stands with these sources in directing its calls for subordination to apologetic, missional and pastoral purposes. By fulfilling the requirements of their political rulers, believers will provide no basis for charges of subversion or for conviction in the courts (2:15); submission to masters and husbands can also be expected to reduce hostility and may even lead to the latter's conversion (3:1–2); and deference to elders will keep the Christian communities united and cohesive in the face of persecution (cp. 5:1–5 with 4:12–19 and 5:6–11).

Yet in the Greco-Roman world of the first century CE, subordination is almost always regarded as normative because of its grounding in the divinely given natural order. Many Jews also see themselves as obliged by God to submit to their rulers in the state and the household, even to pagan or irregular Jewish authorities, and even when they regard these negatively. In any case, Jewish hostility to such regimes should not be overstated; especially in the Diaspora, pagan authority is also widely affirmed. And in early Christian writings subordination is never presented as *merely* pragmatic, but always as also a principled fulfilment of divine obligation.

The foregoing argument has demonstrated that the Petrine author shares this perspective. For him subordination is also a divine imperative, on the grounds that the hierarchical structures of state and household are God-given components of the normative and restored cosmic order.²⁰ But even if this were not enough, the point could still be proved by his appeal to a remarkable list of divine motivations. This includes numerous words and phrases (*διὰ τὸν κύριον*, 2:13; *τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ*, 2:15; *ὡς θεοῦ δοῦλοι*, 2:16; *ἐν [παντί] φόβῳ*, 2:18; 3:2; cp. 2:17; *χάρις [παρὰ θεῶ]*, 2:19,20; *διὰ συνειδήσιν θεοῦ*, 2:19; *κλέος*, 2:20), his use of Christ's sufferings (2:21–23) and the lives of OT women (3:5–6) as examples, his defining of

subordinate conduct in terms of qualities pleasing to God (3:1–4), and his basing the authority of elders on Christian principles (5:1–4).

Two further features of the text confirm this dual motivation for the author's calls to be subordinate. The first is his frequent use of the *ἀγαδοποιέω* word-group (2:14,15,20; 3:6,17; 4:19), which apparently refers to doing good according to both divine and human standards. The second is his employment of the *Hauptstafel* form, which in all its NT instances encourages both a pragmatic conformity to society's (highest) values and a principled recognition of divine authority.

So it is extremely implausible to regard subordination in 1 Peter as a merely pragmatic strategy.²¹ Not only must its theological and ethical motivations be recognized too; there is also no indication that these are secondary to the apologetic, missional and pastoral ones.²² Indeed, the seemingly absolute character of the former may suggest the reverse: that the beneficial practical results of subordination are a by-product of its grounding in divine authority.

Coincident Demands

The normative character of subordination in Greco-Roman and (much) early Jewish thinking, and especially its dual motivation in much early Judaism and most of early Christianity, often reflect the belief that the values and demands of the divinely given order are usually coincident with those of political and social superiors. This view is less than universal: in addition to the widespread hatred in Judaism of pagan (and some Jewish) governors, some Christian writers—most obviously the author of Revelation—can also see them negatively. But in general the NT appears to evaluate the authorities positively, in a variety of texts and contexts, and most clearly in the deutero-Pauline codes.

Standing in this affirming tradition, the author of 1 Peter too sees a close correlation between the will of God and that of superiors within the authoritative structures. This is evidenced not only by the normative status and double motivation that he attaches to subordination, but also in his stated and implied view of the civil authorities: they are God's agent of punishment and praise (2:14) and can be expected usually to fulfil this function.²³ Thus as Bo Reicke says, in 1 Peter “[B]lamelessness before God or Christ and people are intimately connected and are two sides of the same thing,”²⁴ and again this principle is reflected most obviously in its civic and household code.

The widespread first-century CE conviction that the requirements of the cosmic order and g/God mostly coincide with those of superiors in state and

household appears to be so much assumed as not usually to require explanation. But 1 Peter itself points to a justification for its positive view of the authorities that fits well not only with Greco-Roman, Jewish and wider Christian thought, but also with several other aspects of its own teaching on subordination.

Distinction of Values

The introductory verses to the Petrine code (2:11–12) necessitate a distinction between lower social values that the readers must repudiate (also described in 1:14,18 and 4:2–4) and higher ones that they are to exhibit (such as those in 3:1–4);²⁵ the latter are evidently held by the author to coincide with the will of God. This distinction reflects that frequently drawn by Greco-Roman authors between a life of reason and virtue that promotes stability and harmony in the community, and one driven by the baser human impulses that is socially disruptive; this appears to have been a basic feature of much political and social commentary in the ancient world.

Then by following these verses immediately with 2:13–3:7, the Petrine author appears to identify the authoritative structures of politics and society with the second, higher group of values. The hierarchies of state and household are given by God (2:13) to exemplify and secure these standards, against the evil and disorderly forces that embody the lower ones. This idea fits with elements of all three traditions: the Greco-Roman conviction that these structures embody (albeit imperfectly) the cosmic norms of reason and virtue; the belief in some sections of (especially Diaspora) Judaism that its norms largely coincide with the highest principles of Greco-Roman society, represented by civil rulers; and the general affirmation in early Christianity of a broad correspondence between the best values of that society, guaranteed by state and household, and the requirements of Christian living.

This distinction of values, and the ascribing of the higher form to the given structures, help to explain the dual motive for subordination: by submitting themselves to their superiors within these structures, Christians both generally align themselves with God's will and provide themselves with maximum protection against the evil designs of their pagan slanderers.²⁶ Furthermore, it clarifies the reason why subordination is required even to rulers of bad character: as part of the divine order, the structures provide a mainly effective check on the evil dispositions of such people to make decrees that their inferiors should not obey, since the preservation and functioning of the state and household are dependent

on their guaranteeing the best social norms, those that are consistent with the divine will.

Such an understanding of the authoritative structures is in any case required by the Petrine author's understanding of the vocation of the Christian community to reflect the cosmic order as restored in Christ. In this context it can be right for believers normally to be subordinate within the state and the household only if the latter are themselves instruments of that order and not of the disorder opposed to it, and not merely as an ideal but also in practice. They can fulfil this function only if they represent the higher and not the lower values of society.

All of this need not entail that 1 Peter adopts uncritically and entirely the contemporary Roman view of these structures. The author's implicit denial of divine honors to the emperor, noted above, indicates that he sees nothing sacrosanct or unalterable about the particular forms they have taken in his own time and place.²⁷ Also the function he ascribes to governors in 2:14 is limited and by no means covers all the imperial government's claims for itself. And although he in no way denies the authority of political and social superiors, he does at least implicitly relativise it (see below).

Nor is the letter's view of the authorities so optimistic as to exclude the possibility of their being in some respects malicious, oppressive or persecuting. It is quite consistent with superiors' being of bad character themselves, or going beyond their responsibilities and making excessive demands, or imposing savage punishments on the rare occasions when Christians must withhold their subordination from them. Indeed, it has already been shown that the letter directly or indirectly acknowledges the potential failings of those in authority. But these are quite consistent with the author's claim that the requirements of God and those of one's superiors will generally coincide, and that subordination to the latter is therefore the norm.

First Peter's distinction between lower and higher values also has the potential to resolve some of the apparent tension between its apparent calls for both conformity and distinctiveness, which underlie the Balch-Elliott debate and its subsequent development. The author calls for *conformity* to the higher norms of society, represented and safeguarded by the authoritative structures (because these generally correspond with God's will); but he also requires *distinctiveness* from the lower norms expressed in the lives of his readers' pagan neighbors and persecutors (because these do not).²⁸ The imperative of subordination is part of the former demand, but it also inevitably entails the latter.

Relativized Authority

Even while calling for subordination, all three traditions admit that it may sometimes be right to reject a superior's demand. In some Greco-Roman writings the claims of the cosmic order and of virtue are recognized as supreme, though the authors seldom explicitly encourage insubordination on this basis, confirming that they regard it as necessary only in exceptional circumstances. Early Judaism insists on the prior claims of the Jewish law, and principled dissent is more widely favored, though its incidence is infrequent, especially in the Diaspora. Early Christian authors also relativise and limit the demand for subordination under the supreme authority of God, but they too rarely do so directly, again suggesting that they do not expect many conflicts.

The Petrine author also appears to recognize that believers' ultimate loyalty to God takes precedence over the demands of human superiors. The divine motivations for subordination listed above may also be seen as relativizing the authority of political or domestic rulers; one cannot be subordinate to someone according to God's will if that person requires one to do something contrary to it. In such potential cases of conflict between the demands of superiors and those of God, the author would evidently expect his readers to obey God.

But the principle is never explicitly stated, and the oblique nature of these references suggests that it needs no emphasis, but rather is largely taken for granted by author and readers alike. At most they provide an obvious and secondary qualification of the imperative to be subordinate, which it is their primary purpose to *strengthen*. So while insubordination to human authority may occasionally be necessary, the author's reticence in emphasizing the principle, conjoined to the general congruence of divine and human demands, suggests that it will be exceptional at most.

Thus it should probably not be inferred from 1 Peter that its readers are facing a serious problem of pressure to participate in the imperial cult. If this were so, the imperative not to worship the emperor would naturally be explicit and primary, with any call to subordination (in other matters) only implied and secondary, but the author's emphasis is clearly the reverse. The juxtaposition of the last two imperatives in 2:17 may indeed be intended to indicate that the emperor should not be accorded fear (or worship), even if he asks for it, and the use of the adjective *ἀνθρώπινος* in 2:13 may make the same point incidentally by placing him in the human sphere. But in these verses the author's primary concern regarding the emperor is to call for honor and subordination to be given to him, and this is only secondarily and conventionally qualified by the early Jewish

and Christian parenetic principle that fear/worship is only for God. Moreover, by immediately following his call to fear God in 2:17 by an unequivocal one to honor the emperor, the author even reinforces the requirement of subordination in 2:13 and implies that the two activities belong together. No valid inference can therefore be drawn from these texts regarding the extent of the demands being placed on the readers by the imperial cult.

This study also calls into question postcolonial readings of 1 Peter in which the author is particularly concerned to distance his readers from the Roman empire. It has revealed no evidence that the letter is *intentionally* subversive of the current political and social order or sees this as essentially opposed to the God-given and normative ordering of the cosmos. Some alleged examples of critique or resistance are mere subsidiary by-products of the author's deliberate affirmations (not least regarding the imperative of subordination), while others are repudiations of popular values to which he believes the God-given structures of state and household also stand opposed. And on the contrary, as shown above, he places those structures firmly *within* the cosmic order created by God and renewed in Christ. So 1 Peter's almost complete social and political conformism is not a cunning plan designed subtly but deliberately to undermine the Roman ordering of government and society, but a straightforward reflection of its author's convictions and values.²⁹

Freedom

Political Freedom

This study has shown that while the concept of political freedom was highly important in the Greek city-states during the classical period, and in the later Roman republic, by the first century CE it has gone into decline. The eclipse of freedom in Greece under the Macedonians, and much later in Rome under the empire, through the concentration of political power in the hands of absolute rulers, has ensured that the political sense no longer corresponds to the reality of the Greco-Roman world and has led to the redefinition of freedom largely in other terms.

This process is less advanced in early Judaism. Before the first Jewish revolt, hopes for national and political liberation are still dominant in Palestine, though their importance is sometimes overstated. But after AD 70, and long before in the Diaspora, this idea has been relativized and diminished by other concepts of

freedom, which will survive the near-eradication of Jewish political aspirations after the Bar Kokhba revolt.

In early Christianity, in contrast, the language of freedom (especially the crucial *ἐλευθερ-* word-group) is never clearly associated with political liberation, and the most extended treatment of the concept (by Paul) develops it in an altogether different direction. So the picture across the three traditions at the time of 1 Peter is that of a concept whose political sense has lost or is losing ground to other visions of freedom.

The author shows no sign of wanting to resist this trend. Although it is often suggested that *ἐλευθεροί* and *ἐλευθερία* in 2:16 have a political sense, advocates of this view seem insufficiently to acknowledge the purpose of these references within the logic of the passage, which is to reinforce (not limit) the imperative of subordination in verse 13. Similarly the phrase *θεοῦ δοῦλοι*, like the other divine imperatives in the text (see above), also appears intended principally to strengthen the readers' obligations to their superiors. These terms are used to define the character of the readers' existence and so to demonstrate that submission within the authoritative structures of the state and the household is appropriate for them. There is also no indication in any of the letter's freedom texts that Christians are free from obligation to the authorities,³⁰ only (by implication) that they are now able to resist any (probably exceptional) demands from superiors to do what they should not.³¹

In any case, in all the principal Greco-Roman schools political freedom is not conceived in terms of insubordination to civil authority. In fact, a politically free person is necessarily subject to all his/her superiors within the given order; otherwise his/her freedom is mere license. And while much early Judaism does equate political liberation with freedom from obligation to obey a foreign power, no-one aspiring to this seems to think it could co-exist in any way with subordination to such a power. The latter may be a pragmatic strategy for the present, but by definition it cannot be required after liberation.

It is therefore very doubtful whether the idea of a political freedom that (in some sense) liberates people from obligation to the government but (in another sense) still requires subordination to it has any precedent in the first-century thought-world. Moreover, its very intelligibility is doubtful given the conceptual and exegetical inadequacy of the principal attempts to square this circle (believers are to be subordinate because God so wills, not because their superiors do; subordination is voluntary and not compelled). And such convoluted attempts to give a political sense to 2:16 are unnecessary when another concept of freedom is readily

available, one that is externally supported, internally coherent, and properly integrated with the foregoing discussion of order and subordination.

Moral Freedom

By the first century CE a philosophical or moral meaning of freedom as self-mastery and inner autonomy has become dominant in the world of Greek philosophy and may be gaining ground among Romans too. In early Judaism, similarly, hope for liberation (at least in the present) is increasingly being located in a moral freedom grounded in obedience to Torah. For the early Christians the concept almost always includes freedom from slavery to sin and cosmic powers, though it can also involve liberty from sin's other associates and its consequences. For Paul, who writes most on the subject, it is thus the freedom to live in line with God's will and from the compulsion to act against it.

Every reference to freedom in 1 Peter, whether direct or indirect, is consistent with this moral interpretation of the concept, and with the Pauline tradition in particular.³² In 2:16 the author contrasts his readers' freedom as *θεοῦ δούλοι* with the freedom of license; they are liberated from slavery to evil to live for God as their master instead. The other passages relating to the concept all present it in exclusively moral terms: whether as freedom from the bondage of a sinful lifestyle (1:18), the power of sin and moral sickness (2:24), or evil powers (3:22); whether for righteousness (2:24), life determined by Christ (2:25), or proper consciousness of God (3:21). Furthermore, in these passages the author grounds this freedom on the work of Christ and in God's eternal purpose and presents it as a condition and means of salvation, suggesting that moral liberation is fundamental to his concept.

Such a view is not only distinct from political understandings of freedom; in all its forms in the first century CE it also makes freedom independent of any political and social circumstances. The idea that one can be subject to an absolutist king or in legal slavery to a master yet still be free is especially associated with the Stoics, but it is endorsed in various forms by all the Greco-Roman traditions. The early Jewish understanding of moral liberty through Torah can also co-exist with the continuing domination of pagan or irregular Jewish rulers. And in Pauline thought one's position in life (including its subordinate relations) is the proper sphere of one's service to God, but it also has no bearing on one's status before him and capacity to live for him. This concept of moral freedom apparently evolved in place of hopes for political liberation, and by this time such liberation is often not even mentioned in connection with it.

Similarly the moral freedom described in various places in 1 Peter appears to be wholly independent of the political and social conditions experienced by the readers. They can enjoy it as subjects of Rome, as those enslaved to masters (even harsh ones), as married women, and as junior community members under the authority of elders. There is therefore no reason for the author to introduce in 2:16, as an irrelevant and disconnected aside, the idea of a political liberty that would make no difference to their status as free people.

Requires Subordination

It is notable that for the Greco-Roman authors who promote this moral freedom, it requires its recipients to take their place within the cosmic order, and for several of the schools this includes subordination to one's superiors within the normative structures of state and household. For the early Christians too (at least as represented by Paul), this freedom carries an obligation: they must refuse to be ruled by sin or its agents, and so reject any inappropriate demands from their superiors, but must fulfil their responsibilities under God and towards others within the restored cosmic order, which normally include subordination to their human rulers. Early Judaism appears not to have articulated these ideas explicitly, but its growing affirmation of moral freedom is conjoined with a quietist praxis that also implicitly endorses subordination.

This general context confirms the nature of the relationship between freedom and subordination revealed by the exegesis of 1 Peter 2:13–17. The readers' liberation in Christ does not release them from responsibility to their superiors; on the contrary, such subordination is an inescapable obligation resulting from their freedom. That is to say, their moral freedom not only *enables* but also *requires* them to be subordinate to human authority.

Conclusions

From the above synthesis of the background materials in Chapters 2–4 of this work with the exegetical insights of Chapters 5–7, a clear picture has emerged of the meaning and interrelationship of the concepts of subordination and freedom, with that of order, in the exposition and paranesis of 1 Peter. This may be summarized as follows.

Meaning

The Petrine author assumes the general view in the first century CE that the cosmos embodies a rational and moral order, divinely authorized and normative but also deficient or defective, that humans are to reflect and promote. He endorses the Jewish and Christian idea that its dislocation has resulted from the sin of its human and angelic agents, but also that God has undertaken to restore it. And he accepts the Christian teaching that this restoration has been put into effect in God's exaltation of Christ and subordination of the cosmic powers to him, and in his liberation of his people from their destructive power.

On the more controversial issues, the author appears to side with those Jews who do not place the heavenly rulers of the nations among the disruptive cosmic powers, and with those Christians—particularly the deutero-Paulinists—who do not associate human authorities with them. He also favors the (especially) deutero-Pauline view that the restoration of order is a present reality, and that the lifestyle and relationships of the Christian community are meant to embody it; with 1 Timothy, he particularly emphasizes his readers' external relations.

The author shares the common view that the authority of superiors in household and state is given by God, and his use of the *Haustafel* form reflects the Greco-Roman idea (also found in Hellenistic Judaism and the deutero-Paulines) that these structures are part of the divinely given cosmic order; they are thus to be incorporated within the relationships of the Christian community. As for almost all his contemporaries, subordination is for him always a hierarchical relation, which includes obedience as well as recognition and deference, although it may be conditioned in various ways by other factors. He also agrees with the widespread conviction (rejected only in some parts of early Judaism) that it is due to superiors merely because of their standing in the order.

First Peter is aligned with most early Christian and some early Jewish tradition in appealing to both pragmatic and divine motives for subordination, and in its view (also held by Greco-Roman authors) that the demands of superiors and those of God are largely coincident. Drawing on the Greco-Roman distinction between higher and lower social norms, and standing with the same Jewish and Christian thinkers, the author also appears to believe that the political and social structures (as such) are representative of the higher values. Thus although (as all the traditions acknowledge) there may still be conflicts between the demands of the authorities and the supreme requirements of God, necessitating the readers' insubordination, these circumstances are exceptional.

The letter also reflects the general early Christian view that subordinate relationships are conditioned by the equality of believers in Christ, and it closely resembles the deutero-Pauline tradition in its outworking of this principle. But it stands closest to 1 Timothy in its greater emphasis on hierarchy, and especially in its incorporation of the household model into even the ecclesial relationships of the Christian community.

The Petrine author's idea of freedom exists in contexts where the political concept has been largely eclipsed (Greco-Roman), or is fading (Jewish), or has been excluded (Christian). In all three traditions, freedom has been re-envisioned in terms of moral liberation, and in early Christian writings (especially those of Paul) this involves release from the control of sin and evil cosmic powers to obey God's will. All 1 Peter's freedom texts are consistent with this understanding: the readers have been freed by the work of Christ from bondage to their previous sinful lifestyle and the disorderly heavenly forces, for life as slaves of God. Like other current concepts of moral freedom, the author's is independent of political and social conditions and renders these irrelevant to Christians' status as free people.

Where the concept of moral freedom exists, it is consistent with and even (for Greco-Roman and Christian authors) demands subordination to human authorities. Again 1 Peter stands fully within this tradition, presenting subordination as an obligation arising from freedom. This point leads naturally into a summary of the interrelations in the letter between the three concepts.

Interrelationship

Within the teaching and exhortation of 1 Peter the concepts of order, subordination and freedom are interdependent and mutually illuminating. Firstly, the divinely ordained cosmic order has been restored through God's subordinating of the disruptive angelic powers to Christ. The believing community is the present earthly locus of that restored order, and the readers' prescribed subordination to their superiors within the God-given structures of household and state forms part of their fulfilment of that role. Thus God does not set aside the regulatory political and social arrangements that he has previously set in place, but rather incorporates them into the restored order effected in Christ, and requires his people to reflect that order by taking appropriately subordinate places within them.³³ Order and subordination in heaven demand them on earth.

Secondly, for the Petrine author the effects of Christ's victory by which the cosmic order is restored include the freedom of believers from the control of the evil angelic powers and their own previous, and corresponding, sinful lifestyle.

Before their redemption they were agents of disorder in the world, like their self-indulgent, hostile and persecuting neighbors; but now they are liberated to live a life of righteousness determined by Christ and in a proper consciousness of God, and to discharge their responsibility as agents of the restored order.

Thirdly, the author's understanding of freedom is configured within the boundaries of the authoritative and hierarchical structures in which subordination is due. Thus the readers' liberation does not release them from their obligation to their political and social superiors; that kind of *ἐλευθερία* is to be rejected as license. On the contrary, it both enables their subordination, freeing them from the compulsion to ignore or resist authority, and requires it as part of their divine vocation, within the restored order, that they have been redeemed to fulfil.

Significance

The conceptual framework described above thus serves as a vehicle for one of the rhetorical purposes of the Petrine author: to call his readers to subordination within the authoritative structures of the state and the household. This is not merely a pragmatic strategy to diminish or nullify persecution—though this motive is certainly present—but is also a part of their divine vocation, to embody on earth the restored order of the heavens effected by the subordination of the hostile cosmic powers to Christ. The letter's teaching on freedom is principally intended to reinforce this exhortation; the readers' liberation from slavery to sin and the heavenly powers makes their subordination both possible and necessary.

In the wider context of the NT and earliest Christianity, it is hard not to see 1 Peter as a highly conservative document both politically and socially. It places existing hierarchical (and patriarchal) structures firmly within the restored and divinely normative cosmic order, and although the new life of believers in Christ transcends and conditions these, it does not undermine or overthrow them. Conflict between the demands of superiors and those of God, requiring insubordination to the former, is regarded as exceptional, while reform of the structures is rendered inappropriate or irrelevant. So Hans Windisch is right in his judgment that the repeated use of *ὑποτάσσω* in 1 Peter is “ein deutliches Zeichen für den durchaus patriarchalischen, auch nicht im entferntesten reformsüchtigen oder gar revolutionären Charakter des Urchristentums,”³⁴ or at least of one important tradition within it.

Numerous points of contact have been established above with several deutero-Pauline texts, and at least in respect of its civic and domestic conformism 1 Peter clearly stands in the same tradition. In their teaching on subordination these

authors may start from the general coincidence of divine and human obligations within the Jesus tradition, and especially from Paul's exhortations to subordination in Romans (and possibly 1 Corinthians). But they go further, bringing the Hellenistic conceptuality of order into creative dialogue with the gospel message of Christ's victory and exaltation, and consequently presenting a positive and coherent view of political and social structures that belong within the cosmic order—created and restored—and so transcend and contain the shortcomings of those who administer them. Subordination is almost always appropriate within such structures, and the Petrine author also presses into service the developed Pauline view of moral freedom as a means of encouraging it.

So this study has disclosed the potential fruitfulness of the concept of restored order as an interpretive key to the teaching and paranesis of both 1 Peter and this significant NT tradition to which it partly belongs. Further research is needed to establish the full implications of the concept and how far its influence here may extend. But at least with regard to the Petrine author's understanding of subordination and freedom, it can claim to bring to some previously confused discussions a greater degree of conceptual and exegetical clarity.

Notes

- 1 That the section on subordination is much the longest reflects the greater prominence and explicitness of this theme in the letter and the wider range of controversial issues associated with it.
- 2 In particular, his deployment of the Watchers tradition from Jewish apocalyptic (3:19; see below) implies the existence of an original order that these powers have disrupted.
- 3 It is therefore difficult to agree with Boring (*1 Peter*, 109) in his comment on 2:13–17 that “Order as such is from God the creator; but no particular order is from God.” In none of the three traditions is order primarily an abstract and general concept, such as can be represented by the English noun “orderliness”; rather it is always concrete, referring to a particular “ordering” of the cosmos that carries the authority of the divine and comprises particular and specific relations. There is no reason to think that the Petrine author dissents from this view. Similarly and more specifically, Bigg's conclusion (*Epistles*, 140) that “Caesar, though a human institution, is to be obeyed, because order is God's will” appears wrongly to present 1 Peter's view of political authority as just a means to a divinely sanctioned “orderliness” rather than as part of a divinely given “ordering.”
- 4 Elliott, *1 Peter*, 688.
- 5 Richard, *1 Peter*, 164.

- 6 The language of *βασιλειον ιεράτευμα* also implies an ordered community resembling contemporary political structures.
- 7 On this see Michaels' comments on 2:13–17 (*1 Peter*, 122–23). External relations are primary in 3:9–17 and 4:1–6, 12–19 as well as in 2:13–3:6.
- 8 Towner writes (*Timothy and Titus*, 69) with reference to 1 Timothy that the author “regards the social structure as continuous with God’s ordering.”
- 9 J. T. Fitzgerald, “Haustafeln,” 80; *contra* Yoder, *Politics*, 190. In confirmation of this view of 1 Peter the perspective of Warren Carter, whose work on the NT’s approaches to the Roman empire offers support to some postcolonial readings, is especially noteworthy. Carter draws on the notion of “hidden transcripts” (see above, Chapter 1) to argue (W. Carter, *The Roman Empire and the New Testament: An Essential Guide* [Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006], 12–13) that the NT often dissents from the Roman ordering of society and offers alternative visions of life and community. But he exempts the deutero-Pauline letters from this dissent, ascribing to them (22) “an accommodationist approach to society” that affirms patriarchy, downplays future transformation and requires believers to live “quiet, nondisruptive lives as loyal citizens.” And he places 1 Peter firmly within this tradition (23), claiming that for the author “good conduct and social cooperation” are required, along with “loyalty to the empire in every way.” He affirms too (78–79) that in 1 Peter Christians are called to conform to the patterns of wider society, and that this responsibility includes subordination to their political and social superiors. That a respected commentator sensitive to postcolonial nuances should unearth no trace in the letter of any critique of the political and social order strongly suggests that there is none to be found. None of this is to say that in 1 Peter the embodiment of the restored order in the Christian community is *reducible* to established political and social relationships, nor that these are left entirely unchanged within it. The ethical exhortations of the letter outside the code (e.g. 3:8–17; 4:1–19) lay further and higher expectations on the believers (see Seland, “Conduct Yourselves,” 173–86), and the author gives to the practice of hierarchy and subordination some distinctively Christian features (see below).
- 10 See Gielen, *Haustafelethik*, 398; Towner, “Romans 13:1–7,” 157.
- 11 Marshall, *1 Peter*, 82–83.
- 12 Best, *1 Peter*, 113.
- 13 See especially Hort, *First Epistle*, 140–41 and Schelkle, *Petrusbriefe*, 78.
- 14 It is ironic that Paul, who is widely believed to be anti-imperial, should be thought to hold a higher view of pagan political authority than the Petrine author, who is often regarded as conformist. This anomaly strongly suggests that the differences between the passages have been misconceived.
- 15 As Best says (*1 Peter*, 113), “God has ordered creation in such a way that for its harmony some are always subject to others.”

- 16 The relationship of equality and hierarchy is well captured by Donelson (*I Peter*, 147), for whom “First Peter assumes the validity of that social order but colors that order with some peculiar Christian hues,” and Piper (“Fearless Submission,” 50), who sees the author affirming “the mutuality of servanthood without cancelling the reality of headship and submission.” So also Elliott, *I Peter*, 580–81.
- 17 See e.g. Schweizer, *Erste Petrusbrief*, 58; Davids, *First Epistle*, 99; Horrell, *Epistles*, 48–49.
- 18 See Padgett (*As Christ Submits*, 79–84), who also draws a (somewhat different) distinction between egalitarian and hierarchical forms of subordination and ascribes the latter to 1 Peter.
- 19 On the one partial exception, the authority of pagan and irregular Jewish rulers in early Judaism, see below.
- 20 As Schelkle says (*Petrusbrieife*, 75), “Denn da der Staat Ordnung Gottes ist, ist Gehorsam gegen die Obrigkeit Gehorsam gegen Gott, Dienst Gottes.”
- 21 As Schüssler Fiorenza writes (*I Peter*, 57), “[S]uch an interpretation does not square with the author(s)’s rhetoric of submission to the authorities and institutions of the Empire.” And even if postcolonial readings of 1 Peter that identify it as some kind of “hidden transcript” were correct, its nature as a private letter that the authorities are never going to see emphasizes the significance of its repeated appeals to divine motives for subordination: that this is more than a performance for the purposes of self-preservation.
- 22 *Contra* (e.g.) Padgett (*As Christ Submits*, 82), who claims that in the call to submission to the governing authorities “the concern is not so much political as it is evangelical and apologetic.”
- 23 He also never tells his readers to withhold their subordination, suggesting that he regards conflicts as exceptional (see below).
- 24 Reicke, *Disobedient Spirits*, 182.
- 25 As Talbert says (“Plan,” 148), “Christians are to live in their civic, domestic, and ecclesiastical existences in terms of the highest social and cultural conventions of their time and place. They are, of course, to avoid the excesses of the worst in pagan society.”
- 26 In this respect in particular 1 Peter appears to reflect principles embodied in the narrative of Acts: that the demands of God and of the authorities will usually coincide; that Christians are (properly) good citizens; and that Roman magistrates will normally find them innocent of wrongdoing (*pace* Rowe, *World Upside Down*, 87–89).
- 27 It should be recalled that it is the foundational *structures* of authority that the author sees as part of the cosmic order, not the more specific social and legal *forms* that these may take. Although the Roman imperial ideology claims divine endorsement for its regime, and many Greco-Roman writers suggest that some arrangements conform better to nature than others, most at least acknowledge the validity of various political and social systems. Similarly the Petrine author requires the subordination of the

governed to the civil authorities, and that of everyone else in the household to the (male) head, but he does not commend (e.g.) imperial government or slavery over against other political or social systems. His interest is not in these institutions as such, but in the relationships of authority by which they are sustained.

- 28 On this view, Green's comment (*1 Peter*, 71–72) that the author is not advocating (greater) conformity but warning against compromise unhelpfully sets up as an “either-or” what is more probably a “both-and.” Thurén's hypothesis (*Argument*, 86–87) of two sets of implied readers, one wanting to rebel and the other to assimilate, is rendered redundant. And Kraftchick's statement (“Reborn,” 97) that the letter “calls for a greater identification between the church and other members of society who are ostracized for resisting the ‘given’ structures of our commonwealths” places the “structures” on the wrong side of the divide; it is not (normally) they that the readers should be “resisting.”
- 29 The close correspondence of 1 Peter's teaching on subordination with those of the mainly elite and privileged Greco-Roman authors whose work is examined in Chapter 2 (and to a more limited extent with those of the similar Jewish authors discussed in Chapter 3) also calls into question the postcolonial idea that 1 Peter is written from the perspective of the disadvantaged, as distinct from merely being addressed to them.
- 30 *Contra* Marshall (*1 Peter*, 85) and others.
- 31 Also the fact that the author does not identify the powers of 3:22 with human authorities indicates that their subjection does not liberate believers from the social and political structures. On the contrary, it demands that the readers now take their proper subordinate place below their superiors within the structures of the divinely sanctioned cosmic order.
- 32 See Schelkle, *Petrusbriefe*, 76, on the resemblance between Greek philosophical views of moral freedom and the NT and Petrine concept.
- 33 As Hort says (*First Epistle*, 138), “[The author] here expounds the chief social relations . . . in the light of Christian faith and morality, and each exposition tends to shew that the Gospel was a power for their more perfect fulfilment, not for their undoing or dissolution.”
- 34 Windisch, *Katholischen Briefe*, 62.

Appendix 1:

ὑποτάσσω and ἐλεύθεροι/ ἐλευθερία

As explained in the Introduction, this work is a conceptual and not a lexical enquiry, and it has shown that the themes of subordination and freedom in 1 Peter are grounded in a larger set of terms than merely the verb *ὑποτάσσω* and the *ἐλευθερ-* word-group. So the inclusion of a lengthy and detailed discussion of these words would be unnecessary in this context. It is however appropriate to offer some lexical justification for their use in the above argument as a source of key data.

This appendix therefore provides an introductory summary of the key lexical issues relating to *ὑποτάσσω* and *ἐλεύθεροι/ἐλευθερία*. Its limited purpose is primarily to demonstrate that the concepts of subordination and freedom are their principal referents, and secondarily to propose modest lexical grounds for a connection between the author's ideas of subordination and order. It thus addresses the etymology of the two terms, their most common usages in Greco-Roman literature, the LXX and the NT, and their probable semantic ranges.

Etymology

ὑποτάσσω is rarely attested before the Hellenistic period, and it is generally treated as derivative from the much earlier τάσσω.¹ The usages of τάσσω in Greek literature are varied, but it is commonly employed in connection either with assigning or appointing someone to a particular task or class, or with placing people or things in a particular order in relation to each other.² In the LXX it is most frequently used to translate the Hebrew root תָּשַׁב, and less frequently for תִּשַׁב or תָּנַח.³ Like these,⁴ it has both causative and locative senses, conveying the idea of appointment to a position and/or placement in relation to others.⁵ Similarly in the NT it is used for appointment to or arrangement of a particular “order of things.”⁶ The preposition ὑπο in its spatial and subordinate usages carries the sense of “under.”⁷

It is fallacious to assume that because ὑποτάσσω is derived from τάσσω and is a compound of ὑπο + τάσσω it must therefore mean “to order or assign under,” and so embody the idea of a particular “order” within which someone takes or is given a subordinate place. There are however two etymological reasons to suggest that the word may sometimes carry this sense.

Firstly, ὑποτάσσω is a relatively “transparent” word: it has “a perceptible reason for having its form”;⁸ someone who understands the meanings of its two parts can readily and correctly interpret it.⁹ This allows the possibility that the derivation of the word is partly determinative of its usage by the author of 1 Peter, such that it can imply subordination within a given and graded order. Secondly, and more significantly, the word appears frequently in texts where the idea of such an order is presupposed, and in 1 Peter it is found *only* in such texts. Set within that literary framework, the compound ὑπο + τάσσω may well be heard as indicating consignment to, or requiring assumption of, an inferior place within the order in question.¹⁰

Little need be said about the etymology of the ἐλευθερ- word-group. *NIDNTTE* suggests that this includes the Latin *liber*, which means “free,” and/or the Indo-European **leudh*, “people.” “If so, ἐλεύθερος may have orig. meant ‘belonging to the people,’ i.e., a free citizen as contrasted with a slave or foreigner.”¹¹ The proposed Latin origin raises the possibility that the words sometimes relate to freedom. The root “people” may perhaps help to account for the longstanding use of ἐλευθερία and its cognates in social and political settings, but has no other significance for this study.

The etymology of ὑποτάσσω and ἐλευθερ- thus suggests that the words may sometimes carry the senses of subordination and freedom respectively, and that

the former may sometimes also relate to order. These hypotheses can be established on wider grounds.

Usage

Υποτάσσω and its cognates are used in Greek literature in connection with the placing or arranging of something under something else, but very often they have the more developed sense of “subject” or “subordinate,” whether by compulsion (active voice) or voluntarily (middle voice).¹² This subordination can include the ordering of groups of people (including subjects and wives) and demons, and sometimes the inferior placing is in relation to God.¹³ In the LXX *ὑποτάσσω* renders 10 Hebrew words, none frequently; but while there is no standard equivalent, these terms display considerable overlap.¹⁴ Again they convey the ideas of either involuntary subjugation or voluntary submission,¹⁵ and these appear to be carried over into the uses of *ὑποτάσσω*, including those without Hebrew equivalents.¹⁶ There is general agreement that all the NT uses of the word bear the same sense of subordination, constrained or chosen;¹⁷ in at least some cases it includes “recognition of the existing relation of superordination”¹⁸ or even “recognition of an ordered structure.”¹⁹

In Greco-Roman writing the *ἐλευθερ-* word-group is often located in social and political contexts, with reference to those who are not in slavery (often denoted by the *δουλ-* group) or who are citizens of the state. In both cases it suggests being at one’s own command, and so its usage can be extended to include freedom from other people generally, or from enslaving forces such as fear.²⁰ In the LXX the words are most frequently employed to translate the Hebrew root *פָּדַן*, which has to do with the liberation of someone from slavery, and they are used mainly in the same way, though later their use is occasionally expanded to include general freedom from oppression.²¹ But *ἐλευθερ-* is never clearly employed as a political term in the LXX,²² for example in connection with the exodus or return from exile.²³ Similarly in the NT the language is often used in opposition to the *δουλ-* word-group, sometimes for the social freedom that contrasts with slavery, but also for liberation from other sources of enslavement, such as sin, for life in accordance with God’s will. Again *ἐλευθερ-* appears never to have an indisputably political sense.²⁴

While the idea of a word’s “basic meaning” or “stable semantic core” is dubious linguistically,²⁵ subordination and freedom are clearly by far the most common concepts represented by *ὑποτάσσω* and *ἐλευθερ-* in the language-world of

1 Peter. So although there are rare alternative uses,²⁶ it is a reasonable working hypothesis that this is their primary meaning in the letter, unless compelling contextual evidence contradicts it. The usages offer some further support for a connection between the ideas of order and subordination; and while in light of Greco-Roman use the possibility that ἐλευθερ- bears a political sense in 1 Peter cannot be excluded, its non-political sense in the LXX and NT is a small preliminary point in favor of its having a moral meaning there too.

Semantic Fields

Louw and Nida's *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (LN) offers an alternative method of identifying the senses of NT terms. Its glosses of ὑποτάσσω and ἐλευθερ- are in fact very similar to those in the other standard reference works: the former is associated with subjection/submission, whether compelled or voluntary,²⁷ and the latter with freedom/liberty, sometimes in a social sense as release or freedom from slavery, but also as liberty from domination and control in general.²⁸

The active voice of ὑποτάσσω is classified in the "Control, Rule" domain, in the section "Control, Restrain," and the middle/passive voice in the "Guide, Discipline, Follow" domain, in the section "Obey, Disobey." The ἐλευθερ- vocabulary is also placed in "Control, Rule," but in the "Release, Set Free" section, and also in the "Slave, Free" section of the "Status" domain. (Interestingly, in one of its multiple uses τάσσω too is assigned to the "Control, Rule" domain, under "Assign to a Role or Function.")

This different approach therefore offers further support for the close connection of these Petrine terms with the concepts of subordination and freedom. The category of control and restraint naturally includes the idea of enforced subjection, and that of obedience readily contains the sense of voluntary submission. A classification of release and liberation fits with the notion of freedom, perhaps from some kind of slavery, though it should also be noted that LN does not assign to ἐλευθερ- any explicitly political sense.²⁹

Conclusion

This combined lexical evidence suggests that the concepts of subordination and freedom represent the primary referents for the ὑποτάσσω and ἐλεύθεροι/ἐλευθερία word-groups in the linguistic context of 1 Peter, and should be taken as their

primary meaning unless contextual considerations indicate otherwise. It also offers some support for a connection between subordination and order. The data outlined here does not prove what the words mean in 1 Peter or foreclose any of the questions addressed in this study, but it does indicate that the project is lexically defensible.

Notes

- 1 *NIDNTTE*, 4.459–60.
- 2 H. G., Liddell and R. Scott, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon* [LSJ], 2nd ed., rev. and augm. H. S. Jones and R. McKenzie (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1940), 1759–60; BDAG, 991; *NIDNTTE*, 4.459–60; *TDNT*, VIII.27–28.
- 3 E. Hatch and H. A. Redpath, eds., *A Concordance to the Septuagint and the Other Greek Versions of the Old Testament (including the Apocryphal Books)* [HR], 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897), 1.1337; *NIDNTTE*, 4.460.
- 4 The sense of Hebrew roots is not necessarily carried over into LXX usage, but in this case there appears to be a substantial overlap.
- 5 *NIDOTTE*, 3.206, 209, 1237–40; 4.100; *TDOT*, III.209; XIV.99–101, 108–20, 652, 656–58; *TDNT*, VIII.28.
- 6 BDAG, 991.
- 7 BDAG, 1036; *TDNT*, VIII.28; Wallace, *Grammar*, 389.
- 8 Silva, *Biblical Words*, 48.
- 9 On transparency, see Silva, *Biblical Words*, 48–51.
- 10 On the relationship of etymology and context, see Silva, *Biblical Words*, 50.
- 11 *NIDNTTE*, 2.172.
- 12 LSJ, 1897; *NIDNTTE*, 4.460. *TDNT*, VIII.39–40.
- 13 *TDNT*, VIII.39–40.
- 14 HR, 2.1417.
- 15 *NIDOTTE*, 1.912, 927; 2.596; 3.210, 1238.
- 16 *NIDNTTE*, 4.460; *TDNT*, VIII.40.
- 17 BDAG, 1042; *NIDNTTE*, 4.461–62; *TDNT*, VIII.41–45.
- 18 *TDNT*, VIII.44.
- 19 BDAG, 1042.
- 20 LSJ, 532; *NIDNTTE*, 2.172; *TDNT*, II.487.
- 21 HR, 1.452; *NIDNTTE*, 2.173; *NIDOTTE*, 2.238–42; *TDOT*, V.114–18.
- 22 The only possible instance is in 1 Sm 17:25, which may suggest some kind of freedom from civic obligation.
- 23 Indeed, van Rooy goes so far as to say (“Vryheid,” 4), “Alhoewel vryheid ‘n saak is wat in die Ou Testament besondere aandag kry, kom daar nie ‘n woord vir vryheid in staatkundige sin in die Ou Testament voor nie.”

24 For a discussion of Matthew 17:26, see Chapter 4.

25 On this see Silva, *Biblical Words*, 103.

26 See e.g. LSJ, 532, 1897.

27 LN, 36.18; 37.31.

28 LN, 37.133–35; 87.84–85.

29 The association by LN of ὑποτάσσω with obedience echoes that of several other reference tools (LSJ, 1897; BDAG, 1042; *NIDNTTE*, 4.460), and suggests that its meaning may overlap with or even incorporate that of ὑπακούω. But this connection is challenged by *TDNT* (VIII.40–41), such that any conclusions drawn from it require further justification on contextual and conceptual grounds. No semantic connection is made between ὑποτάσσω and either τιμάω/τιμή or ταπεινοφροσύνη, though a conceptual relationship is not therefore excluded. However, λυτρόω is also placed in the “Release, Set Free” section of the “Control, Rule” domain, indicating that it too may properly be regarded as freedom language.

Appendix 2:

Questions of Introduction

This appendix offers a brief overview of the arguments for the answers proposed in Chapter 1 to the principal questions of introduction that relate most directly to the themes of subordination and freedom in 1 Peter. Supporting references are also provided.

Authorship and Date

A minority of scholars argue for 1 Peter's authenticity, principally because of the ascription in 1:1 and the testimony of the early church.¹ Effective critiques have also been made of some of the counter-arguments: the persecution described (see below) sheds little light on date or authorship,² and the identification of Rome with *Βαβυλῶν* (5:13) does not necessitate a post-70 CE dating, as the names had been connected before then.³

Nevertheless, the majority of Petrine scholars favor pseudonymous authorship.⁴ Strong support for this view is found in the quality of the Greek and the author's consistent use of the Septuagint;⁵ the counter-claim that Silvanus (5:12) was a co-author or secretary founders on a deficiency of internal or external evidence.⁶ And while the absence of personal memories of Jesus is not conclusive, the

lack of tradition that can be plausibly and distinctively associated with Peter, and the author's clear dependence on Paul and other Christian sources (see below), tell persuasively against the involvement of Peter.⁷

Other evidence points towards a dating after Peter's (probable) lifetime: there is no evidence of controversy regarding circumcision or Torah-observance; the letter has affinities with other documents independently dated to the late first century; its leadership structures appear to be transitional between earlier and later forms; and the church has already spread across a large area of Anatolia. Moreover, enough time must have elapsed for the diverse Christian traditions on which the author draws to have developed.⁸ Arguments against pseudonymity as an ethically acceptable option for the earliest Christian authors have been addressed by David Meade, who argues that such attributions are "*an assertion of authoritative tradition.*"⁹

Many scholars therefore ascribe 1 Peter to a circle that guarded the apostle's teaching,¹⁰ but again, the paucity of identifiable tradition particularly linked to Peter and the wide range of sources employed argue against this theory.¹¹ As will be shown below, the pseudonymous author is more probably invoking Peter's name to support his work of synthesizing various Christian traditions.¹²

Even on the assumption of pseudonymity, a wide range of possible dates has been proposed, ranging from around 70 to 110 CE.¹³ But the apparent differences in the readers' circumstances from those presupposed by Pliny (111–112 CE) or in Revelation (often dated to the 90s CE), alongside the resemblances to other texts probably written in 70–90 CE and the letter's supposed use by *1 Clement* (c. 96 CE), make a date in this period the most likely.¹⁴ A tentative placement in the 80s allows more time for the church's growth in Asia Minor and the consolidation of the traditions used by the author.

Provenance

A few scholars propose an eastern origin for 1 Peter, perhaps Antioch, or the area to which it is addressed.¹⁵ But others have pointed out that it differs in important respects from other works from this area, and that Peter is not connected in early tradition with either Antioch or Asia Minor.¹⁶ In contrast, the letter has close similarities to western, and some Roman, texts (especially *1 Clement*, but also e.g. Hebrews and Luke-Acts), and both its putative author and his associate Mark (5:13) are elsewhere connected to Rome.¹⁷ Other possible indicators of a Roman provenance include the Roman church's experience of suffering, which it

shares with 1 Peter's readers, and its growing prominence within the worldwide Christian community.¹⁸

But the most compelling evidence for this view is the use of *Βαβυλῶν* in 5:13 to denote the author's (implied) location. It is generally agreed that this cannot be a reference to either of the literal Babylons, and many scholars point to its use in Jewish and other early Christian literature (e.g. 4 Ezr 3:1–2; 2 Bar. 11:1–2; *Sib. Or.* 5:159–60; Rv 14:8) as a code-word for Rome.¹⁹ Some commentators suggest that it may be a purely symbolic reference to the place of exile and thus say nothing about the author's actual location.²⁰ But the other evidence listed above for a Roman provenance indicates that the reference is probably geographical as well as metaphorical,²¹ and that the letter was therefore written from Rome.²²

Recipients

First Peter is addressed (1:1) to five²³ Roman provinces in Anatolia, which may be listed according to the route of its courier.²⁴ They cover a very large area, which suggests that the letter is responding to issues faced by believers in Roman society generally (cp. 5:9).²⁵

The readers seem to represent diverse social backgrounds (cp. 2:18 and 5:1–4), but although some of them may have been fairly wealthy (3:3), probably the majority were relatively poor.²⁶ However, the absence of an address to masters and the very short one to husbands (3:7) need not mean that these groups were wholly or largely absent; rather the author focuses on slaves and wives as representative of Christians' vulnerability in their hostile social context.²⁷

Much scholarly discussion has centered on the designated status of the readers as *παροῖκοι* and *παρεπιδήμοι* (2:11; cp. 1:1,17), and especially on Elliott's proposal that these words refer to a political, social and legal category of foreigners and non-citizens to which the believers belonged *before* conversion; the latter merely exacerbated the suspicion and hostility that they already faced.²⁸ This view has not attracted widespread assent. While many commentators have agreed that the terms reflect a social status,²⁹ they argue convincingly (and especially from the Septuagintal background of the terms) that this results instead *from* conversion; the recipients are alienated and estranged because of their submission to Christ as Lord, which has marginalized them within pagan society.³⁰

The author addresses the recipients as part of the *διασπορά* (1:1), and frequently describes them in Jewish terms (e.g. 2:9–10), while referring to outsiders as *ἔθνη* (e.g. 2:12); he also draws extensively on the OT and early Jewish

tradition (see below). Peter's mission was supposedly to Jews (Gal 2:7–9), and no tension with Jewish Christians is expressed in the text.³¹ These factors lead some scholars to suggest that the letter is addressed to a mainly Jewish readership.³² But for most commentators the description of the readers' pre-Christian past in 1:14,18 and 4:2–4 is decisive evidence for a predominantly Gentile audience.³³ The Jewish character of the letter is sufficiently explained by the author's intention to present the Christian community as heirs to the promises and vocation of Israel,³⁴ and justified by the presence of at least some Jewish Christians to act as interpreters.³⁵

Context and Purpose

It is universally agreed among Petrine scholars that 1 Peter is addressed to believers who were suffering as a result of their faith. While various factors may have provoked the anti-Christian hostility,³⁶ perhaps the most significant was the readers' social and religious exclusiveness, which put them out of step with the outlook and conduct of their neighbors and the popular values of society that underpinned these.

Thus the readers would probably no longer participate (to the same degree) in communal events that they associated with immorality, and their withdrawal would provoke suspicions of disunity, disorder and perhaps disloyalty.³⁷ Their monotheism would also discourage them from sacrificing to the Roman gods or taking part in the imperial cult. Regarding the latter, scholarly opinion is widely divided on the extent to which involvement was demanded or persecution triggered by refusal.³⁸ Nevertheless, believers' alleged atheism might at least be expected by their pagan neighbors to arouse divine retribution and adversely to affect the economies of communities that depended on the cults.³⁹

The precise nature and sources of the persecution described in 1 Peter requires somewhat greater consideration, since it is particularly relevant to certain aspects of this study and has been the subject of significant recent discussion in Petrine scholarship.⁴⁰

For some decades there has been broad agreement that the persecution described in 1 Peter is unofficial.⁴¹ Most commentators have argued that during the first century CE the Roman state did not take the initiative in persecuting Christians over a wide area, and that the letter does not fit with any known instance of official action. Many have concluded that hostility was local and sporadic, and that the readers' pagan neighbors were responsible for it.⁴²

In recent years, however, Paul Holloway, Travis Williams and David Horrell have argued convincingly that the traditional distinction between unofficial and official persecution is too sharp, and have produced significant evidence to show that believers could in principle be denounced to the authorities as criminals by their fellow-citizens. They also find evidence for legal proceedings in 3:15b–16 and 4:16.⁴³ Constraints of space preclude detailed consideration of their important contributions, but a few comments relevant to this study must be made.

Although the authors show that the language of those verses may include the possibility of legal trials, they acknowledge that it cannot be restricted to this sense; it is also used very obliquely if this is the main reference. The words *ἀπολογία* and *λόγος* (3:15) can indeed be courtroom terms, but they need not be limited to this context,⁴⁴ and the use of *παντι* strongly suggests that here they are not,⁴⁵ while in the (heavenly) courtroom setting of 4:5 *λόγος* is used in a different sense. Furthermore, magistrates are not known to have been interested in the *reason* for Christians' hope.⁴⁶ In its other NT uses *Χριστιανός* (4:16) is not a legal charge or associated with persecution; it appears to be a neutral term (Acts 11:26; 26:28). And the related causes of suffering in this verse are probably not all criminal offences: *ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος* almost certainly is not,⁴⁷ and *κακοποιός* need not be (see above, Chapter 5). Suffering as a *Χριστιανός* could thus involve any kind, judicial or otherwise, that results from one's being Christian.⁴⁸ These verses may indeed show that legal censure of the readers was possible, but they do not prove that such persecution was probable or widespread.

Moreover, whatever possibilities are implied by such language, the letter also includes considerable evidence that legal penalties were rarely if ever actually being administered against the readers. The words most commonly associated with hostile action by the state, *διωγμός* and *θλίψις* and their cognates, never appear; nor does the language of imprisonment or execution.⁴⁹ The word *πύρωσις* (4:12), sometimes thought to refer to severe persecution by the authorities,⁵⁰ probably means no more than "testing by fire" (note *πειρασμός* in the same verse and *δοκίμιον* in 1:7) and does not necessarily connote an intense experience.⁵¹ Most importantly, as shown in Chapter 5 above, the author believes that the authorities will normally fulfil their function of punishing evil and praising good.⁵² So while judicial proceedings against the readers may have been possible, the overall evidence of the letter suggests that it was scarcely happening.

Holloway, Williams and Horrell also argue that Christianity was itself treated like a criminal offence in the late first century, having become "effectively illegal" in the Roman empire at the time of the Neronian persecution, such that people could now be legally accused, convicted and even executed simply for

being Christians.⁵³ Their case is highly persuasive, but it should also be noted that there is no explicit statement of believers' criminal status before 111–12 CE,⁵⁴ and it remains uncertain how far and fast the Neronic precedent and principle was accepted in practice.⁵⁵

More importantly, the letter indicates that any charges (legal or otherwise) against the readers can be answered by their doing good (see 2:12,15; 3:13),⁵⁶ suggesting that these relate to their conduct rather than to their faith as such. It follows both that the authorities would be unlikely to initiate proceedings unless they believed that Christians were also a threat to civil order,⁵⁷ and that since they normally were not, their opponents would also be reluctant to denounce them.⁵⁸ To this evidence may again be added the lack of explicit references in the letter to legal penalties in general or to martyrdom in particular.⁵⁹ So again, the possibility of a particular kind of judicial persecution does not amount to likelihood or prevalence.

So while occasional accusations of believers before the courts certainly cannot be ruled out altogether, it seems from the above discussion that in 1 Peter the threat of judicial punishments is very remote. Statements that anti-Christian attitudes were “at all times a lethal threat”⁶⁰ or martyrdom “always and everywhere a threat”⁶¹ thus go well beyond the evidence of the letter and even contradict it. And it is unjustified to suppose that the letter's teaching on subordination to the civil authorities is predicated on their being essentially hostile to the readers.

The previous scholarly consensus that the persecution faced by 1 Peter's readers was largely unofficial and inflicted by their pagan neighbors thus appears still to be well grounded.⁶² Its principal form seems to have been verbal attack (see 2:12; 3:9,16; 4:4,14) involving abuse, slander and disparagement.⁶³ This assault was probably meant to shame and marginalize the Christians, damaging their reputation and threatening their standing, in order to coerce them into abandoning their distinctive faith and conduct and adopting once more the practices of pagan society.⁶⁴ The verb *κακόω* used in 3:13 may point to the further possibility of physical harm,⁶⁵ but its usage is not limited to this,⁶⁶ and such violence is not otherwise attested in the letter except in the specific circumstances described in 2:20.

Scholars are generally agreed that the letter is written to encourage its readers to persevere in their Christian faith and lifestyle in the face of hostility. The author pursues his purpose by testifying to the grace of God (5:12), specifically the new identity and privileges enjoyed by the believers within the Christian community, and by exhorting them to stand firm in that grace by appropriate Christian conduct, not least in their internal and external relationships.⁶⁷

Traditions

Spicq's famous designation of 1 Peter as "une Épître de la Tradition"⁶⁸ underlines the unusual number of parallels between the letter and other texts.⁶⁹ Quotations from, allusions to and echoes of the OT abound, and further connections with early Judaism include tradition found in *1 Enoch* and some affinities with Qumran literature.⁷⁰ The author also borrows from Greco-Roman traditions of civic and household management.⁷¹ Some sayings of Jesus are referenced, perhaps in a pre-Synoptic form, and numerous similarities with the Pauline (and deutero-Pauline)⁷² letters are frequently noted, while there are also points of contact with James and Hebrews. Finally, several passages may incorporate pre-existing hymnic or credal fragments.⁷³

There has been much scholarly discussion of how the correspondences between 1 Peter and other early Christian texts may best be explained. Many authors argue that the letter's distinctive treatment of common themes points to a shared and independent use of early tradition;⁷⁴ often this is thought to be in oral form,⁷⁵ though some commentators think it may have included written sources.⁷⁶ Others have suggested that the parallels are sufficiently close to indicate some form of literary dependence, especially on the letter to the Romans.⁷⁷ These alternatives are not mutually exclusive, and it is also entirely possible that 1 Peter has drawn on oral tradition that has itself been partly shaped by earlier texts.⁷⁸

The scarcity of anything that can credibly be regarded as distinctive to Peter in the letter has already been noted. It therefore seems best to regard 1 Peter "as the product of a consolidating or synthesizing form of early Christianity."⁷⁹ This understanding also helps to explain the choice of Peter as the pseudonymous author, whether as a bridging figure in the middle ground between Paul and Jerusalem,⁸⁰ or as an authoritative interpreter of texts,⁸¹ or as a central and universally authoritative personage within the early church;⁸² in all these capacities his name authorizes and validates the letter's drawing together and further creative development of numerous early Christian and other traditions.⁸³

Notes

- 1 See M. Bockmuehl, *Simon Peter in Scripture and Memory: The New Testament Apostle in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 126; Hagner, *New Testament*, 688. The letter is not however attributed to Peter before Irenaeus (Elliott, *1 Peter*, 121).

- 2 So e.g. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 23–36; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 8–10.
- 3 So e.g. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 47–48; Bockmuehl, *Simon Peter*, 127–28.
- 4 See M. E. Boring, “First Peter in Recent Study,” *Word & World* 24, no. 4 (2004): 359–60 and Dubis, “Research,” 200–1, for lists of scholars taking each view.
- 5 See deSilva, *Introduction*, 845; S. A. Adams, “The Tradition of Peter’s Literacy: Acts, 1 Peter, and Petrine Literature,” in *Peter in Early Christianity*, eds. H. K. Bond and L. W. Hurtado (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2015), 135.
- 6 So e.g. D. G. Meade, *Pseudonymity and Canon: An Investigation into the Relationship of Authorship and Authority in Jewish and Earliest Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987), 166; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 124, who points out that the phrase *Διὰ Σίλωανού* more naturally refers to a courier.
- 7 See Boring, “First Peter,” 361–63; Horrell, *1 Peter*, 21–22.
- 8 See Best, *1 Peter*, 63–64; R. E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 718–19, 721–22; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 137; Horrell, *1 Peter*, 22.
- 9 Meade, *Pseudonymity*, 179 (italics original).
- 10 So e.g. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 127–29; Senior, *1 Peter*, 5–7; M. V. Novenson, “Why Are There Some Petrine Epistles rather than None?” in Bond and Hurtado, *Peter*, 154 (with qualification).
- 11 See especially Horrell, “Petrine Circle,” 12–37.
- 12 So again Horrell, “Petrine Circle,” 43–44.
- 13 See deSilva, *Introduction*, 847; Dubis, “Research,” 204.
- 14 Brown, *Introduction*, 721–22; see also Elliott, *1 Peter*, 135–38.
- 15 So Beare, *First Epistle*, 31; see also Kelly, *Epistles*, 33–34, though he favors Rome.
- 16 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 54; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 131.
- 17 W. L. Schutter, *Hermeneutic and Composition in 1 Peter* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989), 7; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 48.
- 18 Elliott, *1 Peter*, 133–34; Horrell, *1 Peter*, 23–24.
- 19 E.g. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 63, 353–54; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 131–32, 882–84.
- 20 See e.g. Kelly, *Epistles*, 219; Horrell, *1 Peter*, 24.
- 21 So Kelly, *Epistles*, 219–20; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 311.
- 22 *Βαβυλών* appears to form an inclusio with the designation of the recipients as *παρεπίδημοι* in 1:1, uniting author and readers in a common experience. Rome/Babylon is the capital of the exilic sphere, in which believers are alienated in some sense from their surrounding society (see further below). As Karen Jobes writes, “Just as the Babylonian exile marginalized the religion of the Jews with respect to the dominant society, Roman society of Peter’s day was marginalizing the Christian faith” (*1 Peter*, 14 [also 323]; see also Michaels, *1 Peter*, 311).
- 23 Strictly four, as Pontus and Bithynia had been combined in 63 BCE (Elliott, *1 Peter*, 86).
- 24 Schutter, *Hermeneutic*, 7–8; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 84, 90–91.

- 25 See Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 57–58; J. R. Michaels, “1 Peter,” in Martin and Davids, *Dictionary*, 916–17.
- 26 Williams, *Persecution*, 328–29.
- 27 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 55–57.
- 28 Elliott, *Home*, 67–69, 83–84; so also Campbell, *Rhetoric*, 28–29.
- 29 Though see Martin, *Metaphor*, 191–92 for the view that they are purely metaphorical.
- 30 So e.g. Bechtler, *Following*, 74–81; Horrell, “Aliens,” 114–18; see also T. Seland, “Paroikos kai Parepidemos: Proselyte Characterizations in 1 Peter?” in *Strangers in the Light: Philonic Perspectives on Christian Identity in 1 Peter* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2005), *passim*. Jobes’s view (*1 Peter*, 25–41) that the reference is to people who colonized the region or were deported there from Rome has also received little support.
- 31 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 50–51; Horrell, *1 Peter*, 47.
- 32 E.g. A. Stewart-Sykes, “The Function of ‘Peter’ in I Peter,” *Scripture Bulletin* 28, no. 1 (1997): 10–13; J. D. G. Dunn, *Beginning from Jerusalem* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2009), 1158–59.
- 33 E.g. Michaels, *1 Peter*, xlvi; McKnight, *1 Peter*, 23.
- 34 See Michaels, *1 Peter*, xlix–li, though this claim renders less likely his further suggestion (liv) “that there may have been a tacit alliance between (Gentile) Christian and Jewish communities either in Rome or Asia Minor or both in the face of a common enemy.”
- 35 Green, *1 Peter*, 5–6; Horrell, “Aliens,” 121–22.
- 36 See S. Carter, “Persecution in 1 Peter 2:13–3:7: An Exegetical Study of Context, Form and Response” (MA diss., University of Durham, 2015), 11.
- 37 Bechtler, *Following*, 83–86; Williams, *Persecution*, 240–45.
- 38 Cf. e.g. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 26–28 and Williams, *Persecution*, 253 with Klauck, *Religious Context*, 329–30 and McLaren, “Imperial Cult,” 762–63.
- 39 Williams, *Persecution*, 255–58.
- 40 This section re-presents an argument first advanced in Carter, “Persecution,” 11–16.
- 41 Boring, “First Peter,” 365–66; Williams, *Persecution*, 12–13.
- 42 So, among many others, Talbert, “Plan,” 144–45; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 29–36; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 100, 103.
- 43 Holloway, *Prejudice*, 65–72; Williams, *Persecution*, 281–95, 309–16, 329–30; D. G. Horrell, “The Label Χριστιανός (1 Pt. 4.16): Suffering, Conflict and the Making of Christian Identity,” in *Becoming Christian: Essays on 1 Peter and the Making of Christian Identity* (London and New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 176–81, 186–91, 196–97.
- 44 See BDAG, 117, 598–601.
- 45 Nor is there even evidence in the text that this word is intended to “expand the field” from “the person on the street . . . where it begins” to the courtroom (Holloway, *Prejudice*, 70); rather it includes all possible questioners without specifying whether they might or might not include the magistrates.

- 46 Kelly, *Epistles*, 7; Légasse, “Soumission,” 394–95; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 102.
- 47 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 267–68; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 785–88; *contra* Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 311–13.
- 48 Holloway also appeals to the role of the authorities in 2:14; on this see the extended discussion in Chapter 5.
- 49 Kelly, *Epistles*, 10; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 37; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 103.
- 50 Beare, *First Epistle*, 7–8.
- 51 Selwyn, *First Epistle*, 54–55; Kelly, *Epistles*, 8–9; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 9.
- 52 Michaels, “1 Peter,” 919; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 100, 494.
- 53 Holloway, *Prejudice*, 65–68; Williams, *Persecution*, 218–26, 277–81, 295–97; Horrell “Χριστιανός,” 186–96.
- 54 As Williams himself admits (*Persecution*, 225).
- 55 See Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 23–24.
- 56 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 35; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 103; and above, Chapter 5.
- 57 This point may be confirmed by the evidence of Acts (e.g. cp. 16:19–23 and 18:12–16, and see 26:28,32), though admittedly only on the assumption that the book reflects the probable time of its composition (in the late first century) rather than that of the events it describes.
- 58 Williams (*Persecution*, 226–34) and Horrell (“Χριστιανός,” 189–91) themselves acknowledge that governors had freedom to act *or not act* against Christians, and Williams even accepts that in practice they seem rarely to have done so. Downing (F. G. Downing, “Pliny’s Prosecution of Christians: Revelation and 1 Peter,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 34 [1988]: 105–13) goes so far as to argue that Christians were not put on trial at all in Asia Minor until Pliny’s time.
- 59 In any case the number of martyrdoms in the first two centuries was almost certainly quite small; see Caird, *Revelation*, 35; C. G. Kruse, “Persecution,” in Evans and Porter, *Dictionary*, 777; Williams, *Persecution*, 236.
- 60 Holloway, *Prejudice*, 72.
- 61 Williams, *Persecution*, 236.
- 62 It may be noted that this scenario too reflects some of the contexts of persecution described in Acts: hostility from pagan neighbors resulting from cultural and religious nonconformity (e.g. 16:20–21; 19:25–27).
- 63 Michaels, *1 Peter*, lxvi; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 100–1.
- 64 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 28–29; Bechtler, *Following*, 97–98, 103–4.
- 65 So Holloway, *Prejudice*, 69–71, who restricts its meaning still further by suggesting that the context is that of a provincial court and the violence judicial.
- 66 See BDAG, 502.
- 67 See e.g. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 64–65; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 103–5.
- 68 Spicq, *Épîtres*, 15.
- 69 See Feldmeier, *First Letter*, 25–26.
- 70 On Jewish sources, see especially Elliott, *1 Peter*, 12–19; also Horrell, *1 Peter*, 31–35.

- 71 Michaels, *1 Peter*, xlii-xliii.
- 72 It has been assumed throughout this work that Colossians, Ephesians and the Pastoral Epistles are not written by Paul. For arguments to these conclusions, see respectively Lohse, *Colossians*, 84–91, 177–83; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, lxii-lxviii; A. T. Hanson, *The Pastoral Epistles* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1982), 2–11.
- 73 On Christian sources, see especially Horrell, “Petrine Circle,” 12–25; also Michaels, *1 Peter*, xli, xliv-xlv.
- 74 E.g. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 15–23.
- 75 So Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 32–33, and especially Elliott, *1 Peter*, 20–40.
- 76 E.g. Michaels, *1 Peter*, xliii-xlv.
- 77 E.g. Schutter, *Hermeneutic*, 34, and especially Horrell, “Petrine Circle,” 27–28.
- 78 See Elliott, *1 Peter*, 38.
- 79 Horrell, “Petrine Circle,” 12.
- 80 See L. W. Hurtado, “The Apostle Peter in Protestant Scholarship: Cullmann, Hengel, and Bockmuehl,” in Bond and Hurtado, *Peter*, 5–12.
- 81 So Adams, “Peter’s Literacy,” 143–45.
- 82 So Horrell, “Petrine Circle,” 39–40.
- 83 See Horrell, “Petrine Circle,” 43–44.

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