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Taylor Halverson

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READING 1 PETER INTERTEXTUALLY WITH SELECT PASSAGES FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

Taylor Halverson

Abstract: Literary studies, especially intertextual approaches, are relevant for exploring how scriptures are constructed and interpreted. Reading 1 Peter intertextually reveals the thoughtful way that Peter selected suitable, relevant, and applicable Old Testament scripture to encourage faithfulness for his audience. Peter draws from Isaiah 40 in 1 Peter 1:24-25 to preach comfort; Isaiah 40 is one of the hallmark Old Testament chapters focused on comfort. 1 Peter 2:2-3 quotes from Psalm 34 which is a hymn dedicated to the salvation that God's servants experience when they faithfully turn to Him during times of distress and persecution. And when 1 Peter 1:16 invites people to be holy, that call is grounded in the meaning and significance of a portion of the ancient Israelite Holiness Code, Leviticus 19. In summary, Peter demonstrates his scriptural mastery by dipping his pen into some of the most appropriate Old Testament passages available to support his message of faith and encouragement to his audience.

Thesis

The New Testament book of 1 Peter is replete with scriptural quotations and intertextuality.¹ Thoughtful connections between the text of 1 Peter and the Old Testament point to Peter's² familiarity with the Old Testament text.³ Additionally, Peter extracts these quotes from Old Testament passages that share substantive thematic support to his larger objectives of encouraging early Christians to trust in the Lord through faith and righteousness. Reading 1 Peter intertextually with the Old Testament allusions reinforces Peter's message.

Perhaps Peter's abilities to use existing scripture to make new scripture can be likened to Elder Neal A. Maxwell's gift for speaking and writing with eloquence. At times, Elder Maxwell's every sentence is laced with scriptural thought and terminology, not as a slavish devotion to the order and structure of scriptural passages but rather as the full measure of God's revealed word absorbed and renewed in remarkably fresh and faithful ways. In one example, he says "Brethren, there are clusters of memories embedded in each of your lives. And these can help us to

‘remember how merciful the Lord hath been’ (Moroni 10:3). He certainly has been to me!²⁴ By creating an allusion to the Book of Mormon passage in his sermon, Elder Maxwell encourages his audience to remember the mercies of the Lord in their lives by simultaneously calling upon their own personal memories while activating their memory of the words of prophets who recorded the merciful works of the Lord. Peter uses similar strategies to encourage the faithful: his words both incorporate old scripture while inviting his audience to reflect on the earlier scripture’s message. Laced together, Peter’s new text and the scripture of the past create expanded networks of meaning, significance, and application in the lives of those who read intertextually.

In this essay, I first offer a brief context for 1 Peter. Second, I share some methodological observations on reading intertextually. Third, I present intertextual readings for three passages drawn from 1 Peter that quote specific Old Testament verses. What I hope to demonstrate in these readings is the thoughtful manner in which Peter selected these specific Old Testament passages to support his call for Christians to be faithful to God despite the challenges and hardships they faced. Reading the Old Testament quotes Peter uses in the context of their original narrative units helps us see how these texts provided extended literary support for the message of Peter’s text. Read in this way, each of the quotations taken from the Old Testament seems to be embedded in a surrounding literary context that reinforce Peter’s core message to encourage faith. Literary studies, especially intertextual approaches, are relevant for exploring how scriptures are constructed and interpreted.

Context for 1 Peter

The opening passages of 1 Peter provide a clear statement of his purposes for writing:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith — being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire — may be found to

result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.” (1 Peter 1:3–7, NRSV translation)⁵

Peter seeks to encourage Christians who were young in the faith. Though we do not have final confirming evidence for the makeup of his audience, they were likely pagan converts who were not thoroughly familiar with Israel’s scriptures and literary tradition. Nevertheless, seeking to encourage the flock through scripture, Peter calls upon the witness and words of Old Testament passages to underline, illustrate, or expand upon an idea.⁶ Isaiah is a favorite source text in 1 Peter.⁷

Methodology

Literary studies are those that focus on how written texts are read, understood, and interpreted.⁸ One category of literary studies is intertextuality, which “is the dialogue between two or more independent texts”⁹ and is also “the interaction between writers, their texts, and other texts.”¹⁰ One form of intertextuality is literary allusion, which “is specifically a rhetorical device used by writers to give new or additional meaning to their texts”¹¹ by evoking another text. Thus, in order to read the two different texts in a mutually reinforcing way — to read them intertextually — a reader must (1) recognize a quote or allusion in the local text, (2) identify the source of the quoted or alluded text, and (3) then read the local text in light of the quoted or alluded text.¹²

It is important to recognize when engaged in reading intertextually or interpreting intertextually that intertextuality is not about one-to-one correspondences. Intertextuality is more thematic and allusive; it is more playful. Intertextuality intends to broaden interpretive possibilities instead of confining or constraining interpretation to one single normative idea. Because Peter made extensive use of the Old Testament in his epistle, literary and intertextual studies shed light on 1 Peter’s scripture reading and interpretive strategies.¹³ These strategies can help us capture additional meaning and significance that we might miss if we do not understand literary allusion.

Blueprint for Approach

I offer three examples to illustrate reading 1 Peter intertextually in connection with Old Testament sources (1 Peter 1:24–25 and Isaiah 40; 1 Peter 2:2–3 and Psalm 34; and 1 Peter 1:16 and Leviticus 19). These intertextual readings are embedded in chapters that strengthen and support the overall message of 1 Peter.

First, I present a text from 1 Peter together with the quoted earlier scripture that creates the sign of the allusion to texts surrounding the Old Testament quote. Second, I provide perspective on the original context of the earlier scripture. Finally, I illustrate how reading the text from 1 Peter in light of the quoted or alluded Old Testament scriptures enhances or supports the meaning of Peter’s overarching message.

What is the Septuagint (LXX) and Why Does it Matter in Our Study of 1 Peter?

When Peter quotes from the Old Testament, he generally makes use of the Greek Septuagint translation (usually abbreviated LXX) of the Old Testament instead of using the Hebrew Bible.¹⁴ The LXX was an ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible made by Jews living in the Hellenized ancient Near East.¹⁵ Due to Alexander the Great’s conquest of the ancient Near East (about 330–320 BC), Greek became the primary language for many people in the region.¹⁶ Therefore, those who wished to read the Old Testament needed a Greek translation, just like English speakers today rely on English translations of the Old Testament scriptures instead of the original Hebrew.¹⁷ Similarly, readers today who wish for the most precise form of textuality between 1 Peter and the Old Testament should work primarily first with the LXX version before working with the Hebrew version.

Examples to Illustrate 1 Peter’s Intertextual Use of Old Testament Scriptures

1 Peter 1:24-25 Quotes Isaiah 40:6-8; and Reading in Context of Isaiah 40

1 Peter 1:24-25 NRSV	Isaiah 40:6-8 NETS¹⁸
<p>For “All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord endures forever.” That word is the good news that was announced to you.</p>	<p>A voice of one saying, “Cry out!” And I said, “What shall I cry?” All flesh is grass; all the glory of man is like the flower of grass. The grass has withered, and the flower has fallen, but the word of our God remains forever.¹⁹</p>

For an audience that may feel besieged and persecuted for their new beliefs, the context Isaiah passages preserve are beautiful and meaningful thoughts. When rereading the entirety of Isaiah 40, its relevance to Peter's message emerges. Peter has tapped into the broad matrix of meaning of Isaiah 40,²⁰ which has immediate illustrative value for his writing purposes — to build trust in God as temporal and spiritual savior. Peter's message is enmeshed in the context of an entire chapter (Isaiah 40) devoted to comforting and encouraging the people of God.

Significantly, Isaiah 40 represents the trophy,²¹ the turning point where Isaiah transitions from a historical recounting of troubles between Judah and Assyria in Isaiah 36–39 and the series of prophetic calls to repentance in the chapters preceding the historical section (Isaiah 1–35) to speaking in grand words and resounding themes of peace, comfort, and salvation in the mercies of the Lord in Isaiah 40–66. Many scholars have noted the striking tone of this portion of the book of Isaiah (Isaiah 40–66) which “conveys words of consolation and encouragement to his oppressed compatriots in Babylon and promises them salvation and redemption from their captors.”²²

To underscore this significant theme, the opening verse of Isaiah 40–66, Isaiah 40:1, begins with “Comfort, O comfort my people, says God.”²³ Just as Isaiah speaks comfort to besieged and afflicted Jerusalem, the holy city of God's chosen people, so too does Peter seek to calm and comfort the early Christians through trust in God.²⁴

Reading further in Isaiah 40, several insights arise. Isaiah 40:10–20 says that God is in charge, that no nation can overcome the power and purposes of God, that there are no other gods like him. This passage may have been applicable to early Christians living in the Roman Empire where there may have been growing social expectations that to be a Roman was to accept the emperor as a god. Yet for Christians who accepted the Lord as their God, their pagan neighbors and rulers may have suspected their allegiance to Rome. Such circumstances could have led to problems and suffering for the Christians.

Isaiah 40:21–31 encourages the faithful to remember and recognize that God has no equal and that “those who wait for God shall change their strength; they shall grow wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not hunger” (v. 31). The closing promise of Isaiah 40 is quite fitting for the circumstances that the early Christians encountered as they converted from pagan Roman religions to the new upstart and hence socially suspect religion of Christianity. Given the

thrust of just a few brief thematic connections between 1 Peter and Isaiah 40 identified here, it is no wonder that Peter was drawn to Isaiah 40 (and likely other sections of Isaiah 40–66).²⁵ The content of that chapter is a seedbed for encouraging words that could strengthen early Christians who faced all sorts of trouble and discouragement.

1 Peter 2:2-3 Quotes Psalm 34:8; and Reading in Context of Psalm 34²⁶

1 Peter 2:2-3 NRSV	Psalm 34:8 NETS²⁷
Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation — if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.	O taste, and see that the Lord is kind; happy the man who hopes in him.

In 1 Peter 2:2–3 the author speaks of the importance of seeking pure, spiritual milk. Peter then quotes Psalm 34:8 which states in part, “O taste, and see that the Lord is kind.”²⁸ The conceptual connection between 1 Peter 2:2–3 and Psalm 34:8 is tantalizing — those who drink the pure milk have tasted of the Lord’s atonement (compare to 1 Nephi 8). Additionally, what further illustrates the author’s ability in making a sustained argument is the context from which he draws his quotes.

Psalm 34 is attributed to David, who is in trouble and distress as a stranger and an outcast both from his own homeland and that of his enemies. David is literally living in a “no-man’s land” in the borderlands between Israel and Philistia. The superscription for this psalm (the contextualizing text at the head of the psalm) identifies the setting: David had been recently thrust out of the presence of king Abimelech of Gath of the Philistines. But why was David living among the Philistines, the historical enemies of the Israelites? 1 Samuel 21, 27–29 provide the most plausible answers. David served in Saul’s court, but Saul’s jealousy and murderous intent against David caused David to flee his native land to seek refuge as a resident alien, or stranger, among the Philistines. In one version of the story (1 Samuel 27–29), David served as a loyal and appreciated mercenary to king Achish of Gath. Eventually, and reluctantly, Achish had to send David away when the Philistines and Israelites were about to engage in war together. In the other version of the story (1 Samuel 21), as soon as David arrived in Gath, thinking he would find refuge from Saul, he found animosity and threats from the

Philistines (David was after all an Israelite, the enemies of the Philistines). So he feigned madness and then fled the presence of Achish.

Now a curious thing has occurred. The superscription to Psalm 34 says that David fled from Abimelech. Yet the stories in 1 Samuel speak of Achish. Did David flee from two different kings? It doesn't seem likely. Two alternatives are plausible. First, "Abimelech" (a name which likely means "Father of the king" in Hebrew)²⁹ could have been another name or title for Achish. If Achish had a son designated to eventually ascend the throne as king, which was a commonplace in the ancient Near East, that would make Achish an "Abimelech," the father of the king. A second possibility is that the author of Psalms 34 changed the name from Achish to Abimelech so that readers of Psalm 34 would read it intertextually with Genesis 20:1–16 and Genesis 26:1–33. Why might a change like this be made? In those chapters Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 20) and Isaac and Rebecca (Genesis 26) were living as strangers and resident aliens in a foreign land (what was later to become the land of Israel, although when they first arrived, it was a foreign land to them). There was a king named Abimelech who took Sarah from Abraham and Rebecca from Isaac. This was a source of deep distress and struggle for the ancient patriarchs and their wives. One could even say Sarah and Abraham exercised faith, perspective, and commitment to God through righteous living as a way to endure and overcome oppression or persecution.

These are important narratives that ancient writers return to regularly, creating allusions across scriptures that invite multi-layered intertextual reading: For 1 Peter to be read in light of Psalm 34 as related to 1 Samuel 21, 27–29 and Genesis 20 and 26. For example, if we read these scriptures intertextually, we see David as repeating the steps of Abraham and that Peter's audience should likewise follow the faithful examples of David and Abraham. Furthermore, such an intertextual reading means that Psalm 34 is more than just a simple hymn of praise to God. Psalm 34 is a hymnic retelling and representation of God's faithful servants that later readers could seek to emulate.

Significantly, all of these scriptures (Psalm 34; 1 Samuel 21, 27–29; Genesis 20, 26) deal with a chosen servant of God who is living as a stranger or sojourner in a land and is dealing with some distress that is brought on because of their neighbors who do not treat them with full respect and honor. In all of these scriptures, the chosen ones are really at the mercy of the surrounding peoples and their cultures and customs. In all of these cases, God creates a way for the distress to be resolved and temporal salvation (symbolizing eventual spiritual salvation) to be

delivered to the faithful chosen ones. This reading of the text suggests that Peter was writing to an audience who were potentially dealing with these same kinds of issues, underscoring why such an appeal to these scriptural traditions is viable. If Peter did read these Old Testament passages intertextually in the way suggested, this speaks of Peter's competent scriptural understanding.

Perhaps Peter calls to memory Abraham, Isaac, and David, three of the most important heroes in the Israelite tradition because they themselves were strangers and resident aliens, they were treated poorly by their neighbors, and they had core aspects of their family and the promises of God potentially fall into jeopardy. These heroes remained steadfast, trusted in the Lord, lived the laws, and were morally upright,³⁰ so no one had a reason to accuse them of anything (which may be allusively related to 1 Peter's admonitions in 2:11–17; 3:12–17; 4:12–19). After a trial of faith and righteousness for these biblical heroes, God eventually fulfilled his promises to them. The moral character of these biblical heroes and the positive outcome from God to them recorded in the Bible may have influenced Peter to tap into these stories, intertextually, so as to encourage faithfulness among distressed Christians.

The following passages from Psalm 34 show David's confidence in God's care and concern. Note that we can substitute David's name for any other individual or group who seeks God's sustenance in times of trial:

- God will deliver David (or Peter's audience) from fear. "An angel of the Lord will encamp around those who fear him and will rescue them" (Psalm 34:7).³¹
- God will save David (or Peter's audience) from every trouble. "I sought the Lord, and he hearkened to me, and from all my sojournings [being a stranger or resident alien in a foreign land] he rescued me" (Psalm 34:4).
- God will protect those who worship him (whether David or Peter's audience). "The righteous cried, and the Lord listened to them, and from all their afflictions he rescued them" (Psalm 34:17).
- God will provide for all the needs of those who worship him (whether David or Peter's audience). "The Lord will redeem his slaves' souls, and none of those who hope in him will go wrong" (Psalm 34:22).
- It is noteworthy that the LXX reading of Psalm 34:22 uses the Greek word *doulos*, which is usually translated as "servant"

in the KJV, but is more appropriately translated as “slave.” In the Greco-Roman world, slaves were an important cog in the economic and social order. Furthermore, we know that they also constituted some of the earliest Christians. Therefore, 1 Peter alluding to Psalm 34:22 and its reference to slaves being redeemed by the Lord would be appropriate since slaves were unquestionably part of Peter’s audience (see 1 Peter 2:18–25).

Peter only quotes a small portion of Psalm 34. However, the entire psalm seems to reverberate with consolation, comfort, and encouragement to trust the Lord no matter the challenging circumstances. This significant Old Testament message with its resounding call to faithfulness in the face of difficulty is an excellent source text employed by Peter to encourage trust in the Lord.

**1 Peter 1:16 Quotes Leviticus 19:2;
and Reading in Context of Leviticus 19**³²

1 Peter 1:16 NRSV	Leviticus 19:2 NETS ³³
For it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”	Speak to the congregation of the sons of Israel, and you shall say to them: You shall be holy, for I am holy, the Lord your God.

We’ll explore one final example of how Peter selects a single Old Testament quote from within a larger matrix of passages that reinforce the quoted text. In 1 Peter 1:16 he calls upon the early Christians to be holy like God, quoting from Leviticus 19:2. This verse is part of a subsection of 1 Peter (1:13–21) that has been summarized by one scholar as dealing with “hope and holy conduct of the children of God.”³⁴

Leviticus 19 focuses on the need for ritual and moral holiness, the basic building blocks for creating a just society and for establishing a prosperous relationship with fellowmen and God. Leviticus 19 is part of the larger “Holiness Code” that scholars have identified as a major subsection of the book of Leviticus.³⁵ In fact, Leviticus 19 is considered to be “the kernel of the Law” and that all “the essentials of the Torah ... are summarized therein.”³⁶ That is, if one only had a single chapter from the Law (also called the Torah, the Pentateuch, or the Five Books of Moses) to choose from for moral guidance, Leviticus 19 would be the most encompassing and representative chapter of the entire Law.³⁷ In 1

Peter 2:13–3:9, Peter delivers a “household code” which may be functionally analogous to the “Holiness Code” of Leviticus.³⁸ The “household code” of 1 Peter establishes for Christians the expectations for living within the political and social order of their society and within their households without having to compromise their commitment to Christ.

Reading 1 Peter and Leviticus 19 intertextually, one sees that the themes in 1 Peter are echoed in Leviticus 19. Peter is seeking for his people to be holy, even in the face of trials and troubles. As a new people born into a community of brotherhood through baptism, God expected them to live after the manner of holiness. Peter provides practical advice and moral guidance for these early Christians living within the Roman Empire on how to achieve this holiness. The intertext created by this quotation in 1 Peter makes accessible, to those willing to explore further, the memory and morality of Leviticus 19 by quoting just one verse (Leviticus 19:2). In this way, he provides structure and additional encouragement to Christians on how they should practice holy living.

Leviticus 19 begins with a call from God for the people to be holy as He is holy. God then details many of the ways in which the people of Israel must practice holiness. Elements for comparing 1 Peter and Leviticus 19 are included in the following pages. Select passages from Leviticus 19 are placed centered in bold; these are calls to action for Israel to demonstrate holiness. Below the bold centered passages from Leviticus 19 are my suggestions of potentially related passages in 1 Peter. The connections are not always a one-to-one correspondence; sometimes the thematic connection between one passage in Leviticus 19 and another passage in 1 Peter is based on a broader conceptual link. Nevertheless, the totality of the interconnections should demonstrate how prevalent the message of Leviticus 19 — be holy as God is holy — seems to be intertextually laced into 1 Peter.

Passages From Leviticus 19 (LXX English Translation) and Thematically Related Passages in 1 Peter (NRSV)

Leviticus 19:11 You shall not steal.

1 Peter 2:12 Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may be see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge.

1 Peter 4:15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even as a mischief maker.

Leviticus 19:11 You shall not deal falsely.

Leviticus 19:11 You shall not falsely accuse your neighbor

1 Peter 2:1 Rid yourselves, therefore, of all malice, and all guile, insincerity, envy, and all slander.

1 Peter 2:12 Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge.

1 Peter 3:10–11 For “Those who desire life and desire to see good days, let them keep their tongues from evil and their lips from speaking deceit; let them turn away from evil and do good; let them seek peace and pursue it.”

1 Peter 3:13–14 Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated.

1 Peter 4:15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even as a mischief maker.

Leviticus 19:12 You shall not profane the name of your God.

1 Peter 2:17 Honor everyone. Love the family of believers. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

**Leviticus 19:13 You shall not act unjustly
towards your neighbor.**

1 Peter 2:12 Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge.

1 Peter 2:17 Honor everyone. Love the family of believers. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

1 Peter 3:8–9 Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary,

repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called — that you might inherit a blessing.

1 Peter 3:13-14 Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated.

1 Peter 4:2–3 So as to live for the rest of your earthly life no longer by human desires but by the will of God. You have already spent enough time in doing what the Gentiles like to do, living in licentiousness, passions, drunkenness, revels, carousing, and lawless idolatry.

1 Peter 4:15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even as a mischief maker.

1 Peter 5:5 In the same way, you who are younger must accept the authority of the elders. And all of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

Leviticus 19:1.3 You shall not plunder

1 Peter 2:12 Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge.

1 Peter 4:15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even as a mischief maker.

Leviticus 19:13 The wages of a day laborer shall not rest overnight with you until morning

1 Peter 2:12 Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge.

1 Peter 4:4 They are surprised that you no longer join them in the same excesses of dissipation, and so they blaspheme.

Leviticus 19:14 You shall not speak badly of the deaf and put an obstacle before the blind.

1 Peter 2:1 Rid yourselves, therefore, of all malice, and all guile, insincerity, envy, and all slander.

1 Peter 2:12 Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge.

1 Peter 4:15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even as a mischief maker.

Leviticus 19:14 You shall fear the Lord.

1 Peter 3:14 But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated.

Leviticus 19:15 You shall not do something unjust in judgment.

1 Peter 2:12 Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge.

1 Peter 4:15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even as a mischief maker.

Leviticus 19:15 With justice you shall judge your neighbor.

1 Peter 2:12 Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge.

1 Peter 4:15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even as a mischief maker.

**Leviticus 19:16 You shall not go around in deceit
among your nation.**

1 Peter 2:1 Rid yourselves, therefore, of all malice, and all guile, insincerity, envy, and all slander.

1 Peter 2:12 Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge.

1 Peter 2:16 As servants of God, live as free people, yet do not use your freedom as a pretext for evil.

1 Peter 3:10–11 For “Those who desire life and desire to see good days, let them keep their tongues from evil and their lips from speaking deceit; let them turn away from evil and do good; let them seek peace and pursue it.”

1 Peter 4:15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even as a mischief maker.

**Leviticus 19:16 You shall not conspire
against the blood of your neighbor.**

1 Peter 2:12 Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge.

1 Peter 4:14 If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you.

Leviticus 19:17 You shall not hate in your mind your kin.

1 Peter 1:22 Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart.

1 Peter 2:12 Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge.

1 Peter 3:8–9 Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called — that you might inherit a blessing.

1 Peter 3:13–14 Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated.

1 Peter 4:15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even as a mischief maker.

Leviticus 19:17 In reproof you shall reprove your neighbor, and you shall not assume guilt because of him.

1 Peter 2:12 Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge.

1 Peter 4:15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even as a mischief maker.

Leviticus 19:18 And your own hand shall not take vengeance.

1 Peter 2:12 Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge.

1 Peter 3:9 Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called — that you might inherit a blessing.

1 Peter 3:13–14 Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated.

1 Peter 4:15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even as a mischief maker.

**Leviticus 19:18 And you shall not be angry
against the sons of your people.**

1 Peter 2:1 Rid yourselves, therefore, of all malice, and all guile, insincerity, envy, and all slander.

1 Peter 2:12 Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge.

1 Peter 4:14 If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you.

Leviticus 19:18 And you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

1 Peter 1:22 Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart.

1 Peter 2:17 Honor everyone. Love the family of believers. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

1 Peter 3:8–9 Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called — that you might inherit a blessing.

1 Peter 4:8–10 Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaining. Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.

1 Peter 5:5 In the same way, you who are younger must accept the authority of the elders. And all of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

Leviticus 19:26 And you shall not practice ornithomancy or divination by means of birds.

1 Peter 1:14 Like obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires that you formerly had in ignorance.

1 Peter 4:2–3 So as to live for the rest of your earthly life no longer by human desires but by the will of God. You have already spent enough time in doing what the Gentiles like to do, living in licentiousness, passions, drunkenness, revels, carousing, and lawless idolatry.

Leviticus 19:28 And you shall not make any incisions in your body for a soul and make any tattooed characters upon you.

1 Peter 4:2 So as to live for the rest of your earthly life no longer by human desires but by the will of God. You have already spent enough time in doing what the Gentiles like to do, living in licentiousness, passions, drunkenness, revels, carousing, and lawless idolatry.

Leviticus 19:29 Do not profane your daughter by making her commit fornication, and the land will not fornicate.

1 Peter 4:2–3 So as to live for the rest of your earthly life no longer by human desires but by the will of God. You have already spent enough time in doing what the Gentiles like to do, living in licentiousness, passions, drunkenness, revels, carousing, and lawless idolatry.

Leviticus 19:30 You shall keep my Sabbaths and be respectful of my sanctuaries.

1 Peter 2:11 Beloved, I urge you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul.

Leviticus 19:31 You shall not follow after ventriloquists, and you shall not attach yourselves to enchanters, to be thoroughly polluted by them.

1 Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

1 Peter 2:12 Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge.

1 Peter 2:17 Honor everyone. Love the family of believers. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

Leviticus 19:33–34 (KJV) And if a stranger [resident alien] sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

1 Peter 1:22 Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart.

1 Peter 2:11–12 Beloved, I urge you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul. Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge.

1 Peter 2:17 Honor everyone. Love the family of believers. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

1 Peter 3:8–9 Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called — that you might inherit a blessing.

1 Peter 4:8–10 Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to

one another without complaining. Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.

Leviticus 19:35 You shall not do what is unjust in judgment in measures and in standard weights and in balances.

1 Peter 2:1 Rid yourselves, therefore, of all malice, and all guile, insincerity, envy, and all slander.

1 Peter 4:15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even as a mischief maker.

Leviticus 19:36 You shall have just balances and just standard weights.

1 Peter 2:1 Rid yourselves, therefore, of all malice, and all guile, insincerity, envy, and all slander.

1 Peter 2:12 Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge.

Leviticus 19:37 And you shall keep my entire law and all my ordinances, and you shall do them; it is I who am the Lord your God.

1 Peter 1:16 For it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

The extensiveness of the references suggests that Peter understands the thrust and purpose of Leviticus 19. By quoting Leviticus 19:2, 1 Peter may invite an intertextual reading of his epistle with Leviticus 19, to read these two documents in companionship for mutual benefit, understanding, and support, though, to be clear, not to encourage adherence to the Law of Moses. If the early Christians of Peter’s day read 1 Peter intertextually with Leviticus 19, they would have understood themselves as a new Israel, as a people called apart to be holy. Christian readers today can engage in such intertextual reading for similar purposes.

Conclusion

Like other ancient Jewish-Christian writers, Peter is an artful master of scripture. Peter exhorts the saints to faithfulness, underscoring this clarion call by careful and subtle appeal to Old Testament scriptures. Peter invites early Christians to trust God. That same invitation is available to modern readers. Perhaps part of the activation of faith for modern readers who understand intertextuality may involve searching beyond the boundaries of the Old Testament passages Peter quotes in order to drink deeply from the river of larger meaning and significance where these flowers of doctrinal and hortatory beauty were plucked.

Taylor Halverson received a BA from Brigham Young University in Ancient Near Eastern Studies in 1997, an MA in Biblical Studies from Yale University in 2001 and an MS in Instructional Technology from Indiana University in 2004. He completed PhDs in Instructional Technology and Judaism & Christianity in Antiquity — both from Indiana University in 2006. He currently works at BYU full-time at the Center for Teaching and Learning. He is a contributor to the popular LDS Bible Videos project and the LDS Scripture Citation Index site and a columnist for the *Deseret News*. He and his wife Lisa lead travel tours to Israel, the Mediterranean, and Mesoamerica.

Endnotes

- 1 Intertextuality is the process of reading, exploring, investigating, and revealing the relationship between texts.
- 2 The question of 1 Peter authorship has not been satisfactorily resolved, I believe. It is not the main intention of this article to attempt to resolve that question. For simplicity sake, I refer to the author of 1 Peter as Peter, without trying to signal a final answer on the question of authorship.
- 3 John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2000); Steve Moyise, “Isaiah in 1 Peter” in *Isaiah in the New Testament*, eds. Steve Moyise and Maarten J.J. Menken (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 175–88.
- 4 Elder Neal A. Maxwell, “Remember How Merciful the Lord Hath Been,” *Ensign*, May 2004, <https://www.lds.org/general->

conference/2004/04/remember-how-merciful-the-lord-hath-been?lang=eng.

- 5 See also 1 Peter 4:12; 5:6–10.
- 6 A notable scholar of intertextuality in scripture made a statement about Paul that describes 1 Peter well. The quote has been slightly modified: “The vocabulary and cadences of Scripture — particularly of the LXX — are imprinted deeply on Paul’s mind, and the great stories of Israel continue to serve for him as a fund of symbols and metaphors that condition his perception of the world, of God’s promised deliverance of his people, and of his own identity and calling. His faith, in short, is one whose articulation is inevitably intertextual in character, and Israel’s Scripture is the ‘determinate subtext that plays a constitutive role’ in shaping his literary production.” Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 16.
- 7 Victor L. Ludlow, “Isaiah as Taught by the New Testament Apostles,” in *The New Testament and the Latter-day Saints* (Orem, UT: Randall Book Company, 1987), 149–160.
- 8 Useful literary studies resources, many related to Biblical Studies, include Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981); J. Cheryl Exum and David J.A. Clines, eds., *The New Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible* (Sheffield, UK: JSOT, 1993); Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1985); Paul R. House, ed., *Beyond Form Criticism: Essays in Old Testament Literary Criticism* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992); Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, transl. Timothy Bahti (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1982); Douglas A. Knight and Gene M. Tucker, eds., *The Hebrew Bible and Its Modern Interpreters* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986); James L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and Its History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981); Martin J. Mulder, ed., *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988); Stanley E. Porter, “The Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament: A Brief Comment on Method and Terminology” in Craig Evans and James Sanders, eds., *Early Christian Interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel: Investigations and Proposals* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997),

- 79–96; Avigdor Shinan and Yair Zakovitch, “Midrash on Scripture and Midrash within Scripture” in *Scripta Hierosolymitana: Studies in Bible Vol. XXXI*, ed. Sara Japhet (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1986), 257–77; Benjamin D. Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusions in Isaiah 40–66* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998); Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985); Benjamin Sargent, “The Narrative Substructure of 1 Peter,” *Expository Times* 124/10, 2013: 485–90.
- 9 Justin Langford, *Defending Hope: Semiotics and Intertextuality in 1 Peter* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013), xvi.
- 10 Ben McGuire, “Nephi and Goliath: A Case Study of Literary Allusion in the Book of Mormon” *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 18/1–17.
- 11 “Allusion and literary allusion are specific types of intertextuality.” McGuire, “Nephi and Goliath,” 17.
- 12 McGuire, “Nephi and Goliath,” 18.
- 13 I’ve chosen to focus on literary and intertextual approaches even though there are many theoretical and methodological approaches for studying scripture, see for example Robert L. Webb and Betsy Baumann-Martin, eds., *Reading First Peter with New Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of First Peter* (London: T & T Clark, 2007); Stanley E. Porter, ed., *Hearing the Old Testament in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006); Christopher Gosden, *Anthropology and Archaeology: A Changing Perspective* (London: Routledge, 1999); Louis J. Lawrence, *Reading with Anthropology: Exhibiting Aspects of New Testament Religion* (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2005); and a myriad of other approaches.
- 14 “What text type does the New Testament prefer when citing the Old Testament? The substantial majority of these [Old Testament] quotes and allusions [in the New Testament] reflect the Septuagint. ... That the LXX was the principal Bible of the early church can hardly be refuted if one is to judge on the basis of the text form of the Old Testament most frequently used throughout the entire New Testament in quotations.” Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), 4–5; It is “clear that Peter was steeped in Old Testament thought and used

specific Old Testament texts as his point of departure as he applied these to his contemporary context.” 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, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006), see especially p. 246.

- 15 See also Emanuel Tov, “The Septuagint” in *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. Martin J. Mulder (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 2004), 161–88; Natalio Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context: Introduction to the Greek Versions of the Bible*, transl. Wilfred G. E. Watson (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009); Andre Pelletier, “Josephus, the Letter of Aristeas and the Septuagint” in *Josephus, the Bible, and History*, eds. Louis H. Feldman and Gohei Hata (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 97–115.
- 16 Glenn R. Bugh, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Hellenistic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Solomon Grayzel, *A History of the Jews: From the Babylonian Exile to the Establishment of Israel* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1957); A.R.C. Leaney, *The Jewish and Christian World: 200 BC to AD 200* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1984); John Bright, *A History of Israel* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981); Lee M. McDonald, *The Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon: Revised and Expanded Edition* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995).
- 17 Knowing something of the LXX, one gets a sense of the experience that many ancient Jews and Christians had with scripture, analogous to the experience that LDS members have with scripture due to their reliance on the King James English translation of the Bible.
- 18 See New Electronic Translation of the Septuagint (NETS) at <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/edition/>. For the NETS Isaiah see <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/edition/33-esaias-nets.pdf>.
- 19 In the text leading up to these verses, Peter reminds the Christians of their spiritual birth through the imperishable seed of God’s everlasting word. Peter is highlighting the responsibilities and promises inherent in the baptismal covenant. To illustrate the enduring nature of God’s word, Peter then quotes Isaiah 40:6–8,

which explains the difference between natural/earthly seeds, represented by grass and flowers, and eternal seed represented by the word of the Lord. In concluding the thought, Peter explains that the gospel is that enduring word. Moyise, “Isaiah in 1 Peter,” see especially pp. 176–77.

- 20 Shalom M. Paul, *Isaiah 40–66: Translation and Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), esp. pp. 127–56; see also Elliott, *1 Peter*, pp. 392–94.
- 21 In the classical Greek sense of the word, the trophy was where a losing army threw down their weapons and turned to flee when being overpowered. The discarded weapons become trophies of victory for the conquering army. These trophies represented a decisive turning point. So too in Isaiah, chapter 40 represents a decisive turning point, in this instance the victory of God’s mercies and comfort.
- 22 Paul, *Isaiah 40–66*, 127.
- 23 LXX English translations are from Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright, eds., *A New English Translation of the Septuagint (NETS)*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). The entire electronic edition is available at <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/edition/>.
- 24 Compare Isaiah 40 to God’s words of perspective and comfort in D&C 121 to Joseph Smith when he languished in Liberty Jail. The words in D&C 121:7–8 provide particular perspective in the midst of suffering, “My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment; and then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes.”
- 25 “It could well have been the similarity of the precarious situations faced by both authors and the power of Isaiah’s response that inspired [1 Peter’s] frequent use of [Isaiah]. As Isaiah addressed Judean exiles in Babylon (43:14; 47:1; 48:14, 20) as a people reproached, reviled (51:7; 53:1–12), and refined by fire (48:10), so our author from his Babylon (5:13) addresses strangers and resident aliens (1:1, 17; 2:11), harried and abused in their society (2:12; 3:9, 13–17; 4:4, 12–19; 5:9) and likewise tested in the fire of affliction (1:6; 4:12). As the exodus and God’s redemptive liberation of his people from darkness to light provided a model for Isaiah (40:3–5; 42:6, 7, 13, 16; 43:1–21; 52:3, 9), so also for 1 Peter (1:13,

18–19; 2:9). As the covenant and Israel’s divine election were for Isaiah’s message grounds for confidence, hope, and praise (Isaiah 41:8, 9; 42:1, 10–13; 43:10, 21; 44:1–2; 49:7; 54:10), so too 1 Peter (1:1; 2:4–10). Isaiah’s optimistic appraisal, to all appearances, of a dire situation likewise is matched by that of the Petrine author. As Isaiah celebrates the glory of God (40:5; 41:16; 42:8, 12, etc.), so too our author (2:12; 4:11, 13, 14; 5:10). And as Isaiah’s proclamation of good news (40:9; 52:7) and encouragement (40:1; 42:10–13) is permeated by a note of joy and exultation (41:16; 49:13; 51:3, 11; 54:1–17; 55:1–13), so too the message of 1 Peter (1:6–8; 2:9; 4:13).” Elliott, *1 Peter*, 393.

- 26 Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 1–59: A Commentary*, transl. Hilton C. Oswald, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1988), esp. pp. 381–88; John Goldingay, *Psalms, Volume 1: Psalms 1–41* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), esp. pp. 475–86; John Phillips, *Exploring the Psalms: Psalms 1–88* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1988), esp. pp. 256–62.
- 27 NETS Psalms at <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/edition/24-ps-nets.pdf>.
- 28 Compare the use of “taste” in 1 Peter 2:2–3 and Psalm 34:8 to Alma’s use of “taste” in Alma 32:35–36 and 36:24–26.
- 29 “Abimelech,” J. Frederic McCurdy, Gerson B. Levi, and Louis Ginzberg, eds., *Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol 1 (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1901–1906), 62; also at <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/305-abimelech>.
- 30 David is probably the exception here. Still, even then, an intertextual reading of 1 Peter, Psalms 34, and Genesis 20 and 26 provides examples (Abraham and Isaac) and non-examples (David) of the outcomes of moral living.
- 31 For an exploration of how the angel of the Lord brought physical salvation to chosen people in the Old Testament, see Taylor Halverson, “The Path of Angels: A Biblical Pattern for the Role of Angels in Physical Salvation” in *The Gospel of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament: The 38th Annual Brigham Young University Sperry Symposium*, eds. D. Kelly Ogden, Jared W. Ludlow, and Kerry Muhlestein (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 2009), 151–69, see especially the useful summary chart on pp. 164–65.

- 32 Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), esp. pp. 1594–726.
- 33 NETS Leviticus at <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/edition/03-leu-nets.pdf>.
- 34 Elliott, *1 Peter*, 354.
- 35 Scholars typically designate Leviticus 17–26 as representing the “Holiness Code” a set of passages alternating between moral and ritual laws with holiness being the underlying motivation. Michael D. Coogan, *A Brief Introduction to the Old Testament* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2009).
- 36 Elliott, *1 Peter*, 363.
- 37 “The section of Leviticus (ch. 19) that contains these words occupies the central position in Leviticus and therefore in the Pentateuch. . . . The command regarding holiness articulates the fundamental principle underlying the legislation of the Holiness Code (Lev 17–26): Israel’s sanctification by and union with the holy God who delivered this people from Egypt (19:36; 22:33) and its separation from the contagious pollution of the Gentiles (18:1–5; 20:23). This principle of the Levitical Holiness Code — association with and imitation of the holiness of God the Holy One — also entails dissociation from all who are unholy. It thus has social as well as religious significance in 1 Peter as in Leviticus, and in 1 Peter undergirds the dissociative stance implied in conversion and advocated in v. 15 as well as 4:2–4.” Elliott, *1 Peter*, 363.
- 38 Other household codes in the New Testament have been found in Ephesians 5:22–6:5; Colossians 3:18–4:1; 1 Timothy 2:1, 8; 3:1, 8; 5:17; 6:1; and Titus 2:1–10. See also David L. Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981).

