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“REMEMBER THE PREDICTIONS OF THE HOLY  
PROPHETS”: 2 PETER’S PROPHETIC USE  
OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

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A Dissertation  
Presented to  
the Faculty of  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy

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by  
Paul William Lamicela  
May 2022

**APPROVAL SHEET**

“REMEMBER THE PREDICTIONS OF THE HOLY  
PROPHETS”: 2 PETER’S PROPHETIC USE  
OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

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For two people:

My mother,

who taught me to read, gave me a passion for learning and for Scripture,  
and who stuck with my education from trifolds through dissertation.

My dear wife, Laura,

whose loyalty, sweetness, care, and patience are my oasis and delight.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

### Secondary Literature

AB	Anchor Bible
<i>BA</i>	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
<i>BBR</i>	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BCOTWP	Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BHT	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation Series
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BNT	Die Botschaft des Neuen Testaments
<i>BR</i>	<i>Biblical Research</i>
<i>BSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
<i>CBR</i>	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series



<i>CBW</i>	<i>Conversations with the Biblical World</i>
CNT	Commentaire du Nouveau Testament
ConcC	Concordia Commentary
CSC	Christian Standard Commentary
<i>CTR</i>	<i>Criswell Theological Review</i>
<i>DSD</i>	<i>Dead Sea Discoveries</i>
EJL	Early Judaism and Its Literature
EKKNT	Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>EstEcl</i>	<i>Estudios eclesiásticos</i>
<i>ETL</i>	<i>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</i>
<i>EuroJTh</i>	<i>European Journal of Theology</i>
<i>EvQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
<i>HBT</i>	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>
<i>HS</i>	<i>Hebrew Studies</i>
HTKNT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>IDS</i>	<i>In die Skriflig</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>JANES</i>	<i>Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JBQ</i>	<i>Jewish Bible Quarterly</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>

<i>JGES</i>	<i>Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society</i>
<i>JNSL</i>	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>
<i>JPS</i>	<i>JPS Torah Commentary</i>
<i>JPT</i>	<i>Journal of Pentecostal Theology</i>
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JSJSup	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the OT Supplement Series
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods</i>
<i>JSP</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</i>
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
KEK	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament (Meyer Kommentar)
<i>LASBF</i>	<i>Liber Annuus Studii Biblici Franciscani</i>
LHBOTS	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
NAC	New American Commentary
<i>Neot</i>	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
NETS	New English Translation of the Septuagint
NIBC	New International Biblical Commentary
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NIVAC	NIV Application Commentary

<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NSBT	New Studies in Biblical Theology
NTL	New Testament Library
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>OTE</i>	<i>Old Testament Essays</i>
OTL	Old Testament Library
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
<i>Presb</i>	<i>Presbyterion</i>
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
<i>ResQ</i>	<i>Restoration Quarterly</i>
<i>RevExp</i>	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
<i>RevQ</i>	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
<i>RTR</i>	<i>Reformed Theological Review</i>
<i>SBJT</i>	<i>Southern Baptist Journal of Theology</i>
SemeiaSt	Semeia Studies
<i>SPhiloA</i>	<i>Studia Philonica Annual</i>
<i>ST</i>	<i>Studia Theologica</i>
StBibLit	Studies in Biblical Literature (Lang)
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
<i>SWJT</i>	<i>Southwestern Journal of Theology</i>
TBC	Torch Bible Commentaries
TBN	Themes in Biblical Narrative
<i>TDOT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren. Translated by John T. Willis et al. 8 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974–2006
<i>Them</i>	<i>Themelios</i>

THOTC	Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>VC</i>	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
<i>VR</i>	<i>Vox Reformata</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to <i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>ZAC</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum</i>
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>

#### **Ancient Sources**

1–2 Clem.	1–2 Clement
1QapGen	Genesis Apocryphon
1QIsa <sup>a</sup>	Isaiah <sup>a</sup>
1QM	War Scroll
1QpHab	Pesher Habakkuk
1QpMic	Pesher Micah
4QMMT	Halakhic Letter
4QWiles	4Q Wiles of the Wicked Woman
11QT <sup>a</sup>	Temple Scroll <sup>a</sup>
<i>Abraham</i>	<i>On the Life of Abraham</i>
<i>Alleg. Interp.</i>	<i>Allegorical Interpretation</i>

<i>ANF</i>	<i>The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325.</i> Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. 10 vols. 1885–1887. Repr. Christian Classics Ethereal Library.
<i>Ant.</i>	<i>Jewish Antiquities</i>
Barn.	Barnabas
<i>b. Ros. Has.</i>	Babylonian Talmud tractate <i>Rosh Hashanah</i>
<i>b. Sanh.</i>	Babylonian Talmud tractate <i>Sanhedrin</i>
<i>b. Yoma</i>	Babylonian Talmud tractate <i>Yoma</i>
Cant. Rab.	Canticles Rabbah
CD	Cairo Genizah copy of the Damascus Document
<i>Clem. Hom.</i>	Pseudo-Clementine <i>Homilies</i>
<i>Confusion</i>	<i>On the Confusion of Tongues</i>
<i>Dial.</i>	<i>Dialogue with Trypho</i>
<i>Drunkenness</i>	<i>On Drunkenness</i>
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
Frg. Tg.	Fragmentary Targum
Gen. Rab.	Genesis Rabbah
Herm. Sim.	Shepherd of Hermas, Similitude(s)
<i>Ign. Trall.</i>	Ignatius, <i>To the Trallians</i>
<i>J. W.</i>	<i>Jewish War</i>
LAB	Liber antiquitatum biblicarum (Pseudo-Philo)
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
Lev. Rab.	Leviticus Rabbah
Midr. Psalms	Midrash on the Psalms
<i>Migration</i>	<i>Migration of Abraham</i>
<i>Moses</i>	<i>Life of Moses</i>
<i>Names</i>	<i>On the Change of Names</i>
Num. Rab.	Numbers Rabbah

Pol. <i>Phil.</i>	Polycarp, <i>To the Philippians</i>
Pesiq. Rab.	Pesiqta Rabbati
Pirqe R. El.	Pirqe Rabbi Eliezer
<i>QG</i>	<i>Questions and Answers on Genesis</i>
Tg. Neof.	Targum Neofiti
Tg. Ps.-J.	Targum Pseudo-Jonathan
<i>Unchangeable</i>	<i>That God Is Unchangeable</i>
<i>Worse</i>	<i>That the Worse Attacks the Better</i>
Yal. Šim‘oni	Yalqut Šim‘oni
y. <i>Ta‘an.</i>	Jerusalem Talmud tractate <i>Ta‘anit</i>

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## PREFACE

Dr. Schreiner's suggestion of this topic was inspired. It has been a long slog, but it was an incredible privilege to get to know the letter of 2 Peter so closely, and to begin to grasp its author's use of Scripture. It has also served for me as an illuminating ray of light into the interpretation of Scripture found in the writings of scriptural authors and their contemporaries. I have looked along beams of scriptural interpretation emanating from 2 Peter and shining through Jesus's influence, into Second Temple Jewish context, and into inner-biblical interpretation starting in the earliest chapters of Genesis. My hope and prayer now is that those who read my academic study of 2 Peter may have their vision of the world shaped by Peter's and will step into his scriptural drama. I hope to be the first.

There are so many people to be thanked, most of whom cannot be named here. I want to thank all of my MDiv and PhD "buddies" at Southern Seminary from 2014 to the present. They have provided excellent camaraderie, stimulating conversations, and support through life's challenges. Thanks to my professors, especially Drs. Peter Gentry and Stephen Wellum, who sparked my interest in biblical theology and indelibly shaped the way I read Scripture. My gratitude for Dr. Schreiner is difficult to overstate. From my first class with him in 2014, I have deeply admired the combination of his deep humility and expansive knowledge. I could not have asked for a better PhD supervisor. I hope to be like him when I grow up.

The other group of people I need to thank is my dear family. To my parents, Ron and Christine, who raised me to know and love the truth (2 Pet 1:12). To my brother, Andrew, whose friendship and wisdom are invaluable (2 Pet 3:15–16). To my sister Beth, and her new husband, Josh, whose generosity and grasping of God's promises I admire (2



Pet 1:3–4). To my sister Faith, who acutely awaits the new heavens and new earth (2 Pet 3:13), and for whom I cry for the hastening of the coming Day (v. 12). And to my incredible wife, Laura, my fellow heir of the grace of life (1 Pet 3:7).

Paul Lamicela

Lancaster, Pennsylvania

May 2022

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The second letter of Peter is a neglected treasure. While the literature both in New Testament scholarship generally, and in studies of the New Testament's use of the Old Testament in particular, is growing at an exponential rate, 2 Peter hardly registers any interest. But this is a mistake. The author of 2 Peter intends to instill confidence in the prophetic and apostolic message, in the face of false teachers and the "delay" of the Parousia. He fulfills this purpose largely by employing a prophetic reading of the OT to project a "narrative world" which he calls his readers to live inside of. This short, neglected letter thus offers a fascinating sustained appropriation of the OT by an early Christian writer.

To my knowledge, there is currently no monograph or dissertation studying the use of the OT in the entirety of 2 Peter. On the other hand, interest in the use of the OT in the NT as well as literary, canonical, and theological readings of Scripture have received significant attention in recent scholarship. My dissertation is meant to contribute to this broad recent set of interests by filling in the lacuna relative to the study of 2 Peter. I will not be focused on finding and defending new allusions in the letter (these are largely non-controversial), and text critical questions will be rare (most references are to OT stories, not direct quotations of passages). I will rather focus on seeking to understand Peter's theological and literary appropriation of the OT references he makes.

#### **Thesis**

This dissertation studies 2 Peter's pervasive yet often subtle, multifaceted yet unified appropriation of the Old Testament. My thesis is as follows: The author of 2 Peter

reads the OT—focusing on its prophecy and creation-destruction-new creation motifs—as a prophetically forward-pointing narrative which colors the present both by direct promise-fulfillment and by constituting the narrative “script” which contains himself, his readers, and his opponents and which grounds his ethical warnings and exhortations.

Though Peter’s use of Scripture is pervasive, there is only one direct quotation in 2 Peter (to Prov 26:11). Everything else falls into the categories of explicit references, allusions, and thematic parallels.<sup>1</sup> I examine each appropriation of the OT, consider its original context, and where relevant consider Jewish influence. I do not propose many new allusions; the OT references are mostly non-controversial. My primary interest is in how Scripture shapes Peter’s theological and ethical vision. My focus is on how Peter understands and portrays his current situation almost entirely in terms of the interlocking scriptural motifs he employs.

### **History of Research**

There has been much recent interest in the NT use of the OT from a variety of perspectives, but very little work has been done on the use of the OT in 2 Peter. In fact, very little recent work has been done on 2 Peter at all. This section surveys relevant scholarship as follows: first, the study of the NT use of the OT; second, recent scholarship on 2 Peter generally; third, publications relating to 2 Peter’s use of the OT; fourth, works relating to 1 Peter’s use of the OT.

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<sup>1</sup> By “explicit reference,” I mean invoking biblical stories (e.g., the flood narrative) without quoting a specific text. By “allusion,” I mean invoking a biblical text in an indirect manner. In Beale’s words, “the OT wording is not reproduced directly as in a quotation.” G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 31. I include the more nebulous category of “echoes” within “allusions.” By “thematic parallels,” I mean “ideas/concepts shared between texts that transcend precise verbal relationships.” Matthew S. Harmon, *She Must and Shall Go Free: Paul’s Isaianic Gospel in Galatians* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 30.

## NT Use of the OT

This dissertation seeks to describe how the author of 2 Peter reads and appropriates Scripture.<sup>2</sup> A brief sketch of the scholarly conversation on NT use of the OT helps to situate this project. This is a complex and difficult subject, which in recent years has seen an explosion of interest.<sup>3</sup> There are a number of issues and approaches that fall under this umbrella, but many of them can be grouped under the “contextual” versus “non-contextual” use debate.

**Historical sketch.** In 1916 Rendel Harris popularized the idea of widespread use of “testimony books” among early Christians.<sup>4</sup> These books contained important messianic proof texts, extracted from their original contexts. Thus, the early Christians’ use of the OT was frequently done without regard for or even awareness of the passage’s context. In 1952, C. H. Dodd’s highly influential study *According to the Scriptures* argued contra Harris that the NT authors did indeed use the OT in contextual ways, in

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<sup>2</sup> This section draws from Beale, *Handbook on NT Use of OT*, 1–27; Matthew W. Bates, “The Old Testament in the New Testament,” in *The State of New Testament Studies*, ed. Scot McKnight and Nijay K. Gupta (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), 83–102; Aubrey M. Sequeira, “The Hermeneutics of Eschatological Fulfillment in Christ: Biblical-Theological Exegesis in the Epistle to the Hebrews” (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017), 7–101; Susan E. Docherty, “Do You Understand What You Are Reading?” (Acts 8.30): Current Trends and Future Perspectives in the Study of the Use of the Old Testament in the New,” *JSNT* 38, no. 1 (2015): 112–25. Other articles in the same issue of *JSNT* (which was devoted to the use of the OT in the NT) were also helpful for mapping out the current conversation. See David M. Allen, “Introduction: The Study of the Use of the Old Testament in the New,” *JSNT* 38, no. 1 (2015): 3–16; Leroy A. Huizenga, “The Old Testament in the New, Intertextuality and Allegory,” *JSNT* 38, no. 1 (2015): 17–35; Craig A. Evans, “Why Did the New Testament Writers Appeal to the Old Testament?,” *JSNT* 38, no. 1 (2015): 36–48; Timothy H. Lim, “Qumran Scholarship and the Study of the Old Testament in the New Testament,” *JSNT* 38, no. 1 (2015): 68–80; Paul Foster, “Echoes Without Resonance: Critiquing Certain Aspects of Recent Scholarly Trends in the Study of the Jewish Scriptures in the New Testament,” *JSNT* 38, no. 1 (2015): 96–111.

<sup>3</sup> For a helpful overview and bibliography, see Douglas J. Moo and Andrew D. Naselli, “The Problem of the New Testament’s Use of the Old Testament,” in *The Enduring Authority of the Christian Scriptures*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016); Bates, “Old Testament in the New Testament.” Refer also to the in-depth examinations of each NT book’s handling of the OT in G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, eds., *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007). See also David L. Baker, *Two Testaments, One Bible: The Theological Relationship between the Old and New Testaments*, 3rd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010).

<sup>4</sup> J. Rendel Harris, *Testimonies*, vols. 1 and 2 (1916; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

keeping with their original meanings.<sup>5</sup> He pointed to the fact that though the NT authors regularly refer to the same several passages, they rarely quote the same exact verses. This indicates that they were thinking of the entire pericopae and not just decontextualized units. Barnabas Lindars responded to Dodd's work with his *New Testament Apologetic*.<sup>6</sup> As the title suggests, Lindars held that the NT authors used the OT in line with common Jewish interpretive methods—midrash, pesher, etc.—in *ad hoc* ways and primarily for apologetic purposes (in proving Jesus as Messiah).<sup>7</sup>

In 1975, Richard Longenecker published a work arguing that the NT authors used the OT in a large number of ways, from grammatical-historical to allegorical to midrash/pesher, etc. The one unique feature of their hermeneutic was that it was Christological.<sup>8</sup> According to Longenecker, interpreters today should not judge methods considered valid at that time by modern Western standards. In his view the NT authors, being inspired, were correct in their conclusions; but their methods are not normative for today (except for when they were grammatical-historical). Greg Beale responded in his 1989 article, "Did Jesus and His Followers Preach the Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts?"<sup>9</sup> His answer was "no." Beale has argued that the NT authors respect the context of the OT texts they cite; and while they often extend or surpass the original meaning,

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<sup>5</sup> C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: The Sub-Structure of New Testament Theology* (London: Nisbet, 1952).

<sup>6</sup> Barnabas Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic: The Doctrinal Significance of the Old Testament Quotations* (London: SCM, 1961).

<sup>7</sup> Claims concerning Jewish exegetical methods have been chastened by David Instone-Brewer, who demonstrates that Jewish exegesis pre-AD 70 was much more contextually concerned and restrained than latter Rabbinic practice. David Instone-Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions in Jewish Exegesis Before 70 CE* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992).

<sup>8</sup> Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975).

<sup>9</sup> G. K. Beale, "Did Jesus and His Followers Preach the Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts," *Them* 14, no. 3 (1989): 89–96. For a recent follow-up article, see G. K. Beale, "Did Jesus and the Apostles Preach the Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts? Revisiting the Debate Seventeen Years Later in the Light of Peter Enns' Book *Inspiration and Incarnation*," ed. G. K. Beale, *Them* 32, no. 1 (2006): 18–43.

they do not contravene or ignore it. Typological interpretation (which Beale contrasts to allegorical) is important in understanding NT use of the OT.<sup>10</sup>

**Current developments.** Today, the biggest issue in NT use of the OT is still along the lines of the contextual versus non-contextual debate; it now often takes the form of redemptive historical, typological explanations versus theological, literary, and postmodern-influenced ones. Two other trends include reading alongside Second Temple Judaism (e.g., comparing how Paul vs. Qumran quoted Hab 2:4), and (to a lesser degree) studying the text form of citations (MT vs. LXX, etc.).<sup>11</sup>

Since his 1989 article, Greg Beale has been actively involved in studying the NT authors' hermeneutics. In his *Handbook*, he sets out five foundational presuppositions that the NT authors held, which are essential to understanding how they interpreted the OT: (1) Corporate identity and representation; (2) Christ as representing true Israel; (3) History is unified by a wise, sovereign divine plan; (4) The end of the ages has dawned with Christ; (5) Later parts of biblical history and the biblical text interpret earlier parts. These five presuppositions (especially 3 through 5) are important tools for examining the scriptural hermeneutic of the author of 2 Peter.<sup>12</sup>

A watershed moment in the history of NT use of OT study was the publication of Hays's *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (1989), which opened the eyes of NT scholars to the world of intertextuality, metalepsis, literary allusion, and (more controversially) echoes.<sup>13</sup> Hays persuaded scholars that brief allusions to Israel's

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<sup>10</sup> A good entry point into Beale's work on NT use of OT is Beale, *Handbook on NT Use of OT*.

<sup>11</sup> These trends correspond to those listed by Docherty, "Do You Understand What You Are Reading?"

<sup>12</sup> Beale, *Handbook on NT Use of OT*, 95–102.

<sup>13</sup> Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989). Hays borrowed and modified the concept of "intertextuality" from literary studies, notably Julia Kristeva who coined the term. For a recent critique of perceived excesses in application of Hays's method, see Foster, "Echoes without Resonance." For a helpful discussion of "metalepsis" (evoking

Scriptures often represent webs of connections, exegesis, and theological reasoning. He also proposed seven criteria for discerning allusions which have become standard in the field. (In keeping with the influential nature of Hays’s criteria, this dissertation largely follows Hays’s criteria, though I rarely refer explicitly to them.) As 2 Peter’s references to Scripture are almost entirely allusions and direct references (as opposed to quotations), this dissertation demonstrates how such references reveal a worldview shaped by the metanarrative of Israel’s Scriptures understood in light of Jesus as Messiah. This story—told through the language and stories of the OT—shapes Peter’s moral vision and drives his ethical exhortations.

Francis Watson’s *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* exemplifies a careful, historically sensitive analysis of Paul’s reading of the Pentateuch, alongside competing readings of the same texts by other Jewish readers of his era.<sup>14</sup> While I do not devote as much space to reading Second Temple Jewish texts, I similarly intend to show how Peter was a reader of the OT texts. For Peter, like Watson’s Paul, Israel’s Scriptures are not mere confirmatory add-ons to his already-constructed theological edifice. They are the very building blocks of Peter’s house, with the message of Jesus being the cornerstone.

Recently, there has been a trend to identify various “theological” readings of the OT by NT authors, including allegorical or prosopological uses.<sup>15</sup> Such readings can

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the larger story/message of a small reference), see Jeannine K. Brown, “Metalepsis,” in *Exploring Intertextuality: Diverse Strategies for New Testament Interpretation of Texts*, ed. B. J. Oropeza and Steve Moyise (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2016), 29–41.

<sup>14</sup> Francis Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*, 2nd ed. (London: T&T Clark, 2016).

<sup>15</sup> See e.g., Huizenga, “Old Testament in the New”; Ephraim Radner, *Time and the Word: Figural Reading of the Christian Scriptures* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016); Craig A. Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition: Recovering the Genius of Premodern Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018). Some of these emphasize post-biblical interpreters’ hermeneutic more than that of Scriptural authors, though they tend to see continuity between the two groups before the rise of historical criticism. For prosopological exegesis see Matthew W. Bates, *The Hermeneutics of the Apostolic Proclamation: The Center of Paul’s Method of Scriptural Interpretation* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2012); Bates, *The Birth of the Trinity: Jesus, God, and Spirit in New Testament and Early Christian Interpretations of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). But note questions raised by Peter J. Gentry, “A Preliminary Evaluation and Critique of Prosopological Exegesis,” *SBJT* 23, no. 2 (2019): 105–22.

often be classed as non-contextual, as the literary and historical contexts of the OT passages are not what govern the interpretation; instead, creed or kerygma do. This dissertation follows a different path. Peter in his second epistle reads the OT in a prophetic, forward-pointing, eschatological manner; that is, he reads more as a first-century Palestinian or sectarian Jew than as a rhetorically or philosophically aware Greek.<sup>16</sup>

**Conclusion.** Moo and Naselli rightly conclude that no single method or approach is a magic bullet to the study of the NT's use of the OT. They mention three ideas which each play a role: a "canonical" context informs the "interpretive framework" for NT use of the OT; "typology" represents one very important way in which the NT sees the old as fulfilled; and "*sensus plenior*" refers to the deeper, fuller sense the NT authors see in the OT.<sup>17</sup> This is a wise, balanced bit of advice this dissertation seeks to follow. I show how these and related approaches are conjoined in 2 Peter's "prophetic use" of Scripture.

## General 2 Peter Studies

Second Peter is something of an abandoned stepchild in NT studies.<sup>18</sup> Its authenticity was questioned among some in the early days of the church, though it was eventually accepted as authentic and therefore canonical. With the rise of historical criticism, 2 Peter's authenticity was again questioned, but this time the consensus of the

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<sup>16</sup> On Peter reading Scripture as a "sectarian" Jew, see Benjamin Sargent, *Written to Serve: The Use of Scripture in 1 Peter*, LNTS 547 (London: T&T Clark, 2015).

<sup>17</sup> Douglas J. Moo and Andrew D. Naselli, "The Problem of the New Testament's Use of the Old Testament," in *The Enduring Authority of the Christian Scriptures*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 736–37.

<sup>18</sup> John H. Elliott referred to 1 Peter as an "exegetical step-child"—how much more 2 Peter! John H. Elliott, "Rehabilitation of an Exegetical Step-Child: 1 Peter in Recent Research," *JBL* 95, no. 2 (1976): 243–54. While Abson Joseph contends that the Petrine epistles have been seeing a surge in recent interest, most of that interest has been directed toward 1 Peter, not 2 Peter. Abson Joseph, "The Petrine Letters," in McKnight and Gupta, *The State of New Testament Studies*, 425–43.



guild was against the letter's authenticity. The dating of the letter has been pushed into the post-apostolic era; and it has been largely overshadowed by Jude, which is viewed as the original source of a portion of the letter's contents.<sup>19</sup> The current rise of canonical and theological interpretation of Scripture offers hope that 2 Peter will be welcomed back into the family even by those who doubt the letter's authenticity.

**Surveys and commentaries.** The most up-to-date published survey of recent 2 Peter scholarship is in Abson Joseph's chapter on "The Petrine Letters" in *The State of New Testament Studies* (2019).<sup>20</sup> Unsurprisingly, however, the bulk of this chapter discusses 1 Peter and not 2 Peter, underscoring the desert that is 2 Peter studies. While this dissertation interacts with the full range of recent and classic academic commentaries of 2 Peter,<sup>21</sup> of particular note for purposes of this dissertation are the following: Jörg

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<sup>19</sup> For discussion of the reception history of 2 Peter and related canonical questions, see Jörg Frey, *The Letter of Jude and the Second Letter of Peter: A Theological Commentary*, trans. Kathleen Ess (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2018), 163–75, 213–24. Cf. Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 2nd ed., CSC (Nashville: B&H, 2020), 298–325; Peter H. Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 121–32.

<sup>20</sup> Joseph, "The Petrine Letters." See also the surveys by Robert Webb, "The Petrine Epistles: Recent Developments and Trends," in *The Face of New Testament Studies: A Survey of Recent Research*, ed. Scot McKnight and Grant R. Osborne (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 373–90; Peter Müller, "Der 2. Petrusbrief," *Theologische Rundschau* 66, no. 3 (2001): 310–37; Michael J. Gilmour, "2 Peter in Recent Research: A Bibliography," *JETS* 42, no. 4 (1999): 673–78.

Most of the published bibliographies of 2 Peter research are significantly older. See Richard Bauckham, "2 Peter: A Supplementary Bibliography," *JETS* 25, no. 1 (1982): 91–93; John Snyder, "A 2 Peter Bibliography," *JETS* 22, no. 3 (September 1979): 265–67; William G. Hupper, "Additions to 'A 2 Peter Bibliography,'" *JETS* 23, no. 1 (1980): 65–66. There are also a couple of recent introductory/study guide works for students. Eric F. Mason and Troy W. Martin, *Reading 1–2 Peter and Jude: A Resource for Students* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014); George Aichele, *The Letters of Jude and Second Peter: An Introduction and Study Guide: Paranoia and the Slaves of Christ*, T&T Clark Study Guides to the New Testament (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017).

<sup>21</sup> Including Richard Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, WBC, vol. 50 (Waco, TX: Word, 1983); Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*; Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*; Peter H. Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006); Gene L. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008); Earl J. Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2013); Curtis P. Giese, *2 Peter and Jude*, ConcC (St. Louis: Concordia, 2012); Lewis R. Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010); Ruth Anne Reese, *2 Peter and Jude*, Two Horizons New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007); Ben Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1–2 Peter*, vol. 2 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2007); Daniel J. Harrington, "Jude and 2 Peter," in *Sacra Pagina: 1 Peter, Jude and 2 Peter*, by Donald P. Senior and Daniel J. Harrington (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003); Charles Bigg, *St. Peter and St. Jude*, ICC (New York: T&T Clark, 1901); Jonathan Knight, *2 Peter and Jude*, New Testament Guides (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995); Jerome H. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, AB (New

Frey's commentary represents current German critical scholarship on 2 Peter paired with a theological perspective.<sup>22</sup> The recently released (2020) second edition of Thomas R. Schreiner's commentary provides an up-to-date, detailed, evangelical perspective on 2 Peter.<sup>23</sup> While not recent, Richard Bauckham's 1983 commentary on 2 Peter and Jude casts a long shadow over 2 Peter scholarship and is a true classic.<sup>24</sup> Bauckham's detailed, insightful analysis of the letter and its use of the OT and Jewish tradition is invaluable throughout this dissertation. Gene L. Green's recent theology of Peter is an excellent

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York: Doubleday, 1993); J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude*, Black's New Testament Commentaries (London: A & C Black, 1969); Eric Fuchs and Pierre Reymond, *La deuxième épître de saint Pierre; L'épître de saint Jude*, CNT (Neuchâtel: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1980); Anton Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, Der 2. Petrusbrief*, EKKNT (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1994); Henning Paulsen, *Der zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief*, KEK (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992); Karl H. Schelkle, *Die Petrusbriefe; der Judasbrief*, HTKNT (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1961); Karl-Heinrich Ostmeyer, *Die Briefe des Petrus und des Judas*, BNT (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2021). Unfortunately, the *2 Peter and Jude* commentary in the Hermeneia series, to be written by Jeremy Hultin, is forthcoming but no release date is yet available.

<sup>22</sup> Jörg Frey's work—which includes a commentary, articles, and an edited work—represents some of the most recent critical, literary, and theological work on 2 Peter and related matters. Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*; Frey, "On the Origins of the Genre of the 'Literary Testament': Farewell Discourses in the Qumran Library and Their Relevance for the History of the Genre," in *Aramaica Qumranica: Proceedings of the Conference on the Aramaic Texts from Qumran in Aix-En-Provence 30 June–2 July 2008*, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 94 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 345–75; Frey, "Fire and Water? Apocalyptic Imagination and Hellenistic Worldview in 2 Peter," in *Sibyls, Scriptures, and Scrolls: John Collins at Seventy*, JSJSup 175 (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 451–71; Frey, "Hermeneutical Problems Posed by 2 Peter," in *Der Zweite Petrusbrief Und Das Neue Testament*, ed. Wolfgang Grünstäudl, Uta Poplutz, and Tobias Nicklas, WUNT 397 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 9–36; Jörg Frey, Matthijs Dulk, and Jan van der Watt, eds., *2 Peter and the Apocalypse of Peter: Towards a New Perspective* (Leiden: Brill, 2019). While it does not touch on 2 Peter, I also refer to Jörg Frey, "The Reception of Jeremiah and the Impact of Jeremianic Traditions in the New Testament: A Survey," in *Jeremiah's Scriptures: Production, Reception, Interaction, and Transformation*, ed. Hindy Najman and Konrad Schmid, JSJSup 173 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 497–522. Frey's Jude and 2 Peter commentary (published in German in 2015, translated into English in 2018) is committed to reading 2 Peter in its own right and not merely as a lengthened version of Jude. Frey seeks to provide "a thorough survey of Jewish exegetical traditions that may lie behind the reception of biblical examples and figures" in 2 Peter, seeing the letter as a source "within a rich tradition of scriptural interpretation." Frey, introduction to *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, xxxix. He also emphasizes the theology of the letter. On the other hand, Frey views 2 Peter as very late; he promotes what he refers to as a "new perspective" on 2 Peter which sees it as a "literary reaction to the *Apocalypse of 2 Peter*" (Frey, xl). See also Frey, Dulk, and van der Watt, *2 Peter and Apocalypse of Peter*. This perspective greatly affects one's interpretation of the letter and of its use of the OT. In this view, the letter's use of the OT is more influenced by early Christian writings than by Jesus' influence and Second Temple Jewish thought.

<sup>23</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*.

<sup>24</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*. Part of the influence of this commentary has been in Bauckham's arguments for reading 2 Peter as an instance of the "testimony" genre.

work but sadly excludes 2 Peter and will thus be of limited usefulness for this dissertation.<sup>25</sup>

***Reading Second Peter with New Eyes.*** Probably the most significant recent publication on 2 Peter is the collection of essays titled *Reading Second Peter with New Eyes*, published in 2010 by an SBL consultation devoted to James, Peter, and Jude.<sup>26</sup> This book consists of essays which “move beyond the historical-critical paradigm” (which, according to the introduction, “reached its apogee” in Bauckham’s commentary) to examine 2 Peter using rhetorical and socio-rhetorical methods, narrative criticism, and “the sociological category of collective identity.”<sup>27</sup> This dissertation, while not adopting any of the methods wholesale, references and interacts particularly with two of the chapters.

Ruth Anne Reese’s chapter surveys the range of “narrative” approaches used in NT studies and proposes her own, which she applies to 2 Peter (examining “events, narrative voice, and time”).<sup>28</sup> While my approach is completely different from hers, her chapter helps to situate my study of 2 Peter within the range of current narrative approaches.

James C. Miller’s chapter on “collective identity” in 2 Peter draws on social identity theory and contends that “2 Peter functions in significant part as an instrument of communal-identity formation. In other words, this document portrays a symbolic narrative world and attempts to persuade its auditors to locate themselves within it. This

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<sup>25</sup> Gene L. Green, *Vox Petri: A Theology of Peter* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2020). Green leans toward 2 Peter’s authenticity but decides against using it (96–98).

<sup>26</sup> Robert L. Webb and Duane F. Watson, eds., *Reading Second Peter with New Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of Second Peter* (New York: T&T Clark, 2010).

<sup>27</sup> Webb and Watson, introduction to *Reading Second Peter with New Eyes*, xi–xiii.

<sup>28</sup> Ruth Anne Reese, “Narrative Method and the Letter of Second Peter,” in Webb and Watson, *Reading Second Peter with New Eyes*, 119–46.

socially constructed world provides the basis for appropriate attitudes and behaviors called for in the letter.”<sup>29</sup> He later writes,

In spite of 2 Peter’s limited length, a distinctly narrative understanding of God’s activities forms the argumentative backbone of the letter. Within the larger story of divine activity, Peter embeds the stories of the human actors in the drama. It is precisely the location of the auditors in the context of God’s actions that gives traction to his appeal.<sup>30</sup>

My study of 2 Peter makes a very similar claim but shows the importance of the way Peter uses the OT in creating that “narrative world.”

**Conclusion.** At the conclusion of Joseph’s chapter surveying Petrine scholarship, he raises a few issues to which this dissertation contributes from the perspective of 2 Peter:

How might 1–2 Peter shape our identity if we took their claims on our lives seriously? How might our interpretation of 1–2 Peter’s message differ if we were to inhabit the narrative world created by these texts? . . .

More can and needs to be done to pursue the implications of reading 1–2 Peter together. What theological threads run through both letters? What sources do they share? How are these sources being appropriated? How do these letters, read together, inform what we know about God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, salvation, and redemption?<sup>31</sup>

## 2 Peter’s Use of the OT

To my knowledge, there is no existing dissertation or monograph studying the use of the OT in the entirety of 2 Peter. The closest is a 2003 dissertation by Douglas E. Brown which studies only “The Use of the Old Testament in 2 Peter 2:4–10A.”<sup>32</sup> There is

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<sup>29</sup> James C. Miller, “The Sociological Category of ‘Collective Identity’ and Its Implications for Understanding Second Peter,” in Webb and Watson, *Reading Second Peter with New Eyes*, 148.

<sup>30</sup> Miller, “Sociological Category of ‘Collective Identity,’” 166.

<sup>31</sup> Joseph, “The Petrine Letters,” 442–43.

<sup>32</sup> Douglas E. Brown, “The Use of the Old Testament in 2 Peter 2:4–10a” (PhD diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2003).

also D. A. Carson's chapter on 2 Peter in the *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*.<sup>33</sup> I briefly survey both of these publications in this section.

There are a handful of other articles that survey the use of the OT in 2 Peter or study its use in specific passages of 2 Peter,<sup>34</sup> as well as other works which in some way touch on 2 Peter's use of the OT.<sup>35</sup> In addition, commentaries address 2 Peter's use of the OT as instances arise; however, they generally do not view these instances holistically nor spend much time examining connections to 1 Peter's OT use. This dissertation interacts with all of these works where relevant.

**Brown dissertation.** Douglas Brown maintains that despite neglect and skepticism, "2 Peter does utilize the OT, and indeed, the OT is critical to 2 Peter's

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<sup>33</sup> D. A. Carson, "2 Peter," in Beale and Carson, *Commentary on NT Use of OT*, 1047–61.

<sup>34</sup> See Richard Bauckham, "James, 1 and 2 Peter, Jude," in *It Is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture: Essays in Honour of Barnabas Lindars, SSF*, ed. D. A. Carson and H. G. M. Williamson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 303–17; J. Daryl Charles, "Old Testament in General Epistles," in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1997), 834–41; Andreas J. Köstenberger, "The Use of Scripture in the Pastoral and General Epistles and the Book of Revelation," in *Hearing the Old Testament in the New Testament*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 230–54; Steve Moyise, "Jude, 2 Peter and James and Scripture," in *The Later New Testament Writings and Scripture: The Old Testament in Acts, Hebrews, the Catholic Epistles and Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 62–80. On specific passages and themes see Matthew D. Jensen, "Noah, the Eighth Proclaimer of Righteousness: Understanding 2 Peter 2.5 in Light of Genesis 4.26," *JSNT* 37, no. 4 (2015): 458–69; Scott J. Hafemann, "'One Day as a Thousand Years': Psalm 90, Humility and the Certainty of Eschatological Judgement in 2 Peter 3.8," in *One God, One People, One Future: Essays in Honor of N. T. Wright*, ed. John Anthony Dunne and Eric Lewellen (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2018); Hafemann, "'Noah, the Preacher of (God's) Righteousness': The Argument from Scripture in 2 Peter 2:5 and 9," *CBQ* 76, no. 2 (2014): 306–20; Ryan P. Juza, "Echoes of Sodom and Gomorrah on the Day of the Lord: Intertextuality and Tradition in 2 Peter 3:7–13," *BBR* 24, no. 2 (2014): 227–45; David M. Allen, "Genesis in James, 1 and 2 Peter, and Jude," in *Genesis in the New Testament*, ed. Maarten J. J. Menken and Steve Moyise (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 147–65; T. Desmond Alexander, "Lot's Hospitality: A Clue to His Righteousness," *JBL* 104, no. 2 (1985): 289–91; John Makujina, "The 'Trouble' with Lot in 2 Peter: Locating Peter's Source for Lot's Torment," *WTJ* 60, no. 2 (1998): 255–69.

<sup>35</sup> Scott T. Yoshikawa, "The Prototypical Use of the Noahic Flood in the New Testament" (PhD diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2004); J. Daryl Charles, "The Angels under Reserve in 2 Peter and Jude," *BBR* 15, no. 1 (2005): 39–48; Bradly S. Billings, "'The Angels Who Sinned . . . He Cast into Tartarus' (2 Peter 2:4): Its Ancient Meaning and Present Relevance," *ExpTim* 119, no. 11 (2008): 532–37; Hans C. C. Cavallin, "The False Teachers of 2 Peter as Pseudo-Prophets," *NovT* 21, no. 3 (1979): 263–70; David K. Burge, "Reading 2 Peter with Wisdom: Can a Wisdom Hermeneutic Best Explain the 'Enigmatic' Epistle?," *Presb*, Reading 2 Peter with Wisdom, 47, no. 1 (2021): 77–96. See also S. Voorwinde, "Old Testament Quotations in Peter's Epistles," *VR* 49 (1987): 3–16. Anders Gerdmar, *Rethinking the Judaism-Hellenism Dichotomy: A Historiographical Case Study of Second Peter and Jude* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2001).

argument, theology, and purpose.”<sup>36</sup> Brown covers 2 Peter 2:4–10a, a unit he avers “is crafted rhetorically to highlight the employed OT citations.”<sup>37</sup> This unit includes five OT citations, all “from the early chapters of Genesis.”<sup>38</sup> Brown proposes a three-step methodology. Step one is the “establishment of the OT citation.” Step two is the “exploration of how the OT text is used” in other parts of the OT, in Jewish literature, and elsewhere in the NT. Step three is to “discover the significance of the OT usage” by exploring exegetical, “hermeneutical, and theological considerations of the passage.”<sup>39</sup>

Brown makes a fascinating distinction between the two ways he sees Peter using the OT. On the one hand, he uses “OT *figures* as . . . paradigms for moral behavior without any redemptive-historical significance or escalation.”<sup>40</sup> On the other hand, Peter uses “OT *events* as true biblical types with a predictive force.”<sup>41</sup> While 2 Peter may reference figures and events in somewhat different ways, I will argue that even OT “paradigms for moral behavior” have a prophetic, forward pointing dimension.

Brown’s overall perspective on 2 Peter’s use of the OT is relatively similar to my own (and like me he assumes 2 Peter’s authenticity),<sup>42</sup> though there are a number of differences. I am less interested in the technical questions than Brown is, and I am not interested in debates over normativity or validity of Peter’s use of the OT (which he discusses).<sup>43</sup> Brown speaks more of “typology,” whereas I speak of Peter’s “prophetic”

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<sup>36</sup> Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 3.

<sup>37</sup> Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 4.

<sup>38</sup> Brown, abstract to “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” iv.

<sup>39</sup> Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 5–7.

<sup>40</sup> Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 258–59.

<sup>41</sup> Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 258–59.

<sup>42</sup> Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 1n4.

<sup>43</sup> Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 264–73.

use of Scripture and the “narrative world” it projects. The largest difference between these studies is that mine seeks to synthesize all of 2 Peter’s use of the OT. Brown’s work provides a helpful resource for my dissertation’s section on 2 Peter 2:4–10a, and I interact with his broader conception of the use of the OT in 2 Peter.

**2 Peter chapter in *Commentary on NT Use of OT*.** In typical fashion, Carson carefully works through most of the OT allusions in 2 Peter.<sup>44</sup> He follows the structure standard to the *Commentary*: first he discusses the NT context of the allusion, then its OT context, followed by its context in Second Temple Jewish (or Rabbinic) literature, then any textual problems, then Peter’s use in the letter, and finally Peter’s theological appropriation. While a fairly brief chapter, Carson’s careful, nuanced discussion is very helpful. My dissertation builds off of his and similar discussions in the commentaries; however, my main concern will not be on recognizing and explaining each individual allusion so much as synthesizing them and trying to discover Peter’s theological and life-shaping use of the OT in the letter.

### **1 Peter’s Use of the OT**

For three distinct reasons, 1 Peter’s use of the OT is relevant for this dissertation. First, the two letters purport to share a common author; one would therefore expect some consistency in hermeneutic.<sup>45</sup> Additionally, 2 Peter explicitly links itself to 1 Peter in their common use of the prophetic writings of the OT whose fulfillment has been announced by the apostles (2 Pet 3:1–2; cf. 1 Pet 1:10–12).<sup>46</sup> The author believes he is

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<sup>44</sup> Carson, “2 Peter.”

<sup>45</sup> Paul Himes goes beyond this and attempts to synthesize Peter’s theology of OT prophecy from both Petrine letters as well as Peter’s sermons in Acts 2 and 3. Paul A. Himes, “Peter and the Prophetic Word: The Theology of Prophecy Traced through Peter’s Sermons and Epistles,” *BBR* 21, no. 2 (2011): 227–43. Even if one rejects 2 Peter’s authenticity, the explicit reference to 1 Peter in 2 Pet 3:1 implies an intentional connection in the mind of the author of 2 Peter.

<sup>46</sup> See chap. 2 of this dissertation for a full discussion of this point.

using the OT in similar ways and for a similar purpose in 2 Peter as he did in 1 Peter. Third, as seen above, the literature on 2 Peter's use of the OT is extremely limited; thus, interacting with works on 1 Peter's OT hermeneutic provides my study with much-needed conversation partners.<sup>47</sup>

This section first surveys two particularly relevant monographs (by Egan and Sargent) and then mentions a few older studies and a few recent studies on 1 Peter's use of the OT.<sup>48</sup>

**Egan and Sargent.** Two recent monographs on 1 Peter's use of the OT are Patrick T. Egan's *Ecclesiology and the Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter* and Benjamin Sargent's *Written to Serve: The Use of Scripture in 1 Peter*.<sup>49</sup> While both of these studies understand 1 Peter 1:10–12 as the “hermeneutical key” to the letter, their emphases both from this “key” and from the rest of the letter diverge. Egan emphasizes the “suffering and glory motif,” as well as the Christological and ecclesiological hermeneutic Peter employs. He focuses on 1 Peter's use of Isaiah, proposing that “Peter's ecclesiology draws upon the narrative of God's restoration by identifying the church as participating in a grand scriptural narrative” through the Messiah.<sup>50</sup> While Isaiah is not central to 2 Peter,

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<sup>47</sup> Estelle rightly observes, “First Peter demonstrates an extraordinary dependence on the Old Testament, especially considering its size. William Schutter found ‘forty-six quotations and allusions in all, not counting iterative allusions that would greatly boost the total, or nearly one for every two verses.’ Moreover, the Old Testament is broadly represented in 1 Peter: four books of the Pentateuch, four books of the Latter Prophets, three from the Writings with a concentration from Isaiah, Psalms, and Proverbs. Beyond the atomistic approach of quotation and citation, the function of metalepsis (evoking the context, message, or story of the previous text) is also an important consideration for rightly understanding 1 Peter.” Bryan D. Estelle, *Echoes of Exodus: Tracing a Biblical Motif* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2018), 286.

<sup>48</sup> For the survey below, I am indebted to the helpful survey of literature in Sargent, *Written to Serve*, 1–16.

<sup>49</sup> Patrick T. Egan, *Ecclesiology and the Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2016); Sargent, *Written to Serve*.

<sup>50</sup> Egan, *Ecclesiology and Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 44.



this dissertation shows that the letter likewise presents Peter's readers and opponents as participating in the "grand scriptural narrative."

Sargent argues that 1 Peter's use of the OT is "primitive" and "sectarian" in that Peter sees OT prophecy as speaking directly and solely to his present time and the church, which stands at the "climax" of salvation history.<sup>51</sup> Sargent emphasizes the discontinuity between Peter's age of fulfillment and the inferior age of the prophets who wrote only to "serve" those to come. In 1 Peter 1:10–12, Sargent sees Peter offering a hermeneutic characterized by single, "determinate" meaning. He suggests that "1 Peter offers a stimulus to a theologically conceived account of determinacy on the basis of salvation history and ecclesiology."<sup>52</sup> While I think there is far more nuance in Peter's reading of the OT than Sargent allows, this dissertation agrees that in 2 Peter the apostle's perception of being located at the climax of history influences his reading of the OT.

**Other works.** Probably the most significant older study of the OT in 1 Peter is William Schutter's *Hermeneutic and Composition in 1 Peter*; virtually all recent works interact with, and often push back against, this work.<sup>53</sup> Schutter works through and categorizes every quotation and allusion in 1 Peter. He attempts to uncover Peter's hermeneutic, emphasizing 1 Peter 1:10–12. Several unpublished dissertations (and a thesis) have also been written on 1 Peter's use of the OT, notably one under Richard

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<sup>51</sup> Sargent, *Written to Serve*, 4, 192–94. It is "primitive" in that it does not engage in sophisticated hermeneutical strategies such as typology or allegory. It is "sectarian" in that it resembles the hermeneutics of e.g., the Qumran community which interpreted the OT as speaking directly of their time and community.

<sup>52</sup> Sargent, *Written to Serve*, 5.

<sup>53</sup> William L. Schutter, *Hermeneutic and Composition in 1 Peter* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989).

Hays.<sup>54</sup> Carson's chapter in *Commentary on the NT Use of the OT* on 1 Peter is also relevant.<sup>55</sup>

There are a few other recent monographs that should be mentioned. Andrew Mbuvi argues that temple imagery, within the background of "lingering exile," forms an "interpretive matrix" for 1 Peter and is directly applied to Peter's audience.<sup>56</sup> Kelly Liebengood argues that "1 Peter is dependent upon the eschatological programme of Zechariah 9–14 for his theology of Christian suffering."<sup>57</sup> Abson Joseph conducts a narratological reading of 1 Peter; he studies the narrative elements of election, suffering, steadfastness, and vindication through the OT and their identity-shaping role in 1 Peter.<sup>58</sup> Similar to my interest for 2 Peter, Joseph is interested in 1 Peter's theological use of the OT and how it is employed to shape Peter's audience. Finally, Jeff Dryden's work on the role of story in identity formation and paraenesis in 1 Peter, while not dealing directly with the use of the OT, is relevant to my study of 2 Peter's use of the OT for identity formation.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Eric J. Gréaux, "To the Elect Exiles of the Dispersion . . . from Babylon': The Function of the Old Testament in 1 Peter" (PhD diss., Duke University, 2003) (supervised by Hays); W. Edward Glenny, "The Hermeneutics of the Use of the Old Testament in 1 Peter" (ThD diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1987); Dan McCartney, "The Use of the Old Testament in the First Epistle of Peter" (PhD diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 1989); Gregory R. Robertson, "The Use of Old Testament Quotations and Allusions in the First Epistle of Peter" (MAREl thesis, Anderson University, 1990).

<sup>55</sup> D. A. Carson, "1 Peter," in Beale and Carson, *Commentary on NT Use of OT*, 1047–61.

<sup>56</sup> Andrew M. Mbuvi, *Temple, Exile, and Identity in 1 Peter*, LNTS 345 (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 8. This, of course, is subject to the critiques posited against N. T. Wright's understanding of an ongoing exile.

<sup>57</sup> Kelly D. Liebengood, *The Eschatology of 1 Peter: Considering the Influence of Zechariah 9–14* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 1.

<sup>58</sup> Abson P. Joseph, *A Narratological Reading of 1 Peter*, LNTS 440 (New York: T&T Clark, 2012).

<sup>59</sup> J. de Waal Dryden, *Theology and Ethics in 1 Peter: Paraenetic Strategies for Christian Character Formation* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006).

## Methodology

This section clarifies several important matters: first and foremost is my biblical-theological method; then definitions of key terms, my assumption of 2 Peter's authenticity (and alternatives for unconvinced readers), 1 and 2 Peter's relationship, and delimitations of the study.

### Biblical-Theological Method

In the mid-1970s, John McKenzie wrote, "Biblical theology is the only discipline or sub-discipline in the field of theology that lacks generally accepted principles, methods, and structure. There is not even a generally accepted definition of its purpose and scope."<sup>60</sup> Eckhard Schnabel in a 2019 article observes that this statement is "still true today."<sup>61</sup> Hence the importance of identifying my approach for this dissertation, an approach which can be described thus: *descriptive and text-focused*.

*Descriptive*: My intention is to do a descriptive examination of how Peter theologically read and used the OT in 2 Peter.<sup>62</sup> This study has bearing on current discussions of how the NT authors (one at least) read the OT, which sometimes feeds into questions of how Christians "should" read today. I do not, however, wade into current questions of the validity or "normativity" of the NT authors' hermeneutics. I am interested in doing an historical and literary study of how the OT shapes Peter's theological vision.

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<sup>60</sup> McKenzie, *A Theology of the OT*, 1974, 15, quoted in Eckhard J. Schnabel, "Biblical Theology from a New Testament Perspective," *JETS* 62, no. 2 (2019): 244.

<sup>61</sup> Schnabel, "Biblical Theology from New Testament Perspective," 15. For recounting of the history of BT and discussions of major issues in the field, see James K. Mead, *Biblical Theology: Issues, Methods, and Themes* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007); Andreas J. Köstenberger, "The Present and Future of Biblical Theology," *SWJT* 56, no. 1 (2013): 3–23; Gerhard F. Hasel, *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*, 4th ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991); Gerhard F. Hasel, *New Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978).

<sup>62</sup> This is modeled excellently by Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*.

*Historically concerned, text-focused:* “Descriptive” BT, often under the label *Religionsgeschichte*, has traditionally been concerned mainly with behind-the-text historical-critical speculation.<sup>63</sup> This dissertation is concerned with the historical Peter and with influences on his thought and writing (hence, the importance of studying the original Scriptural texts and later Jewish interpretations of those texts). However, the focus is on analyzing the letter of 2 Peter itself, not on behind-the-text historical reconstructions. I seek to understand *through Peter’s text* how the historical Peter theologically and literarily employed the OT in 2 Peter. My assumption is that 2 Peter and other extant Petrine communiques (including Peter’s speeches in Acts) represent at least fairly accurately the historical Peter.<sup>64</sup>

I do not propose many new allusions, as the OT references are mostly non-controversial, but where needed I defend my choices with close readings of language and context.<sup>65</sup> I work through each occurrence, examining its OT source and canonical development, considering Second Temple Jewish interpretations, and noting any relevant

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<sup>63</sup> For classic summaries of *Religionsgeschichte* BT, see Robert Morgan, *The Nature of New Testament Theology: The Contribution of William Wrede and Adolf Schlatter* (Naperville, IL: Alec R. Allenson, 1973); Krister Stendahl, “Biblical Theology, Contemporary,” in *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible A–D*, vol. 1 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), 418–32; James Barr, “Biblical Theology,” in *Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, supplementary vol. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976), 104–11. For an introduction to the “behind the text” to “in front of the text” spectrum in BT, see Edward W. Klink III and Darian R. Lockett, *Understanding Biblical Theology: A Comparison of Theory and Practice* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2012).

<sup>64</sup> I am sympathetic to N. T. Wright’s “critical realism” approach to historical work, in contrast to postmodern ambivalence toward authors and history on the one hand and modernist insensitivity toward literature on the other. I share with Wright the view that history, literature, and theology must go together. See N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 31–46.

<sup>65</sup> Richard Hays’s criteria for establishing allusions will be largely followed, but not explicitly referenced. See Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in Paul*; Beale, *Handbook on NT Use of OT*. On literary allusions see William Irwin, “What Is an Allusion?,” *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 59, no. 3 (March 2001): 287; Derek D. Bass, “Hosea’s Use of Scripture: An Analysis of His Hermeneutics” (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009), 66–103. Bass emphasizes “contextual awareness” (100). See also Benjamin D. Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40–66* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 6–31; Ziva Ben-Porat, “The Poetics of Literary Allusion,” *PTL: A Journal for Descriptive Poetics and Theory of Literature* 1, no. 1 (1976). In some cases, I draw upon the concept of “thematic parallels,” which are “ideas/concepts shared between texts that transcend precise verbal relationships.” Harmon, *She Must and Shall Go Free*, 30.

1 Peter material. I then wrestle with how the allusion or motif is used in 2 Peter literarily, theologically, and ethically.

### **Definitions**

A few key (and contentious) terms should be defined at the outset. I very briefly define *prophetic*, *fulfillment*, *typology*, *characterization*, and *narrative world*.

*Prophetic.* By Peter's "prophetic reading" of the OT, I mean that, for Peter, the OT is intentionally forward-pointing; it does this by direct predictions, by typology, and by its historical narratives. The latter are a "window on the Messianic age."<sup>66</sup> This perspective is founded on a conviction that the OT is divinely inspired Scripture whose human speakers and authors are "prophets" and "apostles."

*Fulfillment.* I often speak of Peter's understanding that OT passages or motifs have been "fulfilled." This term has a range of meaning, corresponding to the range of "prophetic" categories listed above. In some cases, a direct fulfillment of a direct prophecy is intended. In other cases, a typological fulfillment can be observed: Peter points to the culmination of a pattern developed in the OT. In still other cases, OT historical events are said to be "fulfilled" when an analogical event has been identified.<sup>67</sup>

*Typology.* As noted earlier, there is some debate over the definition of typology. I reject the notion that typology and allegory are the same thing; such a view does not accurately explain the stark differences between e.g., Philo on the one hand, and Peter (and other NT authors) on the other.<sup>68</sup> I adopt Beale's description of typology; it is

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<sup>66</sup> This threefold prophetic perspective on the OT, evident both in the NT authors and in latter Rabbinic thought, was first introduced to me by Russell Fuller in a seminary class lecture.

<sup>67</sup> For further discussion, see e.g., Moo and Naselli, "Problem of NT's Use of OT," 710–11; Beale, *Handbook on NT Use of OT*, 95–102.

<sup>68</sup> Young's attempt to subsume typology under allegory is not ultimately persuasive. She is correct that both typology and allegory share certain related presuppositions about God and reality. But as Young herself demonstrates, there is still a necessary distinction to be made between Antiochene and Alexandrian hermeneutics: "Ikonic" exegesis employs the "deeper meaning in the text taken as a coherent whole." "Symbolic" exegesis, on the other hand, "involves using words as symbols or tokens" which destroy the "narrative . . . coherence of text." Frances M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of*

a form of indirect prophecy involving recurring patterns of persons, events, and institutions marked by historical correspondence and escalation in the culmination.<sup>69</sup> I use this term sparingly, preferring the term “prophetic” in this project.

*Characterization.* I argue that Peter “characterizes” his present world using motifs from the OT.<sup>70</sup> One could say that Peter colors in a picture of his world with OT crayons. Thus, the apostles and false teachers of his day are portrayed as the true and false prophets (respectively) of old. I argue that this is both a literary/rhetorical move *and* a “prophetic fulfillment” one, since Peter sees the events of the OT as (indirectly at least) pointing forward to the Messianic age.

*Narrative world.* I argue that key OT motifs inform the “narrative world” (or “narrative script”) in which Peter locates himself and those he addresses. By this I mean that Peter’s interpretation of the OT’s story and its fulfillment in Messiah Jesus intersect the lives of apostle and readers. They are to see themselves, others, and the world they inhabit as characters and set in this prophetically informed story. Thus, for example, Peter’s warnings to persevere are not abstractions; readers are called to take their cues from those who played the same part in this story before them.<sup>71</sup>

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*Christian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 62.

<sup>69</sup> See his helpful discussion in Beale, *Handbook on NT Use of OT*, 13–27. For further discussion of typology, see Leonhard Goppelt, *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982); Francis Foulkes, “The Acts of God: A Study of the Basis of Typology in the Old Testament,” in *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts? Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1994), 342–71; James M. Hamilton Jr., *Typology: Understanding the Bible’s Promise-Shaped Patterns: How Old Testament Expectations Are Fulfilled in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2022).

<sup>70</sup> There are similarities to Bill Arnold’s insightful observations on the book of Acts. He shows that Luke sometimes uses OT phraseology for the literary purpose of portraying “his leading characters as the servants of God akin to the saints of old.” Bill T. Arnold, “Luke’s Characterizing Use of the Old Testament in the Book of Acts,” in *History, Literature, and Society in the Book of Acts*, ed. Ben Witherington III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 322.

<sup>71</sup> The term *narrative world*, while slightly modified in my usage, has been employed in studies of 1 Peter. James Miller writes that 1 Peter “portrays a symbolic narrative world and attempts to persuade its auditors to locate themselves in it.” Miller, “Sociological Category of ‘Collective Identity,’” 167–77. Eugene Boring similarly writes that 1 Peter “projects a narrative world composed of all the events it assumes to be real—compelling serious readers / hearers to examine their own understanding of reality, and indirectly inviting them to live their lives in the world projected by the letter.” M. Eugene Boring, “Narrative Dynamics in First Peter: The Function of the Narrative World,” in *Reading First Peter with New*

## Authenticity and Alternatives

In this dissertation I assume the authenticity of 2 Peter. I recognize that this view is a minority position in NT scholarship, and that doubts concerning the letter's authenticity have a long and noble history. For defenses of Petrine authorship, see Michael Kruger, Thomas R. Schreiner, and others.<sup>72</sup> Wherever relevant throughout my analysis of 2 Peter, I examine passages from 1 Peter which shed light on or are in common with 2 Peter.

For those not convinced of Petrine authorship of 2 Peter, there are alternative canonical and literary strategies for appreciating the connections between 1 and 2 Peter. Firstly, the author of 2 Peter—whoever he may be—explicitly refers to 1 Peter. Even if there are separate authors, the author of the second letter sees his work as continuing, following up on, or at least being read in the shadow of 1 Peter.<sup>73</sup> He intends to be read as the person of “Peter,” with the apostolic background relevant. Focusing on 2 Peter 1:3–11, William Cleary argues that 2 Peter draws on many of the themes of 1 Peter and further develops and applies them.<sup>74</sup> A few other scholars have also suggested a canonical unity to the two Petrine letters. Robert Wall argues that 2 Peter functions canonically to

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*Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of First Peter*, ed. Robert L. Webb and Betsy Bauman-Martin (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 8. Similar concepts are present in Green and Dryden: Joel B. Green, “Narrating the Gospel in 1 and 2 Peter,” *Int* 60, no. 3 (2006): 266–67; Dryden, *Theology and Ethics in 1 Peter*, 7–9. Acknowledgements to Joseph’s chapter—which also employs the term—for pointing me to these other sources: Joseph, “The Petrine Letters,” 434–42. Cf. Joseph, *A Narratological Reading of 1 Peter*.

<sup>72</sup> See Michael J. Kruger, “The Authenticity of 2 Peter,” *JETS* 42, no. 4 (1999): 645–71; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 298–323; P. H. R. van Houwelingen, “The Authenticity of 2 Peter: Problems and Possible Solutions,” *EuroJTh* 19, no. 2 (2010): 119–29; Houwelingen, “De tweede trompet. De authenticiteit van de tweede brief van Petrus” (PhD diss., Theological University of the Reformed Churches, 1988). See also Mathew’s study calling into question Bauckham’s “testament” thesis. Mark D. Mathews, “The Genre of 2 Peter: A Comparison with Jewish and Early Christian Testaments,” *BBR* 21, no. 1 (2011): 51–64.

<sup>73</sup> See G. H. Boobyer, “The Indebtedness of 2 Peter to 1 Peter,” in *New Testament Essays: Studies in Memory of Thomas Walter Manson*, ed. A. J. B. Higgins (Manchester: University Press, 1959), 34–53.

<sup>74</sup> William F. Cleary, “Knowledge of Our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 Pet 1:3-11 and the Canonical Relationship between 1 and 2 Peter” (STD thesis, Catholic University of America, 2012).

fill in the theological witness of “Peter.”<sup>75</sup> Joel Green examines 1 and 2 Peter together from a narrative theology perspective.<sup>76</sup> Finally, Darian Lockett argues that the Catholic Epistles ought to be read not in isolation from each other but as a canonical unit.<sup>77</sup>

While I encourage readers to keep an open mind about the possibility of 2 Peter’s authenticity, canonical and literary approaches also show that there are relevant connections to be made between the two letters and between 2 Peter and the figure of the apostle Peter.

### **Delimitations**

The section below briefly marks out this study’s interaction with Jude, as well as with Hellenistic, Second Temple Jewish, and post-canonical Christian literature.

**Relationship to Jude.** Much scholarship on 2 Peter links the letter closely with Jude. This makes sense given the overlap of material in chapter 2, and given the widespread rejection of Petrine authorship of 2 Peter. I instead study 2 Peter in connection with 1 Peter. However, when I examine material in 2 Peter which overlaps with Jude’s material, I compare and contrast with Jude where this would shed light on 2 Peter’s use of the OT.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Wall’s thesis is that “the canonical function of 2 Peter is to complement the theological conception of 1 Peter toward the end of transmitting an authoritative account of this apostle’s testament to God’s revelation in Jesus,” filling in the rubric of “God,” “Christ,” “Community,” and “Consummation.” Robert W. Wall, “The Canonical Function of 2 Peter,” *BibInt* 9, no. 1 (2001): 68.

<sup>76</sup> Green, “Narrating the Gospel in 1 and 2 Peter.”

<sup>77</sup> Darian R. Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles: The Formation of the Catholic Epistles as a Canonical Collection* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2017).

<sup>78</sup> Especially relevant will be Jenny De Vivo, “2 Peter 2:4–16: The Redaction of the Biblical and Intertestamental References Dependent on Jude 5–11 and Their Overall Significance for the Document” (PhD diss., Loyola University Chicago, 2014). See also J. Daryl Charles, “‘Those’ and ‘These’: The Use of the Old Testament in the Epistle of Jude,” *JSNT* 12, no. 38 (1990): 109–24.



**Relationship to other literature.** My focus is on 2 Peter's use of the OT. It is more common in scholarship to read 2 Peter in connection with Hellenistic,<sup>79</sup> early Christian,<sup>80</sup> or Jewish texts.<sup>81</sup> For the most part, I ignore early Christian writings and will only discuss Hellenistic connections where directly relevant. While these studies are interesting and can be valuable, I am seeking to make a new contribution to the field. Where Peter's use of the OT appears to have been influenced by Jewish traditions, I survey the relevant Second Temple literature.

### Chapter Summaries

In chapter 2, I sketch Peter's Scriptural hermeneutics. The chapter first situates Peter's reading of Israel's Scriptures within his Jewish context and under the influence of Jesus. The chapter then studies Peter's two hermeneutical statements: 1 Peter 1:10–12, and 2 Peter 3:1–2 with 1:20–21. In both, the prophetic nature of Scripture is emphasized, along with its eschatological orientation. After a survey of Peter's use of the OT in Acts,

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<sup>79</sup> Carsten Peter Thiede, "A Pagan Reader of 2 Peter: Cosmic Conflagration in 2 Peter 3 and the Octavius of Minucius Felix," *JSNT* 8, no. 26 (1986): 79–96; J. Daryl Charles, *Virtue amidst Vice* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998); J. Daryl Charles, "The Language and Logic of Virtue in 2 Peter 1:5–7," *BBR* 8 (1998): 55–73; Gene L. Green, "'As for Prophecies, They Will Come to an End': 2 Peter, Paul and Plutarch on 'the Obsolescence of Oracles,'" *JSNT* 23, no. 82 (2001): 107–22; Richard Bauckham, "Sharers in Divine Nature: 2 Peter 1:4 in Its Hellenistic Context," *JTS* 53, no. 1 (2002): 278–81; Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts, "Τούτο πρωτον γινώσκοντες ότι in 2 Peter 1:20 and Hellenistic Epistolary Convention," *JBL* 127, no. 1 (2008): 165–71; C. John Collins, "Noah, Deucalion, and the New Testament," *Bib* 93, no. 3 (2012): 403–26; Clifford T. Winters, "A Strange Death: Cosmic Conflagration as Conceptual Metaphor in 2 Peter 3:6–13," *Conversations with the Biblical World* 33 (2013): 147–61; Frey, "Fire and Water?"

<sup>80</sup> Frey, Dulk, and van der Watt, *2 Peter and Apocalypse of Peter*; Michael J. Gilmour, *The Significance of Parallels between 2 Peter and Other Early Christian Literature* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002); Robert E. Aldridge, "Peter and the 'Two Ways,'" *VC* 53, no. 3 (1999): 233–64; Mathews, "The Genre of 2 Peter"; Mark W. Wilson, "Noah, the Ark, and the Flood in Early Christian Literature," *Scriptura* 113 (2014): 1–12. See also studies of possible connections to earlier Jesus traditions or Gospels in 2 Peter, in Alicia J. Batten and John S. Kloppenborg, eds., *James, 1 and 2 Peter, and Early Jesus Traditions*, LNTS 478 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014).

<sup>81</sup> David H. K. Hoe, "Apocalyptic Discourse in Second Peter" (PhD diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 2008); Frederick W. Danker, "2 Peter 3:10 and Psalm of Solomon 17:10," *ZNW* 53, nos. 1–2 (1962): 82–86; Frey, "Fire and Water?"; Nicholas R. Wense, "Second Temple Jewish Literary Traditions in 2 Peter," *CBQ* 78, no. 1 (2016): 111–30; Billings, "'Angels Who Sinned'; Peter H. Davids, "The Use of Second Temple Traditions in 1 and 2 Peter and Jude," in *The Catholic Epistles and the Tradition*, ed. Jacques Schlosser, BETL 176 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2004); De Vivo, "2 Peter 2:4–16"; Juza, "Echoes of Sodom and Gomorrah." See also Gerdmar, *Rethinking the Judaism-Hellenism Dichotomy*.

the chapter sketches three Petrine motifs which, taken together, suggests a grand Scriptural narrative in his thought: David in Acts, exodus/exile in 1 Peter, and true versus false prophets in 2 Peter. The chapter concludes by synthesizing three hermeneutical principles observed throughout Petrine material: (1) The nature of Scripture: Scripture as prophecy; (2) The message of Scripture: Messianic suffering and subsequent glories; and (3) The application of Scripture: stepping into the story.

Chapter 3 studies the influence of Proverbs and the biblical “Two Ways” motif on 2 Peter. Beyond a quotation from the book to vividly depict the disgusting nature of apostasy (Prov 26:11 in 2 Pet 2:22), Peter employs motifs and themes central to Proverbs (especially Prov 1–9). Peter is an older man, wanting his instruction to be always available to his hearers. His concern is about enticers, fools, scoffers, and the immoral. He catalogues virtues and vices. The letter of 2 Peter presents two ways: one leading to life, and the other to destruction. In keeping with post-biblical Jewish developments, and in line with Jesus’ influence, Peter marries wisdom motifs with Israel’s prophetic history and its eschatological future orientation. In 2 Peter, the way of life leads to new creation; the way of death leads to cosmic destruction.

Chapter 4 examines 2 Peter’s material on true versus false prophets and true versus false prophecy. Peter introduces the theme of prophecy in 2 Peter 1:16–21 with the Transfiguration account and its references to Psalm 2:7, Isaiah 42:1, and Numbers 24:17. Peter and his fellow apostles, in line with the true prophets of old, beheld divine glory and heard the divine voice confirming the words of the OT prophets over Jesus. In 2 Peter 2:1, Peter recalls the OT material concerning false prophets, starting with Deuteronomy 13 and 18 through Jeremiah 23–29. The specific false prophet looming large in 2 Peter is the obscure figure of Balaam. Peter sees in the false teachers of his day the figure of Balaam—people who had heard and known the truth of Jesus, yet who through greed entice others to a destructive life of licentiousness. It will be shown that Peter’s appropriation of biblical prophets / prophecy material is twofold: (1) He references OT

prophecy as authoritative and eschatologically fulfilled in Jesus, and (2) he identifies himself and his fellows with the stories and characters of the OT, which he sees as continuing.

Chapter 5 explains the use of three stories from Genesis in 2 Peter 2:4–10a: the “angels who sinned” (Gen 6:1–4), Noah’s flood, and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Peter structures this paragraph (2:4–10a) to develop a pattern from ancient biblical history proving that God can and will punish the ungodly and deliver the righteous (further developed in 2 Pet 3). He also employs these stories to characterize his own day. Peter likens the “angels who sinned” to the wicked in general (2:9), the false teachers in particular (2:17), and even the entire heavens and earth (3:7). They all are “kept” in “darkness” “for judgment.” The story of Noah and the flood (2 Pet 2:5) is used to exhort readers toward faithfulness, obedience, and trust; but this is primarily because the flood account foretells the story of Peter’s own day. The “now-cosmos” (3:7) is analogous to Noah’s “ancient world” (2:5, 3:6), and readers who refuse to heed the warnings of the new “proclaimers of righteousness” (2:5) will face a flood-like judgment. But the coming judgment will be by fire—like Sodom’s. Sodom’s wicked residents represent sexual immorality, licentiousness, and a lifestyle “enslaved” to corruption (2:19). Peter paints the false teachers with the colors of the men of Sodom, in a stark warning to anyone contemplating sharing in their revelries. A corresponding (but escalated, see 2 Pet 3:7–10) fiery judgment will come upon those who now resemble them. Peter sees in some of his readers the potential to play the role of Lot’s wife (2:17–20)—one who had “barely escaped” but then turned back towards Sodom’s enticements. Peter sees the faithful of his day as playing the role of Lot in their story. Their “trial/temptation” (2:9a) is to remain in a wicked environment and continue to be vexed by it (2:7–8), not succumbing to it or giving up. They can trust in God’s deliverance and know that the same God who delivered Lot will someday deliver them.

Chapter 6 considers 2 Peter 3, the central concern of which is the certainty and efficacy of the *word* and *promise* of God. The flow of scriptural imagery and argument in 2 Peter 3 is built around a succession of four events: creation, flood, fiery judgment (Sodom), and new creation. These are intertwined by causal motifs: word/promise, water, and fire. Peter references Genesis 1 to demonstrate the certainty and efficacy of God's word, but also as the starting place for his creation-flood-current world-final judgment-new creation trajectory. Peter emphasizes two key elements of the creation narrative: creation by God's "word" and out of "water." The "word" focus picks up on the emphasis on the prophetic and apostolic word throughout the letter and carries it forward toward his coming exhortation to wait for God's "promise" of *new* creation. The "water" focus prepares for the flood motif, as he urges that God's word of judgment is reliable. Noah's flood and Sodom's destruction are seen as forward-pointing to the world's final judgment. The destruction will be universal as was Noah's flood, and it will be by fire as was Sodom's. This appropriation began in 2 Peter 2, when the focus was on those past events. In 2 Peter 3, the apostle focuses on the future reality, colored by the flood and especially Sodom stories. Allusions to Isaiah in 2 Peter 3 fit the themes of the chapter perfectly—on "delay" (Isa 60:22, see below), on the cosmos's fiery destruction (Isa 34:4), and the creation of a new "heavens and earth" according to God's word of "promise" (Isa 65:17). Peter also references Psalm 90:4, Habakkuk 2:3, and Isaiah 60:22 to guide his readers in thinking through the seeming delay of Jesus' promised return. He does so by using Scripture itself, showing that God's "word" and prophetic "promises" themselves demonstrate that God's actions are often fulfilled in ways that frustrate human timetables.

## CHAPTER 2

### PETER'S SCRIPTURAL HERMENEUTICS

Before embarking upon detailed study of 2 Peter's use of Scripture in the next chapter, it will be helpful to survey how Peter uses the OT in all materials attributed to him in the NT.<sup>1</sup> This chapter first situates Peter's hermeneutics within his Jewish context and shines a light on Jesus' influence on his reading of Scripture. Next, I examine the scriptural hermeneutic implied in Peter's more explicit statements on Scripture (1 Pet 1:10–12; 2 Pet 3:1–2; and 1:20–21). Then I investigate the use of the Scripture in Peter's speeches recorded in Acts 1–3.<sup>2</sup> After this, I survey three major Petrine themes unique to the speeches, 1 Peter, and 2 Peter respectively. The Davidic theme is prominent in Acts, the exodus/exile motifs in 1 Peter, and “false prophets” in 2 Peter. The hermeneutics implied in the Petrine texts surveyed all point to a larger tapestry that is the prophetic-eschatological vision Peter seeks to convey to his readers in 2 Peter. The chapter concludes with three core principles of Peter's scriptural hermeneutic, which are foundational for the next chapters of this dissertation.

#### **Jewish Context**

“New Testament writers were steeped not only in the Jewish Scriptures, but also in Jewish methods of reading and interpreting Scripture.”<sup>3</sup> Thus it is important to

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<sup>1</sup> A similar survey is attempted for the theme of prophecy in Peter's letters and speeches by Paul A. Himes, “Peter and the Prophetic Word: The Theology of Prophecy Traced through Peter's Sermons and Epistles,” *BBR* 21, no. 2 (2011): 227–43. Himes acknowledges that his corpus is controversial, as do I.

<sup>2</sup> I will also touch on Acts 3:17–26 and Acts 10:42–43 for completeness. Studying Acts to gain insight into Peter's use of the OT (and not merely Luke's) is controversial and must be done carefully. See discussion on warrant and assumptions below.

<sup>3</sup> Lori Baron and B. J. Oropeza, “Midrash,” in *Exploring Intertextuality: Diverse Strategies for*

sketch in the Jewish hermeneutical background to Peter’s reading of Scripture. Like many of his Jewish contemporaries (especially apocalyptically minded ones such as the Qumran sect), Peter sees Scripture as directly relevant to his present day within an eschatological framework. He also employs some of the same exegetical techniques. As will be seen, however, there are also some significant differences in Peter’s hermeneutic, which are directly attributed to the influence of Jesus and the launching of the Christian movement (discussed in the next section). As Qumran will be the most frequent point of comparison, I first clarify the emphasis and nature of Qumranic exegesis. I then briefly compare the hermeneutics of 1 Peter, Peter’s speeches in Acts, and 2 Peter with those of his contemporaries.

### **Clarifying Comparisons**

When comparing Jewish scriptural exegesis to that of the NT, it is common to focus on what in Jewish practice is closest to the NT text under consideration. In the case of Petrine exegesis, it is Qumranic *peshet*. This section briefly sketches the contours of *peshet* exegesis in relation to the NT, but only after raising two important caveats.

The practice of comparing what most closely resembles the text being studied skews two crucial aspects of the data: environment and emphasis.<sup>4</sup> First, Brooke very helpfully reminds readers that “the closer a New Testament passage and a Qumran scroll seem to be, the more likely is it that both merely share a feature of Palestinian Judaism common at the time.”<sup>5</sup> Schnittjer offers a related caution. In many cases, he argues, both

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*New Testament Interpretation of Texts*, ed. B. J. Oropeza and Steve Moyise (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2016), 64.

<sup>4</sup> While not dealing directly with the point of “emphasis,” Simon Gathercole discusses important criteria for establishing relationships and resemblances between literatures. Simon Gathercole, “Resemblance and Relation: Comparing the Gospels of Mark, John and Thomas,” in *The New Testament in Comparison: Validity, Method, and Purpose in Comparing Traditions*, ed. John M. G. Barclay and Benjamin G. White, LNTS (London: T&T Clark, 2020), 173–92.

<sup>5</sup> George J. Brooke, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 13.

NT authors and other Second Temple Jewish writers are actually following the interpretive techniques seen in Israel's Scriptures themselves.<sup>6</sup> When comparing Peter to Qumran, some of the similarities discovered will be due to both literatures' sharing a common *environment*.

Second, comparing the most similar elements of two literatures can obscure the significantly different *emphases* of the literatures. Peter primarily sees Scripture as messianically "prophetic" (see 1 Pet 1:10–12 and discussion below); similarities are thus adduced in Qumran's *peshar* texts. However, while this was an important feature for the Qumran community, their primary scriptural concerns (like those of other Jewish groups) were *halakhic*. The major concerns of the Qumran community—and their fierce opposition to other Jewish groups—lay in disagreements regarding the cultic calendar and observances of feast days, strictness regarding interpretation of Sabbath and purity laws, and similar matters (see especially 4QMMT).<sup>7</sup> Peter shows virtually no interest in these issues in extant material (though he assumes biblical moral norms, e.g., 1 Pet 4:1–17; 2 Pet 2).<sup>8</sup> Likewise, though they certainly recognized scriptural Messianic prophecy

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<sup>6</sup> Gary E. Schnittjer, *Old Testament Use of Old Testament: A Book-by-Book Guide* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2021), 847–65. In the following chapters of this dissertation, I study the original OT passages themselves and often find that Peter's/Jewish interpretive trajectories can be seen in the OT texts themselves.

<sup>7</sup> Shemesh confirms that "legal issues are of prime concern in the scrolls." Aharon Shemesh, "Halakhah between the Dead Sea Scrolls and Rabbinic Literature," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. John J. Collins and Timothy H. Lim (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 598. Cf. Shemesh, *Halakhah in the Making: The Development of Jewish Law from Qumran to the Rabbis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009); Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Qumran and Jerusalem: Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the History of Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010); Bilhah Nitzan, "The Continuity of Biblical Interpretation in the Qumran Scrolls and Rabbinic Literature," in Collins and Lim, *Oxford Handbook of Dead Sea Scrolls*, 337–48. Brooke notes the change in scholarship from granting "automatic priority" to "discussion of" Qumranic texts dealing with scriptural prophecy. "In place of the *Pesharim*, pride of place has [now] more often been given to legal interpretation," such as to the *Temple Scroll*, "the so-called *Reworked Pentateuch* scrolls," the "legal section of the" CD, "and other compositions." George J. Brooke, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Interpretation of Scripture," in *The World of Jesus and the Early Church: Identity and Interpretation in the Early Communities of Faith*, ed. Craig A. Evans (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2011), 125–26. Cf. Brooke, *Dead Sea Scrolls and New Testament*; George J. Brooke, "Shared Exegetical Traditions between the Scrolls and the New Testament," in Collins and Lim, *Oxford Handbook of Dead Sea Scrolls*, 566–92.

<sup>8</sup> Probably the closest he comes is at the Jerusalem Council, when he refers to the law of Moses as an unbearable "yoke" (Acts 15:10). The word *νόμος* never occurs in Peter's writings or in words attributed to him. This is in contrast to the Pauline emphasis on the Mosaic Law and its relationship to

(e.g., Matt 2:3–6), even the earliest of Rabbinic uses of Scripture were concerned primarily with *halakhic* questions.<sup>9</sup> One of the most striking differences between Peter’s use of Scripture and that of his Jewish contemporaries, then, lies in their radically different emphases: For Palestinian Judaism, Scripture was primarily *halakhic* (as later codified in Rabbinic texts), though especially at Qumran there is a concern for prophetic-eschatological readings.<sup>10</sup> For Peter, Scripture is seen almost entirely in prophetic-Messianic terms, with virtually no interest in questions of *halakhah*. With the above important caveats in mind, I can briefly focus in on Qumranic *pesher* and its relationship to NT/Petrine exegesis.<sup>11</sup>

Qumranic *pesher* exegesis is known as a “hermeneutic of contemporaneity”<sup>12</sup> which views Scripture as speaking to the eschaton which has begun.<sup>13</sup> This baseline conviction is shared by Peter and the other NT writers, and there is some overlap in

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Christians. Likely the difference lies in two points: (1) Paul’s primary mission was to the gentiles, so questions of Jewish law became immediately germane. (2) Paul, unlike Peter, had rabbinic training and so was more intimately familiar with such discussions. I am not denying that Peter likely thought through these issues at some level, however.

<sup>9</sup> See David Instone-Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions in Jewish Exegesis Before 70 CE* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), 11–173. For Philo, of course, Scripture is employed philosophically. On Philonic interpretation of Scripture, see Yehoshua Amir, “Authority and Interpretation of Scripture in the Writings of Philo,” in *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. Martin J. Mulder (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 421–54.

<sup>10</sup> For the latter see especially the *pesherim* (1QpHab being the classic example), as well as various passages in CD, 1QS, and 1QM. For examples of *halakhic* exegesis see e.g., 4QMMT, 11QT<sup>a</sup>, and CD 9–11. For discussions of various examples of prophetic and legal exegesis see Michael Fishbane, “Use, Authority and Interpretation of Mikra at Qumran,” in Mulder, *Mikra*, 339–77. Cf. Brooke, “Shared Exegetical Traditions”; Brooke, “Dead Sea Scrolls and Interpretation”; Nitzan, “Continuity of Biblical Interpretation”; Shemesh, *Halakhah in the Making*; Matthias Henze, ed., *Biblical Interpretation at Qumran* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005); Schiffman, *Qumran and Jerusalem*.

<sup>11</sup> Brooke rightly cautions against labelling as “*pesher*” anything in the NT since “an equivalent for the term [פֶּשֶׁר] is nowhere to be found there and there are as many differences as there are similarities between what is taking place in the exegesis of the scrolls and that of the NT. Brooke, “Dead Sea Scrolls and Interpretation,” 126.

<sup>12</sup> Francis Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*, 2nd ed. (London: T&T Clark, 2016), 102.

<sup>13</sup> Elliger summarizes the hermeneutical principle of *pesher* thus: “1. Prophetische Verkündigung hat zum Inhalt das Ende, und 2. Die Gegenwart ist die Endzeit.” Karl Elliger, *Studien zum Habakuk-Kommentar vom Toten Meer*, BHT 15 (Tübingen: JCB Mohr, 1953), 150. Cf. discussion in Shani Berrin, “Qumran Pesharim,” in Henze, *Biblical Interpretation at Qumran*, 116.



practice.<sup>14</sup> But a *peshet* label does *not* disclose what more specific theological commitments may be in effect and what techniques are being employed to read biblical texts. Qumranic *peshet* utilizes a number of techniques to uncover the hidden prophetic meaning. Brownlee originally set out thirteen principles of Qumranic hermeneutics. The first principle is that “everything the prophet wrote has a *veiled, eschatological meaning*.”<sup>15</sup> Most of the other principles are actually more obscure techniques: “meaning is often to be ascertained through a *forced, or abnormal construction of the biblical text*”; “textual or orthographic peculiarities,” textual variants, “equation of synonyms,” and rearrangement or substitution of letters in a word can aid in interpretation; and allegorical interpretation (though perhaps closer to typology in some cases) or “analogous circumstances” or “other passages” of Scripture may illuminate the text.<sup>16</sup> While Brownlee’s principles have been criticized, they have generally been defended.<sup>17</sup>

*Peshet* is often viewed as “atomistic” and non-contextual interpretation. Some scholars take this too far, suggesting that this is always a feature of *peshet*.<sup>18</sup> Such assessments are overstated, however; for example, Francis Watson has offered a detailed, plausible contextual explanation of 1QpHab 7.1–5.<sup>19</sup> Nonetheless, Qumranic *peshet* often

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<sup>14</sup> See Watson, *Paul and Hermeneutics of Faith*, 92; William L. Schutter, *Hermeneutic and Composition in I Peter* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989), 117–18.

<sup>15</sup> William H. Brownlee, “Biblical Interpretation among the Sectaries of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” *BA* 14, no. 3 (1951): 60.

<sup>16</sup> Brownlee, “Biblical Interpretation,” 60–61.

<sup>17</sup> See Instone-Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions in Jewish Exegesis*, 189–90; Schutter, *Hermeneutic and Composition in I Peter*, 114–17. For a more recent discussion of various scholars’ enumerations of Qumranic exegetical principles, see Berrin, “Qumran Pesharim,” 126–32.

<sup>18</sup> John J. Collins has gone so far as to state that “all scriptural interpretation at Qumran is atomistic.” John J. Collins, review of *The Messiah before Jesus: The Suffering Servant of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, by Israel Knohl, *JQR* 91, no. 1/2 (2000): 186. Richard Longenecker’s assumption is similar. See Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 181.

<sup>19</sup> Watson, *Paul and Hermeneutics of Faith*, 103–15. (Prior to examining the Habakkuk *peshet*, Watson surveys references to the prophets in the CD [86–92] and the Qumran *pesharim* of The Twelve [92–103].) Beale suggests that 1QpHab may be employing a typological approach which “may be like that in a number of” NT texts. G. K. Beale, “Did Jesus and the Apostles Preach the Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts? Revisiting the Debate Seventeen Years Later in the Light of Peter Enns’ Book *Inspiration*

does evidence comparatively little concern for literary context and usually even less concern for historical context.<sup>20</sup> This is actually due to Qumran’s understanding of what it means for Scripture to be “prophetic.” Qumran tends to understand Scripture as akin to a mysterious vision or dream “presaging” which needs to be “untangled” by someone divinely given the ability to “prognosticate.”<sup>21</sup> The use of the words פֶּשֶׁר and רִז indicate this.<sup>22</sup>

Peter and the NT share some of the “mystery” conception with Qumran, and again there is some overlap in application.<sup>23</sup> Jesus needed to “open the minds” of Peter and his fellow disciples (Luke 24:45, discussed below), and the OT writers did not fully comprehend their own writings (1 Pet 1:10–11). But at the same time—diverging from Qumran—there is also an assumption that ordinary people can and should be able to recognize that the OT speaks of Jesus. Jesus rebuked his disciples (Luke 24:25–26) and others (John 5:39) for not seeing him in the Scriptures. Peter argues for his understanding of Scripture in front of crowds of unbelievers in Acts 2 and Acts 4, expecting them to be persuaded by the combination of exegetical arguments plus testimony to the resurrection

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*and Incarnation*,” ed. G. K. Beale, *Them* 32, no. 1 (2006): 29n20. Beale elsewhere writes that “concern for contextual exegesis is characteristically found in both Qumran scrolls and Jewish apocalyptic.” G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 3. He then refers to 1QM for Qumran, and for apocalyptic, 1 Enoch 36–72; 4 Ezra 11–13; 2 Baruch 36–42; Testament of Joseph 196–12. Cf. Isaac Rabinowitz, “Peshar/Pittaron: Its Biblical Meaning and Its Significance in the Qumran Literature,” *RevQ* 8, no. 2 (1973): 219–32. Instone-Brewer even sees some contextual awareness in the “Well Midrash” of the Damascus Document (CD 6.3ff). Instone-Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions in Jewish Exegesis*, 190–92.

<sup>20</sup> “For example, Habakkuk’s complaint to God” (Hab 1:13a) “regarding the evil done by the Kittim to the people of their conquered lands, is taken in the *peshar* not as a complaint against God, but as a revealed response to historical injustice” (1QpHab 5: 1–4, cf. the War Scroll). “Another complaint against God in the same biblical context” (Hab 1: 13b) “is not understood in the *peshar* as a reference to the Kittim, but to an opponent group of the *yahad*” (1QpHab 5: 8–12). “This is a striking decontextualization as it disregards altogether the immediate context and its reference to the Kittim.” Nitzan, “Continuity of Biblical Interpretation,” 340–41. On the uniqueness of historical context in NT exegesis vs. other Jewish exegesis, see Benjamin Sargent, *David Being a Prophet* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014).

<sup>21</sup> Rabinowitz, “Peshar/Pittaron.”

<sup>22</sup> Rabinowitz, “Peshar/Pittaron.”; Beale, *Handbook on NT Use of OT*, 29–40.

<sup>23</sup> See G. K. Beale and Benjamin L. Gladd, *Hidden but Now Revealed: A Biblical Theology of Mystery* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014).

confirmed by signs.<sup>24</sup> A Spirit-given paradigm shift is needed (1 Pet 1:12); but for Peter Scripture is not so much a prophetic code to be deciphered (per Qumran) as it is a prophetic history to be seen fulfilled. Individual scriptural passages speak of Jesus in light of those passages' relationships to larger redemptive-historical motifs (e.g., Peter's use of David in Acts; see below).<sup>25</sup>

This sketch helps make sense of both the similarities and the differences in the techniques used by Qumranic *peshet* and Petrine messianic exegesis. (1) Since Scripture is prophetically oriented to the last days which they believe to have begun, both groups will apply Scripture to their immediate present. (2) Since both groups come from the same general milieu, certain techniques (e.g., use of *gezerah shevah* and *qal vaomer*) will appear in both. (3) Since Qumran sees the prophetic nature of Scripture working like a “mysterious” dream or vision, *peshet* will tend more readily to use techniques akin to “codebreaking” (e.g., some of Brownlee's points discussed above). (4) Since Peter sees the “mystery” as being more redemptive-historically based (e.g., the surprise of a suffering Messiah and the incoming of the gentiles), he is more likely to employ techniques related to redemptive-historical motifs and (when speaking to “non-sectarians”) argumentation.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Though this comparison may not be completely fair. Peter argues only when speaking to “non-sectarians,” and scholars have no *peshets* from Qumran addressed to outsiders. On the other hand, “convincing from the Scriptures” is a very important part of the NT ethos (especially Acts).

<sup>25</sup> In line with these conclusions are Schiffman's observations (in his study of Scripture in the Gospel's passion narratives) that “the Christian materials assume that the plain meaning of the text refers to Jesus, his life, death, and resurrection. Qumran *Peshet*, on the other hand, assumes that the text conceals its true meaning, known only to the sectarians through the interpretation of the Teacher of Righteousness.” Lawrence H. Schiffman, “Biblical Exegesis in the Passion Narratives and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Biblical Interpretation in Judaism and Christianity*, ed. Isaac Kalimi and Peter J. Haas, LHBOTS 439 (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 130.

<sup>26</sup> Points 3 and 4 represent a spectrum. They are not mutually exclusive, and both literatures may evidence instances of both points. Perhaps a helpful comparison to Brownlee's principles for Qumran (though not perfect since Brownlee's focus on very specific techniques) is Beale's five presuppositions of NT authors, discussed in chap. 1. See Beale, *Handbook on NT Use of OT*, 95–102.

Schnittjer's comparison of Qumranic *peshet* vs. NT scriptural exegesis yields three helpful conclusions, which considerably overlap with mine. (1) Similarity “applies only in the most general senses that both sets of authors apply Israel's Scriptures to their own situation and view themselves as within the latter days of scriptural fulfillment.” Schnittjer, *Old Testament Use of Old Testament*, 863. (2) In contrast to

The following sections more closely compare and contrast the use of the OT in 1 Peter, Peter's speeches in Acts, and 2 Peter with Peter's Jewish contemporaries (most often Qumran).

### 1 Peter and Hermeneutical Method

Dan McCartney's comparison of Rabbinic, Philonic, and Qumranic hermeneutics to 1 Peter is balanced and helpful.<sup>27</sup> He concludes, first, that 1 Peter's use of OT is similar to all of the above in a couple of basic respects. First, all share a view of Scripture as God's word and as applicable to contemporary life. Second, all attempt to apply it to their communities and concerns. These were common presuppositions across the spectrum of Judaism.<sup>28</sup> The methods furthest removed from 1 Peter's are "hellenistic" methods (e.g., Philo's); the "closest resemblances are to the Qumran materials."<sup>29</sup> This is in fact the broad scholarly consensus.<sup>30</sup> Benjamin Sargent observes, "That 1 Peter

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Qumranic *peshet*, which works through biblical texts "line by line applying elements to their own situations," NT "figural interpretation is highly selective only making allusion to specific parts of the contexts that speak to the fulfillment" (862). "Since they [Qumran] treat the entire scriptural text the interpretative correspondences become very allegorical" (862). In contrast, "the relatively small number of OT passages utilized in the passion texts presumes a *strict selectivity*, conditioned by the circumstances of the passion events. The selective appropriation of figural donor contexts allows the New Testament authors to clothe the historical narration in scriptural language." (Schnittjer notes that this selectivity "is like the selectivity in figural interpretation of scriptural traditions within" the OT.) (3) "Figural interpretation based on shared patterns between donor and receptor contexts"—a.k.a. "typological interpretation"—"appears frequently in" the OT and "extensively" in the NT, but "infrequently in the sectarian literature of Qumran and rarely in rabbinic literature." Schnittjer, *Old Testament Use of Old Testament*, 861–63. Cf. Schiffman, "Biblical Exegesis in the Passion Narratives," 130.

<sup>27</sup> See chap. 6, "The Hermeneutical Milieu of the First Century," in Dan McCartney, "The Use of the Old Testament in the First Epistle of Peter" (PhD diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 1989), 184–238.

<sup>28</sup> Shared uses of Scripture show "much in the New Testament is the common stock of eschatologically oriented first-century Palestinian Judaism." Brooke, *Dead Sea Scrolls and New Testament*, 94.

<sup>29</sup> McCartney, "Use of OT in 1 Peter," 238.

<sup>30</sup> William Schutter's is the classic study on 1 Peter's hermeneutic. He finds that 1 Peter's use of the OT is "homiletic midrash" (not an ideal term) with specific affinities to Qumranic (eschatologically oriented) *peshet* exegesis. He finds an especially relevant parallel to the hermeneutical statement of 1 Pet 1:10–12 in 1QpHab 7.1–5. See Schutter, *Hermeneutic and Composition in 1 Peter*, 111, 169–70. In a brief study, Richard Bauckham concludes that 1 Peter's use of the OT "falls into two main categories: prophetic interpretation and paraenetic application" which are "not wholly distinct"; "*peshet*-type" exegesis characterizes Peter's prophetic interpretation. Richard Bauckham, "James, 1 and 2 Peter, Jude," in *It Is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture: Essays in Honour of Barnabas Lindars, SSF*, ed. D. A. Carson and H.

belongs to a general Apocalyptic Jewish milieu is beyond doubt.”<sup>31</sup>

William Schutter and others find an especially relevant parallel to the hermeneutical statement of 1 Peter 1:10–12 in 1QpHab 7.1–5. The texts read as follows, respectively:

1QpHab 7.1–5: And God told Habakkuk to write what was going to happen to the last generation, but he did not let him know the consummation of the era. And as for what he says: “So that /may run/ the one who reads it.” Its interpretation concerns the Teacher of Righteousness, to whom God has made known all the mysteries of the words of his servants, the prophets.<sup>32</sup>

1 Peter 1:10–12: Concerning which salvation the prophets who prophesied concerning the grace coming to you sought out and inquired, searching into whom [or what]<sup>33</sup> or what kind of time the Spirit of the Messiah in them was showing when he testified in advance the sufferings of the Messiah and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but rather you with respect to these things, which now have been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look.

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G. M. Williamson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 309–11. In a more recent study, Benjamin Sargent is convinced that 1 Peter’s hermeneutic is thoroughly “sectarian” and “primitive” in that Peter sees Scripture as having a single “determinate meaning” for his community, much like Qumran. He claims there is no evidence that Peter thought the prophetic passages he references had a separate meaning in their “original” historical contexts. Sargent reads too much out of 1 Pet 1:10–12 and thus overstates his conclusions. Benjamin Sargent, *Written to Serve: The Use of Scripture in 1 Peter*, LNTS 547 (London: T&T Clark, 2015), 147–69. Patrick Egan’s recent work gives another helpful survey and a nuanced contribution. While he agrees that “there are affinities with the exegetical practice used at Qumran” which “the use of key-word connections between scriptural texts exemplifies,” he argues that “this is not the point of” the hermeneutical statement of 1 Peter 1:10–12. Patrick T. Egan, *Ecclesiology and the Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2016), 71. Instead, “it is something that functions in the background of the letter” (71). For Egan, the unique feature of 1 Peter’s hermeneutic is his theological, “particularly Christian exegesis of scripture” (71). See fuller discussion in Egan, 15–19, 44–75.

<sup>31</sup> Sargent, *Written to Serve*, 147. This is “despite studies seeking to explain various aspects . . . in terms of Hellenistic background.” See excursus on “apocalyptic and 1 Peter” in Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 105–7. See also Chad Pierce, “Apocalypse and the Epistles of 1, 2 Peter and Jude,” in *The Jewish Apocalyptic Tradition and the Shaping of New Testament Thought*, ed. Benjamin E. Reynolds and Loren T. Stuckenbruck (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017), 308–17. Pierce surveys apocalyptic elements in 1 Peter, including (among others) his use of “glory” and his references to angels.

<sup>32</sup> Quotation taken from Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 16–17.

<sup>33</sup> For discussion see Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 109; Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 2nd ed., CSC (Nashville: B&H, 2020), 73–74; Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 101–3.

Striking similarities include the fact that in both passages, (1) prophets predict eschatological events, (2) but are not made aware of when that time would come, and (3) that those prophecies can now be rightly interpreted by divinely sanctioned figures, (4) in a specific community.<sup>34</sup> Clearly there is a similar eschatological framework, concern for prophecy, and understanding of how at least some prophetic texts operate. Both Peter and Qumran assume that Scripture prophetically speaks forward to the eschatological age,<sup>35</sup> of which their communities are seen to be at the center. Both settings also believe that God has raised up teachers who have been given special insight/revelation into the hidden meaning of Scripture—the Teacher of Righteousness for Qumran, Jesus’ apostles for Peter. The similarities firmly situate 1 Peter toward the apocalyptic/sectarian end of the spectrum of Second Temple Jewish hermeneutics.

But the differences between the two passages paralleled above underscore Peter’s theological uniqueness with respect to even his “closest” fellow-readers of Scripture: (1) Peter insists that prophetic texts proclaim a *suffering* and subsequently glorified Messiah (not commonly expected either in Qumran or elsewhere),<sup>36</sup> and (2) as

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<sup>34</sup> Schutter lists eleven points of similarity: “Both (1) focus on certain prophets who (2) God inspired (3) to predict, among other things, (4) the events associated with (5) the End-time, (6) though the precise moment may have eluded them, (7) and whose words (8) require inspired interpretations (9) by divinely appointed persons, (10) in order that the final generation might understand correctly, and, it is implied, (11) respond appropriately.” Schutter, *Hermeneutic and Composition in I Peter*, 111.

<sup>35</sup> As mentioned above, the first of Brownlee’s thirteen hermeneutical principles of Qumran is, “Everything the ancient prophet wrote has a *veiled, eschatological meaning*.” Brownlee, “Biblical Interpretation,” 60.

<sup>36</sup> See N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 307–20; Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, ed. Géza Vermès, Fergus Millar, and Matthew Black, vol. 2, 2nd ed. (London: T&T Clark, 2014), 547–49; William Horbury, *Messianism among Jews and Christians: Biblical and Historical Studies*, 2nd ed. (London: T&T Clark, 2016), 21–22; Horbury, *Jewish Messianism and the Cult of Christ* (London: SCM Press, 1998), 32; John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: Messianism in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 235. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> should not be read as evidence for a suffering Messiah figure at Qumran, contra Israel Knohl, *The Messiah before Jesus: The Suffering Servant of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, trans. David Maisel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000). See Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, 141–48, 164–70; Emiliano R. Urciuoli, “A Suffering Messiah at Qumran? Some Observations on the Debate about 1QIsa,” *RevQ* 24, no. 2 (2009): 273–81; Collins, review of *The Messiah before Jesus*; Horbury, *Messianism among Jews and Christians*, 22. For thorough recent studies of Messianism in ancient Judaism and early Christianity, see Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*; Matthew V. Novenson, *The Grammar of Messianism: An Ancient Jewish Political Idiom and Its Users* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); Horbury, *Jewish*

Peter is writing to a primarily gentile audience, he claims that these prophets prophesied of *gentiles* receiving the messianic eschatological blessings<sup>37</sup> (alien to Qumran and generally unforeseen in Judaism to the extent Peter believes).<sup>38</sup>

There are also differences between the way Qumran and 1 Peter go about actually reading prophetic texts eschatologically. First, as McCartney observes, 1 Peter “does not atomize” the way Qumran did, “or engage in extensive allegorical interpretation” (contra both Qumran and Philo).<sup>39</sup> Longenecker points to Peter’s quotation of Isaiah 40:6–8 in 1 Peter 1:24–25 to make the opposite point, but the passage he references actually serves to underscore Peter’s concern for both literary and redemptive-historical context.<sup>40</sup> Peter homes in on the “word” (ῥῆμα LXX) of the Lord that Isaiah says “stands forever.” “In typical peshet fashion,” Longenecker writes, Peter says that “this is the word (τοῦτο . . . ἐστὶν τὸ ῥῆμα) that was preached to you.” It is, he avers, “an atomistic focusing on a single feature (in this case, τὸ ῥῆμα) and the explication of a fuller meaning seen to lie inherent within that feature from the perspective of eschatological fulfillment.”<sup>41</sup> But precisely the opposite is evidenced here.

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*Messianism and Cult of Christ*; Horbury, *Messianism among Jews and Christians*.

<sup>37</sup> There is a variety of expectation in Second Temple Judaism concerning the fate of the gentiles. For an exhaustive survey see Terence L. Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles: Jewish Patterns of Universalism (to 135 CE)* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007). DSS and apocalyptic Jewish literature is generally quite negative towards gentiles; see John J. Collins, “Gentiles in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Attitudes to Gentiles in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. David C. Sim and James S. McLaren, LNTS (London: T&T Clark, 2013), 46–61; Michael P. Theophilus, “The Portrayal of Gentiles in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature,” in Sim and McLaren, *Attitudes to Gentiles*, 72–91.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Egan, *Ecclesiology and Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 71.

<sup>39</sup> McCartney, “Use of OT in 1 Peter,” 238. As examples of atomization, McCartney discusses 1QpMic frag 10 and 4QpPs37 (229–30); as examples of allegorical he discusses CD 6.3–11 (the Well Midrash), CD 7.14–21, and CD 8:9–12 (215–20).

<sup>40</sup> Sargent helpfully distinguishes between the two types of contexts, noting that while literary context was often acknowledged in Jewish exegesis per Hillel’s middah, concern for historical context was more distinct to the NT. Benjamin Sargent, “The Exegetical Middah מענינו דבר הלמד מענינו and the New Testament,” *NovT* 57, no. 4 (2015): 413–17. For discussion of Hillel’s sixth and seventh principles, on literary context, see Baron and Oropeza, “Midrash,” 68–71.

<sup>41</sup> Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in Apostolic Period*, 181.

A brief glance at the context is in order. In the immediately preceding verses in Isaiah (40:3–5), there is a voice crying out to prepare the way in the desert for Yahweh, for his glory is about to be revealed. In verse 6 another voice is telling someone to “cry” again; then comes the question, “What shall I cry?” In response, the answer is given in verses 9–11. The individual is to cry out on a high mountain as “one heralding good news” (ὁ εὐαγγελιζόμενος) that “your God” has returned to reign and shepherd his people. It is in the middle of this exchange (vv. 6b–8) that Peter’s cited portion is located. Thus when Peter identifies the “word” of Isaiah 40:8 with the “good news” preached to them, he is doing anything but “atomizing.” Whether one finds his exegesis persuasive is a separate question, but what should not be denied is that Peter’s appropriation is sensitive to the literary and redemptive-historical context of the Isaiah passage.<sup>42</sup> Peter is reading (1) a prophetic book in which he sees Jesus to be the fulfillment of the Davidic and suffering Servant of Yahweh (see his use of Isa 53 in 1 Pet 2:21–25), and (2) a passage which speaks of Yahweh’s eschatological return to Zion as a shepherd-king, (3) prepared for by a call for wilderness preparation (with which John the Baptizer was identified), and (4) which explicitly refers to this message as “good news” (ὁ εὐαγγελιζόμενος Isa 40:9 LXX / τὸ εὐαγγελισθὲν 1 Pet 1:25).<sup>43</sup> Both Qumran and 1 Peter read Scripture eschatologically and prophetically. Here, however, Peter shows a greater sensitivity to both the literary context of the scriptural citation and to the redemptive-historical development of motifs present in the passage he cites. Historical meaning matters for

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<sup>42</sup> See fuller discussion with similar conclusions in D. A. Carson, “1 Peter,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 1019–22.

<sup>43</sup> Note how Peter uses a participle form, perhaps influenced by the LXX wording.



Peter since it is through redemptive history that Scripture’s prophecies reach their fulfillment<sup>44</sup>; Peter extends “the historical meaning without divorcing it from history.”<sup>45</sup>

### **Acts, Jewish Techniques, and Historical Context**

Many scholars detect elements of proto-Rabbinic midrashic as well as Qumran-style *peshet* exegesis in Peter’s speeches in Acts. I group these putative features into three categories.<sup>46</sup>

First, some perceived similarities should be seen as superficial and coincidental. As Marshall notes, for example, some scholars detect a *peshet*-like introduction (“Its interpretation refers to”) where Peter pronounces that “this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel” in Acts 2:16.<sup>47</sup> But this is not compelling, for a few reasons. (1) Luke/Peter does not use a word corresponding to Qumran’s trademark פֶּשֶׁר / פִּשְׁרוֹ; Peter simply says “This is . . . .”—a very generic phrase. (2) Peter is not writing an explanation of a biblical text; he is instead proclaiming a scriptural explanation of a current event. (3) As Keener notes, while Qumran emphasized prophetic application of Scripture to the “final generation” (their time), application of prophetic promises to the messianic age probably reflects “some more widespread principles” in Jewish circles.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> It is important to clarify that *peshet* interpretation did not deny a passage’s historical meaning. See Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 873.

<sup>45</sup> McCartney, “Use of OT in 1 Peter,” 238. McCartney points out that 1 Peter’s exegesis is “more closely connected to the historical meaning than any of” the other contemporary Jewish interpretive schools are.

<sup>46</sup> I defend the appropriateness of using the speeches in Acts to study Peter’s hermeneutic in the section below on “Peter in Acts.”

<sup>47</sup> I. Howard Marshall, “Acts,” in Beale and Carson, *Commentary on the NT Use of OT*, 533.

<sup>48</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1:873.

Second, there are some genuine and striking parallels to Jewish techniques, which should be attributed to their inhabiting a shared milieu.<sup>49</sup> For example, in Acts 2:25–35 Peter may employ the *gezerah shevah* technique by juxtaposing two texts (Pss 16 and 110) both containing the phrase “at my right hand” (ἐκ δεξιῶν μου, LXX).<sup>50</sup> He likewise may use a *qal vaomer* (“light to heavy”) argument in Acts 1:16–22 when he applies the fate “of the psalmist’s enemies” to Judas, “betrayers of the righteous one,” the Messiah.<sup>51</sup> Some scholars believe the Pentecost speech resembles the Rabbinic *proem* structure (with an introductory text followed by two other linguistically linked passages),<sup>52</sup> but this should not be pressed too far.<sup>53</sup> There is also Peter’s conviction that David was “a prophet” (Acts 2:30), shared explicitly by Qumran.<sup>54</sup> While Luke must be given his due credit as editor and literary arranger of Peter’s recorded speeches, these techniques and assumptions firmly situate Peter’s use of Scripture within a first-century Palestinian Jewish milieu.

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<sup>49</sup> For fuller studies of these features (with which I do not at all points concur) see E. Earle Ellis, “Midrashic Features in the Speeches of Acts,” in *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity: New Testament Essays* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1978), 198–208; Luke Timothy Johnson, *Septuagintal Midrash in the Speeches of Acts* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2002). Cf. Sargent, *David Being a Prophet*, 76–82.

<sup>50</sup> One cannot be certain, however, because two different “right hands” are referred to, with two different speakers and two different characters at the right hands. Keener notes that there *may* also be a *gezerah shevah* in Acts 1, where Peter connects two passages “based on the way they begin in Greek: γενηθήτω (Ps 69:25 [68:26 LXX]) and γενηθήτωσαν (Ps 109:8 [108:8 LXX]).” Keener, *Acts*, 1:766. For more discussion of *gezerah shevah* see Baron and Oropeza, “Midrash,” 65–68.

<sup>51</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1:765.

<sup>52</sup> J. W. Bowker, “Speeches in Acts: A Study in Proem and Yellammedenu Form,” *NTS* 14, no. 1 (1967): 96–111. Cf. Ellis, “Midrashic Features in Speeches of Acts.”

<sup>53</sup> Marshall finds Bowker’s proposal for the linking of texts in Acts 2 “less than convincing.” Marshall, “Acts,” 532–33. Sargent gives some credence to Bowker’s proposal, but observes that “whilst the essential structural similarity is clear, it is significant the Pentecost speech does not display a clear reference to a pentateuchal reading as one would expect in a Rabbinic homily.” Sargent, *David Being a Prophet*, 79. Keener notes that “while some sermons (esp. 13:16–41) naturally show parallels with synagogue homilies and the greater (though not exclusive) Semitic penchant for parallelism (cf. the long chiasmus in 2:22–36) is present at places, Diaspora Jewish orators probably used Hellenistic oratorical principles at least outside the synagogues and probably, to some degree, even in their homilies.” Keener, *Acts*, 1:259.

<sup>54</sup> See Peter W. Flint, “The Prophet David at Qumran,” in Henze, *Biblical Interpretation at Qumran*, 158–67.

Third, the parallels in Peter’s exegesis and other Jewish interpretation should not obscure how Peter stands apart from them. I will mention three ways. The first difference is that Peter’s exegesis includes redemptive-historical argumentation. Benjamin Sargent draws attention to the uniqueness of the treatment of Psalms 16 and 110 in Acts (2 and 13) when compared with other Jewish uses of Scripture. In Acts 2, Peter’s argument that the risen Jesus is the Messiah hinges in part upon the historical David’s being the author of Psalm 16 and upon his being a “prophet” who was the recipient of God’s covenant recorded in 2 Samuel 7. It is not the words of the text alone which make the messianic case; it is the words situated within the historical context in which they were (assumed to be) written. Sargent demonstrates, “Whilst much of the Scriptural interpretation in Acts follows the simple eschatological appropriation of texts seen at Qumran, there is simply no qumranic parallel for the unusual ‘historical’ reasoning of Acts 2:22–35 and 13:33–37.”<sup>55</sup> Likewise, this type of historical reasoning differs sharply from Rabbinic practice, where “scriptural interpretation is fundamentally a literary activity.”<sup>56</sup> Sargent concludes that “the ‘historical’ hermeneutics” evidenced in Acts (as well as in Hebrews and the *Davidssonfrage* of the Synoptics) “represent a distinctively Christian departure from the hermeneutic norms of the literary environment of the New Testament. The novelty of such hermeneutics, it has been argued, is no doubt due to Christian developments in *Heilsgeschichte* and to the exegetical practice of Jesus himself.”<sup>57</sup>

The remaining two distinctives of Peter’s use of Scripture will be briefly introduced (and discussed in greater detail below). The second difference is that Peter sees in Scripture a suffering Messiah. This was unexpected among Peter’s

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<sup>55</sup> Sargent, *David Being a Prophet*, 78.

<sup>56</sup> Sargent, *David Being a Prophet*, 80.

<sup>57</sup> Sargent, *David Being a Prophet*, 128.

contemporaries, particularly the notion that the Messiah’s sufferings themselves would be his crowning victory. But for Peter, God “announced beforehand by the mouths of all the prophets that his Messiah would suffer” (Acts 3:18). The third difference is how Peter reveals the influence of his rabbi, Jesus. It has been suggested already how Peter’s exegesis reflects that of Jesus; this is unpacked more fully in the section below on Jesus’ influence.

## 2 Peter and Haggadah

There is less scholarly discussion of 2 Peter’s hermeneutical milieu. This is due both to the relative outlier status of 2 Peter and to 2 Peter’s lack of OT quotations. Additionally, those who date 2 Peter to the very late first century or early second century tend to see closer affinities to other early Christian and even pagan writings.<sup>58</sup> There are Hellenistic elements in 2 Peter, but these do not detract from the strongly Jewish worldview and understanding of Scripture in the letter.<sup>59</sup>

First, both 2 Peter and Jude (with which it shares several of its OT references) show a deep familiarity with Second Temple Jewish traditions surrounding OT texts.<sup>60</sup> For example, 2 Peter’s “treatment of Noah and Lot” in chapter 2 show the author’s “first-

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<sup>58</sup> See e.g., Jörg Frey, *The Letter of Jude and the Second Letter of Peter: A Theological Commentary*, trans. Kathleen Ess (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2018), 199–210; Frey, “Fire and Water? Apocalyptic Imagination and Hellenistic Worldview in 2 Peter,” in *Sibyls, Scriptures, and Scrolls: John Collins at Seventy*, JSJSup 175 (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 451–71; Carsten Peter Thiede, “A Pagan Reader of 2 Peter: Cosmic Conflagration in 2 Peter 3 and the Octavius of Minucius Felix,” *JSNT* 8, no. 26 (1986): 79–96. Scholars point to elements which sound Hellenistic (Jewish or pagan), especially the language of “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet 1:4) and the “cosmic conflagration” imagery of chap. 3. Bauckham, “James, 1 and 2 Peter, Jude,” 179–82, 315.

<sup>59</sup> On Jewish historically-centered worldview(s) in contrast to Hellenistic philosophical ones, see Rikk Watts, “Rethinking Context in the Relationship of Israel’s Scriptures to the NT: Character, Agency and the Possibility of Genuine Change,” in *Methodology in the Use of the Old Testament in the New: Context and Criteria*, ed. David Allen and Steve Smith, LNTS (New York: T&T Clark, 2020), 157–77. For brief comparisons between 1 and 2 Peter’s use of the OT, see McCartney, “Use of OT in 1 Peter,” 278–79.

<sup>60</sup> D. A. Carson, “2 Peter,” in Beale and Carson, *Commentary on NT Use of OT*, 1047–61.

hand acquaintance with jewish [*sic*] haggadic traditions about OT.”<sup>61</sup> These traditions are often explicitly referenced when Peter mentions a biblical story. Nicholas Warse suggests that many of the allusions to biblical material in 2 Peter actually show greater affinity to Second Temple traditions than they do to the biblical passages from which the traditions originated. Examples include the following: allusion to the “Watchers” in 2:4 (Gen 6:1–4; Jude 6, 1 Enoch, Jubilees 4, etc.), characterization of Noah as a “preacher” in 2:5 (Gen 6:5–8:19; Jubilees 7:20–39; Josephus’s *Ant.* 1.3.1; Gen. Rab. 30:7, and Sibylline Oracles 1:148–212), emphasis on Lot as “righteous” in 2:7–8 (Gen 13, 19; Wis 10:6; 19:17; Philo’s *Moses* 2.58), and expansion of Balaam’s role (Num 22–24; Philo’s *Moses* 1.268; *Migration* 114; *Names* 203).<sup>62</sup> Peter is not always alluding to specific Second Temple texts, though in some cases he may be; what is clear is that Peter is intimately familiar with traditions that were “in the air” in his day. The precise wording and details of the biblical accounts are not as relevant for Peter’s purposes in this letter. In the cases of the angels, Noah, Sodom, and Lot, it is the fact that the basic story happened that provides Peter’s warning and assurance (seen in the “if, if, if, if . . . then” of 2:4–10).<sup>63</sup> In the case of Balaam, his general character is being invoked to characterize the false teachers (2:15–16).

Second, 2 Peter conveys an understanding of Scripture as “prophecy” very similar to that surveyed in 1 Peter and Acts, with its similarities and differences to Qumran and other Jewish hermeneutics. (This observation is studied in depth in subsequent chapters of this dissertation.) Second Peter 1:20–21 paired with 3:2 closely resembles the hermeneutical statement of 1 Peter 1:10–12 (discussed above with

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<sup>61</sup> Bauckham, “James, 1 and 2 Peter, Jude,” 314–15.

<sup>62</sup> Nicholas R. Warse, “Second Temple Jewish Literary Traditions in 2 Peter,” *CBQ* 78, no. 1 (2016): 111–30.

<sup>63</sup> Once again, Peter references Scripture from a prophetic-historical more than a literary perspective.

reference to 1QpHab and other Jewish convictions). Additionally, 2 Peter's understanding of a coming eschatological judgment and cosmic renewal (per Isaiah) reflects a common Jewish worldview.<sup>64</sup>

Third, while 2 Peter shares a haggadic tradition and baseline convictions regarding the nature of Scripture with contemporary Judaism, there are distinctions between both 2 Peter and other Jewish literature. (1) Second Peter does not reflect common Jewish interpretive techniques such as *peshet*, *gezerah shevah*, and *qal vaomer* or literary form such as *proem*. This is also a distinction between 2 Peter and the other Petrine material discussed thus far. (2) Second Peter reflects distinctly Christian features that harken back to Jesus' own influence. First is the invocation of the Transfiguration (1:16–18) which Peter ties to the “prophetic word” of Scripture (vv. 19–21). For him, Scripture and the apostolic witness form a divine pair (3:2; cf. 1 Pet 1:10–12). Second Peter's drawing upon the biblical motif of “divine delay” (see especially 3:1–15) to speak of the time *after* the coming of the Messiah represents a radically transformed reading of Israel's Scriptures, a break with his contemporaries that began after Jesus' resurrection (Luke 24:25–26, 44–49; Acts 1:6–8) and likely solidified over time.<sup>65</sup>

## Conclusion

Peter was indeed a man of his time; there are many similarities in presuppositions, shared traditions, and techniques employed between Peter's Scripture and that of his Jewish contemporaries. Peter likely has closest hermeneutical affinity to apocalyptic groups like the Qumran community. Like them, he sees himself as part of the “final generation”; like them, he believes that Scripture speaks eschatologically to and

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<sup>64</sup> See Wright, *New Testament and People of God*, 307–20. Cf. Brooke, *Dead Sea Scrolls and New Testament*.

<sup>65</sup> The delay motif is present in the OT itself (see e.g., Dan 9) and in Judaism. See Richard Bauckham, “The Delay of the Parousia,” *TynBul* 31 (1980): 3–36. What is uniquely Christian is seeing a delay of eschatological fulfillment *after* the Messiah's arrival.

about his community. However, there are also important differences which mark Peter as a student of his own rabbi, Jesus. These include Peter's emphases on redemptive history and Messianic suffering. They also include the fact that Peter's main emphasis is not *halakhah* but eschatological prophecy. Egan's analysis of 1 Peter 1:10–12 holds true for Peter's use of Scripture more broadly: Peter indeed does share some Qumranic/Jewish exegetical practices and assumptions, but they function in the "background." It is his "particularly Christian exegesis" that is at the forefront.<sup>66</sup>

### **Jesus' Influence on Peter**

As one of Jesus' closest disciples, Peter was present and engaged for virtually all of Jesus' ministry, and he actively recollected and passed on Jesus' teachings to the nascent church for the rest of his life.<sup>67</sup> Throughout Jesus' three-year ministry, his use of Scripture deeply impacted Peter's hermeneutic.<sup>68</sup> While this is a natural assumption for anyone taking the historical record seriously, here I point to three places where Jesus' hermeneutical influence can be detected: similar hermeneutical statements, Peter's use of passages quoted by Jesus, and the transformation of Peter's view of Messianic suffering.

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<sup>66</sup> Egan, *Ecclesiology and Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 71.

<sup>67</sup> Peter would likely have memorized many of Jesus' sayings while following him around, and he would certainly have frequently rehearsed many of the experiences he witnessed and participated in. Bauckham discusses memorizing, frequent rehearsals, and other factors important to remembering in his chapter "Eyewitness Memory," in Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017), 319–58. Additionally, Jesus' promise that the Holy Spirit would help the disciples remember what he had taught them (John 14:26), while having no historical-critical value, will be taken seriously by those who are convinced of the NT's claims.

<sup>68</sup> See Thomas D. Lea, "How Peter Learned the Old Testament," *SWJT* 22, no. 2 (1980): 96–102. This study surveys the "stone" catena of 1 Pet 2:4–8, showing that Peter's use of the relevant OT passages was shaped by Jesus' explanation of "stone theology." Cf. McCartney, "Use of OT in 1 Peter," 38–40. On Jesus' use of Scripture as foundational to that of the apostles, see Charles Kimball, *Jesus' Exposition of the Old Testament in Luke's Gospel*, LNTS 94 (London: T&T Clark, 1994), 201–2; E. Earle Ellis, "Jesus' Use of the Old Testament and the Genesis of New Testament Theology," *BBR* 3 (1993): 59–75; C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: The Sub-Structure of New Testament Theology* (London: Nisbet, 1952), 110. For studies of Jesus' hermeneutic, see R. Steven Notley, "Jesus' Jewish Hermeneutical Method in the Nazareth Synagogue," in *Early Christian Literature and Intertextuality*, vol. 2, *Exegetical Studies*, ed. Craig A. Evans and H. Daniel Zacharias, LNTS (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 46–59; Kimball, *Jesus' Exposition of OT in Luke's Gospel*.

First, Peter’s summary statements concerning the scriptural witness closely resemble those of Jesus. In 1 Peter, the apostle says that the prophets predicted “the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories after them” (τὰ εἰς Χριστὸν παθήματα καὶ τὰς μετὰ ταῦτα δόξας, 1 Pet 1:11). The prophetic witness to Messiah’s “suffering” and subsequent “glory” originates with Jesus’ words in Luke 24:25–27. Peter claims that the prophets “searched out and carefully inquired” (ἐξεζήτησαν καὶ ἐξηραύνησαν, 1 Pet 1:10) their own messianic prophecies. The Gospels record Jesus mentioning that many “prophets and righteous people” (Matt 13:17) or “prophets and kings” (Luke 10:24) wished they could see and hear the things the disciples were experiencing. Jesus is claiming that the prophets and other scriptural authors of old longed to see the fulfillments of the things that were revealed to them, much as Peter claims in 1 Peter 1:10–12.<sup>69</sup>

In Acts, virtually all of the elements found in Peter’s use of Scripture are present in Jesus’ words in Luke 24:44–49.<sup>70</sup> Peter says that God “announced beforehand by the mouths of all the prophets that his Messiah would suffer” (Acts 3:18), and he proclaims that the Psalms (as prophecy) speak of Jesus’ resurrection (Acts 2:24–36). Jesus had stated that “it is written for the Messiah to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day” (Luke 24:46), and he specifically referred to the Psalms (v. 44).<sup>71</sup> Peter and his fellow apostles are “witnesses” of these events (Acts 2:32; 3:15), as Jesus told them

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<sup>69</sup> On this allusion to Matt 13:17 in 1 Pet 1:10, cf. Ben Witherington III, *The Indelible Image: The Theological and Ethical Thought World of the New Testament*, vol. 1 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 339.

<sup>70</sup> It is legitimate to question whether the overlap is attributable to common authorship by Luke and not to Jesus’ influence on Peter. However (1) the fact that very similar language is used in 1 Pet 1:10–12 and, (2) the assumption of basic authenticity of Petrine elements in Acts (which will be argued for later) gives good grounds for my observation.

<sup>71</sup> The “third day” may perhaps underscore the fact that Jesus’ body would not decay, a point which Peter emphasizes from Ps 16 in Acts 2. This idea, however, is not mentioned in Luke commentaries by e.g., James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Luke*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015); Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997); Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994); John Nolland, *Luke 1:1–9:20*, WBC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000).



they would be (Luke 24:48; cf. Acts 1:8). Peter calls the people to repentance and forgiveness of sins in Jesus' name (Acts 2:38, 3:19), as Jesus had told them to do (Luke 24:47). Moses, Samuel, "all the prophets," and God's promise to Abraham all foretold the Messianic days that were now beginning and would culminate in a future time of restoration (Acts 3:18–26). This broad sweep of scriptural writings is an echo of Jesus' insistence that there were things written of him in Torah, Prophets, and Psalms (Luke 24:44); and the scope of their prophecies echoes Jesus' conviction that these "things" included his sufferings and resurrection as well as the proclamation of forgiveness to all (vv. 46–47).

Second, Peter frequently references OT passages used by Jesus. In Acts, Peter quotes Psalm 110 (Acts 2:34–35; Matt 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42–43). Additionally, Psalm 69 (Acts 1:20) is used by the disciples (John 2:17) and Gospel writers (Matt 27:34 and 48; Mark 15:23; Luke 23:36; John 19:29) about Jesus. In 1 Peter, Thomas Lea points out how the Stone Catena (1 Pet 2:6–8, quoting Isa 28:16; Ps 118:22; and Isa 8:14) is drawn from Jesus' use of Psalm 118:22 and context (Matt 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17).<sup>72</sup> (Peter quotes this same verse before the Sanhedrin in Acts 4:11.)<sup>73</sup> In 2 Peter, the apostle invokes the biblical account of the flood coupled with a Jesus-inspired reference to a "thief" (Matt 24:43; Luke 12:39) to speak of the coming judgment, just as

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<sup>72</sup> There may also be an allusion to Isa 8:15 LXX in Luke 20:17. Additional connections include Peter's name meaning "stone" (lending personal interest in this motif for Peter), and John the Baptist's use of Abrahamic descendants from "stones" in Matt 3:9. Lea, "How Peter Learned the Old Testament."

<sup>73</sup> Lea, 99. Cf. Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 1148–49; F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, rev. ed., NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 93. Bock thinks that "the use of the term ἐξουθενηθείς . . . rather than a form of ἀποδοκιμάζω, . . . which appears in every other NT use of this psalm" suggests "that Luke is using a traditional source that differs from the source for Luke 20:17." Darrell Bock, *Acts*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 193. Even if this is so, as long as the record of Peter's use is authentic, his usage goes back ultimately to Jesus.

Jesus does in Matthew 24:36–44.<sup>74</sup> One can surmise that some of Peter’s other cited passages may have originated with Jesus as well.<sup>75</sup>

Third, Peter’s understanding of a scriptural suffering Messiah was transformed by Jesus. Such a conception was not a part of Jewish expectation<sup>76</sup>; it was certainly not taught in Peter’s hometown synagogue.<sup>77</sup> When Jesus first “began to show his disciples that he must enter Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed, and on the third day be raised” (Matt 16:21; cf. Mark 8:31–33)—immediately after Peter proclaimed Jesus the Messiah (Matt 16:13–20)—Peter was horrified. In Matthew’s words, Peter “took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him, saying, ‘No way, Lord! This will never happen to you!’” (Matt 16:22). When Jesus did die, Peter’s response of denial, hiding, and fishing showed that he still did not yet comprehend the “suffering Messiah.” That was not the way he even thought of reading Scripture. Likely it was when Jesus “opened their eyes to understand the Scriptures” after the resurrection that Peter’s hermeneutical transformation took place.<sup>78</sup> There Jesus unfolded to his disciples how the Scriptures foretell the Messiah’s sufferings and the

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<sup>74</sup> Note also in Matt 24:11 that “false prophets” leading “many astray” are a sign of the time of the end. This is Peter’s emphasis in 2 Peter. In Luke’s account (12:35–40), Peter asks Jesus about the parable of the thief and the Son of Man’s unexpected return (v. 41); Jesus then extends the parable to speak of the master’s “delayed” coming (vv. 42–48)—Peter’s emphasis in 2 Pet 3.

<sup>75</sup> Dodd “concluded that the original stimulus to using these particular contexts [the passages most frequently cited] came from Jesus himself. Thus, it was not so much an accidental collection of isolated verses, but the chapters which the Lord himself used that became the source of the early church’s favorite quotations.” McCartney, “Use of OT in 1 Peter,” 10. Referencing Dodd, *According to the Scriptures*, 107–10. Commenting on Acts 2, Keener suggests that “Joel may well be among the texts in the Prophets that Luke implies that Jesus taught his disciples (24:44–45).” Keener, *Acts*, 1:875.

<sup>76</sup> See discussion in footnote 36.

<sup>77</sup> Paul writes that a crucified Messiah is a “stumbling block” to Jewish expectations (1 Cor 1:23).

<sup>78</sup> See similar suggestion by Robert L. Brawley, *Text to Text Pours Forth Speech: Voices of Scripture in Luke-Acts*, Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 79. Referenced approvingly in Gail R. O’Day, “The Citation of Scripture as a Key to Characterization in Acts,” in *Scripture and Traditions: Essays on Early Judaism and Christianity in Honor of Carl R. Holladay*, ed. Gail R. O’Day and Patrick Gray (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 218.

glories thereafter (see Luke 24:25–27, 44–47).<sup>79</sup> Incredibly, what was once unthinkable to Peter became his trademark emphasis: The Scriptures foretell a suffering Messiah (1 Pet 1:10–12; Acts 3:18). Jesus’ impact on Peter’s reading of Scripture is undeniable.

Peter extends Jesus’ hermeneutic in his letters (especially 1 Peter) to encompass all Christians.<sup>80</sup> Scripture prophesies of the suffering and glories of the Messiah and through him, of the Messiah’s people (1 Pet 2:18–25; 3:8–5:11). It seems that Peter’s deep sense of the significance of sharing in the Messiah’s suffering—in the hope of sharing in his subsequent glories—was also directly impacted by Jesus’ words. Immediately following the prediction which prompted Peter’s rebuke (Matt 16:21–23), Jesus called his disciples to take up their crosses and follow him (vv. 24–28). When Peter volunteered to follow Jesus anywhere, Jesus responded that though he could not follow him “now,” he would follow him in death “afterward” (John 13:36). After the resurrection, John records Jesus foretelling a day when Peter would be carried off and his hands stretched out, to die in the same manner as his Lord (John 21:18–19). Peter refers to these predictions of Jesus, especially the tradition recorded in John 21:18–19, as he prepares to face his own death in 2 Peter 1:14.<sup>81</sup> Jesus transformed the way Peter read Scripture’s witness to the sufferings not only of the Messiah, but also of the people called

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<sup>79</sup> Joshua Jipp suggests that Jesus’ “Scriptural suffering Messiah” arises largely from the “suffering anointed one” of the Psalms—which is exactly where Peter draws from in Acts. Joshua W. Jipp, “Luke’s Scriptural Suffering Messiah: A Search for Precedent, a Search for Identity,” *CBQ* 72, no. 2 (2010): 255–74. Cf. Peter Doble, “Luke 24.26, 44—Songs of God’s Servant: David and His Psalms in Luke-Acts,” *JSNT* 28, no. 3 (2006): 267–83.

<sup>80</sup> McCartney emphasizes this point. According to 1 Peter’s hermeneutic of the OT, “Christians who are suffering have a point of identification with Christ, and can expect glories to come after, and all this is in the Scripture.” McCartney, “Use of OT in 1 Peter,” 41, 295–96. Egan similarly writes that “ecclesiology is frequently an extension of christological reflection [in 1 Peter]. Christology and ecclesiology are interpenetrating categories throughout 1 Peter, as may be seen in several prominent passages. [E.g., the stone catena of ch 2.] . . . Thus, the same terminology flows back and forth between christology and ecclesiology.” Egan, *Ecclesiology and Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 55.

<sup>81</sup> So Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 368–69; Richard Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, WBC, vol. 50 (Waco, TX: Word, 1983), 199–201. Note also Jesus’ earlier promise to Peter that though he could not follow him “now,” he would follow him in death “afterward” (John 13:36). Callan (assuming a late date for 2 Peter) argues that 2 Pet 1:14 is dependent on the written text of John 21:18–19. Terrance Callan, “The Gospels of Matthew and John,” in *James, 1 and 2 Peter, and Early Jesus Traditions*, ed. Alicia J. Batten and John S. Kloppenborg (New York: T&T Clark, 2014), 173–74.

to follow the Suffering Servant's example (1 Pet 2:18–25). The Messianic “sufferings and subsequent glories” foretold by the prophets (1:11) are the same sufferings and glories which Peter and his readers share (4:1, 12–14; 5:1, 3, 10).

In 2 Peter there are also resemblances to the apostle's surrounding Jewish environment's approaches to Scripture: In particular, readers see Peter's familiarity with common Jewish traditions based on biblical stories, his eschatological apocalyptic convictions, and his belief that Scripture “prophesies.” At the same time, it is evident how Peter's scriptural hermeneutic has been profoundly shaped by that of Jesus. For Peter, the apostles are now the divinely authorized, Spirit-inspired successors to the biblical prophets; and both apostles and prophets alike testify to a Messiah and a people who wait patiently while embattled and mocked until the God of Israel fulfills all of his promises.

### **Hermeneutical Statements**

Both 1 and 2 Peter contain passages giving a window into Peter's scriptural hermeneutic.<sup>82</sup> First Peter 1:10–12 speaks of the “Spirit of the Messiah” leading the OT prophets to predict the messianic age, which is now being announced by the Spirit-filled apostles. For 2 Peter, there are two passages which must be read together: 3:1–2 and 1:20–21. The former again juxtaposes the “predictions of the holy prophets” with the recent “command of the Lord” coming by the apostles' word. The latter passage, after speaking of the divinely given word at Jesus' transfiguration received by the apostles, speaks of how the apostolic testimony confirms the Spirit-given words of the prophets.

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<sup>82</sup> McCartney notes how both 1 Peter and 2 Peter “have a statement of basic hermeneutical principle early in the letter.” McCartney, “Use of OT in 1 Peter,” 40n23. While it is not terribly common to read 1 and 2 Peter together in scholarship, a number of scholars have compared 1 Pet 1:10–12 and 2 Pet 1:19–21 and observed their similarities. These include Samuel Bénétreau, “Évangile et prophétie: un texte original (1 P 1,10-12) peut-il éclairer un texte difficile (2 P 1,16-21)?,” *Bib* 86, no. 2 (2005): 174–91; Sargent, *Written to Serve*, 33–39; G. H. Boobyer, “The Indebtedness of 2 Peter to 1 Peter,” in *New Testament Essays: Studies in Memory of Thomas Walter Manson*, ed. A. J. B. Higgins (Manchester: University Press, 1959), 34–53. Sargent notes a few others.

The “prophecy” of the OT came as “people spoke from God while borne by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet 1:21).

### 1 Peter 1:10–12

First Peter 1:10–12 is often spoken of as a “hermeneutical key” to 1 Peter.<sup>83</sup>

The passage divides into two parts. The first part (vv. 10–12a) speaks of the prophets who prophesied of the coming messianic age through the “Spirit of the Messiah.” The second part (v. 12b) speaks of how the fulfillment of those prophecies have been recently announced by the apostles through “the Holy Spirit sent from heaven.”

First and most obviously, this passage claims that at least some of the OT prophets<sup>84</sup> prophesied concerning the Messiah’s suffering, glories, and the grace he would bestow. Contra Sargent, Peter does *not* here say that all of the OT prophetic writings are

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<sup>83</sup> Or in Ostmeier’s words, “Grundlage der Hermeneutik.” Karl-Heinrich Ostmeier, *Die Briefe des Petrus und des Judas*, BNT (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2021), 34. For a nuanced discussion see chap. 2, “The Hermeneutical Picture of 1 Peter,” in Egan, *Ecclesiology and Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 44–75. As noted earlier, Egan argues concerning 1 Pet 1:10–12 that it is Peter’s theological perspective that is his hermeneutical key; he denies that Peter is using “technical language.” While “there are affinities with the exegetical practice used at Qumran” which “the use of key-word connections between scriptural texts exemplifies,” “this is not the point of 1 Pet 1:10–12, it is something that functions in the background of the letter. Instead, Peter argues for his particularly Christian exegesis of scripture.” Egan, *Ecclesiology and Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 71.

Moyise asks two questions of this passage: “(1) Does the ‘prophecy theory’ [of 1 Pet 1:10–12] act as a hermeneutical key for interpreting the author’s actual uses of Scripture? (2) Do the actual uses of Scripture in 1 Peter help to elucidate the meaning of the ‘prophecy theory’?” Steve Moyise, *Evoking Scripture: Seeing the Old Testament in the New* (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 82. Moyise focuses on 1 Peter’s use of Isaiah since “nearly half of the quotations and significant allusions” come from that book (82). He concludes that “‘sufferings’ followed by ‘glories’ is a general indication of what the author of 1 Peter thought the prophets spoke about, but not a hermeneutical key for interpreting each and every verse.” Moyise, 94. Two comments on Moyise’s conclusion: First, it would be more accurate to say that “sufferings and glories” is a “general indication of a *central aspect* of” (but not the whole of) what the author of 1 Peter understood the prophets to speak about. Second, it is puzzling that Moyise devoted an entire chapter of detailed exegesis to determining whether “‘sufferings’ followed by ‘glories’” was a “hermeneutical key for interpreting” every OT reference in 1 Peter—1 Pet 1:10–12 never implied such a thing. Thus, rightly Egan, “The terms suffering and glory are not a theme that resides at the level of individual passages, but that they express something of an overarching narrative.” Egan, *Ecclesiology and Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 71. Atkinson argues that 1 Pet 1:10–12 only applies to certain prophetic texts, and that Peter interprets Scripture differently depending on “genre.” Jordan Atkinson, “Genre-Sensitive Biblical Interpretation in 1 Peter,” *Them* 46, no. 3 (2021): 608–19.

<sup>84</sup> I agree with the majority of scholars that the reference is to OT prophets, not NT prophets (Selwyn’s view). This seems clear from the text, but for discussion see Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 71–72; Himes, “Peter and the Prophetic Word,” 235–37; McCartney, “Use of OT in 1 Peter,” 24–31; Egan, *Ecclesiology and Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 46–49.

directly and only referring to the Messianic age.<sup>85</sup> The passage does, however, seem to imply that forward-pointing prophecy—in contrast to backward-looking theological or literary re-readings of the OT—plays a central role in Peter’s understanding of particularly significant OT texts.<sup>86</sup> Peter is claiming that the OT prophets “were ministering ultimately to believers in the *eschaton*,” and that they “*knew* it by revelation.”<sup>87</sup> This assumption is also seen in Peter’s uses of Scripture in Acts (see below).

These prophecies were given to them by the “Spirit of the Messiah” who was in them.<sup>88</sup> For Peter, as will be seen, prophecy is consistently linked to the Holy Spirit. This connection may have been influenced by his own powerful experience of the Spirit’s outpouring (and subsequent fillings) in Acts, as 1 Peter 1:10–12 implies.

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<sup>85</sup> Sargent implies this: “The Prophets [sic] of the past are seen as the servants of the communities in the present. Because of this, Scripture is understood to be exclusively oriented towards Christ and the communities, both as kerygma and paraenesis.” Sargent, *Written to Serve*, 19. Sargent makes good points about Peter’s assumption of “determinacy,” and helpfully reminds that literary and theological approaches will not adequately explain Peter’s hermeneutic. But Sargent is too sweeping in his claim. Peter does not say that everything in the OT is only for the present; he says that the prophecies of the Messiah are for the present. But even here, Peter would almost certainly concede that, for example, the psalms had some meaning for David’s own day (see Acts 1 and 2). Schreiner rightly concludes that Sargent’s claim is “reductionistic.” Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 71n69. Ostmeyer is a bit less extreme than Sargent, but still too strong. Ostmeyer, *Die Briefe des Petrus und des Judas*, 34. Bénétreau is more balanced than Sargent: “Ce n’est certainement pas une façon de refuser toute utilité immédiate à la prophétie d’Israël (désignation globale des Écrits sacrés), mais l’expression d’une certitude: le Christ est la clé qui en ouvre le sens (cf. Le 24,35; Ac 3,18).” Bénétreau, “Évangile et prophétie,” 175. Really all that 1 Peter 1 is saying is “that the ancient prophets foretold of Christ’s suffering and thus ministered on behalf of contemporary believers.” Himes, “Peter and the Prophetic Word,” 237.

<sup>86</sup> This is where Sargent’s insistence on “determinacy,” while taken too far, is an important reminder, particularly as theological and literary approaches have recently become extremely popular in academic circles. It is not my goal in this dissertation to discuss the normative questions, but simply to point out what Peter’s assumptions were. While he was obviously not a modernist, neither was he a postmodernist. (And premodern is not the same as postmodern.) Green tries to push back against some postmodern-leaning approaches to theological hermeneutics with respect to 1 Peter, but I think he remains stuck in anachronistic assumptions. See Joel B. Green, “‘The Spirit of Christ Which Was in Them’: Peter and Theological Hermeneutics,” in *1 Peter*, Two Horizons NT Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 244–58. For a helpful recent articulation of these ideas, see Watts, “Rethinking Context.”

<sup>87</sup> McCartney, “Use of OT in 1 Peter,” 41. Cf. Schreiner, who cites McCartney approvingly. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 74–76.

<sup>88</sup> For discussions on this wording see McCartney, “Use of OT in 1 Peter,” 37; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 109–10; Egan, *Ecclesiology and Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 51–54; Craig S. Keener, *1 Peter: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2021), 86–88.

This passage also contains a couple less easily understandable claims. The first is that the prophets carefully investigated, trying to figure out the details of the fulfilment of the messianic prophecies they were given.<sup>89</sup> The second is that God revealed to them that these prophecies were not for their own age, but for the age of Peter and his readers. How would Peter know these things, and what do these claims imply regarding Peter's hermeneutic of the OT? It is possible that Peter is thinking about Daniel's inquiry into the vision of the evenings and mornings (Dan 8; cf. Dan 9:22–27; 12:6–13).<sup>90</sup> Gabriel was dispatched to explain it to him, but then instructed him to “seal up the vision, for it refers to many days from now” (Dan 8:26 ESV). In the next chapter, following Daniel's calculation from Jeremiah that the exile should be ending, he is given another vision revealing that the full end of exile would take “seventy sevens” to complete.<sup>91</sup> Putting these passages together, Daniel inquires both concerning his own vision and the vision of Jeremiah (concerning the restoration of Israel and the coming of the kingdom of God), and is told that the fulfillments of those visions would be seen not by him but by later generations. Both Daniel's prayers for his people and his careful recording of visions would serve a future generation.

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<sup>89</sup> There is considerable debate over the meaning of τίνα ἢ ποῖον καιρὸν in v. 11. Does τίνα refer to “whom” or to “what [time]”? Thankfully, one's interpretation does not impact our discussion, but for details and arguments see Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 109; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 73–74.

Ostmeyer notes that it is “nicht die *Inhalte* der Verheißungen” (the sufferings and glorification of Messiah) but “den genauen Zeitpunkt (*Kairos*)” and “die genaue Form, in der es Gestalt annimmt.” Ostmeyer, *Die Briefe des Petrus und des Judas*, 34.

<sup>90</sup> Achtemeier refers to Num 24:17, Deut 18:15, and Hab 2:1–3; he also notes 2 Esdr 4:51–52. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 111. Cf. Egan, *Ecclesiology and Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 55n47. Benetreau also notes that this idea appears in Second Temple Jewish literature. Bénétreau, “Évangile et prophétie,” 175–76n3.

<sup>91</sup> See Karl H. Schelkle, *Die Petrusbriefe; der Judasbrief*, HTKNT (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1961), 39. Interpreting Daniel's “seventy-sevens” vision is notoriously fraught with difficulties, but Peter would have seen in it predictions of both the Messiah's sufferings and his subsequent glorious exaltation. This was the predominant Jewish view until after AD 70. See the detailed study by Roger T. Beckwith, “Daniel 9 and the Date of Messiah's Coming in Essene, Hellenistic, Pharisaic, Zealot and Early Christian Computation,” *RevQ* 10, no. 4 (1981): 521–42. For one recent Messianic interpretation which also discusses the difficulties of the passage, see Peter J. Gentry, “Daniel's Seventy Weeks and the New Exodus,” *SBJT* 14, no. 1 (2010): 26–44.

It is likely, though, that a major source behind Peter’s claims is Jesus himself. While it is entirely possible that in some cases Peter had access to, and makes reference to, written Gospels or traditions, in many (if not most) cases he should be thought of as one of the primary sources of those traditions.<sup>92</sup> Peter says that the prophets predicted “the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories after them” (τὰ εἰς Χριστὸν παθήματα καὶ τὰς μετὰ ταῦτα δόξας, 1 Pet 1:11). About these things the prophets “searched out and carefully inquired” (ἐξεζήτησαν καὶ ἐξηραύνησαν, 1 Pet 1:10). As discussed in the section above, the Gospels record Jesus mentioning that many “prophets and righteous people” (Matt 13:17) or “prophets and kings” (Luke 10:24) wished they could see and hear the things the disciples were experiencing.<sup>93</sup> In these passages Jesus claims that the prophets and other Scriptural authors of old longed to see the fulfillments of the things that were

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<sup>92</sup> A good example of this is 2 Peter’s account of the Transfiguration, which Bauckham argues is “not dependent on the synoptic Gospels but on independent tradition.” Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 209–10. In his view, this could go back to Peter’s preaching. There are arguments against Bauckham’s view, however; see Callan, “Gospels of Matthew and John,” 166–72; Robert J. Miller, “Is There Independent Attestation for the Transfiguration in 2 Peter?,” *NTS* 42, no. 4 (1996): 620–25.

Though my focus is on identifying the origin of Peter’s words with Jesus’ teaching more than on trying to establish literary dependence, the above claim leads to consideration of possible allusions to Jesus traditions in 1 Peter. This discussion has been dominated by two articles by Gundry, one by Best, and a chapter by Maier. See Robert H. Gundry, “‘Verba Christi’ in I Peter: Their Implications Concerning the Authorship of I Peter and the Authenticity of the Gospel Tradition,” *NTS* 13, no. 4 (1967): 336–50; Ernest Best, “1 Peter and the Gospel Tradition,” *NTS* 16, no. 2 (1970): 95–113; Robert H. Gundry, “Further Verba on ‘Verba Christi’ in First Peter,” *Bib* 55, no. 2 (1974): 211–32; Gerhard Maier, “Jesustradition im 1. Petrusbrief?,” in *The Jesus Tradition Outside the Gospels*, ed. David Wenham, Gospel Perspectives, vol. 5 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1985), 85–128. Recently the evidence has been reassessed by Theron K. Wong, “The Use of Jesus’ Sayings in 1 Peter” (PhD diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 2008). As Wong summarizes, Gundry proposed around 30 allusions; Maier largely concurred. Best, however, thought that number way too high, and whittled it down to about 12. Wong, “Use of Jesus’ Sayings in 1 Peter,” 227. Wong studies 17 allusions: the ones that both Gundry and Maier agree on, plus 2 others that Best accepts. In the end, Wong accepts only 7 as valid allusions.

While these studies are valuable, they are very “written text”-based. The large discrepancy between the high number of allusions detected by Gundry and Maier versus the short lists of Best and Wong support the view that the influence of Jesus’ teaching on Peter was indelible and pervasive, but the memories and impression were part of who Peter had become. Written sources were reinforcements, but secondary ones.

<sup>93</sup> Additionally, in John 8:56 Jesus cryptically claims that Abraham saw “my day.” However, while this could refer to Abraham’s foreseeing the eschatological fulfillment of his promises (in line with some Jewish tradition), it may also refer to his experience of theophanies. For discussion of the various views as well as two recent defenses of the latter, see Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 766–68; D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 356–57; Randy Rheaume, “‘Abraham Rejoiced to See My Day and Saw It’: Jesus’ Take on Theophanies,” *JGES* 32, no. 62 (2019): 69–82; Kirk R. MacGregor, “According to John 8, Did Abraham in His Lifetime See Jesus?,” in *A Historical and Theological Investigation of John’s Gospel* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer International, 2020), 159–80.



revealed to them, much as Peter claims in 1 Peter 1:10–12. Then in Luke 24, as Jesus is explaining to the Emmaus duo how Scripture points to him, he asks rhetorically, “Wasn’t it necessary for the Messiah to suffer and to enter his glory?” (οὐχὶ ταῦτα ἔδει παθεῖν τὸν χριστὸν καὶ εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, Luke 24:26).<sup>94</sup> Jesus gave much the same explanation to all the assembled disciples—including Peter—soon thereafter (Luke 24:44–49).

The second part of the passage, 1 Peter 1:12b, speaks of recent developments. Apostolic proclamation of Peter’s day parallels the prophetic witness of old, both of which were enabled by the Holy Spirit. Keener writes, “As the Spirit inspired prophets to testify of Jesus in advance, now the Spirit was inspiring Jesus’s witnesses to testify for him after the events had occurred (1:8; 2:17–18; cf. 1 Pet 1:10–12).”<sup>95</sup> For Peter, the announcement of good news was done “by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven.” There is a very strong link in this passage (vv. 10–12) to Peter’s Pentecost sermon and experience in Acts 2. There, the Holy Spirit was poured out on Jesus’ disciples, and Peter as well as the others were moved to boldly announce the good news of Jesus as Messiah and salvation through him. Luke’s record of Peter’s proclamation that day is largely devoted to explaining the fulfillment of OT prophecies (and Peter goes out of his way to label even King David a prophet).<sup>96</sup> Pentecost seems to have been a defining moment in Peter’s sense of his own relationship to the prophetic writings of old.

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<sup>94</sup> Wong denies that there is an allusion to Luke 24 in 1 Peter, contra Gundry and Maier. Wong, “Use of Jesus’ Sayings in 1 Peter,” 199–201. But I disagree with Wong, with an important qualification: I am not sure that Peter alludes to a specific *text* but rather to his own memories of Jesus’ teaching, reinforced by years of fellowship with others who remembered, taught, and received these traditions.

<sup>95</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1:952.

<sup>96</sup> Though it is also not surprising that Luke emphasizes this in his narrative, as prophecy is an important theme in Luke-Acts. See Keener, *Acts*, 1:909–11. Fitzmyer points to Qumran documents associating “anointed ones” with prophecy, and to a text of Josephus saying David “prophesied” after his anointing, as evidence that in first-century Palestine the concept of David as prophet was not a foreign one. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “David, ‘Being Therefore a Prophet . . .’ (Acts 2:30),” *CBQ* 34, no. 3 (1972): 332–39.

Immediately after Peter writes about prophecy and apostolic proclamation, he draws an inference: “Therefore [Διὸ] . . . put your hope upon the grace being brought to you in the revealing of Jesus the Messiah” (1 Pet 1:13). The prophecies of the OT regarding the messianic age coupled with the proclamation of their fulfillment by the apostles are meant to lead believers to live in light of Jesus’ return. This is remarkably similar to Acts 3:20–21 and, even more significantly, to 2 Peter 3:1–13 (see below). Peter seems to have a consistent sense that the OT prophetic writings (for him, defined broadly) are meant to inspire present-day Christians to live in light of the *future*.

### **2 Peter 3:1–2 and 1:20–21**

Second Peter 3:1–2 and 1:20–21 must be read together. Second Peter 3:1–2 juxtaposes the “predictions of the holy prophets” with the recent “command of the Lord” coming by the apostles’ word. Second Peter 1:20–21, after speaking of the divinely given word at Jesus’ transfiguration received by the apostles, speaks of how the apostolic testimony confirms the Spirit-given words of the prophets. Together, these passages share a number of key elements with the hermeneutical statement of 1 Peter 1:10–12.

In 2 Peter 3:1–2, the apostle calls on his readers to remember two things: the “predictions of the holy prophets” and the “command of the Lord and Savior through your apostles.” Just as in 1 Peter 1:10–12, the predictions of the prophets of old are linked to the apostolic proclamations. In 1 Peter the apostles’ message is linked to the Spirit of the Messiah (1:11); here it is linked to Jesus’ words. In both cases, divine Messianic source and authority is ascribed to them. In both passages, Peter invokes Scripture to exhort his readers to think about and live in light of the future which God has promised will come. Here in 2 Peter 3, the prophets and apostles remind Peter’s readers to wait patiently and faithfully for God’s seemingly delayed salvation and judgment (2 Pet 3:1–13, where he references the flood; Ps 90:4; and Isa 65:17/66:22). In 1 Peter 1:13, Peter writes, “Therefore . . . set your hope on the grace being borne to you at the revealing of

Jesus the Messiah.” The rest of 1 Peter unpacks those themes, with messianically interpreted scriptural citations throughout.

In 2 Peter 1:20–21, the prophecies of Scripture all come not from a human will but from humans’ speaking “from God” while being “borne [φερόμενοι] by the Holy Spirit.” Similarly to 1 Peter 1:10–12, here Peter emphasizes the prophetic nature of Scripture, and specifies that it is the Holy Spirit (a more expected phrase than 1 Peter’s “Spirit of the Messiah,” but the same referent) who inspires and is responsible for it. The prophetic word is “confirmed” in the apostolic witness to its fulfillment (1:16–19)<sup>97</sup>; once again Scripture is assumed to prophesy of the Messiah’s coming (cf. 1 Pet 1:10–11). In 2 Peter 1:19 readers are called to “pay attention” to the prophetic words which serve as “a lamp” in the dark place in which the readers live; in 1 Pet 1:12 the prophets are said to have served “you”—which is again a reference to Peter’s readers. Also, Peter’s discussion of Scripture is in the context of highlighting the divinely-enabled apostolic proclamation of the gospel: In this case, instead of the focus being on the Holy Spirit’s empowering the apostles (1 Pet 1:12), it is on their hearing the divine voice confirming the identity of Jesus at the Transfiguration (1 Pet 1:17–18). Peter employs the word φέρω to liken the voice they heard “borne” from heaven with the prophets, who are the human voices “bearing” the Holy Spirit’s words.<sup>98</sup>

While 2 Peter 3:1–2 and 1:20–21 do not include a direct parallel to the “present suffering, future glory” schema found in 1 Peter 1:10–12 (and Acts 3:18), the letter traces a similar narrative. In 1 Peter, the “suffering/glory” schema is worked out to describe not only the Messiah but also his people (see above). They will share in his sufferings, and someday in his glory (1 Pet 4:1, 12–14; 5:1, 3, 10). In 2 Peter the emphasis is on

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<sup>97</sup> This phrase is debated; see chap. 4 of this dissertation for a detailed study.

<sup>98</sup> The word φέρω occurs six times in 1 and 2 Peter. Four of those times are in 2 Pet 1:17–21. (Interestingly, the word is also used in Acts 2:2 of the Spirit’s coming as a “carried strong wind.”) Cf. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 233.

combating false teachers in the church and exercising discernment and self-control in avoiding the licentious lifestyle they promote (2:1–3, 10–16). Now faithful believers are mocked (3:3–4), tempted (2:17–22), and embattled as their salvation appears delayed (3:4–9). But by remaining faithful to Scripture and the apostolic word without twisting it (3:1–2, 15–16), they will escape judgment and take part in the righteous and glorious new heavens and new earth that is sure to come (3:11–14). The present is a time of embattled waiting, and believers are likened to Noah and Lot—righteous minorities in overwhelmingly wicked societies (2:5–9). But as those scriptural examples demonstrate, “the Lord knows how to rescue the pious from trials/temptations [πειρασμοῦ]” (2:9). The present will be followed by glorious vindication (cf. 1:3–11).

### **Peter in Acts**

While Peter’s reading of the OT is in place in Acts 1, Pentecost seems to have been another pivotal moment for him. Pentecost is the quintessential and prototypical pairing of Spirit-inspired apostolic proclamation with the fulfillment of Spirit-inspired prophetic messianic prediction.<sup>99</sup> As seen in the section above on 1 Peter 1:10–12 and 2 Peter 1:21 and 3:1–2, this constellation of features is central to Peter’s understanding of the OT. Also, here in Acts 1–3 Peter’s signature “suffering and subsequent glory” theme can be detected—a motif he believes is central to OT prophecy (1 Pet 1:10–12) and which colors his teaching and exhortations in 1 Peter and (to a lesser degree) 2 Peter.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Cf. Egan, *Ecclesiology and Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 213.

<sup>100</sup> Therefore I think Barrett mistaken in saying that “there is no value in comparisons [of Acts 2] with 1 Peter, which may in any case not have been written by Peter.” C. K. Barrett, *Acts*, vol. 1, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 132.

Before proceeding to survey Peter's speeches, I must address the validity of attempting to study Peter through speeches attributed to him.<sup>101</sup> The historicity and "accuracy"<sup>102</sup> of Peter's speeches are debated, and "scholarship on the speeches in Acts in general is immense."<sup>103</sup> While no one suggests that the speeches are verbatim transcripts, some scholars (notably Marion Soards) have argued the opposite: that the speeches are entirely Luke's creations designed for his literary and theological purposes.<sup>104</sup> Craig Keener's detailed study of the speeches is more balanced.<sup>105</sup> He concludes that given Thucydidean historiographical expectations,<sup>106</sup> plus factors such as the brevity of Luke's speeches and

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<sup>101</sup> See also the defense by Himes, "Peter and the Prophetic Word," 228n3. The recent assessment and evaluation by Green is very thorough and concurs with my conclusions. Green, *Vox Petri*, 46–71, 234–35, 242–44. Dunn urges caution: "The speeches of Acts can be used only with care as sources for earliest Christian proclamation and teaching. They represent Luke's impression of that theology, but it is theology seen through Luke's eyes and reflecting also his own concerns." James D. G. Dunn, introduction to *The Acts of the Apostles*, Narrative Commentaries (Valley Forge: Trinity Press, 1996), xvii–xix. Dunn thinks that there are "several indications that he [Luke] was able to draw on earlier tradition." It is a "cameo representation" of "the sort of thing Peter would have said, and may indeed have said in his earliest preaching" (Dunn, 27–28). Dunn's cautions must be taken seriously. I am, however, a bit more optimistic that the speeches do give a (Lukan-colored) window into Peter's theology and proclamation. Ruf studies possible parallels between Peter's Acts speeches and 2 Peter. Martin G. Ruf, "Sprachliche Berührungen zwischen dem zweiten Petrusbrief und den Petrusreden der Apostelgeschichte," in *Der zweite Petrusbrief und das Neue Testament*, ed. Wolfgang Grünstäudl, Uta Poplutz, and Tobias Nicklas, WUNT 397 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 113–32. His conclusion is that such parallels cannot be used as support of 2 Peter's authenticity, but that shared traditions could point to a common geographical origin. My view of 2 Peter's authenticity, of course, leads to stronger conclusions; but it is helpful to observe the parallels.

<sup>102</sup> I put "accuracy" in scare quotes in recognition that modern standards of accuracy differ from ancient Jewish and Greco-Roman ones. See Bock, *Acts*, 11–12, 20–23.

<sup>103</sup> Joshua Garroway, "'Apostolic Irresistibility' and the Interrupted Speeches in Acts," *CBQ* 74, no. 4 (2012): 738n1. For a detailed survey of perspectives on the speeches, see Craig S. Keener, "Speeches in Acts," in *Acts*, 1:258–319; Jonathan W. Lo, "Did Peter Really Say That? Revisiting the Petrine Speeches in Acts," in *Peter in Early Christianity*, ed. Helen K. Bond and Larry W. Hurtado (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 62–75.

<sup>104</sup> See Marion L. Soards, *The Speeches in Acts: Their Content, Context, and Concerns* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994). O'Day asserts that "it is axiomatic" for most "interpreters of the use of Scripture in Luke's speeches, that the scriptural interpretation that one finds in the speeches in Acts is Luke's own, that 'the various characters who interpret Scripture are interpreting for Luke, wearing the various masks that he assigns them.'" O'Day, "Citation of Scripture as Key," 208. She quotes Johnson, *Septuagintal Midrash in the Speeches of Acts*. Barrett believes that "Luke in composing this speech (and others) made use of some traditional material." This material was probably "the oldest traditional material he could find," but probably not assessed "as a critical historian." Barrett, *Acts*, 1:131–33.

<sup>105</sup> See Keener, "Speeches in Acts."

<sup>106</sup> Scholars often discuss Greco-Roman historiographical expectations for speeches, and Thucydides' comments (*History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.22.1) are always quoted. Thucydides tried to "put into the mouth of each speaker the sentiments proper to the occasion . . . while at the same time I

his proximity to sources, Luke likely records at least the “gist” of what was spoken on those occasions. Ben Witherington goes slightly further. He proposes that Luke likely records “a skeletal outline, plus perhaps some memorable phrases and stylistic features.”<sup>107</sup> Witherington points to the central role of the “word spoken and received” in the early Jesus movement and suspects that “Luke was likely as careful with his handling of the speech material of the early Christians as he was with the Jesus material.”<sup>108</sup> Further suggesting that the recorded speeches reflect what was spoken, McCartney notes that “there is a diversity between the speeches of Stephen, Peter, and Paul” which “extends to a difference in hermeneutical techniques.”<sup>109</sup> I conclude that the speeches Luke records, while bearing his own literary stamp, can shed light on Peter’s use of the OT. In Green’s words, while we do not have the *ipsissima verba* of Peter, we do have his *ipsissima vox*.<sup>110</sup>

## Acts 1:15–22

Acts opens with Luke writing that Jesus was “taken up” after “giving commands to the apostles through the Holy Spirit” (Acts 1:3).<sup>111</sup> In the same chapter,

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endeavoured, as nearly as I could, to give the general import of what was actually said” (Jowett’s translation). As recently pointed out by Erickson, however, Thucydides’ precise meaning is not completely self-evident; and it is difficult to trace the reception history of Thucydides’ views to Luke’s own day a few hundred years later. See Nathaniel J. Erickson, “Thucydides and the Speeches in Acts: The Importance of the Reception History of Thucydides,” *CBW* 40 (2020). Additionally, Luke may have differed from even his own understanding of Thucydides on this point given his unique purposes. See Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 118.

<sup>107</sup> Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 117n9.

<sup>108</sup> Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 118n13. Bock agrees that “the wording of the speeches comes from Luke but argue that Luke is summarizing tradition with a concern to report what was said.” Bock, *Acts*, 21. For further discussion of this issue as well as of Luke-Acts’s use of the OT, see Marshall, “Acts,” 513–27.

<sup>109</sup> McCartney, “Use of OT in 1 Peter,” 255. He references J. W. Doeve, *Jewish Hermeneutics in the Gospels and Acts* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1954), 168–76. Doeve demonstrates “the different hermeneutical techniques used by Peter in Acts 2 and Paul in Acts 13, in interpreting Ps 16:10.” McCartney, “Use of OT in 1 Peter,” 255n26.

<sup>110</sup> Green, *Vox Petri*, 70–71.

<sup>111</sup> This sounds quite similar to 2 Pet 3:2. For discussion of Luke’s meaning, see Keener, *Acts*,

Peter stands up in the assembly and announces that a replacement for Judas must be chosen in order to fulfill a psalm of David. Luke records Peter as saying, “Brothers, it was necessary for the Scripture to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke before through the mouth of David concerning Judas” (1:16).<sup>112</sup> He then proceeds to quote Psalm 69:25 and 109:8.<sup>113</sup>

It is natural that Peter would have seen Psalm 69 as relevant, given that on multiple occasions it had been applied to Jesus.<sup>114</sup> In the context of Jesus’ cleansing of the temple, John records that the disciples recalled this psalm’s words (v. 9) about “zeal” consuming the Messiah (John 2:17). At the crucifixion, all four Gospel writers see another passage from this psalm (v. 21) fulfilled as Jesus is given sour wine to drink (Matt 27:34 and 48; Mark 15:23; Luke 23:36; John 19:29).<sup>115</sup> Peter, already convinced that this psalm has spoken of Jesus on multiple occasions and that Jesus fulfills the role of

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1:660–62.

<sup>112</sup> Keener writes (note the reference to 1 Pet), “The Holy Spirit testified about Jesus through prophets in advance, just as the new prophetic movement would do retroactively (Acts 1:8; 2:17–18; cf. 1 Pet 1:10–12).” Keener, *Acts*, 1:758.

<sup>113</sup> Barrett claims, “What passage is in mind [in v. 16] is disputed. Some think the reference is to those quoted in v. 20; perhaps more probable is Ps. 41.10 [MT; Eng 41:9].” Barrett, *Acts*, 1:96–97. Marshall rightly pushes back against Barrett’s preference. There “is no indication of such an allusion [to Ps 41:9] here, and there are no verbal contacts; moreover, the specific reference to David as the speaker makes it rather unlikely that Luke would not have included the actual citation.” Additionally, the “gap between vv. 16 and 20 is lessened if vv. 18–19 are treated as a parenthesis inserted by the narrator in Peter’s statement.” It is more likely that Peter is “looking forward to the citations that he will make in 1:20.” Marshall, “Acts,” 529. It is, however, entirely possible that Ps 41:9 was in Peter’s mind as well, given its use by Jesus as recorded in John 13:18.

It is also noteworthy that Jesus is recorded to have said that “not one” of his disciples had been “lost” except for “the son of destruction, so that the Scripture might be fulfilled [ἵνα ἡ γραφή πληρωθῆ]” (John 17:12). It is possible that Jesus himself (in a post-resurrection meeting, perhaps; see Luke 24:45) first referenced Pss 69 and 109 to explain Judas’s departure. In John 13:18, Jesus alludes to Ps 41:9 in speaking of Judas’s betrayal. See Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 44–45.

<sup>114</sup> Some scholars think that Ps 69’s use elsewhere in the NT may suggest that Luke got “it from tradition” or a *testimonia* collection. See Marshall, “Acts,” 530. But I think this is quite improbable. Its use in the Gospels underscores that Peter would have been very familiar with Messianic interpretation of this psalm. He may even have been the one who first thought of it.

<sup>115</sup> Additionally, Jesus alludes either to Ps 69:4 or Ps 35:19 to account for the people’s hatred of him. See Andreas J. Köstenberger, “John,” in Beale and Carson, *Commentary on NT Use of OT*, 493–94. Romans quotes yet another line in this psalm as referring to Jesus (see Rom 15:3). For a fuller discussion of each NT use of Ps 69, see David B. Sloan, “The Understanding of the Psalms in Luke-Acts” (PhD diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2012), 101–6.

Davidic king, sees in the psalm prophetic precedent for a close associate of the Messiah turning on him.<sup>116</sup> Peter then turns to Psalm 109, which takes part in the same story, for what he sees as direction on what to do in such a situation—specifically where someone turns on and falsely accuses the Davidic figure.<sup>117</sup>

As will be seen, this is very similar to Peter’s interpretation of Psalm 16 in the next chapter of Acts. Much of his hermeneutic is already detectable here.

### **Acts 2:14–41**

Luke’s summary of Peter’s Pentecost sermon is almost entirely exposition and application of three “prophetic” texts: Joel 2:28–32, Psalm 16:8–11, and Psalm 110:1 (as well as an allusion to Psalm 132:11–12).<sup>118</sup>

Joel 2:28–32, quoted in full, explains the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that day and accounts for the bold apostolic preaching. This crucial passage and Peter’s declaration of its fulfillment likely impacted him deeply; its resonances can be seen in the 1 and 2 Peter passages surveyed above. As a scriptural prophet had foretold, the Holy Spirit was being poured out and making Jesus’ followers into new prophets. As mentioned earlier, it has been suggested that Peter’s “This is what was spoken . . . .”

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<sup>116</sup> With Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 45.

<sup>117</sup> For further discussion on Luke’s/Peter’s “applying the fate of the Psalms’ ‘enemy’” to the “Davidic king par excellence,” as well as clues pointing to the authenticity of Luke’s report, see Keener, *Acts*, 1:765–68. Keener also discusses Peter’s possible use of *gezerah shevah* and *qal vaomer* interpretive principles. Cf. Marshall, “Acts,” 528–30. Sloan’s discussion of Peter’s figurative, “typological” interpretation of Ps 69 to “the enemy *par excellence*” is helpful. Sloan, “Understanding of Psalms in Luke-Acts,” 112–18.

<sup>118</sup> While Peter himself on Pentecost was likely not reciting the LXX, Luke’s Peter generally quotes the LXX with some modifications. For convenience, I am referencing the Hebrew/English Psalm numbers instead of LXX. For discussions of Luke’s *Vorlage* and modifications, see Marshall, “Acts,” 531–42. One recent study analyzes deviations from the LXX from a discourse grammar perspective; see Steven E. Runge, “Joel 2.28–32a in Acts 2.17–21: The Discourse and Text-Critical Implications of Variation from the LXX,” in Evans, *Exegetical Studies*, 46–59. On prophetic reading of the psalms in Second Temple Jewish literature, see J. Samuel Subramanian, *The Synoptic Gospels and the Psalms as Prophecy*, LNTS 351 (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 19–44.



introductory formular signals a Qumran-style pesher exegesis.<sup>119</sup> While there may be some similarities (e.g., both believed that Scripture prophetically spoke to their present), there are crucial differences.<sup>120</sup> In Peter’s case, it is not the text but the *present situation* that gets introduced by the “This is . . . ,” and there is no technical term like פֶּשֶׁר.<sup>121</sup> Peter was not writing a commentary of a biblical text, but recognizing that he was witnessing and participating in the shocking fulfillment of an eschatological biblical text.

To drive home to Peter’s hearers that Jesus’ resurrection must mean that he is the Messiah, Peter next moves to Psalm 16.<sup>122</sup> He argues his interpretation and reveals some of his hermeneutic: David was “a prophet,”<sup>123</sup> and he knew that God had promised him a dynasty; so “foreseeing he spoke concerning the resurrection of the Messiah” (Acts 2:31).<sup>124</sup> Continuing from Acts 1, this is another psalm from the life of David that Peter

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<sup>119</sup> See discussion in “Jewish Context” section above.

<sup>120</sup> For similarities and differences between Jewish exegesis and 1 Peter (with many overlapping conclusions for Peter in Acts), see McCartney, “Use of OT in 1 Peter,” 184–238.

<sup>121</sup> See Marshall, “Acts,” 533–34.

<sup>122</sup> The two biggest differences between the MT and the LXX of Ps 16 are as follows: rendering לְבִטָּח (securely) as ἐπ’ ἐλπίδι (in hope), and translating תַּחַֿשׁ (pit, though disputed) as διαφθοράν (decay/corruption). Neither of these has much bearing on the actual meaning, when the context of the psalm is taken into account. Gregory V. Trull, “Peter’s Interpretation of Psalm 16:8–11 in Acts 2:25–32,” *BSac* 161, no. 644 (2004): 434–35; Marshall, “Acts,” 538. Cf. Artur Weiser, *The Psalms: A Commentary*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), 177. Contra e.g., Trull and Waltke, I do not think that it makes much difference whether תַּחַֿשׁ is understood as pit or decay, nor that it must be taken as the latter in order for Peter’s appropriation to work. Trull, “Peter’s Interpretation of Psalm 16”; Bruce K. Waltke and James M. Houston, *The Psalms as Christian Worship: A Historical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 323n76. Um contends that Peter’s interpretation of PS 16 “is possible by way of the LXX reading of the quotation. . . . Since the LXX translation of יהִיָהּ is κύριος, it is very convenient for the Lucan Peter to connect the quotations of Joel and Pss 16 and 110 firstly in attributing κύριος to Jesus.” Hyo-Sook Um, “Messianic Psalms in Luke-Acts” (PhD diss., University of Manchester, 2001), 152. But the LXX is not required for Peter’s interpretation. See a better explanation in Sloan, “Understanding of Psalms in Luke-Acts,” 290–91.

<sup>123</sup> David in 2 Sam 23:1 refers to himself as a prophet, declaring an “oracle” by the “Spirit of Yahweh.” While the late dating of 2 Sam 23:1–7 is questionable, on this passage as important to both biblical and post-biblical identification of David as prophet see Mahri Leonard-Fleckman, “Utterance of David, the Anointed of the God of Jacob (2 Samuel 23:1–7),” *JBL* 137, no. 3 (2018): 667–83.

<sup>124</sup> It is common to deny that Ps 16 itself speaks of resurrection or is eschatological. Also, a threat of imminent death is often said to be in view. See e.g., Peter C. Craigie and Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 1–50*, 2nd ed., WBC (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 158; Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 1–59: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988), 240. Weiser, though, believes that “death” in a broader sense is intended, and that the language is consonant with resurrection. Though not “a prophetic prediction of the resurrection of Jesus” the NT usage is “based on the same fundamental conviction.” Weiser, *The Psalms*, 176–78. For a critique of the “imminent death” view, see Sloan, “Understanding of Psalms in Luke-Acts,”

believes speaks to something greater than what took place in David's life. While no doubt if questioned,<sup>125</sup> Peter would have acknowledged that Psalm 16 was relevant to the historical David's life as well,<sup>126</sup> he does seem to imply that the "fulfillment" of this psalm in Jesus' resurrection is stronger than ordinary "typology."<sup>127</sup>

Peter's use of Psalm 16 has generated a range of interpretations in modern scholarship.<sup>128</sup> Some (e.g., Doeve, Longenecker) see it as simply a pesher/midrashic exegesis.<sup>129</sup> This however does not do justice to Peter's insistence on David's redemptive-historical role. Some (e.g., Trull) have proposed that the phrase "your Holy One" (Acts 2:27; Ps 16:10b) refers specifically to the Messiah and is directly prophetic, in contrast to "my soul" in the previous line.<sup>130</sup> This goes against the clear intent of the original Hebrew

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288n81.

<sup>125</sup> Though this is disputed, see below.

<sup>126</sup> Sloan highlights Peter's exploitation of the word *προοράω* from the psalm (15:8 LXX). It is *David*, not Jesus, whom according to Peter "foresees" (*προοράω*) the resurrection of Messiah (Acts 2:31). In Peter's reading, then, the historical David has not disappeared from view. Sloan, "Understanding of Psalms in Luke-Acts," 286.

<sup>127</sup> Contra Goppelt and Rese, see Marshall, "Acts," 538. Marshall reasonably questions this label given Peter's seeming insistence that the passage does *not* apply to the initial "type" (David). As well as "typological," Sloan calls Peter's reading "historical and predictive." Sloan, "Understanding of Psalms in Luke-Acts," 292. For Peter (in Sloan's reading), "David's point was that because he is focused (*προοράω*) on the Lord his lot must be better than bodily decay. Peter's point is the same, with the added truths that what David was seeing when he was looking at the Lord was Jesus and what brings about David's salvation from the grave is Jesus' resurrection from the dead. . . . David experienced the promise in part, as do all who set the Lord before them always, and so the meaning of Ps 16 can be found in part by looking at the historical *Sitz im Leben*, but the psalm also necessitated something more than the historical meaning and must be read with the understanding that David is here functioning as 'a prophet' who knows 'that on oath God had sworn to him to seat from the fruit of his loins on his throne'" (Sloan, 291–93). Sloan is likely on the right track, though again one must take care not to minimize the discontinuity (in Peter's reading) between David's experience and Jesus'.

<sup>128</sup> Trull's survey yields seven views: hermeneutical error (the apostles were wrong, sometimes because of LXX mistranslation), Jewish hermeneutics (apostles used Jewish midrashic methods, pesher), *sensus plenior* (deeper, divinely-intended meaning present transcending human author's), canonical approach (Waltke, see later), typology, single message (Kaiser), and direct prophecy. Gregory V. Trull, "Views on Peter's Use of Psalm 16:8–11 in Acts 2:25–32," *BSac* 161, no. 642 (2004): 194–214; Waltke and Houston, *The Psalms as Christian Worship*, 308–20. Cf. Keener, *Acts*, 1:945–46. Soards lists and summarizes various modern interpretations in Soards, *The Speeches in Acts*, 35. Of course, some commentators (e.g., Dunn) sidestep the trickier questions. See Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 30–31.

<sup>129</sup> See discussion in Trull, "Views on Peter's Use of Psalm 16," 200–203.

<sup>130</sup> Gregory V. Trull, "An Exegesis of Psalm 16:10," *BSac* 161, no. 643 (2004): 304–21; Trull, "Peter's Interpretation of Psalm 16."

parallelism, and (as Marshall rightly notes) Acts 2:31 applies both lines to Jesus.<sup>131</sup> Moessner proposes an ingenious interpretation of Psalms 16 and 110 in Acts 2, focusing on the connections between the two in the LXX versions.<sup>132</sup> He claims, however, that it is the “Lord” who refers to the Messiah; but Peter argues that it is the “David” figure who is the Messiah.<sup>133</sup> Others label Peter’s usage “typological” (e.g., Goppelt) or “typological-prophetic” (Bock); some version of this is probably nearly correct, though it must emphasize that the passage is fulfilled ultimately or “in the fullest sense” only by Messiah.<sup>134</sup>

Another recent approach, championed by Matthew Bates, is prosopological exegesis. Prosopological exegesis is a reading strategy which detects in the interchanges of speakers in biblical texts conversations between members of the Trinity.<sup>135</sup> According to Bates, Peter claims that “David was not merely speaking about him [Jesus], but rather . . . making an in-character speech.”<sup>136</sup> Bates is correct that the psalm’s words “are not to

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<sup>131</sup> Marshall, “Acts,” 539.

<sup>132</sup> He tries to show how together they contribute to proclamation of the “plan of God” first set out in Luke 24 (Messiah suffers, Messiah rises, and message proclaimed to nations). David’s own life and experiences of suffering and trust in the Lord at his “right hand” are central. David P. Moessner, “Luke’s ‘Plan of God’ from the Greek Psalter,” in O’Day and Gray, *Scripture and Traditions*, 223–38.

<sup>133</sup> An additional weakness is that his interpretation only works for the LXX versions of the psalms. Marshall similarly evaluates and notes weaknesses: Marshall, “Acts,” 537–39.

<sup>134</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 124. See Leonhard Goppelt, *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 122–23; Sloan, “Understanding of Psalms in Luke-Acts,” 284–93. Surprisingly, Kaiser’s conclusion is similar, though I disagree with his insistence on absolute “single meaning.” Walter C. Kaiser Jr., “The Promise to David in Psalm 16 and Its Application in Acts 2:25–33 and 13:32–37,” *JETS* 23, no. 3 (1980): 219–29. Perhaps Peter sees this prayer of David being fulfilled in and through David’s Son the Messiah, much as the land promises to Abraham were fulfilled through his descendants. See Rom 4, where Paul quotes the promise to “Abraham and his seed” that “he” would be “heir of the world.” Abraham was given the land in and through his descendants. On the Abrahamic inheritance in Paul, see Esau McCaulley, *Sharing in the Son’s Inheritance: Davidic Messianism and Paul’s Worldwide Interpretation of the Abrahamic Land Promise in Galatians*, LNTS (London: T&T Clark, 2019).

<sup>135</sup> In fact, Bates claims that Peter’s use of Ps 16 in Acts 2 is “one of the most captivating occurrences of prosopological exegesis” in the NT. Matthew W. Bates, *The Birth of the Trinity: Jesus, God, and Spirit in New Testament and Early Christian Interpretations of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 153.

<sup>136</sup> Bates, *The Birth of the Trinity*, 153. But both before and after the quotation of Ps 16, Peter avers that David speaks “concerning” Jesus (εἰς αὐτόν) (v. 25) and “about” (περὶ) his resurrection (v. 31)—not that Jesus is speaking these words or that David speaks “in the person of” the Messiah. Bates notes

be thought of as David's alone."<sup>137</sup> And he correctly underscores Peter's emphasis on the "significant disjuncture" between David's experience and Christ's. But he believes this point "significantly weakens [a] typological solution," for such "requires participation in a common image."<sup>138</sup> I think, as I state above, that something more than typology is likely going on in Peter's interpretation of Psalm 16. But Bates misses the fact that typology is often understood to include disjuncture—this in fact is part of the notion of "escalation." This notion is central to typology, and it claims that the fulfillment will be much greater than the type. One example of typological disjunction in the Gospels involving Jesus and David is Jesus' healing the "blind and lame" when he triumphantly enters Jerusalem (Matt 21:14), in contrast to the "blind and lame" of Jesus being "hated of David's soul" (2 Sam 5:8).<sup>139</sup>

Bates claims that "the exact theodramatic setting" of Psalm 16 (as interpreted by Peter) is "during the crisis of the cross, with death looming, but before the

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these (153), but counters with three observations. (1) David "foresaw" Christ's experience: the first- and second-person language of the psalm demand Christ is speaker (153), and there is a "significant disjuncture" between David's and Christ's experiences (154). (2) Peter uses the "same interpretive logic" as Paul's speech in Acts 13 (154). (3) David as a "prophet" means the "emphasis is on David's future-oriented words not on David's own past experiences as a righteous sufferer" (154).

Bates briefly deals with Paul's use of Ps 16 (and Isa 55:3–5) in Paul's speech in Acts 13. This time in Ps 16, Paul claims that *God* "says in another psalm . . ." that "your Holy One" would not see corruption—again not that David/Jesus says this as Bates's proposal would expect. Paul does not give the same level of explanation as Peter does in Acts 2, though he does give an argument for why this applies to Jesus and not David in vv. 36–37. The application to Jesus is again tied to Paul's strong conviction that Jesus is indeed the messianic son of David (Acts 13:23, 34; Rom 1:3). Bates speaks excitedly of a "solution-by-person" approach to reading these OT texts (74–76). But this is not some fascinating reading strategy, especially with respect to Isa 55:3–5. For Paul, though, it is simply a matter of paying close attention to the language and context of the original text. On the difference between a text's own reference to a future figure vs. a "solution-by-person" reading strategy, see William James Demell, "Typology, Christology and Prosopological Exegesis: Implicit Narratives in Christological Texts," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 24, no. 1 (2020): 137–61.

<sup>137</sup> Bates, *The Birth of the Trinity*, 154.

<sup>138</sup> Bates, *The Birth of the Trinity*, 154.

<sup>139</sup> On this see e.g., Grant LeMarquand, "The Healing of the Blind and the Lame in the Temple. David, 'Canaanites' and the Reconstitution of Israel in Matthew 21.14," in *One God, One People, One Future: Essays in Honor of N. T. Wright*, ed. John Anthony Dunne and Eric Lewellen (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2018), 232–55.

resurrection.”<sup>140</sup> But this view does not tell what makes this the “theodramatic setting”: Is this because Peter is performing “solution-by-person”? Or is this because he sees a redemptive-historical typological / “prophetic” rationale for seeing the “crisis of the cross” as the (or “a”) “theodramatic setting”? Peter’s reference to the Davidic covenant and his use of Davidic psalms in Acts 1 suggest the latter.

While some of Peter’s exegesis is difficult to interpret (particularly according to modern expectations), it is at least clear that Peter is thinking contextually and not merely proof-texting.<sup>141</sup> There is a redemptive-historical impetus behind Peter’s OT interpretation, and there is a perceived need to give his audience an explanation. As discussed in an earlier section, the (assumed) historical context of the Psalm and of David’s life are crucial to Peter’s argument.<sup>142</sup> Peter does not simply assume that Scripture has a theological meaning completely detached from its human authors’ intentions.<sup>143</sup> Neither is he simply trying to make a rhetorical move. Rather, his view of the human authors as “prophets” plus their understanding of God’s promises and their role in redemptive history is how Peter accounts for the forward-pointing/prophetic meaning of Scripture.<sup>144</sup>

Peter then backs up his interpretation of Psalm 16 and continues his argument by pointing to Psalm 110, an important Messianic psalm here attributed to David.<sup>145</sup> This

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<sup>140</sup> Bates, *The Birth of the Trinity*, 154.

<sup>141</sup> Rightly, Sloan, “Understanding of Psalms in Luke-Acts,” 285–86. Sloan points out that Peter/Luke use not only the proof-verse of 16:10 but quote and allude to all of vv. 8–11.

<sup>142</sup> See above section on “Acts, Jewish Techniques, and Historical Context,” and Sargent, *David Being a Prophet*, 58–66.

<sup>143</sup> On the other hand, he does not believe (at least, by the time 1 Peter was written) that the “prophets” fully understood what they were foretelling (1 Pet 1:10–12).

<sup>144</sup> Interestingly, *prophecy* and *promises* dominate 2 Peter’s thoughts on Scripture—as this dissertation reveals.

<sup>145</sup> See further discussion in Barry C. Davis, “Is Psalm 110 a Messianic Psalm?,” *BSac* 157, no. 626 (2000): 160–73; Marshall, “Acts,” 542–43; Keener, *Acts*, 1:959–63.

was not a new thought to Peter either; once again, Jesus had used this verse in relation to himself when questioning the religious leaders (Matt 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42–43). The risen Son of David has ascended to (literally) God’s right hand, to reign over his people and to conquer his enemies.<sup>146</sup> These Spirit-inspired prophetic texts coupled with the eschatological realities Peter witnessed led him to announce by the same Holy Spirit the fulfillment of God’s purposes—and to call his hearers to enter into that fulfillment.

### **Acts 3:17–26**

After Peter and John heal the lame beggar at the Temple, Peter launches into a sermon addressed to the shocked onlookers.<sup>147</sup> In the second half of Luke’s summary, Peter makes three claims regarding what the OT prophets foretold. The first is that God’s “Messiah would suffer.” For Peter, the Messiah’s sufferings are a special focus and recurring item of OT prophecy: “God promised [it] beforehand through the mouths of all the prophets” (v. 18; cf. 1 Pet 1:10–12). Marshall rightly suggests that Peter is likely thinking of psalms such as Psalm 22 and 69, Isaiah’s “Suffering Servant” motif (see 1 Peter), and other “prophetic statements such as” Zechariah 12:10 and 13:7.<sup>148</sup>

The second claim is that the Messiah would “restore all things.” This too “God spoke through the mouths of his holy prophets from of old” (v. 21).<sup>149</sup> Peter now understands these prophecies to refer to the return of Jesus. Peter does not name any

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<sup>146</sup> See fuller discussion in Sloan, “Understanding of Psalms in Luke-Acts,” 294–99. Sloan rightly points out that Ps 110 is viewed as “purely predictive prophecy” and not as typology (296). This is in contrast to Ps 16, 69, 109 discussed above. Contra Andrew Judd, “Do the Speakers in Acts Use Different Hermeneutics for Different Old Testament Genres?,” *JETS* 64, no. 1 (2021): 120–21.

<sup>147</sup> Keener notes that “many scholars have argued for early tradition in this speech, sometimes in contrast with Acts 2.” Keener, *Acts*, 2:1078.

<sup>148</sup> Marshall, “Acts,” 546.

<sup>149</sup> The wording of this line is virtually identical to Luke 1:70. Luke’s wording should be recognized here (so, for example, the wording “holy prophets from of old” is likely not Petrine). However, given that prophets are referred to throughout this speech, and given the consistent interest in “prophets” in anything attributed to Peter related to Scripture, the reference to prophets here should be seen as reflecting Peter’s words.

specific prophecies of restoration here, but it should not be surprising that he returns to the same theme in 2 Peter, where he speaks of the perceived delay of Jesus' return and reminds his readers of God's "promise" through the prophet Isaiah of "new heavens and a new earth" (see also 1 Pet 1:4–5, 13). Interestingly, these first two statements align with the "sufferings and subsequent glories" schema in 1 Peter 1:11 (see also 2 Pet 4:13, 5:1).

Peter's third claim is that Moses and "all the prophets" from Samuel onwards "also proclaimed these days" (v. 24). It is clear that Peter is not only thinking of the writing prophets, for he quotes Moses as a prophet, referred to David as a prophet who foretold of the Messiah, and mentions Samuel. Interestingly, while he next quotes God's promise to Abraham, he never refers to Abraham as a prophet.<sup>150</sup> Peter references Moses' foretelling that God would raise up a "prophet like" him for the people (Deut 18:15–20)—whom Peter identifies with Jesus.<sup>151</sup> Regarding Samuel, Peter is certainly thinking of the message of the Davidic covenant recorded in the book of Samuel (2 Sam 7)—which Peter explicitly referenced in his Pentecost speech.<sup>152</sup> After these statements, Peter calls upon his listeners as "sons of the prophets and of the covenant God made" with the patriarchs. He then quotes God's promise to Abraham that "in your seed all the families of the earth will be blessed" (v. 25). Just as Paul will later do, Peter proclaims the coming of Jesus as the fulfillment of this promise (though Peter here of course does not specify the promise's meaning for the gentiles).

It should be observed that Peter does not refer to the OT as "law" the way that Paul does. The closest he comes is at the Jerusalem Council, when he refers to the law of

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<sup>150</sup> This is possibly because Abraham did not "deliver prophetic oracles or create written documents." If so, this again would show that Peter is seeking to read the OT contextually and sensitively. (He is, however, called a prophet in Gen 20:7).

<sup>151</sup> For discussion of the application of this passage to Jesus as well as its interpretation in other Jewish circles, see Marshall, "Acts," 547–48; Keener, *Acts*, 2:1113–16; David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 183–84.

<sup>152</sup> Of course, the message itself was delivered by Nathan the prophet.

Moses as an unbearable “yoke” (Acts 15:10).<sup>153</sup> (The word *νόμος* never occurs in Peter’s writings or in words attributed to him.) Peter focuses on the law as prophecy—for him, even Moses is a prophet who spoke of Jesus as the greater prophet to come. Oddly enough for a document often seen as non-Petrine, 2 Peter is focused on a very Petrine topic: *prophecy*.<sup>154</sup>

### **Acts 10:42–43**

In the interest of completeness, I briefly mention Peter’s one other recorded explicit reference to Scripture. This time, Peter is proclaiming the good news of Jesus to Cornelius and company. He says that “all the prophets testify” to Jesus (much as he said in Acts 3:24), and particularly that “all who believe in him receive forgiveness of sins through his name.” Peter’s (or Luke’s) statement regarding “all” the prophets should not be pressed too hard.<sup>155</sup> Clearly, Peter does believe that the OT prophets spoke consistently and often of the Messiah. But Peter is thinking of the entire picture each prophet takes a part in painting. Each prophet bears his witness to that picture. Specific passages are not recorded here, though it is likely that Peter quoted some in his address. Peter is likely

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<sup>153</sup> Commentators point out that the law as “yoke” was often viewed positively in Judaism. See discussion in Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 426–27; Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary: 15:1–23:35*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 2235–38. Dunn therefore wonders if this is “Luke’s nod to a Pauline tradition” (see Gal 5:1). Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 201. But given the similarity in topic (whether gentiles are required to follow Torah in order to be the Messiah’s people), “Acts 15’s evocation of themes that also figure heavily in Galatians” is not surprising. See Keener, *Acts*, 2012, 3:2237. As Peterson points out, Nolland also draws attention to the positive use of “yoke.” Nolland concludes that “oppressiveness is not in view here”; rather, Peter is speaking of Israel’s history of “national failure” to keep Torah. J. L. Nolland, “A Fresh Look at Acts 15.10,” *NTS* 27, no. 1 (1980): 105–15. But I think Nolland creates a false dichotomy; both are in view. Peterson and Keener also helpfully point to similarities to Jesus’ words about his “light” yoke in Matt 11:28–30, and about those who imposed heavy burdens on others without bearing them themselves (Matt 23:4; Luke 11:46). It is not surprising to once again see resonances in Peter’s thinking to that of his Master.

<sup>154</sup> For a full study of the theme of prophecy in Peter, see Himes, “Peter and the Prophetic Word.”

<sup>155</sup> Rightly Marshall, “Acts,” 546.



thinking of (among other passages) Isaiah 28:16 and Isaiah 53, both of which he references in 1 Peter (2:6 and 2:24–25, respectively).<sup>156</sup>

### **Three Biblical Motifs**

There are a number of constant threads in Peter's thinking about Scripture: Scripture as prophecy, suffering and glory, the role of the Holy Spirit, and a sense of belonging to Scripture story. Beyond these, however, different Scriptural motifs come and go depending on the issues Peter is addressing. Because 2 Peter's use of Scripture consists primarily of references to stories and themes, it is helpful to sketch a few major motifs throughout the Petrine corpus. Here I sketch three motifs which are siloed in the three different extant sources of Petrine teaching: David in Acts, exodus and exile in 1 Peter, and true and false prophets in 2 Peter. I will demonstrate how these motifs are all part of Peter's larger prophetic-eschatological vision of Scripture which he calls his readers to inhabit.

#### **David in Acts**

In the book of Acts, Peter's focus is on proclaiming that Jesus is Israel's long-awaited Messiah, the Son of David. It is therefore unsurprising that he references five psalms and refers to the Davidic covenant twice within the very earliest days of the post-Ascension movement. It is because David was promised to be the ancestor of the Messiah that his prophetic words find their fulfillment in David's Son. In Acts 1, Peter quotes Psalm 69 and 109 to call for the replacement of Judas. In Acts 2, Peter references three different psalms (quoting 16 and 110, plus alluding to 132). Peter's overall understanding of the importance of David and his Son is crucial to his choice and use of these psalms.

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<sup>156</sup> Peterson observes that there are "scriptural allusions throughout" Peter's address. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 338–39. How many can be attributed to Peter as opposed to Luke, however, is debatable. He also lists OT passages "promising a definitive forgiveness of sins in the last days": Isa 33:24, 55:6–7; Jer 31:34; and Ezek 36:25. Marshall notes that prophecies to this specific topic are "hard to find." Marshall, "Acts," 580.

What controls Peter's usage of the Davidic texts are the convictions that (1) David was a "prophet," and (2) the Messiah is David's Son. Both of these points he makes explicitly (Acts 2:29–31). It is also of note that Peter draws on passages and themes he remembered from his days with Jesus. With the story of David, Peter not only proclaims the fulfillment of Israel's Scriptures and expectations in Jesus; he also situates himself and those around him in that story. He recognizes that if Jesus has brought David's story to its fulfillment, then he and his fellow apostles as well as Jesus' opponents are also part of that story's fulfillment. He then takes his cues accordingly (e.g., in the replacement for Judas). As will be seen, Peter does the same thing in both of his letters, with different scriptural motifs.<sup>157</sup>

### **Exodus and Exile in 1 Peter**

"The OT is cited or alluded to in 1 Peter in rich profusion."<sup>158</sup> But two prominent and intertwined OT motifs are exodus and exile.<sup>159</sup>

**Exodus.** Scattered throughout 1 Peter are evocations of the exodus/new exodus motifs.<sup>160</sup> Peter's readers are to recognize that they were "ransomed . . . by the precious

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<sup>157</sup> Also, it is no accident that suffering followed by exaltation is important to the story and poetry of David. For discussion of this Davidic theme, see Jeremy R. Treat, *The Crucified King: Atonement and Kingdom in Biblical and Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 63–66.

<sup>158</sup> Carson, "1 Peter," 1015.

<sup>159</sup> McCartney very helpfully studies three major OT motifs alluded to in 1 Pet: election, cult, and judgment. See chap. 4, "Thematic Allusions to the OT," in McCartney, "Use of OT in 1 Peter," 104–43. "Peter is using them as *perspectives* with which to view his readers' situation. The result is that each motif has links to the other two" (McCartney, 104). Under election, he looks at "Israel's past" (the exodus), "Israel's present" (exile), and "Israel's future" (inheritance). These are again interlocked. Mbuvi likewise observes how exodus and exile are intertwined in 1 Peter: "The exodus 'echoes' in 1 Peter are subsumed into the exile imagery, which itself is expressed in light of the Second Temple mindset of the 'continuing exile.'" Andrew M. Mbuvi, *Temple, Exile, and Identity in 1 Peter*, LNTS 345 (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 43.

<sup>160</sup> See McCartney, "Use of OT in 1 Peter," 106–12. Mbuvi writes, "1 Peter employs the exodus motif to recast the exilic writings by providing a matrix for understanding the exile experience as a 'Second/New Exodus' (Isa. 40–55; Ezek. 40–48) rather than a reflection on the literal exodus from Egypt." Mbuvi, *Temple, Exile, and Identity in 1 Peter*, 43. While certainly Peter's focus is on the "new exodus" inaugurated by Jesus, this cannot be separated from Israel's exodus (see 1 Pet 2:9).

blood of the Messiah, as of a blameless and spotless lamb” (1 Pet 1:18–19)—a likely reference to the ransoming from Egypt and the Passover lamb. They are, in the words of Exodus, “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a devoted nation, a people for his possession” (2:9; cf. Exod 19:5–6).<sup>161</sup> Peter links this to Hosea’s vision of the re-calling of Israel (2:10; cf. Hos 2:23) as exodus becomes new exodus. At the same time, believers are “sojourners” in a foreign land waiting for God to “visit” them (1 Pet 2:12).<sup>162</sup> They will be called “evildoers” (2:12) and are likely to suffer unjustly (2:20–21; 4:12–19), but they are to live honorable lives that their neighbors will not be able to gainsay when they are finally vindicated. This harks back to Exodus 4, when Moses and Aaron first approach the elders of Israel in Egypt and told them—with accompanying signs—that Yahweh was ready to redeem them. They worshipped when “they heard that Yahweh had visited the sons of Israel and that he had seen their affliction” (Exod 4:31).

**Exile.** There are at least four clear references to the exile in 1 Peter (1:1, 1:17; 2:11; 5:13).<sup>163</sup> The letter is bookended with exile references. In the opening salutation Peter greets his readers as “chosen, exiles of the dispersion.”<sup>164</sup> The letter closes with Peter’s passing on a greeting from “those at Babylon.” In 2:11, Peter exhorts his readers to live ethically in light of their status as “strangers and exiles” living among

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<sup>161</sup> Peter then writes, “. . . so that you may proclaim the excellencies [ἀρετή] of him who called you.” The word ἀρετή occurs only here in the plural, and only four other times in the NT in the singular. Three of those times, interestingly, are in 2 Pet 1:3–5. (The other is in Phil 4:8.)

<sup>162</sup> Schreiner concludes that this is a reference to salvation, not eschatological judgment. Carson concludes the opposite. Carson, “1 Peter,” 1033. But I think Peter’s point that they are both together (cf. 4:12–19, 5:10), just as the exodus was deliverance *and*—or even *through*—judgment. I nod here to the title of a biblical theology by James M. Hamilton Jr., *God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010). Cf. Charles Bigg, *St. Peter and St. Jude*, ICC (New York: T&T Clark, 1901), 138.

<sup>163</sup> For a fuller study of this motif in 1 Peter, see McCartney, “Use of OT in 1 Peter,” 113–21. On the “idea” of a (lingering) exile in Jewish literature and 1 Peter, see Mbuvi, *Temple, Exile, and Identity in 1 Peter*, 10–46.

<sup>164</sup> For discussion of “exiles” in 1 Pet 1:1 see Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 45–47.

“gentiles.”<sup>165</sup> Peter performs a remarkable appropriation of the motif of Israel’s exile in this letter. Israelite exiles are now (predominantly) gentile believers in Jesus—who nonetheless are contrasted with the “gentiles” they live among—and Babylon is now Rome.<sup>166</sup> (Interestingly, Jer 27:22 states that God’s people would remain in *Babylon* until he *visits* and *restores* them.) Andrew Mbuvi concludes that “the ‘idea of exile’ becomes a heuristic paradigm through which 1 Peter interprets the present situation of his audience, recasting the hope for the future that he seeks to establish for his ‘exiled’ community.”<sup>167</sup> Mbuvi is right, but how and why does Peter do this? This is not simply a “theological” or “literary” reading of the OT but an eschatological one. “The experiences of Israel in wandering and exile are the figures which Peter applies to the people of God in this age,”<sup>168</sup> because he believes that this “age” is the fulfillment of what all of the wanderings and exile of God’s people had prophetically foreshadowed.

Peter’s ethical instruction, specifically, synthesizes the two motifs. This can be seen in 1 Pet 2:9–17, where Peter alludes to Exodus 19:6 and then jumps to addressing his hearers as “sojourners and exiles” (after an allusion to Hos 2:23). The use of ἐπισκοπή, “visitation,” likely alludes to the exodus references in LXX Gen 50:24, Exod 3:16, and Exod 13:19. Note also how in verses 13–17 Peter instructs his readers to submit

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<sup>165</sup> In 1:17 Peter calls on his readers to live with “fear” during “the time of your sojourning.” Schreiner notes that “the parallel with Israel’s sojourn in Egypt is apt,” thus linking this verse more closely with the exile theme. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 83. For a study of intertextuality in 1 Peter emphasizing the diaspora theme, see Eric J. Gréaux, “‘To the Elect Exiles of the Dispersion . . . from Babylon’: The Function of the Old Testament in 1 Peter” (PhD diss., Duke University, 2003). Cf. McCartney, “Use of OT in 1 Peter,” 106–21.

<sup>166</sup> “Most scholars agree that” the recipients of 1 Peter “were mainly Gentiles.” Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 25–30. See his arguments and discussion. Cf. Keener, *1 Peter*, 31. Contra, e.g., Ben Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1–2 Peter*, vol. 2 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2007), 22–37; Peter J. Leithart, *The Promise of His Appearing: An Exposition of Second Peter* (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2004). Jobes, while noting that “the consensus is [predominantly] Gentile,” finds the evidence less conclusive. But she concludes that “whether Peter’s readers were formerly Jews or Gentiles, Peter addresses them indiscriminately from within the traditions of biblical Israel, in which the author was thoroughly steeped.” Jobes, *1 Peter*, 23–24.

<sup>167</sup> Mbuvi, *Temple, Exile, and Identity in 1 Peter*, 134.

<sup>168</sup> McCartney, “Use of OT in 1 Peter,” 113.

to the authorities, just as in Israel's exile (see Jer 29), and in contrast to the exodus where they rose up against them.

**Conclusion.** For Peter, not only are directly “prophetic” biblical statements relevant to his present day, but so are broader historical motifs from biblical history. No doubt influenced by Isaiah (and/or Jesus’ reading of Isaiah), Peter sees Jesus as ushering in a new exodus.<sup>169</sup> This exodus has begun, but Jesus’ people are not yet in the promised land. Instead, they are sojourners and exiles—here Peter mixes in another metaphor—awaiting the ultimate return. Peter uses the language not only of the prophets but of the Torah itself to give his new readers roles from an old story.<sup>170</sup> But once again, Peter is not simply engaged in literary or rhetorical effects. He reads the exodus and exile motifs prophetically and eschatologically (as Israel’s prophets themselves did).<sup>171</sup>

### **False Prophets in 2 Peter**

Jörg Frey writes of 2 Peter, “The contrast adopted from the biblical tradition between true and false prophets serves as the model for the opposition between the reliable message of the apostles and the destructive message of the opposing teachers.”<sup>172</sup> A subsequent chapter of this dissertation argues that 2 Peter builds upon a Jeremianic

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<sup>169</sup> For an entire monograph devoted to 1 Peter’s use of the Isaianic vision of divine restoration, see Egan, *Ecclesiology and Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*.

<sup>170</sup> To use terms from social memory theory, Peter *keys* his present to the biblical *script*, thus creating a new *frame* of reference. See Rafael Rodríguez, “‘According to the Scriptures’: Suffering and the Psalms in the Speeches in Acts,” in *Memory and Identity in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity: A Conversation with Barry Schwartz*, ed. Tom Thatcher, SemeiaSt 78 (Atlanta: SBL, 2014), 241–62; Catrin H. Williams, “How Scripture ‘Speaks’: Insights from the Study of Ancient Media Culture,” in Allen and Smith, *Methodology in Use of OT*, 53–70; Barry Schwartz, “Where There’s Smoke, There’s Fire: Memory and History,” in Thatcher, *Memory and Identity*, 7–37. See also J. de Waal Dryden, *Theology and Ethics in 1 Peter: Paraenetic Strategies for Christian Character Formation* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 64–68.

<sup>171</sup> For a primer on how Israel’s prophets interpreted exodus and return from exile eschatologically, see Peter J. Gentry, *How to Read and Understand the Biblical Prophets* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 71–115.

<sup>172</sup> Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 315. Cf. Cavallin’s brief article underscoring 2 Peter’s interest in false prophets: Hans C. C. Cavallin, “The False Teachers of 2 Peter as Pseudo-Prophets,” *NovT* 21, no. 3 (1979): 263–70.

“letter to the exiles” motif begun in 1 Peter. Seen in this light, the unique message, emphases, and scriptural concerns of 2 Peter can be better appreciated. In 2 Peter, the apostle follows in Jeremiah’s steps as he defends his authenticity as a true prophet who has heard directly from God; he condemns false teachers whom he likens to the false prophets of old and with similar imagery to that used by Jeremiah; and he calls on his readers—just as Jeremiah did to the exiled recipients of his letter—to wait patiently for their restoration and to lead obedient and faithful lives despite the seeming delay.

In 2 Peter, not only are directly “prophetic” biblical statements or broadly forward-pointing motifs relevant to his present day; so are specific characters and roles within those prophetic and historical motifs. As Peter and his first-century contemporaries inhabit the eschatological fulfillment of Israel’s prophecies and history, they inhabit the roles of the actors in the old drama.<sup>173</sup>

### **Constant Principles in Peter’s Scriptural Hermeneutic**

From the brief sketches of Peter’s varied use of the OT across the material attributed to him in the NT, three broad and intertwined principles emerge: Scripture as prophecy, the “suffering and glory” schema, and a stepping into Scripture’s story.

#### **The Nature of Scripture: Scripture as Prophecy**

Peter emphasizes the “prophetic” nature of Scripture. Unlike Paul, Peter does not contrast “law” with “promise”—indeed, he hardly speaks about the Mosaic law at all. He speaks little of covenants, or of commandments. For him, Scripture is primarily—though not solely—a forward-pointing text which predicts the coming of the Messiah, his

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<sup>173</sup> Though Witherington views 2 Peter as pseudonymous, he writes the following: “It is characteristic of the Peter of Acts and 1 Peter that he relies on Old Testament prophecy to refute his foes’ slanders against the gospel and to vindicate its truth, and indeed 2 Peter 1:12–21; 3:1–3 show the same sort of reliance.” Witherington, *The Indelible Image*, 1:795.

“suffering and glories,” and the age of fulfillment he inaugurates.<sup>174</sup> Moses, Samuel, David, and others are labelled “prophets,” who through their knowledge of God’s promises and by the influence of the Holy Spirit speak of the age to come.

The role of divine, and particularly the Holy Spirit’s, inspiration of Scripture is prominent in Peter’s speaking of it. In 1 Peter he speaks of the “Spirit of the Messiah” predicting the Messianic suffering and glories. In 2 Peter he refers to Scripture (and particularly, he is speaking of prophetic Scripture) as “breathed out by God.” The Spirit’s inspiration ensures that Scripture is the word of the God who knows and plans history’s culmination.<sup>175</sup> But for Peter, it does not render the human authors completely irrelevant. While they may not always have fully understood their prophecies (1 Pet 1:10–12), at least in David’s case his knowledge of God’s promise to him played a role in his foretelling Jesus’ resurrection (Acts 2). Additionally, divine inspiration for Peter is closely paired with divinely given proclamation by the apostles, with the latter commencing with the outpouring of the Spirit in Acts 2. Both the authors of Scripture as well as Peter and his fellows have in common the Holy Spirit’s inspiration as they give their messages.

### **The Message of Scripture: Messianic Suffering and Subsequent Glories**

Peter sees Scripture as schematizing the Messianic age into two divisions: first suffering, then glory. Peter speaks of the Messiah’s “suffering and subsequent glories” (1

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<sup>174</sup> For Peter, the inaugurated “age of fulfillment” envelops Messiah’s people. Rightly Egan, “[First Peter’s] theology assumes that Christ is central in the thought of prophetic scripture and in the work of the gospel. Yet, the focus is not solely on Christ as the fulfilment of scripture since Peter finds in scripture a means to express the nature and purpose of the church. Since the church is in Christ, a pattern is established whereby what is true of Christ is also true of the church.” Egan, *Ecclesiology and Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 70. Cf. McCartney, “Use of OT in 1 Peter,” 102, 295–96. In this observation one can see a few of Beale’s presuppositions of the NT authors on display, especially corporate identity and representation, Christ as representing true Israel, and that the end of the ages has dawned with Christ. See Beale, *Handbook on NT Use of OT*, 95–102.

<sup>175</sup> Again, this is not a “theological” or literary/rhetorical interpretation of Scripture. It is built upon Peter’s presuppositions that history is unified by a wise, sovereign divine plan, and thus that later parts of biblical history and the biblical text interpret earlier parts. Again Beale, *Handbook on NT Use of OT*, 95–102.

Pet 1:11). The prophets foresaw Jesus' rejection and death, and then his resurrection and victorious reign. The latter culminates in his "restoring all things" in the future (Acts 3:21).

Peter believes that this same suffering/glory schema applies to the Messiah's followers. This theme is most prominent in 1 Peter; see especially 2:21–25, 4:13, and 5:1.<sup>176</sup> Their experience will be like his, because they as his people share in his own experiences. Thus they are called now to suffer—a significant theme in Peter's writings. But as they share in Messiah's sufferings now, they are to be confident that they will share in his glories in the future. This pattern foretold by the OT is fulfilled by the Messiah and his people. While not as explicit in 2 Peter, a "present hardship, future salvation" is definitely observable.<sup>177</sup> The allusion to Isaiah's new heavens and new earth prophecy coupled with Peter's expectation of impending death (2 Pet 1:13)—in a manner like his Lord—hints that the hardships and glories are indeed linked to the Messiah's.<sup>178</sup>

### **The Application of Scripture: Stepping into the Story**

Peter's use of the OT is never academic or merely theological. He always calls his readers not only to respond to Scripture's call, but to inhabit its world—to step into its (true) story. This begins with how he understands his own relationship as an apostle to the scriptural prophets. As already observed, Peter emphasizes Scripture's role as

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<sup>176</sup> McCartney writes that according to 1 Peter, "Christians who are suffering have a point of identification with Christ, and can expect glories to come after, and all this is in the Scripture." McCartney, "Use of OT in 1 Peter," 41. Cf. Egan's study of the suffering/glory theme in 1 Peter (and its Isaianic background): Egan, *Ecclesiology and Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 59–70.

<sup>177</sup> Ostmeier writes, "Der Aspekt der Leidensbewältigung und Leidensbegründung, der den erstern Petrusbrief dominiert, rückt im zweiten Petrusbrief in den Hintergrund." Ostmeier, *Die Briefe des Petrus und des Judas*, 131. While this is true to some extent, it is still an important theme, exemplified (as Ostmeier develops) by Lot.

<sup>178</sup> As suggested above, Jesus' prediction of Peter's crucifixion (John 21) and the looming shadow that must have cast over Peter's life likely affected his thinking on identifying with Christ in suffering.



prophetically foretelling the Messianic age. This emphasis is closely tied to Peter's own role as an apostolic proclaimer of the gospel. Peter does not view himself as a mere reader of Scripture, but as an authoritative successor to its writers. They, under the inspiration of the Spirit, foretold the "sufferings and glories" of the Messiah; he, filled with the Spirit (Acts 2) and having heard directly from God (2 Pet 1), proclaims the fulfillment of those prophecies. This proclamation is not limited to a simple announcement of Jesus' messiahship; it includes all of his exhortations to believers to live their lives in accord with the scriptural fulfillment they have been drawn into.<sup>179</sup>

In Acts 1, Peter and his fellow apostles are fulfilling the story and roles of David and his enemies when they choose Judas's replacement. Believers become Spirit-filled prophets in fulfillment of Joel's vision in Acts 2. In Acts 3, Peter's hearers are "sons of the prophets" and of the Abrahamic covenant and are called to repent so that the final fulfillment of God's promises could come about. In 1 Peter, gentile believers are portrayed as part of the exodus generation, experiencing Isaiah's new exodus. They are also characterized as Babylonian exiles awaiting the ultimate return home. In 2 Peter, the apostle likens himself to the true prophets of the OT and his opponents to the false prophets that plagued Israel. He calls his readers to heed the truth as they await the final judgment and restoration. Peter's appropriation of the OT is vivid, personal, and dramatic. His characterization of present people using OT motifs certainly includes literary and rhetorical motivations, but it is fundamentally the result of his prophetic reading of the OT and his presuppositions concerning Scripture.

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<sup>179</sup> Again the unity of Messiah and people are on display, in line with Beale's corporate solidarity presupposition. Beale, *Handbook on NT Use of OT*, 95–102. Cf. McCartney, "Use of OT in 1 Peter," 102, 295–96. I wonder if this is made more natural by the OT/Jewish feeling of being part of the exodus generation's story. As far back as Deuteronomy, Moses urges the new generation, while referencing the fire of Mt. Sinai from their fathers' generation, "Not with your fathers did Yahweh cut this covenant, but with us . . ." (Deut 5:3–5; cf. Deut 29.) This feeling persists in Seder celebrations today, as the Passover Haggadah says that "in every generation everyone is obligated to see themselves as if they themselves came out of Egypt."

The next three chapters of this dissertation will study how Peter applies these principles to his use of the Old Testament in 2 Peter.

## CHAPTER 3

### WISDOM AND THE TWO WAYS IN 2 PETER

This chapter studies how the book of Proverbs and the biblical “Two Ways” motif has influenced 2 Peter.<sup>1</sup> Peter quotes Proverbs 26:11 in his letter, but I argue that the book’s influence permeates the letter beyond direct quotation or even conscious attempt. As David Burge writes, “A Jew’s familiarity with Proverbial aphoristic wisdom might make it instinctive to adopt Proverbs’ vocabulary, categories, posture, personality, and literary structure when confronted by seductive voices spouting falsehood and mocking God’s word.”<sup>2</sup> Peter writes this letter as a wise elder figure setting out the two ways: the way of life which he exhorts his readers to follow, and the way of destruction which he urges his readers against. He calls his readers to increase in the virtues of the way of life; and he identifies the false teachers as sensual, greedy scoffers who entice the unwary. My argument is twofold: (1) Proverbs stands as the “fountainhead” of the Jewish wisdom tradition, a tradition which significantly influences 2 Peter. (2) The more particular themes and language of Proverbs itself are echoed in 2 Peter.

This chapter first reviews salient themes from Proverbs and other OT wisdom material. It then briefly looks at how OT wisdom was received and developed in Second Temple Judaism and in Jesus’ teaching—becoming more closely connected to Israel’s covenantal history and to eschatology as in 2 Peter. It then examines 2 Peter’s quotation

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<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to David Burge for bringing this to my attention through a paper he presented at the 2020 meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, and through personal communication since then. The paper has been published as David K. Burge, “Reading 2 Peter with Wisdom: Can a Wisdom Hermeneutic Best Explain the ‘Enigmatic’ Epistle?,” *Presb* 47, no. 1 (2021): 77–96. Cf. the observation of Jerome H. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 224.

<sup>2</sup> Burge, “Reading 2 Peter with Wisdom,” 86.

of Proverbs 26:11 and its broader use of Proverbs and the “two ways.” The chapter concludes by suggesting how Peter incorporates wisdom into the prophetic and creation/destruction motifs that dominate the letter.

Darian Lockett has demonstrated a similar phenomenon in the letter of James. While James “clearly takes up Greco-Roman moral topics and rhetorical strategies”—as does 2 Peter—“it is a thoroughly Jewish text” which “owes a great debt to the tradition of Jewish wisdom writing—a tradition which richly incorporated the ‘Two Ways’ motif.”<sup>3</sup> The most significant of these wisdom works, according to Lockett, are Proverbs and Ben Sira.<sup>4</sup> The “Two Ways” motif has a dual origin, in both “the covenantal blessing and curse material of the Pentateuch” and “in Hebrew wisdom literature.”<sup>5</sup> It became popular in later Jewish literature, in Jesus’ teaching, and in Christian writings. In “post-biblical Jewish documents,” the motif developed an eschatological orientation.<sup>6</sup> This chapter surveys all of the same features and developments in relation to 2 Peter, finding a letter with an eschatological message packaged with the language, themes, and dichotomies of Proverbs.

### **Salient OT Wisdom Passages**

While wisdom literature is notoriously difficult to define or circumscribe, the distinct imprint of Proverbs and the biblical “Two Ways” tradition can be clearly

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<sup>3</sup> Darian Lockett, “Structure of Communicative Strategy? The ‘Two Ways’ Motif in James’ Theological Instruction,” *Neot* 42, no. 2 (2008): 274. Lockett argues that “as James firmly fits within the thought world of the Torah and significantly takes up Jewish sapiential themes,” he intentionally fashioned the letter “with this motif in mind” (276; see also 273). Lockett is not, however, claiming that “James actually used any one particular Jewish or early Christian ‘Two Ways’ text” (273).

<sup>4</sup> Lockett, “Structure of Communicative Strategy?,” 274n7.

<sup>5</sup> Lockett, “Structure of Communicative Strategy?,” 274.

<sup>6</sup> Lockett, “Structure of Communicative Strategy?,” 274–75.

observed in 2 Peter. This section sketches salient highlights from the speeches of Proverbs 1–9, and examples of wisdom psalms (1 and 34).<sup>7</sup>

### **Proverbs 1–9**

The speeches of Proverbs 1–9 set the scene and tone of the entire canonical book of Proverbs, and they provide context and grounding for the collections of sayings contained in the rest of the book.<sup>8</sup> These opening chapters lay out the “two ways” which become a trademark of wisdom literature. The speeches are given as the instruction of a royal father to his son (e.g., 1:8; 4:1–4) and to whoever will listen in (1:1–6). Hearers are called to fear Yahweh and to seek after wisdom. They must be diligent to remember the father’s instruction, for it is the way to life. The homilies are filled with warnings against major enemies which pull the “son” toward the way to destruction: “sinners” and fools, the personified Ms. Folly, and the adulterous woman.

The father calls his son to “hear” his instruction intently (Prov 1:8; 4:1, 10, 20; 5:1), to “treasure up” his commandments (2:1), to seek wisdom above all things (2:2–5; 8:4–11). The son must “not forget” (3:1; 4:5) or “forsake” (4:2, 6; 6:20–21; cf. 3:3) his teaching. The son must “not lose sight of” wisdom (3:21) but must closely “keep” both the father’s instruction (4:13, 21; 6:20; 7:1–4) and his own heart (4:23–26). The father’s instruction is to remain with the son long after he is grown and his father gone. The

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<sup>7</sup> The terms *wisdom literature* and *wisdom psalms* are debated. My focus is specifically on Proverbs (with connections to other material which is very similar to Proverbs), so the genre debate is not an obstacle. For scholars wishing to do away with the concept of “wisdom” as a genre altogether see e.g., Will Kynes, *An Obituary for “Wisdom Literature”: The Birth, Death, and Intertextual Reintegration of a Biblical Corpus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019); Mark R. Sneed, ed., *Was There a Wisdom Tradition? New Prospects in Israelite Wisdom Studies*, *Ancient Israel and Its Literature* 23 (Atlanta: SBL, 2015). I agree with Longman, who argues that wisdom literature is still a viable category. See Tremper Longman III, *The Fear of the Lord Is Wisdom: A Theological Introduction to Wisdom in Israel* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 276–82; Longman, “Prophecy and Wisdom: Connections, Influences, Relationships,” in *Riddles and Revelations: Explorations into the Relationship between Wisdom and Prophecy in the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Mark J. Boda, Russell L. Meek, and William R. Osborne, LHBOTS 634 (London: T&T Clark, 2018). Cf. the other essays in Boda, Meek, and Osborne, *Riddles and Revelations*.

<sup>8</sup> For a thorough study of Prov 1–9, see Daniel J. Estes, *Hear, My Son: Teaching and Learning in Proverbs 1–9*, NSBT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997).

father's instruction and the pursuit of wisdom lead the son on the path of life (1:33; 2:5–22; 3:2, 16–18, 22; 4:10, 18–27; 6:23; 8:32–36; 9:11) and honor (4:8–9; 8:18–21). These calls are given along with exhortations to avoid the paths of wickedness and folly that lead to destruction (1:7, 10–19, 22–33; 2:12–22; 3:28–35; 4:14–19, 23–27; 5:1–14, 20–23; 6:12–19, 24–35; chap. 7; 9:13–18).

The path to avoid in Proverbs is the path of folly, wickedness, and particularly adultery. “Fools” (פְּסוּלִים) are often referred to as “scoffers” (לְצַיִם) who laugh at and reject right teaching (1:22–25).<sup>9</sup> Their arrogance will backfire on them; someday they will be the ones who are laughed at when their choices lead to calamity and destruction (1:26–33). They are “men of perverted speech,” who “rejoice” in the “ways of darkness” (2:12–15; cf. 6:12–15). Besides being violent (3:31; 4:17; cf. 10:6–11) and lazy (6:6–9), they are greedy (1:19; cf. 15:27), gluttonous (23:20–21), and arrogant (3:34 LXX; 8:13; cf. 16:5 and 21:4). They seek to “entice” others to join them—and to be destroyed (1:10–19; 7:21–23; cf. 16:29).

Much space in Proverbs 1–9 is devoted to warnings against the “strange woman” (אִשָּׁה זָרָה and נְכַרְיָה; 2:16–22; 5:1–14; 6:20–35; and 7:5–27).<sup>10</sup> This woman is “strange” not for ethnic reasons but because she is “not one’s own wife”—thus, sexual immorality is the concern.<sup>11</sup> The warning against the “strange woman” appears first in

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<sup>9</sup> These terms are sometimes simply rendered with ἀσεβής in the LXX, especially in Prov 1. See discussion in Johann Cook, “Proverbs,” in *A New English Translation of the Septuagint*, ed. Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 621–23.

<sup>10</sup> See Matthew J. Goff, “Hellish Females: The Strange Woman of Septuagint Proverbs and 4QWiles of the Wicked Woman (4Q184),” *JSJ* 39, no. 1 (2008): 25.

<sup>11</sup> Some have argued that “foreign” refers to a woman of different ethnicity, but I concur with Goff that the “strangeness” in Prov 1–9 refers to the fact that “she is not the male addressee’s wife.” Goff, “Hellish Females,” 25–28. She is rather, married to another (Prov 2:17, 7:19). The same is true in the LXX: note the parallelism of 5:20 between the ἀλλοτρίαν and the phrase τῆς μὴ ἰδίας (Goff, 40). See also (as Goff points out) Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs 1–9: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB, vol. 18a (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 262; Christl M. Maier, *Die “fremde Frau” in Proverbien 1–9: Eine exegetische und sozialgeschichtliche Studie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995), 254. Goff critiques, e.g., Claudia V. Camp, *Wise, Strange, and Holy: The Strange Woman and the Making of the Bible*, JSOTSup 320 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 40–71, 323–44. For further discussion, see the excurses in Fox, *Proverbs 1–9*. See also Daniel J. Estes, “What Makes the Strange Woman of Proverbs 1–9 Strange?,” in *Ethical and Unethical in the Old Testament: God and Humans in Dialogue*, ed. Katharine J.

2:16–17 (in the MT, though not in the LXX),<sup>12</sup> and all of chapter 7 is devoted to the theme. The figure of the adulterous woman in some cases blends with the personification of Ms. Folly (9:13–18), and even more so in the LXX<sup>13</sup>; it is both of these female figures that stand in contrast to Lady Wisdom (8:1–9:12). This overlap is developed further in prophetic and Second Temple literature (e.g., 4Q184).<sup>14</sup>

Second Peter includes all of these themes: the “two ways,” the call to pay attention and not forget the elder’s instruction, and the characterization of the wicked. Material scattered throughout Proverbs and wisdom psalms covers similar themes; relevant passages are discussed in the 2 Peter sections below.

### **Psalms 1 and 34**

Psalm 1 is a sharply dichotomized “two ways” composition placed at the head of the Psalter.<sup>15</sup> It contrasts the wicked/sinners/scoffers with those whose “delight” is in the Torah of Yahweh. OT wisdom literature does not often explicitly reference the Torah, though connections are implicit there and become increasingly explicit in Second Temple wisdom literature (see below) closer to Peter’s day.<sup>16</sup> The psalm does, however,

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Dell, *Library of Biblical Studies* (New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 151–69; Maier, *Die “fremde Frau” in Proverbien 1–9*; Michael V. Fox, “The Strange Woman in Septuagint Proverbs,” *JNSL* 22, no. 2 (1996): 31–44; Gale A. Yee, “‘I Have Perfumed My Bed with Myrrh’: The Foreign Woman (išša Zārâ) in Proverbs 1–9,” *JSOT* 13, no. 43 (1989): 53–68.

<sup>12</sup> The LXX’s rephrasing gives more general moral exhortations similar to the preceding verses. See Goff, “Hellish Females,” 28–29.

<sup>13</sup> Rightly Goff, “Hellish Females,” 28. For example, the LXX adds the descriptor “folly” to the woman of Prov 5:5 MT (Goff, 31).

<sup>14</sup> See Goff, “Hellish Females,” 41–44.

<sup>15</sup> The classifications of “wisdom psalms” is debated, but these two are fairly widely accepted. See survey of scholarship and discussion in Susan Gillingham, “‘I Will Incline My Ear to a Proverb; I Will Solve My Riddle to the Music of the Harp’ (Psalm 49.4): The Wisdom Tradition and the Psalms,” in *Perspectives on Israelite Wisdom: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar*, ed. John Jarick, LHBOTS (London: T&T Clark, 2015), 277–309. Goldingay writes that Ps 1 “would not have seemed out of place” within Prov 1–9. John Goldingay, *Psalms*, vol. 1, *Psalms 1–41*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 80. Cf. Longman, *Fear of the Lord Is Wisdom*, 66–67.

<sup>16</sup> Note also how, for example, the reference to a “marriage covenant” in Prov 2:17 becomes a

demonstrate a classic Proverbs-like focus on “prospering” in this life versus being cut off from the “assembly of the righteous.”<sup>17</sup>

Psalm 34:11–22 (Psalm 33:12–23 LXX) is a wisdom poem, of which Peter quotes verses 12–16 (vv. 13–17 LXX)<sup>18</sup> in 1 Peter 3:10–12:

What person is he who wants life, coveting to see good days? Stop your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit. Turn away from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it. The Lord’s eyes are on the righteous, and his ears are toward their petition. But the Lord’s face is against evildoers . . . . (NETS)<sup>19</sup>

The verse immediately preceding the quoted verses is identical to the voice of the father in Proverbs: “Come, O children, hear me; the fear of the Lord I will teach you” (NETS).<sup>20</sup> This passage gives the classic “two ways” dichotomy of Proverbs 1–9 and Psalm 1. In its original context, the passage most likely focused on a blessed life in God’s land versus being judged by God in this life.<sup>21</sup> As later demonstrated, however, Peter “eschatologizes” the passage, and there may already be faint hints of future hope in the psalm’s conclusion (v. 22).<sup>22</sup> These “wisdom psalms” highlight the “Two Ways” motif of

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reference to the Torah in the LXX translation. Goff, “Hellish Females,” 30.

<sup>17</sup> The original referent of “judgment” in the psalm is likely to judgment in this life, not to a final eschatological judgment. This, however, is somewhat dependent on one’s dating of the psalm. For discussion see Goldingay, *Psalms 1–41*, 87–88.

<sup>18</sup> The MT and LXX are virtually identical. See D. A. Carson, “1 Peter,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 1037. First Peter contains numerous references to Ps 34 (33 LXX); see Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 221–22; Carson, “1 Peter,” 1022–23, 1036–37.

<sup>19</sup> Translation from NETS LXX. Albert Pietersma, “Psalms,” in Pietersma and Wright, *New English Translation of Septuagint*, 563.

<sup>20</sup> Kidner notes, “Almost every word in [Ps 34:11] is in the style of the wisdom instructor, as in Proverbs 1–9.” Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1–72: An Introduction and Commentary* (London: InterVarsity, 1973), 158. Cf. Peter C. Craigie and Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 1–50*, 2nd ed., WBC (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 279–81. Jacobson sees some influence of Israel’s “prophetic theology” as well. Nancy L. deClaissé-Walford, Rolf A. Jacobson, and Beth LaNeel Tanner, *The Book of Psalms*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 326–29.

<sup>21</sup> Goldingay notes the “this-worldliness” of v. 12. Goldingay, *Psalms 1–41*, 482. Cf. Carson, “1 Peter,” 1037; and Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 2nd ed., CSC (Nashville: B&H, 2020), 189.

<sup>22</sup> See deClaissé-Walford, Jacobson, and Tanner, *The Book of Psalms*, 328–29.



Proverbs 1–9, which will become a dominant theme of 2 Peter, developed in an eschatological direction.<sup>23</sup>

### **“Two Ways” in Prophetic-Historical Literature**

While it may seem a divergence to look at Israel’s prophetic-historical literature, it is important for appreciating Peter’s reception and development of Proverbs. The “Two Ways” tradition epitomized in Proverbs 1–9 and Psalm 1 is quintessentially sapiential. It is largely focused on an individual’s day-to-day life in this world, with little explicit reference to the history or state of the nation as a whole. However, there is another “Two Ways” stream running through the OT that is distinct though related.<sup>24</sup> This stream begins in Deuteronomy and runs through the so-called Deuteronomic History and into the Latter Prophets. Ultimately, two interconnections are seen: First, biblical wisdom is in the context of the Deuteronomic-prophetic “Two Ways” stream.<sup>25</sup> While the

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<sup>23</sup> I am not denying hints of post-mortem judgment and blessing in Proverbs. However, “life-after-death” is not eschatology. By eschatology I am speaking of the final judgment of the wicked and the destruction of the cosmos, and to the final state of the righteous and the earth’s recreation.

<sup>24</sup> In contrast to an older view (e.g., Zimmerli) which essentially kept the sapiential and Deuteronomic-prophetic streams hermetically sealed off from each other. For a brief survey of scholarship on the place of Proverbs and wisdom in OT theology, see Richard P. Belcher Jr., *Finding Favour in the Sight of God: A Theology of Wisdom Literature*, NSBT (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2018), 1–14. Lindblom’s caution is commendable, but he may miss some of the interconnectedness of the Proverbs and Deuteronomy traditions when he writes that the prophetic “idea of the knowledge of God . . . is of course genuinely prophetic and has nothing to do with the doctrines of the Wisdom teachers.” Johannes Lindblom, “Wisdom in the Old Testament Prophets,” in *Wisdom in Israel and in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Martin Noth and D. Winton Thomas, VTSup 3 (Leiden: Brill, 1955), 199. On the other hand, I think Longman goes a bit too far with his covenantal connections to wisdom, obscuring some of the uniqueness of the wisdom tradition (he points to Deut 4:5–8). Longman, *Fear of the Lord Is Wisdom*, 163–76. Garrett’s sketch of the development of Israelite wisdom from family wisdom to Sinai/Deuteronomy to courtly wisdom to exilic Torah wisdom is balanced and helpful. Duane A. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, NAC, vol. 14 (Nashville: B&H, 1993), 23–28.

<sup>25</sup> For an example in Proverbs itself, see the connection to Deuteronomy in Prov 2:21. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, 77; William McKane, *Proverbs*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970), 288. Cf. Andrew E. Steinmann, “Daniel as Wisdom in Action,” in Boda, Meek, and Osborne, *Riddles and Revelations*, 131; Mark J. Boda, “Wisdom in Prophecy,” in Boda, Meek, and Osborne, *Riddles and Revelations*, 251. Both Steinmann and Boda point out that “real wisdom” in the OT “stems from a relationship with YHWH” (“the fear of YHWH”) (Steinmann, 131), which links to the “covenantal language of Deuteronomy” (Boda, 251). “The pursuit of wisdom” is allied with the covenantal “relational pursuit” (Boda, 251).

influences on wisdom literature are many and diverse (including family folk wisdom and the international wisdom of the ancient Near East),<sup>26</sup> scholars point out that “fear of Yahweh” language is a striking feature shared by Deuteronomy and Proverbs.<sup>27</sup> Proverbs presents itself as embedded within the community and history of Israel by its association with Solomon and its references to the “fear of Yahweh.”

Second, the prophets at times employ proverbial wisdom language.<sup>28</sup> An interesting case study is the use of adultery imagery in both discourses. In the historical-prophetic stream, adultery is metaphorical for the nation’s idolatry, the abandoning of their covenant partner. In the proverbial stream, literal adultery is intended (e.g., Prov 7).<sup>29</sup> Ryan O’Dowd shows how “the prophets’ apocalyptic imagery of divorce and judgment, in fact, manifests the same pattern of two ways of wisdom and life and folly and death that we find in Gen 1–3 and Prov 1–9.”<sup>30</sup> For example, in both Malachi 2:11,

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<sup>26</sup> Again, see Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, 23–28.

<sup>27</sup> James Patrick points to the following: Hans Fuhs, “ירא” in *TDOT*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. John T. Willis et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 6:290–315; Jack R. Lundbom, “Wisdom Influence in the Book of Deuteronomy,” in *Raising Up a Faithful Exegete: Essays in Honor of Richard D. Nelson* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 193–209. See James E. Patrick, “The Fear of the LORD Is the Beginning of Wisdom,” in Jarick, *Perspectives on Israelite Wisdom*, 149. Patrick argues that Proverbs implicitly presupposes Deuteronomy. While his specific arguments are speculative, he draws attention to connections and asks stimulating questions. Cf. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, 26; John J. Collins, “Wisdom and Torah,” in *Pedagogy in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. Karina Martin Hogan, Matthew J. Goff, and Emma Wasserman, EJL (Atlanta: SBL, 2017), 63–65.

<sup>28</sup> For example, Jeremiah sounds a wisdom note in several places. See e.g., Jer 4:22, 5:26–29, 9:23–24, 10:12–14, and 17:5–11. Intriguingly, Jeremiah also critiques the “wise” of his day for lacking true wisdom. Katharine J. Dell, “Jeremiah, Creation, and Wisdom,” in Jarick, *Perspectives on Israelite Wisdom*, 375–90. Cf. Hans-Jürgen Hermisson, “Weisheit im Jeremiabuch,” in *Schriftauslegung in der Schrift*, ed. Reinhard G. Kratz, Thomas Krüger, and Konrad Schmid (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2000), 175–92; Leslie C. Allen, “The Structural Role of Wisdom in Jeremiah,” in Boda, Meek, and Osborne, *Riddles and Revelations*, 95–107. For another example, see the wisdom ending of Hos 14:9. Gerald T. Sheppard, “The Last Words of Hosea,” *RevExp* 90 (1993): 191–204. For further studies into the relationships between wisdom and prophecy, see Boda, Meek, and Osborne, *Riddles and Revelations*.

<sup>29</sup> The metaphorical wise and foolish women are also discussed, but again for individualized instructional purposes.

<sup>30</sup> Ryan O’Dowd, “A Prophet in the Sage’s House? Origins of the Feminine Metaphors in Proverbs,” in Boda, Meek, and Osborne, *Riddles and Revelations*, 181. For a more in-depth study of the adultery metaphor in the Bible, see Raymond C. Ortlund Jr., *God’s Unfaithful Wife: A Biblical Theology of Spiritual Adultery*, NSBT (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2003).

14–16 and Proverbs 1–9 there are “foreign women, sacred covenants with God, and consequences spelled out in cosmic terms” (Prov 2:16–18).<sup>31</sup> The latter prophets (specifically Malachi, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Hosea) “all express the breaking of Israel’s covenant with YHWH in symbolic terms of marital unfaithfulness to foreign wives,” and use imagery “strewn through Prov 5–9”: God is a ““fountain of living water” (Jer 2:13; cf. Prov 5:15-18) and one who gives gifts of wine and vineyards (Hos 2:8-13) to an unfaithful wife who has committed adultery and prostitution (Jer 3:2-6; Ezek 16:28, 32).”<sup>32</sup> This example reveals the interwovenness of national (covenantal) marital imagery from Sinai and Deuteronomy with familial, everyday-life instruction of Proverbs with the prophetic/apocalyptic writings.<sup>33</sup>

The historical-prophetic “Two Ways” stream begins in Deuteronomy and is epitomized in 30:15–20.<sup>34</sup> Moses calls Israel to choose the path of “life” and “blessing” by following the commands of Yahweh. If they refuse and rebel, they will have chosen “death” and “cursing.” The setting of this is national and eventually eschatological, not so much personal and atemporal as in the wisdom tradition. Here, Israel’s choice to follow the path of life leads to long enjoyment in the promised land, while the opposite choice means eventual exile from the land. In Proverbs and the wisdom stream, by contrast, both the choices and consequences are individualized. (Compare the adultery example above.)

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<sup>31</sup> O’Dowd, “A Prophet in the Sage’s House?,” 178–79. He also points out that “wife of your youth” occurs in Prov 5:18 and Mal 2:14–15, as well as in Isa 54:6 and Jer 2:2.

<sup>32</sup> See Prov 5:15-23; 6:23-29; 7:16-20; 9:2, 17. O’Dowd, “A Prophet in the Sage’s House?,” 179.

<sup>33</sup> O’Dowd dates Proverbs as post-exilic and therefore sees the influence going from the prophets to Proverbs. O’Dowd, “A Prophet in the Sage’s House?,” 178–81. I agree with O’Dowd that the connections are significant, but would argue that they either go the other way (Proverbs influenced the prophets) or that both share in common Israelite language/metaphors. See Longman’s critique in Longman, “Prophecy and Wisdom,” 264–65. He thinks the latter. For a defense of an earlier date for Proverbs, see Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, 48–52.

<sup>34</sup> Though one could suggest, as O’Dowd does above, that the motif begins in the Garden of Eden (Gen 2–3).

The choice of Deuteronomy 30 is a choice which will determine the *nation's* history. And ultimately, Moses is confident that Israel will choose the path of death and have to be brought back by Yahweh to the path of life (Deut 30:1–10). The history of Israel as recorded in Kings is told as the story of Israel's repeated choices to follow the path of life or—more regularly—the path of death.

The writing prophets stood on the “front lines” calling the (now fractured) nation to turn away from Deuteronomy's path of destruction.<sup>35</sup> But whether they were holding out the opportunity to turn back to the right way or announcing that the nation had already gone too far to avoid judgment, the hope of restoration to the “fear of Yahweh” remained. This hope, begun in Deuteronomy 30, led to an increasingly grand vision of the “two ways” in the “coming days.” God would lead his people back to the way of life (e.g., Isa 59:20–21; Jer 31:31–33; Ezek 34:11–31). But that way would eventually entail a glorious eschatological state (e.g., Isa 65:17–25; 66:7–23). Those who persisted on the way of death, however, would face a correspondingly severe judgment (e.g., Isa 66:15–24).

If one were to put together the distinct but related “Two Ways” streams of the prophetic and wisdom traditions, the result would be something like an eschatologized wisdom or a personalized redemptive history. At times the practical instruction of the father from Proverbs would remain virtually unchanged (as e.g., Prov 10:12 in 1 Pet 4:8). But often it would be said to lead his son to embrace the way that led to *ultimate* life; it would keep him from treading the path to *final* judgment. As shown in the next section, this is indeed what increasingly happens in Second Temple wisdom literature. And given Peter's deep interest in Scripture as *prophecy* (see previous chapter on Peter's

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<sup>35</sup> Thanks to Peter Gentry for first teaching me this. See Peter J. Gentry, *How to Read and Understand the Biblical Prophets* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 15–30. He refers to Claus Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech*, trans. Hugh C. White (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991). Cf. H. B. Huffmon, “Covenant Lawsuit in the Prophets,” *JBL* 78, no. 4 (1959): 285–95.

hermeneutic) and prophets (see next chapter), with Jesus inaugurating the end of the ages, it is no surprise that in 2 Peter the instruction of Proverbs 1–9 is sung in a prophetic-historical, eschatological octave.

### Wisdom in Second Temple Judaism

Wisdom literature was a thriving genre in the Second Temple period,<sup>36</sup> with “the most salient similarities” to Proverbs.<sup>37</sup> I briefly discuss three texts<sup>38</sup> which extend the wisdom tradition of Proverbs in new directions, as 2 Peter does.<sup>39</sup> First, Ben Sira (like Ps 1) identifies wisdom and Torah; 2 Peter will identify wisdom with the teachings of the “apostles and prophets”—Israel’s Scriptures and the gospel message. Second, Wisdom of Solomon connects proverbial wisdom with eschatology, as do 1 and 2 Peter. Finally, 4QInstruction meshes practical Proverbs-like instruction with an eschatologized “Two Ways” motif speaking of a final judgment and deliverance. In the Second Temple period, the book of Proverbs exerted significant influence, but the “wisdom trajectory” began to more explicitly integrate wisdom with the rest of the Israelite traditions (history, law,

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<sup>36</sup> See John J. Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997); Longman, *Fear of the Lord Is Wisdom*, 219–42; John Kampen, *Wisdom Literature*, Eerdmans Commentaries on the Dead Sea Scrolls (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011); Armin Lange, “Wisdom Literature and Thought in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. John J. Collins and Timothy H. Lim (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 455–78; Matthew Goff, “Wisdom and Apocalypticism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*, ed. John J. Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Matthew J. Goff, *Discerning Wisdom: The Sapiential Literature of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

<sup>37</sup> Rather than Job or Ecclesiastes. Longman, *Fear of the Lord Is Wisdom*, 241. Cf. Matthew J. Goff, “Recent Trends in the Study of Early Jewish Wisdom Literature: The Contribution of 4QInstruction and Other Qumran Texts,” *CBR* 7, no. 3 (2009): 388.

<sup>38</sup> Space does not permit discussion of *Wiles of the Wicked Woman* (4Q184), Instruction-Like Composition B (4Q424), or 4QBeatitudes. But see Kampen, *Wisdom Literature*; Goff, “Hellish Females”; Scott C. Jones, “Wisdom’s Pedagogy: A Comparison of Proverbs VII and 4Q184,” *VT* 53, no. 1 (2003): 65–80; Elisa Uusimäki, “Reading Proverbs in Light of Torah,” in Hogan, Goff, and Wasserman, *Pedagogy*, 155–70; Goff, *Discerning Wisdom*.

<sup>39</sup> This section is by no means intended as a complete study, and nothing I am saying here is controversial. This is all summary of consensus scholarship, meant to provide a necessary background picture to Peter’s reception of Proverbs/OT wisdom.

covenant, prophecy, eschatology).<sup>40</sup> Second Peter’s use of Proverbs exhibits similar tendencies.

## Ben Sira

Ben Sira “most resembles the biblical book of Proverbs.”<sup>41</sup> Unlike Wisdom of Solomon and 4QInstruction, it is non-eschatological.<sup>42</sup> One area in which Ben Sira differs from Proverbs is that the former more frequently identifies wisdom with Torah (see 15:1; 17:11; 19:20; 21:11; 24:23; 34:8; 45:5).<sup>43</sup> Such identifications are virtually absent from Proverbs,<sup>44</sup> though other biblical wisdom literature does so (e.g., Ps 1). Scholars propose that the increased emphasis on Torah in wisdom literature matches the developments in Judaism in the Hellenistic period.<sup>45</sup>

There is also a reference to prophecy in Ben Sira 39:1.<sup>46</sup> The author praises those who “study the law of the Most High,” who seek “out the wisdom of all the ancients,” and who are “concerned with prophecies” (NRSV). Ben Sira here identifies

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<sup>40</sup> Hence, the term *wisdom trajectory* is more apropos than *wisdom tradition*. I borrow the term from Alan P. Winton, *The Proverbs of Jesus: Issues of History and Rhetoric*, LNTS 35 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 15–16.

<sup>41</sup> Kampen, *Wisdom Literature*, 341–44.

<sup>42</sup> Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age*, 48.

<sup>43</sup> Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Law and Wisdom from Ben Sira to Paul: A Tradition Historical Enquiry into the Relation of Law, Wisdom, and Ethics*, WUNT 16 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1985), 69–73. In addition to these seven passages, Schnabel discusses twelve more which he labels “implicit evidence.” See his entire discussion, including synthesis and implications, in Schnabel, 69–92. Cf. Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age*, 48–48; David A. deSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha: Message, Context, and Significance*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 161–210. See also the brief survey of this and the other Second Temple works in Longman, *Fear of the Lord Is Wisdom*, 219–42.

<sup>44</sup> Collins points out that while there are allusions to Deuteronomy’s תורה language in Proverbs (e.g., 6:20–23), the referent is to the instruction of the parent/sage, not to the Mosaic Torah. Collins, “Wisdom and Torah,” 63–65. Cf. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, 26.

<sup>45</sup> Lange, “Wisdom Literature and Thought in Scrolls”; Goff, “Wisdom and Apocalypticism”; Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age*, 222–32. Schnabel demonstrates that for Ben Sira, wisdom is conceived of as a “twofold character”: On the one hand it is a universal, creational “cosmological entity. On the other hand, it is “Yahweh’s wisdom” and closely tied to Israel’s history and cult. Schnabel, *Law and Wisdom from Ben Sira to Paul*, 20–28.

<sup>46</sup> Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age*, 53.

both Torah and prophets with wisdom. Peter in 2 Peter will identify the way of life and wisdom (4:15) with following “prophecy of Scripture” as well as the message of the apostles (1:19–21; 2:21; 3:2).

### **Wisdom of Solomon**

Wisdom of Solomon is explicitly fashioned after Proverbs and the Solomonic wisdom tradition.<sup>47</sup> But it moves beyond Proverbs in merging wisdom with eschatology (see especially 3:1–13) and with Israel’s history (see chaps. 10–19).<sup>48</sup> As will be seen, both of these moves likewise characterize 2 Peter’s appropriation of the biblical wisdom tradition.

First Peter seems to allude to Wisdom 2–3.<sup>49</sup> In Wisdom, the wicked seek to “insult and torture” the righteous, thinking they will not be able to forbear with

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<sup>47</sup> Interestingly, material that sounds like the biblical Ecclesiastes appears in the mouths of the *ungodly* in Wis 1:16–2:10. Cf. deSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha*, 144.

<sup>48</sup> As Burkes puts it, “Wisdom literature has [here] assumed a new dimension.” Shannon Burkes, “Wisdom and Apocalypticism in the Wisdom of Solomon,” *HTR* 95, no. 1 (2002): 44. Burkes also writes, “In form and, to some degree, in its worldview it seems to be best compared with other sapiential works, but the sapiential worldview that the author inherited has undergone a sea change and can be understood fully only alongside apocalyptic texts” (Burkes, 44).

For introductions to Wisdom and its synthesis of biblical (Israelite history, wisdom traditions), Greek (e.g., immortality of the soul), and late Jewish ideas (e.g., apocalyptic), see Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age*, 135–57, 178–95; deSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha*, 131–60; John J. Collins, “The Mysteries of God: Creation and Eschatology in 4QInstruction and the Wisdom of Solomon,” in *Wisdom and Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in the Biblical Tradition* (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 287–305; Burkes, “Wisdom and Apocalypticism in Wisdom of Solomon.” For interesting recent studies of the blending of biblical wisdom with Greek literary forms, see Alviero Niccacci, “The Structure of the Book of Wisdom: Two Instructions (Chs. 1–5, 6–19) in Line with Old Testament Wisdom Tradition,” *LASBF* 58 (2008): 31–72; Eric D. Reymond, “The Poetry of the Wisdom of Solomon Reconsidered,” *VT* 52, no. 3 (2002): 385–99.

<sup>49</sup> This assumes that Wisdom was written earlier than AD 50 (assuming 1 Peter was written in the 60s.) The dating of Wisdom is disputed; the earliest possible date is around 220 BC (due to its use of later LXX books), and the latest conjectured date is around AD 100. Most likely, the book was written between 30 BC and (at the latest) AD 50. DeSilva suggests a date in the “early period” of the Roman Empire (started 27 BC); likely early first century. deSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha*, 137. VanderKam suggests a date “early in” the first century AD. James C. VanderKam, *An Introduction to Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 124–25. Winston likewise places the date early first century AD, specifically during the reign of Caligula (AD 37–41). David Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB, vol. 43 (New York: Doubleday, 1979), 20–25. Collins concurs with an “early Roman period” date, any time from 30 BC to AD 70. Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age*, 179. Most scholars “feel that the latest we can date its [Wisdom’s] composition is AD 50.” Longman, *Fear of the Lord Is Wisdom*, 228.

Davila is an outlier; he argues for Christian authorship in the second half of the first century. See James R. Davila, *The Provenance of the Pseudepigrapha: Jewish, Christian, or Other?*, JSJSup 105

gentleness (2:17–20). Peter speaks of Christians being “insulted” and suffering for righteousness’ sake (1 Pet 2:12; 3:13–17; 4:4–5, 12–19). In Wisdom when the righteous die, fools think they were destroyed and “punished.” In reality, however, the righteous are “tested” “like gold in a furnace,” “disciplined a little” so they will “shine forth” “in the time of their visitation” (Wis 3:1–7 NRSV). Peter speaks of the “judgment” of testing for the righteous (1 Pet 4:17–18) and of the “fiery trial” coming to “try you” (4:12). Most strikingly is 1 Peter 1:6–7: “you have been grieved by various trials, so that your genuineness of faith, more precious than perishable gold (though it is tested by fire!), may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus the Messiah.”<sup>50</sup> The gentiles will “see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation” (2:12). This is an extremely close parallel to Wisdom 3:1–7. Whether or not Peter is directly quoting Wisdom, he is surely operating in the same milieu.

Like Wisdom, 2 Peter eschatologizes the tradition of Proverbs, setting the “two ways” of wisdom and folly within a narrative leading forward to final judgment and vindication. Note the similarities between 2 Peter and Wisdom 5. In Wisdom 5:1–8, the unrighteous will be “amazed at the unexpected salvation of the righteous” (cf. 2 Pet 3:10). They used to hold the righteous “in derision,” but now realize that it is *they* who were the “fools” (cf. 2 Pet 3:3; 2:18) They have “strayed from the way of truth” (cf. 2 Pet 2:21); the “light” and “sun” of righteousness did not shine on them (cf. 2 Pet 1:19). They took their “fill of the paths of lawlessness and destruction” (2 Pet 2) and now at the final judgment the tables are turned.

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(Leiden: Brill, 2005), 200, 223–25. This makes Egan hesitant to find Petrine dependence on Wisdom in 1 Peter. See Patrick T. Egan, *Ecclesiology and the Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2016), 181n104. However, (1) this is a minority view, and (2) as Schaper points out, “there is no trace whatsoever in the book of Wisdom of specifically Christian theologoumena.” Joachim Schaper, “Νόμος and Νόμοι in the Wisdom of Solomon,” in *Wisdom and Torah: The Reception of “Torah” in the Wisdom Literature of the Second Temple Period*, ed. Bernd Schipper and D. Andrew Teeter, JSJSup 163 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 293n2. Cf. Longman, *Fear of the Lord Is Wisdom*, 228. On the dating of 1 Peter, see e.g., Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 19.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 66. Schreiner and other scholars also point to a parallel here with Sir 2:1–6. See e.g., Jobes, *1 Peter*, 95.



Also like Wisdom, 2 Peter connects the wisdom tradition of Proverbs with the OT prophetic-historical stream. Wisdom 10–19 recounts Israel’s early history from a wisdom perspective. And the book declares that it is Lady Wisdom who has made people “prophets” “in every generation” of Israel’s history (Wis 7:27; cf. 11:1). The wicked and idolators also “prophesy lies” (Wis 14:28). The Proverbs-like fools in 2 Peter (2:18–22) are also likened to Israel’s false prophets (2:1); they fail to heed not only the instruction of an elder (1:12–15) but the message of the “apostles” and “holy prophets” (3:2).

#### **4QInstruction**

Found at Qumran but most likely not a sectarian document, 4QInstruction is a fascinating blend of Proverbs-like instruction with an eschatological twist.<sup>51</sup> “The composition is the best example available of a wisdom text with an apocalyptic worldview,” according to Matthew Goff.<sup>52</sup> The best example is an excerpt from 4Q416 (4QInstruction<sup>b</sup>), frag. 2 cols. 1–2 (// 4Q417 frag. 2 cols. 1–2). This section covers greed and poverty, rejoicing and mourning, right judging, borrowing and lending, giving to needy neighbors, and humility. Much of this is very similar to material covered in Proverbs, both in subject matter and even in language (e.g., 4Q416 frag. 2, col. 2, lines 8–9 // Prov 6:1–5). However, in the middle of that same passage are these lines referring to the eschatological judgment (col. 1, lines 5–7; quoting here from less fragmentary parallel in 4Q417 frag. 2 col 1, lines 10–12): “[Gaze upon the mystery] that is to be and seize the birth times of salvation. Know who is to inherit glory and (who) iniquity. Has he

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<sup>51</sup> For surveys of 4QInstruction, see Matthew J. Goff, *4QInstruction*, *Wisdom Literature from the Ancient World 2* (Atlanta: SBL, 2013); Goff, *Discerning Wisdom*, 9–68; Kampen, *Wisdom Literature*, 36–190; Goff, “Wisdom and Apocalypticism”; Longman, *Fear of the Lord Is Wisdom*, 219–42. For a thorough study of the work, see Matthew J. Goff, *The Worldly and Heavenly Wisdom of 4QInstruction* (Leiden: Brill, 2003). Cf. Schnabel’s study of wisdom in the Qumran community in Schnabel, *Law and Wisdom from Ben Sira to Paul*, 190–226.

<sup>52</sup> Goff, “Wisdom and Apocalypticism,” 56. For a recent in-depth survey of scholarship on this and related issues, see Goff, “Recent Trends.”

not [established for the contrite of spirit] and for those who mourn eternal joy?”<sup>53</sup>

Likewise 4Q17 (frag. 2, col. 1) speaks of the two paths of wisdom and foolishness and addresses the reader as “son”—just as Proverbs 1–9 do. But in this section, the two paths lead to eternal judgment or the eternal inheritance, and staying on the right path requires meditating on and understanding God’s “et[ernal] glory [wi]th his wonderful mysteries in his mighty deeds.”<sup>54</sup> Other apocalyptic themes in 4QInstruction include “an addressee with elect status, and a concern with the angelic world (e.g., 4Q416 1; 4Q418 69 ii; 4Q418 81).”<sup>55</sup>

4QInstruction is indebted to Proverbs, and develops its tradition in newer directions. Second Peter similarly situates a “two ways” of wisdom versus foolishness in an eschatological narrative. He also writes to an “elect” audience (2 Pet 1:10; cf. 1 Pet 1:1), and mentions angels (2 Pet 2:4, 11).

### Jesus’ Use of Wisdom

A full study of Jesus’ use of scriptural wisdom motifs is outside the scope of this study.<sup>56</sup> I briefly trace such themes in Matthew 6–7, because Peter’s use of Proverbs

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<sup>53</sup> Quoted from Goff, *4QInstruction*, 185. Compare reconstruction of 4Q416 parallel in translation from Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 849.

The interpretation of *רַי נְהִיָּה* is debated, but I concur with Goff and Collins who take it as a future-oriented, apocalyptic vision of God’s sovereign plan for history and its culmination. See Collins, “The Mysteries of God,” 188–291; Goff, *Worldly and Heavenly Wisdom of 4QInstruction*, 51–79; Goff, *Discerning Wisdom*, 13–29. Contra the “mystery of existence” translation of e.g., Kampen, *Wisdom Literature*. For further discussion cf. Pieter M. Venter, “The Confluence of ‘wisdom’ and ‘Apocalyptic’ in 4QInstruction,” *IDS* 49, no. 2 (2015): 1–9; Longman, *Fear of the Lord Is Wisdom*, 236.

<sup>54</sup> García Martínez and Tigchelaar, *Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 1:859–61.

<sup>55</sup> Goff, “Wisdom and Apocalypticism,” 56.

<sup>56</sup> Recent studies of wisdom in the Gospels and Jesus include Dinh A. N. Nguyen, *Gesù il saggio di Dio e la Sapienza divina: Indagine biblico-teologica introduttiva per ripensare la cristologia sapienziale nei vangeli sinottici*, Collana di Cristologia, Nuova 3 (Rome: Casa Editrice Miscellanea Franciscana, 2017); Ben Witherington III, *Jesus the Sage: The Pilgrimage of Wisdom* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000); Witherington, “Jesus the Sage and His Provocative Parables,” in *Jesus and the Scriptures: Problems, Passages, and Patterns*, ed. Tobias Hägerland, Library of Historical Jesus Studies (New York: T&T Clark, 2016), 162–74. For a study of Jesus’ parables from a wisdom/“Two Ways” perspective, see Dinh A. N. Nguyen, “Le Parabole Di Gesù Sulla Saggezza Ricerca Di Una Cristologia Sapienziale Implicita Nei Vangeli Sinottici,” *Miscellanea Franciscana* 111, no. 1/2 (2011): 208–35. Katrine Brix compares the use of *משל* with “parable” language in the Gospels, and interestingly finds that the closest

and the biblical “Two Ways” motif is influenced by Jesus’ reception and development of the same.<sup>57</sup> The discussion includes two sections.

Matthew 6:19–7:6 is fashioned in a proverbial form, echoing themes from Proverbs.<sup>58</sup> The contrast between “light” and “darkness” (Matt 6:22–23) parallels Proverbs 4:18, 6:69, 13:9. The contrast between serving God versus “money” and the uncertainty of riches (Matt 6:19–21, 24) parallels Proverbs 15:27, 22:16, 23:4–5, 28:8, 28:22. The call not to be anxious but to trust God’s care (Matt 6:25–34)<sup>59</sup> “must be read against the backdrop of Prov 6:6–8”<sup>60</sup> as well as other biblical wisdom passages (Job 38:41; Ps 147:9). Jesus’ proverb warning against giving “what is holy” to “dogs” (Matt 7:6) echoes Proverbs 9:7–8, 11:22, and 23:9.<sup>61</sup> (And notice Peter’s employment of the

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parallel is to Ezekiel. Katrine Brix, “Erste Annäherung einer Hermeneutik des מַשַׁל in alttestamentlichen Schriften mit Überlegungen zur Rezeption dieses Begriffes in den neutestamentlichen Evangelien,” *ZAC* 13, no. 1 (2009): 127–41.

<sup>57</sup> Much of the discussion of wisdom in Matthew has concerned Lady Wisdom in Matthew’s Christology. For discussion see e.g., John Kampen, “Aspects of Wisdom in the Gospel of Matthew in Light of the New Qumran Evidence,” in *Sapiential, Liturgical, and Poetical Texts from Qumran: Proceedings of the Third Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies, Oslo, 1998: Published in Memory of Maurice Baillet*, ed. Daniel K. Falk, Florentino García Martínez, and Eileen M. Schuller, STDJ 35 (Leiden: Brill, 2000); Celia Deutsch, “Wisdom in Matthew: Transformation of a Symbol,” *NovT* 32, no. 1 (1990): 13–47.

My focus here is different; I am looking at Jesus’ use of Proverbs and the wisdom tradition it began. Along these lines, Kang studies parallels between the Sermon on the Mount and Proverbs as well as Deuteronomy. Chang-Hee Kang, “The Literary Affinities of the Sermon on the Mount: With Special Reference to Deuteronomical Features” (PhD diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1987). The close intermingling of covenantal with strikingly Proverbial/“Two Ways” material stands out. See also Tuttle, who observes formal/structural parallels to Proverbs. Gary A. Tuttle, “Sermon on the Mount: Its Wisdom Affinities and Their Relation to Its Structure,” *JETS* 20, no. 3 (1977): 213–30.

<sup>58</sup> These are often thematic parallels and not direct allusions or quotations.

<sup>59</sup> Some scholars detect an allusion to this passage in 1 Pet 5:7. See e.g., C. E. B. Cranfield, *I and II Peter and Jude: Introduction and Commentary*, TBC (London: SCM, 1960), 134; Gerhard Maier, “Jesu-tradition im 1. Petrusbrief?,” in *The Jesus Tradition Outside the Gospels*, ed. David Wenham, Gospel Perspectives, vol. 5 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1985), 102. Schreiner finds an allusion to Ps 55:22 more probable. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 279. Cf. Theron K. Wong, “The Use of Jesus’ Sayings in 1 Peter” (PhD diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 2008), 128–29. This is probably correct, though it is likely that even here Peter’s understanding of the Psalms text is influenced by this saying of Jesus.

<sup>60</sup> Craig L. Blomberg, “Matthew,” in Beale and Carson, *Commentary on NT Use of OT*, 29.

<sup>61</sup> Regarding 11:22 cf. R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 277–78. Some note Matt 7:6 in their comments on 2 Pet 2:22; e.g., Eric Fuchs and Pierre Reymond, *La deuxième épître de saint Pierre; L’épître de saint Jude*, CNT (Neuchâtel: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1980), 102; Peter H. Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 252.

same combination of unclean animals in 2 Pet 2:22).<sup>62</sup> In between there is a passing reference to Solomon himself, the figurehead of OT wisdom (Matt 6:29).

In Matthew 7:15–27, Jesus warns against “false prophets” who would deceive. As bad trees they will be “thrown into the fire.” Their speech and works will be impressive, but they will be uncovered as “lawless” (7:15–23). Jesus then concludes his discourse with a dramatic “two ways” ending. There is a wise man and a foolish man, who are distinguished by their responses to Jesus’ “words.” The wise man puts them into practice and his house is spared, while the foolish man does not practice Jesus’ words and his house is destroyed (7:24–27). Part of the “wise man’s” responsibility is to recognize and reject the coming “false prophets” that pull away from Jesus’ teaching. While these verses hark back to various OT passages,<sup>63</sup> they are structured in a proverbial/wisdom way, using the dichotomies, labels, and storyline of Proverbs 1–9 and Psalm 1.

Pennington argues persuasively that the Sermon on the Mount’s conclusion is an “eschatological, Jesus-given expansion” of the “two ways” presentation of Psalm 1:

Both Ps. 1 and Matt. 7:13–27 invite hearers onto the path of wisdom (Ps. 1:1; Matt. 7:24); contrast two paths or ways of being in the world (Ps. 1:1, 6; Matt. 7:13–14); use fruit-bearing trees as a key metaphor (Ps. 1:3–4; Matt. 7:16–20); speak of final judgment and separation of the righteous from the wicked (Ps. 1:5–6; Matt. 7:13, 21–23, 26–27); contrast those whom the Lord “knows” and those he does not know (Ps. 1:6; Matt. 7:23); and emphasize hearing and heeding God’s revelation (Ps. 1:2; Matt. 7:24).<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Cf. Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture*, NAC (Nashville: B&H, 1992), 128–29; Richard Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, WBC, vol. 50 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), 279.

<sup>63</sup> See Blomberg, “Matthew,” 29–30. Pennington notes other passages related to the flood metaphor, “including Gen. 6–7; Isa. 28:17–22; Jer. 23:19–20; 30:23–24; and Ezek. 13:10–16. Also relevant are several proverbs that paint the picture of the wise and/or righteous ones enduring storms and troubles (Prov. 10:25; 12:7; 14:11).” Jonathan T. Pennington, *The Sermon on the Mount and Human Flourishing: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 283.

<sup>64</sup> Pennington, *Sermon on Mount and Human Flourishing*, 270n2.

This conclusion with its “two ways” structure and emphasis on prophets also resonates with Deuteronomy 30:15–20 and the later prophetic/eschatological trajectory.<sup>65</sup>

These passages reveal an indebtedness to Proverbs and the OT wisdom tradition, as well as the development of such themes along eschatological lines (as seen in other Second Temple literature).<sup>66</sup> Most significant for the purposes of this dissertation are the striking similarities to 2 Peter: the confluence of Proverbs, prophets, and pigs; the call against lawlessness and an emphasis on final destruction; and an eschatologized “Two Ways” schema. Peter’s reception of Proverbs (and OT wisdom) undoubtedly comes through Jesus.<sup>67</sup>

### Wisdom in 1 Peter

This section briefly surveys 1 Peter’s use of Proverbs and a wisdom Psalm (Ps 34) as a preparation for studying 2 Peter’s use of Proverbs in the next section. Peter quotes Psalm 34:12–16 to support his exhortation to “not return evil for evil or reviling for reviling” but rather to “bless” (cf. Luke 6:28 and Matt 5:38–42).<sup>68</sup> “For” if they do

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<sup>65</sup> Blomberg, “Matthew,” 30; Dale Allison, *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013), 190–91. The latter referenced by Pennington, *Sermon on Mount and Human Flourishing*, 270n2.

<sup>66</sup> Quarles writes of this passage, “Jesus’ teaching merges OT depictions of eschatological judgment as a storm with the theme in wisdom literature that the righteous endure catastrophes that destroy the wicked” (Prov 10:25; 12:7; 14:11). Charles L. Quarles, *Sermon on the Mount: Restoring Christ’s Message to the Modern Church* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2011), 349.

<sup>67</sup> As does his hermeneutic more broadly; see chap. 2 of this dissertation. Additionally, Bauckham points out that 2 Pet 2:9 parallels Ben Sira 33:1, Wis 10:9 (two Jewish wisdom texts) and may echo Jesus’ words in the Lord’s Prayer (Matt 6:13). Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 253. For a detailed survey of the influence of Matthew in 2 Peter see Peter Dschulnigg, “Der theologische Ort des Zweiten Petrusbriefes,” *BZ* 33, no. 2 (1989): 168–76. Dschulnigg was recently critiqued by Matthias Berghorn, “Rezeption des Matthäusevangeliums im zweiten Petrusbrief? Zum Verhältnis zweier neutestamentlicher Schriften,” in *Der zweite Petrusbrief und das Neue Testament*, ed. Wolfgang Grünstäudl, Uta Poplutz, and Tobias Nicklas, WUNT 397 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 55–74. But I think the influence of Matthean tradition is inescapable from a close reading of 2 Peter. On Matthew in 1 Peter, see Rainer Metzner, *Die Rezeption des Matthäusevangeliums im 1. Petrusbrief: Studien zum traditionsgeschichtlichen und theologischen Einfluss des 1. Evangeliums auf den 1. Petrusbrief*, WUNT 74 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995).

<sup>68</sup> Once again, Peter seems here to marry Jesus’ teaching with OT wisdom. See discussion in Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 186–87.

this, they will receive a blessing (1 Pet 3:9). The passage from Psalm 34 is then introduced (vv. 10–12), right at the verse in the Psalm which speaks of keeping the “tongue from evil” and seeking “peace.” Those people will “love life and see good days.” In contrast, “the face of the Lord is against those doing evil.” For Peter, the “blessing” of “life” is not primarily referring to life in the present world.<sup>69</sup> While he acknowledges that people should be less likely to “harm” them if they are living uprightly (3:13), the reason he invokes the passage in the first place is that he expects them to be “reviled” and treated with “evil” (v. 9; cf. 2:22–23). The suffering of believers is a major emphasis of 1 Peter (e.g., 4:12–16), and it is the context of the quoted verses of Psalm 34 (see e.g., v. 19).<sup>70</sup> The “life” Peter is thinking of is the eternal, eschatological life that is coming; the “eternal glory in the Messiah” to which they are “called” (5:10; 3:9; cf. 2:12.), the “inheritance” which will be “revealed.” Peter seamlessly integrates Proverbs-like wisdom material into a letter steeped in the “salvation” which the “prophets” foretold (1:10).<sup>71</sup> The influence of Proverbs and OT wisdom will likewise be “eschatologized” in 2 Peter.

First Peter contains a few quotations of and allusions to Proverbs. The first and longest is the quotation of Proverbs 11:31 LXX in 1 Peter 4:18: “If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?” (ESV). The LXX

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<sup>69</sup> Rightly Schreiner, with “most commentators.” See further discussion in Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 189. Goppelt argues that “we are not to decide between this life and the life to come in 3:10.” He points to the present use of “life” in 2:24 for support. Carson, “1 Peter,” 1037. See L. Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, trans. J. E. Alsup (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 230. The context and meaning, however, are significantly different.

<sup>70</sup> For discussion of the contextual use of the psalm, see Dan McCartney, “The Use of the Old Testament in the First Epistle of Peter” (PhD diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 1989), 102–3; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 188.

<sup>71</sup> Thus Bauckham, commenting on this use of Ps 34, concludes that Peter “studied whole passages of Scripture in a way which combined christological-prophetic interpretation and paraenetic application.” Richard Bauckham, “James, 1 and 2 Peter, Jude,” in *It Is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture: Essays in Honour of Barnabas Lindars, SSF*, ed. D. A. Carson and H. G. M. Williamson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 312–13.

reading differs significantly from the MT.<sup>72</sup> Once again, Peter eschatologizes the passage, appropriating it as a reference to the final judgment (4:17).<sup>73</sup>

The other four Proverbs references in 1 Peter are briefer and more straightforward. There is a reference to Proverbs 10:12 (MT, against LXX) in 1 Peter 4:8. Peter exhorts readers to love each other “earnestly, because love covers a multitude of sins.” This seems to be a completely straightforward use of Proverbs.<sup>74</sup> In 1 Peter 5:5 there is a reference to Proverbs 3:34; Peter calls “all” to humility, “for God opposes the proud, but to the humble he gives grace.” While this usage is fairly straightforward, there is a hint of eschatologization in Peter’s appropriation. God will exalt “in due time” (ἐν καιρῷ, v. 6) which in context refers to the eschaton.<sup>75</sup>

Finally, there are two allusions to Proverbs in 1 Peter: Proverbs 24:21 in 1 Peter 2:17, and Proverbs 3:25 in 1 Peter 3:6. These are fully assimilated into Peter’s writing, and simply demonstrate the pervasive influence of Proverbs (and the OT in general) on Peter’s thought and writing.<sup>76</sup>

### **Proverbs and the “Two Ways” in 2 Peter**

This section studies the use of Proverbs 26:11 in 2 Peter 2:22 and the larger influence of Proverbs and the “Two Ways” motif throughout the letter.<sup>77</sup> Proverbs’

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<sup>72</sup> For discussion, see McCartney, “Use of OT in 1 Peter,” 96–98; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 263–64; James Barr, “אֱרֵב־מִלִּי: Prov 11:31, 1 Pet 4:18,” *JSS* 20, no. 2 (1975): 149–64.

<sup>73</sup> Egan points out how Peter reads this Proverbs quotation against the backdrop of Isaiah—highlighting the merging of wisdom and prophecy in Peter. For fuller discussion of this as well as of literary and textual issues, see Egan, *Ecclesiology and Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 201–4.

<sup>74</sup> Though even here, Egan points out that the Proverbs quotation is colored by Peter’s use of Isa 53. Egan, *Ecclesiology and Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 182–85. Some have also seen an echo of Jesus’ words recorded in Luke 7:47 and Matt 6:14–15. See McCartney, “Use of OT in 1 Peter,” 121. Schreiner is skeptical. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 212–13. Cf. discussion in *Comm NT/OT*, 1039.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Carson, “1 Peter,” 1042–43; McCartney, “Use of OT in 1 Peter,” 98–99.

<sup>76</sup> See McCartney, “Use of OT in 1 Peter,” 119–21.

<sup>77</sup> While Jude also speaks of “scoffers,” De Vivo is correct that the “two ways” is much stronger in 2 Peter than in the shared Jude material. See Jenny De Vivo, “2 Peter 2:4–16: The Redaction of the Biblical and Intertestamental References Dependent on Jude 5–11 and Their Overall Significance for

influence is intertwined with Peter's reading of the prophets and of Israel's history (in line with many of Peter's contemporaries and with Jesus' use of wisdom). Thus in 2 Peter, Proverbial motifs are closely connected to covenantal teaching (prophets and apostles) and to eschatology. In that spirit, it will be appropriate to first briefly survey Isaiah 52:5 in 2 Peter 2:2.

### **Isaiah 52:5 in 2 Peter 2:2**

In 2 Peter 2:2, Peter predicts that “because of” the false teachers, “the way of truth will be blasphemed”: δι’ οὗς ἡ ὁδὸς τῆς ἀληθείας βλασφημηθήσεται. Isaiah 52:5 LXX reads that δι’ ὑμᾶς διὰ παντὸς τὸ ὄνομά μου βλασφημεῖται ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν.<sup>78</sup> Bauckham writes that “the adherents of the false teachers, by their scandalously immoral behavior, are giving Christianity a bad name among their non-Christian neighbors. . . . In such allusions to Isa 52:5 the words τὸ ὄνομά μου (‘my name’) are frequently replaced by some other term (cf. 1 Tim 6:1, Titus 2:5) . . . as here by ‘the way of truth.’”<sup>79</sup> While the surrounding context of Isaiah 52:5 is the bringing of the “good news,” it seems to carry little if any relevance to Peter’s allusion here.<sup>80</sup> Additionally, the original meaning of Isaiah 52:5 relates to how Israel’s continued oppression in exile makes Yahweh look inept or unfaithful.<sup>81</sup> It is not directly about Israel’s sin being a bad “witness” to Yahweh. Paul

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the Document” (PhD diss., Loyola University Chicago, 2014), 125. In this chapter I will not study the use of Ps 90 in 2 Pet 3 (see chap. 6 of this dissertation), but it should be noted that it is a “wisdom” + covenantal psalm. On its wisdom features, see Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Psalms 2: A Commentary on Psalms 51–100*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 418. Also, Peter specifically speaks of τὴν σοφίαν given to Paul in 2 Pet 3:15.

<sup>78</sup> The MT does not include the phrase “on account of you.” On differences between MT and LXX (mostly relevant to Paul’s appropriation in Rom 2:24), see J. Ross Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul in Concert in the Letter to the Romans* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 177; Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter to the Romans*, 2nd ed., NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 175.

<sup>79</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 242.

<sup>80</sup> Though here ἡ ὁδὸς τῆς ἀληθείας harks back to the ἀλήθεια reference in 1:12, “where ‘the truth’ = the gospel.” Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 242.

<sup>81</sup> Oswalt comments, “God’s name is held in contempt because it appears to the watching world that Israel’s belief in God was false. He had been forced by the superior power of the gods to surrender his people. Thus the watchers would assume that the rulers of the people would be wailing over



gives a similar, though more explicit, use in Romans 2:24.<sup>82</sup> There, Paul quotes Isaiah 52:5 LXX to support his assertion that “you who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law” (v. 23 ESV). Scholars recognize, however, that Paul is thinking contextually here; and it is in light of the larger Isaianic narrative that Paul’s appropriation is understandable. Schreiner explains,

When we place the Isaiah text onto the larger canvas of Isaiah’s theology and of Paul’s understanding of that theology, then the choice of this text is eminently reasonable. In Isa. 40–66 the people are in exile because of their sin (40:2; 42:24–25; 43:22–28; 50:1). Thus the oppression by the nations in Isa. 52 should not be distinguished from the sin of Israel. Israel was oppressed by foreign nations precisely because of its sin.<sup>83</sup>

It is, of course, impossible to be certain whether Peter is assuming the same understanding of Isaiah 52:5 that Paul is. Two reasons in particular urge caution. First, Peter’s allusion is much more subtle than Paul’s direct quotation; Peter could simply be picking up biblically inspired language to make his point. Second, as Bauckham notes, there are a number of references to Isaiah 52:5 in early Christian literature.<sup>84</sup> Thus it is

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the failure of their trust in God. This is the same point that Ezek. 36:19–20 makes.” John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 363–64. Watts, however, sees a closer connection to the uses of Peter and Paul: “But now, the Babylonian captives had been לִקַּח חַנָּם, ‘seized for nothing,’ that is, with no profit back to Israel or to God. Judah’s rulers had boasted of their prowess even as they allowed YHWH’s ‘name’ to be ‘despised.’ They had been neither respectful nor pious, so judgment had been in order. (Note the parallel in Rom 2:24).” John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, rev. ed., WBC (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 775.

<sup>82</sup> Schreiner and Davids point to Paul’s use as well; see Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 398; Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 222. Cf. J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude*, Black’s New Testament Commentaries (London: A & C Black, 1969), 328.

<sup>83</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, 2nd ed., BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 143. For similar understandings, see Moo, *The Letter to the Romans*, 175–76; James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8* (Dallas: Word, 1988), 118; Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News*, 176–78. Schreiner continues in the above quote, “Paul rightly applies this text to the Jews of his own day. Their sin placed them under the dominion of Rome. The deliverance promised in Isaiah had not come, at least in its fullness. According to Paul the deliverance had come in the good news about Jesus Christ (Isa. 52:7–10), but many of his Jewish contemporaries had rejected this message. They still hoped for deliverance through the law and the old covenant, but that covenant had led only to judgment, not salvation.” Schreiner, *Romans*, 143–44.

<sup>84</sup> Bauckham writes that “quotations of and allusions to this text were used in two different ways in early Christianity: (1) against the Jews (Rom 2:24; Justin, *Dial.* 17.2); (2) in exhortations to Christians not to cause offense to pagans by immoral living (Rom 14:16?; 1 Tim 6:1; Titus 2:5; 1 Clem. 47:7; 2 Clem. 13:2; Ign. *Trall.* 8:2; Pol. *Phil.* 10:3). The allusion here depends on the second usage . . . (the closest parallel to this use of Isa 52:5 is Herm. Sim. 6:23).” Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 242.

possible that in some cases the reference was more to a freestanding saying than to the original text and context of Isaiah. On the other hand, favorable to Peter's cognizance of the Isaianic context are (1) his extensive use of Isaiah in 1 Peter and in 2 Peter, and (2) the contextual use of a fellow NT author, Paul. On balance, I think it likely that Peter was at least aware of the context, and it certainly fits very well with his Isaianic narrative (see chap. 6 of this dissertation). But I think the subtlety of the allusion and the lack of surrounding indicators render it unlikely that a Romans 2:24-style explanation was at the forefront of Peter's intentions in 2 Peter 2:2.<sup>85</sup> Peter's allusion fits well with his conjoining of wisdom "Two Ways" motifs with prophetic eschatological motifs.

### **Proverbs 26:11 in 2 Peter 2:22**

There is one explicit quotation from Proverbs in 2 Peter, which occurs alongside a non-canonical proverb.<sup>86</sup> I use this quotation as an entry point to consider the broader influence of Proverbs and the biblical wisdom tradition on 2 Peter.

One of the distinguishing features of wisdom literature is its international nature. Many proverbs are universal or have equivalents in virtually every culture. Many of the same themes occur in teaching recorded in Israel's Scriptures as well as in the wisdom traditions of other ancient Near Eastern and later Greco-Roman societies.<sup>87</sup> This cosmopolitan nature can be seen in 2 Peter's use of biblical alongside non-biblical

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<sup>85</sup> This allusion is a helpful reminder that authors should not be presumed to always use texts in a single manner.

<sup>86</sup> This is in addition to the references to Proverbs and a wisdom Psalm in 1 Peter surveyed before: Ps 34 in 1 Pet 3:10; Prov 11:31 LXX in 1 Pet 4:18; Prov 10:12 in 1 Pet 4:8; Prov 3:34 LXX in 1 Pet 5:5; Prov 24:21 in 1 Pet 2:17; and Prov 3:25 in 1 Pet 3:6.

<sup>87</sup> The book of Proverbs itself evidences shared material with e.g., the Wisdom of Amenemope, and it explicitly names non-Israelite sages as sources (Agur and Lemuel). Cf. the "international" description of Solomon's wisdom in 1 Kgs 4:29–34. See Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, 21–27; Duane A. Garrett, *The Problem of the Old Testament: Hermeneutical, Schematic and Theological Approaches* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2020), 165–70. Longman argues against the notion that wisdom is "universal and cosmopolitan." "The sages were much more integrated into the other traditions than is often admitted." Longman, "Prophecy and Wisdom," 260. Cf. Longman, *Fear of the Lord Is Wisdom*. While there is a helpful corrective here to some scholarship, Garrett (in the second work) rightly critiques him for going too far.

proverbs (2 Pet 2:22; cf. 2:19).<sup>88</sup> This feature of wisdom literature can make it more difficult to study the influence of biblical wisdom on a later author, since proverbs often become (1) popular free-floating sayings, and (2) mixed with similar extra-biblical sayings.

The proverb quotation in 2 Peter 2:22 concludes the apostle's invective-laden monologue against the false teachers. It is used, however, to characterize both the teachers and any Christian converts who would return to their sinful lifestyle under their influence.<sup>89</sup> Given that the quotation from the canonical book of Proverbs is completed by a non-canonical proverb (from *Ahiqar*)<sup>90</sup> and considering the introductory formula, it is unclear whether Peter is intending to quote Scripture *qua* Scripture.<sup>91</sup> He simply says, “The true proverb [τὸ τῆς ἀληθοῦς παροιμίας, singular] has happened to them” (v. 22)—and then quotes as one saying a conglomerate of biblical and non-biblical statements. But

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<sup>88</sup> The 2:19 reference is pointed out by Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 277.

<sup>89</sup> The referent is debated, but in both v. 18 and v. 20 the referent is the people “escaping” (ἀποφεύγω). In v. 18 this is the recent converts, enticed by the false teachers. Likewise, in 1:4 it is believers (and not false prophets) who have “escaped” (ἀποφυγόντες) the world’s “corruption” (φθορά, cf. 2:19). On the other hand, the language of being “overcome” (ἡττάω, v. 20) is used in v. 19 of the false teachers. The ambiguity supports the view that there is a both/and here. With Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 430–32; Jörg Frey, *The Letter of Jude and the Second Letter of Peter: A Theological Commentary*, trans. Kathleen Ess (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2018), 359; Terrance Callan, “Comparison of Humans to Animals in 2 Peter 2,10b-22,” *Bib* 90, no. 1 (2009): 106. Contra the majority view which sees only the false teachers in view; e.g., Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 277; Karl H. Schelkle, *Die Petrusbriefe; der Judasbrief*, HTKNT (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1961), 219–20. Fuchs and Reymond see the focus on those who fall for the false teachers. Fuchs and Reymond, *La deuxième épître de saint Pierre; Jude*, 103.

<sup>90</sup> For discussion, see Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 278–80. But 2:19 may actually be a Jesus saying; see Wolfgang Grünstäudl, “‘On Slavery’: A Possible Herrenwort in 2 Pet 2:19,” *NovT* 57, no. 1 (2015): 57–71.

<sup>91</sup> Bigg assumes that Peter “does not quote either of them [the two proverbs] as scripture,” due to the way they are introduced. He believes they come from a Jewish collection of proverbs. Charles Bigg, *St. Peter and St. Jude*, ICC (New York: T&T Clark, 1901), 288. Bauckham thinks that the author found the combined proverb in a “Jewish Hellenistic” collection of proverbs. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 273, 278–79. But Frey says that, while this is “possible,” there is “no evidence” for it. He finds it completely reasonable that the author would have himself put the two proverbs together based on their similar imagery. Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 362–63. Against Bauckham, Peter seems to assume the second half of Prov 26:11. Ostmeyer sees the allusion as fully consciously scriptural, almost a prophetic use: “Die Rückfälligen hielten das Heil in Händen und haben es mit Füßen getreten (21b). Doch selbst die Abusridität der Abwendung von der göttlichen Zuwendung ist bereits in den heiligen Schriften angekündigt (22).” Karl-Heinrich Ostmeyer, *Die Briefe des Petrus und des Judas*, BNT (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2021), 137.

in a sense, this is the most natural—even “contextual”—use of biblical Proverbs: a generally applicable wisdom saying applied to real-life situations. The citation does, therefore, help to frame 2 Peter in a biblical wisdom setting.

From the opening lines of the letter, Peter has been concerned that his readers who have “escaped the corruption which is in the world by sinful desire” (1:4) continue in a virtuous life and so “never stumble” (1:10). The most pressing temptation for Peter’s readers is the bold and self-confident false teachers. Their magnetic personae and edgy lifestyle attract many who have started on “the way of righteousness” (2:21).<sup>92</sup> Peter has learned from Jesus the unique horror of returning to a dark state after being freed from it, and he quotes his Master here (v. 20). Jesus had spoken this warning—“and the last state of that that person becomes worse than the first”—of an exorcised person who later became possessed by more and worse demons (Matt 12:45; Luke 11:26).<sup>93</sup> In Matthew’s recording, however, it seems to be a parable of the present generation who is rejecting Jesus: “Thus also it will be for this evil generation” (v. 45). Jesus also warned the paralytic by the pool after healing him that he must “sin no longer, lest something worse happen to you” (John 5:14).<sup>94</sup> The parabolic sense of Jesus’ warning, perhaps coupled with the similar Johannine saying concerning sin, has become for Peter a dominical proverb of all apostates.

Peter encapsulates the futility and horror of reverting to sin with his proverb quotation (v. 22): How disgusting to go try to eat what you vomited up! And what good is it to be cleansed if you go straight back to your filth? In the end, reverting to sin puts one in the company of the unclean animals—dogs and pigs.<sup>95</sup> The full Proverbs quotation

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<sup>92</sup> I discuss this *two ways* term below.

<sup>93</sup> Peter’s quotation changes the singular “that person” to the plural “them.” Cf. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 277; Schelkle, *Die Petrusbriefe; der Judasbrief*, 218.

<sup>94</sup> Once again, Peter combines Jesus’ teaching with Proverbs/OT wisdom.

<sup>95</sup> Virtually all commentaries point this out. What they generally fail to discuss is that Peter is

from the MT (26:11) reads, “Like a dog who returns to his vomit/so is a fool who repeats his folly.” It is unclear here whether Peter is (1) following the MT, (2) familiar with the LXX, (3) reciting from memory, or (4) quoting a delocalized fixed saying (consisting of both the dog and pig metaphors).<sup>96</sup> Against the fourth option is the fact that Peter seems aware of the unquoted second line of Proverbs 26:11 (see below). The LXX expands the MT to emphasize the *worse* state of the dog after eating its vomit: “Like a dog, when he returns to his vomit, also becomes the more hated / so is a fool, when by his own wickedness, he returns to his own sin” (NETS translation). The LXX rendering at the very least sheds light on the connection Peter and his contemporaries likely saw between the “worse state” of apostates and the proverb he quotes. A dog is bad enough—he scavenges about eating garbage and picking at gross things in stench- and filth-riddled places. But far worse is a dog who goes back and eats all the same stuff in a vomited form! This, in fact, is *precisely* what Peter thinks apostates are doing. In their former days they lived as godless sinners, consuming all the world’s corrupt defilements. They then rejected and sought to expel all of that when they turned to the apostolic message. But now, they are actually considering going back, not merely to their original life of ignorance but to the pile of defilements that they “vomited up” in repentance!

In the original canonical proverb, the dog is likened to a “fool” who “repeats his folly.” While Peter does not quote this second line, his usage of the verse assumes it.<sup>97</sup>

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not merely invoking dogs and pigs as a general trope representing “uncleanness,” but for one of their specifically unclean behaviors: their tendency to *revert* to filth. Callan rightly emphasizes this unique feature of Peter’s comparison. Callan, “Comparison of Humans to Animals,” 112.

<sup>96</sup> Commentators often do not discuss this; e.g., it is absent even from D. A. Carson, “2 Peter,” in Beale and Carson, *Commentary on NT Use of OT*, 1057. As noted earlier, Bauckham thinks the combined quotation came from a source. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 273, 278–79. Frey notes that the Proverbs quotation is “formally” “closer to the MT,” but thinks that the LXX “also plays a role.” Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 364. Fuchs and Reymond note that Peter “ne le cite pas d’après la LXX” and speculate a proverbial collection. Fuchs and Reymond, *La deuxième épître de saint Pierre; Jude*, 102–3.

<sup>97</sup> With Curtis P. Giese, *2 Peter and Jude*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia, 2012), 157.

As will be further examined below, Peter has been characterizing his opponents as Proverbs-like fools who spout off “boastful, empty words” (v. 18 CSB), entice others into sin (v. 18), and forsake the “way of righteousness” (v. 21). For Peter, though, the fool’s destruction is identified with eschatological judgment (2 Pet 3).

Peter’s use of (1) a proverb (2) about the “fool,” (3) in contrast to the “way of righteousness” (v. 21) suggests that he is framing his exhortation according to a Proverbs-inspired “two ways” wisdom approach.<sup>98</sup> I will now survey the broader influence of the book of Proverbs on 2 Peter.

### **Proverbs’s “Two Ways” in 2 Peter**

There is significant correspondence between 2 Peter and the speeches (chaps. 1–9) and other sayings from Proverbs. Both works (1) are portrayed as the exhortation of an older man to those under his care, (2) lay out a very clear “Two Ways” schematization of life, (3) are concerned to warn against enticers, and (4) describe characteristics of the godly and ungodly in detail.

**First, both are portrayed as the exhortation of an older man to those under his care.** Examples from Proverbs abound, but a few key passages are Proverbs 4:10–27, 6:20–23, and 7:1–5. Proverbs 4:10–27 is very similar to 2 Peter: An older father (v. 3 ESV) urges his son to not “forget” or “forsake” his instruction, like Peter (2 Pet 1:12–15).<sup>99</sup> The “testimonial” statement in 2 Peter 1:12–15, while it contains a “last wishes” sentiment, should not be reduced to that.<sup>100</sup> Peter’s impetus to “remind” his

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<sup>98</sup> Kistemaker thinks that 2 Peter’s “way” language reflects “the idiom *the Way* that designates Christianity in its early stages.” (He also, though, holds that “way of truth” phrase is drawn from Ps 119:30.) Simon J. Kistemaker, *Peter and Jude* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 283. Cf. Kelly, *Commentary on Peter and Jude*, 328. The context of the “way” occurrences, as pointed out above, better fit a wisdom meaning than a Christian “Way” meaning.

<sup>99</sup> All Proverbs quotations in this and the following subsections are taken from the ESV.

<sup>100</sup> Bauckham rightly highlights the importance of “reminding and remembering” in this letter, but his “testamentary” conception of 2 Peter does not allow for much nuance or complexity in influences. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 196–97. While there is a measure of similarity to the testament genre, the

readers of godly “qualities” is due to (Διὸ, v. 12) the statements of vv. 3–11. That is, he will “repeatedly remind” (ἀεὶ . . . ὑπομιμνήσκειν, v. 12) them *because* (Διὸ, v. 12) it is by walking in the path of virtue and godliness that they will “never fall” (v. 10) and enter the kingdom of the Messiah (v. 11). It is these qualities that will keep them from being pulled back into the world’s corruption (v. 4), from being “unfruitful” (v. 8), and from spiritual blindness (v. 9). As long as Peter is alive he will continue reminding them to walk in the “way of righteousness” and to avoid the snares of the wicked, and he has written this letter so that they will “always” be able to “remember” his instruction (vv. 12–15). Peter returns to the “reminder” theme in 3:1–2, where he tells his readers that both of his letters were meant to remind them of the apostolic and prophetic messages. Peter’s writing is akin to the father of Proverbs who is intent on keeping his son on the straight path even when he is old and gone.

In Proverbs, the son is instructed to get “wisdom and “insight,” and the father’s instruction marks out the path to life—like the exhortation to the virtues of 1 Peter 1:3–11. The son is exhorted to avoid the “path of the wicked” who cause others to stumble, eat and drink evil, and end up in “deep darkness”—like the warnings against false teachers in 2 Peter 2. The path of the righteous, on the other hand, “shines brighter and brighter until full day,” just as “the day dawns and the morning-star rises in your hearts” in 2 Peter 1:19.<sup>101</sup> The “commandment” “is a lamp” (Prov 6:23), like the “lamp shining in a dark place” (2 Pet 1:19). The father’s final instruction is for the son to guard his heart, put away “crooked speech,” and to look directly forward at the right path—which pretty much encapsulates 2 Peter’s core message.

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differences are more significant. See Mark D. Mathews, “The Genre of 2 Peter: A Comparison with Jewish and Early Christian Testaments,” *BBR* 21, no. 1 (2011): 51–64. And it is more likely that a web of sources and influences impacted the writing of Peter’s letter.

<sup>101</sup> The quotation here is from Num 24:17, but the conceptual parallel, since it occurs within the flow of the other parallels, should still be noticed.

**Second, both lay out a very clear “Two Ways” schematization of life; with a path of virtue and godliness leading to life, and a path of folly and wickedness leading to destruction.** Proverbs 4:10–19 juxtaposes in stark relief the “way of wisdom”/“paths of uprightness”/“path of the righteous” versus the “path of the wicked”/“way of evil.” Proverbs 1–2 similarly juxtaposes the way of the wicked who seek to entice others to join them versus the call of Wisdom and her tremendous value. The end result of the way of wickedness is always emphasized, and in general in Proverbs the fools/wicked receive much attention from the narrator. Proverbs 29:8 parallels the themes of 2 Peter 3: “Scoffers set a city aflame, but the wise turn away wrath.” In both cases there are scoffers, destruction by fire, and the wise/godly who escape God’s judgment. In 2 Peter, of course, the judgment is eschatological. Second Peter’s “Two Ways” schema is evident in chapter 1, but it becomes explicit in chapter 2. In 2:2, the false teachers cause “the way of truth” (ἡ ὁδὸς τῆς ἀληθείας) to be “blasphemed” (cf. Ps 119:30; Wis 5:6).<sup>102</sup> In verse 15, they have “forsaken” the “straight way” (εὐθεΐαν ὁδὸν); see parallel phrase in Prov 2:13 LXX, ὁδοὺς εὐθείας.<sup>103</sup> The final mention of “the way of righteousness” (τὴν ὁδὸν τῆς δικαιοσύνης) in verse 21 immediately precedes the Proverbs quotation (Prov 26:11). Proverbs 8:20 LXX uses a plural version of the same phrase, ὁδοῖς δικαιοσύνης.

These two different “ways” drive Peter’s entire letter and constitute a stark black-and-white contrast. The apostles and their followers follow the path of godliness and knowledge; the false teachers and their followers are on the path of sensuality and wickedness. As in Proverbs, the end results of both paths are discussed, but the negative

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<sup>102</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 241–42; Giese, *2 Peter and Jude*, 101. Bauckham points out the increased popularity of the “two ways” metaphor in intertestamental literature and especially at Qumran. Here, the “way” refers to the gospel—the wisdom term is used for a salvation-historical message. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 397–98.

<sup>103</sup> Giese, *2 Peter and Jude*, 132–33. Cf. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 267. Carson (as well as the others) rightly observes that the “locution [is] not uncommon in the LXX,” and that Peter is not likely consciously employing “any particular passage.” Carson, “2 Peter,” 1056. Schreiner notes the connection not only to the wisdom tradition but also to Israel’s history of going astray. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 422–23.



is emphasized. This latter path leads to “judgment” and “destruction” (2:3), while the right path leads to the Messiah’s kingdom (1:11). The pairs of OT examples in 2:4–8 are given to emphasize the “Two Ways” contrast: “the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from testing” on the one hand, and to punish the wicked on the other (v. 9). Chapter 3 is devoted to the contrasting ends of the “two ways,” which are here eschatological (as in Jesus’ teaching and at Qumran). The “scoffers” face fiery divine judgment on a cosmic scale (3:3–10); the godly wait for “new heavens and a new earth” (3:11–14).

**Third, in both cases a central concern is to warn against those who would entice the addressees to join the foolish path.** Proverbs 1:10–19 urges the son: “If sinners entice you, do not consent” (v. 10). The sinners described here are a violent gang of thugs who are “greedy for unjust gain” (v. 19). The son may be drawn to the prospect of wealth, adventure, and fitting in with an edgy crowd; but he is warned that they are ultimately setting a trap for themselves (v. 18). Another prominent enticer in Proverbs is the adulterous woman in chapter 7. She entices the “simple” who are not hardened in foolishness but who “lack sense” (7:7).<sup>104</sup> She offers a feast of love (vv. 16–18), and her “seductive speech” “persuades him” (v. 21). She is bold, loud (vv. 10–15), and seemingly religious (v. 14). Her husband’s return is not imminent, so they have nothing to fear (vv. 19–20). Unsurprisingly, the man is destroyed by her seduction (vv. 22–23, 26–27); “her house is the way to Sheol” (v. 27). The third enticer in Proverbs is the personified Ms. Folly (9:13–18). Interestingly, almost the exact same language and description is used of her as of the adulteress in chapter 7. She is “loud” and “seductive” (like the adulteress) as well as “knowing nothing” (v. 13). She has the same target market as well: the “simple” and those who “lack sense” (v. 16). It is those “who are going straight on their way” but are prone to be swayed (v. 15) who are Ms. Folly’s Sheol-bound “guests” (v. 18).

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<sup>104</sup> The בְּרִי-רְשָׁעִים, LXX νεανίαν ἐνδεῆ φρενῶν.

Second Peter likens the false teachers to all three of these enticers. Like the enticers of Proverbs 1, they love the “wages of unrighteousness” (2 Pet 2:15). “In greed” they “exploit”<sup>105</sup> with their “feigned words” (2:3) and like the violent thugs of Proverbs 1, they are bringing swift destruction upon themselves (2 Pet 2:10). They are likened to “caught” animals (2:12) like the enticers of Proverbs 1:8–19.<sup>106</sup> In language reminiscent of the wayward man and the adulteress of Proverbs 7, the false teachers have “eyes full of an adulteress and not ceasing from sin, enticing unsteady souls” (2:14).<sup>107</sup> They speak “boastful, empty words” (v. 18 CSB) like both Ms. Folly and the adulteress. Like both, their target is the simple, those who “lack these [qualities]” which would make them wise (1:4, 9–11). Like the adulteress, they “entice by sensual passions of the flesh” (2:18); like Ms. Folly, they target “those barely escaping” (v. 18), those who have recently “escaped the defilements of the world” (v. 20). Similar to the reassurances of the adulteress, the false teachers are convinced that Jesus’ return is not something to be worried about (3:4–7).

**Fourth, in both cases virtues are catalogued and the fools/wicked are described in detail.** Sprinkled throughout Proverbs are exhortations to gain specific qualities. Proverbs 2 contains a high concentration. The father calls his son to seek “wisdom,” “insight,” “understanding,” the “fear of Yahweh,” and the “knowledge of God” (2:1–5). Seeking and finding these things leads to understanding “righteousness and justice,” “wisdom” and “knowledge,” and “discretion” (vv. 9–11). These qualities will

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<sup>105</sup> On translation of ἐμπορεύονται see Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 398.

<sup>106</sup> As well as of the wayward man of Prov 7:22–23.

<sup>107</sup> The expression refers to men with lustful eyes. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 266–67; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 421–22. They have not heeded the instruction of Prov 7, and now it seems they in turn “entice” others. Commentators (e.g., the above) speak of the fishing/hunting background of this word; but conceptually, this is precisely what the dangerous women and the fools of Proverbs do to the unwary.

“guard” their bearers “from the way of evil, from men of perverted speech” (v. 12, e.g., false teachers) and from the adulteress (v. 16). Provided the son does “not lose sight of” “sound wisdom and discretion,” he will “walk on [his] way securely, and [his] feet will not stumble” (3:23).

Second Peter 1:5–7 contains the famous virtue list. While this list bears affinities to Hellenistic virtue lists,<sup>108</sup> it also resembles the exhortation of Proverbs to wisdom and godliness (see similar example in Wis 6:17–20).<sup>109</sup> Peter lists the following items, some of which appear in Proverbs and later Jewish wisdom texts (Wisdom and Ben Sira): “virtue” (ἀρέτη), “knowledge” (γνώσις, 15x Prov; 6x Wis; 6x Sir),<sup>110</sup> “self-control” (ἐγκράτεια), “steadfastness” (ὕπομονή, 4x Sir),<sup>111</sup> “godliness” (εὐσέβεια, 2x Prov; 1x Wis; 1x Sir),<sup>112</sup> “brotherly affection” (φιλαδελφία), and “love” (ἀγάπη, 3x Wis).<sup>113</sup> “Knowledge” (γνώσις, ἐπίγνωσις)<sup>114</sup> “plays a central role in” 2 Peter,<sup>115</sup> and likewise in Proverbs. Like Proverbs, attaining these qualities must be diligently attended to (2 Pet 1:5, 10; cf. 3:14). If they are put into practice, “you will never fall” (1:10). It is a life devoted to this path of qualities that leads to life (v. 11)—it is the path of wisdom.

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<sup>108</sup> In fact, as Charles demonstrates, there is a merging here of “Hellenistic form and Jewish theological assumptions.” J. Daryl Charles, “The Language and Logic of Virtue in 2 Peter 1:5-7,” *BBR* 8 (1998): 57. For detailed study see Charles’s article as well as his fuller monograph: J. Daryl Charles, *Virtue amidst Vice* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998).

<sup>109</sup> Wisdom parallel from Schreiner, *I, 2 Peter, Jude*, 351. Schreiner also mentions a fascinating parallel from the Mishnah (Sotah 9:15).

<sup>110</sup> Prov 2:6; 8:9; 8:10; 8:12; 9:6; 13:18; 13:21; 16:8; 19:23; 21:11; 22:23; 22:24; 27:23; 29:7; 30:3; Wis 1:7; 2:13; 6:22; 7:17; 10:10; 14:22; Sir 1:19; 21:13; 21:14; 21:18; 33:8; 40:5. Cf. ἐπίγνωσις in Prov 2:5.

<sup>111</sup> Sir 2:14; 16:13; 17:24; 41:2.

<sup>112</sup> Prov 1:7; 13:12; Wis 10:12; Sir 49:3.

<sup>113</sup> Wis 3:9; 6:17; 6:18.

<sup>114</sup> ἐπίγνωσις occurs 4x in 2 Peter: 1:2; 1:3; 1:8; 2:20; γνώσις 3x: 1:5; 1:6; 3:18.

<sup>115</sup> Charles, “Language and Logic of Virtue,” 61.

Proverbs also contains numerous descriptions of the characteristics of the wicked/fools who are constantly being warned against. Some of these have already been discussed above, but a few more are particularly pertinent in light of 2 Peter’s false teachers. Proverbs 6:12–19, in fact, is almost an exact description of them (cf. 2 Pet 2). The foolish, wicked person has “crooked speech” and “devises evil” and sows “discord.” So “calamity will come upon him suddenly” (vv. 12–15). Yahweh is said to hate these seven things: “haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers” (vv. 16–19). Proverbs 21:6 essentially epitomizes Peter’s view of the false teachers: “The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a fleeting vapor and a snare of death.” Of course, Proverbs speaks of “fools,” “scoffers,” and “folly” throughout. For example, “‘Scoffer’ is the name of the arrogant, haughty man who acts with arrogant pride” (Prov 21:24).<sup>116</sup>

Second Peter is known for its detailed and colorful depictions of the “false teachers” (2 Pet 2:1).<sup>117</sup> They teach “destructive heresies,” and “bring upon themselves swift destruction” (2:1; cf. Prov 6:12–15). They are sensual (2:2), greedy (vv. 3, 15), and exploit with “feigned words” (v. 3). They “despise authority” (v. 10), refusing to listen to godly instruction. They are incredibly arrogant (vv. 10–12). They are sexually immoral (vv. 10, 14), and are party animals (vv. 12–13). They are described as “waterless springs and mists driven by a storm” (v. 17 ESV); and like Proverbs 25:14, they cannot deliver the freedom they promise (v. 19). They speak “boasts of futility” (ματαιότης, cf. 1 Pet

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<sup>116</sup> Thanks to Burge for pointing me to this verse. Burge, “Reading 2 Peter with Wisdom,” 85.

<sup>117</sup> Some have taken a very dim view of Peter’s “vilifications,” but these protestations often reveal more about the scholar’s postmodern Western sensibilities than about the text. See e.g., Frey, who speaks of a “tirade of insults,” “crude polemic,” and “two crudely offensive sayings.” Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 352, 359, 362. Cf. Michel R. Desjardins, “The Portrayal of the Dissidents in 2 Peter and Jude: Does It Tell Us More about the ‘Godly’ than the ‘Ungodly’?,” *JSNT* 9, no. 30 (1987): 89–102. But for Peter—and with a long tradition behind him—(1) the stakes of being lured down the wrong path are extremely high, and (2) colorful characterization of immoral/ungodly behavior was preceded in Proverbs and the wisdom tradition as well as in his contemporary world.

1:18).<sup>118</sup> They are “scoffers” (ἐμπαῖκται, 3:3)<sup>119</sup> who refuse to remember the Lord’s instruction (3:1–2). They are “ignorant and unstable,” “lawless” (ἄθεσμος, cf. 2:7) people who twist Scripture (vv. 16–17).

### **Influence of Proverbs on 2 Peter’s Language and Style**

Burge has recently examined the influence of Proverbs and the wisdom tradition in 2 Peter. His examination reveals that 2 Peter’s “structure, style, and theology” are influenced by Proverbs and the OT wisdom tradition.<sup>120</sup> I will here summarize Burge’s observations for shared structure and style, and address questions of 2 Peter’s relationship to Greek philosophical language.

**Structure.** In the previous sections, I have drawn upon the discourses of Proverbs 1–9 to highlight the influence of Proverbs on 2 Peter. Burge goes one step further and suggests that the broad literary structure of 2 Peter reflects that of these discourses. Second Peter 1:5–15 gives the “exhortation to walk securely by pursuing knowledge,” paralleling Proverbs 2:1–11, 4:1–13, and 7:1–5. Second Peter 1:16–3:10 depicts “the way of the misleaders,” paralleling Proverbs 2:12–19, 4:14–17, and 7:6–23. Second Peter 3:11–18 gives the “final exhortation with promise of blessing,” paralleling Proverbs 2:20–22, 4:18–27, and 7:24–27.<sup>121</sup> It may not be the case that Peter consciously intended to reflect Proverbs, but—to quote Burge’s conclusion again—“a Jew’s familiarity with Proverbial aphoristic wisdom might make it instinctive to adopt

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<sup>118</sup> The term *ματαιότης* is the word in the LXX Ecclesiastes which renders *לִבְיָהוּ*.

<sup>119</sup> Bauckham discusses the Proverbial/OT background in Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 288–89, 104–5.

<sup>120</sup> Burge, “Reading 2 Peter with Wisdom,” 79.

<sup>121</sup> Burge, “Reading 2 Peter with Wisdom,” 87.

Proverbs' vocabulary, categories, posture, personality and literary structure when confronted by seductive voices spouting falsehood and mocking God's word."<sup>122</sup>

**Style.** Second Peter's Greek has been described as difficult, convoluted, and pompous. Burge points out that many of the peculiarities of 2 Peter's Greek are the same as those of Proverbs (both LXX and MT). Bauckham describes 2 Peter's style as "fond of rather grandiose language" and having "a highly stylistic habit of using pairs of synonyms or near-synonyms," and frequently omitting the article.<sup>123</sup> Likewise, Proverbs employs "deliberate ambiguity and graphic language," "erratic usage or non-usage of the article, synonymous parallelism, and chiasms."<sup>124</sup>

Burge also points to the irony of how some have argued that Proverbs just like 2 Peter is indebted to "Greek-philosophical sources, due to similar themes and language"<sup>125</sup> (despite chronological problems with this theory). Apparently, "Scriptural wisdom language is easily confused for Hellenistic, philosophical language."<sup>126</sup> It is undoubtable that 2 Peter contains Hellenistic features, particularly in some of the distinct language used. It is also the case that the wisdom tradition epitomized in Proverbs has had a significant impact on Jewish literature; 2 Peter is written within the background of Jewish wisdom works such as *Wisdom*. But given (1) the explicit quotations of Proverbs in both 1 and 2 Peter, (2) the devotion to Israel's Scriptures Peter exhibits (1 Pet 1:10–12; 2 Pet 1:19–21), and (3) the striking similarities I have explored between the themes of Proverbs and 2 Peter, it seems reasonable that interpreters not too quickly assume a

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<sup>122</sup> Burge, "Reading 2 Peter with Wisdom," 86.

<sup>123</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 137. Pointed out by Burge, "Reading 2 Peter with Wisdom," 89.

<sup>124</sup> Burge, "Reading 2 Peter with Wisdom," 89.

<sup>125</sup> Burge, "Reading 2 Peter with Wisdom," 90.

<sup>126</sup> Burge, "Reading 2 Peter with Wisdom," 90.

Hellenistic explanation for all perceived peculiarities, nor overlay the importance of later Jewish literature. Proverbs stands in the background, as the fountainhead.<sup>127</sup>

### Conclusion

Second Peter bears the marks of the wisdom of Proverbs. Beyond a quotation from the book to vividly depict the disgusting nature of apostasy, Peter employs motifs and themes central to Proverbs, especially to the discourses of Proverbs 1–9. He is an older man, wanting his instruction to be always available to his hearers. His concern is about enticers, fools, scoffers, and the immoral. He catalogues virtues and vices. His entire letter presents two ways—one leading to life, and the other to destruction.

But this wisdom influence has been developed, in keeping with later Jewish wisdom literature (e.g., Ben Sira, Wisdom, and 4QInstruction) and with the influence of Peter’s master (e.g., Matt 6–7).<sup>128</sup> Second Peter marries wisdom motifs with stories from biblical history and imagery of biblical prophets. Now, the right teaching is the prophetic-apostolic message of Jesus; the false teaching is that which pulls people away from this. Peter also eschatologizes wisdom: The way of life leads to new creation; the way of death leads to cosmic destruction. The proverbial immediate “reap what you sow” perspective is also replaced by a long-term prophetic one. These two OT themes, true versus false prophecy and creation/destruction, occupy the next chapters of this dissertation.

In the previous chapter, I discussed three key principles of Peter’s biblical hermeneutic. As seen, Peter has employed the wisdom tradition to call—or even “force”—his readers to step into Scripture’s story (the third principle). Through it he has brought the stark realities of the gospel and its rejection close to them. For Peter, the scriptural narrative world is the only world there is. His readers do not have the luxury of

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<sup>127</sup> Witherington likewise refers to Proverbs as the “fountainhead” of the wisdom tradition. Witherington, *Jesus the Sage*, 16.

<sup>128</sup> There are similarities to what Lange calls “eschatological Torah wisdom.” Lange, “Wisdom Literature and Thought in Scrolls,” 457, 474.

hearing the message of the “apostles and prophets” and then thinking about how it might or might not apply to their lives. It is not an abstract message; it is a path with a sharp Proverbial fork in it. His readers will go one direction or the other. They will be part of Scripture’s dichotomist story, with its creation versus judgment, true versus false prophets, and new creation versus final destruction. Peter employs Proverbs and the “two ways” to call them to step into it one way rather than the other. I begin filling in this story in the next chapter, with true versus false prophets. It is unsurprising that the way of destruction is the way of the false prophet Balaam (2:15–16).



## CHAPTER 4

### TRUE AND FALSE PROPHETS IN 2 PETER

This chapter examines 2 Peter’s use of OT material on true and false prophets. The major concern of 2 Peter is to exhort the recipients to faithfully persevere in godliness, avoiding the attractive licentiousness of the false teachers.<sup>1</sup> To do this, he places himself and his fellow apostles in continuity with Israel’s true prophets, and characterizes the false teachers as akin to the false prophets of old. The “two ways” studied in the previous chapter are paths associated with true prophets versus false prophets, and respectively with those who follow both.

This chapter studies four main points: first, Peter’s three allusions in the Transfiguration paragraph (1:16–21) and his introduction to the prophetic theme; second, the background to Peter’s mention of “false prophets” in Israel (2:1); third, the figure of Balaam as apostate prophet; and finally, the influence of Jeremianic material concerning prophets and exile.

#### **Prophetic Tanak, with a Twist (2 Pet 1:16–21)**

In 2 Peter 1:16–21, the apostle defends<sup>2</sup> the veracity of the apostolic message and of the apostolic interpretation of Israel’s prophetic Scriptures. To do this, he invokes

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter does not address the questions concerning the specific identity of the false teachers. On this see Thomas S. Caulley, “‘They Promise Them Freedom’: Once Again, the Ψευδοδιδάσκαλοι in 2 Peter,” *ZNW* 99, no. 1 (2008): 129–38; Richard Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, WBC, vol. 50 (Waco, TX: Word, 1983), 154–57; Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 2nd ed., CSC (Nashville: B&H, 2020), 325–30. I find the recent proposal of David Burge—arguing that the false teachers are Sophists—plausible, though it may be overly specific. David K. Burge, “A Sub-Christian Epistle? Appreciating 2 Peter as an Anti-Sophistic Polemic,” *JSNT* 44, no. 2 (2021): 310–32.

<sup>2</sup> I hold this to be a “defensive” section, not “offensive.” That is, Peter is responding to accusations that the apostolic message consisted of “cleverly devised myths,” not indirectly labelling the opponents’ message so. This is the more common view in recent scholarship. See Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*,

Jesus' Transfiguration. This is the moment when the apostles saw a heavenly vision and heard the voice of God directly, announcing the fulfillment of Israel's prophetic writings. In this paragraph, Peter alludes to one prophecy from the Torah, one from the Prophets, and one from the Writings, in reverse order.<sup>3</sup> The third allusion, from the Torah, is from the Balaam oracles—a fascinating subtle nod toward the “false prophet” topic of the following section.

### **Recapping True Prophecy (1:16–21)**

In 2 Peter 1:16–2:1, Peter maps the true and false prophets of Israel onto the true and false teachers of his own day. The chiasmic structure of 1:16–2:3, pointed out by Marín, provides the first clue:

A: apostles

B: OT prophets

B: OT false prophets

A: false teachers<sup>4</sup>

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213–14; Jörg Frey, *The Letter of Jude and the Second Letter of Peter: A Theological Commentary*, trans. Kathleen Ess (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2018), 297–98; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 372–73; Jerome H. Neyrey, “The Apologetic Use of the Transfiguration in 2 Peter 1:16–21,” *CBQ* 42, no. 4 (1980): 506; Gene L. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 217. For an example of a work arguing the opposite, in line with a more common older view that the opponents were gnostic, see Thomas S. Cautley, “The Idea of ‘Inspiration’ in 2 Peter 1:16–21” (PhD diss., Eberhard-Karls Universität zu Tübingen, 1982), 61, 109–12. Schreiner’s discussion of this work and other “offensive” views is helpful.

<sup>3</sup> A couple other possible faint allusions have also been proposed. It is possible that there is an allusion to Ps 8:6 or Dan 7:14 in the phrase “honor and glory” of v. 17. See Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 218. This allusion is faint at best. A few scholars have detected in the phrase “until the day dawns” of v. 19 an allusion to a non-LXX version of Song 2:17 (known to Origen), but this is uncertain at best. See Joost Smit Sibinga, “Une citation du Cantique dans la Secunda Petri,” *RB* 73, no. 1 (1966): 107–18. Cf. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 225.

<sup>4</sup> F. Marín, “Apostolicidad de los escritos neotestamentarios,” *EstEcl* 50 (1975): 211–39, cited in Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 236. Cf. Henning Paulsen, *Der zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief*, KEK (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 127.

The interconnections are reinforced by the use of φέρω to connect apostles and OT prophets (see below), and of ἐξακολουθέω to parallel apostles on the one hand (v. 16) with the false teacher-prophets on the other (2:2; 2:15).<sup>5</sup>

In 2 Peter 2:1, Peter explicitly styles the current false teachers “on the analogy” of the “false prophets” (ψευδοπροφήται) of the OT.<sup>6</sup> The latter are juxtaposed with the true prophets of 1:19–21. The καί (“also”) of 2:1 strengthens the contrast; it can be paraphrased thus: “True prophets arose, but so also did false prophets.” Israel’s true prophets are those who were “borne” (φέρω) by God’s Spirit (1:21), and who receive the divine interpretation of the visions they receive (v. 20).<sup>7</sup> Their prophecies are those recorded in Scripture (1:19–21) and to which Peter has just alluded (vv. 17, 19).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> On ἐξακολουθέω, Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 236.

<sup>6</sup> Caulley, “They Promise Them Freedom,” 129. Cf. Hans C. C. Cavallin, “The False Teachers of 2 Peter as Pseudo-Prophets,” *NovT* 21, no. 3 (1979): 269–70. Schreiner suggests that the opponents may be called “teachers” and not “prophets,” “perhaps because they rejected any notion of prophetic inspiration at all.” Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 391. But they “were like the false prophets of old in that they were promulgating a message contrary to God’s truth” (Schreiner, 391). Cf. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 238. As will be seen later, this and especially the moral implications of their influence are the correspondences that Peter emphasizes.

<sup>7</sup> This clause πᾶσα προφητεία γραφῆς ἰδίας ἐπιλύσεως οὐ γίνεται is debated. I agree with Bauckham’s interpretation (and scholars following him; e.g., Frey). Bauckham translates, “No prophecy of Scripture derives from the prophet’s own interpretation.” He makes several points: (1) ἴδιος is often used to refer in an almost technical sense to the origins of prophecy, e.g., in Philo, Jer 23:16, and Exod 13:3. (Counter example is *Clem. Hom.* 2:22.) (2) ἐπιλύσις or verb form ἐπιλύειν is often used for interpretations of dreams or visions (Gen 40:8; 41:8, 12; Hermas). Bauckham also points to pagan parallel in Pseudo-Callisthenes. (3) This interpretation makes much better sense of the connection to v. 21 which is explicitly regarding the *origin* of Scripture. (4) These verses are defensive rather than offensive (as the other view would hold). (5) *Ascension of Isaiah* (3:21–4:18, but especially 3:31) contains a striking parallel to the ideas in this passage. For full discussion see Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 228–35. I would add that the dual aspect of “vision” and “divine voice” in the Transfiguration is likely analogous to the prophets’ seeing visions and then hearing the divine interpretation of them. Frey follows Bauckham’s interpretation, but offers a bit of pushback to Bauckham’s discussion of ἐπιλύσις. It does refer to interpretations of dreams and visions, but in Qumran the same Hebrew root behind the LXX translation ἐπιλύσις (*ptr* > *psr*) refers to interpretation of prophetic writings. So the word “can also denote the resolution of difficult texts by present-day interpreters.” Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 309. Frey also explains that German scholarship has long been dominated by understanding this verse as speaking against private interpretation of Scripture vs. public/Church/authoritative interpretation. See Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 306–12. Bauckham and much of the English-speaking world following him argue that it refers to the origins of prophecy. Cf. discussion in Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 379, 384–86.

<sup>8</sup> Caulley identifies the “prophetic word” with the two Transfiguration allusions. He is wrong to limit the referent to those passages, but rightly observes their function in the narrative. See Caulley, “Idea of ‘Inspiration,’” 128–30. Rightly Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 380–81.

Just as the contemporary false teachers are likened to Israel’s false prophets, Jesus’ apostles are akin to the true prophets of old (1:16–19). The “predictions of the holy prophets” and the commands of the apostles are a unity (3:2). Likewise, in 1 Peter 1:10–12, the Holy Spirit spoke through the prophets and through the apostles.<sup>9</sup> In 2 Peter 1:16–21, the connection between prophets and apostles is strengthened by Peter’s use of the word φέρω.<sup>10</sup> It is used twice of the voice “borne” from heaven in the apostles’ hearing (vv. 17, 18). It is also used twice of Scripture’s prophecies (v. 21): True prophecy (προφητεία) is never “borne” by “the will of a person”; rather, people “borne” by God’s Spirit speak his word. The Transfiguration is a dual-layered prophetic event for Peter, with the apostolic eyewitnesses absolutely central to both.<sup>11</sup> First, it involved witnessing the confirmation and fulfillment of OT prophecies, particularly Psalm 2:7, and the validation of Jesus’ interpretation of them.<sup>12</sup> It was the very words of the prior prophets which they heard “borne” from heaven over Jesus. Second, it is itself something of a prophetic vision of Jesus’ future Parousia.<sup>13</sup> The apostles themselves

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<sup>9</sup> Refer to chap. 2 of this dissertation for fuller discussion of 1 Pet 1:10–12; 2 Pet 1:20–21; and 3:1–2.

<sup>10</sup> This is also noted by Caulley, ““They Promise Them Freedom,”” 136n43.

<sup>11</sup> This is clear from v. 16, and from a discourse grammar analysis of vv. 17–18. On the latter, the actual Transfiguration account is told with participles only (λαβών, ἐνεχθείσης), no indicative verbs. These first-person singular participles ungrammatically connect (with καί) to the first plural indicative verb of v. 18. The use of participles in v. 17 serves to subordinate the Transfiguration story itself to the “punchline” of v. 18. The verse begins with a topical frame (P1 position), ταύτην τὴν φωνήν, pointing back to the Transfiguration voice. The focus (P2 position, new information) is ἡμεῖς ἠκούσαμεν, with the emphatic ἡμεῖς. The entire point of recounting this episode is that “we ourselves heard this voice [emphasis added].” Thanks to my brother, Andrew Lamicela, a linguist and communicative Koine Greek instructor, for discussing this passage with me. On the discourse features mentioned, see chaps. 9 and 10 of Steven E. Runge, *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament: A Practical Introduction for Teaching and Exegesis* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010), 181–225.

<sup>12</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 221.

<sup>13</sup> Neyrey is right to link the Transfiguration and Parousia, and to see the former as prophetic of the latter. But his identifying the Transfiguration with τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον of v. 18 is implausible. See Neyrey, “Apologetic Use of Transfiguration,” 510–19. Bauckham rightly concludes that “the normal usage of the term” and the synonymous προφητεία γραφῆς in v. 20 are decisive. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 224.

experienced this “anticipatory fulfillment” of the Parousia. They are thus witnesses to the OT prophets’ reliability (v. 19), and bearers of the same prophetic mantle (v. 18).<sup>14</sup>

Peter here does not seem to emphasize the directly opposing features of true versus false prophets. For true prophets, his emphasis is on the divine origin of their message. For false prophets, Peter’s emphasis is not so much on the origin of their words, but rather on the immoral lifestyle they promote (chap. 2) and their unbelief of God’s true word (chap. 3).<sup>15</sup> This observation is underscored by Peter’s allusion to a true prophecy of Balaam in verse 19, whom he later characterizes as a false prophet. Implied, however, is that the message of Peter’s “true prophets” demands a certain morally rigorous way of life—just like that of all true prophets of the OT. As in the OT, one is automatically deemed a “false prophet” if they call people away from the revealed path of righteous living (see Deut 13:1–5; Jer 23:21–22).

Before studying the two Transfiguration allusions Peter makes, two points must be defended. First, that these scriptural allusions are not merely an irrelevant detail of a story Peter is referencing. Second, that Peter’s selective retelling of the Transfiguration bolsters his prophetic typology.

First, the Transfiguration allusions are not irrelevant or tangential. Peter claims that the “prophetic word” of the OT is “further confirmed” or “super reliable” in their

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<sup>14</sup> In Frey’s words, as “an anticipatory fulfillment this episode confirms the reliability of (biblical) prophecy.” Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 303–4. Bauckham rejects this linking of the two pieces, but aptly summarizes: “The majority opinion of scholars takes this verse [v. 19] to be saying that the Transfiguration has confirmed OT prophecy. As an anticipatory fulfillment of prophecy the Transfiguration makes the still awaited future fulfillment of prophecy at the Parousia yet more certain.” Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 223. Boobyer argues that the Transfiguration itself “prophesies the Parousia in the sense that it is a portrayal of what Christ will be at that day, and in some degree a miniature picture of the whole second advent scene.” G. H. Boobyer, *St. Mark and the Transfiguration Story* (London: Clark, 1942), 87, quoted in Neyrey, “Apologetic Use of Transfiguration,” 510. Neyrey lists evidence that Peter sees a connection between Transfiguration and Parousia (Neyrey, 513–14).

<sup>15</sup> This could be why he *likens* the false teachers to the false prophets but *labels* them “teachers” instead of “prophets.” Cavallin speculates that the name change highlights the opponents’ “teaching” role against a “prophetic” role they may not have claimed for themselves. Libertinism is also present. Hans C. C. Cavallin, “The False Teachers of 2 Peter as Pseudo-Prophets,” *NovT* 21, no. 3 (1979): 269–70. For further discussion on this question, see Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 391. Cf. Paulsen, *Der zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief*, 127–28.

experience. The Greek clause *καὶ ἔχομεν βεβαιότερον τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον* is debated. The two main debates are over the referent of *τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον* and over the meaning of *βεβαιότερον*.

Various suggestions have been put forward for the referent of *τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον*.<sup>16</sup> (1) Neyrey has implausibly argued that “the prophetic word” refers not to the OT but rather to the Transfiguration itself. This view has been decisively debunked.<sup>17</sup> (2) Some have concluded that “the author refers here to the entirety of (OT) Scripture . . . which was read as prophetic.”<sup>18</sup> Schreiner is correct that Peter is probably thinking more narrowly here.<sup>19</sup> (3) Caulley has identified the prophetic word with the Transfiguration allusions (Ps 2:7; Isa 42:1). He is wrong to limit the referent to those allusions (as the prophetic nature of other OT texts is a prominent theme in the letter), rightly observes their function in the narrative.<sup>20</sup> I conclude that the Transfiguration allusions should be seen as important in that they represent all scriptural prophecy.<sup>21</sup>

The *βεβαιότερον* debate is twofold: (1) Whether *βεβαιότερον* should be understood as comparative or relative is debated, with many commentators opting for the

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<sup>16</sup> For a fuller listing and discussion, see Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 224; Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 303.

<sup>17</sup> See Neyrey, “Apologetic Use of Transfiguration,” 510–19. Bauckham rightly concludes that “the normal usage of the term” and the synonymous *προφητεία γραφῆς* in v. 20 are decisive. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 224.

<sup>18</sup> Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 303. See discussion in Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 380. Cf. Paulsen, *Der zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief*, 120; J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude*, Black’s New Testament Commentaries (London: A & C Black, 1969), 321; Karl H. Schelkle, *Die Petrusbriefe; der Judasbrief*, HTKNT (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1961), 200; Eric Fuchs and Pierre Reymond, *La deuxième épître de saint Pierre; L’épître de saint Jude*, CNT (Neuchâtel: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1980), 72.

<sup>19</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 380. Schreiner believes the context of the letter suggests a reference to “OT prophecies related to the day of judgment and salvation, that is, the day of the Lord” (380).

<sup>20</sup> Caulley, “The Idea of ‘Inspiration’,” 128–30. Rightly Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 380–81.

<sup>21</sup> Ostmeyer interprets the referent of the “prophetic word” as both the content of the prophetic voice and “die prophetische Tradition der heiligen Schriften als Ganze.” Karl-Heinrich Ostmeyer, *Die Briefe des Petrus und des Judas*, BNT (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2021), 121–22.

former view,<sup>22</sup> but Bauckham and some followers arguing for the latter.<sup>23</sup> (2) The relationship between this clause and the Transfiguration scene is debated. Scholars who take *βεβαιοτέρων* as comparative understand Peter to mean that the prophetic word is held to be “further confirmed” or seen as “more reliable” in light of the apostolic vision at the Transfiguration. Scholars who take *βεβαιοτέρων* as elative usually think that Peter is making two separate arguments for his teaching and against the false teachers: the Transfiguration on the one hand, and the Scriptures on the other.<sup>24</sup> It is possible, however, to see a similar relationship to the Transfiguration as the above, based on the flow of thought instead of grammar.

There are good reasons for taking *βεβαιοτέρων* to be comparative, made decisive by a recent comprehensive study.<sup>25</sup> Even if one takes it as an elative, however, the “Transfiguration as confirmation” view should still be adopted. There are compelling reasons to do so: (1) The structure of 1:16–2:3 hints that everything in this passage, including the *βεβαιοτέρων* clause, is interconnected with the apostles central.<sup>26</sup> (2) The

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<sup>22</sup> See e.g., Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 381–82; Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 301–3. Bauckham admits that “commentators have usually given *βεβαιοτέρων* its proper comparative force.” Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 223.

<sup>23</sup> Bauckham’s rendering is thus, “We place very firm reliance on the prophetic word.” Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 223. Bauckham observes that in Koine, comparatives are often used as elatives. Other scholars concede this (see above), but there is disagreement over which actually is the “more natural” reading here. It should be noted that Peter uses the non-comparative form of the word (*βεβαίαν*) in 1:10, where he exhorts readers to “make certain” their calling. See Bo Reicke, *The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude*, AB (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1964), 158; Norman Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, NIBC (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992), 179; Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 226; Curtis P. Giese, *2 Peter and Jude*, ConcC (St. Louis: Concordia, 2012), 86, 90.

<sup>24</sup> So e.g., Giese, *2 Peter and Jude*, 88–89; Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 216, 226. Bauckham appears to fall into the same category, but might be slightly more nuanced. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 223, 226–27.

<sup>25</sup> Travis B. Williams, “Confirming Scripture through Eyewitness Testimony (2 Peter 1.19a): Resolving a Crux Interpretum,” *JSNT* 43, no. 4 (2021): 605–24. Williams studies the “force and function” of *βεβαιοτέρων* and carefully examines every occurrence of the construction *ἔχειν τι βεβαιοτέρων* from the TLG database.

<sup>26</sup> Reasons include the following: (1) As already observed, 1:16–2:3 are arranged chiasmically (see Marín above). There is a very close identification between OT false prophets and contemporary false teachers, and likewise between OT prophets and Jesus’ apostles. Peter sees himself and his fellow apostles as in the same *line* as the OT prophets, not only as a recipient of their writings. (2) As seen above, the word *φέρω* is used to connect apostles and OT prophets. Both are caught up with the “borne” voice of God. Peter

divine voice at the Transfiguration announced the fulfillment of OT prophetic Scripture over Jesus. (3) The statement itself, *καὶ ἔχομεν βεβαιότερον τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον*, prompts the reader to ask, “How? Why?” The most obvious answer—particularly since *the heavenly voice quoted “the prophetic word”*—is that the Transfiguration event triggered this strong conviction by the apostles. (4) If the Transfiguration and Scripture arguments are separate, then the latter is little more than an assertion: “The Bible is trustworthy because it is inspired by God.”<sup>27</sup> It becomes much more compelling as an argument if and only if it is linked to the Transfiguration: “We *know* the Scriptures are trustworthy and that our interpretation is right, because we heard God’s own voice confirming those Scriptures and validating our interpretation of them over Jesus.” (5) Whether the first plural subject of *ἔχομεν* refers to all believers or specifically to the apostles is debated, but the contrast between “we” and “you” (“We” have the word . . . “You” should pay attention) suggests that it is the same “we” as in verse 18—the apostles.<sup>28</sup> If this is the case, Peter is saying something like, “*We* hold Scripture to be “further confirmed” or “super reliable” (because we saw it fulfilled).” (6) If the Transfiguration is indeed an “anticipatory fulfillment” of the Parousia, then Peter likely means that just as the OT prophecies led to the Transfiguration (anticipatory fulfillment), so they will lead to the Parousia (final fulfillment). Peter thus *must* be linking the two.<sup>29</sup> (7) Peter uses Transfiguration-like imagery of his readers’ relationship to the OT. They must “pay attention” to the “prophetic word” until the “day dawns” and the “morning star

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immediately juxtaposes the Transfiguration experience with this verse, and right after it uses language evoking the Transfiguration (e.g., *φέρω*) to describe the OT prophets.

<sup>27</sup> A perfect example of this is Giese, *2 Peter and Jude*, 88–89.

<sup>28</sup> See Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 380; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 224–25. Contra e.g., Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 302.

<sup>29</sup> Vögtle points out that the Synoptics connect the Transfiguration with the Resurrection (Mark 9:9; Matt 17:9) and “machtvollen Kommen des Gottesreiches (Mk 9,1) wie mit der Parusie Christi (Mt 16,28).” Anton Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, Der 2. Petrusbrief*, EKKNT (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1994), 164.



rises” in *their* hearts at the Parousia, just as it did for the “we” (the apostles) at the Transfiguration.<sup>30</sup>

The apostles directly saw and heard God’s own voice confirm the words of the prophets and the Jesus-centered interpretation of them.<sup>31</sup> This experience, Peter says, is what makes the trustworthiness of the written prophecies “even stronger.”<sup>32</sup> The scriptural allusions in this paragraph, then, are not tangential but are central to Peter’s argument in verse 19.

Second, Peter’s retelling of the Transfiguration bolsters his prophetic typology. Peter’s Transfiguration account is selective.<sup>33</sup> Commentators observe how the story is tailored to the author’s purposes.<sup>34</sup> Peter leaves out various details: he omits reference to

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<sup>30</sup> Green rightly argues that the Transfiguration narrative serves *both* to ground the apostolic claim to authority *and* to point forward to the Parousia: “Since the author juxtaposes his eyewitness account with the discrediting *vituperatio* of the heretics, Bauckham is likely correct that confidence in the apostle’s testimony is at stake and is here addressed. However, this line does not eliminate what many have seen as the internal theological link between the transfiguration and the parousia, which the author would have expected his readers to understand.” Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 221.

<sup>31</sup> With Williams, “Confirming Scripture through Eyewitness Testimony,” 620. Bigg argues, wrongly, that “the apostle could hardly make a point of the confirmation of prophecy; it needed no confirmation.” Charles Bigg, *St. Peter and St. Jude*, ICC (New York: T&T Clark, 1901), 268. For this and other reasons he renders the clause, “And even surer is the word of prophecy which we have . . .”—making the “voice of prophecy as even more certain than” the Transfiguration voice (268).

<sup>32</sup> Frey helpfully explains, “The truth of Christ’s glory seen at the transfiguration (which should itself be understood as a fulfillment of the biblical promises) strengthens the reliability of the scriptural prophecies and renders them all the more credible and ‘firm.’” Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 302–3. Cf. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 376–77.

<sup>33</sup> Scholars debate whether 2 Peter’s Transfiguration account modifies the Synoptic tradition or is relying on an independent tradition. For a very detailed discussion of the source-critical relationship, see Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 205–10; Robert J. Miller, “Is There Independent Attestation for the Transfiguration in 2 Peter?,” *NTS* 42, no. 4 (1996): 620–25. Bauckham concludes that it is not dependent on the Synoptics but witnesses to a different tradition. Miller argues to the contrary that 2 Peter’s account is based on Matthew. Frey likewise believes in Matthean dependence. Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 300–301. For listings of both similarities and differences between the Synoptic accounts and 2 Peter’s, see Jerome H. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 173; Paulsen, *Der zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief*, 118–19. A precise answer is not necessary for the present discussion, but it should be observed that 2 Peter is often close to Matthew’s Gospel (Matt 7’s wisdom, “two ways,” and false prophets material; Matt 24 on false prophets and delay of Parousia). Given my position on 2 Peter’s authenticity, I agree with Schreiner that the apostle may be relying at least in part on his own memories of the event. (Schreiner also rightly notes that the differences to the Gospel accounts are not too significant for source-critical purposes.) Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 375–76. Cf. Simon J. Kistemaker, *Peter and Jude* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 267.

<sup>34</sup> As Neyrey rightly lists, Peter’s emphasis is on (1) “the divine voice,” (2) “the equal glory of Jesus and God,” and (3) “Peter’s more active role.” Neyrey, “Apologetic Use of Transfiguration,” 509. Cf. e.g., Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 205; Peter H. Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude* (Grand Rapids:

Elijah and Moses, replaces the Sinai typology with a Davidic “holy mountain,” and removes the “prophet like Moses” typology implied in the Synoptics’ allusion to Deuteronomy 18:15 (“listen to him”).<sup>35</sup> It is not that Peter is uninterested in the topic of prophecy; on the contrary, he is leading up to an explicit discussion of true versus false prophets. It seems, however, that the Transfiguration story serves a different role in Peter’s “prophecy” narrative. It is certainly true that, for Peter, Jesus is the final prophet, fulfilling Deuteronomy 18:15; he applies this very verse to Jesus in Acts 3:22. But *here*, the typology modulates into a different key.<sup>36</sup> In Peter’s retelling of the Transfiguration, it is the apostles who are in the role of prophets, not Jesus.<sup>37</sup> They are speaking authoritatively to others based on the heavenly vision they saw and the divine voice they heard. They as the “true teachers” continue the “true prophets” line. They stand in opposition to the false teachers who are the successors of the “false prophets” of old. Peter’s telling of the Transfiguration does two things: Firstly, it validates the apostles as true “prophets.” Secondly, it confirms the validity of Israel’s Scriptures as true prophecies. The Transfiguration exhibits both as agents of the “borne” voice of God.

### **Transfiguration Allusions (Ps 2:7 and Isa 42:1 in 2 Pet 1:17)**

The first two allusions are spoken by the heavenly voice at the Transfiguration, in 2 Peter 1:17. They are to one passage in the Writings (Ps 2:7) and one in the Prophets

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Eerdmans, 2006), 204–5.

<sup>35</sup> See e.g., Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 207, 218–19. Cf. Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 205.

<sup>36</sup> There is another point of modulation as well: Peter uses the word *ἐξοδος* to describe his own death in 1:15. This word is used in Luke’s Transfiguration account (9:31) to speak of Jesus’ impending death. (The only other NT occurrence is a reference to Israel’s Exodus in Heb 11:22.) This is common in OT literature, and can be called “dynamic analogies.” See e.g., Jonathan Grossman, “‘Dynamic Analogies’ in the Book of Esther,” *VT* 59 (2009): 394–414. Frey also notes the significance of Peter’s use of *ἐξοδος* here. Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 292.

<sup>37</sup> This is where the idea of “Transfiguration as Parousia prophecy” is helpful, though not in the way Neyrey develops it.

(Isa 42:1). Most scholars recognize these references in the Transfiguration accounts and therefore in 2 Peter.<sup>38</sup>

**Allusion 1: Psalm 2:7.** The first allusion consists primarily of the words 'Ο υἱός μου . . . οὗτός ἐστιν in verse 17. The LXX wording, reading υἱός μου εἶ σύ, is modified from second person to third person (demonstrative) to fit the setting ('Ο υἱός μου . . . οὗτός ἐστιν). The lexical parallel is strengthened by the contextual similarities: In both cases it is Yahweh's voice announcing the installation of his appointed royal Son. Also, the Synoptic Transfiguration accounts are replete with allusions to biblical texts and events (especially Sinai in the Synoptics), so this is a passage where allusions are to be expected. What clinches the argument for a deliberate allusion in 2 Peter 1:17 is Peter's reference to the mount of Transfiguration as the "holy mountain" (τῷ ἁγίῳ ὄρει) in verse 18. This matches the words used of Zion in Psalm 2:6 LXX (ὄρος τὸ ἅγιον).<sup>39</sup> This term is never used of Sinai but always refers to Zion.<sup>40</sup> Davids is likely correct in concluding that Peter, by deleting the Deuteronomy 18:5 allusion and other Mosaic

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<sup>38</sup> For the Synoptics see e.g., Craig L. Blomberg, "Matthew," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 55; Rikk E. Watts, "Mark," in Beale and Carson, *Commentary on NT Use of OT*, 186–87; David W. Pao and Eckhard J. Schnabel, "Luke," in Beale and Carson, *Commentary on NT Use of OT*, 311–12. For 2 Peter, see e.g., Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 224; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 376–77; Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, Der 2. Petrusbrief*, 170–71. Bauckham and Davids are indecisive about the Isa 42:1 allusion, noting the possibility of an allusion to Gen 22:2. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 220; Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 204–5. Frey is a bit of an outlier. He makes no mention of Ps 2:7 and explicitly rejects Isa 42:1. Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 300–301.

<sup>39</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 219–21. As Bauckham notes, this phrase occurs only here in the NT. In the LXX the phrase always refers to Zion, never to Sinai. Cf. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 225–26. Bigg misses the allusion, noting perfunctorily that "the mountain was made holy by the theophany." Bigg, *St. Peter and St. Jude*, 267. Fuchs and Raymond likewise miss the allusion, proposing that the adjective "holy" signals that by the author's time there was "toute une tradition sur la montagne où se serait passée la Transfiguration." Fuchs and Raymond, *La deuxième épître de saint Pierre; Jude*, 70.

<sup>40</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 221.

references, intends to bring the Psalm 2 allusion to the forefront.<sup>41</sup> Peter sees the Transfiguration as a proleptic enactment of Jesus' enthronement as Yahweh's anointed.<sup>42</sup>

The judgment, "two ways," and "lawlessness" themes of Psalm 2 mesh well with Peter's concerns in the letter. In Psalm 2, Yahweh's king is installed over the nations (vv. 7–9); he will execute judgment over all of Yahweh's enemies and provide refuge to any who come trembling to him (vv. 9–12). In 2 Peter, God will bring judgment on all the world (chaps. 2–3) and "swift destruction" on those who turn their backs on the "Master who bought them" (2:1). One can receive a glorious, rich entry into the "kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus the Messiah" (1:11) or be utterly destroyed (e.g., 2:9). In the Psalm, trying to remove Yahweh's "bonds" and "cords" will be in vain (v. 3); the only one laughing will be Yahweh (v. 4). In 2 Peter, those who live lawlessly and who scoff at the prophetic word will not be laughing in the end (3:1–7).

The context of the Psalm 2 reference should not be pressed too far, however. For one thing, Peter was at least partially constrained by the historical event that he was recounting. For another, Peter's intention with this allusion is primarily to demonstrate *that* Jesus truly fulfills the prophetic writings. The "prophetic word" was confirmed in their direct experience of God himself quoting Scripture over Jesus (1:18–19). While Psalm 2 meshes well with the message of 2 Peter, the apostle's primary aim was not to make additional theological points with the allusion.

**Allusion 2: Isaiah 42:1.** There is some debate over the correct translation of the Greek line: Ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός μου οὗτός ἐστιν. The main question revolves

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<sup>41</sup> Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 205. Cf. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 207.

<sup>42</sup> Peter sees the Transfiguration as "the fulfillment of the messianic prophecy in Ps 2." Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 221. Bauckham notes that Ps 2:7 is most commonly applied to the Resurrection (see e.g., Acts 13:33; Rom 1:4); he suggests the "proleptic" language for the Transfiguration. He also discusses the Psalm's messianic interpretation in Judaism (219–20). Contra Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, Der 2. Petrusbrief*, 168.

around the repetition of *μου* after *ὁ ἀγαπητός*. Bauckham gives a detailed discussion and concludes that *ὁ ἀγαπητός μου* should be read as a distinct title, thus: “This is my Son, my Beloved One.”<sup>43</sup> The question then becomes, What is the source of *ὁ ἀγαπητός μου*? There may be a reference to Genesis 22:2 (and vv. 12, 16) in this line, as Bauckham discusses. The Hebrew includes second-person pronominal suffixes on both words: *אֶתְּךָ בְּרִיךְ אֶתְּךָ* (“your son, your only one”). The LXX drops the pronoun with the second word (contra the Hebrew and 2 Pet 1:17) but renders the word “beloved” (like 2 Pet 1:17): *τὸν υἱόν σου τὸν ἀγαπητόν*. Thus, it is possible that *ὁ ἀγαπητός μου* in 2 Peter 1:17 is a translation of the Hebrew *אֶתְּךָ* (“my only one”).<sup>44</sup> What makes an allusion to Genesis 22 less likely, however, is the lack of other contextual indicators. The other Transfiguration allusions in the Synoptics—to Psalm 2:7, Isaiah 42:1, and Deuteronomy 18:5—all feature authoritative pronouncements concerning an authoritative eschatological figure (king, servant, prophet). Genesis 22 is a very different passage. There is also, as Bauckham points out, comparatively little “evidence for an Isaac typology in the NT.”<sup>45</sup> While it is possible that *Ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός μου οὗτός ἐστιν* echoes Genesis 22, the echo is probably faint at best.

The other option for *ὁ ἀγαπητός μου* is an allusion to Isaiah 42:1. There is good evidence for this.<sup>46</sup> “My beloved” in this understanding is a rendering of “my chosen one”: *בְּרִיךְ* in Hebrew, *ὁ ἐκλεκτός μου* in the LXX. That the reference here is to the Isaiah passage is strengthened by the fact that the next phrase of 2 Peter 1:17 is a clear allusion to the same verse. The plausibility of this view is also bolstered by Matthew 12:18, where the quotation of Isaiah 42:1–4 renders this same phrase with *ὁ ἀγαπητός μου*. This at the

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<sup>43</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 207–9.

<sup>44</sup> This summary is indebted to Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 207–9.

<sup>45</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 208.

<sup>46</sup> My summary is again indebted to Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 207–9.

very least demonstrates that *ὁ ἀγαπητός μου* can be an allusion to Isaiah 42:1. But it may demonstrate more, since it is only Matthew's Transfiguration account and 2 Peter's that allude to Isaiah 42:1 in the next clause.<sup>47</sup>

The uncontested allusion to Isaiah 42:1 comes in the next words of the heavenly voice: *εἰς ὃν ἐγὼ εὐδόκησα* in 2 Peter 1:17 (*ἐν ᾧ εὐδόκησα* in Matt 12:17). The reference derives from the Hebrew text (*בְּחִירִי רֵךְ הַצֶּדֶק נְפִשֵׁי*), not to the LXX which changes the referent to the nation of Israel.<sup>48</sup> Like Psalm 2, this reference is to Yahweh's king who will rule over the nations ("He will bring forth justice to the nations," v. 1). In contrast to Psalm 2 though, this passage emphasizes the king's gentleness and restorative qualities (Isa 42:2–4). Several verses later there is also a mention of "new things" coming (v. 8), which ties in with Peter's other Isaiah reference in 2 Peter 3:13. Once again, however, Peter is interested not so much in the original literary context of this reference as in the fact that (1) it spoke of the coming Messiah, and (2) its fulfillment was "confirmed" by a divine voice which he and his fellow apostles heard. In other words, it is important because it is *prophetic*.

**Allusion 3: Numbers 24:17 in 2 Peter 1:19.** Immediately following the Transfiguration recounting, Peter admonishes his readers to "pay attention" to the word of the biblical prophets whom the apostles have seen confirmed. Into this admonition he weaves an allusion to a rather surprising source from the Torah: a Balaam oracle.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Again, Peter's Transfiguration narrative is closest to Matthew's. See Miller, "Is There Independent Attestation for Transfiguration?"

<sup>48</sup> The line reads, *Ισραηλ ὁ ἐκλεκτός μου προσεδέξατο αὐτὸν ἢ ψυχὴ μου*.

<sup>49</sup> "Almost all commentators agree" on this allusion. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 226. Cf. D. A. Carson, "2 Peter," in Beale and Carson, *Commentary on NT Use of OT*, 1048; Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 305–6. Frey lists additional Jewish and Christian texts lending support, as well as referencing other German scholars. Caulley insightfully observes that this allusion as a *Balaam* reference is "often overlooked" by scholars. Caulley, "They Promise Them Freedom," 137. Ostmeier highlights the Balaam narrative as background of this allusion and its links to 2 Peter's other Balaam allusions. "Dass der Autor des zweiten Petrusbriefes den Gesamtkontext kannte und im Blick hatte, wird u. a. deutlich daraus, dass er im Folgekapitel eine andere, scheinbar nebensächliche Episode aus dem Balaamzyklus thematisiert (2,15 f.), mit der er ihn als unverständigen Propheten entlarvt." Ostmeier, *Die Briefe des Petrus und des Judas*,

The allusion consists of the words φωσφόρος ἀνατείλη in the second half of 2 Peter 1:19: ἕως οὗ ἡμέρα διαυγάσῃ καὶ φωσφόρος ἀνατείλῃ ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν. The imagery of bright light dawning is common in the eschatological vision of prophetic literature, especially Isaiah (e.g., Isa 9:2; 30:26; 42:6–7; 58:8; 60:1–3; 60:19–20; cf. Matt 4:16; Luke 1:72). But Balaam spoke specifically of a “star” that would “rise”: ἀνατελεῖ ἄστρον in the LXX (MT: כּוֹכַב אֲרִיז). And his reference was to a specific ruler, not a general state of well-being. The phrase in 2 Peter 1:19 likewise uses a “star” lexeme, and it occurs alongside allusions to Jesus as the king of the nations (Ps 2:7 and Isa 42:1). These links confirm the allusion specifically to Balaam’s oracle.

The only other NT pairing of a word for “star” and “rising” (ἀνατολή/ἀνατέλλω) is an extended allusion to Balaam’s star oracle in Matthew 2:2.<sup>50</sup> There the wise men saw the “star” at its “rising” (τὸν ἀστέρα ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ) which they knew announced the birth of the “king of the Jews.” There is another allusion to Numbers 24:17 in the NT, in Revelation 22:16.<sup>51</sup> This verse does not use ἀνατολή/ἀνατέλλω, however. It speaks of the “root and descendant of David” as the “bright, morning star” (ὁ ἀστὴρ ὁ λαμπρός, ὁ πρωϊνός). What is relevant for the 2 Peter allusion is the use of “morning star” language in relation to Balaam’s oracle; 2 Peter does the same, albeit with the word φωσφόρος.<sup>52</sup>

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122–23, 135. Neyrey questions the allusion, seeing the metaphor here as “decidedly Greek” instead. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 183–84.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. e.g., R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 62; Blomberg, “Matthew,” 5. Nicklas studies the question thoroughly; his conclusions may be too cautious, but he does find this allusion plausible. Tobias Nicklas, “Balaam and the Star of the Magi,” in *The Prestige of the Pagan Prophet Balaam in Judaism, Early Christianity and Islam*, ed. George H. van Kooten and Jacques T. A. G. M. van Ruiten (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 233–46.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. e.g., Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 226; Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 408–9; Jan Willem van Henten, “Balaam in Revelation 2:14,” in van Kooten and van Ruiten, *Prestige of Pagan Prophet Balaam*, 247–63. Beale observes how Rev 2:28 connects Ps 2:6–7 and Num 24:17, just as 2 Pet 1:17–19 does. G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 268–69.

<sup>52</sup> Frey notes that “in some passages the promise of the star in Num 24:17 is connected with the image of the sun from Mal 3:20, which could explain the vagueness of the metaphor in 2 Pet 1:17.” Frey,

There has been much debate over the meaning of Peter’s phrase ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν immediately following the allusion. This debate does not directly impact the biblical allusion, so it is not of utmost concern for this study. Scholars have increasingly recognized, however, that it is not in tension with Peter’s objective, eschatological Parousia emphasis.<sup>53</sup> Bauckham helpfully suggests that the specific aspect of the Parousia Peter is referring to involves the fulfillment of the prophetic revelation of God. When that day dawns, the hearts of believers will finally behold in full what the prophetic and apostolic word has revealed in part.<sup>54</sup> The phrase ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν then suggests that the apostles’ own experience at the Transfiguration will be realized for all Christians at the Transfiguration’s fulfillment.<sup>55</sup>

Balaam’s star oracle was interpreted messianically throughout Second Temple Judaism,<sup>56</sup> and possibly even earlier.<sup>57</sup> Bauckham observes that in Testament of Levi

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*Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 305–6.

<sup>53</sup> Contra older views which tended to hold the phrase to refer to an inner, personal, subjective experience; see e.g., Schelkle, *Die Petrusbriefe; der Judasbrief*, 200–201; Kelly, *Commentary on Peter and Jude*, 321–23. Cf. Mayor and Spicq. See discussion in Carson, “2 Peter,” 1048. But not all older commentators took the subjective-psychological view; see e.g., Bigg, *St. Peter and St. Jude*, 269. For the more recent consensus cf. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 226; Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 306; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 383–84; Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 209–10; Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 229; Caulley, “The Idea of ‘Inspiration’,” 140–41; Fuchs and Reymond, *La deuxième épître de saint Pierre; Jude*, 173; Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, Der 2. Petrusbrief*, 171; Paulsen, *Der zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief*, 121.

<sup>54</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 226.

<sup>55</sup> A lesser point of debate has been what word the phrase modifies. While the general scholarly consensus is that this phrase modifies ἀνατείλη, Callan has unconvincingly argued that it modifies γινώσκοντες in v. 20. See Terrance Callan, “A Note on 2 Peter 1:19-20,” *JBL* 125, no. 1 (2006): 143–50. See rebuttal in Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts, “Τουτο πρωτον γινώσκοντες ὅτι in 2 Peter 1:20 and Hellenistic Epistolary Convention,” *JBL* 127, no. 1 (2008): 165–71.

<sup>56</sup> See Testament of Levi 18:3; Testament of Judah 24:1; 1QM 11:6–7; 4QTestim 9–13; CD 7:18–20; and y. Ta’an 68d. This list taken from Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 226. Cf. Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 209; Thomas S. Caulley, “Balaam’s ‘Star’ Oracle in Jewish and Christian Prophetic Tradition,” *ResQ* 56, no. 1 (2014): 28–40; Carson, “2 Peter,” 1048.

<sup>57</sup> There is a clear allusion to Balaam’s third oracle in David’s last words (2 Sam 23:1–7). David there refers to himself as a prophet, declaring an “oracle” by the “Spirit of Yahweh.” His blending of God’s “everlasting covenant” (בְּרִית עוֹלָם) to him with the Balaam oracles may hint that David saw an ongoing/future-oriented connection between the two. For fuller studies of the history of interpretation of Balaam’s “star oracle,” see Caulley, “Balaam’s ‘Star’ Oracle”; Alberdina Houtman and Harry Sysling, “Balaam’s Fourth Oracle (Numbers 24:15–19) According to the Aramaic Targums,” in van Kooten and van Ruiten, *Prestige of Pagan Prophet Balaam*, 189–212; Stefan Beyerle, “‘A Star Shall Come out of Jacob’: A



18:3–4 and Testament of Judah 24:1, “the two images of the star and the sunrise (with reference to Mal 4:2) are closely associated.”<sup>58</sup> Hence the interpretation in 2 Peter 1:19 and Revelation 22:16 “of the star as the *morning* star.”<sup>59</sup> As noted above, the star oracle is interpreted with respect to Jesus’ birth in Matthew 2. As 2 Peter bears considerable affinities to Matthew’s Gospel, Peter would likely have been familiar with this appropriation. He would almost certainly not have seen a tension between Matthew’s application and his own, given how (1) such prophecies often evoke or symbolize the entirety of their fulfillments, which may occur in stages, and (2) Peter’s own use of the Transfiguration demonstrates his flexibility in applying prophetic imagery. For him, the Transfiguration is itself a proleptic vision of Jesus’ future reign, though it is also a fulfillment of e.g., Psalm 2:7.

The star oracle itself contains several interesting features. First, it is spoken by a pagan magician/soothsayer/seer, not by an Israelite prophet. Even worse, it is spoken by an employee of Israel’s enemy (not e.g., a Melchizedek figure). Second, the speaker is never set on Israel’s welfare, and later advises Moab on how to bring them down. Third, the oracle ties in with Jacob’s prophecy concerning Judah’s royal line. This aligns the oracle with later Davidic-messianic texts such as Psalm 2 and Isaiah 42. (Its reception by David in 2 Sam 23 assists as well.) It also ties in with the Abrahamic promises (Gen 12), aligning it with Israel’s *Heilsgeschichte*. Fourth, and very close to the previous, the oracle speaks of a king of Israel who will rule and judge not only Israel but also the nations.

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Critical Examination of the Balaam Oracle in the Context of Jewish Revolts in Roman Times,” in van Kooten and van Ruiten, *Prestige of Pagan Prophet Balaam*, 163–88. Schnittjer demonstrates that Balaam’s oracles are part of a “network” of Messianic expectation in the OT stemming from Judah’s blessing in Genesis. Gary E. Schnittjer, “The Blessing of Judah as Generative Expectation,” *BibSac* 177, no. 705 (2020): 15–39.

<sup>58</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 226.

<sup>59</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 226. Bauckham also notes that the term *φωσφόρος* “was used of Greek divinities and kings.”

Fifth, Balaam sees the fulfillment of his oracle “not now” but rather far off. Peter likewise sees Jesus’ coming potentially further out than some thought plausible.

For the purposes of this dissertation, the most fascinating and important question is why Peter invokes this passage in his letter. Of course, the passage is a well-known Messianic prophecy, likely often delinked from the Balaam story. But the image of Balaam plays a key role in Peter’s characterization of the false teachers in chapter 2.<sup>60</sup> In 2 Peter, Balaam is not just a “false prophet” but something akin in one sense to an “apostate prophet.”<sup>61</sup> He is one who knew “the way of righteousness” (2:21) and caught a prophetic glimpse of God’s glory (Num 24:2–4), but who then turned back to his “vomit” (2 Pet 2:22) for money (v. 15). This “Spirit-borne” prophecy about the coming of Jesus from Balaam subtly serves to set up the “prophet’s” apostasy: “Insinuated in the text of 2 Peter is the singular phenomenon of the downfall of a prophet who became ethically divorced from the message he bore.”<sup>62</sup> The allusion is not terribly strong, but for those with eyes to see it provides a window into Peter’s use of Balaam to characterize the false teachers.

### **“But False Prophets Also Arose” (2 Pet 2:1)**

Peter and his fellow apostles stand in the line of Israel’s true prophets, men and women who truly heard from God. But Israel’s prophets always had dark counterparts—“false prophets”—and their line also continues in Peter’s contemporary opponents:

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<sup>60</sup> Thus, see the helpful explanation by Ted Fornberg, “Balaam and 2 Peter 2:15: ‘They Have Followed in the Steps of Balaam’ (Jude 11),” in van Kooten and van Ruiten, *Prestige of Pagan Prophet Balaam*, 273–74.

<sup>61</sup> There is a similar sentiment expressed in *b. Sanhedrin*: “At first he was a prophet, but in the end, a mere soothsayer.” Quoted in Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 256. However, this may not be the best term, because (as has been and will be seen) Balaam’s heart was never fully aligned with Yahweh’s will. Numbers portrays him as motivated by greed from the very beginning, and God never seems to have been impressed with him.

<sup>62</sup> J. Daryl Charles, “On Angels and Asses: The Moral Paradigm in 2 Peter 2,” *Proceedings* 21 (2001): 7.

Ἐγένοντο δὲ καὶ ψευδοπροφήται ἐν τῷ λαῷ, ὡς καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν ἔσονται ψευδοδιδάσκαλοι (2 Pet 2:1).<sup>63</sup> While 2 Peter 2:1 is not an allusion to a specific OT passage, it evokes a line of warnings and examples beginning in Deuteronomy and ending (for Peter) with Jesus. This section briefly recaps Deuteronomy 13 and 18 and its developments, and Jesus' warnings in Matthew. Jeremiah, the most important other true versus false prophecy background, is discussed in its own section later.<sup>64</sup>

### **Deuteronomy 13 and 18 and Developments**

The fountainhead of “false prophet” material in the OT occurs in Deuteronomy 13:1–5 and 18:15–22.<sup>65</sup> In Deuteronomy 13:1–5, Moses warns of a certain type of “prophet or a dreamer” who may arise among the people (like 2 Pet 2:1). This individual’s “sign or wonder” actually comes to pass, but they call Israel away from Yahweh.<sup>66</sup> Though their words come true, they are *still* considered a false prophet who

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<sup>63</sup> Cf. Earl J. Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2013), 347–48, 350.

<sup>64</sup> The allusion to Isa 52:5 in 2 Pet 2:2, where “the way of truth” is “blasphemed” by the false teachers, was discussed in the previous chapter of this dissertation. Cf. 2 Pet 3:16 where Peter accuses the false teachers of “twisting” the Scriptures.

<sup>65</sup> This recognition could be taken either (or both) of two ways: (1) For those holding to an early date for Deuteronomy, its true vs. false prophets material is the *historical* fountainhead. (2) Regardless of one’s opinion concerning the book’s dating, it is the *canonical* “fountainhead.” Lundbom notes that these two passages are “the only legal passages in the OT dealing with prophets and prophecy. Jack R. Lundbom, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 451. For a side-by-side comparison of the two passages, see Lundbom, *Deuteronomy*, 555. Nelson notes that Deut 13:1 is verbally linked to 18:15 and 22: “a prophet ‘arises’ and the confirmation ‘comes true.’” Richard D. Nelson, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 171. I am using English numbering.

Schmidt studies the *Prophetengesetz* of Deut 18:9–22 alongside Jeremiah; he concludes that Jeremiah is chronologically prior, and that Deut 18 responds to his experience. W. H. Schmidt, “Das Prophetengesetz Dtn 18,9-22 im Kontext erzählender Literatur,” in *Deuteronomy and Deuteronomic literature: festschrift C.H.W. Brekelmans*, ed. M. Vervenne and J. Lust, BETL 133 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1997), 61–69.

<sup>66</sup> Christensen writes that this law (Deut 13:1–5 [Eng]) “raises the issue of true and false prophecy, which becomes a significant theme in both the Former Prophets and the Latter Prophets.” He believes that this “law” “was used to shape” the stories of Aaron and the golden calf in Exod 32 as well as the story of Balaam in Num 22. Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1:1–21:9*, 2nd ed., WBC, vol. 6a (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 269–70.

must be put to death. Being a false prophet can be a matter of making false predictions, but most fundamentally it is a matter of teaching “rebellion against Yahweh.”<sup>67</sup> In Deuteronomy 18:15–22, false prophets are contrasted with the promised “prophet like Moses.” The true prophet speaks the words that Yahweh puts into his mouth, and people must listen to him. The false prophet “presumes to speak a word” in Yahweh’s name that he has “not commanded him to speak” (or he speaks in the name of other gods).<sup>68</sup> Such a prophet must be killed, and their words falsely attributed to Yahweh will not come true.

This pair of texts sets up the OT’s complex (though not, contra some scholars, problematic) treatment of true versus false prophets.<sup>69</sup> True prophets are those (1) who hear directly from Yahweh (thus their words always come to pass), and (2) who call people to follow the covenant. False prophets are defined as follows: They may prophesy by another god/spirit, or by Yahweh. If the former, Yahweh may permit their words to come to pass as a “test” of his people’s loyalty (13:3). If the latter, they have not truly heard from Yahweh, so their words will not come to pass (18:22). In either case, they always pull people away from the covenant (explicitly in 13, implicitly in 18). Both the fulfillment and ethical components are crucial to discerning false prophets.<sup>70</sup> These are

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<sup>67</sup> In Christensen’s words, “Signs alone are meaningless if the intent of the ‘prophet’ is to lead the people astray. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1:1–21:9*, 272. Cf. Lundbom, *Deuteronomy*, 451; Eugene H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, NAC (Nashville: B&H, 1994), 231.

<sup>68</sup> “The prophets of Baal and Asherah were executed on the orders of Elijah, Elisha,” and King Jehu “to carry out the law of the prophets in” Deut 18:20. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1:1–21:9*, 410. Lundbom highlights the accounts in Jeremiah. Lundbom, *Deuteronomy*, 559–60.

<sup>69</sup> See discussion in J. Todd Hibbard, “True and False Prophecy: Jeremiah’s Revision of Deuteronomy,” *JSOT* 35, no. 3 (2011): 339–58; Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 273–74; Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 262–63. Contra e.g., R. P. Carroll, “A Non-Cogent Argument in Jeremiah’s Oracles against the Prophets,” *ST* 30, no. 1 (1976): 43–51; Marvin A. Sweeney, *Form and Intertextuality in Prophetic and Apocalyptic Literature* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010), 78–93. Christensen refers to the direction in Deut 18 as “puzzling,” and goes on to highlight Jonah as a fascinating test case of the complex nature of discerning true vs. false prophets. Christensen, *1:1–21:9*, 410–13. Cf. Lundbom, *Deuteronomy*, 561; Gerhard von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, trans. Dorothea Barton, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966), 125.

<sup>70</sup> Bakon lists five characteristics which biblical prophets shared (these clearly fit 2 Peter’s understanding): (1) Religious and moral conscience of Israel; (2) In the counsel of Yahweh; (3) Disaster would strike, avoidable through repentance; (4) Future predictions; (5) Vision of glorious future, day of reckoning. Shimon Bakon, “True and False Prophets,” *JBQ* 39, no. 3 (2011): 152–58. Cf. Bauckham’s

still the salient points in Peter’s understanding of true and false prophets; hence his emphasis on the Transfiguration confirming prophecy, and on the ethical waywardness of the false teachers.<sup>71</sup>

Examples of both types of false prophets (prophets of false gods and false Yahweh prophets) could be discussed at length, but a few suffice as background to 2 Peter 2:1. The 450 prophets of Ba’al (and 400 prophets of Asherah) in 1 Kings 18 are a classic example of the first type.<sup>72</sup> However, Peter’s main focus—in line with later OT and Second Temple texts—is likely false *Yahweh* prophets. It is this type that dominates 4Q339, which lists “the false prophets who arise in Israel” (cf. 2 Pet 2:1).<sup>73</sup> The list includes seven (or eight) names: Balaam, the “old prophet” from Bethel, Zedekiah (nemesis to Micaiah), and four from Jeremiah.<sup>74</sup> Balaam *did* hear from God, but he is a

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three characteristics in Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 238.

<sup>71</sup> Rightly, on the latter, Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, 2 Peter*, 351.

<sup>72</sup> Cogan observes, “This is the only biblical acknowledgment of prophecy through non-Israelite gods; Deut 13:2–6 rules against prophecy in the name of foreign gods but is there explained as a test of Israel under YHWH’s control.” Mordechai Cogan, *1 Kings*, AB, vol. 10 (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 439. The 450 prophets practiced their witchcraft, divination, etc., explicitly as practitioners of the Ba’al cult. While they were likely effective at times and thus held sway over the people, their main effect according to Elijah was that they led the people away from Yahweh. The showdown at Carmel involved Elijah truly hearing from Yahweh and Yahweh hearing him, but the entire point was to turn the people’s hearts back towards following Yahweh (1 Kgs 18:37). House notes the possible connection between the Ba’al prophets’ executions with the prescribed penalty in Deut 13:1–11. Paul R. House, *1, 2 Kings*, NAC, vol. 8 (Nashville: B&H, 1995), 220.

<sup>73</sup> A few other Qumran texts mention true vs. false prophets: The Temple Scroll (11QT<sup>a</sup> 54:8–18) and Moses Apocryphon (4Q375) simply rework the material from Deut 13/18. 1QH 12 expresses similar language in a prayer. For discussion of prophets in the DSS, see Alex P. Jassen, “The Prophets in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Prophets*, ed. Carolyn J. Sharp (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 367; Kristin De Troyer, Armin Lange, and Lucas L. Schulte, eds., *Prophecy after the Prophets? The Contribution of the Dead Sea Scrolls to the Understanding of Biblical and Extra-Biblical Prophecy*, CBET 52 (Leuven: Peeters, 2009). Cf. Michael Floyd and Robert D. Haak, eds., *Prophecy, Prophecy, and Prophetic Texts in Second Temple Judaism* (London: A & C Black, 2006).

<sup>74</sup> There has been debate over the name in line 9 of the fragment. The DJD volume and many scholars reconstruct the text as, “[the prophet from Gib]eon” (DJD incorrectly assumes Aramaic: נביאה די מן גב[עון]. Golan righty reconstructs in Hebrew: [הנביא אשר מגב]). Lange (in accord with Qimron and Rofé’s first reconstruction) opts for a reference to John Hyrcanus I: [יורהנן בן שמ]עון “[and John son of Sim]on.” This is mainly because the DJD’s reconstruction causes the last name to span two lines, unlike the other names. Armin Lange, “‘The False Prophets Who Arose against Our God’ (4Q339 1),” in *Aramaica Qumranica*, STDJ 94 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 206–7. If line 9 did refer to John Hyrcanus, it would bring the line of OT false prophets into the present (technically recent past), just like 2 Pet 2:1. Lange writes, “By naming John Hyrcanus I at the end of a list of false prophets, the text argues that the Hasmonean ruler is of the same quality as the false prophets listed before” (Lange, 212). However, this reading is almost certainly to be rejected. See defense of the two-line Hananiah reading by Shira J. Golani, “New Light and Some

false prophet because he advised Israel’s seduction. The old prophet (1 Kgs 13:11–32) is (in one sense)<sup>75</sup> a false prophet because he lies about hearing from heaven, and he leads the young prophet to disobey God’s instruction.<sup>76</sup> Note that (just like 2 Peter’s portrayal of Balaam) the old prophet *does* hear from God in the end, but he is still a dangerous man. Van Winkle argues that “obedience to the commandment of Yahweh” is the crucial criterion advanced in this narrative for discerning false prophecy.<sup>77</sup> Zedekiah prophesied deliverance in Yahweh’s name, but he was deceived by a lying spirit from Yahweh himself as judgment on Israel (1 Kgs 22:22–23)!<sup>78</sup> The false prophets in Jeremiah prophesied by Yahweh, but they did not hear from God and they led Israel away from God’s will for them. Hananiah, for example, was struck down by Yahweh, because (1) he did not actually hear from Yahweh, and (2) he uttered “rebellion against Yahweh” (vv. 15–16).<sup>79</sup>

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Reflections on the List of False Prophets (4Q339),” *RevQ* 28, no. 2 (2016): 257–65.

<sup>75</sup> The old prophet is a “false prophet” in one sense, but of course in another sense he is a true prophet—his prediction of the “man of God’s” death by lion was truly from God. See Jerome T. Walsh, *I Kings*, Berit Olam (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996), 183–86.

<sup>76</sup> See House, *I, 2 Kings*, 189–90. DeVries notes that “the complexities” of this narrative “are so formidable that . . . even biblical specialists do not agree on many essential points.” Simon J. DeVries, *I Kings*, 2nd ed., WBC, vol. 12 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003), 172. Cf. the older study of this narrative emphasizing true vs. false prophecy (though it incorrectly identifies the account as a “pre-Deuteronomiac,” Bethelite “legend” in Thomas B. Dozeman, “The Way of the Man of God from Judah: True and False Prophecy in the Pre-Deuteronomiac Legend of 1 Kings 13,” *CBQ* 44 (1982): 379–93.

<sup>77</sup> D. W. Van Winkle, “1 Kings XIII: True and False Prophecy,” *VT* 39 (1989): 31–42.

<sup>78</sup> See further discussion in House, *I, 2 Kings*, 235–38; Cogan, *I Kings*, 497–98; Walsh, *I Kings*, 344–52. Cf. Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 217–18. House surveys the “great deal of scholarly discussion” generated by the Micaiah account (1 Kgs 22). House, *I, 2 Kings*, 237. Sweeney’s claims that this and similar passages suggest that “YHWH has a treacherous side” and that the passage “challenges the prevailing view that YHWH’s words are true” miss the nuances of the pericope. Marvin A. Sweeney, *I and II Kings*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 260. Cf. Walsh, *I Kings*, 352–54. See the helpful response in House, *I, 2 Kings*, 237–38.

<sup>79</sup> Jeremiah observed that Hananiah’s prophecy was quite a bit rosier than the norm for true prophets (28:8), and that it would be validated only if it came to pass (v. 9). Hananiah’s prophecy of a quick end of Babylonian captivity does not on its face seem ethically dangerous. But according to Jeremiah, it is exactly that. This is because it goes against Yahweh’s expressed will for Judah: to submit to the yoke of Babylon (Jer 27), humbly awaiting Yahweh’s timing for restoration (Jer 27:22). Jeremiah is discussed in detail later in this chapter.

Peter highlights both truly hearing from God as well as leading people to obedience, but his emphasis for false prophets is on the latter.<sup>80</sup> Peter’s concern in 2:1 and what follows is that false teachers would arise who—just like the “false prophets” who “arose among” Israel—would lead God’s people to destruction.<sup>81</sup>

### **Jesus on False Prophets**

Another key component to the background of 2 Peter 2:1 is the influence of Jesus’ warnings concerning false prophets. In fact, there is likely an allusion to Jesus’ words in this verse. Some scholars have stumbled over Peter’s use of the future tense: “There will be false teachers” (ἔσονται ψευδοδιδάσκαλοι).<sup>82</sup> But Peter is likely evoking Jesus’ future-tense warnings: πολλοὶ ψευδοπροφήται ἐγερθήσονται (Matt 24:11).<sup>83</sup>

Particularly relevant here are Matthew 7:15–23 and 24:11–12, 24 (cf. Luke 6:22–23, 26; Matt 5:12).<sup>84</sup> Both are passages that deeply impact 2 Peter. Matthew 7:15–27 was discussed in the previous chapter of this dissertation; it was noted how Jesus interweaves “false prophets” warnings with a wisdom/“two ways” setting. The false prophets would deceive, and as bad trees they would someday be “thrown into the fire.”

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<sup>80</sup> Charles observes that Peter’s use of Balaam emphasizes how the false prophet leads people to disobedience. Charles, “On Angels and Asses,” 6–8.

<sup>81</sup> See the section in chap. 3 of this dissertation on Peter’s allusion to Isa 52:5.

<sup>82</sup> Some see the future tense as further evidence of the letter’s pseudonymity. See e.g., Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 239; Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 314. The problem with this view, as Moo points out, is that the letter elsewhere treats the false teachers as a present reality (see 2:10–22 and 3:4–13 where present and aorist are used). Douglas J. Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 1996), 91. The future tense could be seen as merely “rhetorical” (e.g., Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 218). But this is weak and explains little.

<sup>83</sup> Rightly Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 392; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 91–92. Justin explicitly links 2 Pet 2:1 with Jesus’ warnings: “Just as there were false prophets contemporaneous with your holy prophets, so are there now many false teachers amongst us, of whom our Lord forewarned us to beware.” Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 82.1 (*ANF* 1:641). See discussion in Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 237; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 307.

<sup>84</sup> Atkins makes a fascinating case for Deut 18 and its later developments as background for John 5. J. D. Atkins, “The Trial of the People and the Prophet: John 5:30–47 and the True and False Prophet Traditions,” *CBQ* 75, no. 2 (2013): 279–96.

Their speech and works will be impressive, but they will be uncovered as “lawless.” Part of the “wise man’s” responsibility is to recognize and reject the coming “false prophets” that pull away from Jesus’ teaching.

Matthew 24 records Jesus’ Olivet Discourse concerning the coming woes and the eventual return of the Son of Man.<sup>85</sup> One of the most dangerous woes is the rise of false prophets (along with false messiahs). These false prophets will lead many astray and cause many to “stumble.” It seems (by the direct juxtaposition and by Matt 7:22–23) that they will be leading the push toward “lawlessness” which will cause people’s love to grow cold. They may perform miraculous signs and wonders, but Jesus warns his hearers not to go astray. It is no accident that Jesus’ warnings concerning false prophets go hand in hand with his exhortations concerning the end of the age. As in 2 Peter, the false prophets here are those who refuse to *wait* with faithfulness, hope, and love. They promise premature and false deliverances (vv. 23–26), and encourage lifestyles of false, deceptive freedom (vv. 12–13). Jesus exhorts his hearers to wait faithfully and patiently for his unexpected (delayed?) return—not in gluttony, drunkenness, and mistreatment (vv. 48–51). Peter characterizes the false teachers in the same terms (gluttony, drunkenness, and oppression) in 2:13–19. Peter also follows Jesus in referring to the flood narrative in this context (Matt 24:37–39; 2 Pet 3:4–6), and in referring to the event as a “thief” (Matt 24:43; 2 Pet 3:10).<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> France notes that this passage may in turn “be based” on Deut 13:1–13. R. T. France, *Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1985), 345.

<sup>86</sup> It is widely held that Jesus is behind Peter’s “thief” reference. E.g., Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 305–6; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 458–59; Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 408; Nicholas R. Wense, “Second Temple Jewish Literary Traditions in 2 Peter,” *CBQ* 78, no. 1 (2016): 124. Frey also acknowledges Jesus’ use of flood language to describe the judgment in commenting on 2 Pet 3:4–6. Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 392.



In 2 Peter 2:1, Peter connects Jesus' warnings of coming false prophets with the false prophets in prior biblical history. He once again sees his day as a reiteration of the same play, with new actors playing familiar roles.<sup>87</sup>

### **Balaam the False Prophet**

Balaam is an important figure in 2 Peter. Jude's passing mention of Balaam (v. 11) only serves to emphasize the character's much more sustained treatment and central location in 2 Peter.<sup>88</sup> As already stated, Balaam in 2 Peter is the "apostate" prophet; he is one who did hear from God and who saw the truth, but who for love of greed and lawlessness turned his back on the right way. This section studies the OT story, Second Temple/NT uses, and Peter's appropriation to modern-day "Balaams."<sup>89</sup>

### **OT Background of Balaam Story**

The so-called "Book of Balaam" spans Numbers 22–24; there is a second brief mention in chapter 31 which gets emphasized in later Jewish and Christian reception.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Goppelt comments, "Of course, the reason for comparing old false prophets and new false teachers is not that this forms an ingenious parallel, but that the author sees the former as the types and the latter as the fulfillment—fulfillment in a typological sense." Leonhard Goppelt, *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 158–59. Goppelt is right, though I suggest there is something more (though *not* less) than this at work. The new false teachers are typologically related, but they are also inhabitants of a shared—true—story world.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Ostmeier, *Die Briefe des Petrus und des Judas*, 130–31.

<sup>89</sup> There is extensive literature on Balaam, with renewed interest in the years following the 1967 Tell Deir 'Alla inscription find. The most recent monograph thoroughly studying Balaam is Robker, who approaches the study from a historical-critical, literary, and redaction-historical perspective. Jonathan M. Robker, *Balaam in Text and Tradition* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019). An important recent collection of essays tracing the reception history of Balaam in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam is Ed Noort, "Balaam the Villain: The History of Reception of the Balaam Narrative in the Pentateuch and the Former Prophets," in van Kooten and van Ruiten, *Prestige of Pagan Prophet Balaam*, 3–23. Older works include John T. Greene, *Balaam and His Interpreters: A Hermeneutical History of the Balaam Traditions*, BJS 244 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992); Michael S. Moore, *The Balaam Traditions: Their Character and Development*, SBL Dissertation 113 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990). Greene takes a thoroughly historical-critical approach and reaches some idiosyncratic conclusions. Moore focuses on ancient Near East backgrounds to Balaam, and traces his complex "roles" which include e.g., seer and exorcist. Relevant articles (which are numerous) are referenced throughout the following sections. On the Tell Deir 'Alla inscription, see e.g., Robker, *Balaam in Text and Tradition*, 271–305; Émile Puech, "Bala'am and Deir 'Alla," in van Kooten and van Ruiten, *Prestige of Pagan Prophet Balaam*, 25–48.

<sup>90</sup> The history of the biblical Balaam traditions is debated, with many critical scholars seeing an ideologically motivated development of the traditions shifting from positive to negative. See e.g., John

Numbers 22–24 tells the story of Balaam being called by the king of Moab to curse Israel. After some back-and-forth, Balaam goes but speaks only prophetic blessings over Israel.<sup>91</sup> Four points relevant to 2 Peter’s use become evident from Numbers 22–24:

(1) Balaam is a pagan diviner whom God temporarily seconds as his prophet. Balak hires Balaam to use his connections to the divine realm to pronounce potent curses, not to speak God’s words foretelling blessings and judgments. God, however, hijacked Balaam’s role.<sup>92</sup> When God finally approved Balaam’s trip, he did so with the express stipulation that Balaam would only speak his words (22:20, 35). In chapters 23–24, Balaam delivers four oracles in which he blesses Israel, and even foretells the coming of a “star” who would rule both God’s people and the surrounding nations. As commentators observe, the third oracle (and the fourth, whence is the “star oracle”) does not even begin with Balaam’s usual preparatory divination rituals. Instead, the Spirit of God rushes upon him and he suddenly beholds an inspired vision (strikingly similar to 2 Pet 1:21).<sup>93</sup>

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Van Seters, “From Faithful Prophet to Villain: Observations on the Tradition History of the Balaam Story,” in *A Biblical Itinerary: In Search of Method, Form, and Content: Essays in Honor of George W. Coats*, ed. Eugene E. Carpenter, JSOTSup 240 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 126–32; Noort, “Balaam the Villain”; Greene, *Balaam and His Interpreters*. Such assumptions are tenuous at best, and they rely on hypothetical (and problematic) assumptions about the history of the Tanakh. See Moore’s harsh critique of Greene, for example: Michael S. Moore, review of *Balaam and His Interpreters*, by John T. Greene, *CBQ* 55, no. 4 (1993): 759–61. It is undeniable that mentions of Balaam post the initial “Book of Balaam” are more explicitly negative; but this does not imply a sharp, ideologically driven evolution. Biblical narratives often exhibit what Robert Alter famously calls “the art of reticence,” characterizing people and events through subtle literary features instead of direct pronouncements. Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, rev. ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 143–62. Num 22–24 features the same phenomenon. See Gordon J. Wenham, *Numbers*, TOTC, vol. 4 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1981), 188–89. The debate is not crucial to the purposes of this study, since Peter receives the traditions in their final form and reads the text with then-current assumptions. Suffice it to say that Peter’s reading may not be as far from the original account as some suggest.

<sup>91</sup> I recognize that many view Num 22–24 (excluding the she-ass scene, which is seen as separate) as portraying Balaam “unequivocally positively.” See e.g., Robker, *Balaam in Text and Tradition*, 5. Cf. George W. Coats, “Balaam: Sinner or Saint?,” *BR* 18 (1973): 22; Philip J. Budd, *Numbers*, WBC, vol. 5 (Waco, TX: Word, 1984), 263–64. I think this is overstated; the presentation is ambiguous at best. The focus of the text is not on Balaam’s character but on his oracles. Rightly Wenham, *Numbers*, 189–90.

<sup>92</sup> This is the point of the Deut 23:4–6 passage. Despite the puzzling way it is often misread, it is *not* a different take on the Balaam narrative itself. Contra e.g., Noort, “Balaam the Villain,” 12–13; David D. Frankel, “The Deuteronomical Portrayal of Balaam,” *VT* 46, no. 1 (1996): 30–42; Van Seters, “From Faithful Prophet to Villain”; Budd, *Numbers*, 272–73.

<sup>93</sup> See e.g., Wenham, *Numbers*, 198–99; Timothy R. Ashley, *The Book of Numbers*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 487; C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *The Pentateuch*, trans. James Martin,

(2) Balaam was in no way concerned with the people of Israel; he was in principle perfectly willing to curse them.<sup>94</sup> Reading the oracles, one would be forgiven for thinking that Balaam was on Israel's side. But like the Narnian dwarves in *The Last Battle*, Balaam was on what he thought was his own side. His singular concern was to avoid facing divine retribution for offending one of the gods, and probably to keep his five-star reputation as an effective diviner. When called by Balak, he was more than willing to go *provided* Israel's god did not forbid the venture. He presumably had heard stories of Yahweh's exploits and was unwilling to cross him (cf. Num 22:1–3; Josh 2:10–11).<sup>95</sup> After being expressly forbidden by God, he asks *again* if he can curse Israel.<sup>96</sup> While he follows God's stipulations carefully, his actions demonstrate that those stipulations alone are what hold him back. If not for the fear of failure and/or retribution, he would gladly have plied his trade against Israel.

(3) Balaam was allured by the incentives offered by Balak: specifically, reward and reputation.<sup>97</sup> Balak at first sent the “fee for divination.” The second group offered him “great honor” and essentially a blank check (22:17). Balaam's mental picture of this was the king's “house full of silver and gold” (v. 18). This was apparently the highest reward he could think of. While God approved Balaam's trip (at the second request), his “anger was kindled because” Balaam went (22:22).<sup>98</sup> The seemingly paradoxical reaction

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vol. 3, *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1847), 186–88.

<sup>94</sup> Balaam is an “amoral professional sorcerer who will curse or bless anyone for the right fee.” Shubert Spero, “Moses Wrote His Book and the Portion of Balaam’: (TB Bava Batra 14b),” *JBQ* 41, no. 3 (2013): 195–96. Anisfeld is correct that neither did he hate Israel (contra Rabbinic tradition). Moshe Anisfeld, “The Psychology of Balaam,” *JBQ* 41, no. 4 (2013): 229. Anisfeld posits avarice and grandiosity as Balaam's motivating traits.

<sup>95</sup> In Josh 2:10–11, Rahab acknowledges her people's awareness of Yahweh's drying up the Red Sea *and* of his giving Israel victory over Sihon and Og. The latter, told in Num 21:21–35, is precisely what terrified Balak (Num 22:1–4).

<sup>96</sup> This account comes shortly after Moses' sin of striking the rock, which doomed him to death in the wilderness. Readers are meant to know that ambivalence towards God's commands can be fatal.

<sup>97</sup> To adapt Anisfeld, “The Psychology of Balaam.”

<sup>98</sup> This is a difficult and seemingly contradictory action on God's part. As scholars point out, it

hints that Balaam was knowingly pushing for something prohibited, and prompts the reader to search for what. The answer of the narrative is that Balaam was allured by Balak's financial and honor incentives—though he did resist them.<sup>99</sup>

(4) Balaam is quickly stopped in his tracks by a dramatic role reversal. The talking donkey scene is one of the most bizarre in all of biblical literature, but it represents a terrifying direct intervention by God to stop Balaam's "reckless" behavior. The great "seer" is blind to the angel, and the soothsayer is thwarted by a talking beast.<sup>100</sup> It is an ominous threat. The same God who could make a seer blind and a donkey talk could make the diviner mute or mad (or both) if he refused to heed this warning.<sup>101</sup>

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echoes the similar incident between God and Moses in Exod 4:24–26. Embry points out shared verbal and structural features of the two accounts (e.g., the use of רגל in both). Bradley Embry, "The Endangerment of Moses: Towards a New Reading of Exodus 4:24–26," *VT* 60, no. 2 (2010): 177–96. See also Amos Frisch, "The Story of Balaam's She-Ass (Numbers 22:21–35): A New Literary Insight," *HS* 56 (2015): 106; Hans Ausloos, "On an Obedient Prophet and a Fickle God: The Narrative of Balaam in Num 22–24," *OTE* 20, no. 1 (2007): 98–100. But contra Ausloos, it is not a completely arbitrary or "fickle" response on God's part. It is a complex response to a complex situation. (1) God did not want Balaam to go, and Balaam knew that. (2) Balaam's desire to go led him to ask *again*, so God agreed with the intent to hijack the entire event. (3) God was still angry about Balaam's desire. (4) God wanted to show Balaam he was angry and could kill him for his "recklessness," in order to underscore the seriousness of not going beyond God's word with Balak. (5) God's mercy was extended so that Balaam could carry out God's intended reversal of Balak's purpose.

<sup>99</sup> At least, at this point. It is possible that these incentives led him to advise Moab/Midian to seduce the Israelite men.

<sup>100</sup> See Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 132. Budd is correct that the donkey story is originally "satirical," but wrong that in the alleged Yahwist's hands the story portrays Balaam "as receiving divine revelation and taking the role of the true penitent (vv. 31–34) as well as receiving a true commission (v. 35). Budd, *Numbers*, 264.

<sup>101</sup> Num 22–24 is full of irony and role reversals, as well as allusions to previous Pentateuchal texts. These include (but are not limited to) the following. Balak's concern about a people "too mighty" (22:5–6) and Balaam's "I have sinned" (22:34) echo Pharaoh (Exod 1:9–10; 9:27; and 10:16, respectively); they should have thought harder about how that story ended. God once again "plundered" Israel's enemies by having them bless his people. On these allusions cf. Ausloos, "Obedient Prophet and Fickle God," 85; Frisch, "Story of Balaam's She-Ass," 105. Balak thinks that blessing and curse come from Balaam (22:6), but they actually come from Balak's enemies—Abraham's family (24:9; Gen 12:3). As in Eden, an animal speaks (Gen 3:1–7); but this time she is the righteous character used by God to open Balaam's eyes to the fact that he is *not* like God, and to keep him from death (22:28–33). On the Eden allusions cf. George W. Savran, "Beastly Speech: Intertextuality, Balaam's Ass and the Garden of Eden," *JSOT* 19, no. 64 (1994): 33–55. On role reversals in the she-ass scene, see Clinton J. Moyer, "Who Is the Prophet, and Who the Ass? Role-Reversing Interludes and the Unity of the Balaam Narrative (Numbers 22–24)," *JSOT* 37, no. 2 (2012): 167–83; Frisch, "Story of Balaam's She-Ass." Ausloos also point out parallels between donkey scene and Gen 22. Ausloos, "Obedient Prophet and Fickle God," 88–89.

Numbers 25 tells of Israel falling into sin and judgment when they “began to whore with the daughters of Moab.”<sup>102</sup> The Moabite/Midianite women led the Israelites not only into sexual immorality but also into idolatry. Soon the people were “yoked” to the Baal of Peor.<sup>103</sup> This brought about a blow which Balaam’s words were unable to do. Yahweh’s plague killed 24,000 people. In Numbers 31, Moses holds Balaam responsible for the enticement.<sup>104</sup> Israel had just defeated Midian in battle, and killed Balaam who apparently had not gone far enough when he “went off” in Numbers 24:25. When Moses realized that the Midianite women had been allowed to live, he was furious: “Behold, these, on Balaam’s advice, caused the people of Israel to act treacherously against the Lord in the incident of Peor, and so the plague came among the congregation of the Lord” (31:16 ESV). Balaam is blamed for planning a scheme whereby the Moabite/Midianite women would entice the Israelite men, and pull them in both to forbidden sexual unions and—more fatally—to idolatry. This would in turn bring about Yahweh’s judgment on them, and King Balak would come as close as ever to fulfilling his original wish.

This second episode highlights four points which become very important in the reception history of Balaam, including for 2 Peter: (1) It confirms Balaam’s complete lack of actual regard for God’s people and his willingness to work against them. (2) It establishes Balaam’s use of “enticement” instead of direct cursing. (3) It highlights the role of sex, licentiousness, and idolatry in bringing judgment on God’s people. (4) It recounts Balaam’s swift judgment.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Once again, I am assuming (as did Peter) the originality of this account. For a possible historical reconstruction, see Spero, “Moses Wrote His Book.”

<sup>103</sup> The narrative’s overall parallelism is striking. Balak ben Zippor led the men of Moab and Midian to bring Balaam ben Beor to Israel for cursing—which failed. Balaam ben Beor then led the women of Moab and Midian to bring Israel to Baal of Peor for cursing—which succeeded.

<sup>104</sup> The shifts between Moabites and Midianites do not imply a later interpolation on an earlier story. Moab and Midian have been together from the beginning of the Balaam narrative (22:3–5, 7) and they appear together in 25:1–9. See Wenham, *Numbers*, 208.

<sup>105</sup> Elsewhere in the OT Balaam is only mentioned in passing. Josh 13:22 mentions Balaam as “the one who practiced divination” who was killed with the Midianites. In Deut 23:4–5 and Jer 24:9–10, he

## Jewish and NT Reception of Balaam

Jewish tradition struggled to make sense of the complex figure of Balaam. The tradition developed in both positive (albeit often circumscribed) and negative directions.<sup>106</sup> Overall, Balaam's character is generally viewed negatively, while his prophecies are honored—much as in 2 Peter.

A few sources emphasize the positive prophetic role of Balaam.<sup>107</sup> While 1 Enoch does not explicitly mention Balaam, the work contains structural and verbal allusions to Numbers 22–24.<sup>108</sup> Enoch is a prophet with experiences akin to Moses' and Balaam's.<sup>109</sup> The haggadic retelling of the Balaam narrative in Pseudo-Philo spins the account in a more favorable direction. Balaam wishes to do God's will and is not motivated by greed or hatred of Israel. However, he advises Balak on seducing Israelites through overtly sexual means.<sup>110</sup> Finally, the Qumran texts quote Balaam's "Star Oracle"

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is an example of how God delivered Israel by causing Balaam to bless them. Similarly, Neh 13:2 and Mic 6:5 use him as an example of God's sovereign care of Israel. In both cases, Balak/Moab are the locus of blame. Gen 36:32–33 and 1 Chr 1:43–44 may contain genealogical references, spelling his name as "Bela." For discussion of the Bela references, see Robker, *Balaam in Text and Tradition*, 207–9.

<sup>106</sup> For surveys of Balaam's reception history, see Charles H. Savelle, "Canonical and Extracanonical Portraits of Balaam," *BSac* 166, no. 664 (2009): 387–404; John T. Greene, "The Balaam Figure and Type Before, During, and after the Period of the Pseudepigrapha," *JSP* 8 (1991): 67–110; Robker, *Balaam in Text and Tradition*, 1–2; Christopher T. Begg, "Balaam's Talking Ass (Num 22,21-35): Three Retellings of Her Story," *Annali Di Storia Dell'Esegesi* 24, no. 1 (2007): 207–28. In-depth studies of Balaam in specific Jewish works can be found in van Kooten and van Ruiten, *Prestige of Pagan Prophet Balaam*.

Despite some claims to the contrary, the LXX does not "radically reinterpret" the text. Contra József Zsengellér, "Changes in the Balaam-Interpretation in the Hellenistic Jewish Literature (LXX, Philon, Pseudo-Philon and Josephus)," in *Biblical Figures in Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature*, ed. Hermann Lichtenberger and Ulrike Mittmann-Richert (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 488–91. Zsengellér and others suggest a more messianic interpretation of the *Vorlage*. But Robker pushes against this. Jonathan M. Robker, "Bileam messianisch gelesen?," in *Theologie und Textgeschichte: Septuaginta und Masoretischer Text als Äußerungen theologischer Reflexion*, ed. Frank Ueberschaer, Thomas Wagner, and Jonathan M. Robker, WUNT 407 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018), 111–25.

<sup>107</sup> The survey in this paragraph and the next is heavily indebted to Savelle, "Canonical and Extracanonical Portraits of Balaam." Also Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 81–83.

<sup>108</sup> See Eibert Tigchelaar, "Balaam and Enoch," in van Kooten and van Ruiten, *Prestige of Pagan Prophet Balaam*, 87–100.

<sup>109</sup> See Alex P. Jassen, "Scriptural Interpretation in Early Jewish Apocalypses," in *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*, ed. John J. Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 72–74.

<sup>110</sup> See Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 81; Jacques T. A. G. M. van Ruiten, "The Rewriting of Numbers 22–24 in Pseudo-Philo, *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* 18," in van Kooten and van Ruiten,

and other oracles as eschatological prophecies. But these prophecies are disconnected from the person and story of Balaam himself, who is not mentioned directly.<sup>111</sup> As discussed earlier, Balaam is explicitly labelled a false prophet in 4Q339. The Dead Sea Scrolls treatment is very similar to 2 Peter's usage: a positive reference to the oracle, but a negative depiction of the man.

In general, though, Balaam is viewed very negatively. Philo despises Balaam, characterizing him as a "sophist."<sup>112</sup> Balaam was "stabbed by his own madness" who "with his soothsayer's mock wisdom he defaced the stamp of heaven-sent prophecy" (*Names* 202–3) "enticed by those offers" of money" (*Moses* 1.268).<sup>113</sup> Even after the angel stopped him, Balaam did not "turn aside and refrain from evil-doing, but let the stream of his folly run full course and was overwhelmed by it and swallowed up" (*Unchangeable* 181).<sup>114</sup> Josephus' long recounting paints a somewhat forgiving portrait of Balaam in the first part of the narrative (*Num* 22–24), but a condemning one in the

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*Prestige of Pagan Prophet Balaam*, 101–30.

<sup>111</sup> See Florentino García Martínez, "Balaam in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in van Kooten and van Ruiten, *Prestige of Pagan Prophet Balaam*, 71–82. Gordley unconvincingly argues that Balaam's character was viewed positively by Qumran. He mistakes their embrace of having "eyes that are opened" and receiving eschatological visions with acceptance of his character. Matthew E. Gordley, "Seeing Stars at Qumran: The Interpretation of Balaam and His Oracle in the Damascus Document and Other Qumran Texts," *Proceedings* 25 (2005): 107–19.

<sup>112</sup> George H. van Kooten, "Balaam as the Sophist *Par Excellence* in Philo of Alexandria: Philo's Projection of an Urgent Contemporary Debate onto Moses' Pentateuchal Narratives," in van Kooten and van Ruiten, *Prestige of Pagan Prophet Balaam*, 131–62. It is fascinating to observe how Philo brings the figure of Balaam to bear upon his contemporary opponents (sophists), just as Peter does to his (the false teachers).

<sup>113</sup> Philo, *On Flight and Finding. On the Change of Names. On Dreams.*, trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, LCL 275 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934), 246–47; Philo, *On Abraham. On Joseph. On Moses*, trans. F. H. Colson, LCL 289 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935), 412–15. Balaam was "actuated not by any honourable or sincere feelings, but rather by a wish to pose as a distinguished prophet whose custom was to do nothing without the sanction of an oracle, declined, saying that the Deity did not permit him to go." (Philo, *Moses* 1.267 [LCL, 414–15]. See Savelle, "Canonical and Extracanonial Portraits of Balaam," 392.

<sup>114</sup> Philo, *On the Unchangeableness of God. On Husbandry. Concerning Noah's Work As a Planter. On Drunkenness. On Sobriety.*, trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, LCL 247 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1930), 98–99. See Savelle, "Canonical and Extracanonial Portraits of Balaam," 392. Cf. Torrey Seland, "The Expository Use of the Balaam Figure in Philo's *De Vita Moysis*," *SPhiloA* 28 (2016): 321–48.

enticement incident.<sup>115</sup> In Rabbinic literature, Balaam is considered one of seven gentile prophets, but otherwise he is portrayed in harshly negative terms. Interestingly, Jesus is pejoratively likened to Balaam.<sup>116</sup>

A few points stand out in Jewish reception of Balaam. (1) Balaam's prophecies are viewed positively, but his person is not. The same is seen in 2 Peter, where a Balaam oracle is alluded to as true prophecy, but Balaam himself is a paragon of wickedness. (2) Balaam's greed is highlighted. This is definitely the case in 2 Peter, where Balaam's "greed" is seen as his fatal flaw (2:15; cf. 2:3). (3) Balaam's enticement of Israel through foreign women is greatly embellished. In 2 Peter, this incident is not explicitly mentioned, but (as will be seen) it colors the surrounding verses which speak of adultery, enticement, and licentiousness.

Peter's reference to Balaam betrays further knowledge of and dependence on Jewish traditions surrounding Balaam. Bauckham points out these signs.<sup>117</sup> (1) Peter says that the donkey "rebuked" Balaam, restraining his "madness." In the original narrative, the angel administers the bulk of the rebuke, while the donkey mainly complains. In the "Targums to Num 22:30 (Frg. Tg.; Tg. Ps.-J.; Tg. Neof)," however, the donkey gives a speech "in which she rebukes Balaam for his foolishness in supposing that he can curse Israel when he is unable even to curse his donkey."<sup>118</sup> (2) Peter speaks of Balaam's "madness." While not mentioned in Numbers, Balaam's "foolishness" or madness is

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<sup>115</sup> Savelle, "Canonical and Extracanonical Portraits of Balaam," 394–95. See L. H. Feldman, "Josephus' Portrait of Balaam," *SPhiloA* 5 (1993): 48–83.

<sup>116</sup> Savelle, "Canonical and Extracanonical Portraits of Balaam," 397–400; Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 253–56; Judith R. Baskin, *Pharaoh's Counsellors: Job, Jethro, and Balaam in Rabbinic and Patristic Tradition*, BJS 47 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1983); Ronit Nikolsky, "Interpret Him as Much as You Want: Balaam in the Babylonian Talmud," in van Kooten and van Ruiten, *Prestige of Pagan Prophet Balaam*, 213–32.

<sup>117</sup> See also the study by Jenny De Vivo, "2 Peter 2:4–16: The Redaction of the Biblical and Intertestamental References Dependent on Jude 5–11 and Their Overall Significance for the Document" (PhD diss., Loyola University Chicago, 2014), 111–34.

<sup>118</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 268.



referred to in the Targums (Tg. Ps.-J. Num 22:30; Frg. Tg. Num 22:30), as well as in Philo (*Names* 203, *Moses* 1.293). Targum Pseudo-Jonathan Numbers 22:5 sees in Balaam's father's name a reference to insanity: בער, "to be brutish, stupid" (cf. Philo: *Cher.* 32; *Conf* 159; *Migr.* 113; *Worse* 71).<sup>119</sup> (3) Peter refers to Balaam as a prophet. While never referred to as a "prophet" in the OT or elsewhere in the NT,<sup>120</sup> he is accepted as such "in Jewish tradition (cf. Tgs. Neof. And Ps.-J. Num 23:7; Frg. Tg. Num 23:1, 24:4; LAB 18:12; Philo, *Names* 203; *b. Sanh* 106a; Num. Rab. 20:7, 10)."<sup>121</sup> (4) Bauckham points out that Philo observes a similar ironic reversal between seer and donkey that Peter does: "The unreasoning animal showed a superior power of sight to him who claimed to see not only the world but the world's Maker" (*Moses* 1.272 [LCL, 416–17]).<sup>122</sup> Peter though emphasizes *speech*, not *sight*, in his reversal.

Balaam is mentioned only three times total in the NT; in 2 Peter, in Jude 11, and in Revelation 2:14. The Jude reference is the likely source of Peter's use, though Peter has greatly expanded it. Jude simply mentions "Balaam's error" to which his opponents have "abandoned themselves for the sake of gain" (ESV). In the letter to the Pergamum church, Jesus accuses some in their midst as holding to "the teaching of Balaam." Interestingly, this reference is completely to the Numbers 31 incident, not to the main Balaam cycle. In line with Jewish tradition, the incident is slightly fleshed out and adapted to its present application; but it is still quite close to the original. Balaam "taught Balak" to cause Israel to stumble by eating "food sacrificed to idols and [practicing] sexual immorality" (ESV).<sup>123</sup> This use highlights the fact that Balaam's role in

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<sup>119</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 268–69.

<sup>120</sup> De Vivo, "2 Peter 2:4–16," 130; Cavallin, "False Teachers as Pseudo-Prophets," 267.

<sup>121</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 269. Of course, in 4Q339 he is explicitly labelled a *false* prophet.

<sup>122</sup> See Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 269.

<sup>123</sup> For a study of Revelation's use of Balaam, see van Henten, "Balaam in Revelation 2:14." Cf. G. K. Beale and Sean M. McDonough, "Revelation," in Beale and Carson, *Commentary on NT Use of OT*, 1094.

immorality, feasting (licentiousness), and idolatry are on the radar of the NT community. Thus, it is warranted to see the figure of Balaam coloring the description of 2 Peter's false teachers in similar terms (see below); his influence goes beyond the explicit mention in 2:15–16.

### **Balaam in 2 Peter 2:15–16**

Explicit mention of Balaam in 2 Peter takes only two verses: 2 Peter 2:15–16. Four points are included: (1) He is introduced as representing the “way” which the false teachers follow. (2) Greed is highlighted, and this greed is directly tied to Balaam's prophetic role. (3) He is quickly stopped by God. (4) Through his sin he became “mad” like an animal. He is so intertwined, however, with Peter's descriptions of the false teachers and their followers that his character colors 2:1–3 and 2:10–22.<sup>124</sup>

The first unit, 2:1–3, is a more general statement of 2:15–16. Verse 1 makes the announcement: Just like there were false prophets among Israel (anticipating the Balaam reference), there will be false teachers now. In verse 2, many will “follow” (*ἐξακολουθήσουσιν*) their evil way (just as “they have followed [*ἐξακολουθήσαντες*] the way of Balaam” in v. 15) characterized by “sensuality” (anticipating the Balaam backstory).<sup>125</sup> The first sentence of verse 3 is directly parallel to a clause in verse 15: In verse 3, they speak “feigned words” out of “greed”<sup>126</sup>; in verse 15, Balaam's impetus to speak curses and entice to immorality was due to his desire for money. Also in verse 3,

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<sup>124</sup> I concur with Fornberg, who argues that vv. 12–16 (and v. 18) and 2:1–3 allude to Balaam, and points to the oracle allusion in 1:19. Fornberg, “Balaam and 2 Peter 2:15.” I go further than Fornberg in seeing continued echoes of the Balaam motifs in 2:17–22.

<sup>125</sup> Rightly also De Vivo, “2 Peter 2:4–16,” 119.

<sup>126</sup> Ostmeier points this out as an “implizit” allusion to Balaam. The false teachers' greed show them to be Balaam's successors. Ostmeier, *Die Briefe des Petrus und des Judas*, 128–29.

destruction comes quickly; in verse 16, rebuke and restraint come quickly for Balaam.<sup>127</sup>

See the parallels laid out in table 1 below.<sup>128</sup>

Table 1. Parallels: 2 Peter 2:1–3 and 2:15–16

<b>2 Peter 2:1–3</b>	<b>2 Peter 2:15–16</b>
False prophets of old, false teachers today	Balaam is “prophet,” and the current “false teachers” follow his way
“Many will follow” <i>πολλοὶ ἐξακολουθήσουσιν</i>	“They have followed” <i>ἐξακολουθήσαντες</i> <sup>129</sup>
“sensuality”	See background of Balaam story (cf. v. 14 “eyes full of adultery”)
“In greed they will exploit you with feigned words” <i>ἐν πλεονεξία πλαστοῖς λόγοις ὑμᾶς ἐμπορεύονται</i>	v. 15, Balaam “loved the wages of unrighteousness” <i>ὃς μισθὸν ἀδικίας ἠγάπησεν</i> (cf. v. 14, “hearts exercised in <u>greed</u> ” <i>καρδίαν γεγυμνασμένην πλεονεξίας ἔχοντες</i> )
“Condemnation” quick in coming	“Rebuked” and “restrained” immediately

Balaam thus is central to Peter’s characterization of the false teachers in terms of the OT false prophets. The connections do not end but really only begin here. Following the three OT examples of God’s judgment and deliverance (see chap. 5 of this dissertation), 2:10–22 can be divided into three cycles of the same theme. The center cycle is the Balaam mention of verses 15–16 (see below). Each of the three cycles, however, references almost exactly the same themes—with each featuring animals (illustrated by the following list).

<sup>127</sup> For most of these same connections, see Fornberg, “Balaam and 2 Peter 2:15,” 272–73.

<sup>128</sup> Additionally, it is possible that the references to “denying the Master who bought them” and to “freedom” could allude to the speech which Josephus put into Zimri’s mouth, following the sex and idolatry scandal of Num 25 (*Ant.* 4:145–149). See Caulley, “They Promise Them Freedom,” 134–35, 138.

<sup>129</sup> There are three instances of this word in 2 Peter: these two and in 1:16, where the apostles did not “follow” myths.

Balaam sits at the center of Peter's characterization:

A. Introduction (2:1–3)

1. False prophets/teachers
2. Enticing others
3. Sensuality
4. Greed
5. Swift condemnation/destruction

B. Cycle 1 (vv. 10–14)

1. Verse 12: “Irrational animals,” trapped and destroyed
2. Verse 13: “Wages of unrighteousness” μισθὸν ἀδικίας
3. Verses 10–14: Deception, licentiousness, adultery
4. Verse 14: “Enticing unsteady souls” δελιάζοντες ψυχὰς ἀστηρίκτους

C. Cycle 2 (Balaam, vv. 15–16)

1. Verse 15: Balaam's “way” / “Two Ways”
2. Verse 16: Balaam as “prophet”
3. Verse 15: “Wages of unrighteousness” μισθὸν ἀδικίας
4. Verse 15–16: Wrong speaking
5. Verse 16: Reversed role with an “unspeaking animal”
6. Verse 16: Rebuked and restrained (like animal)
7. Background: Enticed sexually, deception

D. Cycle 3 (vv. 17–22)

1. Verse 18: Speaking emptiness
2. Verse 18: Enticing (δελιάζουσιν) the unsteady
3. Verse 19: Licentiousness, deceptive promise of freedom
4. Verse 22: Become animal-like: entangled and ensnared, like dog or pig

The first cycle, 2:10b–14, includes four salient points which presuppose the Balaam account: (1) Animals.<sup>130</sup> Peter begins with material adapted from Jude about blasphemy. In contrast to the angels, the false teachers “blaspheme” ignorantly. They resemble the opposite of angels: *ἄλογα ζῶα*, “irrational animals.” While Jude uses this same phrase and refers to their destruction (v. 10, *ἐν τούτοις φθείρονται*), Peter capitalizes on and extends the imagery.<sup>131</sup> The “irrational” braying of animals gets alluded to in verses 17–22, as does the image of an animal getting captured.<sup>132</sup> But in between comes Peter’s Balaam reference, where (unlike Jude) Peter centers on the donkey.<sup>133</sup> (2) “Wages of unrighteousness.” Peter claims that these animal-like teachers suffer *μισθὸν ἀδικίας*, “the wages of unrighteousness,” just as Balaam loved *μισθὸν ἀδικίας* in verse 15.<sup>134</sup> The use of this phrase is slightly different in each instance. In the first (v. 13), *μισθὸν ἀδικίας* is something the animal-teachers “suffer” as a consequence—it is strongly negative. In Balaam, however, *μισθὸν ἀδικίας* is something he “loves” and seeks after. The reader recalls, however, that this is something that will not work out well for Balaam (and see his end in Numbers 31).<sup>135</sup> Despite the different applications, the phrases clearly link the false teacher description to Balaam. (3) Deception, licentiousness, adultery. This section

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<sup>130</sup> Schreiner also sees allusions to Ps 49:12 and 20 in 2 Pet 2:12. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 419.

<sup>131</sup> For a fuller study of Peter’s adaptation and expansion of Jude’s reference to Balaam, see De Vivo, “2 Peter 2:4–16,” 111–34.

<sup>132</sup> Fornberg thinks that the “destruction” reference here “probably alludes” to Balaam’s end in Num 31:8. Fornberg, “Balaam and 2 Peter 2:15,” 269.

<sup>133</sup> Fornberg thus argues that the “irrational animals” reference is already “an allusion to Balaam and his donkey.” Fornberg, “Balaam and 2 Peter 2:15,” 266, 269. Of course, in the original narrative the donkey speaks the truth. There is a difference, but Balaam’s donkey still colors Peter’s text. Rightly Ostmeyer, *Die Briefe des Petrus und des Judas*, 136.

<sup>134</sup> This connection is picked up by e.g., Fornberg, “Balaam and 2 Peter 2:15,” 270; De Vivo, “2 Peter 2:4–16,” 120–25.

<sup>135</sup> Bauckham writes that the author “probably intends an ironical secondary reference to the recompense which Balaam would receive for his iniquity from God’s justice.” Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 268. He references “a similar irony” implied by Jewish exegetes, e.g., *Sipre Num* 157: the Israelites “killed Balaam son of Beor with the sword. The Israelites paid him his full salary and did not deprive him” (268).

portrays the false teachers as licentious “revelers” (τρυφήν, ἐντρυφῶντες). But their revelry is “deceptive” (ἀπάταις)<sup>136</sup>—as was that of the Moabites in Numbers 25.<sup>137</sup> This idea is explained in the third cycle (vv. 17–22), where the false teachers “promise freedom,” but themselves are “slaves of corruption” (v. 19). Their talk is good and their lifestyle is attractive, but they have “eyes full of an adulteress” (see Num 25) that cannot get enough of sin. In between is Balaam, who is enslaved to greed. (4) Enticements to sin. Like an adulteress and/or like a trap for an animal,<sup>138</sup> they “entice” people who are unstable (δελεάζοντες ψυχὰς ἀστηρίκτους). Corresponding to this in the third cycle, the false teachers “entice” (δελεάζουσιν) the unsteady. The Balaam connection to these two points is not explicit, but it is implicit in the background of the Balaam story. This is likely hinted at in the respelling of Beor as “Bosor” (Βοσὸρ, v. 15), which may be a play on words with the Hebrew בֶּשָׂר, “flesh”—a nod to the Numbers 25 and 31 account of the sexual immorality advised by Balaam.<sup>139</sup> Balaam’s greed and evil heart ultimately led him to entice Israel by sexual means, leading to both their destruction and his own.<sup>140</sup>

The third cycle, 2:17–22, contains very similar themes (some of which have been touched on already). (1) The false teachers are said to speak “loud boasts of emptiness” (ὑπέρογκα γὰρ ματαιότητος φθεγγόμενοι).<sup>141</sup> Bauckham notes that ματαιότητος

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<sup>136</sup> Jude reads ἀγάπαις (“love feasts”), but Bauckham rightly argues that the change is not accidental; likely Peter intends the play on words. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 266.

<sup>137</sup> Fornberg, “Balaam and 2 Peter 2:15,” 270.

<sup>138</sup> The connection in this context is also found in Proverbs, e.g., 7:21–23; 23:27.

<sup>139</sup> On this change see Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 267–68; Fornberg, “Balaam and 2 Peter 2:15,” 267–68; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 423–24. Bauckham notes that “a rather similar explanation connected בעור (“Beor”) with בעיר (“beasts”) in order to accuse Balaam of bestiality (*b. Sanh.* 105a). Others, however, argue that the spelling change is inadvertent; likely based on a place name. C. M. Hays, “A Fresh Look at Bosor: Textual Criticism in 2 Peter 2:15,” *Filología Neotestamentaria* 17, nos. 33–34 (2004): 105–34; Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 350–51; Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 289–90.

<sup>140</sup> On all of these, see again Fornberg, “Balaam and 2 Peter 2:15,” 270.

<sup>141</sup> Since Peter uses φθέγγομαι both here and for the donkey’s speech, Fornberg sees this as evidence that Balaam is still on the author’s mind in v. 18. Fornberg, “Balaam and 2 Peter 2:15,” 268–69.

may have been chosen because of “the traditional description of Balaam as μάταιος.”<sup>142</sup> (2) and (3) As mentioned, the false teachers both here and above are said to “entice” (δελιάζουσιν) the unstable by their smooth words and licentiousness. Balaam ultimately succeeded in the same way.<sup>143</sup> (4) Animal imagery returns in this section. Peter speaks of those who “escape” (vv. 18 and 20, ἀποφεύγω) the corruption of the world (alluding back to 1:4, where the same word is used), but who then becomes “entangled” and thus “overcome”—suffering the fate of the “irrational animals” in verse 12 who were born to be “caught and destroyed.” The animal references get stronger as the false teachers and their followers are likened to dogs and pigs who return to the filth from which they have been cleansed. In the background, once again, stands the human/animal role reversal of Balaam and his donkey, which Peter emphasizes in verse 16.

The next consideration is Peter’s short but important Balaam cycle (vv. 15–16).<sup>144</sup> Each of the elements Peter mentions ties directly into his characterization of the false teachers. The first two elements tie into larger OT themes in 2 Peter. (1) Balaam is introduced as the representative of a “way,” the way of unrighteousness. Or perhaps more specifically, this is the “way” of *forsaking* righteousness *for* wickedness? This ties Balaam directly to the “Two Ways” motif of the letter (see previous chapter of this dissertation). It is also significant that in the original Balaam account itself (Num 22:32), Balaam is rebuked because his “way” (literal and moral) was “reckless” (or “perverse,” or “not pleasing”)<sup>145</sup> before Yahweh (MT: כִּי־יֵרַט הַדֶּרֶךְ לְנֶגְדִי, LXX: ὅτι οὐκ ἀστεία ἡ ὁδός

<sup>142</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 274. Cf. Fornberg, “Balaam and 2 Peter 2:15,” 268–69.

<sup>143</sup> Fornberg sees an allusion to Num 25 and 31 here in 2:18. Fornberg, “Balaam and 2 Peter 2:15,” 268.

<sup>144</sup> For a full, detailed treatment of this section, see Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 283–85.

<sup>145</sup> The Hebrew word יֵרַט is uncertain. It occurs only here and in Job 16:11, and here scholars debate whether the text is corrupt and what precise meaning to give the word. See Budd, *Numbers*, 254; Ashley, *The Book of Numbers*, 453; Jacob Milgrom, *Numbers: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation*, JPS (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1990), 320. The LXX’s translation, ἀστεία, means “acceptable, well-pleasing” in this context, though it also means “beautiful, well-formed.” Walter Bauer and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian*

σου ἐναντίον μου).<sup>146</sup> (2) Peter, alone in the NT, labels Balaam a “prophet.” This moniker directly ties Balaam to 1:16–2:1, where Peter contrasts the true prophets of old and their successors (the apostles) with the false prophets of old and their successors (the false teachers).

The remaining elements in the central Balaam cycle connect very closely to the first and third cycles. (3) The impetus for Balaam’s wickedness was his love of its “wages” (μισθὸν ἀδικίας). As mentioned above, this phrase (μισθὸν ἀδικίας) was used several verses earlier of the false teachers, and it ties in to the “greed” theme in the letter (e.g., 2:1). (4) “Speaking” is key to the Balaam story; his “wrongdoing” was (initially) his desire to speak curses over God’s people. Later—and more successfully—it became his advice on how to entice God’s people (Num 31). This likens Balaam to the false teachers of Peter’s day. (5) Peter’s human/animal role reversal is both humorous and important. (See next paragraph.) (6) Balaam receives an instant cease-and-desist order, and later a certain end. This ties in with the judgment warnings of verse 3 and the rest of the letter. (7) The “enticement to licentiousness and sexual immorality” theme in 2 Peter is present in the Balaam backstory and may be hinted at in the spelling of “Bosor.” As discussed earlier, this became an increasingly important part of the story in post-biblical Jewish literature.

In 2:12, the false teachers are likened to ἄλογα ζῶα, “unreasoning animals.” Here in verse 16, Balaam’s donkey is at first “voiceless,” ἄφωνον (though Peter avoids the word ἄλογα for it); but somehow this ὑποζύγιον ἄφωνον (“voiceless donkey”) finds its

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*Literature*, ed. William F. Arndt and Frederick W. Danker, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 117. The NETS translation of the LXX renders the word here “pretty,” but this does not seem particularly apt. Peter W. Flint, “Numbers,” in *A New English Translation of the Septuagint*, ed. Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 129.

<sup>146</sup> Bauckham writes that Peter “may have had in mind the emphasis on Balaam’s ‘way’ (ὁδός), both literal (Num 22:23 LXX) and metaphorical (Num 22:32 LXX), in Num 22:21–35, the passage to which v. 16 refers. The false teachers are Balaam’s followers on the road of disobedience to God for the sake of financial profit.” Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 267. Cf. Fornberg, “Balaam and 2 Peter 2:15,” 267; Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 350; Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 285.



φωνῆ and speaks aloud! The donkey becomes the one with reason who speaks God's rebuke to the human prophet. Balaam, on the other hand, undergoes the opposite transformation. He is a "prophet," one who is connected to the divine realm who speaks forth clarity and truth (see allusion in 1:19). But he winds up in a state of "madness," *παραφρονίαν*. Against the embarrassing foil of his own beast of burden taking on his human prophetic role, Balaam has essentially become the "unreasoning animal" of verse 12.<sup>147</sup>

In sum, the Balaam story is interwoven through the entirety of chapter 2, from its initial reference to "false prophets" of old to its closing animal proverb. And this comes after the allusion to his prophetic oracle in 1:19, where he truly *did* hear from God.<sup>148</sup> Balaam is a false prophet because he sought to lead God's people astray. He sought to use his (real!) connection to the divine realm for his own greed and to the destruction of God's people.<sup>149</sup> When this failed, he chose to entice them by licentiousness, deception, and sexual sin. Just as this false prophet arose, so have new false teachers who follow his "way."

### Modern-day "Balaams" in 2 Peter

Balaam is used as a particularly apt instance of 2:1: "false prophets also arose . . . just as there will be false teachers among you." The account of Balaam is not mentioned as a mere example. He is rather one whose "way" is followed by those who bear his likeness. His character permeates Peter's descriptions of his own opponents, such

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<sup>147</sup> Cf. De Vivo, "2 Peter 2:4–16," 129–30.

<sup>148</sup> Ostmeyer connects the Balaam allusions in his reading of the "wandering"/"going astray" "Planeten" (in 2:15) as opposed to the "Morgenstern" of 1:19. He adds, "Als Irrlaufen und Nachfolgern Balaams (15a.b) geht in ihren Herzen der Morgenstern nicht auf (2Petr 1,19c)." Ostmeyer, *Die Briefe des Petrus und des Judas*, 135.

<sup>149</sup> As Fornberg puts it, Balaam "was inspired by God when he spoke about the star." But "he fell victim to greed, and was killed like the 'irrational animals.'" Fornberg, "Balaam and 2 Peter 2:15," 266. Cf. the apt conclusion by De Vivo, "2 Peter 2:4–16," 130–33.

that it is hard to know where exactly the appropriation begins and ends. The story of Balaam is being replayed, or continued, in the present by Peter's opponents.

Peter sees Balaam as not simply a stock "bad guy." His character is indeed depicted in extremely negative terms, but he legitimately had a true prophetic experience, being "carried along" by the Spirit of God (1:19) and speaking a messianic oracle (v. 18). How doubly tragic, therefore, for him to end up caught in the trap of greed, returning to his vomit. This is the very tragedy that Peter is warning his readers against.<sup>150</sup>

Through Balaam, Peter characterizes his present situation using an OT story. For him, the false teachers and his conflicted readers have stepped into and are inhabiting the OT's real-life story world.

### **Jeremiah and Exile**

There is one further, broader OT influence on 2 Peter's prophetic material: Jeremiah.<sup>151</sup> I read 2 Peter as the unified continuation of 1 Peter, a letter shaped by the motif of Jeremiah's letter to the exiles.<sup>152</sup> The basic argument of 2 Peter unfolds thus: Chapter 1 defends Peter's identity as a true prophet and the divine origin of his message against accusations that he was a false prophet. Chapter 2 continues the "true vs. false prophet" motif but shifts the focus to indicting licentious heretical teachers, whom Peter likens to the false prophets of old. Chapter 3 shifts once again to the recipients of the letter, urging them to heed the messages of God's true prophets and apostles and to

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<sup>150</sup> Cf. Ostmeyer, *Die Briefe des Petrus und des Judas*, 122–23, 135, 157.

<sup>151</sup> Unless otherwise noted, chapters and verses in this section refer to MT numbering, not LXX; and scriptural quotations are ESV.

<sup>152</sup> I believe that what is found in 1 and 2 Peter pointing to Jeremiah fits Beale's advice: "The telltale key to discerning an allusion is that of recognizing an *incomparable or unique parallel in wording, syntax, concept, or cluster of motifs in the same order or structure.*" G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 31. Bauckham lists allusions he discerns in 2 Peter to the OT, and his list does not include Jeremiah references. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 138. However, as will be seen, many commentators recognize conceptual parallels between the two books, and some also point to specific Jeremiah references when commenting on certain passages in 2 Peter. Perhaps if they read 1 and 2 Peter together, they would see a stronger case for Jeremianic allusions.

persevere in faithfulness while awaiting the delayed fulfillment of God’s promise of new creation. In each chapter, the influence of Jeremiah can be felt.

I first discuss three relevant themes from Jeremiah which Peter evokes in his two epistles. Following this, I sketch a unified interpretation of 1 and 2 Peter to establish 1 Peter’s use of the “letter to exiles” theme which 2 Peter builds upon. Then I can describe the similarities between 2 Peter and Jeremiah and suggest the prophet’s influence on this letter. I conclude with suggestions concerning the significance of this study for the interpretation of 2 Peter.

### **Salient Themes in Jeremiah**

Central to the book of Jeremiah, and particularly to Jeremiah 23–29,<sup>153</sup> is the conflict between true and false prophets and their competing messages. In fact, the book of Jeremiah is unique in the OT prophetic literature for its sustained emphasis on these themes.<sup>154</sup> There are three specific themes in Jeremiah (especially chaps. 23–29) which are particularly relevant for this study of 2 Peter: Jeremiah’s invectives against false prophets, his defense against charges of being a false prophet, and his letter to the Babylonian exiles.

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<sup>153</sup> For a monograph devoted to this section, see Daniel Epp-Tiessen, *Concerning the Prophets: True and False Prophecy in Jeremiah 23:9–29:32* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012). Epp-Tiessen writes that this unit of text is “the largest block of biblical text that deals with” the topic of “true and false prophecy” (Epp-Tiessen, 1). He proposes that this section has (in the MT) an intentionally, carefully constructed chiasmic structure (Epp-Tiessen, 41–44). Osuji traces “thematic and lexical landmarks” unifying Jer 26–29 in terms of true and false prophecy. Anthony C. Osuji, “True and False Prophecy in Jer 26-29 (MT): Thematic and Lexical Landmarks,” *ETL* 82, no. 4 (2006): 437–52.

<sup>154</sup> Hibbard writes, “An examination of the concordance reveals that Jeremiah has more to say about נביאים by a considerable margin than any other book among the latter prophets: the term נביא occurs in Isaiah seven times; in Ezekiel 17 times, but the term occurs 95 times in Jeremiah. Additionally, the book names more prophets, both true and false, than any other prophetic book.” (He does note that LXX Jeremiah “uses προφήτης or ψευδοπροφήτης only 57 times.”) Hibbard, “True and False Prophecy,” 342. For greater accuracy, but not significantly altering Hibbard’s point, note that the term נביא occurs 6 times in the Hebrew Bible, 5 in 1 Samuel and 1 in Isaiah; נביא occurs 21 times, including 4 times in Isaiah and 3 times in Ezekiel. Neither occur in Jeremiah. Lundbom writes that “the problem of distinguishing true Yahweh prophets from false Yahweh prophets became critical in the time of Jeremiah.” Lundbom, *Deuteronomy*, 559–60.

**Invectives against false prophets.** Jeremiah 23:9–40 unleashes an invective against the false prophets, describing their characteristics and the fate awaiting them; and then contrasts the origin of true prophecy (Yahweh) with that of false (the prophets’ own minds).<sup>155</sup> These two themes are recurrent in Jeremiah’s conflict with false prophets.

First, Jeremiah 23:9–40 emphasizes the contrasting origins of true and false prophecy. “Do not listen,” Yahweh admonishes, “to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you, filling you with vain hopes. They speak visions of their own minds, not from the mouth of the Lord” (v. 16). The false prophets’ visions do not come from God but are “lying dreams” (v. 32), vain imaginings of the pseudo-prophets themselves. Similarly, in chapter 14:14 the false prophets are called out for “prophesying lies in my name” when in fact “I did not send them, nor did I command them or speak to them.”<sup>156</sup> Instead of hearing from Yahweh, “They are prophesying to you a lying vision, worthless divination, and the deceit of their own minds.” False prophets “make up” their utterances, but true prophecy must originate directly from God himself (see Jer 1:7). True prophets speak God’s words, not their own. Jeremiah’s letter to the exiles (chap. 29) likewise warns against the false prophets who seek to deceive with “the dreams that they dream” (29:8–9; cf. v. 21); they are speaking “lying words that I [Yahweh] did not command them” (v. 23). In 2 Peter 1 as the apostle defends himself as a true prophet, he will emphasize the fact that he too he received his message directly from Yahweh.

Second, Jeremiah describes the characteristics of the false prophets of Judah in graphic and ominous terms: as adulterous,<sup>157</sup> lying, aiding and abetting evildoers, and

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<sup>155</sup> Shead writes that Jer 23:9–40 itself “contains the longest treatment of prophecy in the Bible.” Andrew G. Shead, *A Mouth Full of Fire: The Word of God in the Words of Jeremiah*, NSBT (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 157.

<sup>156</sup> “The same *accumulatio* occurs in” 23:21 and in 1:7. Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 708. In 1:7, Yahweh is sending, commanding, and speaking to Jeremiah. In the other two passages, false prophets are condemned for prophesying apart from these three actions of God to them. The contrast in origins of true and false prophecy is highlighted by the use of this “*accumulatio*.”

<sup>157</sup> Lundbom thinks that “adultery” should be taken literally here, especially given the reference to Sodom. Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21–36*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 187. I think

acting like the people of Sodom and Gomorrah (Jer 23:14; cf. 50:40). Greed may also be a motivation (14:18; 8:10). They have “prophesied by Baal” and have gone after worthless things (2:8). In contrast to true prophets, the false prophets prophesy peace and prosperity to rebellious people who are facing imminent divine judgment (13:13–16; 23:16–17). They “lead my people astray by their lies and their recklessness” (23:32). Not only do false prophets turn people away from Yahweh by their utterances, but they also actively oppose their faithful counterpart (chap. 26; chap. 29:24–32). In the letter to the exiles (Jer 29), Yahweh once again indicts the false prophets “because they have done an outrageous thing in Israel, they have committed adultery with their neighbors’ wives, and they have spoken in my name lying words that I did not command them” (v. 23). Jeremiah 23 also vividly depicts the destruction prepared for the false prophets. They will face the very destruction they say will be avoided (14:15–16). “Slippery paths in the darkness” and “disaster” (v. 12), “bitter food” and “poisoned water” (v. 15), “the storm” of Yahweh and “a whirling tempest” (v. 19)—these shall be their lot (cf. vv. 39–40). Cajot helpfully points out that “Jeremiah’s rule of thumb is: ‘An immoral and corrupt person can never be a true and authentic spokesperson of God.’”<sup>158</sup> Thompson, commenting on Jeremiah 23:14, notes that “the false prophets are distinguished both by their false preaching and by their evil way of life.”<sup>159</sup> Peter’s emphasis on the alarming moral state of the false teachers in 2 Peter 2 is quite similar.

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the metaphorical overtones (idolatry) may still be in view as well. Neyrey observes, “Adultery and sexual immorality” in Jer 3:1, 2, 9 is something that causes “pollution.” See 2 Pet 2:10. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 201. Also, Epp-Tiessen observes that the charge of adultery is leveled at the very beginning (23:10, 14) and the very end (29:23) of the “concerning the prophets” section of Jeremiah. Epp-Tiessen, *Concerning the Prophets*, 51.

<sup>158</sup> Rodel M. Cajot, “Jeremiah and the False Prophets,” *Philippiniana Sacra* 42, no. 126 (2007): 514; see 511–14.

<sup>159</sup> J. A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 495.

**Defense of prophethood.** In Jeremiah 26–28, Jeremiah faces two challenges to his identity as a true prophet of Yahweh.<sup>160</sup> In chapter 26, he prophesies against the temple and Jerusalem—which prompts a hastily-called trial filled with angry prosecutors. Jeremiah’s prophecy against God’s house and the holy city cannot be true! He has prophesied “in the name of” Yahweh, but he is about to be sentenced to death as a false prophet. Jeremiah’s defense is simply to reiterate that he has been sent by Yahweh and that if they repent, God would relent. Then there is a change of mind, and certain elders remind the assembly that Yahweh prophets had proclaimed such messages before, and that they should be heeded.

In chapters 27–28, Jeremiah goes hand-to-hand (or more aptly, shoulder-to-shoulder) against a single false prophet named Hananiah. Jeremiah dons a yoke to symbolize that Judah must now submit to Nebuchadnezzar’s rule. Hananiah counters with a prophecy of his own: Yahweh would break Babylon’s yoke within two years. Jeremiah hears once again from Yahweh, confirming his original message and adding a new one: Hananiah will die within the year. When this latter prophecy comes true a mere two months later, Jeremiah’s prophethood is vindicated.

Jeremiah comes through as a true prophet. He really has heard directly from Yahweh and has not made up his own dreams. He has stood in the divine council and knows the true interpretation of the visions he has seen. He calls people to repentance and faithful obedience, which is what true prophets always do. His message could and must be believed: Live faithfully during a long exile, knowing that eventual restoration is certain. As will be seen, Peter’s message and the defense of himself as a true prophet in 2 Peter is very similar.

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<sup>160</sup> On both of these challenges see Shead, *A Mouth Full of Fire*, 161–73.

**Letter to the exiles.** Jeremiah's letter to the Babylonian exiles (Jer 29) is "the only example of a prophetic epistle preserved in the Hebrew Bible."<sup>161</sup> It is located at the end of the group of chapters focusing on true versus false prophecy (chaps. 23–29).<sup>162</sup> Jeremiah writes to encourage the exiles to settle into their new land of Babylon,<sup>163</sup> for the exile will be long (29:5–9).<sup>164</sup> They must "seek the welfare of the city" in which they are exiled (v. 7). God will fulfill his promise to restore them to a blessed land, but not for seventy years (vv. 10–14). In the meantime, they must not listen to the prophets in their midst, for they are false (vv. 8–9, 15–23)! They have prophesied peace and prosperity apart from faithfulness to Yahweh; they have "committed adultery" and have spoken "in my name lying words that I did not command them" (v. 23). God's people must trust in the true word and promises of God and remain faithful to him in their exile, and avoid at all costs the lying, wicked, doomed-to-destruction false prophets. As I demonstrate, Peter

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<sup>161</sup> Carolyn J. Sharp, "My Servants the Prophets': Prophecy and Ideology in the Deutero-Jeremianic Prose" (PhD diss., Yale University, 2000), 147. Sharp continues, "The written word of the prophet presumably would be less liable to misinterpretation and would provide a relatively durable witness regarding the problems or issues it addressed (cf. Isa 30:8), and the form of epistle theoretically would ensure that the specific addressees would be bound by the proclamation, at least to the extent that they acknowledged the authenticity of the prophet" (147). See Peter's similar objectives and concerns in 2 Pet 1.

<sup>162</sup> For a good discussion of Jer 29 and its relationship to the entire unit of Jer 23:9–29:32, see Epp-Tiessen, *Concerning the Prophets*, 184–200. He writes that this chapter functions to "provide an interpretation of exile" (193). It "functions as a warning to anyone who listens to false prophets, refuses to accept the reality of exile, and clings to Judah's pre-exilic world. YHWH offers deliverance not only to the deportees of 598," but to all who "embrace exile as divine judgment," heed true prophecy, and while waiting for restoration "repent and seek YHWH with all their hearts" (194). This is not far from the message of 1–2 Peter.

<sup>163</sup> According to John Hill, "Both the figure of Babylon and the idea of return" in the book of Jeremiah contains "a metaphorical dimension." John Hill, *Friend or Foe? The Figure of Babylon in the Book of Jeremiah MT* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 207. That is, Babylon in Jer 29 is not only the place where certain exiles were deported in 597 BC. "To be in Babylon is a phrase that describes the situation [also] . . . of those who live in unnamed lands as part of the diaspora. Babylon is a metaphor and stands for the place from which all those banished from the land will return" (207; see 208 also for fuller context). Hill argues that Jer 25 and 29 themselves show this development. First Peter clearly embraces this understanding, which may very well have originated with Jeremiah.

<sup>164</sup> "Exile and Babylonian domination will be temporary . . . , emphasized especially by the oracles in chs. 50–51 depicting Babylon's destruction." Epp-Tiessen, *Concerning the Prophets*, 187. Jeremiah encourages "the exiles to live in anticipation of the day when YHWH will destroy Babylon and restore them to their homeland" (187). This is exactly what both 1 Peter (2:11–12, 5:10) and 2 Peter (3:8–14) do.

picks up the motif of Jeremiah's letter to the exiles in his first epistle and builds upon that motif while drawing on other Jeremianic themes in his second.

### **1 and 2 Peter as a Unity in Light of Jeremiah**

When 1 and 2 Peter are read together, Jeremiah's influence on both can be seen. The letter to exiles motif, the emphasis on OT and prophetic themes, Peter's defense of his own true "prophethood," and the warnings against false prophets all correspond to central burdens of Jeremiah. Jeremiah's letter to the exiles itself shares the same concerns which span 1–2 Peter: instructions for how the exiles should live, encouragement to listen to the true prophet, warnings against false prophets, and exhortation to wait for Yahweh's delayed deliverance.<sup>165</sup>

First Peter is a letter to exiles.<sup>166</sup> The letter opens with a fascinating salutation to the "elect exiles [παρεπίδημος] of the Dispersion" (1 Pet 1:1).<sup>167</sup> Peter refers to his readers again as being in "exile" (παροιμία) in 1:17 and as "sojourners and exiles [παρεπίδημος]" in 2:11.<sup>168</sup> Finally, he creates an *inclusio* by closing the letter with a cryptic reference to her "who is at Babylon" (5:13)<sup>169</sup>—the very place to which Jeremiah

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<sup>165</sup> One may wonder whether other OT passages on true vs. false prophets, especially Deut 18 and Ezek 13, may also be influencing 2 Peter. Three responses: First, I am not denying that these other passages may also color Peter's writing, only that Jeremiah is prominent among them. Second, Jeremiah is undoubtedly indebted to Deut 18's teaching on prophets, and Ezek 13 is likely indebted to Jeremiah (see n184 of this diss. chap.). Third, only Jeremiah can fully account for the constellation of themes and features which span 1–2 Peter: letter to exiles, defense of one's true prophethood, invectives against false prophets, and exhortations while awaiting delayed fulfillment.

<sup>166</sup> See the helpful study of 1 Peter (along with James) as an early Christian Diaspora letter in the trajectory of Jeremiah's letter to exiles. Lutz Doering, "First Peter as Early Christian Diaspora Letter," in *The Catholic Epistles and Apostolic Tradition*, ed. Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr and Robert W. Wall (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), 215–36.

<sup>167</sup> This is Doering's first point of identification as well, with a helpful discussion on the meaning of Diaspora in 1 Peter. Doering, "First Peter as Diaspora Letter," 229–31.

<sup>168</sup> The word *παρεπίδημος* refers to sojourners, foreigners, or exiles. Combining its use with a reference to the "Dispersion" confirms that exile is in view. On the use of exile language in 1 Peter see Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 44–47; Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 81–83; Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 61–66.

<sup>169</sup> Cf. Doering, "First Peter as Diaspora Letter," 232–33.



sent his letter to exiles (Jer 29).<sup>170</sup> Throughout the letter, Peter encourages his readers to endure suffering and live faithfully as they await the “inheritance” which will be revealed “in the last time” (1:4–5). They are to conduct themselves “with fear throughout the time of [their] exile,” for God judges impartially and the Messiah has ransomed them (1:17–19). As “sojourners and exiles” they are to “abstain from the passions of the flesh” and to conduct themselves honorably among the gentiles, so that they “may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation” (2:11–12) when God “restores” them (5:10). (Interestingly, Jer 27:22 states that God’s people would remain in *Babylon* until he *visits* and *restores* them.)

The honorable conduct called for includes submitting to all rulers in the land of exile, to endure suffering under slave masters, and to be subject to unbelieving husbands (2:13–3:17). “The end of all things is at hand,” so believers must avoid gentile sensuality and lawlessness and walk in self-control, love, forbearance, and suffering (4:1–19).<sup>171</sup> God will “exalt” them when the day of restoration dawns (5:6, 10).

In 2 Peter, the apostle builds upon the “letter to exiles” theme begun in 1 Peter. In 2 Peter 3 he explicitly mentions that he is writing a “second letter”<sup>172</sup> to the same

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<sup>170</sup> Achtemeier writes that the reference to Babylon “is included here to reaffirm the analogy of Christians living in conditions of diaspora (1:1) as exiles and aliens within Greco-Roman culture (1:1; 2:11). In that way the author constructs an *inclusio* with the opening verse, giving to his whole letter this kind of framework.” Achtemeier, *Ezekiel*, 354. Similarly see Jobes, *1 Peter*, 321–23; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 290–91. Jobes argues that “Babylon” seems to be used primarily as an *inclusio* to the exile motif and questions whether it is even a reference to Rome at all. She points out that Peter does not say anything “subversive” about Rome in the letter but speaks in “quite the contrary” way. Jobes, *1 Peter*, 321–23. But the reference to submitting to Roman rule in 1 Pet 2:13–17 actually strengthens the association of Babylon with the exile motif—particularly in light of Jer 27 and 29. Jeremiah’s exiles were instructed to submit to the rule of Babylon and seek the city’s prosperity while waiting for Yahweh’s eventual deliverance.

<sup>171</sup> “The paraenetic character of 1 Peter . . . corresponds to one of the functions” of Jewish Diaspora letters.” Doering, “First Peter as Diaspora Letter,” 232.

<sup>172</sup> Among scholars who deny the authenticity of 2 Peter, there is some debate over whether the reference in 3:1 to a previous letter is to 1 Peter or to some other document (perhaps Jude, partial material from 2 Peter itself, or another lost letter), but most scholars today believe that 1 Peter is indeed in view. See e.g., Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 368–69; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 285–87; Lewis R. Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 265–66; Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 134–35; Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 309–11; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 441–42.

audience<sup>173</sup> (2 Pet 3:1) whom he addresses as “beloved” (3:1; cf. vv. 8, 14, and 17).<sup>174</sup>

The longings and expectations of 1 Peter’s exiles are completed in 2 Peter’s promise of a “new heavens and a new earth” filled with righteousness (2 Pet 3:13).<sup>175</sup> This indeed is the “inheritance” waiting to be revealed “in the last time” (1 Pet 1:4–5). In both letters this hope is meant to deter readers from licentious living and to spur them on to godliness (1 Pet 2:11–12; 2 Pet 3:11–14).

Second Peter builds upon and develops the “prophetic” theme begun in 1 Peter. The entire letter of 1 Peter is written as a “prophetic” letter to exiles, and recipients of both letters are reminded of the words of the prophets of old (1 Pet 1:10–12; 2 Pet 1:19–21; 3:2).<sup>176</sup> But in 2 Peter the apostle shifts from instructing his exiles on how to patiently endure and suffer (1 Peter) towards warning them to hold on to true prophets/teachers, repudiate the false, and stay faithful while awaiting a delayed fulfillment of the prophetic promises (2 Peter).

First and Second Peter are a unity.<sup>177</sup> Keeping in mind that 2 Peter builds on the letter-to-exiles motif established in 1 Peter, I can now examine the influence of Jeremiah on Peter’s second letter.

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<sup>173</sup> This is also debated among those denying authenticity. Donelson asserts, “If 1 Peter is the intended referent,” which he believes is the “best guess,” “then it is likely that the author of 2 Peter is simply borrowing on the credibility of 1 Peter. There is no need for the communities or the issues to be the same.” Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, 265–66. Bauckham, however, rightly disagrees: “If 2 Pet 3:1 refers to 1 Peter, the recipients must be the churches named in 1 Pet 1:1, unless 1 Peter was already so widely known that the author of 2 Peter can think of it as addressed to all Christians. Second Peter 3:15–16 . . . however, provides clear evidence that 2 Peter does address a specific church or group of churches.” Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 165.

<sup>174</sup> First Peter uses the appellation “beloved” twice (2:11; 4:12); the first occurrence is in the same sentence as his “sojourners and exiles” statement.

<sup>175</sup> See Schreiner, *I, 2 Peter, Jude*, 128.

<sup>176</sup> Köstenberger sees a resemblance between the first two passages, and I would add the third. Andreas J. Köstenberger, “The Use of Scripture in the Pastoral and General Epistles and the Book of Revelation,” in *Hearing the Old Testament in the New Testament*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 247.

<sup>177</sup> Other connections could be drawn, but I have focused on those related to the “letter to exiles” and prophetic motifs. On the similarities between the opening passages of both letters, see William F. Cleary, “Knowledge of Our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 Pet 1:3-11 and the Canonical Relationship between 1 and 2 Peter” (STD thesis, Catholic University of America, 2012). Also, Köstenberger observes that “the

## Similarities Between 2 Peter and Jeremiah

Frey writes of 2 Peter, “The contrast adopted from the biblical tradition between true and false prophets serves as the model for the opposition between the reliable message of the apostles and the destructive message of the opposing teachers.”<sup>178</sup> Nowhere is this contrast more emphasized than in the book of Jeremiah. In fact, 2 Peter’s very use of the word *ψευδοπροφήτης* (especially given that it comes along with an explicit reference to OT times, 2:1) links to Jeremiah, as nine out of the ten occurrences of the word in the LXX are from Jeremiah.<sup>179</sup> This section explores thematic parallels and evocations of Jeremiah in 2 Peter. Because conceptually the letter divides nicely into its three chapters, I take each chapter in turn.<sup>180</sup>

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reference to the flood in 2 Pet 3:6 resembles 1 Pet 3:19–21.” Köstenberger, “Use of Scripture in Epistles and Revelation,” 247. Interestingly, Noah appears in both 1 and 2 Peter, but not in Jude.

<sup>178</sup> Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 315. I am focusing on 2 Peter’s use of Scripture directly, but this is not to deny the influence of Second Temple Jewish traditions on Peter’s thinking. For a reminder of this see Peter H. Davids, “The Use of Second Temple Traditions in 1 and 2 Peter and Jude,” in *The Catholic Epistles and the Tradition*, ed. Jacques Schlosser, BETL 176 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2004), 409–31.

<sup>179</sup> LXX numbering: 6:13; 33:7–8, 11, 16; 34:9; 35:1; 36:1, 8. “The epithet is found only once elsewhere (Zech. 13:2), although the idea is surely more widespread. . . . Jeremiah’s central issue is the false claims of the ‘false prophets’ over against the truth the prophets proclaimed.” Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 237. Cf. Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 315–17. This is the central dichotomy of 2 Peter as well. In the NT, the word *ψευδοπροφήτης* occurs eleven times, only twice in the epistles: once in 2 Pet 2:1 and once in 1 John 4:1. (And note that 1 John 2:27 likely alludes to Jer 31:34).

The previous paragraph raises the question of whether Peter drew from or had access to the proto-MT of Jeremiah, the LXX, or perhaps both. There are significant organizational differences (and some content differences) between LXX and MT of Jer 23–29 MT, let alone the rest of Jeremiah. Holladay deals in great detail with the differences; see William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1986); William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 2*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989). While one cannot be certain, I will assume that Peter had access to the Septuagint, but think it most likely that he was familiar with the Hebrew as well. My reasons for assuming familiarity with the LXX include his use of the word *ψευδοπροφήτης* and a few other Greek words matching those in Jeremiah; and Bauckham’s assertion that “unlike Jude, 2 Peter’s allusions are habitually to the LXX.” Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 138.

<sup>180</sup> Interestingly, although there is clearly common material between 2 Peter and Jude, Jude makes no mention of prophets or prophecy, true or false. The characterization of true and false teachers as prophets and the emphasis on true vs. false prophecy (see 2 Pet 1:16–2:3; 2:15–16; 3:2–4) is unique to 2 Peter. It is unsurprising then that evocations of Jeremiah are also absent from Jude. In 2 Peter the apostle is developing themes from his first letter, with Jeremiah in mind, as he characterizes his concerns in light of OT prophetic conflict (see 2:1).

**2 Peter 1: Defense of authenticity as true prophet.** In 2 Peter 1, the apostle seeks to defend his claim to be a true “prophet,” one who has received his message directly from God. Likely the antinomian teachers and the scoffers wrote off the apostolic message as nothing but “cleverly devised myths” (1:16).<sup>181</sup> Peter finds himself in the same place as Jeremiah (Jer 26–28), and his criteria are the same. Peter stresses the fact that the apostles directly heard the very words of God endorsing Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. The reason Peter chooses the Transfiguration account is precisely because it shows that he, as a “true prophet” (according to Jeremiah), has heard directly from God.<sup>182</sup>

The myths versus voice-of-God dichotomy of verses 16–18 is repeated in the explicitly prophetic verses 19–21: The words of prophecy in Scripture are sure and certain, for Scripture too came directly from God and not merely from a man’s mind (vv. 19–20). In fact, prophecy must originate with the voice of God and never with the “will” of a prophet (v. 21). Bauckham rightly argues that the phrase *ἰδίας ἐπιλύσεως* (“one’s own interpretation”) in verse 21 refers to the prophets: “In true prophecy this interpretation is not the prophet’s own explanation of his vision, but an inspired, God-given interpretation.”<sup>183</sup> Peter has, along with all true prophets, not only beheld revelations from God but has also received the true, divine interpretation of those visions.

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<sup>181</sup> Details concerning the opponents are uncertain, but it is commonly held that they dismissed at least the apostolic teaching of the Parousia. See Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 154–57; Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 226–28; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 325–29.

<sup>182</sup> Recognizing the prophetic/Jeremianic background would have avoided Donelson’s confusion about the use of the transfiguration story here. See Lewis R. Donelson, “Gathering Apostolic Voices: Who Wrote 1 and 2 Peter and Jude?,” in *Reading 1–2 Peter and Jude: A Resource for Students*, ed. Eric F. Mason and Troy W. Martin (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014), 19–21.

<sup>183</sup> The meaning of the phrase *ἰδίας ἐπιλύσεως* is debated. “It is not clear whether [the phrase refers to] the interpretation that the prophet gives to his visionary experience or the interpretation that a reader gives to the prophecy.” Peter H. Davids, *2 Peter and Jude: A Handbook on the Greek Text* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2011), 62–63. See other options in Fuchs and Reymond, *La deuxième épître de saint Pierre; Jude*, 74–75. Bauckham’s interpretation, given above, has become influential. Bauckham shows that Philo (and others) uses very similar language to express that true prophecy is not of the prophet’s origination. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 230–31. Followed by e.g., Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 307–10; Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 231–32; Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 210–13; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 384–85. Cf. Fuchs and Reymond, *La deuxième épître de saint Pierre; Jude*, 74–

The context as well as the language of 2 Peter 1:16–21 evoke Jeremiah 14:14 and 23:16, especially in 2 Peter 1:20–21: “Knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”<sup>184</sup> The Jeremiah passages read thus:

And the Lord said to me: “The prophets are prophesying lies in my name. I did not send them, nor did I command them or speak to them. They are prophesying to you a lying vision, worthless divination, and the deceit of their own minds.” (Jer 14:14)

Thus says the Lord of hosts: “Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you, filling you with vain hopes. They speak visions of their own minds, not from the mouth of the Lord.” (Jer 23:16)

In 2 Peter 1, Peter portrays himself in the position of Jeremiah, a true “prophet” whose claim of authenticity is in question. Like Jeremiah, he repeats the fact that he has heard directly from God; he has not spoken from his own mind.

**2 Peter 2: Invectives against licentious false teachers.** Verse 1 of 2 Peter 2 continues the “true vs. false prophets” motif but shifts the focus onto the false prophets:

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75. See Frey’s helpful discussion of common German interpretation of vv. 20–21, where—still affected by Reformation debates—Peter (like a Catholic official) is opposing “unauthorized” private interpretation. Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 307–10.

<sup>184</sup> Commentators frequently reference these and other passages in Jeremiah as background for (though not necessarily as alluded to by) 2 Pet 1:20–21. Bauckham is representative: “What it says is in conformity with the OT prophets’ own testimony to the nature of prophecy: that the true prophet, unlike the false (Jer 14:13; 23:16; 18:21–22, 26; Ezek 13:3), does not speak on his own initiative (cf. Amos 3:8; Jer 20:9) or proclaim a message which is the product of his own mind, but speaks ‘the word of the Lord’ when it comes to him.” Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 234. Cf. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 232; Lewis R. Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude: A Commentary*, New Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 235; Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 211, 213; Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 311.

Ezek 13 may also be behind 2 Pet 1:20–21. In vv. 1–7 the prophets “prophesy from their own hearts” (ἀπὸ καρδίας αὐτῶν). Yahweh “has not sent them” nor “spoken”; they have seen “false visions and lying divinations.” In vv. 17–19 the “daughters of your people” “prophesy out of their own hearts” (ἀπὸ καρδίας αὐτῶν) and lie. What is striking is the similarity of this passage to Jeremiah. Besides that already mentioned, the prophets also pronounce, “‘Peace,’ when there is no peace” (v. 10). This language only occurs elsewhere in Jer 6:14 and 8:11. Zimmerli writes, “Since Jeremiah’s influence on Ezekiel is elsewhere not to be denied . . . here also Ezekiel must have been influenced by Jeremiah.” Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, trans. Ronald E. Clements, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 291ff, 44–46. Cf. LaMar Eugene Cooper, *Ezekiel*, NAC (Nashville: B&H, 1994), 35–36; Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 406. Of course, all of these passages are likely also indebted to Deut 18:18–20.

“But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you.” This chapter amounts to a sustained invective against such false teachers, whom Peter has likened to the false prophets of old.

Peter uses some rather colorful and imaginative language to depict both the characteristics and the fate of false prophets (2 Pet 2). Some of this resembles the language of Jeremiah against the false prophets and apostate Israelites of his day.<sup>185</sup> Like Jeremiah’s false prophets, Peter’s are described as immoral/adulterous (2:2, 10, 14), greedy (vv. 3, 14–15),<sup>186</sup> liars (v. 3), and rebellious (v. 10, Jer 28:16 and 29:32).<sup>187</sup> Sodom and Gomorrah are also mentioned (v. 6). Like Peter’s false teachers (v. 19), the false prophets in Jeremiah certainly promised “freedom”—from Babylon and (in a sense) from God too. But they were slaves of corruption on every level. The false teachers “entice unsteady souls” (v. 14), much as the false prophets in Jeremiah sought to “deceive” their hearers (Jer 28:15; 29:8).

As for the fate of the false teachers, Peter speaks of “the gloom of utter darkness” (2:17; see Jer 23:12) and judgment by fire (3:7; see Jer 29:22 where the king of Babylon will roast a false prophet in the fire). Reminiscent of Hananiah of old, these false teachers will bring upon themselves “swift destruction” (2 Pet 2:1). Their destruction is certain (2:12–13), just as that of Jeremiah’s false prophets.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> Of course, some of it is likely also drawn from or influenced by Second Temple traditions as well, as Werse seeks to show. Werse, “Second Temple Traditions in 2 Peter,” 116–22. I think Werse goes a bit too far in emphasizing Jewish/Christian tradition as opposed to the origins of those traditions in Scripture. While this influence is not to be denied, Peter’s heavy emphasis on Scripture itself would seem to caution against overclaiming.

<sup>186</sup> Balaam is mentioned in this regard (2 Pet 2:15–16); while he is mentioned in Jude 1:11 as well, only Peter characterizes him as a (false) “prophet.”

<sup>187</sup> They are also described as “blasphemous” in 2 Pet 3:10–12. While this term is not used in Jeremiah, the concept is not distant. Also, in Ezek 20:27, blasphemy is linked to spiritual adultery/idolatry, which of course does appear explicitly in Jeremiah.

<sup>188</sup> More broadly, Jeremiah emphasizes the destruction of Judah, akin to a “decreation,” in judgment for sin. The oracles against the nations reveal that “this judgment of Judah, expressed in tearing down and uprooting, has been a prelude to universal judgment.” Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, NSBT (Leicester: Apollos, 2003), 163–64. Likewise, 2

In 2 Peter 2:17, one of the expressions used is “waterless springs,” *πηγαὶ ἄνυδροι* in the Greek. In Jeremiah 2:13, Yahweh announces through the prophet that his people “have committed two evils.” The first is that “they have forsaken me, the fountain [*πηγὴν*, LXX] of living water.” They have instead hewn out “cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water [*οὐ δυνήσονται ὕδωρ*, LXX].” (Jer 17:13 also refers to forsaking Yahweh, “the fountain of living water” [“fountain of life,” *πηγὴν ζωῆς*, LXX].)<sup>189</sup> Peter’s wording is not shared with Jude; the intentional change of Jude’s language fittingly evokes Jeremiah.<sup>190</sup>

Jeremiah’s oracles against the false prophets of his day have colored Peter’s invectives against the licentious false teachers whom he has likened to false prophets of old.

**2 Peter 3: Exhortation to patient, faithful waiting.** In chapter 3 of 2 Peter, the apostle shifts the focus directly to his readers, the Christian exiles who are awaiting the fulfillment of God’s promises. (This is where Peter refers to 1 Peter and mentions prophets again, 3:1–2.) Peter reminds his hearers that their exile will continue for what seems a long time to them; God’s “promise” to bless them in a new land “where righteousness dwells” will come to pass, but not yet (3:1–13). God is not being sluggish but is exercising patience in the hopes of more people finding repentance (3:8–9). But the

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Pet 3:7–11 ominously announces the judgmental destruction of the entire world.

<sup>189</sup> Commenting on this verse, Schreiner writes, “We think here of the parallel in Jer 2:13” (which he then quotes). “Instead of providing people with the water of life, they [the false teachers] gave them ‘broken cisterns that cannot hold water’ (Jer 2:13).” Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 426. Other commentators mention Jer 2:13 and/or 14:3 when commenting on 2 Pet 2:17; see Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 244; Giese, *2 Peter and Jude*, 143. Also mentioning in passing, Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 274; Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 292; Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 353; Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, 2 Peter*, 366; Fuchs and Reymond, *La deuxième épître de saint Pierre; Jude*, 98; Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, Der 2. Petrusbrief*, 205–6; Schelkle, *Die Petrusbriefe; der Judasbrief*, 215.

<sup>190</sup> The corresponding expression in Jude is “waterless clouds” (v. 12). The word *πηγή* does not occur in Jude. Of course, Jer 2 refers to the people in general and not the prophets specifically, though they are clearly in the lead and in the context (2:8, 26).

day will come when false teachers, the unfaithful, and oppressors will be judged, and God's people will be restored (3:7, 10–13). Jeremiah likewise foretold an extended timetable for the first exile (Jer 25:1–14) and in his letter to the exiles exhorted the displaced Israelites to settle in, wait patiently, and live faithfully as they await restoration to their land (29:4–14).

Peter recognizes that there will be people who sow doubt among his readers: “scoffers” will come who are entrenched in their “sinful desires” (2 Pet 3:3).<sup>191</sup> They will say, “Where is the promise of his coming?” (v. 4, Greek: Ποῦ ἐστὶν ἡ ἐπαγγελία τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ). They claim that there is no sign that God's word is coming true; everything has been going the same for as long as anyone can remember. Such scoffers who refuse to believe the “predictions of the holy prophets” (v. 2) are not new. Jeremiah faced hearers who despised his message of a delayed deliverance, and those who could not patiently wait for his positive predictions to come to pass in God's timing. They say to him, “Where is the word of the Lord? Let it come!” (Jer 17:15; LXX: ποῦ ἐστὶν ὁ λόγος κυρίου ἐλθάτω). Peter is seeing the same pattern of response to true prophecy as there was in Jeremiah's day, evoking the language of that prophet.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Jude's “scoffers” (1:18) are fairly general; no speech is recorded, and they are characterized simply by “following their own ungodly passions.” They are predicted specifically by the apostles. In 2 Peter, however, the “scoffers” fulfill the predictions of the *prophets* and apostles, and they use words from the prophet Jeremiah's book to specifically scoff the delayed fulfillment of God's promises (2 Pet 3:4).

<sup>192</sup> NA<sup>28</sup> lists Jer 17:15 in the margin of 2 Pet 3:4 as an allusion or parallel. Commentators on 2 Pet 3:4 often note that “Where is . . . ?” questions are commonly used in the OT of skeptics or scoffers, and then mention Jer 17:15 and other passages. Bauckham, for example, writes that “especially relevant are Mal 2:17 . . . and Jer 17:15, where Jeremiah's enemies scoff at the nonfulfillment of his prophecies.” Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 289. See Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 228; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 445–46. See also Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 316; Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 379; Giese, *2 Peter and Jude*, 173; Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, 2 Peter*, 376; Fuchs and Reymond, *La deuxième épître de saint Pierre; Jude*, 110; Paulsen, *Der zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief*, 153; Kistemaker, *Peter and Jude*, 325. Fuchs and Reymond see these prophetic echoes as Peter's way of saying, “Leurs propos mêmes étaient annoncés par les prophètes!” Fuchs and Reymond, *La deuxième épître de saint Pierre; Jude*, 110.



## **Jeremiah in 2 Peter Conclusion**

Seen as building upon the Jeremianic “letter to the exiles” motif begun in 1 Peter, the unique message, emphases, and scriptural concerns of 2 Peter can be better appreciated. In 2 Peter, the apostle follows in Jeremiah’s steps as he defends his authenticity as a true prophet who has heard directly from God; he condemns false teachers whom he likens to the false prophets of old and with similar imagery to that used by Jeremiah; and he calls on his readers, just as Jeremiah did to the exiled recipients of his letter, to wait patiently for their restoration and lead obedient and faithful lives despite the seeming delay.

## **Conclusion**

True versus false prophecy permeates 2 Peter, in rich, multilayered and interrelated motifs rooted in the OT. The allusions allow readers to see Peter’s world the way he saw it—a world of sharp dichotomies, high stakes, and most of all as a new act of an old drama.

The previous chapter of this dissertation explored Peter’s employment of the biblical “Two Ways” theme. This is a wisdom theme, which Peter (in keeping with some of his Jewish contemporaries) merged into his apocalyptic, eschatological worldview. This chapter demonstrates how the two ways of wisdom and folly are populated by two types of characters all too familiar from Scripture—true and false *prophets*.

Peter introduces the theme of prophecy with his own experience at Jesus’ Transfiguration. He and his fellow apostles, in line with the true prophets of old, beheld divine glory and heard the divine voice. They heard God confirm the words of the previous prophets, affirming both that the apostles follow in their trail and that their messianic interpretation is true. Jesus is the messianic king of Psalm 2 and Isaiah 42. And Peter adds that he is the “morning star” of Numbers 24. Like the prophets of old, Peter calls his readers to a morally rigorous life, and to patience during a long divine wait.

Many false prophets arose in the OT, and Jeremiah is at the epicenter of true versus false prophet showdowns. Peter emphasizes the character of Balaam, invoking the two major parts of his narrative in Numbers 22–24 and 31 influenced by some later Jewish traditions. Peter sees in the false teachers of his day the figure of Balaam—people who had heard and known the truth of Jesus, yet who through greed entice others to a destructive life of licentiousness. Peter realizes that his readers are at risk of becoming the counterparts of the Israelites who fell prey to the Moabite sex offensive in Numbers 25.

It is crucial here to recognize the two distinct yet (for Peter) inseparable appropriations of the OT. Peter is (1) referencing OT prophecy as authoritative and eschatologically fulfilled in Jesus, and (2) identifying himself and his fellows with the stories and characters of the OT, which he sees as continuing. Peter’s approach is not a mere literary characterization, nor is it simply a typological or redemptive-historical fulfillment. It is something of both, though the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Peter likens himself and his opponents to those of old and calls his readers to enter the biblical story-world precisely *because* he believes his present to be connected through redemptive-history to the real-life sagas of the past. True “prophets” still hear from God (1:16–21), and new false prophets “will arise” just like they did before (2:1). Balaam would be back, just on a new donkey. Peter’s readers will follow one of the two ways—either the prophets’ way of righteousness or the “way of Balaam.” While they wait for the long delay of their return from exile, they must pay attention to Scripture and follow the right path, until the “morning star rises in their hearts.”<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> Fuchs and Reymond eloquently put Peter’s use of the OT: “[le témoignage de l’AT] rappelle aux croyants qu’ils s’inscrivent dans tout un cheminement, qui’ils participent à l’histoire d’un peuple que Dieu accompagne et suscite à l’existence. Les chrétiens se doivent donc de vivre eschatologiquement, c’est-à-dire confiants dans le témoignage de ceux qui ont vu le Seigneur de gloire incarné, et marchant encore dans la nuit mais tenant en main la «lampe» (λύχνος) de l’AT, dont ils savent qu’elle ne s’éteindra pas avant le lever du jour. En définitive, leur situation est plus humble, mais combien plus vraie, que celle des gens qui cèdent au vertige de l’illumination et à l’ivresse noble des interprétations «spontanées».” Fuchs and Reymond, *La deuxième épître de saint Pierre; Jude*, 75–76.

Second Peter's material on prophecy emphasizes the three principles in Peter's use of the OT (see chap. 2 of this dissertation). (1) Peter emphasizes the prophetic nature of Scripture both through direct statements (e.g., 1:20–21) and through his highlighting of prophetic characters (true and false). (2) Peter implicitly follows the “Messianic suffering and subsequent glories” schema. He calls his readers to heed the message and lifestyle of the scriptural prophets, who spoke of the hope of future glory (e.g., 1:16–19; 3:13) but warns of the present need for vigilance and patience (e.g., 2:1–3:7; 3:14). (3) Peter calls his readers to step into Scripture's story. His application is not merely to “do this” or “follow that” but to take on the roles of certain characters—and avoid others.

## CHAPTER 5

### PRIMEVAL JUDGMENT AND DELIVERANCE

This chapter examines the three biblical stories in 2 Peter 2:4–10a: the Watchers of Genesis 6:1–4, Noah’s flood, and Sodom and Gomorrah.<sup>1</sup> While Peter is referring to Genesis, his use is influenced by later developments in Jewish tradition.<sup>2</sup> The entire section is a single if/then statement, with four “ifs” (vv. 4–8) connected to the same “then” (vv. 9–10a).<sup>3</sup> Peter uses the three stories as a series of rapid-fire examples from prior biblical history which prove God’s ability to deliver the godly and to destroy the wicked. They can be called “eschatological examples” (see v. 6). For Peter, the forward-pointing function of these stories testifies to the faithfulness of God’s character and to biblical history’s progression toward eschatological fulfillment.<sup>4</sup> But once again, Peter connects these examples directly with his readers: his allusions to each of the three stories later in 2 Peter situate his contemporaries within the biblical story-world.

This chapter first studies the structure of Peter’s conditional statement and the main point he is seeking to make. I then examine Peter’s use of each biblical story,

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<sup>1</sup> Bauckham observes that verse 3b marks the “transition in the argument.” However, the conditional sentence is from v. 4 to v. 10a, as even Bauckham’s formatting shows. Richard Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, WBC, vol. 50 (Waco, TX: Word, 1983), 244–45.

<sup>2</sup> In fact, these three stories were linked in Jewish tradition as well as 2 Peter. This will be discussed later, but see Bauckham, 249–50, 252.

<sup>3</sup> Most of this is implicit; there is only one *εἰ*, and no explicit “then.” For more on the structure of this paragraph, see “Structure and Thrust” section below.

<sup>4</sup> See Francis Foulkes, “The Acts of God: A Study of the Basis of Typology in the Old Testament,” in *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts? Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1994), 342–71; G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 95–102. Rightly also cf. Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 2nd ed., CSC (Nashville: B&H, 2020), 400.

including the original account and its development in Jewish tradition. The chapter concludes with a synthesis of the insights gleaned from Peter's appropriation of these stories.<sup>5</sup> While the present chapter provides a thorough survey of the paragraph, it emphasizes how these references contribute to 2 Peter's overall use of the OT.

A word about 2 Peter's relationship to Jude is in order at this point. This section of 2 Peter exhibits the majority of the overlap between the two letters, and it is most likely (in keeping with the scholarly consensus) that Jude was Peter's source.<sup>6</sup> However, as will be seen in the "structure and thrust" section below and throughout the chapter, Peter's appropriation is anything but a wholesale adoption.<sup>7</sup> This can be seen in the following ways: (1) Peter selects some elements from Jude, but he leaves others and adds his own elements. He picks up the story of the Watchers, but he pairs it with Noah (a favorite of his). He picks up Sodom but makes it a two-sided story, with Lot as the positive side. He skips the "wilderness generation" and Cain references. (2) Peter thoroughly reworks the borrowed material into his own more cohesive structure and argument (see "Structure and Thrust" section below). (3) Peter reflects on the stories beyond simply the elements borrowed from Jude (as seen in the Balaam material in the previous chapter). (4) There may be evidence that Peter is not always even familiar with Jude's sources; e.g., 1 Enoch and *Assumption of Moses* (the latter used in Jude 9, a verse

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<sup>5</sup> For an entire dissertation devoted to the use of the OT in 2 Pet 2:4–10a, see Douglas E. Brown, "The Use of the Old Testament in 2 Peter 2:4–10a" (PhD diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2003). Cf. Jenny De Vivo, "2 Peter 2:4–16: The Redaction of the Biblical and Intertestamental References Dependent on Jude 5–11 and Their Overall Significance for the Document" (PhD diss., Loyola University Chicago, 2014).

<sup>6</sup> For an overview of the relationship between Jude and 2 Peter (including Peter's divergences), see Eric Fuchs and Pierre Reymond, *La deuxième épître de saint Pierre; L'épître de saint Jude*, CNT (Neuchâtel: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1980), 20–24. Cf. Henning Paulsen, *Der zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief*, KEK (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 97–100; Charles Bigg, *St. Peter and St. Jude*, ICC (New York: T&T Clark, 1901), 216–24.

<sup>7</sup> See Terrance Callan, "Use of the Letter of Jude by the Second Letter of Peter," *Bib* 85, no. 1 (2004): 42–64; D. A. Carson, "2 Peter," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 1048–49; Jörg Frey, *The Letter of Jude and the Second Letter of Peter: A Theological Commentary*, trans. Kathleen Ess (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2018), 325–26; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 245–47.

borrowed in 2 Peter 2:11).<sup>8</sup> This chapter thus acknowledges Jude as one source, but considers Peter’s material on its own terms and in its own right.

### **Structure, Thrust, and Hermeneutics of 2 Peter 2:4–10a**

This section examines the structure and main point of 2 Peter 2:4–10a, as well as important hermeneutical insights from the paragraph.

#### **Structure and Thrust of Paragraph**

The paragraph under investigation, 2 Peter 2:4–10a, is a complicated conditional statement. The protasis (marked with a single *εἰ*) includes three *καί* instances, connected to a single apodosis (marked by a verb alone, not a signal word). The structure is a bit confusing. The first two examples use *ἀλλὰ* in the middle, but in different ways: The first restates the “judgment” point (angels who sinned). The second contrasts the “judgment” part (ancient world) with the “salvation” part (Noah). The third pair of examples (Sodom vs. Lot) has a *καί* between them, making it unclear if they are viewed as two distinct examples or if the author is using the *καί* differently this time.<sup>9</sup> Thankfully, three points are clear: (1) that the three stories share a common apodosis (vv. 9–10a); (2) that there is an intended contrast between judgment and salvation (explicit in v. 9); and (3) as Bauckham points out, that Peter sums up the sins of all three biblical stories (the negative sides) in verse 10a.<sup>10</sup> These points require brief explanation.

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<sup>8</sup> See Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 247, 261–62; Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 339. Alternative explanations of 2 Pet 2:11 have, however, been offered. Green explicitly pushes back against Bauckham’s suggestion that Peter misunderstood Jude 9. Gene L. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 271–73. Cf. Schreiner’s questioning of Bauckham’s reconstruction of Jude 9. Schreiner, *I, 2 Peter, Jude*, 416–17, 551–55.

<sup>9</sup> For discussions of the structure and parallelism of this passage, see e.g., Schreiner, *I, 2 Peter, Jude*, 401; Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 325. Bauckham points out Peter’s use of alliteration to reinforce “the parallelism” between the destruction of Sodom (*καταστροφῆ κατέκρινεν*, v. 6) and that of the flood (*κατακλυσμὸν κόσμου*, v. 5). Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 252.

<sup>10</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 255.

(1) In contrast to Jude, the three biblical stories here share a common apodosis. This is significant, for Peter is thinking of all of these stories as related to each other and revealing a common truth about the future. They are all drawn from Genesis and share common literary features, as will be seen. (2) In keeping with Peter’s “two ways” theme, the text makes explicit that Peter deliberately sets these up as dual examples: they show on the one hand that the Lord delivers the righteous, and on the other that he judges the wicked. (This is in contrast to Jude, whose examples are only of judgment.)<sup>11</sup>

(3) Peter does not describe the sins of the groups when he mentions them; in contrast, he goes into detail on the righteousness of Noah and Lot. He reserves his descriptions for the apodosis (v. 10a), where the characteristics of the three groups of sinners get melded into a single description—one which serves to characterize his contemporary opponents. Specifically, Peter says that the wicked “go after the flesh in defiling passion and despise the Lord’s authority” (τοὺς ὀπίσω σαρκὸς ἐν ἐπιθυμίᾳ μiasμοῦ πορευομένους καὶ κυριότητος καταφρονοῦντας).<sup>12</sup> This description corresponds to 2:1–2, where the false teachers are accused of “denying the Master who bought them” (τὸν ἀγοράσαντα αὐτοὺς δεσπότην ἀρνούμενοι) and encouraging “lewdness” (ἐξακολουθήσουσιν αὐτῶν ταῖς ἀσελείαις).<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. discussion in Paulsen, *Der zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief*, 131–32; Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 326.

<sup>12</sup> With most commentators, referring to Christ; see e.g., Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 413. Contra (who argues for a reference to God) e.g., Anton Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, Der 2. Petrusbrief*, EKKNT (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1994), 193–94.

<sup>13</sup> The “greed” piece in 2:3 previews Balaam, the other OT example in 2 Pet 2. Cf. Karl-Heinrich Ostmeier, *Die Briefe des Petrus und des Judas*, BNT (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2021), 128.

## Hermeneutical Insights from Paragraph

A few statements in this paragraph give tantalizing glimpses into Peter's conception of Scripture and his appropriation of it: (1) judgment "of old" (v. 3b), (2) Peter's three worlds schema, and (3) "making them an example" (v. 6).

The first glimpse is Peter's statement of judgment being "of old" (v. 3b). This line immediately precedes the paragraph being considered, and the latter serves as ground or explanation of it. Peter writes, οἷς τὸ κρίμα ἔκπαλαι οὐκ ἀργεῖ, καὶ ἡ ἀπώλεια αὐτῶν οὐ νυστάζει. What he means by their judgment being "from ancient times" is explained by (γὰρ) the series of examples from ancient times (all from Genesis) which prove that God's judgment is certain.

A similar sequence, with the same word ἔκπαλαι (Peter's only other use), occurs in 3:4–7. In 3:4, the scoffers wonder where the Lord's promised return is. Judgment appears not to be on the horizon. What they are forgetting, Peter writes, is the original world's (ὁ τότε κόσμος = "the ancient world" of 2:5) creation out of (ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ δι' ὕδατος) and destruction by water (ὑδατι).<sup>14</sup> This is the world brought about "from ancient times" (ἔκπαλαι) (v. 5). Just as the "then-world" (ὁ τότε κόσμος) was destroyed by water, so the "now-world" (οἱ δὲ νῦν οὐρανοὶ καὶ ἡ γῆ) is awaiting a fiery judgment—thus, the ungodly should be duly warned (v. 7).

In both uses of ἔκπαλαι, Peter seems to imply that God's judgments from long ago are directly relevant to Peter's contemporaries. The false teachers of the present should see themselves already indicted and awaiting a certain execution in the stories "from ancient times." As will be seen in more detail while examining the specific OT stories mentioned, two interlocked factors lead Peter to this conclusion: (1) God's faithful, stable character. He acts in similar ways throughout history. (2) Biblical history

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<sup>14</sup> See chap. 6 of this dissertation for discussion of the syntactically difficult δι' ὧν.



is forward-pointing, with past acts in the drama foreshadowing future ones.<sup>15</sup> Events of the eschaton, in which Peter places his day, are the culmination of all the great acts of judgment and salvation in Israel's Scriptures.<sup>16</sup> These two points are fleshed out in the following paragraphs of this section.

The second glimpse is Peter's "three worlds" conception. As just mentioned, for Peter biblical history is forward-pointing, with events related as scenes in a play. This is seen in Peter's "three successive worlds" schema, helpfully pointed out by Bauckham.<sup>17</sup> For Peter, there is first the "ancient world" (*ἀρχαίου κόσμου*, 2:5) or the "then-world" (*ὁ τότε κόσμος*, 3:6). This refers to the first "heavens and earth" that God created in Genesis 1–2 (3:5–6). This world was destroyed by being drowned in water at the flood (v. 6). Peter's second world is the "now-world" (*οἱ νῦν οὐρανοὶ καὶ ἡ γῆ*, 3:7), the world that emerged from Noah's flood. This is the world Peter inhabits; but like the "then world," this world is full of scoffers and rebels and will face a similar judgment (3:1–7; 2:5–9). But this time the judgment is heightened—the entire cosmos (heavens and earth) will be destroyed not by water but by fire (3:7).<sup>18</sup> Peter's third world is the world that emerges out of the fiery cataclysm, the "new heavens and new earth" that God creates (3:13). In this world, as in Genesis 1–2, "righteousness dwells."

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<sup>15</sup> On the importance of history for Peter, with Brown, "Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a," 260, 262–63. Brown gives "three evidences" that "Peter understands these OT events to be prophetic" (typological): (1) Peter emphasizes divine action and intent throughout the paragraph. (2) Verse 6 states that Sodom's destruction is a "pattern of things to come" (as I discussed earlier). (3) Peter uses flood and fire imagery in 2 Peter 3 of the final judgment.

<sup>16</sup> On these two factors see Foulkes, "Acts of God"; Beale, *Handbook on NT Use of OT*, 95–102. This is summarized by Beale in two of his proposed presuppositions which underlie the biblical authors' interpretation of the OT: "History is unified by a wise and sovereign plan so that the earlier parts are designed to correspond and point to the later parts," and "The age of eschatological fulfillment has come in Christ." Beale, 96–97.

<sup>17</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 250. Cf. Fuchs and Reymond, *La deuxième épître de saint Pierre; Jude*, 84–85.

<sup>18</sup> As Brown rightly observes, "Just as the Flood exemplifies the *scope* of the eschatological judgment, so the fiery overthrow of Sodom foreshadows its *means*." Brown, "Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a," 209.

These three worlds are not for Peter a mere succession. They share characteristics and even a similar internal plot structure (with differences—the third world does not get destroyed). Neither are they merely cyclical. While they have similar internal plots, they contribute to a single grand plot that moves forward from the absolute beginning of the story (first creation) to an absolute climax (new creation that will not be destroyed).<sup>19</sup> Thus Peter sees the destruction of the flood as depicting the future destruction of the present world. He can go even further and see the fiery destruction of Sodom as a microcosm of the world’s destruction (*à la* the Flood) and specifically of the fiery destruction to come. He likely even sees a connection to the casting down of the heavenly beings with the destruction not only of earth but also of the heavens (3:10).<sup>20</sup>

The third glimpse is Peter’s claim that God “made” Sodom and Gomorrah “an example” (*ὑπόδειγμα*) of future judgment (2:6). Brown rightly points out that this language likely applies to Peter’s other examples of judgment in this paragraph, as “they are parallel and function similarly in the passage.”<sup>21</sup> Peter’s statement indicates that he does not regard his appropriation of these biblical stories as merely a “literary” or “theological reading” of the OT. In his mind, the forward-pointing nature of these stories is a historical reality, based on God’s sovereignty over history and his faithful character. In recounting Sodom and Gomorrah’s destruction, he writes that “God” made the cities “an example” of what would happen—in the future—“to the ungodly.” In Peter’s conception of history, there is an intentional future-oriented warning embedded in God’s past acts of judgment.<sup>22</sup> Similar rebellion in the future would be judged in similar ways.

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<sup>19</sup> Cf. De Vivo, “2 Peter 2:4–16,” 65–66.

<sup>20</sup> Additionally, a few scholars (e.g., Paulsen and Gerdmar) have suggested that *στοιχεῖα* in 3:10 refers to angels. This interpretation is unlikely, however. See discussion in Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 459–60; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 315–16.

<sup>21</sup> Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 262–63.

<sup>22</sup> With Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 262–63.

And worldwide rebellion would be judged in a similar manner but on a cosmic scale.<sup>23</sup> Likewise, there would be deliverance as there had been in the past; and like in the past, the righteous would face “trials” first. It thus makes sense to refer to the OT stories in 2:4–10a as “eschatological examples.”

### **Structure and Thrust Conclusion**

Peter structures this paragraph (2:4–10a) to prove from ancient biblical history that God can and will punish the ungodly and deliver the righteous. This is in part a grounding of his statement in verse 3b that the judgment of the wicked is “from of old” and “is not sleeping.” Now to examine each of the stories Peter appropriates: the fallen angels of Genesis 6:1–4, Noah and the flood, and Sodom and Lot.

### **The Angels That Sinned (Gen 6)**

Second Peter’s reference to the Genesis 6:1–4 account is made in 2:4, with perhaps another passing echo in verse 10’s reference to “despising the authority of the Lord” (*κυριότητος καταφρονοῦντας*). In the reference itself, only the words “the angels who sinned” go directly back to Genesis 6. The bulk of the reference—to God’s “not sparing” them but casting them “into Tartarus” where they are “kept for judgment”—is to later developments of the story in Jewish tradition. Thus, this section first sketches the original story, then traces its development in Jewish tradition, and finally examines Peter’s appropriation.

There is a “matrix of several interlocking challenges” involved in this passage’s interpretation.<sup>24</sup> The following are particularly relevant: (1) the meaning of

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, Der 2. Petrusbrief*, 196.

<sup>24</sup> Carson, “2 Peter,” 1048. My list overlaps with, but is not identical to, Carson’s. Brown lists problems as follows: (1) “Question of which OT event or passage Peter is alluding to, if any at all.” (2) Connection to a “complex web of related biblical passages, including Jude 6, 1 Pet 3:19–20, and Gen 6:1–4.” (3) Questions concerning use of “extrabiblical source materials.” (4) the “issue of historicity.” Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 53–54. In reality, the second of these problems is the most significant.

Genesis 6:1–4 itself, (2) Peter’s relationship to the original story versus later tradition, and (3) how the current passage relates to 1 Peter 3:18–22. The current passage’s relationship to Jude’s use of the story is another of the challenges, but it is only tangentially related to the present task.<sup>25</sup>

### **Original Story: Genesis 6**

The account recorded in Genesis 6:1–4 is brief, mysterious, and riddled with interpretive problems. It is also one of the most bizarre stories in the Bible. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to study in detail every interpretive difficulty of this account. (Peter does not mention the Nephilim; this is one major debate which need not be addressed here.)<sup>26</sup> I focus on setting out the basic contours of the account, which sets the stage for later interpretive developments.<sup>27</sup>

A brief word about the identity of the “sons of God” is in order. Views range from the “godly sons of Seth vs. wicked line of Cain” view to an “exalted kings” view to the “angelic/divine beings” view. But as Wenham observes, the latter is “at once the oldest view and that of most modern commentators.”<sup>28</sup> Full discussions can be found elsewhere, but this view is by far the strongest.<sup>29</sup> Reasons include (1) usage of “sons of

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<sup>25</sup> For detailed analysis of this issue, see De Vivo, “2 Peter 2:4–16,” 35–56.

<sup>26</sup> Debates over Gen 6:4 abound. Are the *הַנְּפִלִים* the same as *הַגְּבֻרִים*? When precisely were these sexual unions happening? What does “in those days, and also afterwards” mean? What, if any, is the connection between these beings and the *רַפְּאִים*? And why are people being referred to as Nephilim after the flood (Num 13:33)? For discussion, see Robin L. Routledge, “The Nephilim: A Tall Story? Who Were the Nephilim and How Did They Survive the Flood?,” *TynBul* 66, no. 1 (2015): 19–40. Cf. Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, WBC (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 142–43.

<sup>27</sup> Brown similarly writes that “Genesis 6:1–4 is one of the most disputed and difficult passages in the OT.” He likewise only deals with the identity of the “sons of God” and how the passage fits into the broader context of Genesis. Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 66–67.

<sup>28</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 139. Also Carson, “2 Peter,” 1049. Westermann writes that “the chapter that asked, are the *בְּנֵי (ה)אֱלֹהִים* to be regarded as human or as non-human beings, can be considered closed” in favor of a non-human interpretation. Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1–11: A Continental Commentary*, trans. John J. Scullion (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 371.

<sup>29</sup> See especially Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 139–40; Carson, “2 Peter,” 1049–50; Robin L. Routledge, “‘My Spirit’ in Genesis 6.1–4,” *JPT* 20, no. 2 (2011): 232–51; Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis (Part 1): From Adam to Noah*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem:

God” elsewhere in the OT (Job 1:6; Ps 29:1), (2) ancient Near East/pagan parallels (e.g., Gilgamesh), (3) history of interpretation (Second Temple Jewish readings, LXX, early Christian), (4) textual details (e.g., contrast between “sons of God” and “daughters of men”). Furthermore, it is clear that this is the view which Jude and Peter hold (they explicitly refer to the beings as “angels”).<sup>30</sup> The “mighty men” (הַגִּבֹּרִים)/Nephilim (הַנְּפִלִים) are the warped offspring of these angelic-human unions, who live on in legend and whose names can be applied to later people who strike terror (see Num 13:33).<sup>31</sup>

Whatever the original source of this account, the author of Genesis has carefully woven it into his narrative.<sup>32</sup> Genesis 6:1–8 is a unit comprised of two paragraphs. The first paragraph (vv. 1–4) tells the angel-human union, and the second (vv. 5–8) announces God’s purpose to flood the earth. The unit immediately follows the Adam-to-Noah genealogy (Gen 5), set out as the “generations of Adam” (זֶה סֵפֶר תּוֹלְדוֹת אָדָם). It immediately precedes the flood narrative, set out as the “generations of Noah” (אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדוֹת נֹחַ).<sup>33</sup> Wenham lays out how Genesis 6:1–8 is “closely integrated” with the genealogies of Genesis 5, and how it sets up for the flood account of 6:9ff. Within 6:1–8

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Magnes Press, 1961), 291–301; Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 67–73; Willem A. VanGemeren, “The Sons of God in Genesis 6:1–4 (an Example of Evangelical Demythologization),” *WTJ* 43, no. 2 (1981): 320–48.

<sup>30</sup> This list is drawn from Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 139. Also Carson, “2 Peter,” 1049.

<sup>31</sup> Once again, for helpful discussion of the Nephilim see Routledge, “The Nephilim.” Cf. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 142–43. Cf. Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis (Part 2): From Noah to Abraham*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1961), 298–301.

<sup>32</sup> On possibilities for sources of Genesis (including its earliest portions), see Duane A. Garrett, *Rethinking Genesis: The Source and Authorship of the First Book of the Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991). Standard critical theories of Pentateuchal composition do not adequately account for this passage, as Wenham demonstrates: Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 136–38. Contra e.g., Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 371–74.

<sup>33</sup> On the significance of the “generations” (תּוֹלְדוֹת) for the literary structure of Genesis, see Jason S. DeRouchie, “The Blessing-Commission, the Promised Offspring, and the *Toledot* Structure of Genesis,” *JETS* 56, no. 2 (2013): 219–47.

itself, the two paragraphs contain literary connections to each other.<sup>34</sup> This unit continues the story of human beings gone awry and sets the stage for God’s climactic judgment.

The account in Genesis 6:1–4 bears literary affinities to the Fall narrative of Genesis 3. This literary patterning is important for interpreting the passage. Genesis 6:2 opens the story with a statement that the “sons of God” “see” that human women are “good”/“beautiful,” so they “take” them. This is clearly a literary adaptation of Genesis 3:6: there, a human woman “saw” that the fruit was “good,” so she “took” it. See parallels laid out in table 2 below.<sup>35</sup> (Underlined text marks verbal parallels, while italics indicates additional conceptual parallels.)

Table 2. Parallels: Genesis 6:2 and 3:6

Gen 6:2	<u>ויראו בני־האֱלֹהִים אֶת־בְּנוֹת הָאָדָם בִּי טֹבַת הַנְּהָ וַיִּקְחוּ לָהֶם נָשִׁים מִכָּל אֲשֶׁר בָּחָרוּ</u>
Gen 3:6	<u>וַתֵּרָא הָאִשָּׁה בִּי טוֹב הָעֵץ לְמֵאֲכָל וְכִי תִאֲוָה־הוּא לְעֵינֶימָּ וַנְּחַמְדָּ הָעֵץ לְהִשְׁכִּיל וַתִּקַּח מִפְּרִיֹו</u>

Both actions are in contravention of divine intents/commands. Eve took fruit from a forbidden tree; the “sons of God” produced fruit via forbidden unions. Both were attempts (at least from the human side) at attaining eternal life, as is implied (as Wenham observes) in the similarity of 6:3 to 3:22.<sup>36</sup> In 6:3 God’s “spirit” would not remain in humans “forever” (לְעֹלָם), while in 3:22 they would not live “forever” (לְעֹלָם). In both cases, God’s response was to deny immortality/longevity. In Genesis 3, the human pair

<sup>34</sup> See Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 136–37. These are discussed below.

<sup>35</sup> This is identified by e.g., Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 141; Routledge, “‘My Spirit’ in Genesis 6.1–4”; Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1–17*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 265, 267. VanGemeren notes conceptual parallels between all “four divine judgments” in Genesis: the fall, the flood, Babel, and Sodom. This is significant, in that three of these are cited together by Peter. VanGemeren, “Sons of God in Genesis 6:1–4,” 327.

<sup>36</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 141.

were cast out of the Garden and doomed for eventual death. In Genesis 6:3, Yahweh pronounces that his “spirit/breath” would not “remain” (יָדוֹן)<sup>37</sup> within humans indefinitely/forever (לְעֹלָם). Despite their latest attempt to merge with immortal beings, they are mortal “flesh” (בְּשָׂר); they would *not* bear immortal offspring, and their lengthy lifespan would become drastically reduced.<sup>38</sup>

Routledge’s examination of this account goes even further. He argues that the intentional literary patterning after the Fall account is meant to highlight *human* transgression. The focus, he argues, is not on the angels *per se* but on the humans. This is the group Yahweh judged at the Fall, and this is the group condemned for their incessant wickedness and judged by the Flood now.<sup>39</sup> Routledge’s insights are helpful, and he is right to point out that there is a human side to the account.<sup>40</sup> Scholars often point out that the wording of 6:2, וַיִּקְחוּ לָהֶם נָשִׁים, indicates the normal “taking” of a woman in marriage—not rape.<sup>41</sup> There is thus a consensual element (at least between the “sons of God” and the women’s fathers).<sup>42</sup> Much later, Testament of Reuben 5:6–7 and Targum

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<sup>37</sup> The meaning and root of this word has been debated, with some proposing a meaning like “strive.” However, there is solid evidence supporting the meaning of “abide/remain,” from the root יָדָן: In addition to its being supported by the LXX and Vulgate, cognates from Akkadian, Aramaic, Arabic, and late Hebrew support this meaning. Cassuto, *Genesis (Part 2)*, 295–96; Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 142.

<sup>38</sup> Some scholars have suggested that this refers to a “period of grace” before the flood. But this seems unlikely (1) in the immediate context (the flood is not mentioned yet), (2) with the Gen 3 allusion (which is about refusal of immortality), and (3) with the emphasis on genealogies and gradually reduced lifespans in Genesis. See Cassuto, *Genesis (Part 2)*, 297–98; Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 142; Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, NAC (Nashville: B&H, 1996), 334–35; Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 376. Contra e.g., Hamilton, *Genesis 1–17*, 269. There is, however, a long tradition of interpreting the 120 years as the period before the flood. For discussion see Pieter van der Horst, “‘His Days Shall Be One Hundred and Twenty Years’: Genesis 6:3 in Early Judaism and Ancient Christianity,” ed. Irene E. Zwiep and Avriel Bar-Levav, *Zutot: Perspectives on Jewish Culture* 2, no. 1 (2002): 18–23; Katie Marcar, “In the Days of Noah: Urzeit/Endzeit Correspondence and the Flood Tradition in 1 Peter 3–4,” *NTS* 63, no. 4 (2017): 563–66.

<sup>39</sup> Routledge, “‘My Spirit’ in Genesis 6.1–4.”

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 141.

<sup>41</sup> See e.g., Cassuto, *Genesis (Part 2)*, 294–95; Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 141; Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 331.

<sup>42</sup> See Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 141, 146. Wenham writes, “So, as in Gen 3, we have the temptation to sin coming from outside man, but his freely given consent brings him under judgment” (146).

Pseudo-Jonathan would also picture the human women as seeking to entice the “sons of God.”<sup>43</sup>

The unit of 6:1–8 introduces the Flood as part of the judgment upon at least the human side of this sinful activity. This is evidenced by the literary connections between verses 1–4 and verses 5–8, as Wenham points out.<sup>44</sup>

Table 3. Genesis 6:1–8 interconnections

6:2	The sons of the gods	see . . .	the daughters . . .	are good
6:5	The LORD	sees	the thoughts	are evil
6:3 // 6:7				
6:3	The LORD said,	“my Spirit . . . in man for ever”		
6:7	The LORD said,	“I shall wipe out man”		

Yahweh directly contradicts the “seeing” and actions of the “sons of God” (vv. 2 and 5). As part of his intention to not allow their offspring to live “forever,” he will “wipe them out” (vv. 3 and 7). The sin of the sons of God with human women seems to be a microcosm or an epitome of the general wickedness of humanity at large. This introduces the Flood account.<sup>45</sup>

However, there are *two* sinning parties in this paragraph, the humans *and* the angels. Humanity is judged with the flood, while no angelic punishment is explicitly

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<sup>43</sup> Thanks to Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 541; Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 331n114.

<sup>44</sup> Tables reproduced from Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 137.

<sup>45</sup> An additional connection: Similar to the later juxtaposition of the pride of the Tower of Babel (Gen 11) with the lowliness of Abraham’s calling (Gen 12), this text juxtaposes the mighty Nephilim/giants that resulted from these forbidden unions with the lone figure of righteous Noah. Rightly regarding the Noah vs. giants contrast, see Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 137.



mentioned here.<sup>46</sup> The history of interpretation thus has not been wrong in emphasizing the sin of the “sons of God” and in expecting a completed version of their fall account—a punishment. The earliest recorded possible reflection on the punishment deserved by these “sons of God” comes in Ezekiel 32:20–28. This passage seems to allude to Genesis 6:1–4, and it speaks of גְבוּרִים “who have fallen in battle and who now inhabit Sheol.”<sup>47</sup>

While Genesis 6:1–4 is full of interpretive landmines, several salient points come into focus. (1) The sin of the “sons of God” has two elements; it consists of *transgressing their boundaries* (they belong in the heavens, and humans on the earth) in a *sexual manner*. These two elements remain important throughout the history of interpretation of this passage. (2) The account is patterned after the Fall narrative, with judgment explicit on the human side (lifespan decrease and flood) but not on the “sons of God” side. This second point fostered reflection and development later on, and that development is based on solid expectations of the story itself.

As scholars point out, stories of gods/divine beings marrying human women are common in various ancient cultures (see e.g., Gilgamesh and Hesiod’s *Theogony*).<sup>48</sup> Peter, in fact, may echo Hesiod in 2 Peter (in his “Tartarus” reference; see discussion later). Such accounts sound preposterous to modern Westerners, but their presence across a number of cultures should give one pause. Perhaps there is behind these various myths some strange activity that did once occur, far back toward the dawn of human history.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> With Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 74. There may be a sense in which the flood itself is part of the judgment upon the “sons of God.” Their offspring all went to the bottom of the sea, and it seems they were at least frustrated (part of their “binding”) in their attempts at regular unions with human women in the future.

<sup>47</sup> See Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 143.

<sup>48</sup> See Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 138; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 402. Cf. Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 371–72.

<sup>49</sup> With Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 543–44; Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 93; Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 140.

The account of Genesis 6 is terse, without embellishment; it may preserve the truest witness to this strange happening.

### **1 Enoch and Other Jewish Tradition**

As mentioned, the story of Genesis 6:1–4 fostered much creative thinking around the Second Temple period (and likely before; see Ezek 32:20–28).<sup>50</sup> The most detailed version is found in 1 Enoch (6–19, 21, 86–88; 106:13–17), but the account is referred to in a large number of Jewish sources: Jubilees 4:15, 22; 5:1; CD 2:17–19; 1QapGen 2:1; Testament of Reuben 5:6–7; Testament of Naphtali 3:4–5; 2 Baruch 56:10–14; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.73. According to Testament of Naphtali, the Watchers “departed from nature’s order” and were therefore cursed with the flood. As mentioned above, Testament of Reuben has the women alluring the angels, laying all the blame at their feet. Jubilees explicitly sees the flood as judgment for these activities and their perverse offspring.

The coverage in 1 Enoch is much more extensive.<sup>51</sup> The chiefs of the band of Watchers are named, and they swear together to commit their conspiracy (1 Enoch 6). The sins of the Watchers are more varied than in the biblical account. As in Genesis 6:1–4, they cross boundary lines in coming to earth and uniting with human women (9:8;

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<sup>50</sup> In-depth discussion of the development of the “sons of God”/fallen angel traditions in Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity can be found in e.g., Angela Kim Harkins, Kelley Coblenz Bautch, and John C. Endres, eds., *The Fallen Angels Traditions: Second Temple Developments and Reception History*, CBQMS 53 (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association, 2014); Archie T. Wright, *The Origin of Evil Spirits: The Reception of Genesis 6:1–4 in Early Jewish Literature*, 2nd ed. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013); Annette Yoshiko Reed, *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity: The Reception of Enochic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Loren T. Stuckenbruck, *The Myth of Rebellious Angels: Studies in Second Temple Judaism and New Testament Texts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017), 1–57; Angela Kim Harkins, Kelley Coblenz Bautch, and John C. Endres, eds., *The Watchers in Jewish and Christian Traditions* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014); Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 74–80.

<sup>51</sup> Summaries and discussion of 1 Enoch and its Book of Watchers can be found in Daniel M. Gurtner, *Introducing the Pseudepigrapha of Second Temple Judaism: Message, Context, and Significance* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), 21–91; George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch: The Hermeneia Translation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 1–12; James C. VanderKam, *An Introduction to Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 88–94.

15:1–10). They are said to “defile” themselves with the human women (e.g., 7:1; 8:8; 10:11)—language hinting at sexual immorality (though the “defilement” here seems to be largely connected to the sexual boundary crossing; see 15:1–10).<sup>52</sup> A major part of their wickedness lies in teaching their human wives “mysteries” such as “sorcery and charms” (7:1; 8:3), and Asael’s teaching men how to make metal weapons and jewelry (8:1–2). The Watchers’ offspring (the giants, Nephilim, and Elioud) terrorize the human population, specifically devouring their food and killing their men (7:2–5; 10:15). In the end, the “cry” of the earth goes up to heaven (7:6; 8:4; 9:10). In 1 Enoch, humans and especially the semi-human offspring of the Watchers do follow in the evil and violent behavior of the Watchers. But the “godlessness and violence” are the fault, ultimately, of the Watchers (8–9; 10:7–8; 16:3; 86:3–87:1). In contrast, the account in Genesis 6 does not shift blame for human depravity onto the “sons of God.”

Upon the intercession of the good archangels, God steps in and sends them to rectify the situation on earth (9–11). The Watchers are imprisoned, kept in torment until the final judgment (9–10; cf. 19:1–2; 87:2–3). The text explicitly links the judgment of the Watchers to a future *fiery* destruction of the earth reminiscent of 2 Peter 3: “And on the day of the great judgment, he [Asael] will be led away to the burning conflagration” (10:6). The giants (offspring of the Watchers and human women) are destroyed and are explicitly denied both immortality and even long life (10:9–10).<sup>53</sup> Finally, the sin of the Watchers is closely linked to the flood. The flood was intended to cleanse humanity from the evil influence of the Watchers (10:1–3; 106:13–17).

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<sup>52</sup> All quotations of 1 Enoch taken from Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch*.

<sup>53</sup> In 1 Enoch, the spirits of the destroyed Watchers account for the “evil spirits” who now roam the earth (see 15:8–10).

The language of Jude 7 echoes 1 Enoch 10:12–13; cf. 10:4–6.<sup>54</sup> It is clear that Jude, as well as Peter,<sup>55</sup> share at least some of this understanding of the Genesis story. As Schreiner and Charles caution, however, the apostles do not necessarily pick up the entirety of the surrounding traditions, unchanged. Neither of them, especially Peter, shift responsibility for the origin of sin and judgment onto the angelic beings, nor do they (again, especially Peter) show an interest in details such as names of angels.<sup>56</sup>

Nonetheless, it seems clear that Peter viewed the Genesis 6:1–4 account as the story of angelic beings who attempted to rebel against God’s ordained sphere for them, who engaged in sexual sin, and likely who led others to sin. Their immense power could not prevent Yahweh from judging the results of their actions (their offspring) with a flood and confining the Watchers themselves to an “imprisonment” while they await his final judgment.

### **“Angels That Sinned” in Peter**

While the focus is on 2 Peter, it is necessary to first take a look at another Petrine allusion to the “angels who sinned” story: 1 Peter 3:18–22. I then return to 2 Peter’s mention and its application later in chapter 2.

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<sup>54</sup> See Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 52–53. For a discussion of Jude’s role in the church’s reception history of Enoch, see Rebecca Skaggs, *1, 2 Peter and Jude through the Centuries* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2020), 200–212.

<sup>55</sup> Both 2 Peter and 1 Peter, assuming 1 Pet 3:18–22 is a reference to the Watchers (see discussion below).

<sup>56</sup> See Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 542–43; J. Daryl Charles, “The Angels under Reserve in 2 Peter and Jude,” *BBR* 15, no. 1 (2005): 39–48. Cf. Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 92; Ben Witherington III, *The Indelible Image: The Theological and Ethical Thought World of the New Testament*, vol. 1 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 772. Gentry and Fountain believe that Jude actually uses Enochic traditions “to counter their own assertion that evil in the world is due to angelic impurity,” instead of human rebellion. Peter J. Gentry and Andrew M. Fountain, “Reassessing Jude’s Use of Enochic Traditions (with Notes on Their Later Reception History),” *TynBul* 68, no. 2 (2017): 280–86.

**1 Peter 3:18–22.** Unfortunately, this is another highly controversial passage.<sup>57</sup>

The text reads that Jesus was “put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,” and in this state he “also went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison.” These spirits are identified as those who “disobeyed back when the patience of God waited in the days of Noah.” It is likely that these “spirits” are linked to the “angels and authorities and powers” subjected to Jesus in verse 22.

A variety of interpretations have been offered of this passage.<sup>58</sup> Some have held that Jesus descended to Hades to proclaim salvation and/or a “second chance” to disobedient humans from Noah’s day. Some have held that Noah’s preaching was the means of Jesus speaking to the (then alive) people who failed to repent. As Schreiner observes, these interpretations face major problems. The first bears no connection to Peter’s context—how does proclaiming salvation to the dead help Christians to suffer faithfully? Introducing a “second chance” here would, if anything, have the opposite effect. The second problem involves trouble with the participle “went” (πορευθείς); Jesus is said not to have “preached through” Noah or even simply to have “preached.” He “went and preached.”<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> “Few passages in the New Testament have proved as complex as this short, but infamous, pericope.” David M. Allen, “Genesis in James, 1 and 2 Peter and Jude,” in *Genesis in the New Testament*, ed. Maarten J. J. Menken and Steve Moyise, LNTS 466 (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 158. Cf. John H. Elliott, ed., *1 Peter*, AB, vol. 37b (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 647–48.

<sup>58</sup> See helpful discussions of the various views as well as defenses of the “fallen angels” view in Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 208–25; Dan McCartney, “The Use of the Old Testament in the First Epistle of Peter” (PhD diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 1989), 147–73; Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 243–51. Cf. Skaggs, *1, 2 Peter and Jude through Centuries*, 91–131; Douglas N. Campbell and Fika J. van Rensburg, “History of the Interpretation of 1 Peter 3:18–22,” *Acta Patristica et Byzantina* 19 (2008): 73–96; William J. Dalton, “The Interpretation of 1 Peter 3:19 and 4:6: Light from 2 Peter,” *Bib* 60, no. 4 (1979): 547–55; Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 239–74; Allen, “Genesis in James, 1 and 2 Peter and Jude,” 158–59; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 648–73; Craig S. Keener, *1 Peter: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2021), 269–75. The classic work on the topic is William J. Dalton, *Christ’s Proclamation to the Spirits: A Study of 1 Peter 3:18–4:6*, 2nd ed., AnBib 23 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1989). Grudem attempts a strong argument in favor of a “human spirits” (Augustinian) view. See Wayne A. Grudem, *The First Epistle of Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC, vol. 17 (Leicester: InterVarsity, 1988), 203–39.

<sup>59</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 208–15.

Likely the greatest problem with the above interpretations is that they ignore the clear parallels with 1 Enoch. Thus, the majority of scholars today see a reference to the same “imprisoned spirits” mentioned in 2 Peter and Jude—the “angels who sinned.” In this view, Jesus’ “proclamation” was not a gospel message, but a proclamation of victory.<sup>60</sup> While not the most common usage of the word in the NT, κηρύσσω can refer to “proclaiming” more generally (see Luke 8:39; Rom 2:21; Gal 5:11; Rev 5:2).<sup>61</sup> This fits with the conclusion in verse 22 that all spirits are now subjected to Jesus. Furthermore, the pairing of the “imprisoned spirits” with the Noah story matches (1) the two units in Genesis 6:1–8, (2) the pairing of the two stories in 1 Enoch, and (3) the pairing of the two stories in 2 Peter 2:4–5.

Peter thus sees Jesus’ death as climactically triumphing over all the schemes of the demonic realm, represented and epitomized in these fallen angels of Genesis 6:1–4. While they remain in their temporary holding cells awaiting final judgment, they know what the verdict will be; and even now they are in complete subjection under Jesus. Peter’s readers should see themselves in the place of Noah, a man almost alone in being saved through the ark.<sup>62</sup> In Noah’s day just as in theirs, the forces of evil were overwhelming, on both human and demonic levels. But Jesus through suffering became victorious over even the strongest and strangest demons, so they should be confident in their own journey through a hostile world and lives marked by suffering.

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<sup>60</sup> Or as Keener notes, if it is speaking of “good news,” “this proclamation nevertheless remains bad news to the fallen angels and their hostile intentions for humanity.” Keener, *1 Peter*, 274. McCartney writes that “the gospel proclamation which was a proclamation of condemnation to the ‘disobedient spirits’ spelled life to the Gentiles who formerly had been in the power of these spirits.” McCartney, “Use of OT in 1 Peter,” 173.

<sup>61</sup> In the LXX, see Gen 41:43; Exod 36:6; 2 Kgs 10:20; Esth 6:9; Jonah 1:2.

<sup>62</sup> Jobes likewise writes, “Peter wishes to connect the sins of angelic beings in the ancient past, the victorious proclamation of the risen Christ, and the lives of Christian believers ‘now.’” Jobes, *1 Peter*, 247.

Peter’s usage of the Watchers account in 2 Peter 2 witnesses to the same basic take on the story, but in 2 Peter he invokes a different aspect of the story for a very different purpose. But his appropriation of Noah in 1 Peter 3:18–22 is similar to his appropriation both of Noah and Lot in 2 Peter 2.

**2 Peter 2:4, 10a.** The main mention of this OT story is contained in 2 Peter 2:4: Εἰ γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ἀγγέλων ἀμαρτησάντων οὐκ ἐφείσατο, ἀλλὰ σειραῖς<sup>63</sup> ζόφου ταρταρώσας παρέδωκεν εἰς κρίσιν τηρουμένου. . . . “If God did not spare the angels who sinned<sup>64</sup> but, thrusting them down to Tartarus, handed them over to chains of darkness to be kept for judgment . . . .” Attention must first be drawn to the verb ταρταρώ (“cast into Tartarus”). While the verb occurs only here in the NT or LXX, the noun τάρταρος occurs in the LXX (Job 40:20; 41:24; Prov 30:16) and in other Jewish literature (1 Enoch 20:2; Sibylline Oracles 4:186; Philo, *Moses* 2.433; *Rewards* 152).<sup>65</sup> In Greek mythology, Tartarus is where the Titans were imprisoned—in a story with marked affinities to the Watchers, as Jewish authors noted (comparing the Nephilim with the Titans, see Josephus’ *Ant.* 1.73; LXX Ezek 32:7; Sir 16:7; calling the Watchers themselves Titans, see Jdt 16:6; cf.

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<sup>63</sup> There is a textual variant here between this word meaning “chains” and *σιροῖς/σειροῖς* meaning “pits.” Bauckham writes that “it is almost impossible to decide between the two readings.” Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 244. External evidence is finely balanced, and good arguments can be made either way on internal grounds. Favoring *σειραῖς* (chains), see Bauckham, 244, 249; Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 268. Favoring *σιροῖς/σειροῖς* (pits/caves) see Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 403; Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 324, 328; Peter H. Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 226; Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 85–86; Fuchs and Reymond, *La deuxième épître de saint Pierre; Jude*, 83; Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, Der 2. Petrusbrief*, 190.

<sup>64</sup> Or “angels when they sinned.” For discussion see Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 83.

<sup>65</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 249. Cf. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 402–3.

[Christian] Sibylline Oracles 2:231).<sup>66</sup> Peter’s echo of the “Greek myth of the Titans . . . follows Hellenistic Jewish practice”<sup>67</sup> and connects with his “Gentile audience.”<sup>68</sup>

Peter’s mention thus far picks up a biblically based story commonly known in Judaism, which he found in Jude 6. With the “Tartarus” language, he seems to note its similarity to stories his readers would be familiar with. But otherwise, his reference is quite straightforward in verse 4. Verse 10 provides part of the interpretation and application. As noted earlier, Peter groups together the specifics of the sins of each of the three stories in verses 9–10a. These verses thus apply to all three biblical examples, but they are particularly relevant here. The “angels who sinned” are said to show that “the Lord knows how . . . to keep [τηρεῖν] the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment [εἰς ἡμέραν κρίσεως]” (v. 9).<sup>69</sup> Verbal overlap confirms that the story of the Watchers from verse 4 is coloring Peter’s language here: there too he writes that the ungodly (in that case the “angels who sinned”) are “kept” (τηρουμένων) “for judgment” (εἰς κρίσιν). In verse 10a, Peter underscores that God’s reserving for judgment “especially” applies to those “who go after flesh in the polluted lust and who despise the

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<sup>66</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 249. Cf. Carson, “2 Peter,” 1050.

<sup>67</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 249. Cf. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 250–51; Paulsen, *Der zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief*, 133; Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, Der 2. Petrusbrief*, 190.

<sup>68</sup> Charles, “Angels under Reserve,” 45. Cf. Jerome H. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 202. Brown incorrectly claims that Peter employs this term “to explain the biblical concept of hell.” Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 87. The “prison” is a holding place, not “hell” in any final sense (Brown, 90–91).

<sup>69</sup> Whether to take *κολαζομένους* as contemporaneous with *τηρεῖν* or as in the future (with *εἰς ἡμέραν κρίσεως*) is debated. A contemporaneous rendering would read, “to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment.” This reading is especially close to v. 4, where the angels are kept in a form of punishment until the final judgment. This view is possible; see e.g., Douglas J. Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 1996), 107. With a majority of commentators, I prefer the future reading (in the main text above). Contextual arguments tip the scale: as e.g., Bauckham, Schreiner, and Davids point out, in light of the current prosperity of the false teachers and the future orientation of deliverance/judgment in 2 Peter, it seems unlikely that Peter would speak of a *current* punishment of the wicked. Rather, in Bauckham’s words, v. 9 draws “the general lesson of vv 4–8,” but “with special reference to the eschatological” judgment and deliverance. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 254. For discussion, see also Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 412–13; Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 232; Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, Der 2. Petrusbrief*, 193. Cf. Karl H. Schelkle, *Die Petrusbriefe; der Judasbrief*, HTKNT (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1961), 209–10; Fuchs and Reymond, *La deuxième épître de saint Pierre; Jude*, 88.



authority of the Lord.” Again, while these characteristics apply to Peter’s other two examples, they epitomize the dual sin of the “sons of God”: boundary crossing (rebellious against God’s authority) and sexual passion.<sup>70</sup> Jude makes the boundary crossing sin explicit (Jude 6), but it is evident here in Peter as well.<sup>71</sup>

In an obscure (to modern readers) story from days of yore, Peter sees a two-pronged pattern of sin which is alarmingly evident in the false teachers of his own time. As chapter 2 and chapter 3 go on to lay out in detail, Peter’s opponents seek to throw off the theological and moral authority of Jesus and his authorized representatives (e.g., 2:1; 3:1–7; cf. 1:16–21) and to engage in licentiousness (2:12–22). Further echoes of the Genesis 6 story bear this out and reveal Peter’s signature appropriation of the OT.

**Echoes of the Watchers in 2 Peter.** Peter is not finished with the “angels who sinned” story after 2:4 or even after 2:9–10a. As already demonstrated, the biblical motifs and stories Peter invokes tend not to be one-offs but to permeate the surrounding paragraphs. This appears to be part of how Peter appropriates OT stories and motifs. The biblical stories become *part of* Peter’s story-world, and various bits of them are used throughout his letter to characterize the actors of his own day. This is certainly the case here, and becomes evident when tracking 2 Peter’s four occurrences of the verb τηρέω.<sup>72</sup>

The first two occurrences have already been mentioned. The usage of this word begins in 2:4 with the “angels who sinned” story. They are handed over “to chains of darkness [σειραῖς ζόφου] to be kept [τηρουμένους] for judgment [εἰς κρίσιν].” The second

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<sup>70</sup> Rightly Fuchs and Reymond, that *σάρξ* both in v. 10a and in v. 18 likely has a sexual meaning, but not referring to any specific sexual deviancy in particular (e.g., homosexuality). Rather, “les faux docteurs ont pris comme maître la chair, le sexe.” Fuchs and Reymond, *La deuxième épître de saint Pierre; Jude*, 89.

<sup>71</sup> Contra Frey, who claims that “further details of their offenses [beyond “sinning,” with possibly “sexual sins in general”] . . . are of no interest.” Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 327.

<sup>72</sup> Brown mentions these connections very briefly. Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 88–89.

occurrence is in verse 9, where God knows how “to keep [τηρεῖν] the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment [εἰς ἡμέραν κρίσεως].” Already in verse 9, Peter is infusing his description—both “to keep” and “unto . . . judgment”—with language from the Watchers story (see following verses).

The third occurrence is in 2:17. Those who follow the “way of Balaam” are like “waterless fountains and storm-driven mists.” “For them,” Peter writes, “the gloom of darkness is kept (reserved)” (οἷς ὁ ζόφος τοῦ σκοτους τετήρηται). This phrase is copied from Jude 13 (though *sans* the words εἰς αἰῶνα), just as the use of ζόφος and τηρέω in verse 4 are from Jude 6. The occurrences of ζόφος and τετήρηται in both Jude 13 and 2 Peter 2:17 are an unquestionable echo of the Watchers in Jude 6/2 Peter 2:4 respectively.<sup>73</sup> That this connection is still intended by Peter is demonstrated by the fact that Peter includes other echoes of the Watchers story in his letter and is discriminating in what he draws from Jude 12–13.<sup>74</sup>

Peter is now appropriating the story as a “dynamic analogy.”<sup>75</sup> Just as the “angels who sinned” are “kept” in “darkness,” so the false teachers of Peter’s day—

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<sup>73</sup> In Jude 13 there is a catchword connection to the “angels” in v. 6, and the background of the “stars” reference is likely to Enochic Watchers. There is a “close parallel” to the v. 6 reference. Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 117. Cf. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 89–90; Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 73–74. Not all commentators see an Enochic background, however, e.g., Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 565; Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 99–100. The word “wandering” used of the stars (ἀστῆρες πλανῆται) is also seen as an allusion to the Balaam motif. See Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 90; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 565; Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 74.

Some commentators pick up on the 2 Pet 2:4/2:17 connection, e.g., Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 244; Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 293; Ben Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1–2 Peter*, vol. 2 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2007), 360; Curtis P. Giese, *2 Peter and Jude*, ConcC (St. Louis: Concordia, 2012), 150. Not all do, however; e.g., Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 274; Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 354; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 427.

<sup>74</sup> Jude 12–13 has “waterless clouds,” “unfruitful trees,” “fierce waves of the sea,” and “wandering stars”—with descriptions. 2 Pet 2:17 speaks of “waterless *springs* [emphasis added]” and “storm-driven mists,” and then adds Jude’s line about the “gloom of darkness.” In Jude, however, this phrase describes the “wandering stars,” an appropriate judgment for errant light-givers. See Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 90. Peter’s omission of this “stars” metaphor brings the link to his “angels” in v. 4 to the forefront.

<sup>75</sup> As noted in the previous chapter of this dissertation with respect to Peter’s use of the Transfiguration account. I adapt this phrase (or, perhaps, I treat the term itself as something of a “dynamic analogy”!) from Jonathan Grossman, “‘Dynamic Analogies’ in the Book of Esther,” *VT* 59 (2009): 394–414. The idea is that an author can take one story and use elements of it to characterize multiple *different*

though literally walking around and unbound—have a “darkness” that is being “kept” for them.<sup>76</sup> Note also how in the following verses (vv. 18–19), the dual-pronged pattern of sin from verse 9 (based in Gen 6:1–4) is again evidenced: the false teachers speak “loud boasts of nonsense [ματαιότητος],” (1) promising “freedom” (ἐλευθερίαν) from the Lord’s authoritative constraints, and (2) seeking to “allure” people into sexual immorality (δελεάζουσιν ἐν ἐπιθυμίαις σαρκὸς ἀσελγείαις) (Cf. the language of τὰ μιάσματα τοῦ κόσμου in v. 20, echoing v. 10; and ἐπιθυμία in 3:3 and 1:4.)

The fourth occurrence of τηρέω is found in 3:7. The echo to the Watchers is a bit fainter and the “dynamic analogy” has morphed again, but it is still present. Peter has just been speaking of scoffers who deny the coming judgment (3:3–4). They intentionally forget, Peter says, how God has acted in the past—specifically in creation and flood (vv. 5–6). The historical pattern is a prophetic pattern which will culminate in a final judgment (v. 7). As seen, the destruction of the “then-world” by the Flood is connected to the story of the Watchers. This was the case in the original text, with Genesis 6:1–4 linked to verses 5–8 and the entire unit introducing the flood narrative. As seen above, the connection became more explicit in later Jewish tradition. Peter also links the two, both in 1 Peter 3:18–22 and here in his juxtaposition in 2 Peter 2:4–5. It is therefore not surprising that in 3:7, Peter speaks of the current “heavens and earth” awaiting final judgment using the language of the Watchers account from 2:4: creation is stored up (τεθησαυρισμένοι) for fire, “kept for the day of judgment” (τηρούμενοι εἰς ἡμέραν κρίσεως) and the ungodly’s destruction. Now it is not merely one group of strange beings long ago who are “kept” “for judgment” (εἰς κρίσιν τηρουμένων, 2:4), nor is it limited to the ungodly in general (εἰς ἡμέραν κρίσεως . . . τηρεῖν, 2:9) or to the false teachers in

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(and even technically incompatible) referents in his work.

<sup>76</sup> Brown rightly observes that the “chains of darkness” language in v. 4 “proleptically foreshadows the same kind of darkness that awaits the false teachers” in v. 17. Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 86.

particular (τετήρηται, 2:17).<sup>77</sup> It is the entire “heavens and earth” that have once again become deeply corrupt as in Genesis 6:1–8 and which as an entirety are being “kept” like the Watchers “for the day of judgment.” Peter pictures the entire world as fulfilling the role and plot of the “angels who sinned” story.

### **“Angels Who Sinned” Conclusion**

The story begins with four verses in Genesis 6, recounting a bizarre episode where deviant angelic beings “saw” human women who were “good” and “took” them for themselves. This Fall-infused narrative involved two prongs: crossing divinely set up boundaries, and sexual sin. The result of their unions was warped offspring who were powerful and tall but still very much mortal. Yahweh responded in judgment by shortening human lifespans. As this behavior epitomized the wickedness of the day, Yahweh also decreed a worldwide flood. A “fall narrative” such as this with judgments all around leads readers to wonder what the fate of the “sons of God” was, but the story itself focuses on humanity. The details of this story are filled in by later Jewish tradition (especially 1 Enoch), which emphasized God’s judgment upon the angels. He imprisoned them for their behavior, where they are chastised until their release for final eternal judgment.

Peter’s appropriation of this strangest of biblical stories is both fascinating and instructive. Peter follows the basic contours of the Jewish haggadic traditions associated with this biblical story. Like Jude 6, Peter sees it as exemplifying God’s judgment of the wicked and thus serving as a warning for contemporary sinners. But Peter integrates the narrative deeply into his letter and into his story world. (1) This event is related to God’s destruction of the earth at the flood and also to his destruction of Sodom. There is a

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<sup>77</sup> These connections are sometimes mentioned, but usually very briefly. See Witherington, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians*, 375; Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 274; Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 399. Cf. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 301; Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 322.

historical pattern which also serves as a prophetic pattern—these events in the past show that God judges rebellious sinners, and point forward to a future culmination of such judgments. (2) Peter uses the story of the Watchers to characterize those of his own day. The wicked in general (2:9), the false teachers in particular (2:17), and even the entire heavens and earth (3:7) all are viewed as actors filling the roles of the Watchers of old. They all are “kept” in “darkness” “for judgment.”

### **Noah and the Flood**

The account of Noah and the flood seems to have been important to Peter, given his use of the story in both of his letters.<sup>78</sup> In 2 Peter, the account crops up twice—in 2:5 and again in 3:6 (with the story in the background of 3:8–10 as well, through Matt 24). The two occurrences are interconnected and thus cannot be fully separated in this study. However, this section focuses on 2:5 and how it is connected to the other echoes in 2 Peter. The next chapter of this dissertation focuses more fully on Peter’s appropriation in 3:6.<sup>79</sup> This section first briefly describes the flood story in Genesis, then looks at its later developments in Jewish literature, and then examines Peter’s appropriations (first in 1 Peter and then in 2 Peter).<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Jobes suggests (with reference to 1 Peter at least) that this is because Noah was “the most prominently known biblical figure in Asia Minor even among Gentiles.” Jobes, *1 Peter*, 245–46. There may be something to this, but I think there are other important factors, particularly the topics Peter was addressing and Jesus’ use of Noah.

<sup>79</sup> The same phenomenon exists for Peter’s Sodom references; see next section of this chapter.

<sup>80</sup> Jesus’ use of the flood story also influenced Peter, but its influence is seen not in the 2:5 reference but in the references in 2 Pet 3. It will thus be dealt with in the next chapter of this dissertation. An in-depth study of the flood narrative and its typological use through OT (in Exodus, Psalms, Isaiah, and Ezekiel), intertestamental (apocrypha and pseudepigrapha) and NT (by Jesus in Matt 24 and by Peter in 1 Pet 3 and 2 Pet 2–3) can be found in Scott T. Yoshikawa, “The Prototypical Use of the Noahic Flood in the New Testament” (PhD diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2004).

## Noah and the Flood in Genesis

Apart from referring to Noah as a “proclaimer of righteousness,” Peter’s reference to the flood account in 2:5 is a basic, terse summary of the narrative in Genesis 6–9. He highlights, though, not just judgment upon “humans” but destruction of the “world” (*κόσμος* appears twice in v. 5).<sup>81</sup>

Genesis 6:1–8, examined above, introduces the depraved state of the world at the time. The entire human population is characterized only by wickedness (vv. 5–6). The desperate situation is apparently epitomized in verses 1–4, where beautiful human women were joining with deviant heavenly beings and producing warped, fierce offspring (vv. 1–4).<sup>82</sup> Humankind had “corrupted” the earth (כָּל־בְּשָׂר אֶת־דֶּרֶכָּו עַל־הָאָרֶץ), filling it with “violence” (הַמָּס) (6:11–12). God’s decision is to undo creation, to “wipe out” not only humanity but all living creatures and the earth itself (6:7, 13).<sup>83</sup>

Verse 13 speaks of wiping out living creatures (כָּל־בְּשָׂר) with הָאָרֶץ. Verse 7 uses language more closely recalling Genesis 1–2: He will wipe out הָאָדָם (the man/humankind) whom he had created (בְּרָאתִי) from the ground (הָאֲדָמָה), along with a listing of the major categories of other living creatures from Genesis 1: מֵאָדָם עַד־בְּהֵמָה מִשָּׂמַיִם וְעַד־עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם. As Peter recognizes in 2 Peter 3:5–6, God’s use of water as medium of destruction was not arbitrary. It represented the de-creation of the world, bringing it back to the state of “formless and void” (תוהו וָבוהו) prior to the original creation (Gen 1:2). The “face of the ground” (פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה, 6:7) would be submerged by a

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<sup>81</sup> On the structure and literary coherence of the flood account, see Gordon J. Wenham, “The Coherence of the Flood Narrative,” *VT* 28, no. 3 (1978): 336–48; Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 101–4. On similar themes as well as a broader overview of the flood account in context, see Mark F. Rooker, “The Genesis Flood,” *SBJT* 5, no. 3 (2001). We are not here concerned with ancient Near Eastern parallels and possible influences, as it is the Genesis account alone (with later Jewish traditions) that Peter received.

<sup>82</sup> Rightly Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 147.

<sup>83</sup> On the flood as an “almost complete reversal” of the creation account, see P. J. Harland, “Creation, Uncreation and Re-creation,” in *The Value of Human Life: A Study of the Story of the Flood (Genesis 6–9)* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 89–111.

“flood of water” (הַמַּבּוּל מַיִם, 6:17); the earth’s surface would again become “the face of the deep,” the “face of the waters” (1:2).<sup>84</sup>

In stark contrast to “his generations” (דִּרְתָּיו, 6:9), Noah is described as “righteous” and “blameless,”<sup>85</sup> one who “walked with God” (6:9; cf. 6:8; 7:1).<sup>86</sup> Despite the disaster which was intended to be comprehensive in its scope, letting nothing escape, God provided Noah and his family deliverance. In fact, the very waters which destroyed everything else buoyed up the ark, keeping all on board alive (see 1 Pet 3:20). The deliverance of Noah should be set against the backdrop of the extreme nature of the deluge. The text (here or elsewhere in the OT) does not state that Noah “proclaimed righteousness.”<sup>87</sup> But as Carson notes, an “imaginative reading of the narrative” would undoubtedly presuppose “that Noah would have to provide some sort of rationale for his activity before the ungodly watching world.”<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> On literary parallels between creation and flood/recreation, see Bruce K. Waltke and Cathi J. Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 127–30; Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 351, 376, 378, 383; Yoshikawa, “Prototypical Use of Noahic Flood in NT,” 87–100; Warren A. Gage, *The Gospel of Genesis: Studies in Protology and Eschatology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2001).

<sup>85</sup> Kaminski performs a thorough study of Noah’s label of “righteous.” Carol M. Kaminski, *Was Noah Good? Finding Favour in the Flood Narrative*, LHBOTS 563 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014). But her conclusion, that Noah’s righteousness is after God’s calling of him, is likely incorrect. The flow of the narrative suggests that 6:9 is not meant as a summary statement of Noah’s life (focusing on his building the ark), but of his character to that point (explaining God’s choice of him). See fuller discussion of Noah’s righteousness in Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 137–42. Brown surveys OT references to Noah outside Genesis (Brown, 145–47).

<sup>86</sup> Noah’s “walking with God” links him to Enoch (5:22, 24). See Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 170; Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 356–59.

<sup>87</sup> Contra the interesting but unlikely suggestion of Matthew D. Jensen, “Noah, the Eighth Proclaimer of Righteousness: Understanding 2 Peter 2.5 in Light of Genesis 4.26,” *JSNT* 37, no. 4 (2015): 458–69. Rightly Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 405n42.

<sup>88</sup> Carson, “2 Peter,” 1051.

Noah emerges from the flood as a new Adam figure, in a newly created world.<sup>89</sup> As Peter will write, he passed from the “then-world” to the “now-world.”<sup>90</sup> The new creation aspect of the flood account is important for 2 Peter’s appropriation, but it does not come into play until 2 Peter 3. Thus, this aspect will be addressed in the next chapter of this dissertation.<sup>91</sup>

### **Noah and Flood in Jewish Tradition**

“Mention of the flood narrative is extraordinarily frequent in the literature of early Judaism.”<sup>92</sup> Often, as in both 1 and 2 Peter, it is linked to the story of the Watchers—though Jewish literature sometimes holds the Watchers responsible for humanity’s corruption and thus the flood (as seen in the previous section, especially 1 Enoch 1–36 and Jubilees) in ways that both Genesis and Peter do not.<sup>93</sup> While this is not

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<sup>89</sup> On Noah as a new Adam figure, cf. Yoshikawa, “Prototypical Use of Noachic Flood in NT,” 94–98; Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018); Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 398–99; Gage, *Gospel of Genesis*. Noah also prefigures Lot and Moses; see Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 130; Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 391–93, 398–99.

<sup>90</sup> Yoshikawa argues that within the literary structure Gen 1–11 itself, the flood is typologically charged. “The primary typological characteristic of the flood, therefore, is to function as a prototype for future events that involve the themes of (re)creation, judgment, and redemption and perhaps even more specifically, redemption through judgment resulting in (re)creation.” Yoshikawa, “Prototypical Use of Noachic Flood in NT,” 123.

<sup>91</sup> For a discussion of OT allusions to the flood outside of Genesis, see Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 107–10; Yoshikawa, “Prototypical Use of Noachic Flood in NT,” 55–267; Daniel R. Streett, “As It Was in the Days of Noah: The Prophets’ Typological Interpretation of Noah’s Flood,” *CTR* 5, no. 1 (2007): 33–51.

<sup>92</sup> Carson, “2 Peter,” 1051. Cf. Yoshikawa, “Prototypical Use of Noachic Flood in NT,” 340. Carson writes that the flood appears in wisdom and historical works (e.g., Wis 10:4; 14:6–7; 3 Macc 2:4; 4 Macc 15:31; Josephus’ *Ant* 1.72–119), apocalyptic literature (Jubilees, 1 Enoch, 2 Esdras), the DSS (e.g., CD-A II, 17–21; V, 1; 1QapGen ar; 1Q19 + 1Q19 bis; 4Q176; 4Q244), and Philo (e.g., *Abraham* 41–45; *Confusion* 23–25; *Moses* 2.54, 59; *On Dreams* 1.74; *Flight* 191–193; *QG* 2.15, 18, 45). Carson, “2 Peter,” 1051–52.

<sup>93</sup> Though this is not true for all Jewish texts. For example, 1QapGen “attributes the cause of the Flood to wicked humanity and the Watchers,” but “4Q370 focuses on the nature of the human rebellion that causes the Flood.” This is summarized as “human ingratitude and rebellion in response to God’s abundance/provision.” Jeremy D. Lyon, “Qumran Interpretation of the Genesis Flood” (PhD diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014), 170–71. Even the remaining books comprising 1 Enoch (spanning chaps. 37–105) put greater emphasis on human rebellion. This was brought to my attention by N. T. Wright, *Paul and His Recent Interpreters* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015), 161. For a breakdown of where various Jewish texts laid blame for the flood, see De Vivo, “2 Peter 2:4–16,” 59–63.



the place for a detailed examination, a few points salient to the study of 2 Peter's use must be briefly surveyed.<sup>94</sup>

First, 2 Peter 2:5 depicts Noah as both a righteous man (e.g., Wis 10:4; Sir 44:17; Jubilees 5:19; Philo's *Alleg. Interp.* 3.77; *Abraham* 27, 47; *Moses* 2.59, *QG* 809) and as a "proclaimer of righteousness."<sup>95</sup> That Noah preached to the wicked of his day is expressed in various sources, including Sibylline Oracles 1:128–129, 148–198; Jubilees 20–29; *Eccles. Rab.* 9:15; *b. Sanh.* 108, and Josephus *Ant.* 1.74.<sup>96</sup> Sibylline Oracles 1:148–98 provides a "long sermon" of Noah's, where he is thought to have urged repentance.<sup>97</sup> Josephus gives an "imaginative description"<sup>98</sup> of Noah preaching to his contemporaries:

But Noah, indignant at their conduct and viewing their counsels with displeasure, urged them to come to a better frame of mind and amend their ways; but seeing that, far from yielding, they were completely enslaved to the pleasure of sin, he feared that they would murder him and, with his wives and sons and his sons' wives, quitted the country. (*Ant.* 1.74)<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> For thorough studies of the use of the Noachic flood in Second Temple texts, see Yoshikawa, "Prototypical Use of Noachic Flood in NT," 268–350; Michael E. Stone, Aryeh Amihay, and Vered Hillel, eds., *Noah and His Book(s)* (Atlanta: SBL, 2010); Jack P. Lewis, *A Study of the Interpretation of Noah and the Flood in Jewish and Christian Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 1978); Brown, "Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a," 110–21. Cf. Devorah Dimant, "Noah in Early Jewish Literature," in *Biblical Figures Outside the Bible*, ed. Michael E. Stone and Theodore A. Bergren (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 1998), 123–50.

<sup>95</sup> Example references drawn from Brown. For a fuller discussion of Noah's righteousness in Jewish literature, see Brown, "Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a," 148–60; Dimant, "Noah in Early Jewish Literature."

<sup>96</sup> Carson, "2 Peter," 1052. Philo too may witness to Noah as "preacher"; he explains that the flood generation "heard predictions about the impending deluge, presumably from Noah" (*QG* 2.13). Brown, "Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a," 155.

<sup>97</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 250–51.

<sup>98</sup> Carson, "2 Peter," 1052.

<sup>99</sup> Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities (Books 1–3)*, trans. H. Thackeray, LCL 242 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1930), 34–35. For further treatment of Josephus' portrayal of Noah, see Louis H. Feldman, "Josephus' Portrait of Noah and Its Parallels in Philo, Pseudo-Philo's 'Biblical Antiquities,' and Rabbinic Midrashim," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 55 (1988): 31–57.

Second, Jewish tradition usually held the flood generation guilty of the same sins as the Sodomites, and often closely associated both events.<sup>100</sup> Schlosser points to Philo's *Drunkenness* 222 and *QG* 2:8, 2:16, and 4:53; Josephus' *Ant.* 1:72–73 and 194; Testament of Naphtali 3–4; and Jubilees 20:5.<sup>101</sup> The last of these texts (which Schlosser notes “est particulièrement clair”<sup>102</sup>) parallels the judgments of the giants and the Sodomites and equates their sins: “And he told them of the judgment of the giants, and the judgment of the Sodomites, how they had been judged on account of their wickedness, and had died on account of their fornication, and uncleanness, and mutual corruption through fornication.”<sup>103</sup> Peter's merging of the sins of his three groups in 2 Peter 2:10a makes sense in this light.

Finally, Noah's flood is often “seen by the writers of Second Temple Judaism as an eschatologically charged event.”<sup>104</sup> It is a “prototype of eschatological judgment.”<sup>105</sup> In addition 1 Enoch (90, 108), there are the Qumran texts 1QapGen, 4Q252, and 4Q370 which Lyon studies.<sup>106</sup> 1QapGen literarily links the judgment of the

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<sup>100</sup> Jacques Schlosser, “Les jours de Noé et de Lot: à propos de Luc 17:26-30,” *Revue biblique* 80, no. 1 (January 1973): 19–25. Cf. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 251; Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, Der 2. Petrusbrief*, 188–89.

<sup>101</sup> Schlosser also lists Rabbinic examples; see Schlosser, “Les jours de Noé et de Lot,” 23–24.

<sup>102</sup> Schlosser, “Les jours de Noé et de Lot,” 23.

<sup>103</sup> James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols. (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1983–1985), 2:94. See Schlosser, “Les jours de Noé et de Lot,” 23.

<sup>104</sup> Yoshikawa, “Prototypical Use of Noahic Flood in NT,” 339.

<sup>105</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 251. This is well argued in Yoshikawa, “Prototypical Use of Noahic Flood in NT.” Before analyzing NT use, Yoshikawa studies the typological shape of the flood account in Gen 1–11 itself, then the typological use throughout the rest of the OT, and then its use in Second Temple Judaism. Cf. Marcar, “In the Days of Noah”; Streett, “As It Was in the Days of Noah,” 34–37; Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 113–14; Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, Der 2. Petrusbrief*, 188–89.

<sup>106</sup> Lyon, “Qumran Interpretation of Genesis Flood,” 176–78. Lyon also studies 4Q422, but notes that this text does not exemplify this feature. Cf. Florentino García Martínez, “Interpretations of the Flood in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Interpretations of the Flood*, ed. Florentino García Martínez and Gerard P. Luttikhuisen, TBN 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1999). On eschatology in 1 Enoch, see James C. VanderKam, “The Book of Enoch and the Qumran Scrolls,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. John J. Collins and Timothy H. Lim (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 160–61.

flood with the “eschatological fiery judgment” foreseen in Noah’s visions.<sup>107</sup> 4Q252 depicts both events as following a “divinely ordered timetable.” 4Q370 invokes “eschatological language” for the “Flood narrative (I:3–5; cf. Isa 24:18–20),” and admonishes his contemporaries to “not rebel” against God as the flood generation did.<sup>108</sup> As Carson (as well as Dimant) explains, the Qumran texts (he lists CD-A II, 17–21; V, 1; 1QapGen; 1Q19; 4Q176; 4Q244) tend to identify their community with Noah; they constitute the “righteous remnant.” The Watchers, on the other hand, are identified with the corrupt Jerusalem priesthood. The flood, as for Peter, typifies the coming judgment on the wicked, through which only their righteous remnant will be saved.<sup>109</sup> At this point one should not be surprised to see similarities between the two (see chaps. 2 and 3 of this dissertation); both tend to appropriate Scripture in eschatological-apocalyptic ways. While in 2 Peter 2:4–10a Peter explicitly points to Sodom’s destruction as an “example” of future judgment, he clearly thinks the same of the flood. This becomes explicit in Peter’s use of the flood story in chapter 3.

### **Noah and the Flood in Peter**

This section explores Peter’s appropriation of Noah and the flood, first glancing at 1 Peter before focusing on 2 Peter. As mentioned earlier, full treatment of the flood material in 2 Peter 3 will be kept for the next chapter of this dissertation. Peter’s motifs are interconnected, so it is hard to delimit perfectly. The flood motif is closely tied

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<sup>107</sup> Also, Josephus says that Adam “predicted a destruction of the universe, at one time by a violent fire and at another by a mighty deluge of water” (Josephus, *Ant.* 1.70 [LCL, 33]).

<sup>108</sup> Lyon, “Qumran Interpretation of Genesis Flood,” 176–78.

<sup>109</sup> Carson, “2 Peter,” 1051. Cf. Dimant, “Noah in Early Jewish Literature,” 140–44. For a fuller study of the flood narrative at Qumran, see Moshe J. Bernstein, “Noah and the Flood at Qumran,” in *The Provo International Conference on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Donald Parry and Eugene Ulrich, STDJ 30 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 199–231.

to the other judgment stories of 2 Peter 2, but also to the creation/new creation motifs of 2 Peter 3.<sup>110</sup> I focus on the former here but also show how they connect to the latter.<sup>111</sup>

**Reference in 1 Peter.** As in 2 Peter 2:4–5, the flood story is juxtaposed with the story of the Watchers in 1 Peter 3:18–22. This passage was discussed in the previous section with an emphasis on the Watchers. A few more points are in order here, focusing on Noah and the flood.<sup>112</sup>

Firstly, Peter speaks of the days before the flood as a time when “the patience of God waited” (1 Pet 3:20, *ὅτε ἀπεξεδέχετο ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ μακροθυμία*). While not explicit in 2 Peter 2’s mention of the story, this idea features prominently in 2 Peter 3:9, with an implied connection to the flood story mentioned a few verses earlier. Note the use of *μακροθυμέω* in 2 Peter 3:9: *ἀλλὰ μακροθυμεῖ εἰς ὑμᾶς*. The verb occurs only here in Peter’s letters, while the noun *μακροθυμία* is only in 1 Peter 3:20 and 2 Peter 3:15. In all occurrences of this word group, God’s delay of judgment is the topic, and the flood story is either explicitly or implicitly referenced.<sup>113</sup>

Secondly, Peter fixates on the number eight. In 2 Peter 2:5 a Classical Greek term is used (*ὄγδοον*). Here in 1 Peter 3:20, a more common construction is employed: *ὀλίγοι, τοῦτ’ ἔστιν ὀκτῶ ψυχαί*. Peter’s use of the term here is to further underscore or

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<sup>110</sup> Brown is right in saying that the flood’s “use in 2 Pet 2:5 not only provides another plank in the current argument, but also provides the foundation for the eschatological argument in 2 Peter 3.” Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 123, 128.

<sup>111</sup> The influence of Jesus’ use of the flood narrative on Peter must be remembered. For a survey of Luke 17:26–27 and Matt 24:37–38, see Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 121–23.

<sup>112</sup> Marcar argues that 1 Peter’s use of the flood narrative is more pervasive than often thought. For example, many of the sins listed in 4:3–5 “are dominant themes in the indictments of the flood generation, especially sins related to sexuality, pleasure and idolatry.” Marcar, “In the Days of Noah,” 560–61. The phrase “flood of debauchery” (*τῆς ἀσωτίας ἀνάχυσιν*) may also be a play on words alluding to Noah’s flood.

<sup>113</sup> Brown follows Grudem’s (Augustinian) interpretation of this passage, which has Jesus preaching *through Noah* to the flood generation. This connects well with 2 Pet 2:5, but as argued above the “fallen angels” interpretation is most likely correct. Brown acknowledges that he is following a minority position. Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 164–65.

expound on the “few” (ὀλίγοι) that are saved. Peter’s readers likewise feel outnumbered, nearly alone, in a hostile world. The next section discusses this in light of 2 Peter’s use. But it is an interesting point of connection between the two occurrences, perhaps another sign that the same basic conception of the story lies behind both uses.<sup>114</sup>

Thirdly, Peter sees an eschatological symbolic correspondence (or “typological connection”) between salvation in the ark and the sign of Christian baptism.<sup>115</sup> (Peter uses the word ἀντίτυπον in 1 Pet 3:21). Second Peter is silent on the subject of baptism; he appropriates the flood story in other ways. But a major point of continuity lies in the fact that in *both cases* (perhaps I should say “all three cases,” thinking of 2 Peter 2 and 2 Peter 3 as semi-distinct cases), Peter draws out this same type of forward-pointing, eschatological significance. In fact, given his three distinct-yet-similar appropriations, it is evident that what underlies the specific appropriations is a broader understanding of the entire flood narrative as forward-pointing. It is “prophetic,” as all redemptive history is for Peter. It has particular relevance for his day because of where he stands, at the beginning of the eschatological fulfillment of God’s promises (1 Pet 1 and 2 Pet 1; cf. Acts 2) awaiting the final consummation. Because the flood story, like all historical narratives, is multilayered and complex, its appropriation will be multifaceted.<sup>116</sup> In 1 Peter 3, Peter emphasizes the way Noah’s salvation through water is pictured again in baptism. Here the water as means of salvation is emphasized (and thus corresponds to baptism); in 2 Peter, the water as judgment is emphasized. Peter also (as mentioned

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<sup>114</sup> Contra Bauckham, who denies any connection between the two uses. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 250. Davids is correct to conclude that “there does not appear to be any reason to import this symbolism into 2 Peter, for his point appears to be fewness, not a symbolic eight.” Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 227n21. Cf. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 405; Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 135–36. The significant connections between the two passages, pointed out by Green, strengthen this argument. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 252–53. See discussion below.

<sup>115</sup> For further discussion, see Benjamin Sargent, *Written to Serve: The Use of Scripture in 1 Peter*, LNTS 547 (London: T&T Clark, 2015), 139–41; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 220–21. Cf. Patrick T. Egan, *Ecclesiology and the Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2016), 179–82.

<sup>116</sup> Similarly, see Marcar, “In the Days of Noah,” 556.

earlier) in 1 Peter 3 sees the suffering Christians of his day as akin to the lone righteous figure of Noah against the powerful dark forces of his age. He sees these, though, because he *really does* believe that his generation awaits a global destruction and the recreation of the world (2 Pet 3), the final culmination of the pattern begun in Noah's flood. Baptism itself stands in this pattern, pointing back to Noah and forward to the final fulfillment; it is in fact a proleptic enactment by new "Noahs" of the final "flood and recreation."<sup>117</sup>

Peter's reference to Noah and the flood in 1 Peter 3:18–22 stretches in somewhat different directions from his uses in 2 Peter. But important similarities exist: his use of the number eight (the least significant one), his portrayal of the pre-flood days as a time of God's "patience," and his conviction of a forward-pointing eschatological significance to the event. The differences are important for understanding 2 Peter's use as well, for the different directions he takes (here, baptism) suggest a larger hermeneutical, "prophetic" perspective on this event (and others) in biblical history.

**2 Peter 2:5.** We now move to the main text in 2 Peter 2:5.<sup>118</sup> The verse itself reads, "and [if] he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah a proclaimer of righteousness and seven others, while bringing a flood upon the world of the ungodly" (καὶ ἀρχαίου κόσμου οὐκ ἐφείσατο, ἀλλὰ ὄγδοον Νῶε δικαιοσύνης κήρυκα ἐφύλαξεν, κατακλυσμὸν κόσμῳ ἀσεβῶν ἐπάξας). This must be connected to the apodosis in verse 9, where the example serves a dual function (like the next example and unlike the previous): "the Lord knows how to rescue the godly" on the one hand, and to judge the wicked on the other.

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<sup>117</sup> As Marcar writes, "The recipients of 1 Peter were to understand themselves as occupying a similar position in cosmic history as that occupied by Noah and his family in the days before the flood." Marcar, "In the Days of Noah," 566.

<sup>118</sup> Brown sees two specific connections between 2 Pet 2:5 and Heb 11:7: (1) Noah condemned τὸν κόσμον, a usage of κόσμος "identical to that found in 2 Pet 2:5." (2) "Noah's ministry of condemnation at least implicitly parallels Noah's righteous preaching in 2 Pet 2:5." Brown, "Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a," 163.

While Peter follows some of the Jewish tradition concerning the Noah account (his being a preacher, link to Sodom and Watchers, etc.), scholars rightly point out that this verse alludes directly to the Genesis text. The phrase in verse 5, *κατακλυσμὸν κόσμῳ ἀσεβῶν ἐπάξας*, is a direct allusion to Genesis 6:17 LXX: *ἐγὼ δὲ ἰδοὺ ἐπάγω τὸν κατακλυσμὸν ὕδωρ ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν*.<sup>119</sup> This suggests that at least for this example, Peter is thinking of the original biblical account and not only of later Jewish developments. While it is not possible to confirm, the similar situation with Peter's use of Balaam may hint at an analogous approach to the Watchers and Sodom stories as well.<sup>120</sup> These are not just Jewish stories for Peter (though they are that); for him they are also scriptural and historical.

As mentioned in the 1 Peter 3 section above, Peter seems fascinated by the number eight in this story. (Here he uses an obscure Classical Greek term, *ὄγδοον*, meaning essentially “one of eight.”)<sup>121</sup> Various explanations for its significance have been offered. Bauckham believes that “Christian tradition was in the habit of specifying” the number saved at the flood. This, he proposes, is due to the “eschatological symbolism of the number eight.”<sup>122</sup> Davids is correct to push back, writing that “there does not appear to be any reason to import this symbolism into 2 Peter, for his point appears to be fewness, not a symbolic eight.”<sup>123</sup> Schreiner suggests that 1 Peter's usage apply here:

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<sup>119</sup> See Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 251; Carson, “2 Peter,” 1052; Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 97–100. Brown points out additional minor connections to the Genesis text.

<sup>120</sup> It may be that this is truer of the flood account than the others (Watchers and Sodom), since he got the latter two from Jude and this one he brought in himself. But the fact that a similar situation is true of Balaam hints in the opposite direction.

<sup>121</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 250.

<sup>122</sup> The eighth day represents the beginning of the new “creation week.” Bauckham points out also that this eschatological symbolism is (later) linked by Justin Martyr to the eight people saved from the flood (*Dial.* 138.1). Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 250. Cf. Ostmeyer, *Die Briefe des Petrus und des Judas*, 130. But Witherington rightly observes that Bauckham “overexegetes” *ὄγδοον* in 2 Pet 2:5. Witherington, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians*, 353. Cf. Paulsen, *Der zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief*, 133.

<sup>123</sup> Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 227n21. Also, if 2 Peter is authentic, Bauckham's

“eight” here, as there, underscores how few and insignificant the righteous appear. But despite how “outnumbered,” God “knows how to” deliver them from trials and judgment (v. 9).<sup>124</sup>

Peter refers to Noah as a “proclaimer of righteousness.” As noted earlier, this was a common part of the Jewish traditions surrounding the Genesis account, and it appears that Peter thought it at least somewhat accurate. It is also not a massive stretch given the contours of the Genesis text itself (as discussed). The reference to Noah as a “proclaimer”/“preacher” of “righteousness” fits well with 2 Peter’s emphasis on true versus false teaching and true versus false prophets. Noah, while not labelled a prophet, stood in the line of those who spoke the true word of God, with the prophets of old and the apostles now (2 Pet 1:16–2:1; 3:1–3).<sup>125</sup> Like them, he called the wicked to repentance so they would avoid God’s judgment. Noah called people to the same “way of righteousness” that Peter and his fellow apostles (and the prophets before them) do (2:21). And Noah as a “proclaimer of righteousness” was saved to inhabit a new world where this righteousness was supposed to dwell. Sadly, it became as corrupt as the “ancient world,” leading Peter’s generation to await a new creation where “righteousness dwells” (3:13).<sup>126</sup>

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“Christian tradition” argument is less compelling (since the letter is dated earlier).

<sup>124</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 405. The significant connections between 2 Pet 2:5 and 1 Pet 3:18–22, pointed out by Green, strengthen this argument. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 252–53.

<sup>125</sup> I think this is the main significance of the “preacher” reference. Contra De Vivo, who writes that Noah-as-preacher is “absolutely essential” to 2 Peter, “because it is only when Noah preaches righteousness that the flood is delayed. The delay of the flood provides an explanation for the delay of the impending conflagration (3:9).” De Vivo, “2 Peter 2:4–16,” 81. There is no evidence in 2 Peter or in Genesis that Noah’s preaching is *causally related* to the flood’s delay. 1 Pet 3:20 speaks of God’s forbearance in the “days of Noah,” but it seems that this is related to the time needed for the ark’s preparation.

<sup>126</sup> Thus Michaels writes of Noah as “proclaimer of righteousness,” “i.e. the righteousness of a new world, 2 Pet 3:13.” J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, WBC, vol. 49 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 201. The only other occurrence of *δικαιοσύνη* in 2 Peter is in 1:1.



Referring to Noah and to Lot, 2 Peter 2:9 says that the Lord knows how “to deliver the righteous out of trials/testing” (ἐκ πειρασμοῦ ῥύεσθαι). While this may apply more to Lot (see later in this chapter), Peter likely intends it for Noah as well. The immediate context for 1 Peter 3’s mention of the Noah account is believers’ suffering and facing temptation (3:17–18; 4:1–5). Noah and his band of seven others stood alone, facing dark demonic onslaughts on the one hand (3:19–20) and a debauched society on the other (4:2–4).<sup>127</sup> In 2 Peter 2:5, Peter’s re-use of the “eight” idea, his calling Noah a “proclaimer of righteousness,” and his later mention of fleshly scoffers (3:1–6) hint at the “trials/testing” that “Noah the eighth” faced. (Also, the Watchers were just mentioned again, albeit slightly differently than in 1 Pet 3.) Peter sees Noah as akin to Lot, just as he sees the flood generation as akin to Sodom (in line with Jewish tradition). Noah, like Lot, was a lonely man in a shockingly wicked world—facing demonic and fleshly temptations, as well as opposition from society. Peter’s point, though, is that just as God rescued Noah out of these, he will rescue those who play Noah’s role in this new—and last—act of the drama.<sup>128</sup>

Second Peter 2:5 uses the word κόσμος twice: he refers to the world of Noah’s day as both “the ancient world” (ἀρχαίου κόσμου) and “the world of the ungodly” (κόσμῳ ἀσεβῶν). This is significant for two interconnected reasons. (1) Peter operates with a “three worlds” schema (discussed earlier in this chapter) which Peter sets the stage for in 2:5 and becomes prominent in chapter 3. (2) In light of the “three worlds” schema, Peter

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<sup>127</sup> While 4:2–4 does not mention Noah, Peter likely intended a connection between the similarly depraved societies of Gen 6 and his day. Rightly Marcar, “In the Days of Noah,” 560–61.

<sup>128</sup> Brown sees Noah serving “two purposes”: he is a “moral paradigm” for the faithful few living in an ungodly world, and he is a “prophetic type of a righteous believer who finds” eschatological salvation. Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 170–71. Brown is correct, but I would merge the two into a single prophetic-narrative-paraenetic whole. The “prophetic,” forward-pointing story is inextricably linked to the “moral paradigm” aspect. Vögtle notes that Peter is anticipating chap. 3’s “typologischen Relation von erster und zweiter Totalvernichtung der Welt (3,5–7).” Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, Der 2. Petrusbrief*, 189.

sees his current world as analogous to that of Noah's day. Peter's use of *κόσμος* in this verse thus leads me to survey echoes of the Noah and flood account elsewhere in 2 Peter.

**Echoes of Noah and flood in 2 Peter.** As just noted, Peter's use of the word *κόσμος* in 2:5 is significant for exploring echo-connections to the Noah/flood account elsewhere in 2 Peter. First is Peter's "three worlds" schema. For Peter, each of the successive worlds in history is prophetically (or typologically) related to each other. The original "ancient world" was created by God and was destroyed by the flood because of human wickedness. The present world (the "now-world," 2 Pet 3:7) emerged from the flood but is set to be destroyed by fire, again due to human wickedness. The world emerging in the future will finally break the pattern, in fulfillment of God's promise (3:13; Isa 65:17). This pattern is discussed in detail in the next chapter, as it becomes prominent in 2 Peter 3. But Peter sets the stage for it already in 2:5.<sup>129</sup> It is important to emphasize here that the "worlds" connection demonstrates that Peter's two uses of the flood story (in chap. 2 and chap. 3) are not completely separate, and they cannot be siloed off from each other. Peter's use of this story is multifaceted, but it is just that—*faceted*, implying a single "submerged narrative" beneath both exposed "iceberg tips" (as well as that in 1 Pet 3:18–22).<sup>130</sup>

Under Peter's "three worlds" schema, the present world is analogous to Noah's before the flood. It is unsurprising, therefore, that he seems to characterize it thus elsewhere in the letter. Three of 2 Peter's five occurrences of *κόσμος* refer explicitly to the flood (2:5; 3:6). The other two refer to the present world, but in a way that is connected to the overall schema dominated by the flood narrative's characterization of evil worlds. In 1:4, believers have, through divine promises (*ἐπαγγέλματα*), "escaped the corruption in

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<sup>129</sup> Cf. Paulsen, *Der zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief*, 133; Fuchs and Reymond, *La deuxième épître de saint Pierre; Jude*, 84–85.

<sup>130</sup> Language is indebted to and adapted from Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1–4:11*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002).

the world by sinful passion” (ἀποφυγόντες τῆς ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἐν ἐπιθυμίᾳ φθορᾶς). This verse is linked conceptually and verbally to 3:13, where believers wait for a “new heavens and new earth” in contrast to the corrupted one, “according to his promise” (κατὰ τὸ ἐπάγγελμα αὐτοῦ).<sup>131</sup> (These are the only two occurrences of ἐπάγγελμα in the entire NT.) The “corruption in the world” and the new creation believers await is analogous to the “world of the ungodly” in Noah’s day and the renewed world he inhabited, respectively. Noah’s “world of the ungodly” (telescoped with Sodom) was marked by “evil passion” and despising God’s lordship, as is Peter’s contemporary world of 1:4 and beyond—this is the very point of Peter’s generalization in 2:9–10, which slides right into description of the present-day false teachers.

The other occurrence of κόσμος, in 2:20, is similarly charged, with lexical links both to 1:4 and to 2:10. Here Peter warns against “escaping” (ἀποφυγόντες) from the “defilements of the world” (τὰ μιάσματα τοῦ κόσμου) through “knowledge” (ἐν ἐπιγνώσει) of Jesus, and then returning to the same corruption. The references to “escaping” (ἀποφυγόντες) and knowledge (ἐν ἐπιγνώσει) are a clear verbal link to 1:2–4. The phrase τὰ μιάσματα τοῦ κόσμου does connect with 1:4’s τῆς ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἐν ἐπιθυμίᾳ φθορᾶς, but there is also a lexical link to 2:10 with the word μίασμα. Verse 10 uses a slightly different root, μιασμός, but they are virtually identical.<sup>132</sup> Also, of course, the idea of the corrupt κόσμος ties all of this back to Noah’s world in 2:5. Once again, the present world is the “world of the ungodly” (2:5) full of μίασμα/μιασμός (defilement, 2:20 and 2:10) as in Noah’s day, from whose temptations Noah’s successors need to escape (ἀποφυγόντες) just as the Lord rescued (ῥύεσθαι) him from them (2:9).

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<sup>131</sup> Vögtle explicitly links Noah’s entering the new world as a prefiguration of the righteous who will receive the promise of 2 Pet 3:13. Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, Der 2. Petrusbrief*, 191.

<sup>132</sup> See Walter Bauer and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. William F. Arndt and Frederick W. Danker, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 521.

## **Noah and Flood Conclusion**

Bauckham helpfully sums up the connection between Noah's story and the story which Peter's world inhabits: "Noah, preserved from the old world to be the beginning of the new world after the Flood, is a type of faithful Christians who will be preserved from the present world to inherit the new world after the judgment."<sup>133</sup> Peter's brief reference to Noah and the flood in 2 Peter 2:5 can certainly be referred to as a "moralizing use" of the OT,<sup>134</sup> but it would be a huge mistake to see it *only* as that. Peter uses the story to exhort his readers toward faithfulness, obedience, and trust; but he does so because he sees the events of Noah and the flood as a story which foretells the story of his own day. He sees in it, and in the other stories in this paragraph of 2 Peter 2, a pattern based in God's faithful character—which is thus certain to be completed. Once again, Peter does not simply exhort his readers to abstract ethical behavior with a distant-but-useful example. He more subtly but more powerfully calls them to embody Noah's role and to inhabit the story of the flood generation. For Peter this is never merely a literary device; he is convinced that the "now-world" really is analogous to Noah's "then-world," that his time is also a time of "trials/temptations," and that those of his readers who refuse to heed the warnings of the new "proclaimers of righteousness" really will face a judgment analogous to and worse than that of the flood. It will be by fire—which leads to Peter's next OT story.

## **Sodom and Lot**

Peter's use of Sodom and Lot takes up the bulk of the protasis of 2 Peter 2:4–10a, spanning verses 6–8. While Peter uses the Sodom and Lot aspects of the story to

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<sup>133</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 250. De Vivo writes, "Since Noah is the bridge between the first two worlds, he became the example to those living in the second, post-diluvian world. 2 Peter encourages his community to remain faithful to the commandments of God. If they do, like Noah, they will be the bridge between the two worlds, this time, between the post-diluvian world and the world to come." De Vivo, "2 Peter 2:4–16," 80.

<sup>134</sup> Carson, "2 Peter," 1052.

make two distinct points (and only the Sodom portion comes from Jude),<sup>135</sup> Carson is correct that both “must be taken together because the interpretation of each is linked with the interpretation of the other.”<sup>136</sup> Peter’s material can be broken into three parts: (1) the basic recounting of the Genesis 18–19 story, (2) interpretive additions, and (3) eschatological appropriation. I study each facet by tracing the story through its original account in Genesis, surveying later Jewish developments, and then by examining the usage in 2 Peter 2:6–8 and echoes throughout the letter.

### **Sodom and Lot in Genesis 18–19**

The Sodom and Lot account occurs after the so-called primeval history, as part of the Abraham saga.<sup>137</sup> As Peter references, God’s patience is at an end with the twin cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Their wickedness is great, and he is about to judge them with the proverbial “fire and brimstone” that will raze the cities to the ground in a smoldering heap. The incident appears in Genesis because Abraham’s nephew, Lot, happens to be living in Sodom—thus providing a link to Abraham’s story. The story proper is contained in Genesis 19. But Genesis 18’s record of Abraham’s intercession with Yahweh is crucial to the narrative’s characterization of Lot.<sup>138</sup> As in the previous

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<sup>135</sup> For detailed analysis of 2 Pet 2:6–8’s use of Jude 7, see De Vivo, “2 Peter 2:4–16,” 83–106.

<sup>136</sup> Carson, “2 Peter,” 1052.

<sup>137</sup> Brown discusses how Lot connects to the Abraham saga: “The account of Lot is intricately bound to Abraham in the book of Genesis. In many ways Lot’s role is secondary and used merely to highlight God’s dealings with Abraham.” Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 223. He references Helyer, who points out three “crises” in the Abraham narrative “that jeopardize the seed blessing” which “directly relate to Lot and Sodom” (Brown, 177–78). See Larry R. Helyer, “The Separation of Abram and Lot: Its Significance in the Patriarchal Narratives,” *JSOT* 8, no. 26 (1983): 77–88. For a fuller survey of Lot in the OT, see Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 224–29.

<sup>138</sup> Thus rightly Cotter, arguing that “causal connections” as well as “characters, point of view, time, motion, and theme all serve to bind Genesis 18–19 tightly together.” David W. Cotter, *Genesis*, Berit Olam (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003), 116. Hamilton likewise highlights important connections. Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18–50*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 30. Cf. John Van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1975), 215–16. For a close, integrated reading of Gen 18–19, see Robert I. Letellier, *Day in Mamre, Night in Sodom: Abraham and Lot in Genesis 18 and 19*, BibInt 10 (Leiden: Brill, 1995). Cf. Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 180–83.

sections of this chapter of the dissertation, I do not examine every detail of the OT narrative. Three elements in particular help better grasp Peter's appropriation of both the judgment and deliverance sides to the story: (1) the nature of Sodom's sins, (2) Lot's characterization as "righteous," and (3) intratextual literary links to the flood and "sons of God" narratives. Carson notes that the first two of these are "longstanding exegetical debates."<sup>139</sup> I use the third to shed light on those debates as well as to shed light on Peter's use of this account.

**Literary hyperlinks.** As elsewhere in the book of Genesis (see previous two accounts studied in this chapter), so here literary "hyperlinks"<sup>140</sup> to other narratives in the book play a crucial role in conveying the meaning of the story. The Lot-and-Sodom narrative bears important resemblances to the previous two accounts, the "sons of God" and the flood. Remember that these in turn are linked to the fall ("sons") and creation (flood) accounts. (In addition, there is a small echo of Cain and Abel which is significant.) A later literary appropriation of the Sodom story in Judges also sheds light on the story's early reception and thus furnishes important clues to debated questions about the Sodom story.<sup>141</sup>

The "sons of God" and flood accounts are evoked together as a single story in the Sodom narrative. (Earlier I noted how they are already somewhat connected in Gen 6, and that they become more closely linked in later Jewish tradition.) Connections include the following:

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<sup>139</sup> Carson, "2 Peter," 1052.

<sup>140</sup> I adopt this term from Tim Mackie, BibleProject, <https://bibleproject.com>.

<sup>141</sup> There are resemblances in Abraham's intercession to Moses' intercession in Exod 32–34, but this is outside the scope of this dissertation. See Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, WBC (Waco, TX: Word, 1994), 52–53; Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, NAC (Nashville: B&H, 2005), 222. Hamilton writes that Abraham here "becomes the pattern for other intercessors" including Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, Job, Amos, "and especially Moses." Hamilton, *Genesis 18–50*, 25.

1. This is the next major violent judgment after the flood. (The Tower of Babel judgment was of a different character.)<sup>142</sup>
2. As in the flood narrative, all are destroyed except for one (relatively) righteous man and his family (though in Gen 19, not all of the family made it out).<sup>143</sup>
3. Both involved “raining” down judgment from heaven. The Sodom account is the first time the verb “rain” (מטר) occurs after the flood account (Gen 7:4; 19:24).<sup>144</sup> This time fire “rains” down from heaven, as opposed to water.
4. The sins mentioned or hinted at in both stories are similar: sexual deviance (6:1–4) and violence (6:11) in Genesis 6, which combine in the Genesis 19 scene between Lot’s household and the people of the city.
5. Both stories (or for Gen 6, combinations of stories) involve at least attempted human and angelic sexual intercourse.<sup>145</sup> In the case of Sodom it was unwitting and unsuccessful. But given, first, the other links to the flood story, and second, the fact that these are the *only* two instances anywhere in the Hebrew Bible of such an attempt, the parallel is striking.
6. There is a similar “fall” scene after both accounts of deliverance. In both cases, the “hero”/“righteous” man gets drunk and is involved in sexually-charged impropriety led by his child(ren).
7. Other minor connections include the following: “Interior monologues” of Yahweh are presented in Genesis 6:5–7, 11:6–7, and 19:17–19.<sup>146</sup> The angels “shut” (סגר) Lot and family inside the house (19:10), as Yahweh did to Noah and family in the ark (Gen

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<sup>142</sup> As I later observe, there are evocations of the Babel story in the Sodom narrative. There are also literary connections between Gen 6 and the Babel story. See Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 467. Literarily, Babel is closely connected to the Table of Nations in Gen 10 and the call of Abraham in Gen 12. On this see e.g., Mathews, 431–87; Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, 112–15; Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, NSBT (Leicester: Apollos, 2003), 73–77. This in turn helps set the background for the Sodom story. Michael also demonstrates the literary links between the Tower of Babel narrative and Jacob’s dream of a heavenly ladder. See Matthew Michael, “The Tower of Babel and Yahweh’s Heavenly Staircase,” *HBT* 39, no. 1 (2017): 31–45. For a classic study on the internal literary structure of the Babel narrative, see Jan P. Fokkelman, *Narrative Art in Genesis: Specimens of Stylistic and Structural Analysis*, 2nd ed. (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1991), 11–45.

<sup>143</sup> On a number of connections between flood and Sodom, cf. Robert Alter, *The Five Books of Moses: A Translation with Commentary* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2004), 95.

<sup>144</sup> I was first made aware of this thanks to Mackie of BibleProject. Fascinatingly, the next occurrences of the word are in Exod 9:23–34 to describe the plague of fiery hail upon Egypt. Wenham similarly notes that the verb שחח “is a key term in this story and in the flood story.” Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 53. The verb occurs 17 times in Genesis; all except one (38:9) are with reference either to the flood or to Sodom.

<sup>145</sup> See Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 54.

<sup>146</sup> Cotter, *Genesis*, 119. Cf. VanGemenen, “Sons of God in Genesis 6:1–4,” 327–28.

7:16b).<sup>147</sup> The phrases “find favor” (אֶת־חֶסֶד) and “save life” (לְהַחְיִית אֶת־נַפְשִׁי) in Genesis 19:19 evoke Genesis 6:8, 19–20.<sup>148</sup> In Genesis 19:29, God “remembered” Abraham and thus spared Lot, as God “remembered Noah” in Genesis 8:1.<sup>149</sup>

These connections suggest two observations. First, the author of Genesis intends for readers to interpret the Sodom and Gomorrah story in light of the “sons of God” and flood stories. That this was done in the history of interpretation and in 2 Peter specifically is thus well grounded in the literary design of the Genesis narrative. (I will more fully pick up Peter’s eschatological appropriation to final judgment later in this chapter.) Second, these connections lead one to probe deeper in this vein for further insights on Carson’s two “longstanding exegetical debates” on Peter’s use of the Sodom account: Lot’s righteousness and Sodom’s sin.<sup>150</sup>

**Sodom’s sin.** What is “the sin of Sodom”? Throughout the history of interpretation, the city has been charged with homosexuality/sexual perversion, violence and gang rape, hatred of strangers, pride and lack of care for the poor, and violations of hospitality. Many interpreters recognize the multifaceted nature of Sodom’s sins. More recently, debates have erupted over whether the narrative emphasizes, or even includes at

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<sup>147</sup> Hamilton, *Genesis 18–50*, 37.

<sup>148</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 58.

<sup>149</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 59.

<sup>150</sup> For a survey of Sodom references in the OT outside of Genesis, see Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 186–91.



all, homosexual sin.<sup>151</sup> I am not interested here in the modern social debates.<sup>152</sup> My purpose is to try to understand what *Peter's* understanding of Sodom's sin was. To do this means pushing past current heated debates and trying to assess the Genesis text and then (in the next section) later Jewish interpretation. Doing so will demonstrate that attempts to single out or zero in on one specific sin are misguided; strangely enough, the extremes on both sides (homosexuality-focused view and hospitality-focused view) may rely too heavily on the incident of the encounter between the men of the city and Lot's household. This point should be obvious in that the encounter occurred only in Sodom, not in the other cities which God determined to destroy.<sup>153</sup> This incident provides crucial data; but it is merely a vignette, a window, into the behavior patterns of the cities of the region (19:23–25)—and it comes *after* God has determined to destroy them.

Literary features provide a more reliable approach. As just observed, the Sodom story is meant to be interpreted in light of the flood story, with the people of the twin cities paralleling the wicked generation of Noah. It would be reductionistic to limit the sin of the flood generation to “sex with divine beings + violence.” Those were indeed factors, with the latter being explicitly stated as a major factor (Gen 6:11, 13). But the

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<sup>151</sup> Socially progressive interpreters have focused instead on the charge of hospitality violations (and gang rape), sometimes to the exclusion of homosexuality. For examples of completely non-sexual readings of Gen 18–19, see e.g., Scott Morschauser, “‘Hospitality,’ Hostiles, and Hostages: On the Legal Background to Genesis 19.1–9,” *JSOT* 27, no. 4 (2003): 461–85; Brian Doyle, “The Sin of Sodom: *Yāda*, *Yāda*, *Yāda*? A Reading of the Mamre-Sodom Narrative in Genesis 18–19,” *Theology & Sexuality* 9 (1998): 84–100; Doyle, “‘Knock, Knock, Knockin’ on Sodom’s Door’: The Function of פתח/דלת in Genesis 18–19,” *JSOT* 28, no. 4 (2004): 431–48. Though these interpreters sometimes raise helpful observations, the non-sexual reading is untenable. See critique in Carson, “2 Peter,” 1052–54. Toward the other extreme, Peterson argues that “the Sodomites lost their land and their lives predominantly due to the one sexual sin singled [in Lev 18] out as an abomination—homosexual acts.” Brian N. Peterson, “The Sin of Sodom Revisited: Reading Genesis 19 in Light of Torah,” *JETS* 59, no. 1 (2016): 31. Cf. Brian N. Peterson, “Identifying the Sin of Sodom in Ezekiel 16:49–50,” *JETS* 61, no. 2 (2018): 307–20. While Peterson is right to try to read the narrative in light of the Torah as a whole, and that homosexuality is *included* in Sodom’s sins, he is incorrect to read it as “the” central sin of Sodom. The narrative must be read first in light of Genesis (noting its connections to the flood narrative) before reading in light of more distant books such as Leviticus.

<sup>152</sup> The articles listed above contain helpful sketches of the history of interpretation, ancient and modern.

<sup>153</sup> Frey makes a similar observation. Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 91–92.

text indicates that these behaviors were symptoms of a deeper and more pervasive corruption. Yahweh’s decision to undo creation came because the permeation of rebellion begun at the fall (and seen developing already in the Cain and Abel story) had reached a super-saturation point.<sup>154</sup> Yahweh “saw that the evil [רע] of humans was great in the earth, and that every purpose of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil [רע] continually” (Gen 6:5).<sup>155</sup> As Wenham points out, the word רע is “a comprehensive and general term of condemnation,” and “few texts in the OT are so explicit and all-embracing as this in specifying the extent of human sinfulness and depravity.”<sup>156</sup> The earth was “violent” (חמס),<sup>157</sup> but more deeply it was “corrupt/spoiled/ruined” (וְתִשָּׁחַת הָאָרֶץ, v. 11),<sup>158</sup> as the text emphasizes: “And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth” (v. 12 ESV). Sexual perversion is an important factor (6:1–4), as is violence (vv. 11, 13); but both appear to be expressions of a more thoroughgoing perversion: the pervasive רע of their hearts. This בל-corruption remained after the flood (Gen 8:21), and produced, among other things, *both* the sexual misconduct of Ham and the hubris of the Tower of Babel—both of which are literarily evoked in the Sodom narrative.

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<sup>154</sup> Harland demonstrates how humankind’s failure “to live up to the aims of creation” in Gen 3–11 is the cause of the flood. This is evident in the Cain and Abel, Lamech, and “sons of God” narratives, as well as the condemnations in 6:5–8. See “The Causes of the Flood,” in Harland, *The Value of Human Life*, 21–44.

<sup>155</sup> Wenham helpfully observes the reversal of the created goodness here. In Gen 1:31, “God saw *all* that he had made . . . that it was really very good.” In 6:5, Yahweh “saw that the *evil* of man was great . . . and *every* idea . . . was nothing but *evil all* the time.” Wenham points out “the twice repeated” כל and רע; also, “this verse stands in ironic contrast” with the “seeing” “good” language in 6:1–2. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 144.

<sup>156</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 144. Cf. Rooker, “The Genesis Flood,” 62.

<sup>157</sup> As Brown rightly points out, the word חמס “probably has a broader connotation in this context” than simply “violence,” “referring to all kinds of social injustices including violence.” Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 105n29. In support he references Hamilton, *Genesis 1–17*, 278–79; Cassuto, *Genesis (Part 2)*, 52–53.

<sup>158</sup> On this word see Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 170–71.

In the same way, the Sodom story highlights sexual perversion and violence/oppression. Both are epitomized in the attempted homosexual gang-rape incident. But both are symptoms of the deeper and more pervasive problem (again, cf. Gen 8:21): the general wickedness of the people of the twin cities had reached a super-saturation point. Yahweh could not find even ten relatively righteous people in the city (and the bar is *not* set impossibly high, since Lot qualifies). A crucial verse at the beginning of the narrative (meant to set the tone and scene) is Genesis 18:20. The “outcry” against the city has reached God,<sup>159</sup> which is explained by “their sin” being “very weighty” (18:20):

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה  
 זַעֲקַת סְדֹם וְעִמֹרָה \ כִּי־רַבָּה  
 וַחֲטָאתָם \ כִּי כִבְדָה מְאֹד

This “report” prompts Yahweh to “go down” (יָרַד, 18:21) for a fuller investigation, reminiscent of his “going down” (יָרַד) to see the Tower of Babel (Gen 11:5, 7).<sup>160</sup> But this time, judgment will resemble the flood, not Babel’s. The report is more than confirmed in the angels’ encounter; but that encounter is viewed by the text as a *confirmation* of a previous report of thoroughgoing, pervasive wickedness—as was true of the flood generation.<sup>161</sup> The pervasive wickedness is deep and broad enough to be epitomized in the angel’s encounter but to also include the pride, selfishness, and oppression of Ezekiel 16:49–50. In fact, the brief echo of Babel may hint at the pride of the city.

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<sup>159</sup> Different words are used, but there is a similar idea to the cry of Abel’s blood in Gen 4:10. “‘Outcry’ refers to the protests of those offended.” Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 50.

<sup>160</sup> See Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 50. Cf. VanGemeren, “Sons of God in Genesis 6:1–4,” 327–28.

<sup>161</sup> Rightly Gordon J. Wenham, “The Old Testament Attitude to Homosexuality,” *ExpTim* 102, no. 12 (1991): 361; Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, 239; Cotter, *Genesis*, 122.

This background helps better situate the angelic encounter with the men of Sodom. Sexual perversion, violence against the vulnerable, and hospitality violations are all on full display here.<sup>162</sup> Recent interpreters are right to emphasize that this is not merely “homosexuality”—it is attempted violent gang rape.<sup>163</sup> And it is gang rape of travelers who should be welcomed and protected; this does seem to be a major reason for Lot’s protestation (19:8).<sup>164</sup> The horror of Lot’s offer to bring out his own daughters to experience the same fate is mind-boggling, and shows the depths of depravity to which the city has descended. But their rejection of Lot’s daughters in favor of the men does underscore that the sexual perversion of homosexual passion is intended to be a significant indictment upon the city. Certainly, the first readers of Genesis, familiar with Torah’s sexual ethics (see Lev 18:22), would have read the story this way.<sup>165</sup>

The account of the Levite and his concubine in Judges 19 is intentionally patterned after the Sodom story, giving a window into the early interpretation of Genesis 19.<sup>166</sup> The “sons of Belial” surround the house, beat on the door, and demand that the

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<sup>162</sup> These are balanced fairly well in e.g., Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, 231–38; Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12–36: A Continental Commentary*, trans. John J. Scullion (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 301.

<sup>163</sup> Rightly (though he may slightly downplay the significance of homosexuality in the story), Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 55, 63–64; Wenham, “Old Testament Attitude to Homosexuality,” 361. Cf. Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 276. Contra Hamilton, who tries to argue that the word *עָד* in the OT nowhere has “the nuance of ‘abuse’ or ‘violate.’” In other incidents (including Judg 19), more directly violent language is used. Hamilton, *Genesis 18–50*, 34–35. Cf. Peterson, “The Sin of Sodom Revisited,” 19. However, it is the *context*, not the lexeme, that is determinative; and it defies plausibility to read anything other than an abusive, violent night intended by the men of Sodom for their victims.

<sup>164</sup> Rightly Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 55–56; Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, 236; T. Desmond Alexander, “Lot’s Hospitality: A Clue to His Righteousness,” *JBL* 104, no. 2 (1985): 289–91.

<sup>165</sup> Rightly (though perhaps overly polemical in tone), Peterson, “The Sin of Sodom Revisited.” Peterson points both to the Holiness Code as well as to clues in literary connections to the previous chapters of Genesis.

<sup>166</sup> This assertion assumes that Judg 19 was written after Gen 19. See discussion of scholarly opinions on this topic in Hamilton, *Genesis 18–50*, 38. I hold to the priority of the Gen 19 narrative (agreeing with the dominant view). Even if one reverses this, the point is not diminished. In this case, Gen 19 would (likely) need to be read in light of its “predecessor,” Judg 19. In any case, the “canonical witness” (as Hamilton calls it) is what was received by Peter. For a detailed study of the relationship between the two texts, see Daniel I. Block, “Echo Narrative Technique in Hebrew Literature: A Study in Judges 19,” *WTJ* 52, no. 2 (1990): 325–41. PENCHANSKY shows how Judg 19 takes Gen 19 and Gen 24 and “links the two stories into a single coherent narrative” (with Gen 24 corresponding to the first half of Judg 19 and Gen

owner “bring out” the male guest, explicitly to have sex with him. The owner protests and offers his own daughter and the Levite’s concubine. They reject the offer, but it is forced upon them. The concubine is found dead in the morning.<sup>167</sup> This story prominently features the evil of abusing a traveler expecting protection in one’s town.<sup>168</sup> But just as prominent is the horribly twisted, violent sexual passion so dominating the town’s inhabitants. This is displayed both in the twisted object of their passion (homosexual object) and in the horrifically violent nature of the passion (gang rape, here leading to the unspeakably horrific death of the female concubine). The author of Judges intends for the reader to be horrified that a city in Israel had become a mini-Sodom—which speaks to his view of the Sodom story.

It makes sense, then, that Jewish tradition and 2 Peter (1) link the sin of the flood generation with Sodom’s sin, and (2) apply the story more broadly to all manner of particularly corrupt human behavior awaiting God’s judgment.

**Lot’s righteousness.** Peter elaborates on Lot’s identity as “righteous” (*δίκαιος*), claiming even that he was vexed by the wickedness all around him (2 Pet 2:8).<sup>169</sup> And yet Genesis 19 does not give a flattering portrait of Lot (nor does Gen 13, where Lot chooses to live near Sodom).<sup>170</sup> A good case can be made that “Lot is not

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19 to the second half). David Penchansky, “Staying the Night: Intertextuality in Genesis and Judges,” in *Reading between Texts: Intertextuality and the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Danna N. Fewell (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 77–88.

<sup>167</sup> The one thing crystal clear from this passage’s implicit interpretation of the Sodom story is that Morschauser’s view is his own invention. Carson, “2 Peter,” 1054.

<sup>168</sup> On links between hospitality violations in both Gen 19 and Judg 19, see Victor H. Matthews, “Hospitality and Hostility in Genesis 19 and Judges 19,” *BTB* 22, no. 1 (1992): 3–11.

<sup>169</sup> Fuchs and Reymond note this observation in 2 Peter’s usage. Fuchs and Reymond, *La deuxième épître de saint Pierre; Jude*, 85.

<sup>170</sup> See Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 60–61; Cotter, *Genesis*, 127–28; Peterson, “The Sin of Sodom Revisited,” 29. Tonson walks through the positive and negative aspects of Lot’s characterization. Paul Tonson, “Mercy without Covenant: A Literary Analysis of Genesis 19,” *JSOT* 26, no. 1 (2001): 108–10. While Tonson is correct that there are complex ambiguities in the narrative, he is wrong to infer from “the absence of moral judgment in Genesis 19” that the author “does not intend to moralize” (Tonson, 110). As noted, “the art of reticence” is an important feature of the way the narrator of Genesis crafts his stories.

identified as righteous nor does he act in a righteous manner.”<sup>171</sup> However, other clues in the Genesis text indicate that at some level Lot fills the role of a (relatively) righteous person in this narrative.<sup>172</sup>

First, Lot is intended to correspond to Noah, the “righteous” (קִדְיָץ, LXX δίκαιος) man of the previous destruction story (Gen 6:9 and 7:1). I examined the literary links between the two stories earlier. This framing alone indicates that the reader should think of Lot as the “righteous” man who like Noah escapes God’s thorough judgment. But the link goes further, in that the word “righteous” (קִדְיָץ, LXX δίκαιος) is *only* (with one exception in 20:4)<sup>173</sup> used in Genesis to describe Noah (6:9 and 7:1) and in the dialogue between Abraham and God concerning Sodom (Gen 18)—which implicitly is

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Judgments are made in more subtle ways. Cotter, writing about Gen 18–19, is exactly right: “As is often the case in the study of Hebrew narrative, reticence on the part of the author betrays authorial intention. In other words, the author highlights or underlines what is important for the development of his thoughts as much by what is not said as by what is said.” Cotter, *Genesis*, 117. Alter points out one way this subtlety works out: “The concluding episode of this chapter, in which the drunken Lot unwittingly takes the virginity of both his daughters, suggests measure-for-measure justice meted out for his rash offer.” Alter, *The Five Books of Moses*, 92. A helpful survey of recent discussion of the characterization of Lot can be found in Doyle, “The Sin of Sodom,” 94–98.

<sup>171</sup> Cotter, *Genesis*, 122. Cotter’s next sentence is, “He is saved only because of Abraham.” A similar sentiment is expressed in Hamilton, *Genesis 18–50*, 49. There is certainly some truth to this; Abraham is depicted in Gen 18–19 as impeccable, with Lot as something of a foil. For example, note the contrast between Abraham’s plea for Sodom and Lot’s for Zoar. Lot’s is laced with selfishness and unbelief. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 58. However, Abraham’s intercession in Gen 18 implies that Lot himself is meant to be taken as a “righteous” figure. For a further critique of Lot, see William J. Lyons, *Canon and Exegesis: Canonical Praxis and the Sodom Narrative*, JSOTSup 352 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 219–25. Rickett studies the reception of the separation narrative (Gen 13) and concludes that this narrative contains elements which further enable an “unrighteous outsider” reading of Lot. Dan Rickett, “Creating an Unrighteous Outsider: The Separation of Abram and Lot in Early Scriptural Retellings,” *CBQ* 76, no. 4 (2014): 611–33. Brown likewise sets Lot’s separation from Abram as an important moment “because it inevitably ties Lot’s fate with Sodom.” Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 178–80.

<sup>172</sup> There is perhaps an analogy with Balaam, though in the opposite direction. Balaam in many ways appears righteous, though in the end he is on the wrong side. (This is how Peter portrays Lot; see later.) There may be a measure of truth in Turner’s labelling of Lot as a “Jekyll and Hyde” character. See Laurence A. Turner, “Lot as Jekyll and Hyde: A Reading of Genesis 18–19,” in *The Bible in Three Dimensions*, ed. David J. A. Clines, Stephen E. Fowl, and Stanley E. Porter, JSOTSup 87 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 85–101.

<sup>173</sup> Gen 20:4 is where Abimelech asks God not to kill a “righteous” people. This itself likely echoes Abraham’s plea for Sodom. Rightly Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 70–71.

intended to characterize Lot. Lot is clearly portrayed as a morally inferior character to Noah; but he holds the same “slot” in the narrative.<sup>174</sup>

Second, the dialogue between Yahweh and Abraham in Genesis 18 is crucial, as Carson rightly observes.<sup>175</sup> Abraham pleads with Yahweh not to destroy Sodom if there are “righteous” (רְיָשִׁים, LXX δίκαιος) people living in the city. He surely is thinking of his own nephew and assuming (or at least hoping) that there are other inhabitants like him. In the end, not even ten “righteous” people are found, so God removes the few that are there so that he can destroy the city—those few being Lot and (some of) his family. Here again, the narrative is clearly setting up Lot as the “righteous” individual in the story.

Third, a few of Lot’s actions hint at his “righteous” designation. Alexander observes how the initial verses of Genesis 18 and 19 compare Lot to Abraham, characterizing Lot in almost the same way as Abraham with respect to hospitality.<sup>176</sup> Lot also “listens to the angelic visitors when he is told to leave”—albeit barely.<sup>177</sup> Perhaps also the residents’ grudge against his being their moral “judge” (v. 9) could be added to the list as implicitly signifying Lot’s moral superiority. Lot is a deeply flawed character; his willingness to give up his daughters is particularly shocking and completely unforgivable.<sup>178</sup> But as Carson points out, most biblical figures are flawed, including

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<sup>174</sup> Lot, while analogous to Noah, is depicted as an inferior character—and so is his family. Unlike Noah’s family, Lot’s children-in-law are *not* spared with him, nor is his own wife. Lot himself is not called “blameless” (contra Noah in Gen 6:9); and as Wenham points out, while in Gen 8:1 “God remembered Noah” and caused the flood to abate, in 19:29 it is the fact that “God remembered Abraham”—not Lot himself—that led to Lot’s being spared. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 59–60. Cf. Hamilton, *Genesis 18–50*, 42. Additionally, while the incident between Lot and his daughters in the cave is analogous to that of Noah and Ham after the flood, Lot’s is far more serious. He is considerably more drunk, and the daughters’ sexual misconduct is greater. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 60. Wenham rightly observes a similar moral decline between the fall and Cain and Abel narratives. They are literarily linked, but the latter express a greater internalization of sin. See Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 106–10.

<sup>175</sup> Carson, “2 Peter,” 1054. Cf. Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 217; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 135.

<sup>176</sup> Alexander, “Lot’s Hospitality.” Cf. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 53–55, 63–64. Cotter thinks that the hospitality Lot shows contrasts poorly with Abraham’s, but this is doubtful. Cotter, *Genesis*, 122.

<sup>177</sup> Carson, “2 Peter,” 1054.

<sup>178</sup> This should *not* be in any way excused or explained away. In my judgment, Wenham is

Lot's uncle, Abraham.<sup>179</sup> In the end, Lot is characterized as the righteous figure in this story because he fundamentally did not follow in the ways of Sodom. He was not one of the men banging at the door. He was not, at heart, really “one of” them—which is what Peter picks up.<sup>180</sup>

It is fascinating that Peter chooses this particular word—*δίκαιος*—to describe Lot in relation to Sodom (three times in 2 Pet 2:7–8). He is actually following the precise wording of the original story's characterization.<sup>181</sup>

### **Sodom and Lot in Jewish Tradition**

Jewish tradition continues and, in some ways, accentuates the trajectories found in the text of Genesis 18–19, both regarding Sodom's wickedness and destruction as well as Lot as “righteous.” This section also includes Jude's use of Sodom, since it is closely intertwined with other Jewish texts.

**Sodom's sin.** Sodom and Gomorrah “had long been regarded as the paradigm case of divine judgment” (Deut 29:23; Isa 1:9; 13:19; Jer 23:14; 49:18; 50:40; Lam 4:6; Hos 11:8; Amos 4:11; Zeph 2:9; Sir 16:8; 3 Macc 2:5; Jubilees 16:6, 9; 20:5; 22:22; 36:10; Testament of Asher 7:1; Philo, *QG* 4:51; Josephus, *J. W.* 5.566; Matt 10:15; 11:24; Mark 6:11; Luke 10:12; 17:29).<sup>182</sup> The specific sins attributed to Sodom are

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perhaps a bit too excusing of Lot and too unforgiving of Lot's daughters. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 55–62. Mathews is more appropriately harsh. Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, 236–37.

<sup>179</sup> Carson, “2 Peter,” 1054. This includes mistreatment of women in his household. In the very next chapter (Gen 20), Abraham is once again interceding for a city—but this time due to *his* turning over his own wife to a powerful man to save his own skin. He did likewise in Gen 12:10–20. In Gen 16, he is involved in oppressing Hagar. Cotter helpfully walks through Abraham's less-than-favorable characterization in Gen 20 (juxtaposed with Gen 18). Cotter, *Genesis*, 129–34.

<sup>180</sup> Rightly Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 410; Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 216–18, 222–23.

<sup>181</sup> Rightly Hamilton, *Genesis 18–50*, 56.

<sup>182</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 53. The list is taken from Bauckham. Cf. D. A. Carson, “Jude,” in Beale and Carson, *Commentary on NT Use of OT*, 1074; Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 90n163; Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 64–65. Cf. Lyons, *Canon and Exegesis*, 234–39. Cf. Brown, “Use of OT in 2



varied, in keeping with the analysis of the original story.<sup>183</sup> They are charged with violations of hospitality (Wis 19:14–15) and hatred of strangers (Josephus, *Ant.* 1.194).<sup>184</sup> The first is clearly a part of the original story (though admittedly, “violation of hospitality” sounds a bit too weak for “attempted gang rape”). The “hatred of strangers charge,” however (especially with Josephus’ strong language),<sup>185</sup> is less obvious—Lot and his family were, after all, strangers who moved into the city and seemed to do just fine. Lot’s sitting in the “gate” (Gen 19:1) “suggests that he was a respected member of the community.”<sup>186</sup> On the other hand, he was still viewed as a partial outsider, a “sojourner” (19:9) who was resented for his moralizing.<sup>187</sup>

Sodom was also charged with “pride and selfish affluence” as seen already in Ezekiel 16:48–50 (3 Macc 2:5; Josephus’ *Ant.* 1.194; Philo’s *Abr.* 134; Tg. Ps.-J. on Gen 13:13 and 18:20; Sir 16:8).<sup>188</sup> In a passage directly picked up by Jude 7 (see below), 3 Maccabees 2:5 states, “You consumed with fire and sulphur the men of Sodom who acted

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Peter 2:4–10a,” 191–92.

<sup>183</sup> For fuller studies of Sodom and Lot in various bodies of Jewish literature, see L. H. Feldman, “The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah According to Philo, Pseudo-Philo, and Josephus,” *Henoch* 23, nos. 2–3 (2001): 185–98; Judith H. Newman, “Lot in Sodom: The Post-Mortem of a City and the Afterlife of a Biblical Text,” in *The Function of Scripture in Early Jewish and Christian Tradition*, ed. Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders, LNTS (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 34–44; Jacques T. A. G. M. van Ruiten, “Lot versus Abraham: The Interpretation of Genesis 18:1–19:38 in Jubilees 16:1–9,” in *Sodom’s Sin: Genesis 18–19 and Its Interpretations*, ed. Edward Noort and Eibert Tigchelaar, Themes in Biblical Narrative 7 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 29–46; Eibert Tigchelaar, “Sodom and Gomorrah in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in Noort and Tigchelaar, *Sodom’s Sin*, 47–62; Florentino García Martínez, “Sodom and Gomorrah in the Targumim,” in Noort and Tigchelaar, *Sodom’s Sin*, 83–96; J. A. Loader, “The Sin of Sodom in the Talmud and Midrash,” *O TE* 3, no. 3 (1990): 231–45; J. A. Loader, *A Tale of Two Cities: Sodom and Gomorrah in the Old Testament, Early Jewish and Early Christian Traditions* (Kampen: Kok, 1990); Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 191–97.

<sup>184</sup> See Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 91; Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 52–53.

<sup>185</sup> “Now about this time the Sodomites, over-weeningly proud of their numbers and the extent of their wealth, showed themselves insolent to men and impious to the Divinity, insomuch that they no more remembered the benefits that they had received from Him, hated foreigners and declined all intercourse with others” (Josephus, *Ant.* 1.194 [LCL 94–97]).

<sup>186</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 54.

<sup>187</sup> But this is a very common experience in close-knit, traditional cultures, even today. It does not imply “hatred of strangers.”

<sup>188</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 54; Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 91.

arrogantly, who were notorious for their vices; and you made them an example to those who should come afterward” (RSV).<sup>189</sup> As mentioned earlier, there may be a hint of this already in the echo of the Tower of Babel in Yahweh’s “going down” (יָרַד) in Genesis 18:21.

Finally, Sodom was charged with sexual immorality in general, and homosexuality in particular (Jubilees 16:5–6; 20:5; Testament of Levi 14:6; Testament of Benjamin 9:1; Testament of Naphtali 3:4–5; Philo, *Abr.* 134–36; *Moses* 2.58; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.200–201).<sup>190</sup> Again, this is likely already referenced in Ezekiel 16’s “abomination” language.<sup>191</sup> Philo is particularly insistent on the points both of “general moral debauchery” and homosexuality (*Abraham* 134–36; *Moses* 2.58).<sup>192</sup> Though Josephus focuses on hospitality and strangers in *Ant.* 1.194, he speaks of their sexual perversion as well several lines later (*Ant.* 1.200–201).<sup>193</sup>

Testament of Naphtali 3:4–5 urges against becoming “like Sodom, which departed from the order of nature.” The next sentence likens this to the Watchers’ similar departure “from nature’s order.”<sup>194</sup> This resembles Jude 7, where Sodom “likewise” went after “other flesh” (ἀπελθοῦσαι ὀπίσω σαρκὸς ἑτέρας). Bauckham and others argue that

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<sup>189</sup> Brown rightly notes the “strong parallels” between 3 Macc 2:5, Wis 10:7, and 2 Pet 2:6–7. Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 193.

<sup>190</sup> Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 91; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 54; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 545.

<sup>191</sup> On this see Peterson, “Identifying Sin of Sodom in Ezek 16,” 314–19.

<sup>192</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 545. Cf. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 54.

<sup>193</sup> Josephus writes, “But the Sodomites, on seeing these young men of remarkably fair appearance whom Lot had taken under his roof, were bent only on violence and outrage to their youthful beauty. Lot adjured them to restrain their passions and not to proceed to dishonour his guests, but to respect their having lodged with him, offering in their stead, if his neighbours were so licentious, his own daughters to gratify their lust. But not even this would content them” (Josephus, *Ant.* 1.200–201 [LCL 98–99]). Rightly Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 545. For various excerpts, see Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 52–53.

<sup>194</sup> Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 1:812. Observation from Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 52.

what is in view in both of these texts is the boundary crossing between angels and humans.<sup>195</sup> This is possible, and as noted earlier there is a link in the Sodom story to the Watchers incident. But it is likely not the best reading of Testament of Naphtali for three reasons: (1) The Sodom reference comes first, implying that the Watchers reference should be understood in light of Sodom and not the other way around. (2) Elsewhere in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, “the Sodomites” are referenced thus: “sexually promiscuous like the promiscuity of the Sodomites” (Testament of Benjamin 9:1); “Your sexual relations will become like Sodom and Gomorrah” (Testament of Levi 14:6).<sup>196</sup> (3) Other Jewish literature calls out Sodom for sexual perversion and homosexuality, not for human-angel intercourse.<sup>197</sup> Thus Davids is likely correct in concluding that “Bauckham is right in arguing that the comparison with the fallen angels [in Jude 7] has to do with crossing a ‘species’ boundary. However, even the evidence of Testament of Naphtali would be consistent with what Philo makes clear, that sexual intercourse with other males was viewed as crossing just such a boundary.”<sup>198</sup>

Two observations relating to Peter’s handling of the sin of Sodom can now be made. First, in Jewish literature, Sodom’s sin was viewed broadly as “corruption” in general. Often, however, sexual perversion and arrogant or violent behavior are included. Peter’s understanding is similar, though he (like Jude) does not include “inhospitality” or “hatred of strangers.” Second, a single author generally charges Sodom with multiple evils, and it often seems as though each individual charge is merely an example of what the author sees as thoroughgoing corruption (e.g., Philo; Josephus’ *Ant.* 1.194–201; 3

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<sup>195</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 54–55. Cf. Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 91–92.

<sup>196</sup> Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 1:827, 793. Observation from Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 52–53.

<sup>197</sup> Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 53.

<sup>198</sup> Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 53.

Macc 2:3–7). Peter likewise uses Sodom as an example of thoroughgoing corruption, with sexual sin and arrogance present but not exclusive.

**Sodom’s destruction.** One particular clause from 3 Maccabees 2:5 is picked up by Jude, and through him to Peter: the city’s destruction makes them “an example to those who should come afterward” (RSV) (παράδειγμα τοῖς ἐπιγινομένοις).<sup>199</sup> “The particular features of the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah . . . became stock imagery of future judgment (Deut 29:23; Isa 34:9–10; Jer 49:17–18; Ezek 38:22; Sibylline Oracles 3:504–7; Rev 14:10–11; 19:3; 20:10).”<sup>200</sup> As Bauckham writes, this is at least in part because of the enduring visibility of the destruction (as implied in Jude 7, though not in 2 Peter). Later generations can still see the ruins of these cities, and so they continue to serve as a warning of God’s judgments.<sup>201</sup> Wisdom 10:7, Josephus (*J. W.* 4.483) and Philo (*Moses* 2.56; cf. *Abr.* 141) all claim that not only the ruins but also the smoke and even flames can still be seen.<sup>202</sup> Josephus even claims to have himself seen the pillar of salt which was once Lot’s wife (*Ant.* 1.204).

As in 2 Peter (especially in chap. 3), Jewish literature often linked Sodom’s destruction to the “sons of God” and flood account “as the two signal examples of divine judgment”<sup>203</sup> (Jubilees 20:5, Testament of Naphtali 3:4–5, Sir 16:6–8; 3 Macc 2:4–5; cf. Josephus *J. W.* 5.566).<sup>204</sup> In Luke 17:26–30, the flood and Sodom are depicted “as the

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<sup>199</sup> Carson, “2 Peter,” 1054; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 252. Jude 7b reads, πρόκεινται δῆγμα πυρὸς αἰωνίου δίκην ὑπέχουσαι. 2 Pet 2:6b reads, ὑπόδειγμα μελλόντων ἀσεβέσιν τεθεικώς.

<sup>200</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 55. Cf. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 64–65.

<sup>201</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 54–55. This is likely assumed in Jude 7’s claims that they “are exhibited”—in the present—as an example. See Bauckham, 55; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 546.

<sup>202</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 55.

<sup>203</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 252.

<sup>204</sup> See Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 544.

two prototypes of eschatological judgment.”<sup>205</sup> In Ben Sira 16:6–8 and 3 Maccabees 2:4–5, the sons of God/flood and Sodom destructions are immediately followed by references to the Egyptians’ destruction at the exodus. Philo likewise summons the flood and Sodom’s destruction as the two exemplary judgments—one by water and the other by fire (*Moses* 2:53–56; cf. the striking similarity to 2 Pet 3:6–7). But he also uses these two judgments to underscore God’s protection of the “one” righteous man/household in each event (*Moses* 2:57–60). Peter likewise ties the sons of God, flood, and Sodom accounts as examples of God’s judgment and of the deliverance of the righteous, and he does not reference the exodus, though Jude 5 does.<sup>206</sup>

**Lot as righteous.** Lot is a complex individual in Jewish tradition as in the Genesis text.<sup>207</sup> Overall, Jubilees presents a relatively negative portrayal of Lot (see especially 16:7–9),<sup>208</sup> though 12:30 seems to veer in the opposite direction.<sup>209</sup> Josephus specifically praises Lot for his hospitality, stating that “he was very kindly to strangers and had learnt the lesson of Abraham’s liberality” (*Ant.* 1.200 [LCL, 98–99]).<sup>210</sup> Philo presents Lot “as a thoroughly flawed individual” (*Abr.* 211–238; *Moses* 2.58;

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<sup>205</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 252.

<sup>206</sup> Fascinatingly, 3 Macc 2:7b contrasts the previous examples of judgment (sons of God/flood, Sodom, exodus) with the exodus as example of deliverance—as Peter does with Noah and Lot: “but carried through safely those who had put their confidence in you, the Ruler over the whole creation” (RSV). De Vivo writes that Peter’s substitution of flood for Jude’s exodus “works perfectly” since “the flood has strong literary connections” to the angels and Sodom examples (both present in Jude). De Vivo, “2 Peter 2:4–16,” 58.

<sup>207</sup> For another survey, see Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 229–36.

<sup>208</sup> See van Ruiten, “Lot versus Abraham.” Jubilees 16:7–9 seems to hold Lot culpable for the incest with his daughters. See Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 332n448. Rickett points to the role of Gen 13 (the separation narrative) in negative readings of Lot. Rickett, “Creating an Unrighteous Outsider.”

<sup>209</sup> Carson, “2 Peter,” 1055. Carson also points to 1QapGen ar XX, 22–24.

<sup>210</sup> Josephus’ connecting of Lot’s hospitality to Abraham’s strengthens Alexander’s case in Alexander, “Lot’s Hospitality.” Josephus is also very generous to Lot’s daughters, explaining that they “acted thus to prevent the extinction of the race” in the “belief that the whole of humanity had perished” (*Ant.* 1.205 [LCL, 100–101]).

*Drunkenness* 162–164).<sup>211</sup> But Philo also deems him righteous, and his description of Lot’s righteousness is perceptive and nuanced:

While the rush of the flaming thunderbolts consumed the whole land, and the inhabitants to boot, one man alone, an immigrant, was saved by God’s protecting care, because he had shewn no liking for any of the misdeeds of the country, though immigrants, to secure themselves, usually shew respect for the customs of their hosts, knowing that disrespect for these entails danger at the hands of the original inhabitants. Yet he did not reach the summit of wisdom, nor was it because of the perfection of his nature that he was deemed worthy of this great privilege, but because he alone did not fall in with the multitude, when they turned aside to licentious living and fed every pleasure and every lust with lavish supplies of fuel like a flame when the brushwood is piled upon it. (*Moses* 2.58 [LCL, 476–77])

In line with my analysis of Genesis 18–19, Jewish tradition understood Abraham’s plea for the “righteous” of the city to refer “to Lot (Pirque R. El. 25, Gen. Rab. 49:13), and so could speak of him as a righteous man (Wis 10:6; 19:17: δίκαιος; cf. . . . Philo, *Mos* 2.58).”<sup>212</sup> Wisdom 10:6–10 is especially close to 2 Peter 2, particularly verse 6: “Wisdom rescued a righteous man [δίκαιον] when the ungodly were perishing” (RSV), αὕτη δίκαιον ἐξαπολλυμένων ἀσεβῶν ἐρρύσατο φυγόντα καταβάσιον πῦρ Πενταπόλεως.<sup>213</sup> Bauckham also notes how Wisdom 10 uses the word ῥύομαι (four times, in vv. 6, 9, 13, 15) to refer both to Lot and then more generally to the righteous, just as 2 Peter 2:7 (of Lot) and 9a (of “the godly”) do.<sup>214</sup>

While 1 Clement is likely later than 2 Peter, it sheds further light on Lot’s righteousness. “Because of his hospitality and piety, Lot was saved out of Sodom when

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<sup>211</sup> Carson, “2 Peter,” 1055. Philo writes that Abraham’s nephew was “an unreliable and hesitating person, ever inclining this way and that, sometimes fawning on him with loving greetings, sometimes rebellious and refractory through the inconsistency of his different moods” (*Abr.* 212 [LCL, 104–5]).

<sup>212</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 252. Cf. Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 332; Carson, “2 Peter,” 1055.

<sup>213</sup> See e.g., Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 229; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 252; Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 332. Frey goes so far as “suspect that this passage inspired the author [of 2 Peter] here.” Cf. M. G. Ruf, *Die heiligen Propheten, eure Apostel und ich. Metatextuelle Studien zum zweiten Petrusbrief*, WUNT 300 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 418–27.

<sup>214</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 252.

all the surrounding countryside was judged by fire and brimstone. The Master thus made it clear that he does not abandon those who hope in him, but hands over to punishment and torment those who turn away” (11:1).<sup>215</sup>

### Sodom and Lot in 2 Peter

This section examines 2 Peter 2:6–8 as well as other echoes of the Sodom and Lot story in 2 Peter.<sup>216</sup>

**2 Peter 2:6–8.** As was mentioned at the beginning of the section on Sodom and Lot, 2 Peter 2:6–8 can be conceptually divided into three parts: (1) the basic recounting of the Genesis 18–19 story, (2) interpretive additions, and (3) eschatological appropriation. See breakdown in table 4 below.

Table 4. Second Peter’s appropriation of Sodom and Lot

1: basic story	<b>6a:</b> And [if] he condemned to destruction the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by reducing them to ashes <b>7a:</b> and [if] he rescued righteous Lot
2: interpretive additions	<b>7b:</b> distressed by the sensual lifestyle of the lawless <b>8:</b> (for this righteous man, living among them day after day, tormented his righteous soul by their lawless deeds which he saw and heard)
3: eschatological appropriation	<b>6b:</b> setting them as an example of what is coming upon the ungodly

<sup>215</sup> Bart D. Ehrman, trans., *The Apostolic Fathers*, vol. 1: *I Clement. II Clement. Ignatius. Polycarp. Didache*, LCL 24 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 52–55. Clement similarly cites Abraham’s “faith and hospitality” (1 Clem. 10:7) as the reason for God’s giving him a son. See Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 408; Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 332; Alexander, “Lot’s Hospitality”; Fuchs and Reymond, *La deuxième épître de saint Pierre; Jude*, 86. Bauckham thinks that 1 Clem. 11:1, along with Wis 10:6 and Philo’s *Moses* 2.58, “seem to belong to the same paraenetic tradition as 2 Pet 2:4–9.” Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 252; see also 246–47. Davids disagrees. Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 230.

<sup>216</sup> There is likely a direct verbal link between 2 Pet 2:6 and Gen 19:29 LXX, the use of the word καταστροφή. There is a textual problem in 2 Pet 2:6, with some MSS omitting the word. Its presence is likely original. See discussion in Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 174–76. Cf. Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 331n442. It is not a major problem; Bauckham does not even mention it. Also, once again, Jesus’ use of Sodom is significant for Peter. For survey, see Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 198–200.

This is the third of Peter’s OT stories forming the protasis of his conditional statement (spanning 2:4–10a). As has become increasingly apparent, Peter views these stories as interrelated. This chapter traces these interrelations back to the original accounts in Genesis, demonstrating how the Watchers and flood accounts are linked; this section has already highlighted the strong literary “hyperlinks” between those two narratives and Sodom. Jewish tradition seems to have picked up on at least some of these connections. Of course, how much Peter’s influence came directly from his study of Genesis and how much from his cultural milieu is impossible to say. That Peter sees both the flood (2:5) and the destruction of Sodom (v. 6) as foreshadowing the final judgment is made explicit in chapter 3.<sup>217</sup> But it is very likely that his statement in verse 6 about the exemplary nature of Sodom’s destruction also colors his previous flood reference in verse 5. The interrelatedness of the three destruction stories is underscored in verses 9–10a. There, Peter puts the three stories together to make one point: God is punishing/will judge the wicked. (The “holding under punishment” language seems to specifically refer to the Watchers, while the “day of judgment” to both flood and Sodom.) He likewise characterizes the sins of the three stories’ bad actors in a single statement: they “go after<sup>218</sup> the flesh in defiling passion and despise the Lord’s authority” (v. 10a). The phrase *κυριότητος καταφρονοῦντας* (“despising the Lord’s authority”) seems especially appropriate for the Watchers, though it is probably not limited to them. All three stories implicate their bad actors for rebelling against Yahweh and seeking to throw off his restraints. The “defiling passion” reference applies to all the stories<sup>219</sup>—the Watchers’

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<sup>217</sup> Cf. Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 331; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 252; Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 228; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 407.

<sup>218</sup> It should be noted that “go after” (*ὀπίσω . . . πορευομένους*) echoes the LXX phrase used to describe “going after” other gods (e.g., Deut 4:3; 6:14; 28:14; 1 Kgs [3 Kingdoms] 11:10; Isa 65:2; Hos 11:10). Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 233; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 255.

<sup>219</sup> Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 233; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 413. Davids notes that “to ‘go after flesh’ is the expression used in Jude 7 as a partial description of the sin of Sodom” (233).



perverted sex, the sensuality of Noah’s generation—but it is epitomized in the account of the men of Sodom.

Peter clearly sees sexual sin as playing not the sole, but a major role in Sodom’s sin, in line with one of the strands of Jewish interpretation (and of the original story). Like the flood generation, the Sodomites stand as a representation of pervasive corruption in general, with sexual misconduct particularly visible.<sup>220</sup> This characterization well explains Peter’s subsequent depiction of the false teachers (2:10b–22) in precisely these terms: sexual imagery is prominent, but so is greed, violence, and general “enslavement to corruption” (αὐτοὶ δοῦλοι ὑπάρχοντες τῆς φθορᾶς, 2:19).<sup>221</sup> Peter also seems to mesh with other Jewish writings on Sodom’s serving as an “example” to his contemporaries, though (unlike Jude) he does not mention visible evidence.<sup>222</sup> Again, this makes for a vivid prophetic symbol of Peter’s next major point coming in chapter 3: the final fiery judgment.<sup>223</sup>

On the positive side, Peter sets up Lot as an exemplary “righteous” man (discussed earlier). The wording chosen, δίκαιον, matches the original account in Genesis 18, implying that Peter (with other Jewish writers) connected Abraham’s plea to spare the “righteous” with Lot.<sup>224</sup> Peter is not intending to exculpate Lot from all fault (just as most other Jewish writers were not). He is dealing with a complex character, just like Balaam. His point is not to evaluate all of Lot’s actions (just as the allusion to Balaam’s prophecy

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<sup>220</sup> Green notes that “sometimes the wickedness of the towns is referred to generically, as here in 2 Peter, while elsewhere the specific nature of the sin becomes the topic of reflection, as in the case of Jude.” Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 255, 260. I would argue that a bit of both is actually going on here in 2 Peter (as Green seems to do on p. 260).

<sup>221</sup> Cf. Green, 265–67; Allen, “Genesis in James, 1 and 2 Peter and Jude,” 163–64.

<sup>222</sup> Cf. Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 331.

<sup>223</sup> On “eschatological symbol” cf. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 255–56; Loader, *A Tale of Two Cities*, 117.

<sup>224</sup> With Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 247.

in 1:19 recognizes a positive side to Balaam’s story), but to show him as fundamentally different from his fellow city dwellers.<sup>225</sup> Peter does not mention Lot’s hospitality, though this is likely one factor in his mind.<sup>226</sup> It seems that his focus, though, is more in line with Philo’s statement in *Moses* 2.58: Lot did not fit into the cesspool in which he lived. The (relatively) lengthy additions regarding Lot’s behavior—with no specific parallels to verse 8 in extant Jewish literature<sup>227</sup>—should cause reflection on Peter’s rhetorical purpose. I earlier noted that Noah fits in well with Peter’s motif of true prophets and other true teachers of God’s word. But Peter uses Lot to represent a slightly different facet of the experience of the righteous, as evidenced by his long aside. Lot is highlighted as someone living in the midst of “lawlessness” (ἀνόμοις ἔργοις, v. 8), surrounded by constant perversion (vv. 7–8). He himself did not assimilate, did not cave in and put up the proverbial white flag.<sup>228</sup> Thus, his πειρασμός was to be internally “tormented” by the

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<sup>225</sup> With (to varying degrees) Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 408–10; Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 229; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 105. Green is right to lay out Lot’s many grievous flaws, and to push back against any who paint too rosy a picture of the man. (His critique of Alexander is not without warrant.) Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 258–59. Cf. Alexander, “Lot’s Hospitality.” For a further critique of Lot, see Lyons, *Canon and Exegesis*, 219–25. Paulsen points to Abraham’s intercession and to Lot’s relative moral superiority to his fellow townspeople. Paulsen, *Der zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief*, 134.

<sup>226</sup> In addition to the parallel in 1 Clem. 11:1, Heb 13:1 exhorts readers to hospitality with a reference to Abraham’s and/or Lot’s entertaining of angels. Peter exhorts his readers to hospitality in 1 Pet 3:9. Allen lists Lot’s hospitality and Abraham’s intercession for the “righteous” as possible factors in Peter’s positive reading of Lot. But he holds that these alone are likely insufficient, and believes it “likely that Peter is drawing on a tradition that already attributed righteousness to Lot (Wis 10:6).” Allen then stresses that Peter’s interest is “paraenetic [and] rhetorical”—he is not seeking to retell the entire story with “narrative ‘accuracy.’” Allen, “Genesis in James, 1 and 2 Peter and Jude,” 164. These observations are largely on the right track, but I would put more weight on the OT factors for Peter’s positive portrayal of Lot. It is likely that the later Jewish tradition and Peter both could see Lot as in some sense “righteous” (though flawed) because of these narrative elements.

<sup>227</sup> As noted by e.g., Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 253; Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 230; Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 333. Each of these scholars suggests the possibility of a now-lost haggadic source, though Frey thinks it more likely that Peter composed it himself. An interesting, though questionable, proposal by Makujina is that Peter could have been influenced by the LXX reading of Gen 19:16, where “they were troubled” (ἐταράχθησαν) instead of “he [Lot] procrastinated/hesitated” (ἠῆκεῖν). Depending on punctuation choices, the sentence could be made to read, “They were also troubled because of the lawlessness of the city.” John Makujina, “The ‘Trouble’ with Lot in 2 Peter: Locating Peter’s Source for Lot’s Torment,” *WTJ* 60, no. 2 (1998): 255–69. For a critique of this proposal, see Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 218–23.

<sup>228</sup> Witherington aptly sums up Peter’s exhortation: “Do not become anesthetized to sin just because it is so prevalent around you.” Witherington, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians*, 354.

surroundings in which he lived (trial), and to not give in to the wickedness around him (temptation).<sup>229</sup> It likely included, as for Noah, scoffing (cf. 3:3) and alienation from his neighbors (cf. Gen 19:9).

This is how Peter pictures the lives of his own readers. Though they have fundamentally escaped the world's corruption (1:4), they must be diligent to “never fall” (1:9–10; 3:11; 3:14). All around them are false teachers and a wicked world seeking to “entice” (2:14, 18) them to sin. Material in 1 Peter fills out the picture: believers will be “spoken evil of” and “insulted” over their good behavior (3:16). Their neighbors will be “surprised” and “malign” them when they refuse to join in with the “same [Sodom-like] flood of debauchery” (specifically here, “living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry; 1 Pet 4:3–4 ESV). Peter tells them to be prepared to “suffer” (πάσχω; 4:1–2) this type of verbal and social abuse for not “going with the wicked flow.” This is similar to the scenario Peter seems to have in mind in 2 Peter 2:7–9. He emphasizes these aspects of the Sodom story because they tell the story of his readers now.<sup>230</sup>

Chapter 2 of this dissertation observed that one of Peter's key hermeneutical principles is the “suffering-glory” motif. This is relatively submerged in 2 Peter, but here it juts above the surface. The conviction that the Messiah's people, like the Messiah himself, lives through suffering before future glory undergirds the examples of Noah and

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<sup>229</sup> Cf. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 263; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 211. Schreiner notes that there is “probably an allusion to the Lord's Prayer” here. Bauckham rules out “temptation to sin,” because “Noah and Lot are not represented as being attracted by evil, but as reacting against it.” Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 253. I think, however, that this observation does not do justice either to Lot's story in Gen 19 or to Peter's application in 2:10b–22. Bauckham also helpfully notes a parallel to Sir 33:1 (Bauckham, 253).

<sup>230</sup> Ostmeyer rightly highlights Lot's suffering in his application for Peter's readers. Lot's suffering—like that of Peter's readers—consisted not primarily in direct attacks from his neighbors (“direkte Angriffe seiner Zeitgenossen”); rather, “Lot litt darunter, den Lebenswandel der ihn umgebenden Menschen mitanzusehen und mitanhören zu müssen.” Ostmeyer, *Die Briefe des Petrus und des Judas*, 131. Cf. Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, Der 2. Petrusbrief*, 192. For similar reasons, Peter portrays Lot's situation as “souffrance quasi insupportable.” Fuchs and Reymond, *La deuxième épître de saint Pierre; Jude*, 87. Bigg, on the other hand, believes the “trial” of Lot was the “constant annoyance of insult and ill-usage.” Bigg, *St. Peter and St. Jude*, 278.

especially Lot. Fundamentally, Lot and Peter’s readers live in very similar spaces. Embattled and alone, living in and surrounded by a world full of wickedness—and a world trying to suck them in. It is fascinating that *this* is what Peter refers to as “trials”—not harsh physical persecution, but this. Deliverance will indeed come—as Lot’s story shows (2:9)—and in the form of new creation (3:13). But until then, suffering like Lot will be the lot of Peter’s readers.

This section is also setting up for Peter’s emphasis on eschatological judgment and salvation in chapter 3; thus, as Carson notes, “by going on from water to fire, he is advancing to consideration of the final day of judgment.”<sup>231</sup> This will be dealt with in-depth in the next chapter of this dissertation, but suffice it to say that Peter merges the universality and cosmic destruction/new creation aspects of the flood with the fiery aspect of Sodom’s destruction in his portrayal of eschatological judgment in 2 Peter 3. He gives a strong hint of this in 2:6 when he states that this is an “example” of “what is about to happen to the ungodly” (ὕπόδειγμα μελλόντων ἀσεβέσιν τεθεικώς)—coming soon (again note parallel to 2 Macc 2:5).<sup>232</sup> This is a clear anticipation of chapter 3.

**Echoes in 2 Peter 2.** The story of Lot and Sodom is echoed in 2 Peter 3, which will be addressed in the following chapter because they are intertwined with the broader creation/destruction/new creation motifs. Here, I explore echoes in 2 Peter 2:10b–22.

Verses 13b–14a evoke the licentious and depraved nature of the Sodomites. The descriptors in these verses link to verse 10a, τοὺς ὀπίσω σαρκὸς ἐν ἐπιθυμίᾳ μiasμοῦ πορευομένους. Like the men of Sodom, the false teachers are “unceasing from sin”—specifically sexual sin: ὀφθαλμοὺς ἔχοντες μεστοὺς μοιχαλίδος καὶ ἀκαταπαύστους ἀμαρτίας (v. 14a).<sup>233</sup> They are “revelers,” living a wild lifestyle like those of Sodom and

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<sup>231</sup> Carson, “2 Peter,” 1052.

<sup>232</sup> See Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 252.

<sup>233</sup> Cf. Simon J. Kistemaker, *Peter and Jude* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 308.

the flood generation. And it is these who “entice” the unstable (v. 14b)—as Lot’s family fell prey.

The more profound echo occurs in verses 17–20. This time the echo is to a previously unmentioned part of the Sodom story: Lot’s wife.<sup>234</sup> In 2 Peter 2:18 the false teachers, like the inhabitants of Sodom, “entice by sensual passions of the flesh [ἐν ἐπιθυμίαις σαρκὸς ἀσελγείαις] those barely escaping<sup>235</sup> from those living astray [τοὺς ἐν πλάνῃ ἀναστρεφόμενους].” In verse 7, Lot was “distressed” by the “sensual living” (ἀσελγεία ἀναστροφῆς) of the “lawless.” In verse 18, two of the same words appear again: ἀσελγεία and the verb form of ἀναστροφῆς, ἀναστρέφω. In Genesis 18, Lot was able to flee; he had not yet succumbed to the enslavement of Sodom’s lifestyle. His wife came so close; in Peter’s words, she “barely escaped” (v. 18). But for Peter, the pull of Sodom’s enticements “overcame” (v. 19) her. There can be little doubt that this is precisely what Peter is thinking of, given the verbal connections to verse 7 and the uniquely applicable language of “barely escaping.”<sup>236</sup> But Peter here is using the role of Lot’s wife within his

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<sup>234</sup> Peter *might* have a similar oblique reference to another minor character in the Abraham narrative in 1 Pet 2:18–20, this time to Hagar. (Lack of explicit verbal mention makes this echo less certain than the “Lot’s wife” reference in 2 Peter.) Hagar is the clearest OT example of a slave explicitly recognized by God as suffering unjustly, being told to return and submit, and his watching out for her to bless her. Also, several verses later (3:5–6), Peter briefly picks up the example of Sarah in submitting to her husband, showing that these narratives are on his mind. On Sarah, see McCartney, “Use of OT in 1 Peter,” 145–47. For a thorough study of the reception history of Lot’s wife, see Josey B. Snyder, “Looking Back at Lot’s Wife: A Reception-Critical Character Study” (PhD diss., Emory University, 2016).

<sup>235</sup> τοὺς ὀλίγως ἀποφεύγοντας could refer to the extent (partially escaped) or the duration (escaped for a little while). Either way, the escape is not complete. See Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 274–75. On the textual variant here, see Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 427–28; Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 307; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 271. ὀλίγως and not the variant ὄντως is almost certainly original.

<sup>236</sup> Oddly enough, commentators fail to point this out, including Bauckham, Schreiner, Giese, Witherington, Frey, Green, Neyrey, Davids, Carson, Paulsen, Schelkle, Kelly, Vögtle, Ostmeyer, Fuchs and Reymond, Reese, Donelson, and Kistemaker. Brown’s dissertation does not mention it either. Green at least mentions the ἀναστροφῆς/ἀναστρέφω connection to v. 7. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 295. Schreiner mentions the use of ἀσελγεία in v. 7. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 427. Hafemann writes that “Second Peter 2.17–22 is perhaps the most neglected paragraph of what may still be the most neglected letter in the New Testament.” Scott J. Hafemann, “Identity, Eschatology, and Ethics in 2 Peter 2.17–22,” in *Muted Voices of the New Testament: Readings in the Catholic Epistles and Hebrews*, ed. Katherine M. Hockey, Madison N. Pierce, and Francis Watson, LNTS 565 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017), 55. But, he argues that “despite its neglect, it provides a significant paradigm for understanding the struggle in the early church to create and preserve a Christian ‘identity’” (Hafemann, 55). My observation concerning Lot’s wife reinforces the connection of these verses to Peter’s larger themes and concerns.

broader employment of the Sodom account to describe and warn his own readers. They are living in a Sodom-like environment. The Lord “knows how” to rescue people through the “trials/temptations” of that world (v. 9), but Peter’s readers risk playing the role not of Lot but of Lot’s wife. As they know from her story (and perhaps even from personal experience, *à la* Josephus’ claim!), escaping and then becoming “entangled and overcome” in the end is the worst of all fates. Peter is implicitly warning them against turning into a pillar of salt.<sup>237</sup>

### **Sodom and Lot Conclusion**

Peter elaborates more on the Sodom and Lot account than he does on the two other accounts in this pericope. He also sees it connected to those previous accounts—in the types of sins committed, in the judgments issued, and (except for the Watchers) in the deliverance of the righteous. The study of Genesis 18–19 found that these tight connections begin with the literary features of the story itself; they are then carried on in the later Jewish traditions reaching to Peter’s day.

Once again, Peter’s use of this account is not a one-off, nor is it single-layered. It is introduced in 2:4–10a but picked up and developed further in 2:17ff and in chapter 3, and it includes multiple dimensions of warnings and encouragements: (1) Peter views the Sodom account as representing sexual immorality, licentiousness, and perhaps even deeper, a lifestyle “enslaved” to corruption (2:19). A corresponding (but escalated, see chap. 3) fiery judgment will come upon those now who resemble them. Peter paints the false teachers with the colors of the men of Sodom, in a stark warning to anyone contemplating sharing in their revelries. (2) Peter sees in some of his readers the potential to play the role of Lot’s wife (2:17–20). They in a sense have already been freed (1:4), but they are not out of the woods (or better, out of the city) yet. God is able to keep them

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<sup>237</sup> Jesus also referred to Lot’s wife in the context of Sodom, the flood, and eschatological judgment (Luke 17:22–32). His appropriation of her part, however, is different from Peter’s.

(2:9), but they must not give in to Sodom’s enticements. (3) Peter sees the faithful of his day as playing the role of Lot in their story. Their “trial/temptation” is to remain in a wicked environment and continue to be vexed by it, not succumbing to it or giving up. They can trust in God’s deliverance and know that the same God who delivered Lot will someday deliver them.<sup>238</sup> This is a tender, encouraging note in the midst of a litany of frightening warnings.

In this section, the three principles discussed in chapter 2 of this dissertation surface again. (1) Peter’s prophetic, eschatological view of Scripture’s stories is clear. The story of Sodom and Lot is not merely a gripping moral story or historical narrative (it is both for him), but it is an “example” (ὑπόδειγμα) of the coming judgment. It stands in a line with the flood, with which it will be merged together in chapter 3 as prophetic depictions of final judgment.<sup>239</sup> (2) Readers also meet again, in the characterization of Lot, with Peter’s “suffering and subsequent glory” understanding of redemptive history. Lot’s role is precisely where Peter *expects* his readers ought to be right now. This was Jesus’ experience, and it will be his people’s as they await the great day of deliverance. (3) Finally, Peter again situates his readers squarely inside Scripture’s stories; his literary characterizations are based on his prophetic/eschatological convictions. He does not merely pull lessons and warnings from the stories into his teaching; he pulls his readers *into* the stories *as* his teaching.<sup>240</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> Cf. Fuchs and Reymond, *La deuxième épître de saint Pierre; Jude*, 87.

<sup>239</sup> With Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 262–63.

<sup>240</sup> Once more, Brown speaks of Peter’s “moral paradigm” and “typological” uses of the Sodom narrative, which I believe Peter blends together. Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 210–12.

## Chapter Conclusion

Much can be gleaned from 2 Peter 2:4–10a concerning Peter’s use of Scripture. I divide this chapter’s conclusion into two parts: first a few elements more directly unique from this chapter, then a couple which tie in to my larger project.

### Unique Features

**Use of Jewish tradition.** Though this was glimpsed with Peter’s use of the Balaam material, one of the biggest questions raised in this chapter involves Peter’s use of Jewish traditions with biblical accounts.<sup>241</sup> Peter’s use of the Watchers, Noah, and Lot/Sodom all point back not to the pristine Genesis text, but to both the text *and* the later tradition. A few points are in order: (1) Readers should expect that popular stories are internalized and then retold in vivid ways, with extra details commonly in circulation. Modern preachers do the same thing today, and this does not detract from the story provided the integrity of the original story is not jeopardized. (This includes both Peter’s use of tradition and his own additions concerning Lot’s internal turmoil.) Second Peter should be read not as an academic treatise, but as a passionate homiletical exhortation. (2) For the flood and Sodom/Lot stories, the traditional developments are in keeping with the original narratives. The furthest removed is Noah as a “preacher.”<sup>242</sup> But this is a fairly reasonable inference, at least at some level. (3) While Peter’s use of these OT stories is mediated through traditions circulating in his culture, as Bauckham notes there is

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<sup>241</sup> For a similar summary in Brown’s dissertation conclusion, see Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 256–57. Brown’s hermeneutical explanation is helpful, though it is stated more strongly than mine (265–72). In my view, Brown is too quick to assume that Peter’s additions to the OT stories constitute “new information or revelation” about the OT stories, and that they ought to affect the reading of the Genesis narratives. I would avoid a statement like “Peter’s revelatory stance allows him to elevate these traditions on a par with Scripture, whereas today one must be careful not to add to Scripture” (272). We should be cautious for two reasons: (1) Peter’s purpose is not to add information to the original stories, and (2) his letter is rhetorically rich homiletical exhortation, not a research project. I have shown that Peter’s retellings of the OT stories are in line with the original accounts, but there are a few genuine additions (especially with the Watchers account) that fit with the original accounts but are not part of them.

<sup>242</sup> Peter may also imply that Sodom’s remains are still visible, but this is not stated, unlike Jude 7. While factually disputable, this would not impinge upon the original story itself (it may affect its eschatological use in Jude).



evidence that he *does* refer directly to the biblical text and not only to the embellished stories.<sup>243</sup>

(4) The case of the Watchers is the most pronounced. Genesis 6 does not even imply that the “sons of God” were locked up in judgment, though given the literary echoes to fall and flood, this is not a far-fetched development. Here it does seem that Peter invokes later developments as factually accurate (authoritative?) and connected to the biblical-prophetic story. Assuming he was familiar with 1 Enoch,<sup>244</sup> he only recounts material related to the story of the flood/Watchers. Most likely, Peter believed that the angelic judgment was factually accurate and thus belonged with the Genesis 6 account. This does *not* imply that Peter embraced all of the embellishments or theological perspectives in 1 Enoch.<sup>245</sup> Genesis 6:1–4 and what he understands to be its conclusion deserve to be invoked together. If anything, this may underscore that Peter’s interest in Scripture extends to (what he sees as) the behind-the-text historical events and not merely the text as “stories.”

**Invoking various aspects.** Once again, this phenomenon has been glimpsed before, but it comes into focus in 2 Peter 2:4–10a. When Peter uses a story or motif, he

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<sup>243</sup> There are echoes of LXX Gen 6:17 in 2 Pet 2:5 and Gen 19:29 in v. 6. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 247, 251–52. Cf. Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 215–16, 254.

<sup>244</sup> McCartney (writing of 1 Peter) thinks it “not unlikely that Peter could have known and used the same traditional material of 1 Enoch.” McCartney, “Use of OT in 1 Peter,” 152–56. Bauckham, writing of 2 Peter and assuming an author other than Peter, questions whether the author was familiar with 1 Enoch. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 139–40, 248. Gentry and Fountain raise questions concerning 1 Enoch’s textual history and conclude that it is better to see Jude using “Enochic traditions” than 1 Enoch *per se*. Gentry and Fountain, “Reassessing Jude’s Use of Enochic Traditions,” 262–67.

<sup>245</sup> Rightly regarding Jude and applying to Peter, see Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 542–43. Nor does Peter’s use Enochic tradition imply that he believed 1 Enoch to be inspired. The contrast with Jude is significant, in that Jude explicitly embraces not only embellishments to biblical stories, but also prose discourse in 1 Enoch (Jude 14–15). But it is highly unlikely that even Jude thought 1 Enoch inspired. For helpful discussion, see Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 566–68. Bauckham points out that “at Qumran, for example, the Enoch literature . . . [was] evidently valued without being included in the canon of Scripture.” Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 96. For further detail on the history of 1 Enoch’s canonical status, see Jeremy Hultin, “Jude’s Citation of 1 Enoch,” in *Jewish and Christian Scriptures: The Function of “Canonical” and “Non-Canonical” Religious Texts*, ed. James H. Charlesworth and Lee Martin McDonald, *Jewish and Christian Texts in Contexts and Related Studies 7* (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 113–28; Gentry and Fountain, “Reassessing Jude’s Use of Enochic Traditions.”

tends not to include just one reference. Rather, even if he has one main reference, the story/motif tends to be echoed throughout the letter (and sometimes also in 1 Peter). And even if his main reference refers to only one or two aspects of a story, other echoes may invoke other aspects. Previous chapters reveal the wisdom/“Two Ways” motifs permeating the letter, and observe Peter’s use of Balaam: an echo of his (true!) prophecy in 1:19, the main references in 2:15–16, and the permeation throughout chapter 2. Here the same obtains with the three stories in this chapter: (1) The Watchers are used to characterize the false teachers (including in 2:17b). (2) The flood is used in chapter 2 but also linked in chapter 3 with the creation story to speak of destruction/new creation. (3) The Sodom/Lot account is used in a very multifaceted way. The Sodomites are used to characterize the false teachers of Peter’s day, the judgment upon Sodom is used as an “eschatological example” of the final judgment in chapter 3, Lot’s experience is used to encourage Peter’s faithful readers, and even Lot’s wife is alluded to as a warning against falling after “escaping” corruption. This phenomenon is brought into even greater focus when Jude’s use of the shared material is compared; Jude tends to use his stories in a much more self-contained, one-off fashion. Sodom is given a crisp mention in verse 7, serving only as a warning and example to future generations. The Watchers (v. 6) get even less application, though they may be referenced (e.g., v. 13).

**Weaving narratives together.** Given Peter’s use of a considerable number of biblical stories and motifs, and given his tendency to invoke various aspects of these stories throughout 2 Peter, the result is that 2 Peter tends to weave the different stories and motifs together. In the space of a few verses Peter may pile on echoes of “two ways,” Balaam and false prophets, and all three OT stories from Genesis—plus maybe an allusion to Proverbs or a Jesus saying to boot! Somehow, though, these allusions do not feel chaotic; they rather appear more like a tapestry woven into a “thick” pattern. For Peter, these stories and motifs all belong in the same “symbolic universe,” the same

story-world. They are all parts of the biblical story, which is prophetically pointing forward in various ways to the eschaton. If Peter's time *is* the beginning of that age, then the story he and his contemporaries are living will bear reflections of the many stories that preceded him. The long, grand story of prophetic history is reaching its climax; and climaxes always involve the coming together of all the strands of the story thus far.

### **Tie-ins**

**With other dissertation chapters.** This chapter of the dissertation stands at an important point in the study and in 2 Peter's use of the OT. Chapter 3 studied the influence of Proverbs' wisdom and "two ways." Peter (in keeping with developments in his era) takes the "Two Ways" wisdom motif and modulates it into a prophetic, eschatological key. The "two ways" are not merely the two ways of wisdom and folly, life and death; they are the two ways leading either to new creation/eternal life or to God's judgment/the destruction of the cosmos. This led naturally to 2 Peter's emphasis on prophets; chapter 4 observed that along Peter's "two ways" stand not sages but prophets—true prophets versus false prophets. In this chapter, Peter issues his own calling from the prophetic events in Scripture concerning the *end points* of those two ways. Here he focuses on the personal dimensions—individual judgment versus individual deliverance. In the next chapter (both of the dissertation and of 2 Peter), he will emphasize the cosmic dimensions of those "end points"—the world's destruction and new creation.

**With "three principles."** This chapter clearly evidenced Peter's three principles for reading the OT (see chap. 2 of this dissertation). (1) The prophetic nature of Scripture: Scripture is prophetic for Peter, not only in the Psalms and the *Nevi'im* but in its *history*. The coming final judgment is from "of old" (2 Pet 2:3), in that God's judgments of the past are a sure "example" (2:6) of his future judgment(s). Sinners of his day should look back and see themselves already indicted in the events of those stories.

Likewise, God’s deliverance of the righteous of old (Noah, Lot) is a representation of how he will likewise deliver the righteous in the last days. Biblical history itself is prophetic, based on God’s purposes and character.<sup>246</sup> (2) Scripture’s message of suffering and subsequent glory. This principle appears clearest in 2 Peter in the story of Lot. As discussed, Peter portrays Lot’s *πειρασμός* as his standing alone surrounded by wickedness, and not giving up or giving in. God did indeed deliver him, just as he will deliver Peter’s faithful readers. But the messianic pattern holds: like Lot, their calling now (as in 1 Peter) is to suffer and be tested/tempted; only *later* will glory come. (3) Scripture’s application through “stepping into the story.” This point has been emphasized repeatedly throughout this chapter. Peter does not merely give examples and warnings (he does those!); he writes the story of his own day as the next act in the same drama.<sup>247</sup> He pictures his characters as the very characters from the stories of old. Part of his application, in addition to and alongside his direct exhortations, is to make his readers see

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<sup>246</sup> With Beale, *Handbook on NT Use of OT*, 95–102; Foulkes, “Acts of God”; Rikk Watts, “Rethinking Context in the Relationship of Israel’s Scriptures to the NT: Character, Agency and the Possibility of Genuine Change,” in *Methodology in the Use of the Old Testament in the New: Context and Criteria*, ed. David Allen and Steve Smith, LNTS 579 (New York: T&T Clark, 2020), 157–77. Brown concludes that only the OT “events” Peter cites should be considered as “true biblical types with predictive force,” not the OT “figures.” This is because “the escalation is not between the OT individual and the NT individual, but rather between” the events. Thus, he sees the “comparison between OT figures and NT figures as a one-to-one correspondence with merely a moral or paranetic [*sic*] emphasis.” Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 258–59. I do not, however, think that such a precise distinction should be made. It is far more likely that in Peter’s mind, the people and events were bound up with one another such that it is the entire story that is “prophetic.” Also, I shy away from the language of “typology,” and so am not bound to the same precise definitions as Brown. But Jesus’ claim that the least in the kingdom of heaven are greater than the old covenant’s greatest prophet (Matt 11:11; Luke 7:28) suggests that there may be some sense of “escalation” extending to OT figures.

<sup>247</sup> Brown speaks of “predictive” and “paranetic” (*sic*) applications of the OT in the NT. Brown, “Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a,” 50–52. My argument is that Peter blends those two categories together in his application.

In a recent article, Beckman observes that for Ben Sira, “Previously inked Scriptures are not historically detached or un-applicable to the later believing community. Scripture functions as a hermeneutical lens by which later lives can be understood and formed. Scripture is not understood in isolation to modern reality but finds representation in present believing individuals and circumstances.” Peter Beckman, “Ben Sira’s Canon Conscious Interpretive Strategies: His Narrative History and the Realization of the Jewish Scriptures,” *Them* 46, no. 3 (2021): 572. Though his approach and perspective are different from Peter’s, it is helpful to think about other Jewish appropriations of Scriptural history for their present day.

the world through the lens of Scripture's stories.<sup>248</sup> They do not get to choose the stories they inhabit—Peter is convinced that his is not merely a literary appropriation, but a prophetic redemptive-historical one.<sup>249</sup> But his readers *do* get to choose which of the characters' parts they will play—will they be, for example, the Sodomites? Or Lot? Or maybe, worst of all, Lot's wife?

The next chapter picks up the flood and Sodom stories again, and studies them along with creation/new creation motifs and other references related to Peter's cataclysmic portrayal in 2 Peter 3.

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<sup>248</sup> Rightly the central concern of Wright (though not necessarily embracing all of his material on figural interpretation). Stephen I. Wright, "Inhabiting the Story: The Use of the Bible in the Interpretation of History," in *"Behind" the Text: History and Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Craig Bartholomew et al., *Scripture and Hermeneutics 4* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 492–519.

<sup>249</sup> With Brown, "Use of OT in 2 Peter 2:4–10a," 260, 262–63.

## CHAPTER 6

### CREATION, DESTRUCTION, AND NEW CREATION

This chapter considers allusions to Scripture in 2 Peter 3, where Peter emphasizes the certainty and efficacy of God’s word of promise in creation, destruction, and new creation. These allusions include Peter’s continued appropriation of flood and Sodom stories (studied in the previous chapter of this dissertation), and allusions to Genesis 1 (creation), Isaiah 34:4 (briefly, on destruction), and Isaiah 65:17 (“new heavens and new earth”). They contain allusions to Psalm 90:4, Habakkuk 2:3, and Isaiah 60:22—where Peter guides his recipients in “reading” the timing of God’s promises (hence, “hermeneutical allusions”).

The chapter’s organization is as follows: first, I outline the general structure of 2 Peter 3, followed by the “hermeneutical allusions.” After this, the chapter follows 2 Peter 3’s movement from creation to flood to fire, to final re-creation by God’s “promise.”

Second Peter 3 weaves together all of the scriptural motifs studied thus far in this dissertation: the flood and Sodom’s destruction set the pattern for eschatological destruction, the “promise” of the prophets is both mentioned and explicitly cited, and the scoffers of Proverbs question God’s judgment.

#### **Section Introduction: Word, Water, and Fire**

The central concern of 2 Peter 3 is the certainty and efficacy of the *word* and *promise* of the Lord. This concern introduces the chapter, in verse 2: “Remember the forewarned words [τῶν προειρημένων ῥημάτων] of the holy prophets and the command of the Lord and Savior through your apostles.” Therefore it is not surprising that the rest of

the chapter thus contains a dense web of allusions to Scripture and to Jesus' teaching (with the latter's own scriptural allusions as well). Peter employs these allusions to address objections concerning God's "delayed" judgment, and he closes with a tantalizing reference to God's "promise" (ἐπάγγελμα), given through Isaiah, of a "new heavens and a new earth" (v. 13).<sup>1</sup>

### Scriptural Response to Objections

In 2 Peter 3, the apostle exhorts his readers to continued confidence and faithfulness despite scoffers' taunts of Jesus' "delayed" return.<sup>2</sup> Peter employs two distinct scriptural avenues to deal with these objections, which are marked off by two instances of λανθάνω in verse 5 and verse 8 respectively. Both verses begin with clauses including a form of λανθάνω and ending with a ὅτι which introduces the content of what they must not "forget."<sup>3</sup>

In verse 5, the verb λανθάνω is in the third person (λανθάνει). This statement is directed (literarily at least) against the "scoffers"/false teachers, who doubt the Lord's return altogether.<sup>4</sup> Peter includes the indictment θέλοντας to hold them culpable for their

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<sup>1</sup> It should be briefly noted here that Bauckham argues for a (hypothetical) "Jewish apocalyptic" source behind much of 2 Pet 3. Richard Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, WBC, vol. 50 (Waco, TX: Word, 1983), 283–85. Frey, in a lengthy excursus, rejects this idea. Jörg Frey, *The Letter of Jude and the Second Letter of Peter: A Theological Commentary*, trans. Kathleen Ess (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2018), 377–79. Davids writes that the idea is "possible" but unproven. Peter H. Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 264–65. Davids's caution is warranted.

<sup>2</sup> For a fuller discussion of the "delay of the Parousia" in ancient Jewish and NT literature, see the excellent article by Richard Bauckham, "The Delay of the Parousia," *TynBul* 31 (1980): 3–36. For a survey of modern scholarship on the issue, see Rebecca Skaggs, *1, 2 Peter and Jude through the Centuries* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2020), 255–64.

<sup>3</sup> V. 5: λανθάνει γὰρ αὐτοὺς τοῦτο θέλοντας ὅτι. . . . V. 8: Ἐν δὲ τοῦτο μὴ λανθανέτω ὑμᾶς, ἀγαπητοί, ὅτι. . . . Rightly Scott J. Hafemann, "'One Day as a Thousand Years': Psalm 90, Humility and the Certainty of Eschatological Judgement in 2 Peter 3.8," in *One God, One People, One Future: Essays in Honor of N. T. Wright*, ed. John Anthony Dunne and Eric Lewellen (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2018), 532. Bauckham observes this connection as well; see Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 304. Additionally, both v. 3 and v. 9 include a reference to God's ἐπαγγελία. (These are the only two occurrences in 2 Peter, though ἐπάγγελμα appears in 1:4 and 3:13. It may be coincidental, but the ἐπαγγελία references seem to be negative/judgment oriented, while the ἐπάγγελμα references are positive/redemptive).

<sup>4</sup> The scoffers' worldview seems to include uniformitarian, non-interventionist assumptions likely from Greek philosophy (whether Aristotelian, Platonic, Epicurean, or Peripatetic is uncertain). See Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 2nd ed., CSC (Nashville: B&H, 2020), 447–48; Frey, *Jude and*

“not knowing.” The content of their ignorance (ὅτι content clause) is the creation and flood—concrete events in the past which demonstrate the efficacy and justice of God’s word.

In verse 8, the verb λανθάνω is a third person imperative (λανθανέτω).<sup>5</sup> This statement includes a vocative ἀγαπητοί, signaling a gentle exhortation to faithful readers shaken by the delay of the Lord’s return.<sup>6</sup> They are not to be shaken by the scoffers’ taunting, but to remember that the timing of God’s actions is different from that of humans. This argument is made in the ὅτι content clause by allusions to Psalm 90:4 (89:4 LXX) and Habakkuk 2:3 (as well as Isa 60:22). God’s word itself testifies to the strange “delays” in the fulfillments of God’s words of promise (v. 9; v. 13), and these allusions give something of a hermeneutical key to interpreting the timing of God’s promised acts.

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*Second Letter of Peter*, 376–77; Charles Bigg, *St. Peter and St. Jude*, ICC (New York: T&T Clark, 1901), 292; Edward Adams, “Creation ‘Out of’ and ‘Through’ Water in 2 Peter 3:5,” in *Creation of Heaven and Earth: Re-Interpretations of Genesis I in the Context of Judaism, Ancient Philosophy, Christianity, and Modern Physics*, ed. George H. van Kooten (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 195–210. Cf. Sam Meier, “2 Peter 3:3–7 – an Early Jewish and Christian Response to Eschatological Skepticism,” *BZ* 32, no. 2 (1988): 255–57. Burge proposes a Sophistic background, but this may be too precise. David K. Burge, “A Sub-Christian Epistle? Appreciating 2 Peter as an Anti-Sophistic Polemic,” *JSNT* 44, no. 2 (2021): 310–32. Schreiner helpfully reminds that they did not necessarily deny the fulfillment of “soteriological prophecies” in Jesus Christ, but held that “the physical world had been stable from” its creation or perhaps was eternal. Schreiner, *I, 2 Peter, Jude*, 448. Vögtle’s reminder is that these opponents were individuals, and their objections may have varied slightly from person to person. Anton Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, Der 2. Petrusbrief*, EKKNT (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1994), 217.

I should also briefly address the referent of the “fathers” who “fell asleep” in 3:4. For a defense of the view that these “fathers” are the “first generation of Christians,” see Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 289–93. This, Bauckham notes, is the view of “almost all modern commentators.” Cf. Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 382. Vögtle, though holding the “first generation” view, concedes that this referent is not the norm. Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, Der 2. Petrusbrief*, 216. I, however, side with Schreiner, who argues that it refers to “the patriarchs of the OT.” He writes that the plural πατέρες “never refers to the first generations of Christians in the NT, but it *always* refers to the patriarchs of the OT” (with extensive list of references). “Furthermore, there are hundreds of verses in the OT where ‘ancestors’ refers to the patriarchs.” Additionally, “the term ‘ancestors’ overlaps with the phrase ‘since the beginning of creation.’” Schreiner, *I, 2 Peter, Jude*, 446–48. Cf. Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 265–67; Gene L. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 317–18; Edward Adams, “Where Is the Promise of His Coming?: The Complaint of the Scoffers in 2 Peter 3.4,” *NTS* 51, no. 1 (2005): 111–14. The question does not significantly impact this study, though the position I take adds an additional scriptural reference (to the OT patriarchs).

<sup>5</sup> V. 8 also begins with a δε, signaling a transition from the focus on scoffers to the focus on faithful readers.

<sup>6</sup> Though as Bauckham notes, in effect both arguments are “really addressed to the readers.” Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 304.



## Progression of Scriptural Imagery

The flow of scriptural imagery and argument in 2 Peter 3 is complex, yet somehow very cohesive. It is built around a succession of four events: creation, flood, fiery judgment, and new creation. These are intertwined by causal motifs: word/promise, water, and fire.<sup>7</sup>

Table 5. Progression of scriptural imagery in 2 Peter 3

Creation (v. 5)	οὐρανοὶ . . . καὶ γῆ	
	ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ δι' ὕδατος	τῷ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγῳ
Flood (v. 6)	ὁ τότε κόσμος	
	δι' ὧν / ὕδατι	
Fire (v. 7)	οἱ νῦν οὐρανοὶ καὶ ἡ γῆ	
	πυρὶ	τῷ αὐτῷ λόγῳ
Fire (v. 10)	οὐρανοὶ . . . καὶ γῆ	
	καυσούμενα λυθήσεται	τῆς ἐπαγγελίας (v. 9)
New creation (v. 13)	καινοὺς οὐρανοὺς καὶ γῆν καινὴν	
	x	κατὰ τὸ ἐπάγγελμα αὐτοῦ

Creation came “out of water and through water” by means of “the word of God.” In the flood, the earth’s destruction came via the same two means.<sup>8</sup> Now, Peter

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Adams, who similarly points out how “the divine word” links creation, flood, and judgment, and how water and fire likewise link the three. Adams, “Creation ‘Out of’ and ‘Through’ Water,” 196–97. On the “word” and three worlds emphasis, cf. Henning Paulsen, *Der zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief*, KEK (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 160; Eric Fuchs and Pierre Reymond, *La deuxième épître de saint Pierre; L’épître de saint Jude*, CNT (Neuchâtel: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1980), 113.

<sup>8</sup> The referent of δι' ὧν in v. 6 is debated. Some scholars think the plural pronoun refers to the two instances of “water” in v. 5. The “most common solution,” and the one held here, “is that the plural relative pronoun refers to the water and to the word of God, both of which are mentioned in v. 5. The same agents that brought order to the world—water and God’s word—were also responsible for its destruction.” See discussion in Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 451. Carson takes a different position: that the plural refers only to the “waters.” D. A. Carson, “2 Peter,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old*

warns, the cosmos is “by the same word” of God kept for destruction “by fire.”<sup>9</sup> The next sections of this chapter show how Peter accentuates “water” imagery as part of his appropriation of the creation and flood narratives from the OT. He does the same with “fire” imagery to hark back to the Sodom narrative used earlier in the letter. The emphasis on God’s “word” is likewise a motif featuring explicitly in Genesis 1, and God’s “word” is also present in the flood and Sodom narratives. The “prophetic word” (1:19) as well as that of Jesus and the prophets (3:2) speak forward to the final destruction and re-creation (Isa 65:17); hence Peter seeks to connect God’s “word” at creation (3:5) to his word of “promise” in Isaiah 65:17 (3:13).

Peter intentionally employs the οὐρανοί-and-γῆ word pair (along with the word κόσμος) to tie 2 Peter 3 together, leading from Genesis 1:1 in verse 5 to Isaiah 65:17 in verse 13. The plural of οὐρανός occurs five times in 2 Peter, all in chapter 3 (vv. 5, 7, 10, 12, 13) and each time paired with the word γῆ (except v. 12).<sup>10</sup> Peter punctuates the progression of chapter 3 with the “heavens and earth” word pair or the word κόσμος: The first (v. 5) is a reference to creation of “heavens and earth” in Genesis 1. The second (v. 6) is a reference to ὁ τότε κόσμος destroyed by the flood.<sup>11</sup> The third (v. 7) and fourth (v.

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*Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 1058. There is a textual issue here as well, as a small minority of witnesses read a singular δι’ ὧν instead of plural δι’ ὧν. The *ECM* adopts this reading, but for a persuasive case in favor of the plural (on both external and internal grounds), see Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 390–92. Externally, the “vast majority of witnesses” as well as ancient translations favor the plural reading. On internal grounds, Frey makes multiple arguments. One particularly relevant for the present purposes is his reference to the work of Blumenthal, who has “successfully shown that the plural variant does indeed serve a strategic function in the argument of 2 Pet 3 by accentuating the continuous role of God’s word as agent of judgment and salvation” (Frey, 391). See Christian Blumenthal, “Omikron oder Omega. Zur Textkonstitution und Textgeschichte von 2 Petr 3,6,” in *Der zweite Petrusbrief und das Neue Testament*, ed. W. Grünstäudl, T. Nicklas, and U. Poplutz, WUNT 397 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 205–30.

<sup>9</sup> Bauckham makes this same observation. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 298. Cf. Karl H. Schelkle, *Die Petrusbriefe; der Judasbrief*, HTKNT (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1961), 225.

<sup>10</sup> The singular occurs once in 2 Pet 1:18, referring to the “voice borne out of heaven.”

<sup>11</sup> It makes sense for Peter to use κόσμος here, as he used similar wording in 2:5 (twice: once as ἀρχαίου κόσμου and once as κόσμῳ ἀσεβῶν) to describe the world destroyed by the flood.

10) refer to the destruction of the present “heavens and earth,” and the final (v. 13) is the allusion to Isaiah’s “new heavens and new earth.”<sup>12</sup>

### **“Thousand Years” of Patience (3:3–4, 8–9)**

This section examines the three “hermeneutical allusions” in 2 Peter 3: Psalm 90:4, Habakkuk 2:3, and Isaiah 60:22. I have dubbed these allusions “hermeneutical” because Peter invokes them to help his audience rightly “read” the actions and promises of God in the face of seeming delay. As the Psalm 90 allusion is the most explicit, it receives the bulk of the attention. The other two allusions are also significant, however. Habakkuk 2:3 is so for two reasons. First, it is part of the next verse and same thought in 2 Peter (3:8–9). Second, Hafemann points out that these are the “two scriptural texts that Second Temple and Rabbinic Judaism commonly pondered when discussing the problem of ‘the delay of the End.’”<sup>13</sup> Isaiah 60:22 is important because it ties the “hermeneutical” waiting/hastening material to the Isaianic vision of restoration and judgment which Peter invokes in the chapter.

### **Psalm 90:4 (89:4 LXX) in 2 Peter 3:8**

This section first studies Psalm 90 in its original context and in the context of the Psalter. It then surveys Jewish uses of the psalm, followed by a study of 2 Peter’s use.

**Psalm 90.** Psalm 90<sup>14</sup> is the one Psalm explicitly identified with Moses.<sup>15</sup> It is a prayer marked by tensions: tensions between God as both dwelling place and destroyer,

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<sup>12</sup> V. 12’s reference to “heavens” further elaborates on their destruction.

<sup>13</sup> Hafemann, ““One Day as a Thousand Years’,” 532. For discussion on these two texts, Hafemann (for good reason) points to Bauckham, “The Delay of the Parousia.”

<sup>14</sup> For convenience, I will simply refer to the psalm as Ps 90.

<sup>15</sup> Mosaic authorship is denied by most commentators, who view the psalm’s ascription to Moses as a post-exilic scribal decision. But “even those who deny Mosaic authorship . . . point out the many connections between the psalm and other Mosaic literature.” James T. Borger, “Moses in the Fourth Book of the Psalter” (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2002), 116. See especially parallels to Deut 32 (cf. Exod 15 and 32; Deut 31–34). See e.g., Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, WBC

between humans as sinful and yet God’s “servants,” and between universal-cosmic and individual-personal language.<sup>16</sup> The psalm also fuses elements of wisdom (e.g., vv. 10–12) together with covenantal/Deuteronomic ideas (e.g., vv. 1–2, 13–15).<sup>17</sup> Psalm 90 is intricately structured, forming an interlocking whole.<sup>18</sup> Despite this, “the psalmist’s terse style often makes the sense elusive and causes the text to bristle with grammatical and stylistic difficulties.”<sup>19</sup>

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(Waco, TX: Word, 1990), 437–39; Nancy L. deClaisse-Walford, Rolf A. Jacobson, and Beth LaNeel Tanner, *The Book of Psalms*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 690–91; John Goldingay, *Psalms*, vol. 3, *Psalms 90–150*, BCOTWP (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 23–24. For a detailed study of the linguistic connections, as well as further discussion on authorship, see Borger, “Moses in Fourth Book of Psalter,” 109–22. See also Tanner’s reading of Ps 90 alongside Exod 32–34 and Deut 32–33: Beth LaNeel Tanner, *The Book of Psalms through the Lens of Intertextuality*, StBibLit 26 (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 85–107. Pointed out by Geoffrey W. Grogan, *Psalms*, THOTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 158. Of course, connections like this to other writings attributed to Moses could point to common authorship. For a succinct defense of Mosaic authorship, see Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1–72: An Introduction and Commentary* (London: InterVarsity, 1973), 50. Oddly, Alter sees no connection to Deuteronomy. Robert Alter, *The Book of Psalms: A Translation with Commentary* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2009), 317.

In any event, Peter would likely have identified the psalm with Moses (due to both the linguistic parallels and the superscription). In this case, the LXX is stronger than the Hebrew, rendering the typical ל phrase *הַפְּלִיָּה לְמֹשֶׁה* with the (subjective) genitive phrase *προσευχὴ τοῦ Μωϋσῆ* instead of the more common τῷ rendering. There is, however, still debate over the meaning of the superscriptions both Hebrew and Greek. Even here, Pietersma translates the superscription as “A prayer pertaining to Moses.” Albert Pietersma, “Psalms,” in *A New English Translation of the Septuagint*, ed. Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 592. See brief discussion in Pietersma, 545. Contra Pietersma, I hold that his rendering would be a more plausible rendering of a τῷ . . . superscription than of the genitive construction in Ps 89 LXX.

<sup>16</sup> See further on these tensions Will Kynes, “Morality and Mortality: The Dialogical Interpretation of Psalm 90 in the Book of Job,” *JSOT* 44, no. 4 (2020): 628–31. Cf. Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 444–45.

<sup>17</sup> Clifford sees Ps 90 as a “communal lament” and *not* as a “wisdom meditation.” Richard J. Clifford, “Psalm 90: Wisdom Meditation or Communal Lament?,” in *The Book of Psalms: Composition and Reception*, ed. Peter W. Flint and Patrick D. Miller Jr. (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 190–205. Clifford is right that the focus of the psalm is a lament regarding God’s anger at the community (which highlights the covenantal aspects of the psalm). Elements of “wisdom,” however do remain (which Clifford does not dispute, but perhaps downplays), and Kraus rightly sees the psalm as a lament injected with “wisdom teaching.” Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60–150: A Continental Commentary*, trans. Hilton C. Oswald (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 214–18. I would simply add that the “lament” is connected to Israel’s covenantal status and history as well as to universal (e.g., creation and fall, Gen 1–3) rationales. On Gen 2–3 as background, see Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 444–45.

<sup>18</sup> There is scholarly consensus on the psalm’s literary intricacy and unity, especially following Stefan Schreiner, “Erwägungen zur Struktur des 90 Psalms,” *Bib* 59 (1978): 80–90; Pierre Auffret, “Essai sur la structure littéraire du Psaume 90,” *Bib* 61 (1980): 262–76. See e.g., Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 437–38; Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Psalms 2: A Commentary on Psalms 51–100*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 419–21; Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 214.

<sup>19</sup> Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms II: 51–100*, AB (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1968), 322.

The opening lines of the psalm set up for the contrast between God’s eternal, unchanging presence as “dwelling place”<sup>20</sup> and judge on the one hand, and on fallen humans’ ethereal, transitory lifespans.<sup>21</sup> The setup is accomplished in two ways: the psalmist proclaims the Lord as Israel’s “dwelling place” (90:1), and as the one who created the world and existed as God long prior to it (v. 2). Verses 14–17 return to this theme, calling on Yahweh as the one with **דָּוָה** and who alone can “establish the work of our hands” (vv. 14, 17). In the body of the psalm, God’s unshakeable, eternal rule is seen in his unfailing judgments against sin (vv. 3–11). Though the emphasis in Psalm 90:4 is on God as eternal judge, God as eternal “dwelling place” or “refuge” (**מְעוֹן**) must be kept in view as well.

These two characteristics of God serve as a foil to emphasize the utter frailty and short-term nature of the human condition. If God is “dwelling place,” then humans—both Israel and all the “sons of Adam” (**בְּנֵי-אָדָם**, v. 3)<sup>22</sup>—have unceasingly fled from it in rebellion. This has been true since Adam’s own first rebellion leading to death and futility outside Eden (Gen 3:19, 23). If God is eternal judge, then the only thing “eternal” about humans is their liability to judgment and their pathetic mortality under God’s sentence of death. Empires may rise, individuals may amass to themselves god-like power, but then

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<sup>20</sup> Some scholars propose emending **מְעוֹן** (“dwelling place”) to **מְעוֹד** (“safe place”/“refuge”). The LXX rendering, *καταφυγή* (“refuge”), may be seen as evidence for a **מְעוֹד** reading. However, as Tate notes in his discussion (on which mine is drawn), **מְעוֹן** can have the “extended meaning” of “refuge” in e.g., Deut 33:27; Ps 71:3; 91:9. See Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 432.

<sup>21</sup> The word *fallen* here is essential; the psalm is not a reflection on humankind’s abstract transitoriness but on their subjection to inevitable judgment (vv. 3–11). Tate writes, “Ps 90 witnesses to a direct relationship between sin and death, probably with Gen 2–3 in the background. A connection between the wrath of God and the shortness of life seems to be assumed as necessary” per Gen 1–11. Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 444–45. The distinction I am noting is along somewhat similar lines to Clifford, “Psalm 90.” The fact that the word rendered “dust” in v. 3 (**אֶבֶר**, “crushed” or “pulverized”) has a different meaning than **אֶרֶץ** (“ground”) used in Gen 2–3 weakens any direct allusion to Gen 2–3. See Goldingay, *Psalms 90–150*, 26; deClaissé-Walford, Jacobson, and Tanner, *The Book of Psalms*, 692n10. However, God’s command to the “sons of Adam” to “return” (**שׁוּבוּ**) to a “pulverized” state of death creates a striking link to Gen 3:19 (where **שׁוּבוּ** is also used). Rightly Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73–150* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), 360.

<sup>22</sup> Tanner rightly translates “children of Adam,” picking up the significance of **בְּנֵי-אָדָם** here. deClaissé-Walford, Jacobson, and Tanner, *The Book of Psalms*, 692.

they die, and their memory is utterly forgotten.<sup>23</sup> This goes on from generation to generation. Throughout it all, God stands as the one constant—and the cause of humankind’s transience. As the centuries roll on, God’s permanence juxtaposed with human ephemerality begins to remind of someone mowing his lawn (to update the imagery slightly from vv. 5–6). People/grass (רָצִיף) keep coming up, and just as quickly they are cut down—with no appreciable change in the homeowner’s life. Fallen humanity has truly been reduced to futility. Verses 3–4 could be paraphrased, “You just wipe us out and it’s nothing to you.”

Verses 8–12 individualize a similar lament; instead of a thousand years, the psalmist speaks of an individual human lifespan: seventy to eighty years.<sup>24</sup> The best one’s strength can yield might be eighty years; but each additional year simply brings more “toil and trouble” (v. 10) under God’s “fury” (v. 9). And then, those years “soon pass, and we fly away” (v. 10)—a vapor, a fleeting mist. There is no escaping God’s anger, his judgment against “iniquities” and “hidden deeds” (v. 8). God is simply *always* there, and no matter how long a person’s years are, they are ultimately like a night’s dream or a week’s lawn growth to God.

The psalm, however, begins with God not as an eternal judge but as an eternal “dwelling place.” This theme is picked up as the one and only solution to the human condition voiced in the body of the psalm. Verse 3 has God consigning humankind to “return” (שׁוּב) to powder; but verse 13 calls on Yahweh to “return” (שׁוּב) to his people in “pity.”<sup>25</sup> God’s רַחֵם is called upon, and the speakers call themselves “your servants”

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<sup>23</sup> Compare the imagery of Isa 40:15.

<sup>24</sup> As Tate points out, “similar reflections” on the “eternity of God and the brevity and evil of human life” are to be found in Sir 18:1–14 and Jubilees 23:8–15. The latter reflects on the “decline in longevity” post-Deluge. Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 442.

<sup>25</sup> Kidner, *Psalms 73–150*, 362; Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 443.

(עֲבָדֶיךָ). Judgment is *not* the final word for God’s people; God’s status as their “dwelling place” is.

There is one “practical” prayer in the psalm, immediately after the lament and prior to the call for Yahweh to “return.” Verse 12 asks God to “teach” his people to “number our days” in order to get a “heart of wisdom.” Two things should be gleaned from this verse for the present purposes: (1) The prominence of the wisdom motif.<sup>26</sup> (2) The need to live wisely in light of the certainty of God’s judgment and of life’s fleeting nature.

It is helpful to briefly compare Psalm 90 to Psalm 102, as the meaning of the psalm can be obscure at times.<sup>27</sup> In Psalm 102, the psalmist begs God to hear him, complaining, “My days pass away like smoke, and my bones burn like a furnace” (v. 3 ESV) because of Yahweh’s indignation (v. 10). Grass imagery appears again, as in Psalm 90 (though here עָשָׂב is used, not חֲצִיר): his heart is “struck down like grass [עָשָׂב] and has withered” (v. 4 ESV), and he compares his days to “an evening shadow; I wither away like grass [עָשָׂב]” (v. 11 ESV). In the same contrast as Psalm 90, “You, Yahweh, remain

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<sup>26</sup> These observations are largely in line with commentators. Tate understands this verse to represent “mainstream wisdom theology.” It expresses more than simply “realizing how few” one’s days are; it includes “the ideas of ‘evaluation/judgment.’” Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 442–43. Kraus takes a similar view, but emphasizing that “one can appear before God only with a wise heart.” Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 217. Cf. Goldingay, *Psalms 90–150*, 31; Grogan, *Psalms*, 159. Clifford takes a bit of a different path. He argues (based Ps 39:5 and on Ugaritic and Akkadian cognates) that the phrase יָמֵינוּ לְמִנּוֹת means to “count off or take note of a set period of time” (e.g., the months of a pregnancy). He applies this to Ps 90:12 by concluding that “rather than to be aware of mortality,” the verse is referring to the days “of affliction.” Clifford’s conclusion, however, does not necessarily follow from his evidence. He is likely correct that the phrase refers to considering a “set time”; but the “set time” is given in v. 10, where the “days” of “our” years (note matching vocabulary) are seventy or eighty. Clifford, “Psalm 90,” 202–3. Tanner follows Clifford, wrongly stating (in the face of v. 10) that v. 12 is “a plea for the humans to accurately tally the *days* of God’s wrath so that they will understand there is indeed an end to it.” deClaisse-Walford, Jacobson, and Tanner, *The Book of Psalms*, 695.

<sup>27</sup> Clifford similarly surveys Ps 39 to shed light on Ps 90’s meaning. He writes, “Given the subtlety of the argument that Psalm 90 makes to God . . . it seems best to begin with another, similar psalm where the same argument is made in a more accessible way.” Clifford, “Psalm 90,” 192. I will similarly use Ps 102 as (to use Clifford’s words) an “entry into” Ps 90.

A number of other neighboring psalms to Ps 90 bear similarities as well: Ps 91 fills out the “dwelling place” material of Ps 90. Ps 92 speaks of the wicked “like grass” again. Ps 94 is a “How long?” call against other wicked people, noting the “futility” of human thoughts. Ps 89 holds the tension of God’s חֲסָד with his “casting off” of his people, “cutting short” their days (vv. 45–48).

[תָּשׁוּב] forever” (v. 12). Here too, this means that he will hear and answer (vv. 13–22). Verses 23–24 revert to the psalmist’s condition again. The psalmist complains that God has “broken his strength in midcourse” and “shortened” his days (ESV), then asks God not to “take him away in the midst of his days” (ESV). This then is contrasted with God’s eternity, as though that is a reason why he should show mercy and lengthen the poor psalmist’s days: “you whose years endure throughout all generations [בְּדוֹר דּוֹרִים].” Next, the psalmist speaks of God’s work in creation (cf. Ps 90:2); even these, he says, “will perish, but you will remain” (v. 26 ESV). Here the psalmist uses the metaphor of a worn-out garment. But God remains the same; years have no effect on his vitality and life (v. 27). The psalm closes (v. 28) with a reference to “your servants” and their “children,” asking that they be “established” (cf. 90:16–17).<sup>28</sup>

The comparison with Psalm 102 is instructive. There are significant points of conceptual and verbal contact between the two psalms: the overall tension between God as refuge/deliverer versus God as judge, the contrast between God’s eternity versus human transience, the imagery of humankind as a “grass,”<sup>29</sup> and the reference to God’s creative action. In both psalms, God’s eternity is a double-edged sword: it assures of God’s faithfulness to save and “establish” his servants on the one hand, but it also guarantees and contrasts against the utterly short, frail life of fallen humans.

Psalm 90:4, then, is a lament over the brevity of human life and the inability to escape God’s wrath: “For a thousand years in your eyes are as yesterday that has passed, or a watch in the night.”<sup>30</sup> Peter adapts this verse to a rather different context and extends

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<sup>28</sup> For further helpful discussion of Ps 102, see Jacobson’s comments in deClaissé-Walford, Jacobson, and Tanner, *The Book of Psalms*, 748–58. Jacobson notes that “Psalm 102 is unified by the motif of *time* [emphasis added]” (757).

<sup>29</sup> Interestingly, Peter picks up similar language about “all flesh” being like “grass” that is “withering” from Isa 40:6–8 in 1 Pet 1:24–25.

<sup>30</sup> The LXX is virtually identical to the MT in this verse.



its meaning. The extension will be seen in how Peter juxtaposes the original wording with its inversion.<sup>31</sup>

**Jewish literature.** The use of Psalm 90:4 in Jewish literature follows a trajectory rather different from either the original psalm itself or from Peter's usage of it. As scholars observe, the psalmist's contrast of a "day" with a "thousand years" becomes what Bauckham calls an "exegetical rule" which was abstracted from Psalm 90 and applied to various biblical passages involving days or years.<sup>32</sup> Unfortunately, most of the examples are from later rabbinic or early Christian literature. Davids lists the earliest evidence: Barnabus 15:4–5, 2 Enoch 33:1–2, Jubilees 4:29–30.<sup>33</sup> Main uses of the "exegetical rule" include the following, drawn from Bauckham and Neyrey<sup>34</sup>:

1. The Genesis 1 creation week could be seen by this "rule" to preview the world's six-thousand-year history (Barn. 15:4, 2 Enoch 33:1–2, cf. Pesiq. Rab. 40.2), or to redefine the length of each creation day (Barn. 15.4; cf. Gen. Rab. 8.2; *b. Ros. Has.* 31a; Lev. Rab. 19.8, Song. Rab. 5.11, Num. Rab. 4, Midr. Psalms 25.8).
2. Passages referring to the "day" or "days" of the Messiah could yield the equivalent number of millennia (cf. Midr. Psalms 90.7; *Yalkut Shimeoni* to Ps 72; *b. Sanh.* 99a).
3. The "rule" applied to Proverbs 8:30 could imply that Torah "preceded the creation of the world by two thousand years" (cf. Gen. Rab. 8:2; Lev. Rab. 19:1; Cant. Rab. 5:11).<sup>35</sup> In this verse, Wisdom speaks of being "daily" God's delight at the creation of

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<sup>31</sup> Rightly Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 402–3.

<sup>32</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 306–7. Cf. Hafemann, "'One Day as a Thousand Years'"; Bauckham, "Delay of the Parousia"; Carson, "2 Peter," 1059; Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 402–3; Wolfgang Schrage, "'Ein Tag ist beim Herrn wie tausend Jahre, und tausend Jahre sind wie ein Tag' (2 Petr 3,8)," in *Glaube und Eschatologie: Festschrift für Werner Georg Kümmel zum 80. Geburtstag* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1985), 267–75.

<sup>33</sup> Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 275. Also, interesting but not directly relevant to my purposes, Rashi interprets Ps 90:15a ("give us joy") eschatologically: "in the days of the Messiah." Rashi and Mayer I. Gruber, *Rashi's Commentary on Psalms*, Brill Reference Library of Judaism 18 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 578. He also mentions the years of Adam's life in his comment on v. 4 (Rashi and Gruber, 575–78).

<sup>34</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 306–7; Jerome H. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 238. Neyrey's list seems to be taken as standard in e.g., Carson, "2 Peter," 1059; Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 275. Bauckham emphasizes that not all uses of Ps 90:4 were eschatological; see Prov 8:30 and Gen 2:17 uses.

<sup>35</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 307.

the world. The Hebrew rendered daily is יום יום—the word “day” twice. If two days equals two thousand years, Wisdom/Torah exists two thousand years prior to creation.

4. The “rule” was used to reconcile Adam’s nearly thousand-year lifespan with Genesis 2:17’s threat that he would die the “day” he sinned (Jubilees 4:29–30; cf. Gen. Rab. 19.8; Num. Rab. 5.4 and 23.13). Adam lived for 930 years, or less than one day in the reckoning of Psalm 90:4; thus, God’s threat was carried out.

Second Peter 3:8 is clearly not employing Psalm 90:4 in any of the above ways.<sup>36</sup> In fact, he is not really using the “exegetical rule” at all.<sup>37</sup> Bauckham, though, enlists evidence from four other Jewish texts (which were “not previously noticed”)<sup>38</sup> which he believes together create a closer parallel to 2 Peter 3:8. These texts are Pirque R. El. 28 (cf. Yal. Šim‘oni 76),<sup>39</sup> Ben Sira 18:9–11, 2 Baruch 48:12–13, and LAB 19:13a.<sup>40</sup>

The latter three will be quoted:

- Ben Sira 18:9–11: “The number of a man’s days is great if he reaches a hundred years. Like a drop of water from the sea and a grain of sand so are a few years in the day of eternity. Therefore the Lord is patient with them and pours out his mercy upon them” (RSV).
- 2 Baruch 48:12–13: “For we are born in a short time, and in a short time we return. With you, however, the hours are like times, and the days like generations.”<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Bauckham points out that if the Jewish and early Christian “parallels are to govern the interpretation of 2 Pet 3:8, then the [verse] must mean that ‘the day of judgment,’ mentioned in v 7 will last a thousand years.” Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 307. But this would be incoherent with Peter’s argument in 2 Pet 3. Neyrey attempts to link Peter’s use to the “length of Adam’s life” use in Gen. Rab. 22.1. In Genesis, “God’s word will surely come true: Adam will die; but God’s mercy delayed punishment. In 2 Peter, God’s word will prove true, after God grants mercy to sinners for repentance.” Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 238. This connection, though, is far-fetched. There is no evidence that Peter is thinking of the Adam account, nor does the explanation have much explanatory power over a more generic alternative.

<sup>37</sup> This lack of any clear Jewish parallel, according to Bauckham, led the “majority of commentators” to conclude that 2 Peter’s use of Ps 90:4 “is entirely unprecedented.” Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 308. Bauckham’s assessment is considerably less true today, given the influence of his commentary on subsequent scholarship.

<sup>38</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 308. Now, though, they are regularly referenced; see e.g., Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 276–77; Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 402–3.

<sup>39</sup> Though the rabbinic text likely dates to early second century, “it seems closely related to the traditions embodied in” *Apoc. Abr.* 28–30, which “may indicate its antiquity.” Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 308.

<sup>40</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 308–10.

<sup>41</sup> James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols. (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1983–1985), 1:636.

- LAB 19:13a: “But this heaven will be before me like a fleeting cloud and passing like yesterday.”<sup>42</sup>

None of these references are exact parallels to 2 Peter 3:8 (as Bauckham acknowledges).<sup>43</sup> However, they are significant; they show a use of Psalm 90:4 (1) other than as an “exegetical rule,” (2) related to eschatology, and (3) which concern (particularly LAB 19:13) the seemingly long amount of time before the end.<sup>44</sup> Davids’s conclusion is helpful: “A use of Ps 90:4 was at the least ‘in the air’ for discussions of the shortness of human life in comparison with the length of God’s life, and this use was at times applied to apocalyptic contexts, namely, as the reason for the delay of the final end.”<sup>45</sup>

**2 Peter.** As introduced above, Peter’s faithful readers are not to be shaken by the scoffers, but to remember that the timing of God’s actions is different from that of humans—demonstrated by Psalm 90:4 (89:4 LXX). Peter invokes the verse to help explain the apparent “slowness” of God’s acts of judgment and salvation.<sup>46</sup> This is a very different point than that made in Psalm 90 itself (human brevity). Hafemann summarizes the difference this way: the question in Psalm 90 is on “how long God’s *anger* would last,” while in 2 Peter it is on “how long God’s *patience* will last.”<sup>47</sup> Bigg summarizes,

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<sup>42</sup> Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2:328. The remainder of this verse is relevant to 2 Pet 3, with similar concern to “shorten” the remaining time and language on heavenly hosts being destroyed: “And when the time draws near to visit the world, I will command the years and order the times and they will be shortened, and the stars will hasten and the light of the sun will hurry to fall and the light of the moon will not remain; for I will hurry to raise up you who are sleeping in order that all who can live may dwell in the place of sanctification I showed you” (2:328).

<sup>43</sup> See full discussion in Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 306–9.

<sup>44</sup> Bauckham seeks to argue that this evidence is consistent with a Jewish apocalyptic background for 2 Pet 3. (On this see chap. 6n1 of this dissertation.) While I will not fully agree with Hafemann’s interpretation of Ps 90, he is right to suggest a larger role for the context of the quotation in 2 Pet 3. Hafemann, “‘One Day as a Thousand Years’,” 533.

<sup>45</sup> Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 277.

<sup>46</sup> Schelkle also mentions God’s self-disclosure in Exod 34:6 (and later OT texts) as relevant background. Schelkle, *Die Petrusbriefe; der Judasbrief*, 227.

<sup>47</sup> Hafemann, “‘One Day as a Thousand Years’,” 541.

“The desire of the Psalmist is to contrast the eternity of God with the short span of human life. What St. Peter wishes is to contrast the eternity of God with the impatience of human expectations.”<sup>48</sup> Any proposal that Peter means that the day of judgment lasts one thousand years is highly implausible, making no sense of Peter’s argument.<sup>49</sup>

That Peter is intending to develop the verse beyond its original context is made plain by his starting with the *reverse* of the verse.<sup>50</sup> In Psalm 90, the psalmist could not have said that “one day [of ours] is as a thousand years [to God].” This would destroy the contrast the psalm is making between the brevity of fallen human experience against God’s eternity. With respect to God, Psalm 90 is not about his general disconnection from the human experience of time, but about his enduring presence both in judgment and in salvation.

Given the changes Peter has introduced into the allusion, it is perhaps surprising that much of the verse’s context is applicable to 2 Peter 3. Both Psalm 90 and 2 Peter 3 speak of God as creator, and wisdom themes are important in both. Second Peter 3:11 is particularly similar to Psalm 90:12. Both verses invite readers to take stock of their mortality/God’s judgment (Ps 90:12: “So teach us to count our days”; 2 Pet 3:11: “Since all these things are thus being dissolved”), and to live wise, holy lives in light of it (Ps 90:12: “so that we will be brought to a heart of wisdom”; 2 Pet 3:11: “what sort of people must you be in holy living and godliness”). The scoffers of 2 Peter 3:3–5 are, in effect, those who have not heeded Psalm 90:12; they have *forgotten* what Psalm 90 says about God’s creative acts (2 Pet 3:5–6), and they *forget* about their own transience in the

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<sup>48</sup> Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 295.

<sup>49</sup> For discussion and critique, see Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 306–8. Additionally, as mentioned earlier, Bauckham shows how Neyrey’s attempt to link 2 Pet 3:8 to Gen 2:17 fails.

<sup>50</sup> Rightly Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 402. See below, however, for a proposal that the two halves are actually stating the same thing. The first half is the wording of the “exegetical rule” common in Jewish circles, the second as its grounding in the biblical text. See critique in Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 307. Bauckham does, however, entertain a same-meaning interpretation that would simply be for “stylistic effect” (Bauckham, 310). But I think Vögtle is right to assume there is more than “stilistischen Effekt” involved in the reversal. Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, Der 2. Petrusbrief*, 230.

face of God’s judgment (2 Pet 3:4, 7). Peter calls his faithful readers to *remember* the mindset of Psalm 90, to walk in wisdom in light of God’s impending judgment as Psalm 90:12 called for (2 Pet 3:1–2, 11–12). In 2 Peter 3:13 they are also, as Psalm 90:13–14 hinted, waiting for Yahweh to return with his enduring *hesed*, for him to be their “dwelling place” again.

Peter’s emphasis does seem to be on God’s perceived delay (3:4, 9), so the direct allusion in verse 8b makes sense (“a thousand years is as one day”). As noted above, however, Peter’s reversal of Psalm 90:4 in verse 8a is puzzling.<sup>51</sup> What is the sense of saying that with God “a day” is like “a thousand years,” that a very short amount of human time feels like a millennium to God? How does this explain the problem of God’s “delay,” which seems to be Peter’s concern? There are a few main options:

(1) The two lines could mean essentially the *same thing*, with verse 8a as the “exegetical principle” and verse 8b as its scriptural grounding. In this view, the first line (Peter’s reversal of Ps 90:4) matches the popular wording of the formula often drawn from Psalm 90:4: one “God’s-day” equates to one thousand human years. The second line (the allusion to Ps 90:4) grounds the first line by quoting the biblical passage for support.<sup>52</sup> Perhaps the closest example of this construction is found in Genesis Rabbah 8.2,<sup>53</sup> which reads thus: “Now the day of the Lord is a thousand years, as it is said [דְּכַתִּיב], For [כִּי] a thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past.”<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Many commentators do not even discuss the meaning of the A-line. Often they simply ignore it. For example, no mention is made in Carson, “2 Peter,” 1059; Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 325–26; Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 275–77; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 454–55.

<sup>52</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 307. Alternatively, the “two halves of the sentence could have the same meaning” in a *stylistic* manner: “One-day-before-the-Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years are as one-day-before-the-Lord” (310). While technically possible, such a poetic interjection is not in keeping with the graphic, urgent, exhortatory tone of 2 Pet 3. One would only expect this if the entire statement was quoted from another source—and there is no such source in extant Jewish literature.

<sup>53</sup> Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 402.

<sup>54</sup> H. Freedman and Maurice Simon, eds., *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis*, vol. 1 (London: Soncino Press, 1939), 56.

This quotation does feature both the exegetical formula (equivalent to 2 Pet 3:8a) and the quotation of Psalm 90:4. But the quotation is clearly introduced. The passage cannot be mistaken as two parallel lines; it is clear that the b-line grounds the a-line. In contrast, 2 Peter 3:8 contains no introductory formula, and joins its two lines with a *καί* (rather than a grounding *γάρ* or *ὅτι*). Peter’s verse reads more like a poetic couplet than a proposition and its ground. There is also a considerable contextual difference between the passages. In Genesis Rabbah 8.2, the “exegetical principle” and its scriptural ground are invoked to prove that Wisdom/Torah preceded creation by two thousand years. In 2 Peter 3, Psalm 90:4 and its reverse are not invoked as a tool to explain another passage. Instead, they are given as adducing a principle which the readers must not forget.<sup>55</sup>

(2) Hafemann argues that both Psalm 90 and 2 Peter 3 are not about the shortness of human time versus the length of God’s time at all. Instead, they are both about the *certainty* of his judgment.<sup>56</sup> This view rightly emphasizes the centrality of “certainty of judgment” (and salvation) in both texts. But the view fails to adequately account for the temporal comparisons both in Psalm 90 and in 2 Peter 3; both texts concern the certainty of God’s judgments *juxtaposed with* either human brevity (Ps 90) or God’s seeming delay (2 Pet 3).

(3) Peter may be saying something a bit more abstract than Psalm 90; namely, that God’s sense of timing with respect to judgment and salvation is different from that of humanity.<sup>57</sup> Thus, “one day before the Lord is as a thousand years, and, on the other hand, a thousand years is as one day.”<sup>58</sup> This is still not quite an abstract philosophical

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<sup>55</sup> The suggestion that the day of judgment in v. 7 lasts a thousand years is completely implausible: semantically, it makes no sense of Peter’s argument; grammatically, the *δέ* and second instance of *λανθάνω* in v. 8 clearly signal a new thought unit. Cf. critique in Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 307.

<sup>56</sup> Hafemann, “‘One Day as a Thousand Years’,” 539–40.

<sup>57</sup> With e.g., Fuchs and Reymond, *La deuxième épître de saint Pierre; Jude*, 114–15.

<sup>58</sup> Hafemann, “‘One Day as a Thousand Years’,” 530.

statement concerning God's general relationship to time, though it is getting closer than Psalm 90 was. Peter is still concerned with the issues of judgment and salvation, as the immediately following line (v. 9) makes clear: "The Lord is not delaying the promise [of judgment]" (cf. v. 13 for the "promise" of salvation).<sup>59</sup> This view does not fully explain *why* Peter thought this a better option than simply alluding to Psalm 90, but it does better account for Peter's wording and flow of thought.

(4) It is possible that Peter's inversion of Psalm 90:4 is connected to God's *patience* (v. 9).<sup>60</sup> In this reading, the a-line would be suggesting something along the lines of Jesus' "How long shall I bear with you?" (Matt 17:17; Mark 9:19; Luke 9:41). God does not want anyone to perish (2 Pet 3:9), so he "bears long" with them (see Luke 18:1–8). A day of human wickedness feels like a thousand years for God's forbearance. The b-line (the direct allusion to Ps 90:4) by contrast focuses on the human perspective awaiting God's judgment/salvation. As in Psalm 90 itself, God's judgment is certain, and it wipes away millennia of human history as though they were a day or two.

View 3 is to be preferred, though views 2 and 4 may color the meaning as well. Bauckham, in summarizing the options, urges caution against too "strict" an interpretation; 2 Peter 3 is not a precise philosophical treatise.<sup>61</sup>

In sum, Peter's allusion to Psalm 90:4 betrays a deep resonance with the original psalm while at the same time adapting a principle for a very different scenario. Peter is trying to convey to his hearers a hermeneutic for reading God's timelines; God is the eternal "dwelling place" who remains always present and *always* reliable in judgment

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<sup>59</sup> With Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 310.

<sup>60</sup> Bauckham entertains this possibility in Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 310.

<sup>61</sup> Bauckham writes that "the essential meaning" of v. 8 is "that in God's eyes a long period may appear short. Possibly the repetition of the statement in reverse is intended to allow for the opposite contrast . . . , but it may be merely for stylistic effect. The two halves of the sentence could have the same meaning. . . . The fact that 2 *Apoc. Bar.* 48:13 reads 'with thee the hours are as the ages,' when the meaning really requires 'the ages are as the hours,' should perhaps caution against too strict an interpretation." Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 310.

and salvation. People cannot and should not read their perceptions of the passing of time onto him; the two do not map onto each other.

**Conclusion.** The author of Psalm 90 wrote of the futility of brief human life under judgment against an all-too-real perception of this truth. A thousand years of human achievements, a great lifespan of eighty years—they disappear in a flash before the eternal Judge. Peter writes of the same basic truth about God against a *lack* of perception of this reality: God’s judgments and salvation *will* come about; right now, believers are living in the middle of that “thousand years” of human achievements, watching scoffers live long lives—but to God, all of this is like a “watch in the night.” And in the night, like a thief, he will bring it all to an end (2 Pet 3:10).

### **Habakkuk 2:3 in 2 Peter 3:9**

Peter briefly alludes to Habakkuk 2:3 in 2 Peter 3:9. This is a faint and rather delocalized allusion, so a full treatment is not undertaken here. Bauckham writes that “the opening words of this verse are probably dependent on the last words of Hab 2:3,” which was the “*locus classicus* for reflection on the problem of delay in Judaism.”<sup>62</sup>

Habakkuk 1:2–4 introduces the prophet’s complaint. He sees violence, iniquity, and injustice permeating his surroundings; his response is to beg Yahweh, “How long?” Yahweh responds by promising to raise up the Chaldeans to wreak further havoc (1:5–11). Habakkuk responds with a second complaint: When would God finally put an end to all of this back-and-forth of violence (1:12–17)? Yahweh’s next response is a “vision” which must be written down (2:1–4).<sup>63</sup> Its certainty is undeniable, but it will not come for

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<sup>62</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 310. Bauckham’s list of references includes Isa 13:22; 51:14 LXX; Sir 35:19 LXX; 1 QpHab 7:5–12; Heb 10:37; 2 Baruch 20:6; 48:39; *b. Sanh.* 97b. Cf. Bauckham, “Delay of the Parousia.”

<sup>63</sup> Thomas points to Isa 30:8 as an “interesting cotext that illuminates” the significance of writing down the prophecy in Hab 2:2. In both cases, the written document “serves as a witness and confirmation of God’s [future-oriented] word of judgment.” Heath A. Thomas, *Habakkuk*, THOTC (Grand



a long time from a human perspective. The vision likely spans the content of Habakkuk 2:4–20: “The woes present the great reversal of the Babylonians, where the retribution principle that derives from wisdom thinking takes full swing: the wicked will reap what they have sown and the righteous will be vindicated.”<sup>64</sup>

There is a temporal tension in Habakkuk 2:2–4.<sup>65</sup> On the one hand, the vision “hastens” to the end and “will not delay.”<sup>66</sup> On the one hand, it will “seem slow” and require one to “wait for it” (ESV).<sup>67</sup> In words equally applicable to 2 Peter 3 (and Ps 90), Barker writes, “The answer of God would surely come, but . . . from the prophet’s point of view the prophecy might seem slow. . . . God had already decided upon a solution and would reveal it according to his timetable, but God was not indebted to any human to reveal the answer before he chose to.”<sup>68</sup>

As noted above, Habakkuk 2:3 was the crucial text concerning “the problem of delay in Judaism.”<sup>69</sup> Ben Sira 35:19 LXX “offers the closest linguistic parallel to” 2 Peter 3:9 with *ὁ κύριος οὐ μὴ βραδύνη*; in the latter too, “*βραδύνειν* also occurs alongside

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Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 105.

<sup>64</sup> Thomas, *Habakkuk*, 107–8. The content of the vision, or “what, precisely, is written down on the tablets,” is uncertain. Thomas surveys the options: It may be simply the content of Hab 2:4 or 2:4–5. Barker assumes 2:4 and Robertson believes 2:4–5. See Kenneth L. Barker, *Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah*, NAC (Nashville: B&H, 1998), 324; O. Palmer Robertson, *The Books of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 183. Thomas, however, thinks that the plural number of the tablets implies a longer message. It may also be “the theophany of Hab 3,” but this is also unclear. Thomas’s own conclusion is that Hab 2:4–20 is the “best candidate for the content of the vision.” Thomas, *Habakkuk*, 107–8.

<sup>65</sup> Thomas writes that “without a doubt, [Hab 2:2–5] are some of the most complicated verses in the book.” Thomas, *Habakkuk*, 103. Additionally, textual issues related to these verses cannot be addressed in detail here. For details, consult commentaries.

<sup>66</sup> Heflin rightly notes that Habakkuk “does not mean that the future events predicted in the vision will come soon, without delay. . . . The comment rather means that the fulfillment will not miss God’s scheduled time; it will not delay a moment beyond its appointed time.” J. N. Boo Heflin, *Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Haggai* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 90. Quoted in Barker, *Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah*, 324.

<sup>67</sup> “Waiting” and “patience” are also found in vv. 14–15.

<sup>68</sup> Barker, *Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah*, 323.

<sup>69</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 310.

μακροθυμεῖν, although with reference to the judgment of sinners.”<sup>70</sup> A close conceptual parallel to 2 Peter 3:9’s use of Habakkuk 2:3 is in 1QpHab 7:1–14.<sup>71</sup> The document interprets Habakkuk to mean that “the final age will be extended and go beyond all that the prophets say.” Those who “observe the Law” will not “desert the service of truth when the final age is extended beyond them, because all the ages of God will come at the right time.”<sup>72</sup> While there are large discontinuities between Qumran’s and Peter’s overall interpretation, Peter like Qumran is here applying the Habakkuk passage to the eschatological delay and certainty.

It is impossible to know if Peter is at all consciously cognizant of the context of Habakkuk 2:3. It is entirely possible that Peter is merely invoking a commonly used, scripturally based saying.<sup>73</sup> The origin and original context of the statement, however, fits perfectly with Peter’s own concerns. “Habakkuk, like all of us, was living ‘between the times,’ between the promise and the fulfillment.”<sup>74</sup> While the destruction of Babylon may have been the original referent of the vision, that destruction itself was inextricably bound up with the ultimate restoration of God’s people.<sup>75</sup> “The Lord is not delaying” his ultimate promises (v. 9; cf. Isa 65:17, in v. 13). But the fulfillment does seem delayed, as

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<sup>70</sup> Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 404. Frey concludes, with Ruf, that “the conceptual pair of ‘certainly come/not delay . . . belongs to the common stock of expressions concerned with the assurance of an (eschatological) arrival” (Frey, 404). With quotation from M. G. Ruf, *Die heiligen Propheten, eure Apostel und ich. Metatextuelle Studien zum zweiten Petrusbrief*, WUNT 300 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 533.

<sup>71</sup> Much has been written on the use of Hab 2:2–4 in 1QpHab 7:1–14. See e.g., Bauckham, “Delay of the Parousia”; Serge Ruzer, “Eschatological Failure as God’s Mystery: Reassessing Prophecy and Reality at Qumran and in Nascent Christianity,” *DSD* 23, no. 3 (2016): 347–64; Francis Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*, 2nd ed. (London: T&T Clark, 2016), 71–150.

<sup>72</sup> Quotations from Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 16–17.

<sup>73</sup> Alternatively, Peter may be thinking of the context, in line with 1QpHab (though the scroll is a running commentary as opposed to a brief allusion).

<sup>74</sup> Ralph Smith, *Micah–Malachi*, WBC (Waco, TX: Word, 1984), 107, quoted in Barker, *Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah*, 323.

<sup>75</sup> With Heflin, *Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Haggai*, 90, referenced in Barker, *Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah*, 323.

3:1–8 emphasizes. Peter’s readers are exhorted to “hasten” the fulfillment of the vision (3:12), invoking Isaiah 60:22. But, in a continuation of Peter’s Habakkuk allusion, they are also to “wait for” it (v. 12).<sup>76</sup> Indeed, Peter has *written down* his letter so that God’s people could keep in mind the exhortations to faith and perseverance in the face of ungodliness and seeming delay (1:12–15; 3:1–2).

### **Isaiah 60:22 in 2 Peter 3:12**

As just mentioned, 2 Peter 3:12 speaks of “hastening” the coming of the Lord.<sup>77</sup> Bauckham writes, “Clearly this idea of hastening the End is the corollary of the explanation (v 9) that God defers the Parousia because he desires” repentance.<sup>78</sup> The Habakkuk 2:3 reference is thus connected to another OT allusion, this time to Isaiah 60:22 in 2 Peter 3:12. In this case, Peter draws on the MT tradition, *not* on the LXX. The MT reads that God will “hasten it” (אֲנִי יְהוָה בְּעֵתָהּ אַחֲזֶינָהּ). The LXX, on the other hand, removes the “hastening” reference, replacing it with “I will gather them” (ἐγὼ κύριος κατὰ καιρὸν συναξάσω αὐτούς).<sup>79</sup> (Peter uses the verb σπεύδω.)

Isaiah 60 presents a beautiful vision of the future restoration of Israel. The days of suffering and forsakenness would be over (vv. 10–15), the nations would bring in their bounty (vv. 4–7, 13, 16), and peace and joy would reign (vv. 17–18). In language later drawn on by the author of Revelation 21, the light of sun and moon would be replaced by the glory of Yahweh himself, and “your days of mourning will be ended” (vv. 19–20).

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<sup>76</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 324.

<sup>77</sup> Schreiner points out that in Acts 3:19–21, Peter seems to teach an idea “current in Judaism . . . that God would fulfill his promises if Israel would repent.” Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 467. Cf. Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 291; Carson, “2 Peter,” 1060–61. Thus 2 Pet 3:12 is not the only time Peter speaks of a human-based “hastening” of God’s return in blessing.

<sup>78</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 325. Cf. Carson, “2 Peter,” 1060–61; Bauckham, “Delay of the Parousia,” 27n51.

<sup>79</sup> According to Carson, “It appears that the LXX translator had difficulty with the notion of God ‘hastening’ the day, and gave an entirely different meaning.” Carson, “2 Peter,” 1060.

God’s people would flourish and “your people will all be righteous” (v. 21)—compare 2 Peter 3:13, where the new creation is the place where “righteousness dwells.”<sup>80</sup> It is at the end of this vision that it is written, “I am Yahweh; in its time I will hasten it” (v. 22). Isaiah 60:22b “was the basis for a whole series of Jewish texts which speak of God hastening the time of the End”<sup>81</sup> (see Sir 36:10; 2 Baruch 20:1–2; 54:1; 83:1; LAB 19:13).<sup>82</sup> “It featured in the debate between R. Eliezer and R. Joshua” concerning the timing of the end, with Rabbi Joshua insisting that “redemption would come at the appointed time, irrespective of repentance” and Rabbi Eliezer that “the Lord would hasten the coming of redemption in response to Israel’s repentance” (see *y. Ta’an.* 1:1).<sup>83</sup>

Peter is speaking of “hastening” this same coming of the Lord, which will result both in judgment and in the realization of Isaiah’s “new heavens and new earth” (2 Pet 3:13). Carson rightly recognizes that Isaiah 60:18–21’s “descriptions of cosmic phenomena” overlap with (without being “identical to”) “those found in” 2 Peter 3:10–13.<sup>84</sup> The major difference between Peter’s use and the original text is that in Isaiah, it is *Yahweh* who “hastens” the vision, while in 2 Peter 3:12 it is Peter’s *readers*.<sup>85</sup> An explanation is probably along the lines of what Bauckham surmises: “Usually [in Jewish

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<sup>80</sup> This point is also noted by Carson, “2 Peter,” 1060. This is likely also colored by Isa 11, as noted by Richard L. Schultz, “Intertextuality, Canon, and ‘Undecidability’: Understanding Isaiah’s ‘New Heavens and New Earth’ (Isaiah 65:17–25),” *BBR* 20, no. 1 (2010): 34. And Leene suggests a possible allusion to Isa 32:16. Henk Leene, *Newness in Old Testament Prophecy: An Intertextual Study* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 142.

<sup>81</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 325. Cf. discussion in Carson, “2 Peter,” 1060.

<sup>82</sup> Carson, “2 Peter,” 1060.

<sup>83</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 325, 312–13. “Later rabbinic texts actually say that repentance (*b. Yoma* 86b, attributed to the early second-century R. Jose the Galilean; cf. also *y. Ta’an.* 1:1; *b. Sanh.* 97b; Acts 3:19) or charity (*b. B. Bat.* 10a, attributed to R. Judah, c. AD 150) brings repentance nearer” (Bauckham, 325). Carson cautions that it is “uncertain that any of these traditions reach back to Peter’s time.” Carson, “2 Peter,” 1060. While this caution should be kept in mind, Bauckham writes that the debate between Rabbis Eliezer and Joshua “may be authentic and therefore date from the late first century [AD].” Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 312.

<sup>84</sup> Carson, “2 Peter,” 1060.

<sup>85</sup> See Carson, “2 Peter,” 1060.

literature], as in Isa 60:22, it is God who is said to hasten the coming of the End, but R. Eliezer's view implies that, since God hastens in response to repentance, repentance itself might be said to hasten the End."<sup>86</sup> That verse 12 is a "corollary" to verse 9 confirms such an explanation. Peter has a high view of God's sovereignty over the timing of his promises' fulfillments (vv. 8–9).<sup>87</sup> But verse 9 claims that the Lord's delay is due to his "patience" "toward you." The implication, strengthened in verse 12, is that "repentance" and godly living would resolve the reason for God's delay—and thus "hasten" the coming of the "day of God."<sup>88</sup> This is a particularly poignant instance of Peter's "stepping into the story" appropriation of the OT. Not only are Peter's readers awaiting the fulfillment of the great Isaianic vision, but they are joining in on *God's* own role in bringing it to pass.

Peter seems to be doing three things with this allusion: (1) borrowing the language of Isaiah 60:22, (2) connecting to the broader vision of Isaiah 60 (and beyond), and (3) adapting the Isaianic reference to his own flow of thought. The power of the allusion is this: not only does Peter include a (somewhat adapted) reference to "hastening" God's salvation, but he provides yet another point of connection to God's promised, prophetic vision of the coming Day—Peter's key themes in this chapter and letter.

### **Hermeneutical Allusions Conclusion**

In these three allusions—Psalm 90:4, Habakkuk 2:3, and Isaiah 60:22—Peter guides his readers in thinking through the seeming delay of Jesus' promised return. He

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<sup>86</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 325. Cf. Bauckham, "Delay of the Parousia," 27n51.

<sup>87</sup> For discussion of the tension between God's sovereign timing and human "hastening" in 2 Pet 3, see Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 333–34; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 467; Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 290–91; Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 415; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 324–25; Carson, "2 Peter," 1060–61.

<sup>88</sup> See Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 324–25.

does so by using Scripture itself, showing that God’s “word” and prophetic “promises” themselves demonstrate that God’s actions are often fulfilled in ways that frustrate human timetables. With this hermeneutical principle in mind, I can now turn to Peter’s appropriation of water, fire, and new creation.

### **Creation: Water and Word (3:5)**

This section evaluates Peter’s use of the Genesis 1 creation narrative, particularly focusing on “word” and “water” imagery. I will follow the usual outline of Genesis 1, Jewish literature, and then 2 Peter.

#### **Genesis 1**

Genesis 1 emphasizes, again and again, that creation came about through God’s speaking.<sup>89</sup> The  $\text{רָאָה}$  construction introduces each of the six creation days. The

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<sup>89</sup> The study of Gen 1 is fraught with interpretive challenges. For overviews of the questions, see especially Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, WBC (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 1–40; Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, NAC (Nashville: B&H, 1996), 86–111. A major challenge is how to responsibly analyze and assess the ancient Near Eastern parallels alongside of the biblical text. For surveys of the relevant ANE texts (especially *Enuma Elish* and the Memphite texts), see Richard J. Clifford, *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible*, CBQMS 26 (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association, 1994); Christopher B. Hays, *Hidden Riches: A Sourcebook for the Comparative Study of the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near East* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2014), 41–73; David T. Tsumura, “Genesis and Ancient Near Eastern Stories of Creation and Flood: An Introduction,” in *I Studied Inscriptions from before the Flood: Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1–11*, ed. Richard S. Hess and David T. Tsumura (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 27–57; Walter Beyerlin, ed., *Near Eastern Religious Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978).

The interpretive questions are mostly beyond the scope of this dissertation, but interaction with ancient sources are noted as needed. The main point of contact in this project is with the role of “water” in Gen 1, and as understood by 2 Pet 3:5. Briefly, then, ANE parallels are important for understanding an ANE text such as Genesis. One must always resist the tendency towards Sandmel’s infamous “parallelomania.” Samuel Sandmel, “Parallelomania,” *JBL* 81, no. 1 (1962): 1–13. Mathews echoes this exact point: Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 86. Walton and Batto can be mentioned as examples; see John H. Walton, *Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011); Bernard F. Batto, *In the Beginning: Essays on Creation Motifs in the Ancient Near East and the Bible* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 7–53. They offer useful insights; but in my judgment, they veer into Sandmel’s trap. For a more responsible approach, see Vern S. Poythress, *Interpreting Eden: A Guide to Faithfully Reading and Understanding Genesis 1–3* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019). Drawing on Poythress, Gen 1 does bear similarities to various aspects of common ANE creation motifs. But it should not be read simply as an ancient Near Eastern cosmogenic myth. (And those myths themselves should not be—as they sometimes are—read through a modern lens.) Gen 1 speaks neither mythologically nor “scientifically”; rather, it speaks phenomenologically and in a historically referential manner. It speaks not in poetry but in what Collins calls “exalted prose narrative.” C. John Collins, *Genesis 1–4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2006), 44.

word אָמַר also occurs in God's blessing to the sky and sea creatures (1:22), and it occurs twice in verses 26 and 28 where God announces his intention to create humankind and then blesses them (respectively).<sup>90</sup> The entire structure of Genesis 1 is built around God's speaking, and the chapter's denouement involves God's speaking blessing and commission.<sup>91</sup> Wenham underscores how God's "saying" is used in Genesis 1

in a more pregnant sense than usual [in the OT]. It is a divine word of command that brings into existence what it expresses. Throughout Scripture the word of God is characteristically both creative and effective: it is the prophetic word that declares the future and helps it come into being. But in this creation narrative these qualities of the divine word are even more apparent.<sup>92</sup>

The motivation for emphasizing God's speaking" in the creation narrative may relate in part to polemical concerns.<sup>93</sup> In ancient Near Eastern creation myths, creation is spoken of in a variety of ways. Westermann summarizes these, from a notion of "birth" or a "succession of births" to a "struggle or a victory" to "action or activity."<sup>94</sup> The latter can include creation by divine word (in some of the Memphite theology).<sup>95</sup> In general,

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<sup>90</sup> The word also occurs in 1:29. It occurs twice with God as subject in Gen 2, in vv. 16 and 18.

<sup>91</sup> Noting this is Thomas A. Keiser, "Genesis 1–11: Its Literary Coherence and Theological Message" (PhD diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 2007), 53–56. Cf. Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1–17*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 119; Bruce K. Waltke and Cathi J. Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 56. Keiser observes that Gen 1 "comprises God's speeches joined by narrative." Keiser, "Genesis 1–11," 54. He insightfully summarizes as follows:

God's speech becomes more complex in each day of creation. At first, his statements move from simple to complex. Then, there is the introduction of blessing added to the simple jussives. Finally, in the last creative act of the sixth day, generally recognized as the climax of creation, God's speech becomes even more developed. Whereas in all other days his statements present the introduction of a new entity, in Day 6 he speaks of intention and purpose prior to introducing that entity. Then, following the blessing, for the first time God's speech includes direct address to that which he has created. Thus, a consideration of the manner in which God's speech is presented throughout the account reaffirms the implication of other structural clues that the creation account should be understood in terms of a progressive development, building and crescendoing to the climax of the creation of humankind, thus reaching the goal of the sabbath." (Keiser, 55–56)

<sup>92</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 17–18.

<sup>93</sup> This is helpfully introduced by John D. Currid, *Against the Gods: The Polemical Theology of the Old Testament* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 33–46. Cf. Gerhard F. Hasel, "Polemical Nature of the Genesis Cosmology," *EvQ* 46 (1974): 81–102; Gordon H. Johnston, "Genesis 1 and Ancient Egyptian Creation Myths," *BSac* 165, no. 658 (2008): 178–94.

<sup>94</sup> Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1–11: A Continental Commentary*, trans. John J. Scullion (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 26–47.

<sup>95</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 38–41. Cf. the helpful table in Currid, *Against the Gods*, 39. For

however, the creator god forms other gods and the rest of the cosmos in very humanlike, magical, or even grotesque ways.

In Genesis 1, the one High God stands distinct and removed from his creation; the narrative's emphasis on the divine speech alone sets the tone for the biblical conception of the true God. He is not a god who fights against, cajoles, or has sex with the material world. He is the God who speaks—the same God, as later Scripture would portray him, of the prophets (cf. 2 Pet 1:16–21; 3:2; 1 Pet 1:10–12).<sup>96</sup> Creation by God's word sets up for Israel's history of divine words (promises) of future blessing and judgments (cf. 2 Pet 3:13; 1 Pet 1:23–25).

The next occurrence of *וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים* after Genesis 3 comes in Genesis 6:13, when “God said to Noah” that he was going to destroy “all flesh” and “the earth.” He then speaks to Noah again after the flood, in a renewed commission and blessing (8:15–9:17).<sup>97</sup> In Genesis, then, creation “by God's word” is followed by God's word announcing destruction of the same world (cf. 2 Pet 3:6).

The Genesis 1 narrative also gives water a prominent place.<sup>98</sup> It portrays the primeval, “formless and void” (*תהו ובהו*) earth as engulfed in water.<sup>99</sup> After the separation

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further discussion of Egyptian creation myths studied alongside Genesis, see John D. Currid, *Ancient Egypt and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997), 33–73; James K. Hoffmeier, “Some Thoughts on Genesis 1 and 2 and Egyptian Cosmology,” *JANES* 15 (1983): 39–49; Johnston, “Genesis 1 and Ancient Egyptian Creation Myths”; John D. Currid, “An Examination of the Egyptian Background of the Genesis Cosmogony,” *BZ* 35, no. 1 (1991): 18–40.

<sup>96</sup> See again Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 17–18.

<sup>97</sup> Gen 8:15 uses a different construction, including the verb *דבר* in addition to a form of *אמר*: *וַיְדַבֵּר אֱלֹהִים אֶל-נֹחַ לְאמֹר*.

<sup>98</sup> See e.g., David T. Tsumura, *Creation and Destruction: A Reappraisal of the Chaoskampf Theory in the Old Testament* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 36–57, 129–39; Tsumura, “Genesis and ANE Stories of Creation and Flood,” 41. Brown argues that the *Vorlage* of the LXX has a more positive, “collaborative” role for the waters; the MT employs the “dark,” chaos role for the waters. William P. Brown, “Structure, Role, and Ideology in the Hebrew and Greek Texts of Genesis 1:1–2:3” (PhD diss., Emory University, 1991), 432–37. But this is likely taken too far. Finally, Cook disputes the idea that LXX Gen 1–2 bears Hellenistic features. Johann Cook, “The Septuagint of Genesis: Text and/or Interpretation?,” in *Studies in the Book of Genesis: Literature, Redaction and History*, ed. André Wénin (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), 315–29.

<sup>99</sup> For a careful study of this phrase, see Tsumura, *Creation and Destruction*, 9–35.



of light from darkness on Day 1, the next two days involve dealing with water. On Day 2, the waters are separated vertically; the waters “above” the רָקִיעַ (“expanse”/“firmament”)<sup>100</sup> become “the heavens” (שָׁמַיִם, Gen 1:8).<sup>101</sup> On Day 3, the waters are separated horizontally; there is finally “earth” and “seas” (v. 10).<sup>102</sup>

The watery genesis of the earth is a common feature of “many Near Eastern cosmologies.”<sup>103</sup> Tsumura writes, “The ‘watery beginning’ of Gen 1:2 could well be a reflection of a universal understanding of water as a basic element of the cosmos. . . .”<sup>104</sup> Later he continues, “However, while there is a similarity between ancient traditions and the Genesis story in terms of a watery beginning, there are also differences in the nature of the relationship between the water and the creator-god as well as in the details of the description.”<sup>105</sup>

In ANE myths, the water is often something essentially “eternal,” existing with the god(s) before the structuring of the earth. Some scholars see a similar phenomenon in Genesis 1, and the idea of a *creation ex nihilo* is still a matter of debate<sup>106</sup> (though

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<sup>100</sup> I cannot here detail the discussion of the רָקִיעַ. It is often thought of as something like a “hammered out dome.” Poythress, though, cautions against unduly assuming an “iron dome” idea in a modern scientific sense. Poythress, *Interpreting Eden*, 171–86.

<sup>101</sup> Hamilton examines the use of בֵּינֵי . . . לְ in Gen 1:6; it is used in Lev 20:25 and elsewhere to stress “a distinction between” one thing and another. Hamilton, *Genesis 1-17*, 122. Wenham points to Gen 7:11 as a reference to the waters “above” and “below” the earth. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 16.

<sup>102</sup> The remainder of Day 3 is devoted to the creation of plant life for the newly created dry land.

<sup>103</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 8. Westermann observes that “the primeval sea and darkness are found together” in many ancient cosmogonies, including Egyptian, Phoenician, Orphic, Aztec, Thales, and Sumerian. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 106. Clifford gives Egypt’s conception as an illustration: “The time before creation was imagined as one of limitless waters (personified as Nun), the primeval flood, and total darkness.” Clifford, *Creation Accounts in ANE and Bible*, 102. Cf. Beyerlin, *Near Eastern Religious Texts Relating to OT*, 3. Also see the opening lines of *Enuma Elish* (Beyerlin, 82).

<sup>104</sup> Tsumura, *Creation and Destruction*, 130.

<sup>105</sup> Tsumura, *Creation and Destruction*, 130.

<sup>106</sup> Brown, for example, sees *ex nihilo* as a late development, with early antecedents. Brown, “Structure, Role, and Ideology,” 74–82. The debate, as Lovett summarizes, is largely related to one’s translation of Gen 1:1: either as an independent clause (the “traditional” view) or as a dependent clause (in light of *Enuma Elish*). The latter rendering (“When God began to create”) “implies the possibility that the formless and void earth preexisted God’s creative activities that began with the creation of light in v. 3.”

probably not from Peter’s perspective).<sup>107</sup> Genesis 1:1, however, does seem to intend a temporal and ontological separation between God and *all* of his creation—the “heavens and earth . . . includes the subterranean water of the *těhôm*.”<sup>108</sup> In Genesis 1, then, the water is not something “out of” which earth is created in an ultimate sense. God creates the empty heavens and the watery earth, and then forms and structures his creation (both sky and earth) “out of” and “through” this water (Days 2 and 3). Earlier scholars identified the תְהוֹם in Genesis 1:2 with a malevolent supernatural being. This identification has fallen out of favor.<sup>109</sup> But the תְהוֹם is something that represents the chaotic, unformed state of the primeval earth.<sup>110</sup> It must be restricted, subdued, formed. Both the sky and the earth will be created “through” and “out of” water—as Peter would much later say.

As shown in the previous chapter of this dissertation, the watery beginning of the primeval earth sets the stage for the reversal of creation at the flood—where once again, water covers the entire surface of the land.<sup>111</sup> After Genesis 1:2, the word תְהוֹם is

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Kenneth W. Lovett, “The Negative Motif of the Sea in the Old Testament” (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2019), 82n3. For full defenses of the traditional view, see Joshua D. Wilson, “A Case for the Traditional Translation and Interpretation of Genesis 1:1 Based upon a Multi-Levelled Linguistic Analysis” (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010); Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 137–44. Cf. Poythress, *Interpreting Eden*, 291–321.

<sup>107</sup> Though this is debatable as well. Davids, for example, believes that Peter reads the story with Gen 1:1 as a “title verse” followed by “a description of a watery chaos” upon which “light breaks.” Thus, “we do not start with *creatio ex nihilo*” (contra, he believes, Heb 11:3). Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 268–69. Against this reading of Gen 1, see Poythress, *Interpreting Eden*, 291–321.

<sup>108</sup> Tsumura, *Creation and Destruction*, 139. Tsumura’s next sentence is, “Hence the relationship between Elohim and *těhôm* is that of the creator and the creature.”

<sup>109</sup> For a helpful study, see Tsumura, *Creation and Destruction*, 36–57. Cf. (on *tehom* not being equatable to Tiamat) Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 16; Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 105.

<sup>110</sup> Tsumura cautions against seeing the Gen 1 water as “destructive or threatening,” contra the assumptions of some scholars. He claims that תְהוֹם and תְהוֹ וְבַהו “have nothing to do with the chaotic state of the earth” and are “not negative.” The water rather remains “neutral as a potential power to ‘form’ as a result of God’s” actions. David T. Tsumura, *The Earth and the Waters in Genesis 1 and 2: A Linguistic Investigation*, JSOTSup 83 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1989), 168. Even if Tsumura goes too far, his corrective is on the right track.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 20; Lovett, “Negative Motif of Sea in OT,” 83, 93–94.

next used in Genesis 7:11 and 8:2 when the “fountains of the deep” (מְעִיֵּנֹת תְּהוֹמוֹת) burst open for the great Deluge.<sup>112</sup> As discussed then, already in Genesis 6–8 there is a full cycle of creation/de-creation/recreation “out of and through water” by God’s “word” (2 Pet 3:5).

### **Jewish Literature**

“Creation *by the word of God* is a common idea,” Bauckham notes.<sup>113</sup> After Genesis 1, other references include Psalm 33:6, 148:5; Ben Sira 39:17; Wisdom 9:1; and 4 Ezra 6:38, 43.<sup>114</sup> In 4 Ezra 6:38–54 (NRSV), God speaks on Day 1, and “your word accomplished the work” (v. 38). On Day 3, “your word went forth, and at once the work was done” (v. 43). On Days 3–6, God’s verbal activity is referred to as his having “commanded” the various aspects of creation into existence (vv. 42–53). In 4 Ezra 6:1–6, creation by God alone (though not explicitly by his “word”) is used to underscore the fact that God “planned these things,” and “the end shall come through me alone and not through another” (NRSV).

In Ben Sira 39:16–21, creation is spoken of to emphasize that God’s “commands” and “purposes” will always be fulfilled:

All the works of the Lord are very good, and whatever he commands will be done at the appointed time. No one can say, ‘What is this?’ or ‘Why is that?’—for at the appointed time all such questions will be answered. At his word the waters stood in a heap, and the reservoirs of water at the word of his mouth. When he commands, his every purpose is fulfilled, and none can limit his saving power. (vv. 16–18 NRSV)

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<sup>112</sup> The only other instance of תְּהוֹמוֹת in Genesis is in 49:25, in Jacob’s blessing to his sons.

<sup>113</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 298.

<sup>114</sup> See Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 298; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 450. Likewise, Green calls creation by the word of God “a fundamental and oft-repeated theme.” Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 319. In the account of creation in Jubilees 2:1–16, God’s speaking plays much less of a role. In Wis 9:1–2, creation by God’s “word” is paralleled to forming humankind by his “wisdom.”

Ben Sira 43:26 also speaks of God’s sustaining the earth by his word: “By his word all things hold together” (NRSV).<sup>115</sup>

Green observes that the water reference in 2 Peter 3:5 “appears to be cognizant of the traditions based on” Genesis 1:6–10. Green points to 4 Ezra 6:42, 2 Enoch 47.5 (itself dependent on Ps 24:2), and Jubilees 2.5–7.<sup>116</sup> Each of these passages simply elaborates on the separation of the land from the waters in the Genesis account. Jubilees 2.5–7 is representative: God “said to the waters, ‘Let them pass from the surface of the whole earth into one place, and let the dry land appear.’ And the waters did as he said” (vv. 5–6).<sup>117</sup>

In Jewish tradition around Peter’s time, then, the world’s creation was commonly spoken of in language directly drawn from Genesis 1. Creation was by God’s “word” or “command,” and it came as a separating of the dry land from the “waters.” Creation could be invoked to emphasize God’s power and the certainty of his future purposes.

## 2 Peter 3:5

The scoffers forget, Peter writes, *ὅτι οὐρανοὶ ἦσαν ἑκπαλαι καὶ γῆ ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ δι’ ὕδατος συνεστῶσα τῷ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγῳ*.<sup>118</sup> This section emphasizes two matters: (1) creation “out of water and through water,” and (2) creation “by the word of God.”

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<sup>115</sup> Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 319.

<sup>116</sup> Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 320. In Tamfu’s fascinating study of water imagery in the Psalms, he concludes the following: “The psalmists primarily employed water imagery to allude to four historic works of God—the waters of creation (Gen 1–2), the water in the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:10–13), the flood (Gen 6–9), and the crossing of the Red Sea (Exod 14–15)—as paradigms for understanding their present and the future.” Dieudonné Tamfu, “The Water Imagery in the Psalms: An Inner-Biblical Interpretation” (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014), 209.

<sup>117</sup> Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2:56.

<sup>118</sup> Schreiner notes that “the basic meaning of this verse [v. 5] is clear, but the details are murky because the syntax is complicated and unclear.” Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 449. Frey summarizes, “It is uncertain whether (a) in *οὐρανοὶ ἦσαν ἑκπαλαι καὶ γῆ . . . συνεστῶσα* both *οὐρανοὶ* and *γῆ* are the subjects of *ἦσαν* or (b) *ἦσαν* has only *οὐρανοὶ* as its subject, so that for *γῆ* an ellipsis with a periphrastic conjugation (*[ἦν] συνεστῶσα*) should be assumed.” See further discussion in Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 387–88. One debate is over whether *συνεστῶσα* refers to the initial “forming” of the world, or its

ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ δι' ὕδατος. Commentators agree that the phrase ἐξ ὕδατος is a fairly straightforward reference to Genesis 1.<sup>119</sup> There both the sky (οὐρανός [sg.]) and the dry land were formed “out of” the original primeval waters. The second phrase, δι' ὕδατος, is viewed as more puzzling.<sup>120</sup> It is most likely that the phrase should be read as “by means of” or even possibly “through the medium of,” but not as “through” in a locative sense.<sup>121</sup> But then, what does it mean to say that the earth was formed “by means of water”? One option is that Peter is assuming Stoic cosmogony.<sup>122</sup> (This is tied up with

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current “sustaining.” For the former view, see Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 449–50; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 296. For the latter, see Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 319–20. I side with Schreiner and Bauckham, seeing a reference to the original “forming” of creation. However, it makes little difference for this study; creation is still the emphasis of the verse.

<sup>119</sup> See e.g., Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 297; Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 268–70; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 450–51; Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 234. Frey avers that Peter goes “significantly beyond Gen 1,” with the use of the term a telltale sign of Hellenistic influence. Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 387–89.

<sup>120</sup> Again, see e.g., Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 297; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 450; Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 269–70; Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 389; Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 234.

<sup>121</sup> With Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 297; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 450–51; Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 388–89; Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 269–70. “Through the medium of” comes from Adams; but I reject his proposed background. Adams, “Creation ‘Out of’ and ‘Through’ Water,” 205. Adams thinks the instrumental reading is “a very strained attempt to make the language fit Genesis 1” (Adams, 198–99). He then proceeds to argue for a Stoic background to the wording (“alongside” Gen 1). Adams misses, however, the crucial parallel wording of the next verse, which Peter is setting up for: the waters (and word) are the means δι' ὧν God destroyed the earth. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 297–98. All of the above scholars, including Adams but excepting Frey, do not see a direct reference to Thales’ view of water as the primary element.

<sup>122</sup> This view is defended by e.g., Adams, “Creation ‘Out of’ and ‘Through’ Water”; Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 388–89. Adams views the word *συνιστάω* as a telltale clue to the presence of Stoic cosmogony, which he then elucidates. The author of 2 Peter is, according to Adams, “committed to those aspects of Stoic cosmogony connoted by the twin prepositional constructions: first, that water was the direct elemental substance out of which everything else was made; second, that water was not the original state of this substance, but the material transformation of a more fundamental element.” Adams, “Creation ‘Out of’ and ‘Through’ Water,” 206. This he identifies as the “fire” mentioned in 3:7, stating that “it is reasonable to suppose that, in line with Stoic doctrine, he took that basic element to be fire” (Adams, 206). His explanations, however, are singularly unconvincing. (1) 2 Pet 3 is *not* intended to convey philosophical beliefs; and pressing Peter’s two prepositions in the service of such specific, detailed beliefs is out of place. (2) A far more contextually aware explanation for the δι' ὕδατος reference is to set up its parallel in the flood verse (per Bauckham). (3) While Peter speaks much of fire, it is with the historical background of Sodom’s destruction and the prophetic background of a coming fiery judgment. There is no hint whatsoever that fire as a “fundamental element” is anywhere in view. Somewhat more plausible is Adam’s argument that Peter’s fiery conflagration is influenced by Stoic notions (Adams, 206–7). Thus, it is entirely possible that Peter’s language reflects familiarity with Stoic ideas current in his day. But it goes far beyond the evidence (and even against the strong, explicitly biblical motifs in the chapter) to read Stoic convictions into 2 Pet 3.

whether Peter refers to a Stoic “cosmic conflagration” later in the chapter.) Likely, though, this is reading too much into the phrase δι’ ὕδατος. Bauckham is probably right that “the writer means that water was, in a loose sense, the instrument of creation, since it was by separating and gathering the waters that God created the world. This also provides a good parallel with the next verse, which states that by means of water [δι’ ὕδωρ, referring to both water and God’s word] he afterward destroyed the world.”<sup>123</sup>

One thing that is clear is that Peter deliberately emphasizes the “water” aspect of the Genesis 1 narrative. Peter does this to tie together the creation and flood narratives in the next verse: δι’ ὕδωρ [word and water] ὁ τότε κόσμος ὑδατι κατακλυσθεὶς ἀπώλετο (v. 6). In verse 7, οἱ νῦν οὐρανοὶ καὶ ἡ γῆ are kept by God’s word and *fire* (instead of water): τῷ αὐτῷ λόγῳ τεθησαυρισμένοι εἰσὶν πυρὶ. This progression parallels the “destruction by water” then “destruction by fire” examples of 2:5–6. Peter’s “three worlds” schema was discussed in the previous chapter of this dissertation, but it comes to the fore here.<sup>124</sup> The original world was created by word and water; it was then destroyed by word and water at the flood. The current world will too be destroyed by God’s word, but this time by fire as at Sodom. The result will be—according to God’s word of “promise”—a new heavens and earth (3:13).

**τῷ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγῳ.** Peter insists on the agency of “the word of God” in creation. At one level, this is a clear restatement of the repeated refrain in Genesis 1 (“and God said”). But as has been seen before, Peter is quite intentional about the specific elements he accentuates in the stories he employs. (This was particularly clear in his highlighting of Lot’s “righteousness,” which served Peter’s purpose to connect the Sodom story to his current readers.) This phenomenon has already been observed in 3:5 with Peter’s

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<sup>123</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 297–98. In Vögtle’s words, “Gottes Allmachtswort des Wassers bediente.” Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, Der 2. Petrusbrief*, 226.

<sup>124</sup> Again, see Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 250; Fuchs and Reymond, *La deuxième épître de saint Pierre; Jude*, 84–85.

emphasis on “water.” Peter here highlights the “word of God” because his fundamental point in this section is that God’s promises of judgment and new creation are trustworthy. “Remember the before-spoken words [τῶν προειρημένων ῥημάτων] of the holy prophets and the command [ἐντολῆς] of the Lord” (v. 2). These words must be remembered because “scoffers” will cast doubt on the “promise [ἡ ἐπαγγελία] of his coming” (v. 4). What the scoffers overlook, Peter says, is that the earth has not had an eternally static past. It was created “by the word of God [τῷ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγῳ]” (v. 5), and by his word [δι’ ὧν] it was once destroyed (v. 6). “By the same word [τῷ αὐτῷ λόγῳ]” it will be destroyed again (v. 7). While God’s timing seems long, he is not “slow to fulfill his promise [τῆς ἐπαγγελίας, cf. v. 4]” of judgment and redemption (v. 9). This is underscored first by a word from Psalm 90 and from Habakkuk (vv. 8–9; cf. v. 2a), and then by a word (“command,” cf. v. 2) from the Lord himself (v. 10, alluding to Jesus’ “thief” saying recorded in Matt 24:42–44 and Luke 12:39).<sup>125</sup> The conclusion is that “we are awaiting” a new creation, “according to his promise [τὸ ἐπάγγελμα]” from the prophet Isaiah. Once again, God’s word will create a new world.

Peter’s accentuation of God’s “word” in creation (v. 5) also connects to the larger themes of his letter. Chapter 4 of this dissertation studied the “prophets and prophecy” theme in 2 Peter, and examined the importance of 2 Peter 1:19 and 3:2. In

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<sup>125</sup> Some see 1 Thess 5:2 as a background; either way, the saying originates with Jesus. See discussions in Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 305–6; Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 408; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 458–59; Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 282. There is evidence that Peter is familiar with at least some Pauline letters (2 Pet 3:15–16), but there is also evidence that he intends to invoke Jesus-tradition (3:2) and alludes to other parts of Matt 24 in chap. 3. For a detailed survey of the influence of Matthew in 2 Peter see Peter Dschulnigg, “Der theologische Ort des Zweiten Petrusbriefes,” *BZ* 33, no. 2 (1989): 168–76. Dschulnigg was recently critiqued by Matthias Berghorn, “Rezeption des Matthäusevangeliums im zweiten Petrusbrief? Zum Verhältnis zweier neutestamentlicher Schriften,” in *Der zweite Petrusbrief und das Neue Testament*, ed. Wolfgang Grünstäudl, Uta Poplutz, and Tobias Nicklas, WUNT 397 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 55–74. But I think the influence of Matthean tradition is inescapable from a close reading of 2 Peter. On Matthew in 1 Peter, see Rainer Metzner, *Die Rezeption des Matthäusevangeliums im 1. Petrusbrief: Studien zum traditionsgeschichtlichen und theologischen Einfluss des 1. Evangeliums auf den 1. Petrusbrief*, WUNT 74 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995).

1:19, Peter speaks of the confirmation of τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον, which hearers must hold onto until the final fulfillment of God’s promises. τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον in 1:19 contrasts with the πλαστοῖς λόγοις of 2:3, coming from the false teachers. In 2:3, Peter warns that τὸ κρίμα ἔκπαλαι οὐκ ἄργεῖ, καὶ ἡ ἀπώλεια αὐτῶν οὐ νυστάζει. The “not sleeping”/delay language of this verse maps on to the concerns of 2 Peter 3:4–10, and the verse connects to two specific verses in chapter 3 where God’s “word” features prominently. First, 2:3 says that their judgment is from “of old” (ἔκπαλαι); 3:5 contains the only other instance of ἔκπαλαι in the entire NT. In 3:5 the scoffers forget that the “heavens and earth” existed from “of old” ἔκπαλαι, being made by the word of God. This “from of old” reference to God’s creation sets up for the primeval destruction of the world by God’s word in the flood (3:6). The 3:5 occurrence is almost exactly parallel to 2:3ff, where the ἔκπαλαι judgment immediately precedes the primeval examples of the judgment of angels and flood (vv. 4–5). Second, 3:7 speaks of the “judgment” and “destruction” of the ungodly: κρίσεως καὶ ἀπωλείας τῶν ἀσεβῶν ἀνθρώπων. While a slightly different word for judgment is used in verse 7 (κρίσις vs. κρίμα), they are virtually identical.<sup>126</sup> The word ἀπώλεια occurs five times in 2 Peter: three times in 2:1–3, once in 3:7, and once at the end in 3:16. Peter in 3:5 is applying and elaborating on the same ἀπώλεια in chapter 2, with essentially the same summary of OT stories that he elaborated on there.

As noted earlier, Peter uses λόγος to speak of God’s word in 3:5 and 3:7, and it is implied in 3:6. (He also uses the word in 1:19, speaking of τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον.) In 3:2, however, he uses the word ῥῆμα when he speaks of τῶν προειρημένων ῥημάτων of the prophets. It is instructive to briefly glance at the use these same two words in 1 Peter 1:23–25. In 1 Peter 1:23, believers are born again διὰ λόγου ζῶντος θεοῦ καὶ μένοντος. Peter then quotes from Isaiah 40:6–8, where τὸ ῥῆμα κυρίου μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα (v. 24).

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<sup>126</sup> This letter often uses different synonyms in the letter, e.g., ῥῆμα and λόγος (discussed below), ἐπαγγελία and ἐπάγγελμα, θησαυρίζω and τηρέω.



Peter then identifies this τὸ ῥῆμα with the good news proclaimed to them (τὸ εὐαγγελισθὲν εἰς ὑμᾶς, v. 25). In this passage, (1) Peter uses both words λόγος and ῥῆμα seemingly interchangeably (as in 2 Pet 3:2, 5, 7 and elsewhere in the letter); (2) identifies God’s word as that which “remains” steadfast forever (as is his concern in 2 Peter 1:19–21; 3:2, 9, 13); (3) is powerfully life-giving (in creation and destruction, 2 Pet 3:5, 7); and (4) is linked to a scriptural quotation (see the numerous allusions in 2 Pet 3). These are the same points I have observed in 2 Peter 3.

### **Conclusion**

Peter draws directly on the creation narrative in Genesis 1 to demonstrate the certainty and efficacy of God’s word, but also as the starting place for his creation-flood-current world-final judgment-new creation trajectory. He emphasizes two key elements of the Genesis narrative: creation by God’s “word” and out of “water.” The “word” focus picks up on the emphasis on the prophetic and apostolic word throughout the letter and carries it forward toward his coming exhortation to wait for God’s “promise” of *new* creation. The “water” focus prepares for the flood motif, as he urges that God’s word of judgment is reliable.

### **Destruction: Word, Water, and Fire (3:6–7, 10–12)**

The themes of creation by water and word in 2 Peter 3:5 have just been addressed. Now I will consider Peter’s evocation of the flood and Sodom stories in 3:6ff, with his emphasis again on God’s word and on the material means of destruction—water and fire.<sup>127</sup> It should be stated at the outset that some of the scriptural material in this

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<sup>127</sup> Allen helpfully surveys what this section discusses: “The destructive water-fire sequence also alludes back to the Genesis imagery of 2 Pet. 2:5-6, the respective Flood/Sodom judgment episodes mapping onto the destruction outlined in 3:5-6. Where the Flood was the first world-destroying act of judgment, so a (new Sodom) fire-initiated action will be the next judgment of the godless (3:6).” David M. Allen, “Genesis in James, 1 and 2 Peter and Jude,” in *Genesis in the New Testament*, ed. Maarten J. J. Menken and Steve Moyise, LNTS 466 (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 164.

section of 2 Peter 3 is mediated through Jesus-tradition, recorded now in Matthew 24 and Luke 17.<sup>128</sup> Given that the flood and Sodom stories received in-depth treatments in the previous chapter of this dissertation, this section deals almost exclusively with the appropriation of these narratives in 2 Peter 3. This section also briefly assesses Peter's use of Isaiah 34:4.<sup>129</sup>

### **Flood: 2 Peter 3:6**

Peter's allusion to the flood consists of 3:6: δι' ὧν ὁ τότε κόσμος ὕδατι κατακλυσθεὶς ἀπώλετο. In the opening section of this chapter, I discussed the referent(s) of δι' ὧν, concluding that a reference to water and God's word is most likely. The previous section noted that divine speaking is prominent in the Genesis 1 account. In the flood story, water is by definition prominent. It seems that Peter alludes to the two stories in light of each other: he emphasizes the water element of the creation story so that it meshes well with the flood story, and he speaks of God's word with respect to the flood in a way that coheres with the creation story. Also as mentioned above, the next occurrence of וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים after Genesis 3 comes in Genesis 6:13, when "God said to Noah" that he was going to destroy "all flesh" and "the earth." Peter highlights here that the ancient world's destruction was brought about by God's sure and powerful word of

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<sup>128</sup> Note for example Jesus' words in Luke 17:22–37, combining delay, thief, flood, Sodom, final judgment, and even "Lot's wife." See discussion of Juza's work below. Ty also argues for echoes of John the Baptist's teaching in 2 Pet 3:6–7. Neil Ty, "An Examination of the Judgment-by-Water-and-Fire Oracles of 2 Peter 3:6–7: Echoes of John the Baptist?" (PhD diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 2019). In the previous chapter of this dissertation, I observed the prominence of Jewish tradition in Peter's use of the OT stories in 2:4–10a. While this influence is still present in 2 Pet 3, Jesus' influence on Peter's use of the flood and Sodom accounts rise to prominence (as seen in some of the "prophetic" motifs studied in chap. 4 of this dissertation).

<sup>129</sup> I do not deal here with Peter's reference to the "Day of the Lord" in 3:10. Carson's comment is sufficient: "The expression 'day of the Lord' appears about twenty times in the OT, especially in the prophets where it signals a visitation by God that brings in both salvation and judgment. It is impossible to nail down any one OT passage here as the background that Peter had in mind. It is more likely that he is picking up terminology that was standard by the time he wrote." Carson, "2 Peter," 1059.

command. God’s word both creates and destroys, and it is always reliable in its predictions of both.

Two other brief notes should be made. First, there may be an echo of the flood story in Peter’s use of μακροθυμία/μακροθυμέω in 2 Peter 3:9 and 15. This word group only occurs one other time in 1–2 Peter: in 1 Peter 3:20 when “God’s patience waited” in the days of Noah. Peter may, then, have intended a parallel between God’s delay now with his waiting then.<sup>130</sup> Second, the word ἀσεβής occurs three times in 2 Peter. In 2:5 it refers to the “ungodly” destroyed in the flood. In 2:6 it refers to the future “ungodly” who would be destroyed in like manner to Sodom’s cities. In 3:7, Peter picks up the ungodly of flood and Sodom when he speaks of “the destruction of the ungodly.”

Finally, Peter draws upon what is now Luke 17:26–30 and Matthew 24:3–51 in 2 Peter 3. In both passages, Jesus invokes the flood account to describe the time preceding the return of the Son of Man.<sup>131</sup> The Luke passage includes both Sodom and flood, but flood appears in both. This is discussed further in the “Fire” section below.

### **Fire: 2 Peter 3:7**

2 Peter 3:7 reads, οἱ δὲ νῦν οὐρανοὶ καὶ ἡ γῆ τῶ ἀυτῶ λόγῳ τεθησαυρισμένοι εἰσὶν πυρὶ τηρούμενοι εἰς ἡμέραν κρίσεως καὶ ἀπωλείας τῶν ἀσεβῶν ἀνθρώπων. Sodom’s destruction is not explicitly mentioned here, but the allusion cannot be missed.<sup>132</sup> (1) The

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<sup>130</sup> Bauckham mentions this potential connection to deny any such “flood typology” in 2 Pet 3:9. The μακροθυμία motif is common in “Jewish traditions about the delay of the End.” Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 314. But I think a case can be made for an echo, given the word-group use. Vögtle draws a connection between v. 9 and Noah’s preaching “righteousness” (and repentance) in 2:5. Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, Der 2. Petrusbrief*, 231.

<sup>131</sup> See Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 252.

<sup>132</sup> Juza notes that a “majority of commentators attest to this connection” including Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 300; Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 271; Lewis R. Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude: A Commentary*, New Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 269–70; Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 322; Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, Der 2. Petrusbrief*, 191–92. See Ryan P. Juza, “Echoes of Sodom and Gomorrah on the Day of the Lord: Intertextuality and Tradition in 2 Peter 3:7–13,” *BBR* 24, no. 2 (2014): 230. Oddly enough, it is not mentioned in Carson, “2 Peter,” 1058; Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 394; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 452–53.

progression in 3:5–7 is very similar to 2:4–10a; the certainty of God’s judgment upon the ungodly is the focus (vv. 9–10a), with the “angels who sinned” swapped for creation, but then both featuring flood followed by fiery judgment. (2) 2:5 speaks of the “ancient world” (ἀρχαίου κόσμου) being destroyed by flood, and 3:6 speaks of “the then world” (ὁ τότε κόσμος) destroyed by flood. Both are followed by a fiery judgment upon the current world (with the “now world”—οἱ δὲ νῦν οὐρανοὶ καὶ ἡ γῆ—made explicit in 3:7). (3) 2:6 explicitly states that the destruction of Sodom is “an example of what is coming upon the ungodly [ἀσεβέσιν].” Furthermore, 3:7 clearly brings that “example” forward by speaking of that final fiery judgment upon the “ungodly” (τῶν ἀσεβῶν).<sup>133</sup> This evidence, especially number 3, implies that 2 Peter 3:10–12 is colored by the “example” of Sodom.<sup>134</sup>

Many scholars do not see any further specific Sodom imagery beyond 2 Peter 3:7.<sup>135</sup> Ryan Juza, however, believes that the story’s influence permeates the chapter. While I am more reticent than Juza, he does make some astute observations.<sup>136</sup> One such observation is the potential link between the mockers (ἐμπαῖκται) of 3:3 and Lot’s sons-in-law, “who thought that Lot was ‘joking’ (γελοιάζω) when he warned them of imminent judgment (Gen 19:14; cf. ‘mock’ [καταπαίζω] in Testament of Levi 14:6–8). Peter’s readers can join the mocking sons-in-law (and perish) or repent and join Lot in being

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<sup>133</sup> With Juza, “Echoes of Sodom and Gomorrah,” 232.

<sup>134</sup> Similar points are excellently made by Juza, “Echoes of Sodom and Gomorrah,” 228–32.

<sup>135</sup> Juza claims that “no one carries the allusion to [Sodom] any further than 3:7.” Juza, “Echoes of Sodom and Gomorrah,” 230. This is overstated. Brown recognizes that “in 2 Peter, it [the fiery judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah] provides a prospective pattern for the fiery destruction that awaits the wicked and the elements of the world on the day of judgment (2:9, 3:7, 10, 12). Rhetorically, the example of Sodom and Gomorrah is coupled with the flood (2:5) in anticipation of the flood-fire typology in 2 Peter 3.” Douglas E. Brown, “The Use of the Old Testament in 2 Peter 2:4–10a” (PhD diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2003), 204–5. Brown cites others who make similar observations.

<sup>136</sup> Juza claims that 2 Pet 3:7–13 is an “elusive text” which the story of Sodom is the interpretive “solution.” Juza, “Echoes of Sodom and Gomorrah,” 228. I would not go that far, but I agree that it is one important element in understanding the text.

saved.”<sup>137</sup> The same “patience” of the Lord that saved Lot is still operative to save now (3:15).<sup>138</sup>

Another important piece of evidence Juza proposes is Jesus’ use of Sodom as a paradigmatic example of eschatological judgment in Luke 17:29.<sup>139</sup> Peter draws upon what is now Matthew 24 in 2 Peter 3: the “thief” reference, the ideas of readiness and delay, and even the Isaiah 34:4 allusion. It is likely, however, that Peter is employing the Jesus tradition behind both Matthew 24:3–51 and Luke 17:22–37.<sup>140</sup> Matthew 24:37–39 likens the coming days to the flood of Noah’s day. Next comes the “one taken/one left” saying (vv. 40–42), followed by the thief saying (vv. 32–44). Luke 17:26–27 is very close to the flood material in Matthew 24:37–39. Verses 34–35 are very close to the “one taken/one left” saying of Matthew 24:40–42. Verse 37 contains a question and answer about the location of the foretold events (“Where, Lord”) instead of Matthew 24’s thief saying. But in between the shared material on flood and “one taken/one left,” Luke includes (in vv. 28–33) material on Sodom and Lot. Jesus here uses Sodom as the second of two OT events which describe the coming days—precisely as Peter does in 2 Peter 3. Additionally, Jesus speaks not only of the flood and Sodom generally but of Noah and Lot in particular—just as Peter singles out both characters in 2 Peter 2.<sup>141</sup> Juza plausibly suggests that Peter may be working with a version of the tradition that includes both the

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<sup>137</sup> Juza, “Echoes of Sodom and Gomorrah,” 235.

<sup>138</sup> Juza, “Echoes of Sodom and Gomorrah,” 235.

<sup>139</sup> Juza also proposes that 2 Pet 3:9 “likely” draws on the use of Sodom in Matt 11:20–24, where Jesus “brings together three components: (1) repentance, (2) the day of the Lord, and (3) the judgment against S & G.” Juza, “Echoes of Sodom and Gomorrah,” 235. What makes this idea less-than-compelling is that Jesus is not speaking of Sodom’s judgment at all, only of their sinfulness.

<sup>140</sup> Interestingly, Michaels suggests a similar source behind 1 Pet 3:20–21. “The saying is probably derived either from Q or from an equally early eschatological discourse known to Matthew and Luke.” J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, WBC, vol. 49 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 200.

<sup>141</sup> See from the previous chapter of this dissertation that Peter seems to allude to Lot’s wife in 2:18, which Jesus does—albeit differently—in Luke 17:32.

Sodom material and the thief saying.<sup>142</sup> This cannot be proven definitively, but it is difficult to deny that Peter is influenced by material in both Matthew 24 and Luke 17.

The above argument suggests that Peter is still thinking of the flood and Sodom in verses 8–12, and not only through verse 7. The burning up of the heavens in 3:10–12 recalls Matthew 24:29. But Sodom is in the picture as well, given (1) the influence of the Matthew 24-Luke 17 tradition, (2) the flood and Sodom material in 3:6–7, and (3) the “example” statement of 2:6.<sup>143</sup> The next allusion (Isa 34:4), discussed below, provides further evidence.

### **Isaiah 34:4 in 2 Peter 3:10, 12**

From Isaiah 34:4, Peter draws language to describe the future cosmic destruction.<sup>144</sup> In 2 Peter 3:12, Peter states that the στοιχεῖα καυσούμενα τήκεται (“the elements will melt in their burning”). Bauckham observes that “this clause derives from Isa 34:4 LXX (B, Lucian): τακῆσονται πᾶσαι αἱ δυνάμεις τῶν οὐρανῶν (‘all the powers of the heavens will melt’).”<sup>145</sup> Peter replaces “the powers of the heavens” with στοιχεῖα. This version of Isaiah 34:4 would then also be behind 2 Peter 3:10.<sup>146</sup> The context in

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<sup>142</sup> Juza, “Echoes of Sodom and Gomorrah,” 235–36.

<sup>143</sup> Juza discusses other thematic and verbal reminiscences to the Sodom account in 2 Pet 3. A number of these, however, I find too general or tenuous to be compelling.

<sup>144</sup> Two other minor echoes in 2 Pet 3:12 can be briefly summarized. The verb τήκω used in 2 Pet 3:12 “is also used of the melting of the mountains at the eschatological coming of God: LXX Isa 63:16–64:1, Mic 1:4, *I Enoch* 1:6.” Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 326. Cf. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 468. Isa 63 is likewise a proclamation of Yahweh’s coming vengeance, with eschatological salvation in the surrounding chapters. Mic 1 foretells the destruction not of the nations (though they are called to listen) but of Samaria and Jerusalem for their rebellion. “Willis concludes that such a summons to the nations is appropriate in an oracle which announces judgment on Israel because the prophets considered Yahweh’s punishment of Israel as a model of Yahweh’s future punishment of the nations.” Smith, *Micah–Malachi*, 16. Smith is citing John T. Willis, “Some Suggestions on the Interpretation of Micah 1:2,” *VT* 18, no. 3 (1968): 372–79. Cf. Leslie C. Allen, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 268–70.

<sup>145</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 325. Cf. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 468. The “standard” LXX reading is completely different, closer to the MT.

<sup>146</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 325, 315–16.

Isaiah concerns Yahweh’s proclamation of judgment against the nations, which precedes the ransomed returning in chapter 35.

Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of the verses surrounding Isaiah 34:4 is that just a few verses later, in verses 9–10, imagery from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is used to portray this coming “day of vengeance”<sup>147</sup>:

And her [Edom’s/Idumea’s] ravines shall be turned into pitch, and her land into sulfur,<sup>148</sup> her land shall burn like pitch night and day, and it shall not be quenched forever, and its smoke shall go up above; for generations it shall be made desolate; indeed, for a long time it shall be made desolate.<sup>149</sup>

We have seen how 2 Peter 3 draws deeply on Matthew 24—or, likely, the tradition behind both Matthew 24 and Luke 17. In Matthew 24, Jesus is speaking of judgment/destruction, of the return of the Son of Man, and of the example of Noah’s day—all of which Peter adopts in 2 Peter 3.<sup>150</sup> Peter also adopts Matthew 24’s use of the word *παρουσία*.<sup>151</sup> Jesus’ thief saying (Matt 24:43; cf. Luke 12:39) is employed in 2 Peter 3:10, immediately prior to the Isaiah 34:4 allusion. Most likely, then, Matthew 24:29 is also behind Peter’s language in 3:10–12, which is Jesus’ quotation of Isaiah 13:10 and 34:4.<sup>152</sup> In Luke 17 Jesus explicitly speaks of Sodom, but here in Matthew 24 he chooses

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<sup>147</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 55; Juza, “Echoes of Sodom and Gomorrah,” 238.

<sup>148</sup> The Hebrew text uses *תִּרְהַב*, which is used in Gen 19:24 and Deut 29:22 referring to Sodom’s destruction. The LXX wording is not identical with Isa 34.

<sup>149</sup> Moisés Silva, “Esaias,” in Pietersma and Wright, *New English Translation of Septuagint*, 850.

<sup>150</sup> Oddly, commentators tend not to address this connection. Matt 24:29 is not mentioned by Bauckham, Schreiner, Frey, Davids, or Carson.

<sup>151</sup> The word *παρουσία* occurs four times in Matt 24 (vv. 3, 27, 37, 39), the only occurrences in the Gospels. 2 Peter employs the word three times (1:16; 3:4; 3:12). The first previews the *παρουσία* emphasis of chap. 3. See Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 371–72. The latter two are likely more directly indebted to Jesus’ use recorded in Matt 24: 3:4 likely alludes to Matt 24:3, and 3:12 being closer to the other three instances in Matt 24. Scholars note that the term *παρουσία* became a “technical term” for Christ’s second coming in early Christianity, and cite Matt 24 among other NT and early Christian texts. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 372; Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 379n697; Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 201, 264. However, given the other parallels to Matt 24, I think a more direct link to the chapter is probable.

<sup>152</sup> On Jesus’ allusions, France explains: “The first two lines are taken from Isa 13:10: the words are almost all the same as those of the LXX, though the first clause has been recast (‘it will be

two allusions which have in their contexts (in Isa 13:19 and 34:9–10, respectively) Sodom’s destruction. It is possible that Peter’s allusion comes through Jesus, though as discussed Peter’s wording matches LXX (B, Lucian).<sup>153</sup> This suggests that Peter is influenced both by Jesus’ teaching and by the text of Isaiah itself.

In the allusion to Isaiah 34:4, Peter invokes a prophetic oracle related to the coming divine judgment which fits well with his “succession of worlds” schema in chapter 3. This is one of the forewarnings of the “holy prophets” mentioned in 3:2. The allusion is also tied to Sodom’s destruction, which both Peter and Isaiah see as exemplary of the world’s destruction. The mediation of these two themes through Jesus’ teaching underscores their interrelation in 2 Peter 3.

## Conclusion

Peter, in keeping with Jewish tradition and Jesus’ teaching, sees Noah’s flood and Sodom’s destruction as forward-pointing to the world’s final judgment. The destruction will be universal as was Noah’s flood, and it will be by fire as was Sodom’s. This was introduced in 2 Peter 2, when the focus was on those past events. In 2 Peter 3, the apostle focuses on the future reality, using the flood and especially Sodom stories.

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darkened as the sun rises’ becomes ‘the sun will be darkened’). That same text also speaks of the ‘stars of heaven’ not giving their light, which links up with the thought of the second allusion, but the latter is in fact verbally closer to Isa 34:4.” R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 921. He continues, “In this case the echo is less exact, but the LXX Isaiah text speaks both of the stars falling from heaven and of heaven itself ‘rolled up like a scroll,’ while the probable Hebrew text also adds the idea of the host of heaven ‘rotting away.’ These two Isaiah texts are the most obvious sources for Jesus’ words here, but there are other examples in the OT prophets of similar imagery drawn from cosmic disorder and darkness: see Ezek 32:7–8; Amos 8:9; Joel 2:10, 30–31; 3:15” (France, 921–22). Cf. Craig L. Blomberg, “Matthew,” in Beale and Carson, *Commentary on NT Use of OT*, 86–87; Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, WBC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 713; David L. Turner, *Matthew*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 581–82.

<sup>153</sup> Again, see Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 316.



### **New Creation by Promise (3:12–13)**

This section examines 2 Peter’s allusion to Isaiah 65:17 in 3:13. The allusion should be read in light of Peter’s larger prophetic, Isaianic eschatological vision. This “Isaianic narrative” underlies much of 1 Peter, as Patrick Egan has shown.<sup>154</sup> In this section, then, I first briefly survey 1 Peter’s use of Isaiah, drawing on Egan and others. I then briefly recap 2 Peter’s four other Isaiah allusions before focusing on the allusion to Isaiah 65:17 in 3:13.

#### **Isaiah in 1 Peter**

It is worth briefly summarizing the use of Isaiah 40 in 1 Peter 1:22–25 once again. Earlier in this chapter, this quotation was mentioned with regard to its use of *λόγος* and *ῥῆμα*. Connections to 2 Peter 3’s use of the same words suggest the particular relevance of this Isaiah quotation for the purposes of this dissertation. In 1 Peter, Isaiah 40 is invoked to contrast the “word of God” against everything that is perishable. This word, he implies, is to be identified with Isaiah’s “good news” announced in the very next verse of Isaiah 40 (v. 9). Isaiah’s “good news” of the return of Yahweh to restore his people is the good news that the apostles have now proclaimed to the recipients of 1 Peter.<sup>155</sup> But this observation implies that Peter is connecting to the full Isaianic vision of restoration. Egan summarizes that this is indeed the case, and is worth quoting at length:

The story of Israel in 1 Peter has a distinctively Isaianic quality. The proclamation of good news (Isaiah 40), the suffering servant (Isaiah 49, 53) and the disciples of the suffering servant (Isaiah 54, 63, 66), and the ultimate vindication of God’s people in a decisive act of divine deliverance (Isaiah 65–66) outlines the general contours of the Isaianic narrative. . . .

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<sup>154</sup> Patrick T. Egan, *Ecclesiology and the Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2016). The prophetic vision is not limited to Isaiah, of course. Liebengood, for example, studies the influence of Zech 9–14 on 1 Peter’s eschatology. Kelly D. Liebengood, *The Eschatology of 1 Peter: Considering the Influence of Zechariah 9–14* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014). I am not here suggesting that Isaiah (or Zechariah) forms “the” single “grand thematic narrative” in Peter. See critique of similar attempts in Galatians in A. Andrew Das, *Paul and the Stories of Israel: Grand Thematic Narratives in Galatians* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016).

<sup>155</sup> See discussion of this same passage in chap. 2 of this dissertation.

This outline of an Isaianic story of restoration can be mapped out within 1 Peter. There are three movements corresponding to the three major divisions of the body of the letter. First, the proclamation of God's renewed presence among his people occurs in the body opening (1 Pet 1:13–2:10). The contours of this proclamation draw upon the resources of Isaiah 40, whereby the word of God is equated with the gospel (1 Pet 1:25), and a tapestry of quotations and allusions in 1 Pet 2:4–10 which depict a renewed temple service. Second, the call of the churches in Asia Minor to a high moral standard based on the pattern of Christ even in the face of suffering extends across the body middle (2:11–4:11) and into the body closing (4:12–5:10). Prominent in this section of 1 Peter are quotations of Isaiah 53 and Psalm 33[34], among other quotations and allusions. Finally, the body closing extends into the ultimate vindication of God's people in the final judgment. Central to this part of the letter is an allusion to Isa 11:2, placing the churches of Asia Minor in the midst of God's final plan for his people. There it is asked, "What will the end be for those who disbelieve the gospel of God?" This reiteration of the gospel of God correlates with the connection between Isaiah 40 and the proclamation of the gospel in 1 Pet 1:25, creating an arc to the three-movement structure.<sup>156</sup>

This backdrop from 1 Peter is important for this study of the allusions to Isaiah in 2 Peter 3. As is underscored by the related use of "word" language, 2 Peter 3 is still plugged in to the same Isaianic vision when the apostle looks forward to the "new heavens and new earth."

### **Brief Isaiah Allusions in 2 Peter**

As the allusion to Isaiah 65:17 is the most explicit Isaiah reference and the one most fully integrated into the letter, it receives the fullest treatment here. First though, I briefly recap the other four allusions to Isaiah in 2 Peter, in order to better discern the larger Isaianic narrative that stands behind the allusion in 3:13.

**Isaiah 42:1 in 2 Peter 1:17.** The first allusion is to Isaiah 42:1 in 2 Peter 1:17. This is in the words of the "Majestic Glory" at the Transfiguration: the reference to "my

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<sup>156</sup> Egan, *Ecclesiology and Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 74. For other studies of Isaiah in 1 Peter, see Steve Moyise, "Isaiah in 1 Peter," in *Isaiah in the New Testament*, ed. Steve Moyise and Maarten J. J. Menken (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 175–88; Jocelyn A. Williams, "A Case Study in Intertextuality: The Place of Isaiah in the 'Stone' Sayings of 1 Peter 2," *RTR* 66, no. 1 (2007): 37–55. Cf. relevant sections in Dan McCartney, "The Use of the Old Testament in the First Epistle of Peter" (PhD diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 1989); Benjamin Sargent, *Written to Serve: The Use of Scripture in 1 Peter*, LNTS 547 (London: T&T Clark, 2015); D. A. Carson, "1 Peter," in Beale and Carson, *Commentary on NT Use of OT*, 1047–61.

beloved” (“my chosen one”) “in whom I am well pleased” (see chap. 4 of this dissertation). Peter was constrained by the preexisting tradition, and his main interest in that pericope seems to be more on the prophetic nature of the passage than on its full context. However, Peter may have (at least subconsciously) connected the Isaiah 42:1 reference to his larger Isaianic narrative. Isaiah 42 introduces the Servant of Yahweh, whom Peter identifies as Jesus. The God who created the “heavens” and “earth” will through the Servant bring about “new things” (42:5–9) of both judgment and salvation (vv. 10–17).

**Isaiah 52:5 in 2 Peter 2:2.** The second Isaiah allusion is to 52:5 in 2 Peter 2:2 (see chap. 3 of this dissertation). Peter predicts that “because of” the false teachers, “the way of truth will be blasphemed.” While it is possible that Peter is thinking of the surrounding context (à la Rom 2:24), it is likely that the reference has become something of a freestanding saying. Peter’s allusion fits well with his conjoining of wisdom “Two Ways” motifs with prophetic eschatological motifs.

**Isaiah 34:4 and 60:22 in 2 Peter 3:10, 12.** These two allusions were studied earlier in this chapter, and they are the most relevant to my purposes since they occur in the verses immediately preceding Isaiah 65:17 in 2 Peter 3:13. Isaiah 60:22, used in the reference to “hastening” the coming Day (2 Pet 3:12), taps into the Isaianic vision of future restoration in chapter 60 and beyond. Isaiah 34:4 (in 2 Pet 3:10, 12) includes appropriate language reminiscent of Sodom’s destruction to speak of future judgment upon the nations. Peter once again taps into Isaiah’s future visions—in a subtle way—to speak of eschatological destruction.

#### **Isaiah 65:17 (cf. 66:22) in 2 Peter 3:13**

This is the most explicit reference to Isaiah in 2 Peter. Peter introduces it as God’s “promise” (*ἐπάγγελμα*), which ties in the allusion to the broad themes of the letter

(especially 1:4 and 3:2). The content of the allusion is the perfect completion to 2 Peter 3's themes.<sup>157</sup>

**Isaiah.** A multitude of questions arise when attempting to study the reception of Isaiah 65:17. First are the questions surrounding the original meaning of the passage, which in turn lead to questions concerning the meaning(s) of its intertexts (Isa 1, 11, 25, 40–48; Deut 28; Gen 1–3). These issues are then connected to questions concerning the literary and authorial unity of Isaiah. I do not attempt to resolve these latter questions here. I assume the unity of Isaiah, and point out that at the very least, this was Peter's reception of the book.<sup>158</sup>

Isaiah 65:17 comes in the middle of Isaiah's final vision,<sup>159</sup> coming at the end of a long book full of threats, judgment oracles, and heart-stopping visions of hope for future redemption.<sup>160</sup> In Isaiah 65:17–25 (or vv. 13–25 in Gentry's structure), God announces the glories of the new creation/Jerusalem. This section is followed by God's calls for true worshippers at his (eschatological?) temple (66:1–6), then by a song of rejoicing with Jerusalem (vv. 7–14), and finally by a scene of final judgment and

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<sup>157</sup> Cf. the in-depth treatment of new creation in Isaiah, the rest of the OT, and Second Temple literature, see Mark D. Owens, *As It Was in the Beginning: An Intertextual Analysis of New Creation in Galatians, 2 Corinthians, and Ephesians* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2015), 14–67; Rodrigo J. Morales, *The Spirit and the Restoration of Israel: New Exodus and New Creation Motifs in Galatians* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 13–77.

<sup>158</sup> For discussion of the literary unity of Isaiah, see Peter J. Gentry, "The Literary Macrostructures of the Book of Isaiah and Authorial Intent," in *Bind Up the Testimony: Exploration in the Genesis of the Book of Isaiah*, ed. Daniel I. Block and Richard L. Schultz (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2015); Craig A. Evans, "On the Unity and Parallel Structure of Isaiah," *VT* 38, no. 2 (1988): 129–47. For discussion of the thorny debates in competing diachronic analyses of Isa 65 and Isa 11, see Richard L. Schultz, *The Search for Quotation: Verbal Parallels in the Prophets* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 244–52. For a brief defense of the authorial unity of so-called First, Second, and Third Isaiah in light of increasing recognition of interrelationships between the three sections, see John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 3–16.

<sup>159</sup> In Gentry's outline, it is part of the central section (65:13–25) of a chiasmic structure spanning 65:1–66:24. See Gentry, "Literary Macrostructures," 251.

<sup>160</sup> For a fuller study of Isa 65–66 as the conclusion to Isaiah, see Emmanuel U. Dim, *The Eschatological Implications of Isa 65 and 66 as the Conclusion of the Book of Isaiah* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2005).

salvation (vv. 15–24),<sup>161</sup> where “new heavens and new earth” are mentioned once more (66:22).

In Isaiah 65:17, God “creates” (ברא) a “new heavens and a new earth.”<sup>162</sup> But in the following verse, he seems to “create” (ברא) a renewed “Jerusalem.” In this new Jerusalem, there will be no more weeping or untimely death (vv. 19–20); there will not be foreign invasions or calamity (vv. 21–23). Animals themselves will exhibit changed instincts, so that none will be harmful “in all my holy mountain” (v. 25). The ambiguities of the text have led to much debate over what exactly Isaiah has in view in verse 17. The passage contains elements which are very “this-worldly,” and the emphasis seems to be on Jerusalem rather than the entire cosmos. Creation and de-creation language is used metaphorically in the prophets to refer to, for example, the Babylonians’ coming (Jer 4:23–26).<sup>163</sup> These and other factors lead some scholars to see only a symbolic description of a brighter political arrangement (in the Persian era) in view.<sup>164</sup>

On the other hand, other features suggest that more may be in view.<sup>165</sup> The wording of verse 17 is certainly evocative of something more cosmic, with its reference

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<sup>161</sup> Frey believes that in Isa 65–66 “there is no mention of a preceding catastrophe.” But, he concedes, “a partial destruction could . . . be implied in Isa 66:15–16.” Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 417n870.

<sup>162</sup> Watts notes that ברא “is a word used only with God as subject. It appears in the early chapters of Genesis (9x) and in Isa 40–66 (19x) [among other places]. There is a concentration of uses in chap. 45 (6x) and here in 65:17–18.” John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, rev. ed., WBC (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 924.

<sup>163</sup> Peter J. Gentry, *How to Read and Understand the Biblical Prophets* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 102–5. Isa 43:1 speaks of the creation (ברא) of the people of Israel, which may appear similar to 65:18d.

<sup>164</sup> Watts, for example, writes “the new order that is being created is (like chap. 45) the one in which Persia holds sway over the entire area so that Jerusalem can be rebuilt . . . This is not an eschatological picture of the distant future.” Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 924. Cf. Karl W. Weyde, “‘For I Am about to Create New Heavens and a New Earth’: Prophecy and Torah in Isaiah 65:17–25,” in *New Studies in the Book of Isaiah: Essays in Honor of Hallvard Hagelia* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2014), 219; Konrad Schmid, “Neue Schöpfung als Überbietung des neuen Exodus: Die tritojesajanische Aktualisierung der deuterotesajanischen Theologie und die Tora,” in *Schriftgelehrte Traditionsliteratur*, vol. 77, FAT (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 196–97, cited in Weyde, “New Heavens and New Earth.”

<sup>165</sup> Oswalt presents a full-on, NT-style “new creation” view of Isa 65. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, 652–62. Beale likewise argues for an “eternal new creation context” of Isa 65. G. K. Beale, “An Amillennial Response to a Premillennial View of Isaiah 65:20,” *JETS* 61, no. 3 (2018): 461–

to “heavens and earth” (Gen 1:1). The reference to changes in the animal kingdom similarly leads in this direction. Intratextual factors are even stronger. First, the idea of “Jerusalem” itself in Isaiah takes on an idealized, eschatological meaning that transcends a localized city.<sup>166</sup> Second, this passage is placed as the culmination of the final book of Isaiah,<sup>167</sup> completing visions of restoration which *do* include that of the natural order (especially Isa 25, discussed below). Third, allusions to Genesis 1–3 (discussed next) color the passage in an *Urzeit/Endzeit* direction.<sup>168</sup> In the end, it may be too strong to take Isaiah 65:17 in *precisely* the same sense as Revelation 21 or 2 Peter 3:13.<sup>169</sup> However, it is almost certainly wrong not to see a vision of cosmic transformation present in Isaiah 65:17–25. This vision may become further developed in later literature, but those later texts are following the trajectory of the earlier.<sup>170</sup>

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92. Schultz and Leene are significantly more cautious, but seem to allow that some cosmic transformation may be in view. Schultz, *The Search for Quotation*, 256; Leene, *Newness in Old Testament Prophecy*, 123, 142–43.

<sup>166</sup> Mauser’s discussion of the role of Jerusalem is helpful: “The first verse ([Isa 65:]17) displays a certain contrast to the rest of the passage. It introduces the universal vision of new heavens and a new earth. The remaining verses concentrate on one particular spot: on Jerusalem whose joy and peace are described down to verse 25, a verse which speaks of the peace among animals ‘in all my holy mountain,’ that is, Zion, on which Jerusalem is built. . . . All through the Book of Isaiah the hope for the world at large is reconcilable with the emphasis on Jerusalem as the medium through which a universal benefit is secured (e.g., 2:2–4; 60:1–3). New heavens and a new earth can arise because Jerusalem in their midst is now so renewed that it is the sign and agent of the new age for the whole world.” Ulrich W. Mauser, “Isaiah 65:17–25,” *Int* 36, no. 2 (1982): 184.

<sup>167</sup> Childs writes that “the promise in chapter 65 is . . . the fulfillment of God’s will taking shape throughout the entire book of Isaiah.” Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 538; cf. 542–45.

<sup>168</sup> With Childs, *Isaiah*, 537. Watts wrongly renders אָרֶץ in Isa 65:17 as “land” instead of “earth” in 65:17. He says that the word is “consistently” “understood as referring to Palestine.” Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 924. While this is likely correct when the word occurs by itself, it is *not* the case when paired with שָׁמַיִם in an allusion to Gen 1:1. שָׁמַיִם and אָרֶץ language in Isaiah is often used with a cosmic sense. See 37:16; 44:24; 45:12; 45:18; 48:13; 51:6; 51:13; 51:16; 66:1.

<sup>169</sup> For example, Isaiah does not picture a full cosmic destruction scene, contra 2 Pet 3, though “a partial destruction could . . . be implied in Isa 66:15–16.” Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 417n870.

<sup>170</sup> See the balanced discussion in Ben Witherington III, *Isaiah Old and New: Exegesis, Intertextuality, and Hermeneutics* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017), 320–38.

The vision of new creation in 65:17–25 is replete with resonances to other passages in Isaiah as well as to the Pentateuch.<sup>171</sup> First, there are important links to Isaiah 1, 11, 25, and 40–48.<sup>172</sup> Second, curse reversal imagery harks to Leviticus and Deuteronomy. Third, and particularly apropos for my purposes, are references to Genesis 1–3.<sup>173</sup>

There are important links tying this ending vision of Isaiah (65–66) with the opening chapters (1–2) of the book and to chapters 40–48, emphasizing the culminating nature of the final vision. Regarding chapters 1–2, Childs points to “the unusual level of intertextuality” between these two sections.<sup>174</sup> Summarizing Beuken, Childs writes,

First, Beuken affirms that in 65:17–24 the frame conveys affinity with chapter 1 by the word pair “heavens and earth” (65:17 // 1:2), by the promise “I will answer (65:24) in contrast to “I will not listen” (1:15), and the reference to offspring (65:23 // 1:4). Second, the density of common terms between chapter 1 and 66:22–24 is of a remarkable quality. He cites the following examples: the calling of “heavens and earth” to witness that Israel is a “brood of evildoers” (1:2, 4); the promise that “the new heavens and new earth” will share their everlasting existence with the purified “seed” (66:22); the accusation against “those who rebelled against me” (66:24 // 1:2, 28); the reversal in Israel’s true worship (66:23) from the false cult of 1:13.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> See the helpful study by Konrad Schmid, “New Creation Instead of New Exodus: The Innerbiblical Exegesis and Theological Transformations of Isaiah 65:17–25,” in *Continuity and Discontinuity: Chronological and Thematic Development in Isaiah 40–66*, ed. Hans M. Barstad and Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 175–94.

<sup>172</sup> See helpful side-by-side comparisons and discussion of some of these parallels in Childs, *Isaiah*, 542–45.

<sup>173</sup> Weyde writes, “Isa 65:17–25 clearly alludes to material in Genesis 1–3 as well as to the concluding chapters of Deuteronomy. Thus, the Isaiah passage picks up elements from the beginning and the end of the Pentateuch, the most remarkable references being those to Gen 1:1 and 3:14.” Weyde, “New Heavens and New Earth,” 227.

<sup>174</sup> Childs, *Isaiah*, 543. Weyde confirms that “In recent research on the Book of Isaiah, scholars seem to agree that chapters 65–66 and chapter 1 envelop the entire Book of Isaiah with a literary frame.” Weyde, “New Heavens and New Earth,” 210.

<sup>175</sup> Childs, *Isaiah*, 544. See Wim Beuken, “Isaiah Chapters 65–66: Trito-Isaiah and the Closure of the Book of Isaiah,” in *Congress Volume, Leuven, 1989* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 204–21. Cf. Marvin A. Sweeney, “Prophetic Exegesis in Isaiah 65–66,” in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition*, ed. Craig C. Broyles and Craig A. Evans, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 455–74.

Next, scholars observe that the language of Isaiah 65:17 (and following) “is highly reminiscent of chs. 40–48.”<sup>176</sup> Childs’s summary is again helpful:

The reference to God as creator . . . of the heavens and and earth is a dominant theme [of Second Isaiah] (42:5; 45:7, 12, 18, etc.). Moreover, the verb [ברא] is not only used to designate God’s initial creation of the heavens and earth, but its continuous maintenance and preservation (42:5–6). However, even more significantly, the verb is employed by Second Isaiah in connection with the promise of the new things (48:6), which will replace the former things. Thus, v. 17b joins intentionally to this theme of the former things (48:18).<sup>177</sup>

This brings the discussion to the links between Isaiah 65 and 25. Beale has argued that Isaiah “65:13–14, 18, 25 are likely an inner-biblical development of Isa 25:7–9.”<sup>178</sup> Isaiah 25:7–9 speaks of the day when on the “mountain” of God, he will “swallow up death forever” (ESV). Beale lists five “verbal and thematic parallels . . . between the two passages that cumulatively are unique in all of the OT”: the holy mountain, time of “rejoicing” and “gladness,” God removing “reproach” and “troubles,” “no more crying,” the new era’s lasting forever.<sup>179</sup> The significance of these connections is that they strengthen the case for seeing 65:17 as a reference to something truly eschatological and cosmic.<sup>180</sup> Both texts focus on Zion/Jerusalem, but both also speak of radical renewal of the world; in 25 including the elimination of death itself. This is the reversal of the judgment of Genesis 3, which is alluded to in 65:25 and implied in the reference to “new heavens and new earth” itself.

Finally, the links to Isaiah 11 are significant.<sup>181</sup> As Childs notes, “It has been long recognized that [Isa 65:25] offers a compendium of the messianic oracle of 11:6–9.

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<sup>176</sup> Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, 655–56. See also Childs, *Isaiah*, 537, 543; Eberhard Sehmsdorf, “Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte von Jesaja 56–66: Jes 65:16b–25; 66:1–4; 56:1–8; 66:17–24,” *ZAW* 84, no. 4 (1972): 517–76.

<sup>177</sup> Childs, *Isaiah*, 537. Cf. his listing of parallels (543).

<sup>178</sup> Beale, “An Amillennial Response,” 471.

<sup>179</sup> Beale, “An Amillennial Response,” 472.

<sup>180</sup> Beale, “An Amillennial Response,” 472.

<sup>181</sup> For studies of these two passages in relation to each other, see Schultz, *The Search for*



Two lines between the passages are virtually identical: ‘the lion will eat straw like the ox’ and ‘They will not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain.’<sup>182</sup> The function of this intratextual allusion to Isaiah 11 is to conclude Isaiah 65’s “portrayal of the new eschatological order by citing the well-known messianic passage of chapter 11.”<sup>183</sup>

Next are the intertextual links to the curses of Deuteronomy 28, which in Isaiah 65:17–25 are reversed. “YHWH’s people will inhabit the houses they have built and eat the fruits of the vineyards they have planted (Isa 65:21–22 annulling Deut 28:30, 39–40), and they as well as their descendants shall be blessed by YHWH (Isa 65:20, 23 annulling Deut 28:41).”<sup>184</sup> In referencing both the opening chapters (Gen 1–3) and closing chapters (Deut 28) of the Torah, Isaiah 65’s new creation announcement offers a radical transformation of both Israel and the world.<sup>185</sup> The curses of Deuteronomy and of Genesis 3 would be reversed, and Jerusalem and the entire “heavens and earth” would be recreated.

Finally, the crucial links to Genesis 1–3 can be considered. The initial reference is 65:17, which speaks of God “creating” a “new heavens and new earth”—an obvious allusion to Genesis 1:1. But Isaiah is not finished here. The new creation is clearly “very good,” as all are called to rejoice in this beautiful new creation (vv. 18–19).

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*Quotation*, 240–56; Weyde, “New Heavens and New Earth,” 211–16. Like Schultz and Childs, I am considering the passages as “synchronic” parallels. Schultz, *The Search for Quotation*, 252; Childs, *Isaiah*, 538–39.

<sup>182</sup> Childs, *Isaiah*, 538.

<sup>183</sup> Childs, *Isaiah*, 539.

<sup>184</sup> Weyde, “New Heavens and New Earth,” 214. Weyde further notes, “Other scholars see in the Isaiah passage allusions to the curses and blessings in both Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28, alternatively (only) to Lev 26:16, 20. Looking at the literary context of Isa 65:17–25 we also find other links with the curses and blessings in Deuteronomy: In Isa 65:16, the statement saying that whoever blesses and takes an oath, shall do it by the God of faithfulness, probably alludes to the stipulation in Deut 29:18 [ET 19]” (214–15).

<sup>185</sup> Pointed out by Weyde (referencing Schmid). Weyde adds, “The possible consequences of the old creation shall be annulled; the good order of the creation cannot be perverted any more.” Weyde, “New Heavens and New Earth,” 214. Cf. Schmid, “New Creation Instead of New Exodus.”

There is also a likely link to Genesis 2–3 in Isaiah 65:20–22’s “motif of an extended human life span.”<sup>186</sup> Verse 23 may reveal reminiscences of the judgments upon Adam and Eve: hard toil and difficulty in childbearing, respectively. Most significantly is verse 25, with its clear allusion to Genesis 3:14. “And the serpent, dust shall be its food”: שֶׁנֶּחֱמָה לְחֶמְהוּ עֵפֶר לְחֶמְהוּ. Verse 25 copies much of Isaiah 11:6–9, as discussed above. But in Isaiah 65:25, the snake language is changed in order to more closely reflect the wording of Genesis 3:14.<sup>187</sup> Isaiah 11:8 uses פִּתְּוֹן and צִפְּוֹן to refer to snakes (rendered “cobra” and “adder” in ESV); Isaiah 65:25 uses Genesis 3’s שֶׁנֶּחֱמָה. Isaiah 11:8 speaks of children playing at snakes’ lairs; Isaiah 65:25 replaces this with the language of Genesis 3:14, that the snake would eat עֵפֶר (dust). The changes underscore the intentional significance of Genesis 1–3 for the whole of Isaiah 65:17–25: the opening words of the oracle reference Genesis 1:1, and the closing words reference Genesis 3:14. This passage pictures a full renewal of God’s creation and a reversal of its curses.

**Jewish literature.** “The need for a renewal of creation is also widely recognized in [Jewish] literature, though usually not with the terminology of ‘a new heaven and a new earth’ or the like.”<sup>188</sup> Texts include Jubilees 1:29; 4:26; 1 Enoch 45:4–5; 72:1; 91:16; 2 Baruch 32:6; 44:12; 57:2; 4 Ezra 7:75; LAB 3.10.<sup>189</sup> Examples from Jubilees and 1 Enoch are discussed below.

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<sup>186</sup> Weyde points to Stordalen for this idea. Weyde, “New Heavens and New Earth,” 214n16; Terje Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden: Genesis 2–3 and Symbolism of the Eden Garden in Biblical Hebrew Literature* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 440.

<sup>187</sup> Childs, *Isaiah*, 538.

<sup>188</sup> Carson, “2 Peter,” 1060. Frey writes, “The expression ‘new creation’ is adopted and intensified in some early Jewish texts, where the disappearance of the present world becomes increasingly explicit and thus a truly new creation is implied.” Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 417. Concerning Qumran texts, Martínez observes, “At Qumran the word ‘creation’ is not only used to express the creative act of God, or the temporal beginning of the reality created by God, but also the expected renewal of the reality (‘the heavens, the earth, and all their creatures’) in the eschatological future. The ‘day of creation’ is not only the model of the end times but one of its names as well.” Florentino García Martínez, “Creation in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in van Kooten, *Creation of Heaven and Earth*, 65.

<sup>189</sup> See Carson, “2 Peter,” 1060; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 326; Frey, *Jude and Second Letter*

Jubilees 1:29 speaks of “the full number of jubilees, from [the day of creation until] the day of the new creation when the heaven and earth and all of their creatures shall be renewed according to the powers of heaven and according to the whole nature of earth, until the sanctuary of the Lord is created in Jerusalem upon Mount Zion.”<sup>190</sup> This passage differs from 2 Peter 3 in two ways: (1) It does not speak of a great destruction prior to the renewal. (2) It pictures the new creation as “renewal” (with less discontinuity between old and new). But there are important similarities as well: (1) The passage draws upon Isaiah 65–66 and 11. (2) The new creation is for “all of the elect of Israel,” analogous to the phrase “where righteousness dwells” in 2 Peter 3:13. (3) A fascinating aspect of this passage is how it, like Isaiah 65 itself, unites the imagery of a new “creation” with that of a renewed “Jerusalem.”<sup>191</sup> The author of Jubilees intends a cosmic renewal; this is evident from his universal language and from the echoes of Genesis 1–2 which were not part of Isaiah 65: the clause “the heavens, the earth, and all of their creatures” reflects Genesis 2:1 (“the heavens and the earth and all their hosts”), and the “powers of the heavens”/“all of the lights” reflects creation Day 4.<sup>192</sup> (As in 2 Peter 3, “the writer includes the heavenly bodies in the renewal.”)<sup>193</sup> The author seems to understand Isaiah as intending this as well; this is implied by his adoption of Isaiah’s “Jerusalem” language without evident concern that localized language clashed with a universal vision.

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*of Peter*, 417–18.

<sup>190</sup> Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2:54. Bracketed portion was in the published translation.

<sup>191</sup> The eschatological temple is included as well. See James C. VanderKam, *Jubilees 1–21*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2018), 166.

<sup>192</sup> VanderKam, *Jubilees 1–21*, 165–66.

<sup>193</sup> VanderKam, *Jubilees 1–21*, 165.

Now to look at 1 Enoch. In the *Book of Parables*, God speaks of transforming both heaven and earth. He will make both a “blessing,” and only his “chosen ones” will “dwell on it, but those who commit sin and error will not set foot on it” (45:4–6).<sup>194</sup> The opening verse of the *Book of the Luminaries* (1 Enoch 72:1) introduces “how every year of the world will be forever, until a new creation lasting forever is made.”<sup>195</sup> 1 Enoch 91:11–17 (in the *Apocalypse of Weeks*) uses language similar to 2 Peter 3:13. First, both passages bear echoes of Isaiah 65:17 and 60:22.<sup>196</sup> 1 Enoch 91:11–17 emphasizes the coming of “righteousness” to both the earth (vv. 11–14) and the heavens (vv. 15–17).<sup>197</sup> The passage speaks of a “new heaven” in verse 16, after the “first heaven” passes away following a great judgment.<sup>198</sup> This is rather similar to 2 Peter 3, though there is no explicit reference to a new earth.

Second Temple Jewish texts, particularly here Jubilees and 1 Enoch, reveal close similarities to 2 Peter 3’s reception of Isaiah’s “new creation.” While I am not arguing for literary dependence, it is clearly recognizable that 2 Peter’s appropriation of Isaiah 65:17 fits his Jewish milieu. First, Isaiah is the clear fountainhead of this material, alluded to explicitly by later texts. Second, Isaiah’s new creation is understood as universal and cosmological, with the dissolution/renewal of “the heavens” accentuated. Third, the new creation is specifically for the “righteous.” Fourth, the “new creation” is

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<sup>194</sup> George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch: The Hermeneia Translation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 59. I recognize that the date of the *Parables* is disputed. Even if it is later, however, it may reflect a common earlier understanding.

<sup>195</sup> Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch*, 96.

<sup>196</sup> This passage is a textually problematic excerpt. Scholars posit “a dislocation of material during the course of transmission,” since this passage belongs after 93:10 to complete the *Apocalypse of Weeks*, as in Loren T. Stuckenbruck, *1 Enoch 91–108*, Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2007), 49.

<sup>197</sup> Cf. Stuckenbruck, *1 Enoch 91–108*, 57–59.

<sup>198</sup> “And the first heaven will pass away in it, and a new heaven will appear, and all the powers of the heavens will shine forever with sevenfold (brightness).” Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch*, 141.

described sometimes as renewal and other times as genuinely new; as in 2 Peter 3, the analogy of Noah's flood is apt—the postdiluvian world is a “renewal” of the original creation, but it is quite “new” as well.<sup>199</sup>

**2 Peter 3:13.** Following the cosmic judgment foretold in the OT (see above) and by Jesus (Matt 24; Luke 17), Peter sees not annihilation but the creation of a new world. This, he writes, God has promised—and invokes Isaiah 65:17. That Peter sees in this reference a cosmic transformation is beyond question, and it is in keeping with both the trajectories of Isaiah and of common expectations in Second Temple Judaism (see discussions above). When Peter describes destruction and renewal, it is not a Stoic conflagration; it is prophetic eschatology.<sup>200</sup> There is a succession of worlds, but not an endless cycle of worlds. There is a progression from initial creation to final creation—from creation by God's “word” through destruction and re-creation by God's word to final new creation “according to his promise.”<sup>201</sup> And it is the place of “righteousness.”

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<sup>199</sup> Rightly Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 299.

<sup>200</sup> Bauckham writes that 2 Pet 3's conflagration “has been attributed to Stoic or Iranian influence, but there can be no real doubt that its immediate background is to be found in Jewish apocalyptic.” Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 300. Fire functions to “consume the wicked” in the OT, and “as the idea of a universal, eschatological judgment developed (cf. already Isa 66:15–16; Mal 3:19),” the fire imagery developed “into the expectation of a universal conflagration, especially when the future universal judgment was envisaged by the analogy with the Flood as a universal judgment in the past” (Bauckham, 300). Bauckham adds that “it is probable that the Iranian [Zoroastrian] ideas exercised some influences on Jewish eschatology” (Bauckham, 300). But the differences are essential: In Jewish and Christian literature, the conflagration is a final judgment of the wicked. In contrast, the “Zoroastrian fire [is one] of purification and . . . the Stoic idea [is] of a natural, deterministic cycle of destruction and renewal” (Bauckham, 301). Bauckham concludes that if the author of 2 Peter “was aware of the pagan parallels, he is unlikely to have been very concerned with them. (Bauckham, 301). Cf. Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, Der 2. Petrusbrief*, 228. Frey, in an in-depth excursus, surveys the history of the “conflagration” concept in pagan, Jewish, and Christian literature. Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 393–400. His conclusions are fundamentally similar to Bauckham's, with slight distinctions: “By incorporating widespread cosmological conceptions, the author shows his capacity for contemporary philosophical discourse in shaping his presentation of the Parousia and judgment. But the theological accent in this is clear: the anticipated end of the world signifies the ‘day of judgment’ and the destruction (*ἀπώλεια*) of the godless. It is not just a ‘natural occurrence,’ but rather an event that aims toward the judgment . . . There is no mention of a ‘rebirth’ from the fire” (Frey, 399–400). Cf. Thiede's study, which concludes that 2 Peter follows the OT/Jewish trajectory of conflagration, which is distinct from the Stoic concept. He then studies the reception of 2 Pet 3 by early Christian writers (Irenaeus and Origen, Minucius and Justin) who are in conversation with Greek philosophical thought. Carsten Peter Thiede, “A Pagan Reader of 2 Peter: Cosmic Conflagration in 2 Peter 3 and the Octavius of Minucius Felix,” *JSNT* 8, no. 26 (1986): 79–96.

<sup>201</sup> Frey rightly observes that “the cosmic catastrophes (3:5–7) are attributed to God or God's word, as of course the new world in v. 13 rests on God's promise (Isa 65:17; 66:22: ‘I will make’).” Frey,

Schultz writes that “2 Peter 3:13 appears to combine Isa 11 and 65, for righteousness is mentioned only in the former (vv. 1–5), and the new heavens and new earth are mentioned only in the latter.”<sup>202</sup> Peter’s eschatology follows the trajectory of Israel’s prophetic eschatology.

The most important element of this quotation is that it itself alludes to Genesis 1. As examined above, Isaiah is picturing the restoration of Israel and the world in light of Genesis 1. Peter uses this allusion to complete the creation/new creation theme running through chapter 3. To recap from the first section of this dissertation chapter, Peter intentionally employs the οὐρανοί-and-γῆ word pair (along with the word κόσμος) to tie 2 Peter 3 together, leading from Genesis 1:1 in verse 5 to Isaiah 65:17 in verse 13. The plural of οὐρανός occurs five times in 2 Peter, all in chapter 3 (vv. 5, 7, 10, 12, 13) and each time paired with the word γῆ (except v. 12). Peter punctuates the progression of chapter 3 with the “heavens and earth” word pair or the word κόσμος: The first (v. 5) is a reference to creation of “heavens and earth” in Genesis 1. The second (v. 6) is a reference to ὁ τότε κόσμος destroyed by the flood. The third (v. 7) and fourth (v. 10) refer to the destruction of the present “heavens and earth,” and the final (v. 13) is the allusion to Isaiah’s “new heavens and new earth.”

In many ways, 2 Peter’s allusion to Isaiah 65:17 is the culminating climax of the letter:

(1) The allusion refers to the same reality as 1:11, 1:19, 2:9. In 1:3–11, Peter exhorts his readers who have escaped (ἀποφεύγω; cf. 2:18, 2:20) the world’s corruption (φθορά; cf. 2:12 [2x], 2:19) of sinful passion (ἐπιθυμία; cf. 2:10, 2:18, 3:3). He calls them to persevere in godly qualities, in response to God’s “precious and great promises”

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*Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 416. Cf. Schelkle, *Die Petrusbriefe; der Judasbrief*, 229; Fuchs and Reymond, *La deuxième épître de saint Pierre; Jude*, 121.

<sup>202</sup> Schultz, “Intertextuality, Canon, and ‘Undecidability,’” 34.

(ἐπαγγέλματα, v. 4; cf. 3:13).<sup>203</sup> If they do so, they will be welcomed into the “eternal kingdom” of Jesus (v. 11). As seen in the recurrence of its language throughout the letter, 2 Peter 1:3–11 introduces the basic flow of thought repeated in the following chapters. This “eternal kingdom” introduced at the beginning of the letter is identified as Isaiah’s “new heavens and new earth” at the end of the letter. Later in chapter 1, Peter urges readers to rely on the “prophetic word” (τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον, 1:19)—a phrase quite similar to “word” and “prophecy” language in chapter 3. Someday, the “morning star” will rise—a reference to the eschatological day depicted in 3:13. In chapter 2, the “rescue” (ῥύεσθαι, 2:9) comes at the conclusion of the biblical accounts of flood and Sodom—destructions of creation by water and fire picked up in chapter 3. This “rescue” is ultimately the “new heavens and new earth” that arises after the ultimate fiery cosmic destruction.

(2) The allusion is portrayed as the ultimate “promise,” the climax of the prophetic “word” emphasized throughout the letter. As seen in the previous point and elsewhere in this chapter, the allusion to Isaiah 65:17 in 2 Peter 3:13 is framed as God’s “promise”—a term used elsewhere in the letter (ἐπάγγελμα here and in 1:4, ἐπαγγελία in 3:4 and 3:9). The occurrence in 1:4 is plural (ἐπαγγέλματα), but it is the same word as 3:13; and it is the only other occurrence “in early Christian literature.”<sup>204</sup> The referent may be broad, to all future-oriented promises. But given the verbal link to 3:13 and the mention of the “eternal kingdom” at the end of this passage (1:11), the new creation is likely prominent among the “promises.” Frey writes, “The view toward eschatological

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<sup>203</sup> On the link between the “promises” of 1:4 and 3:13, cf. Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, Der 2. Petrusbrief*, 243. On 3:4 and 3:14, cf. Paulsen, *Der zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief*, 170.

<sup>204</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 179. Frey wrongly thinks that the different words used for “promise” may serve to “differentiate” the promises of 1:3 and 3:13 from the “promise of the Parousia” (in 3:4, 9) which the opponents doubted. Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 261. This view is difficult to defend referentially (the overlap seems considerable), and it ignores other cases of synonyms used in 2 Peter. Bauckham is right that the two words should be viewed as synonymous. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 179.

fulfillment pervades the letter, and, at the end of the eschatological argumentation, 3:13 returns to the concept of the ‘promise’ (ἐπαγγελία), thereby recalling 1:4.”<sup>205</sup>

(3) The allusion completes the pattern of destruction/salvation in 2:4–10a. As mentioned above, 2:9 speaks of the Lord knowing “how to rescue the godly out of trial” as well as how to judge the wicked. This conclusion is deduced from Peter’s biblical examples of the angels who sinned, the flood, and Sodom (especially Lot, where ῥύομαι is also used in v. 7). Chapter 3 takes the flood and Sodom stories (with possibly a hint of the “angels” story) into its creation/destruction/recreation saga.<sup>206</sup> The “rescue” of the righteous out of the burning city of Sodom (and from the flood) is fulfilled in the rescue of the righteous out of the burning heavens and earth (vv. 10–12) and into the new creation (3:13).<sup>207</sup>

(4) The allusion underscores the righteousness/unrighteousness contrast. The new heavens/new earth is the place “where righteousness dwells.” For the “righteous” as inhabitants of the new creation, Peter is indebted both to the Isaianic vision and to Jewish convictions developed from Isaiah (see above).<sup>208</sup> But Peter also intentionally adds this line after the allusion to underscore and complete the righteous/unrighteous contrast in the letter (starting with the “world” full of corruption in 1:4).<sup>209</sup> There are true versus false prophets (1:21–2:1), the “godly” versus the “unrighteous” (2:9), those who follow

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<sup>205</sup> Frey, *Jude and Second Letter of Peter*, 261.

<sup>206</sup> Contra Ostmeyer, who would dispute the “recreation” term here. He holds that in contrast to the flood creation/destruction/recreation cycle, “erfolgt nach dem Feuergericht keine Wiedereinrichtung einer erneuerten Schöpfung.” No remains of the old serve as material for the new. Karl-Heinrich Ostmeyer, *Die Briefe des Petrus und des Judas*, BNT (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2021), 144.

<sup>207</sup> Fuchs and Reymond rightly reference Noah and Lot as representing the “righteous” of 3:13. Fuchs and Reymond, *La deuxième épître de saint Pierre; Jude*, 121–22.

<sup>208</sup> Leene suggests that the “righteousness” language in 2 Pet 3:13 could be an allusion to Isa 32:16. Leene, *Newness in Old Testament Prophecy*, 142.

<sup>209</sup> “It [the new heavens and earth] will be the precise opposite of the present order, dominated as it is by desire and corruption” (1:4). J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude*, Black’s New Testament Commentaries (London: A & C Black, 1969), 368.



the “way of righteousness” versus those who stray from it (2:20–21). In this allusion, Peter takes the entire biblical story and brings his readers directly into it. The “way of righteousness” (2:21) leads here; not to an abstract reward but right into the biblical “heavens-and-earth” story—to a new one “where righteousness dwells.” In sum, the allusion to Isaiah 65:17 is connected to the Scriptural trajectories *and* to the exhortatory purposes of the letter.

### **Isaiah Conclusion**

Isaianic eschatology is important to Peter in general (in both epistles), but his specific choices of allusions in 2 Peter 3 fit the themes of the chapter perfectly—on “delay,” on the certainty of God’s “promise,” on the destruction and re-creation of “heavens and earth.” On 2 Peter 3:13, Carson writes the following: “It is doubtful that either Christian steadfastness or Christian morality, let alone Christian spirituality and Christian eschatology, can long be maintained without the dominance of this vision.”<sup>210</sup> Peter would agree, adding that this was the point of the letter of 2 Peter.

### **Chapter Conclusion**

Second Peter 3 operates at multiple levels. It is a tightly intracconnected unity, proclaiming the certainty and efficacy of God’s word from creation to new creation. But it is also the concluding chapter of the letter, tying together themes of word, prophecy, and “two ways” from throughout the letter. In this conclusion, I survey these two levels, as well as 2 Peter 3’s relationship to Peter’s three hermeneutical emphases.

### **2 Peter 3’s Complex Unity**

As sketched at the beginning of this dissertation chapter, the central concern of 2 Peter 3 is the certainty and efficacy of God’s *word* and *promise*, given by prophets,

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<sup>210</sup> Carson, “2 Peter,” 1061.

apostles, and Jesus himself (3:2). Unsurprisingly then, the rest of the chapter is essentially a dense web of scriptural and dominical allusions. The flow of Scriptural imagery and argument in 2 Peter 3 moves from original creation (Gen 1:1) to new creation (Isa 65:17), with flood and (Sodom-tinted) fiery judgment in between. But Peter is not content with merely listing the succession. He accentuates the common elements which link each biblical story to each other and to the events of the eschaton: he emphasizes God's "word"/"promise" in each act of creation/judgment, he emphasizes the medium of "water" in Genesis 1 and in the flood, and he emphasizes the fiery nature of final judgment to correspond to Sodom's destruction. God's promises and his past acts recorded in Scripture are all prophetic, and Peter's readers must therefore shun the scoffers and walk in wisdom.

To deal with the scoffers' objections and as an aid to his recipients in "reading" the timing of God's promises, Peter turns again to Scripture. He majors on Psalm 90:4, with allusions to Habakkuk 2:3 and Isaiah 60:22 as well. Scripture itself, Peter emphasizes, provides the needed resources to shore up one's confidence in God's word of promise.

### **Connections throughout 2 Peter**

Second Peter 3 ties together themes from across the letter:

1. "Word"/"promise": As noted earlier in this dissertation chapter, 2 Peter 3 is the climax of the "word"/"promise" emphasis of the letter. Believers are brought into God's "promise" (1:4), to which they must cling until its fulfillment (3:4, 13). God's "word" is completely "certain" (1:19), unlike the "feigned words" of the false teacher-prophets (2:3); his is the word that creates and recreates (3:2, 5, 7).
2. Flood and Sodom: The previous chapter of this dissertation focused on Peter's use of three accounts from Genesis: "angels who sinned," Noah's flood, and Sodom's destruction (2 Pet 2:4–10a). These stories are "examples" of the coming judgment and deliverance (2:6, 9). In 2 Peter 3, the latter two examples are woven into Peter's exposition of final judgment and new creation. As seen elsewhere in 2 Peter, the author accentuates different aspects of his scriptural stories in different contexts. In chapter 2, the flood was simply a warning of God's judgment. In chapter 3, however, Peter weaves the flood story into his "three worlds" exposition. The waters of the flood and God's word are emphasized, to parallel Genesis 1.

3. Prophecy: In chapter 4 of this dissertation, I studied 2 Peter's material on true versus false prophecy. This theme is introduced in 2 Peter 1:16–2:1, and is continued in Balaam as scriptural exemplar of false prophet. The apostles are likened to the true prophets of old, whose words are reliable (1:16–21). Here in 2 Peter 3, the prophetic voice of apostles and prophets are rejoined (3:1–4), in the call to heed God's promise of coming new creation (3:13).
4. "Two Ways": Chapter 3 of this dissertation laid out the wisdom-like "two ways" dichotomy of 2 Peter. There is a way of life and a way of destruction (2:2, 15, 21). What was observed is that wisdom's "two ways" become the *prophetic* "two ways" of eschatological destruction versus new creation. These two eschatologized ways are laid out in vivid relief in 2 Peter 3, complete with wisdom's warning (3:11–12).

### Peter's Hermeneutics

Second Peter 3 relates to the three hermeneutical principles from chapter 2 of this dissertation. First, though, a note on Jesus' influence on Peter (also studied in chapter 2 of this dissertation) is in order.

1. Jesus' teaching (especially Matt 24 and Luke 17) plays a prominent role in 2 Peter 3. That observation in itself is not directly relevant to this dissertation, but what *is* relevant is that these Jesus-traditions are an influencing source for some of Peter's OT motifs in 2 Peter 3. From Jesus' words on the coming judgment, Peter picks up the use of Sodom and Noah stories, as well as Isaiah 34:4. These observations are further supporting evidence of the influence Jesus had on Peter's reading of Scripture.
2. Scripture as prophecy: As discussed above, 2 Peter 3 completes the letter's emphasis on the prophetic nature of Scripture. This is headlined in 3:2 and underscored in the Isaiah 65:17 allusion in 3:13. But it is also seen as Peter lays out the progression of "worlds" and judgments—these are evidence of God's efficacious "word," but they are also Scripture's own narrative prophecies (2:6, 9; 3:7).
3. Suffering and glory: This principle is not strongly seen in 2 Peter 3, but Peter's discussion of "delay" passages (Ps 90:4; Hab 2:3; Isa 60:22) hints at this motif. God's vindication would be fulfilled in great glory (3:13), but there *would* be divinely intended (and Scripturally warranted) time of continued waiting. This time would be full of opposition, temptation, trial—as it had been for Noah when "God's patience waited" (1 Pet 3:20; cf. 2 Pet 3:9, 15).
4. Stepping into the story: 2 Peter 3 tells the story of the world(s) in such a way as to sweep his readers directly into it. Genesis 1's creation narrative is not simple an origins story; it is the precursor to the new origins story that *they* would take part. Someday, they would participate in a new creation week. The flood story is not simply a past judgment; it is the precursor to the equally universal judgment which would engulf *their* world. Someday, they would escape—or not—the new deluge. Sodom's destruction is not an isolated fire; it is the precursor to the fire which would flame across *their* entire heavens and earth. Someday, all the things they see and know will "dissolve." Scripture's story *is* their story. They *are* living in it. The only question is, what part will they choose?

Peter thus closes 2 Peter 3 and the whole letter by urging his readers to continue on the right path, to heed Scriptural prophecy, to wait for God's certain word of promise (3:11–18).

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

This dissertation has studied 2 Peter's use of the Old Testament. The study demonstrates the following: The author of 2 Peter reads the OT—focusing on its prophetic and creation/destruction/new creation motifs—as a prophetically forward-pointing narrative which colors the present time. It does so both by direct promise-fulfillment and by constituting the narrative world which contains Peter himself, his readers, and his opponents. This narrative script grounds 2 Peter's ethical warnings and exhortations. In this concluding chapter, I first summarize each chapter, and then synthesize the study's findings and suggest implications for the disciplines of New Testament studies and biblical theology.

#### **Chapter Summaries**

Following the introduction of the project and summary of research in chapter 1, chapter 2 sketches Peter's scriptural hermeneutics. The first section situates Peter's reading of Israel's Scriptures within his Jewish context, finding closest affinities to Qumranic use of Scripture and to common Jewish *haggadic* traditions. Peter's hermeneutic is set apart by the influence of Jesus, whence Peter learned the scriptural centrality of "Messianic suffering followed by glory" and adopted key OT passages to cite. The chapter then studies Peter's two hermeneutical statements: 1 Peter 1:10–12, and 2 Peter 3:1–2 with 1:20–21. In both, the prophetic nature of Scripture is emphasized, along with its eschatological orientation. After a survey of Peter's use of the OT in Acts, the chapter traces three Petrine motifs which, taken together, suggests a grand scriptural

narrative in his thought: David in Acts, exodus/exile in 1 Peter, and true versus false prophets in 2 Peter.

Chapter 2 concludes by synthesizing three hermeneutical principles observed throughout Petrine material: (1) The nature of Scripture: Scripture as prophecy. Peter reads the OT primarily as a prophetic text, which through both direct speech and historical recounting points forward to the Messianic age. (2) The message of Scripture: Messianic suffering and subsequent glories. For Peter, the OT schematizes the Messianic age into two divisions: first suffering, then glory. This schema applies to Messiah's followers; they are expected now to suffer, to be tested, and to wait for the coming day of glory. (3) The application of Scripture: stepping into the story. Peter calls his readers not only to respond to Scripture's call, but to inhabit its world.

Chapter 3 studies the influence of Proverbs and the biblical "Two Ways" motif on 2 Peter. Beyond a quotation from the book to vividly depict the disgusting nature of apostasy (Prov 26:11 in 2 Pet 2:22), Peter employs motifs and themes central to Proverbs (especially Prov 1–9), including cataloguing virtues and vices. He writes as an older man, concerned about enticers, fools, scoffers, and the immoral. The letter of 2 Peter presents two ways: one leading to life, and the other to destruction. In keeping with post-biblical Jewish developments, and in line with Jesus' influence, Peter marries wisdom motifs with Israel's prophetic history and its eschatological future orientation. In 2 Peter, the way of life leads to new creation; the way of death leads to cosmic destruction.

Chapter 4 assesses 2 Peter's material on true versus false prophets and true versus false prophecy. Peter introduces the theme of prophecy in 2 Peter 1:16–21. He and his fellow apostles, in line with the true prophets of old, beheld divine glory and heard the divine voice confirming the words of the OT prophets over Jesus. The divine voice proclaimed Jesus to be the messianic king of Psalm 2 and Isaiah 42, and Peter adds that he is the "morning star" of Numbers 24. In 2 Peter 2:1, Peter recalls the OT material concerning false prophets, starting with Deuteronomy 13 and 18 through Jeremiah 23–29.

The specific false prophet looming large in 2 Peter is the obscure figure of Balaam. Peter sees in the false teachers of his day the figure of Balaam—people who had heard and known the truth of Jesus, yet who through greed entice others to a destructive life of licentiousness. Peter’s appropriation of biblical prophets/prophecy material is twofold: (1) He references OT prophecy as authoritative and eschatologically fulfilled in Jesus, and (2) he identifies himself and his fellows with the stories and characters of the OT, which he sees as continuing.<sup>1</sup>

Chapter 5 explains the use of three stories from Genesis in 2 Peter 2:4–10a: the “angels who sinned” (Gen 6:1–4), Noah’s flood, and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Peter structures this paragraph (2:4–10a) to develop a pattern from ancient biblical history proving that God can and will punish the ungodly and deliver the righteous (further developed in 2 Pet 3). He also employs these stories to characterize his own day. Peter draws from the Genesis narratives along with later Jewish traditions. He also sees each of the stories as literarily/analogously connected to each other; such connections are observed in the text of Genesis itself as well as in later Jewish tradition. Peter likens the “angels who sinned” to the wicked in general (2:9), the false teachers in particular (2:17), and even the entire heavens and earth (3:7). They all—both the people and the inanimate “heavens and earth”—are “kept” in “darkness” “for judgment.” The story of Noah and the flood (2 Pet 2:5) is used to exhort readers toward faithfulness, obedience, and trust; but this is primarily because the flood account foretells the story of Peter’s own day. The “now-cosmos” (3:7) is analogous to Noah’s “ancient world” (2:5; 3:6), and readers who refuse to heed the warnings of the new “proclaimers of righteousness” (2:5) will face a flood-like judgment. But the coming judgment will be by fire—like Sodom’s.

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<sup>1</sup> I am not arguing for complete continuity between prophets and apostles in every area, but that Peter sees a connection, a “passing of the baton,” in this regard.

Peter's use of the Sodom account is introduced in 2:4–10a but picked up and developed further in 2:17ff and in chapter 3, with multiple dimensions of warnings and encouragements: (1) Sodom's wicked residents represent sexual immorality, licentiousness, and a lifestyle "enslaved" to corruption (2:19). Peter paints the false teachers with the colors of the men of Sodom, in a stark warning to anyone contemplating sharing in their revelries. A corresponding (but escalated, see 2 Pet 3:7–10) fiery judgment will come upon those who now resemble them. (2) Peter sees in some of his readers the potential to play the role of Lot's wife (2:17–20)—one who had "barely escaped" but then turned back towards Sodom's enticements. (3) Peter sees the faithful of his day as playing the role of Lot in their story. Their "trial/temptation" (2:9a) is to remain in a wicked environment and continue to be vexed by it (2:7–8), not succumbing to it or giving up. They can trust in God's deliverance and know that the same God who delivered Lot will someday deliver them.

Chapter 6 considers 2 Peter 3, the central concern of which is the certainty and efficacy of the *word* and *promise* of God. The flow of Scriptural imagery and argument in 2 Peter 3 is built around a succession of four events: creation, flood, fiery judgment (Sodom), and new creation. These are intertwined by causal themes: word/promise, water, and fire. Peter references Genesis 1 to demonstrate the certainty and efficacy of God's word, but also as the starting place for his creation-flood-current world-final judgment-new creation trajectory. Peter emphasizes two key elements of the creation narrative: creation by God's "word" and out of "water." The "word" focus picks up on the emphasis on the prophetic and apostolic word throughout the letter and carries it forward toward his coming exhortation to wait for God's "promise" of *new* creation. The "water" focus prepares for the flood motif, as he urges that God's word of judgment is reliable. Noah's flood and Sodom's destruction are seen as forward-pointing to the world's final judgment. The destruction will be universal as was Noah's flood, and it will be by fire as was Sodom's. This appropriation began in 2 Peter 2, when the focus was on those past



events. In 2 Peter 3, the apostle focuses on the future reality, colored by the flood and especially Sodom stories.

Allusions to Isaiah in 2 Peter 3 fit the themes of the chapter perfectly—on “delay” (Isa 60:22), on the cosmos’s fiery destruction (Isa 34:4), and the creation of a new “heavens and earth” according to God’s word of “promise” (Isa 65:17). Peter also references Psalm 90:4, Habakkuk 2:3, and Isaiah 60:22 to guide his readers in thinking through the seeming delay of Jesus’ promised return. He does so by using Scripture itself, showing that God’s “word” and prophetic “promises” themselves demonstrate that God’s actions are often fulfilled in ways that frustrate human timetables.

### **Synthesis**

Despite containing virtually no direct quotations of Scripture, 2 Peter is permeated by the OT. Peter writes to warn against false teachers who question the message of Scripture confirmed by the apostles’ experience of Jesus. Peter sets out the “two ways” of Proverbs: the way of wisdom and folly, of life and of death. These two ways, though, are eschatologized and shot through with Scripture’s grand narrative: the two ways are the ways of true versus false prophets, and they lead to eschatological destruction or new creation.

The story of Scripture which Peter sees culminating in the coming destruction and new creation (2 Pet 3) is one which begins with the first creation by God’s word and through water. That “ancient world” (2:5, 3-6) was destroyed by God’s word and water—with the wicked judged and Noah spared. A similarly paradigmatic judgment also took place by fire, when Sodom was judged and “righteous Lot” spared. And God’s judgments are not limited to the earth: God judged even heavenly beings who sinned sexually and refused God’s lordship. These past events confirm the certainty of God’s words of promise. The “now world” will be destroyed as universally as that of Noah’s day, but in

the fiery manner of Sodom. The righteous are now “tested” (2:9a) as was Lot, but will be brought into the promised “new heavens and new earth” of Isaiah 65:17 (3:13).

Peter’s readers cannot choose what narrative world they inhabit. Scripture’s story world is the true world. But they can choose which characters’ roles they play in the continuation of Scripture’s drama. Peter exhorts them to choose the right “way”: Do not be a scoffer (3:3) but heed the voice of wisdom. Follow the true prophets’ successors and not the modern-day Balaams. Continue to not feel at home in a licentious world like Lot, and not “barely escape” (2:18) like Lot’s wife. Wait patiently for a new world like Noah, and not be destroyed like his contemporaries.

### **Implications**

Three implications from this dissertation serve to stimulate the study of biblical theology, Scriptural application, and New Testament studies.

### **Biblical-Theological Terminology**

The first regards biblical-theological terminology. In this dissertation, I have largely (though not completely) avoided the term *typological*. I have also shunned terms such as *figural* and *allegorical*. These terms (among others) represent currently debated attempts to describe NT authors’ use of the OT. *Typological* traditionally refers to recurring patterns of persons, events, and institutions that are intended by divine and human authors to point forward to a Christological/eschatological fulfillment of the pattern.<sup>2</sup> The term *figural* refers to both historical and to literary resemblances between OT and NT texts/events, but the focus is on the retrospective recognition of this

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<sup>2</sup> See e.g., G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012); Leonhard Goppelt, *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982); James M. Hamilton Jr., *Typology: Understanding the Bible’s Promise-Shaped Patterns: How Old Testament Expectations Are Fulfilled in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2022).

resemblances and not (as in typology) on their forward-pointing orientation.<sup>3</sup> *Allegorical* is a slippery term in current usage, but the focus is often on theological correspondence between OT and NT rather than historical or even literary. Undergirding allegorical reading is a strong set of philosophical convictions.<sup>4</sup>

In place of these terms, I have chosen the term *prophetic* to describe Peter's reading of the OT. *Allegorical* reading cannot be used to describe 2 Peter's hermeneutic. As seen in chapter 2 of this dissertation, Peter is generally the furthest removed from the great exemplar of allegory, Philo. Peter's concerns in the letter are historical in nature: it is on *events* in the OT that map on to events in the present and future. He is not interested in drawing abstract theological truths from his OT material. *Figural* reading likewise cannot adequately account for Peter's use of the OT. While he highlights both historical and literary resemblances between OT stories and texts, he insists on the forward-pointing nature of these texts. God's past judgments are intentionally future-oriented "examples" of eschatological judgment (2:6), and the scoffers err because they forget God's first act of creation and destruction (3:5).

*Typological* is clearly the best of the three above-mentioned candidates for describing Peter's use of the OT. Most of the Scriptural references in 2 Peter involve not didactic material but *stories* which he does see as pointing forward to his eschatological present (and future) time. However, I suggest that while this term can be rightly employed in 2 Peter, it is not the best encapsulating 2 Peter's use of the OT. Instead, I propose the term *prophetic*.

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<sup>3</sup> See e.g., Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989); Richard B. Hays, *Reading Backwards: Figural Christology and the Fourfold Gospel Witness* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014).

<sup>4</sup> See e.g., Craig A. Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition: Recovering the Genius of Premodern Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018).

First, *typology* carries considerable baggage in current discussions concerning NT use of OT. It has a large literature and has generated significant controversy in recent discussion. I am reticent to anachronistically pull poor Peter into all of the assumptions and issues of modern debates.<sup>5</sup>

Second, the term *prophetic* more closely matches Peter's own language and emphasis throughout the letter (1:19–2:1, 3:2) and in the hermeneutical statement of 1 Peter 1:10–12. (The language of “example” in 2:6 could be seen as the best counterexample, but I would argue that *prophetic* can include what is traditionally called *typology*.) As we have seen especially in chapter 4 of this dissertation, 2 Peter is framed as a conflict between two sets of prophets: the true prophets (including OT prophets and Jesus' apostles) versus the false prophets (those of old and the false teachers of Peter's day). Peter writes to persuade readers of a single prophetic vision which spans the entire OT, the revelation of Jesus, and the eschatological age. His use of Scripture, then, is largely a “prophetic” use.

Third, the term *prophetic* encompasses both traditionally “typological” elements (persons, events, institutions) as well as more directly propositional material. A key weakness, in my view, of relying on the term *typological* in 2 Peter is that it could create a separation between OT material which I am convinced Peter portrays as unified. Scripture presents, in its warnings, its stories, its wisdom motifs, and its promises, a unified prophetic vision. Peter and his fellow apostles, in their teachings, warnings, exhortations, and recounting of Jesus' life, are continuing that same unified prophetic

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<sup>5</sup> On some of the current debates, see e.g., Samuel Emadi, “Intertextuality in New Testament Scholarship: Significance, Criteria, and the Art of Intertextual Reading,” *CBR* 14, no. 1 (2015): 8–23; Dennis R. Edwards, “Hermeneutics and Exegesis,” in *The State of New Testament Studies*, ed. Scot McKnight and Nijay K. Gupta (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), 63–82; Matthew W. Bates, “The Old Testament in the New Testament,” in McKnight and Gupta, *The State of New Testament Studies*, 83–102; Beale, *Handbook on NT Use of OT*. See also *JSNT* 38, no. 1 (2015), which was devoted to NT use of OT.

vision. Peter’s reading of Scripture is holistically “prophetic” in a way that defies attempts at neat subdivision.<sup>6</sup>

My argument here is *not* intended to cover all use of the OT in the NT. This is a dissertation on 2 Peter, and my description is limited to this letter and to its connections to other Petrine material. However, scholars would do well to take the findings here and think through their implications for the broader field. How do biblical authors deal with the intersection of historical and literary use of scriptural texts? How do they see the relationship between didactic and narrative in their redemptive-historical schemas? How can scholars today best categorize various descriptions of biblical appropriation in ways that best reflect the unified perspective of the biblical authors making these appropriations?

### **Narrative Scriptural Application**

One of the striking features of 2 Peter’s use of Scripture is its application. I have referred to 2 Peter’s approach to application throughout the dissertation as “stepping into the story.”<sup>7</sup> Peter applies Scripture in 2 Peter not so much by drawing out its implications but by drawing in his readers. Peter overlays the narrative world of Scripture onto his present day, characterizing people and society as the new actors playing the same drama. The approach to application in 2 Peter is inextricably tied to the argument above concerning Peter’s reading of Scripture as a unified prophetic vision. His characterization of present people using OT motifs certainly includes literary and rhetorical motivations, but it is fundamentally the result of his prophetic reading of the OT and his convictions

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<sup>6</sup> Indeed, *typology* is meant to refer to the idea that history is *prophetic*. See Francis Foulkes, “The Acts of God: A Study of the Basis of Typology in the Old Testament,” in *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts? Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1994), 366. I am in fundamental agreement, but wish to not obscure this type of “prophetic” material from other types evoked in 2 Peter.

<sup>7</sup> It is striking to me—and profoundly right!—that a recent lay-level introduction to 2 Peter is titled *Living in God’s True Story*: Donald L. Morcom, *Living in God’s True Story: 2 Peter*, Transformative Word (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2021).

concerning Scripture. Peter would surely object to my use of the word *overlay* above—in his understanding, he is simply guiding readers to see the world *as it really is*.

James Miller’s conclusions concerning 2 Peter are very similar to my own, apart from his description of the narrative world as “socially constructed,” which Peter would no doubt quibble with:

My contention is that 2 Peter functions in significant part as an instrument of communal-identity formation. In other words, this document portrays a symbolic narrative world and attempts to persuade its auditors to locate themselves within it. This socially constructed world provides the basis for appropriate attitudes and behaviors called for in the letter. . . .

In spite of 2 Peter’s limited length, a distinctly narrative understanding of God’s activities forms the argumentative backbone of the letter. Within the larger story of divine activity, Peter embeds the stories of the human actors in the drama. It is precisely the location of the auditors in the context of God’s actions that gives traction to his appeal.<sup>8</sup>

The importance of narrative in holistic moral formation has been increasingly recognized, both in NT studies and in philosophical circles.<sup>9</sup> This study has focused on the way Peter applies Scripture by calling his readers to step into its narrative world, to forever have their own world transfigured by its prophetic narrative. Further work can be done on how other less-studied biblical authors—both OT and NT—apply Scripture in narrative-world-building ways. What additional insights can be gained for our own

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<sup>8</sup> James C. Miller, “The Sociological Category of ‘Collective Identity’ and Its Implications for Understanding Second Peter,” in *Reading Second Peter with New Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of Second Peter*, ed. Robert L. Webb and Duane F. Watson (New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 148, 166. Eugene Boring comes to a very similar, and well-articulated, conclusion regarding 1 Peter: “The letter’s impact is comprised not only, and perhaps not primarily, by the specific items it communicates discursively—information, commands, promises, and the like—but by projecting all that it says within the framework of the narrative world presupposed by the letter. The readers are met not only with statements, commands and promises, but by an understanding of reality, a world that has a particular narrative shape, that may be different from their own and challenges it. The narrative world is itself a continuing call to decision as to which is the real world that determines the life of the reader: the everyday world assumed by culture and common sense, or the world projected by the text.” M. Eugene Boring, “Narrative Dynamics in First Peter: The Function of the Narrative World,” in *Reading First Peter with New Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of First Peter*, ed. Robert L. Webb and Betsy Bauman-Martin (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 24. Cf. Joel B. Green, “Narrating the Gospel in 1 and 2 Peter,” *Int* 60, no. 3 (2006): 262–77.

<sup>9</sup> See e.g., the writings of N. T. Wright (in which this theme is prominent). Cf. Stephen I. Wright, “Inhabiting the Story: The Use of the Bible in the Interpretation of History,” in *“Behind” the Text: History and Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Craig Bartholomew et al., *Scripture and Hermeneutics* 4 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 492–519; James K. A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013).

philosophies of moral formation? What practical implications do these insights have for preachers and educators?

## **2 Peter: “A Faith Equal to” the Rest of the NT**

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, 1 Peter has been famously called an “exegetical step-child.”<sup>10</sup> If that is so, then one might best describe Peter’s second exegetical child as an aborted fetus. It certainly has strong counts against it: significant portions “lifted” from Jude, and a long history of doubts concerning its authenticity. But throughout the course of writing this dissertation, I personally have been struck by the richness of the letter. I believe it has more to offer the world of NT studies than it is often seen to bear. Two suggestions follow.

In this dissertation, the strongly Jewish world of the letter has come to the fore.<sup>11</sup> Peter’s use of Scripture is very often mediated through the traditions of Second Temple Judaism. What more can be gleaned by comparative study of 2 Peter (and perhaps other Petrine material) with other Jewish texts? What insights would be gained by such analysis for further understanding the author(s) and communities of the Petrine letters?

While this was a dissertation about Peter’s use of the OT only, it was impossible to fulfill the task without multiple extended references to Jesus’ teaching. Chapter 2 of this dissertation sketched the influence of Jesus on Peter’s hermeneutic. In the body of the dissertation, specific portions of Jesus-tradition loom large over all three chapters of 2 Peter. As seen, especially in 2 Peter 3, Peter refers both to Jesus’ own words *and* to OT stories used in that teaching. Peter’s reading of Scripture is difficult if not

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<sup>10</sup> John H. Elliott, “Rehabilitation of an Exegetical Step-Child: 1 Peter in Recent Research,” *JBL* 95, no. 2 (1976): 243–54.

<sup>11</sup> This observation, of course, is not meant to exclude or deny Hellenistic elements, or to even suggest an absolute divide between the two.

impossible to untangle from Jesus'. What results would a full study of Jesus' influence on Petrine material yield?

### **Conclusion**

“Remember the predictions of the holy prophets,” Peter exhorts (2 Pet 3:2). The letter of 2 Peter is shaped at multiple levels by the OT. The letter is framed in the tradition of Proverbs’s “Two Ways.” These “two ways” are populated by true versus false prophets, respectively, which lead to eschatological destruction on the one hand or to new creation on the other. Eschatological destruction and new creation are the fulfillment of the OT’s narrative of “three successive worlds,” with creation followed by judgment by flood, the current world awaiting a Sodom-like judgment by fire, and a coming new creation “according to his promise.” The author of 2 Peter reads the OT as a prophetically forward-pointing narrative, into which he calls his readers and characterizes his present world.



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## ABSTRACT

### “REMEMBER THE PREDICTIONS OF THE HOLY PROPHETS”: 2 PETER’S PROPHETIC USE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

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This dissertation argues that the author of 2 Peter reads the OT as a prophetically forward-pointing narrative which colors the present time. It does so both by direct promise-fulfillment and by constituting the narrative world which contains Peter himself, his readers, and his opponents. This narrative script grounds 2 Peter’s ethical warnings and exhortations.

After addressing introductory matters in chapter 1, chapter 2 sketches a broad Petrine hermeneutic of the OT. Peter reads Scripture as prophetic, as emphasizes Messianic suffering and glory, and as a story to “step into.”

Chapter 3 studies the influence of Proverbs and the biblical “Two Ways” motif in 2 Peter. Peter eschatologizes wisdom: the way of life leads to new creation; the way of death leads to cosmic destruction. Chapter 4 focuses on 2 Peter’s material on true vs. false prophets and true vs. false prophecy. Peter and his fellow apostles follow the line of Israel’s true prophets, and the false teachers are likened to Israel’s false prophets and specifically Balaam.

Chapter 5 studies the use of three stories from Genesis in 2 Peter 2:4–10a: the “angels who sinned” (Gen 6:1–4), Noah’s flood, and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Peter structures this paragraph (2:4–10a) to develop a pattern from ancient biblical history proving that God can and will punish the ungodly and deliver the

righteous (further developed in 2 Pet 3). He also employs these stories to characterize his own day.

Chapter 6 studies 2 Peter 3, the central concern of which is the certainty and efficacy of the *word* and *promise* of God. The flow of Scriptural imagery and argument in 2 Peter 3 is built around a succession of four events: creation, flood, fiery judgment (Sodom), and new creation. Peter also references Psalm 90:4, Habakkuk 2:3, and Isaiah 60:22 to guide his readers in thinking through the seeming delay of Jesus' promised return. The chapter closes with Peter's use of Isaiah's new creation promise.

Chapter 7 synthesizes the study's findings, draws conclusions, and discusses the significance of the study.

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