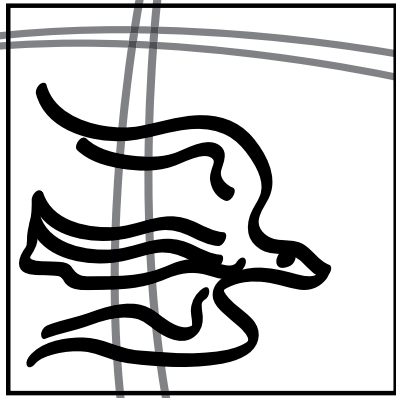


THE SUFFERING SERVANTS OF I PETER

Dennis J. Lauritsen



Over a century ago, Charles Monroe Sheldon published his bestselling book, *In His Steps: "What Would Jesus Do?"* Written in the winter of 1896, and read by the author a chapter at a time to his Sunday evening prayer service at the Central Congregational Church of Topeka, Kansas, the book was translated into many languages and has sold more than thirty million copies. On the opening page of Sheldon's volume, as a preface to chapter 1, are words from the First Epistle of Peter: "For hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps" (2:21, KJV). Although phrases from this verse recur on almost every page of this once-popular book, 1 Peter itself has been considered by many as the "exegetical step-child"¹ of biblical scholarship as well as of the church's preaching and teaching until the last several decades, even though it is one of the most pastoral letters in the New Testament.

"Nothing seems more unworthy," John Calvin wrote, "and therefore less tolerable, than undeservedly to suffer; but when we turn our eyes to the Son of God, this bitterness is mitigated: for who would refuse to follow him going before us?"² The author of 1 Peter seems to understand that suffering for "doing what is right" (2:15, 20) should not come as a surprise to those who "have been called" (a form of the verb *καλέω*, "to call," is used five times in the letter)³ to follow Christ, who has left us an example of righteous suffering (cf. 3:14 where the writer offers a beatitude for those who suffer "on account of righteousness": *ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ πάσχετε διὰ δικαιοσύνην, μακάριοι*). The theme of Christian suffering is primary in 1 Peter, which uses the verb *πάσχω* ("to suffer") more than any other New Testament writing.⁴ Additional terms and images for suffering are also reflected in the use of a related noun *πάθημα* ("suffering or misfortune," 1:11; 4:13; 5:1, 9) as well as *λυπέω* ("to be distressed," 1:6), *λύπη* ("grief, sorrow, or affliction," 2:19), Jesus' shedding of blood (1:2, 19) and his *μώλωψ* ("bruise or wound," 2:24d), his rejection

by humans (2:4c), and the *λοιδορέω* ("reviling or verbal abuse," 2:23) that he endured. Several times the author speaks of situations in which the recipients of this circular letter have suffered verbal abuse, referring to *πειρασμοί* ("tests or trials," 1:6, 4:12), *καταλαλέω* ("to slander, to speak against, to speak evil of," 2:12; 3:16), *κακός* ("evil or injurious conduct," 3:9), *λοιδορία* ("insult or verbal abuse," 3:9), *ἐπηρεάζω* ("to be reviled, threatened or mistreated," 3:16), *ὀνειδίζω* ("to reproach or insult," 4:14), and *βλασφημέω* ("to malign," 4:4).

The repeated theme of righteous suffering, appearing to be primarily verbal in nature rather than physical, is the most prevalent characteristic applied to the Christian communities by the author of 1 Peter. While some references to suffering are of a general nature,⁵ others give a more specific indication of the reason for the suffering of "the elect sojourners in the diaspora of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" (1:1). For example, Christians have their faith challenged in ways that require them to provide an *ἀπολογία* ("defense") "concerning the hope" that is in them (3:15); they are abused for their Christian behavior (3:16; 4:4; cf. 3:14); and they "are reviled" because they bear the name "Christ" (4:14, 16). The adversity of these particular communities is not peculiar to them but, according to the author, has become a

common experience for Christians "throughout the whole world" (5:9). This type of suffering does not appear to be based upon anything specific, but rather is a consequence of the identity of these Christian communities, addressed as *παροίκους καὶ παρεπιδήμους* ("resident aliens and visiting strangers"),⁶ regardless of any particular charges; nor was the suffering of the recipients the result of an official persecution of Christians by Rome.⁷ Rather, as John Elliott notes, the suffering is the consequence of alienated (4:4), suspicious (2:15, 3:15), slanderous (2:12, 3:16), and hostile (3:9, 13) local opposition that could lead to hearings and official trials⁸:

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The letter presupposes a situation in which the addressees were not being treated as “enemies of the state” but were made victims of social discrimination because of their being strangers and aliens both socially and religiously, because of their similarity to Israel in their distinctiveness and nonconformity, and because of their adherence to an exotic Israelite sect stigmatized as “Christian.” It reflects the tension and conflict of the messianic movement not with mainstream Israel, as was the case with Paul, but with society at large and locates this letter in a new epoch in the history of the primitive church.⁹

Furthermore, the letter does not make use of the words *διώκω* or *διωγμός* (“to persecute, persecution”), words that are used elsewhere in the New Testament to speak of more violent official forms of oppression.¹⁰ Nor does the letter speak of physical aggression, trials, or executions of Christians. Elliott concludes that “it was rather ignorance regarding these strangers and aliens on the part of outsiders (2:15, 3:15) that led to suspicion and accusation of wrongdoing (2:12, 2:19–20); surprise and maligning as a result of Christians’ withdrawing from previous association with outsiders (4:4); intimidation (3:6, 14).”¹¹

Though there may have been at this time no generally sanctioned, empire-wide persecution yet, nonetheless the author of 1 Peter was acutely aware that the communities being addressed were suffering as a result of their identity as *παροίκους καὶ παρεπιδήμους* and subject to local harassment, “much the same as any other group which would isolate itself from the larger society and refuse to conform to its social norms. Such persecution could take the forms of official or unofficial local persecutions, probably more local than regional, and more at the initiation of the general populace as the result of a reaction against the life-

style of the Christians.”¹² One motive for such localized hostility may be reflected in 4:3f: “You have already spent enough time doing what the Gentiles like to do... They are surprised that you no longer join them in the same excesses... and so they abuse you.”¹³ This contributing factor may have included the withdrawal from the customary forms of life, thus the accusation that Christians were guilty of “hatred against humankind” and that the Christian religion was “a new and mischievous superstition.”¹⁴

1 Peter appears to say at least two things which pertain to the recipients’ experience of suffering. The first has

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to do with accusations: “If they speak against you as wrongdoers...” (2:12); “When you are abused, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame” (3:16); “They are surprised... they abuse you” (4:4); “If you are reproached for the name of Christ...” (4:14). The second is the issue of being accused before the courts, which can be deduced from the admonition at the close of the letter: “Let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or a mischief maker. Yet if any of you suffers as a Christian...” (4:15f).

Thus, the letter does not address a situation of overt, empire-sanctioned persecution, but rather is written from the perspective of Christian discipleship and witness through “suffering for doing what is right.” 1 Peter

2:21–23 compares in similar terms Jesus’ own experience to the situation of the recipients of the letter: “Christ also suffered... When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten” (2:23). The inference is that the Christian communities should approach their own suffering in the same way as their Lord did. Several sections of the letter speak to this recurring theme, including the exhortation addressed to the *οἰκέται* (“household servants”) in 2:18–25.¹⁵ The passage is one of several exhortations located within what has been widely identified as a typical “household code,” “station code,” or “domestic code” in 2:11–3:12.¹⁶ This section begins with an introduction which urges the “beloved” to “conduct themselves honorably among the Gentiles” (2:11–12), followed by an exhortation concerning submission to authorities (2:13–17), then specific exhortations addressed to household servants (*οἰκέται*, 2:18–25), wives of non-Christian husbands (3:1–6), and a brief section addressed to husbands (3:7), concluding with a general exhortation for the entire community (3:8–12). This “household code” follows the first major section of the letter (1:1–2:10) where, as Elliott has observed,

stress is laid on the distinctive communal identity and the divinely conferred dignity of Christian believers who live within a hostile society as “strangers and resident aliens” (cf. 1:1, 17; 2:11). Through the mercy of God (1:3; 2:10) and faithful response to the gospel (1:12, 25), the “reborn” (1:3, 22) addressees have become “obedient children” (1:14; cf. 2:2) incorporated into the household or family of God (2:4–10). Sanctified by the call of the holy God (1:14–16), and united in faith with “the elect and holy one,” Jesus Christ, they constitute an elect and holy community called to live a distinctly obedient and

holy way of life within an unholy and hostile environment.¹⁷

Following this affirmation of communal identity, the author turns to the conduct of the household of God within the structures of society (2:11–3:12). Here, the community is urged to lead a way of life such that others, “though they malign you, may see your honorable deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation” (2:12). To illustrate this way of life, the author uses “a modified schema” of a traditional “household code.”¹⁸ Several unique features of the passage help us to infer the social setting of the communities addressed by the letter.

First, in contrast to other New Testament household codes where the exhortation of *δοῦλοι* (“slaves”) and *κύριοι* (“masters”) follows that of husbands and wives and of parents and children (Colossians 3:18–4:1; Ephesians 5:22–6:9; 1 Timothy 2:8–6:2; Titus 2:1–10), thereby communicating that “slaves are at the very bottom of the social hierarchy,”¹⁹ here slaves are addressed first and thus given priority of place. Noteworthy also is that the usual term for “slaves” (*δοῦλοι*) in the household codes has been replaced in 1 Peter with the term “household servants” (*οἰκέται*), calling attention to the household (2:5; 4:17) as the focus of the exhortation. Accordingly, the designation “household servants,” rather than “slaves,” belongs to “a larger strategy in which the *οἶκος*, or household, is accentuated as the primary ecclesial metaphor of the letter. The vulnerable condition of these slaves vis-à-vis their master-owners resembles closely the vulnerable condition of the entire Christian community within society, just as their innocent suffering is consistent with the suffering of the faithful.”²⁰ Although “masters” (*δεσπότες*, not *κύριοι*, 2:18) are mentioned, nothing is said of their responsibilities as in other household codes. The attention is focused solely on the condition and conduct of the household servants who, according to the author, and against the usual

regard for slaves, “have a moral character!”²¹ Other household members are addressed in 1 Peter, but only the exhortation of household servants is given an extensive christological basis (2:21–25), namely, that the household servants are to follow the *ὑπογραμμός* (“blueprint or example,” 2:21) of Christ who “also suffered on behalf” of household servants as well as the entire community.²² This christological rationale is comprised of what may be the author’s redaction of an early hymn which draws various quotations from and makes allusions to the Suffering Servant depicted in Isaiah 53.

1 Peter 2:18–25 may be divided into three sections, including the exhortation to submit to masters (2:18)

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with the primary rationale that it is a “credit” (*χάρις*, mentioned twice) before God (2:19–20), and a secondary christological rationale (2:21–25) providing a rather extensive elaboration upon 2:18–20. This second motivation is noticeably theological as it places the sufferings of the household servants, that is, the suffering Christian communities, in the perspective of the sufferings of Christ. Just as Christ was “handing over his case to the one who judges justly” (2:23c), so also it will be a “credit before God” to those household servants “who are doing what is right and suffering” for it (2:20b).

What is stated here concerning the *οἰκέται* applies to the *οἶκος τοῦ θεοῦ* (“household of God”), providing a “blueprint” or christological rationale for the entire household, including:

an indicative basis for the imperatives which follow as well as precede it... As the subordination of servants (2:18–20) illustrates the subordination of all (2:13), so the christological statement in 1 Peter 2:21–25 relates to and expands upon the briefer christological formula in 2:13, “for the Lord’s sake” (*διὰ τὸν κύριον*)... the innocent suffering of righteous servants, like that of all the righteous believers (3:12; 4:18), derives its power and motivation from the vicarious suffering of the Righteous One (3:18), the Servant of God, Jesus Christ (2:21–25).²³

Significantly, the author chooses the section on household servants to present the model for Christian existence. Jesus the servant suffered unjustly and patiently, and having been established in glory, holds out hope and promise to the Christian who suffers for “doing what is right.” “The household codes then serve as a charter for proper Christian conduct among Gentile neighbors in order that all men might ‘live as servants of God’ (2:16).”²⁴

The recurring verb *πάσχω*, used three times in this passage alone, serves as the primary word which links 2:18–20 to 2:21–25, just as it is the experience of “suffering for doing right,” which is stressed throughout the letter as an essential bond uniting believers with their Lord. 1 Peter 2:22–24 describes, through the use of Isaiah 53, the innocent suffering of the obedient Christ and its healing effect. Verse 25 concludes the unit with a shepherd metaphor “depicting the reunion of believers and Lord: those who were once scattered have now been gathered and returned (by God) to their shepherd and guardian.”²⁵

A synthesis of a creedal formula (2:21b), a tissue of allusions to Isaiah 53 and Deuteronomy 21:23 (2:22–24a, e), possibly another creedal formula (2:24c, d), and more allusions to Isaiah 53 (2:25a), have led many to propose the presence of a hymn frag-

ment in this passage.²⁶ On the basis of the linguistic and stylistic features of 1 Peter 2:11–3:12, it appears that the author has used a piece of tradition rooted in Isaiah 53 and Deuteronomy 21:23 to form the authoritative core for the christological rationale, using the “hymnic” material (2:22, 24a, b, c) to elaborate upon a “creedal formula” (21b) and weaving together a cohesive unit by means of his own exegetical reflections on the Isaiah text. In this way, the author effectively provides a motivation for the communities to live by the baptismal call to follow the “blueprint” (2:21) of Christ who suffered for “doing what is right,” “who did not sin” (2:22) but “himself bore up our sins in his body upon the tree” (2:24).²⁷

Here the author has chosen the most insignificant members of the communities, the household servants, to be the examples for everyone else.²⁸ They are urged to “be subject to” their masters, not only the good and gentle ones, but also the “overbearing.” The same verb, *ὑποτάσσω* (“to be subject to”), is used here as in 2:13, and carries the same connotation of urging the slaves to remain responsible and active in the household as part of their mission of witness; but it must be “in all fear” (2:18), *not toward the masters* (2:17; 3:6, 14) *but toward God*. The household servants are to carry out their role in such a way that their primary allegiance is to God (2:16). They are to suffer for “doing what is right” so that their behavior is not determined by the abusive behavior of others but by their Lord who has given them their freedom. “As servants of God, live as free people, yet do not use your freedom as a pretext for evil” (2:16).

The chief concern of the letter is with the conduct of Christians undergoing affliction and suffering; they suffer because that is what happens to Christians.²⁹ Not only does Christ suffer, but so also do his followers. The author reminds the recipients not to be surprised when suffering comes, “as though something strange were happening to you” (4:12). If you follow in

the footprints of Christ, suffering will follow you. “For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you” (2:21). It is not only evildoers who suffer the consequences of their actions; it is also people who do right that “suffer the consequences.” In this letter, “Peter” refers to himself as a “witness (*μάρτυς*) to the sufferings of Christ” (5:1). To be a Christian is to be a witness to the suffering of Christ and to enter into that “suffering for doing what is right.” “But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ’s sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed” (4:13). ✠

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Notes

1. John H. Elliott coined this phrase; see, for example, “The Rehabilitation of an Exegetical Step-Child: 1 Peter in Recent Research,” *JBL* 95 (1976): 243–54.

2. John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles*, trans. John Owen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 89.

3. See 1:15; 2:9, 21; 3:9; 5:10.

4. Note that a form of *πάσχω* occurs twelve times in 1 Peter (2:19, 20, 21, 23; 3:14, 17, 18; 4:1 [two times in this verse], 15, 19; 5:10), while there are only thirty occurrences of the verb in the entire New Testament. Melito of Sardis (flourished ca. 160–170 AD), in his paschal homily *Peri Pascha* (On the Passover), makes effective use of *πάσχα* (an Aramaic form of *פסח*) and the verb *πάσχω*. “What is the Passover? Indeed its name is derived from that event—‘to celebrate the Passover’ (*τὸ πασχεῖν*) is derived from ‘to suffer’ (*τοῦ παθεῖν*). Therefore, learn who is the sufferer, and who is he who suffers along with the sufferer” (46–47a). This feature, together with others, has led some to conclude that 1 Peter was originally an Easter liturgy or baptismal homily that was reshaped by the author (see F. L. Cross, *1 Peter: A Paschal Liturgy* [London: Mowbray, 1954]). The overwhelming majority of recent commentators has found such a proposal untenable.

5. E.g., 1:6; 4:12, 19; 5:9, 12.

6. In 1 Peter 2:11 the recipients are designated *παροίκους καὶ παρεπίδημους* (“resident aliens and visiting strangers”). The latter of these two related words, *παρεπίδημοι*, emphasizes the initial designation of the addressees in the opening salutation: “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect visiting strangers (*παρεπίδημοις*) of the diaspora” (1 Peter

1:1a). Moreover, the noun, *παροιμία* (“alien residence”), describes the circumstances of the readers again in 1 Peter 1:17: “And if you call upon as Father the one who impartially judges according to the work of each, in fear conduct yourselves with reverence throughout the time of your alien residence (*παροιμία*).” The terms *παροίκιοι* and *παρεπίδημοι* identify respectively the addressees of 1 Peter in general terms as resident aliens and visiting strangers living in the territories of Asia Minor. “The language conveys both socio-political as well as historical-religious connotations as applied by the author of 1 Peter. Here, the terminology which is used to identify the recipients as *παροίκους καὶ παρεπίδημους* appears to have been derived from the experience of the Jewish Diaspora, thereby creating a link between 1 Peter’s recipients and the status of the dispersed Jewish communities to which there is an analogous situation of social and religious estrangement and alienation” (John H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981], 35). Although persons who were either *παροίκιοι* or *παρεπίδημοι* were subject to both legal and social restrictions, the Greek *παροίκος* and Latin *peregrinus* were the conventional terms used to designate the social and political status of the noncitizen. As resident and transient aliens they shared the same vulnerability as the many thousands of Jewish and other ethnic *παροίκιοι* of Asia Minor and throughout the Roman Empire. The issues and struggles surrounding the *παροίκιοι* were significant factors contributing to the political and social tensions which characterized the history of the eastern provinces.

7. Efforts to link 1 Peter with Roman persecutions of Christianity have been abandoned by most recent scholars who emphasize local harassment as the cause of the communities’ suffering. As Elliott points out in his masterful commentary, “historians have long noted [that] the first worldwide persecution of Christians officially undertaken by Rome did not occur until the persecution initiated by Decius (249–251 CE) in 250 CE (on the Decian persecution, see Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.39.1–42.6; 7.1.; *Sib. or.* 13:81–88). Prior to this time, anti-Christian actions against individuals or groups were sporadic, generally mob-incited, locally restricted, and unsystematic in nature,” in John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible 37B (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 98. Elsewhere Elliott seeks the causes and features of the conflict in 1 Peter in the social conditions which were characteristic of the interaction of Christians and society. He finds that it is more likely that the conflict was local and social rather than due to direct confrontation with Rome, in *A Home for the Homeless*, 62. See also Paul J. Achtemeier in *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter*, ed. E. J. Epp (Minneapolis: Hermeneia, 1996), 28–34, who

provides an extensive analysis of the policy of the Romans toward the practice of non-Roman religions by non-Roman people. Achtemeier understands this policy to be generally one of tolerance in which foreign religious customs were permitted as long as those customs were ancestral and did not pose a threat to Rome.

8. See Mark 13:9–13 and parallels; Matthew 5:11–12; Luke 6:22–23; Matthew 10:17–22; Luke 12:11–12; 21:12–17; Acts 18:1–11; 23:23–26:32.

9. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 103.

10. See Matthew 5:11–12, 10:17–23; Mark 10:30; Luke 11:49, 21:12; John 15:20; Acts 9:4–5, 13:50, 22:4; Romans 8:35; 1 Corinthians 4:12, 15:9; 2 Corinthians 12:10; Galatians 1:13, 23; 2 Thessalonians 1:4.

11. Elliott, 100–101.

12. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 35.

13. Leonard Goppelt observes that an essential principle of life in Hellenistic society was conforming tolerance, that is, reciprocal acceptance, especially in religion and morals. He notes that “Judaism sought to establish the absolute claim of its religion during the Maccabean period and had opposed this principle in bitter confrontations with Hellenistic rulers.” *A Commentary on First Peter*, ed. F. Hahn, trans. J. E. Alsup (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 40.

14. Suetonius, *Nero* 16 (LCL 2, 111).

15. Slavery in antiquity should not be confused with race-slavery in which proponents abused biblical texts like this one to justify the brutalization of human beings. For an excellent discussion of slavery in the Roman Empire, see Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 188–204; also, James Albert Harrill, *Slaves in the New Testament: Literary, Social and Moral Dimensions* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2006).

16. Goppelt identifies the unit as a “station code,” *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 162–65. Others identify the peculiarities of this “household code.” See John H. Elliott, “Backward and Forward ‘In His Steps’: Following Jesus from Rome to Raymond and Beyond. The Tradition, Redaction, and Reception of 1 Peter 2:18–25,” in *Discipleship in the New Testament*, ed. F. F. Segovia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 184–208. Still others disqualify it from the genre as typified in Colossians 3:18–4:1; Ephesians 5:22–6:9; 1 Timothy 2:1, 2:8–15, 6:1–2; Titus 2:1–10. See Edgar Krentz, “Order in the ‘House’ of God: The *Hausstafel* in 1 Peter 2:11–3:12,” in *Common Life in the Early Church: Essays Honoring Grayden F. Snyder*, ed. J. V. Hills, et. al. (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International), 279–85.

17. Elliott, “Backward and Forward,” 186.

18. Elliott, 186. The phrase which serves as a linking device, *εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ ἐκλήθητε*, in 2:21 is repeated in 3:9, namely, “for to this

you have been called.” The clause apparently serves as a frame integrating the exhortations addressed specifically to household slaves, wives, husbands, and generally to the community in 2:18–3:12.

19. Krentz, “Order,” 282.

20. Elliott, “Backward and Forward,” 188.

21. Krentz, “Order,” 283.

22. The term *ὑπογραμμός* is found in 2 Maccabees 2:28 where it refers to the sketching of the “outlines” of a story without regard to the details presented by the original author. According to Plato (*Prot.* 326), as well as Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* 5.8.49), the word originally connoted an outline tracing of letters to be copied by children learning the alphabet. The word also appears in 1 Clement referring to Paul as the greatest *ὑπογραμμός* of endurance (5.7), of Christ who is a *ὑπογραμμός* of humility (16.17), and again of Christ as a *ὑπογραμμός* of those who perform good works (33.8). From this, without losing its classroom associations, it came to mean a blueprint, pattern, or model in general. It could refer to a writing or a drawing which was placed under another sheet to be retraced on the upper sheet by the student. Another possibility is the suggestion that the reference is to an artist’s sketch, the details of which were to be filled in by others. It would appear that the term as used in 1 Peter does not indicate that household servants and community are to precisely imitate Christ’s suffering as such, but rather points to the important characteristics of Christ’s sufferings which are to serve as a “blueprint” for them.

23. Elliott, “Backward and Forward,” 188.

24. Richard Earl, “The Functional Christology of First Peter,” in *Perspectives on First Peter*, ed. Charles H. Talbert, NABPR Special Studies Series 9 (Macon: Mercer, 1986), 137.

25. Elliott, “Backward and Forward,” 190.

26. The terminology is borrowed from W. L. Schutter, *Hermeneutic and Composition in 1 Peter*, SWUZNT 2 (Tübingen: Mohr/Paul Siebeck, 1989), 65. Cf. 1 Peter 1:18–21, 3:18–22 for other possible occurrences of traditional materials. Several features of the passage indicate that it may be traditional material which the author has used to advance his exhortation to those who innocently suffer, relating the significance of Christ’s suffering. First, the causal *ὅτι* in 2:21; second, the fourfold use of the relative pronoun *ὅς* in 2:22, 23, 24a, and 24c (in the genitive); and third, the fluctuating pronouns from the second person plural in 2:21 to the first person plural in 24a–b back to the second person in 24c–25; fourth, an address which expands to a wider audience than slaves, thus showing detachment from the present context. One might also add that there seems to be a heightened tone and rhythmic parallelisms in 2:22 and 23a.

27. References in the New Testament to Isaiah 53 tend to be obscure, for example in Mark 10:45 and Hebrews 9:28, or highly fragmentary as in Romans 4:25a. The passion accounts in Matthew and Mark seem even to ignore Isaiah 53 in favor of Psalm 22. Nor are these verses in 1 Peter similar to the three christological hymns most widely recognized (cf. 1 Timothy 3:16; Philippians 1:6–11; Colossians 1:15–20); none of them reflects specific Old Testament passages, and all, unlike this passage in 1 Peter, include references to glory as well as suffering. What is certain in this passage is that the author makes use of Isaiah 53, either by direct citation (2:22), by indirect citation where several verb similarities are preserved (2:24–25), or by allusion where there are no verbal similarities as such, but where similar themes are present (2:23). The indirect citation in 1 Peter 2:24a–b seems to be a combination of several passages, namely, Isaiah 53:4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12; in verses 4 and 5, the phrase *τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἡμῶν*, while in 2:12 the reference is to *ἀμαρτίας πολλῶν ἢ αὐτῶν*. The return to the second person plural in 1 Peter 2:24c may be due to the understanding of *μῶλωψ* (“bruise or wound”) as it is applied to slaves who suffer at the hands of their masters. “Whereas *μῶλωπι* in an address to slaves would ordinarily be likely to evoke associations with routine punishment, when uttered in the same breath with crucifixion, it must connote primarily one and one thing alone, the horrific preliminary to crucifixion customary at the time, scourging. So it seems that the author of 1 Peter has found a double meaning concealed in Isaiah’s *μῶλωπι*, one that is perfectly suited for the circumstances of slaves because it applies to the entire range of punishment which they, more than anyone else, had good reason to fear. He uses *μῶλωπι* in conjunction with his brusque return to a second person address to slaves to remind them forcibly that Jesus’ identification with them in their suffering could not have been more concrete and complete, short of literally being sold into slavery, so that his example is binding even upon them.” Schutter, 143.

28. See Matthew 11:11 where Jesus says, “Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

29. That this commitment would involve suffering seems to have formed part of the paraneic tradition of the early church, possibly based upon the words of Christ in Matthew 10:28 and 38; 16:24; and Luke 12:4, 14:27 (cf. Acts 14:22). In addition to the many references in 1 Peter itself, 1 Thessalonians 3:3ff affirms that afflictions are inevitable for Christians (cf. 1 Thessalonians 2:14 and Hebrews 10:32ff).