

1:22 *Love One Another*

PURITY FROM WITHIN.

HILARY OF ARLES: Why does Peter talk about purifying our souls but says nothing about the body? The reason for this is that true purity comes from within. If the soul is clean, the body will be cleansed as well.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTARY ON 1 PETER.³⁰

OBEYING BY THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT.

OECUMENIUS: This means: "When you have pulled yourselves together and determined to obey the truth by the power of the Spirit." For it is also possible to "obey" in evil and vicious matters, but that is not in the Spirit. And since there is a purification or preparation which must come before obedience, Peter wants to bring in as many extra helpers as possible. This is the role of brotherly love, which makes our neighbors also partakers of the good things which we have found. COMMENTARY ON 1 PETER.³¹

1:23 *Born Again*

BIRTH FROM THE SPIRIT.

DIDYMUS THE BLIND: Peter uses the words regeneration and restitution to signify the introduction of birth after the destruction of the first generation of mankind. For how could that not have been destroyed, seeing that it is corrupt, in order to make room for the incorruptible which is coming and which will remain forever? For there is a first birth, in the descent of Adam, which is mortal and Word of God. COMMENTARY ON 1 PETER.³²

THE UNENDING WORD.

ANDREAS: The Gospel says: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away, says the Lord Jesus Christ." ³³ CATENA.³⁴

1:24 *All Flesh Is Like Grass*

LONGING FOR DIVINE LIFE.

GREGORY OF NYSSA: If someone despises whatever is held in honor among men and longs only for the divine life, is he likely to think of the grass which exists today and is gone tomorrow as something worth striving for? ON VIRGINITY 4.40

TWO SIDES OF HUMANITY.

HILARY OF ARLES: Here we see the two sides of the human being. The outer man is like the flower of the field which is mortal and will pass away, whereas the inner man lives forever by the power of the living God. INTRODUCTORY COMMENTARY ON 1 PETER.42

1:25 *The Word of the Lord Abides Forever*

THE WORD REMAINS.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: The Word of God remains forever—both prophecy and divine teaching. ADUMBRATIONS.43

GUIDED TOWARD SALVATION.

ANDREAS: God foresaw and forewarned us about all the above, but although he sees our great disobedience, the Lord of all persists in guiding us toward salvation. CATENA.44

2:1 *Turn Away from*

Evil BE BORN AGAIN.

DIDYMUS THE BLIND: This verse upsets the heretics, who like to think that natures are good or bad in themselves and therefore cannot be changed. But what Peter says is fully in line with the words of Jesus: “You must be born again.” 1 COMMENTARY ON 1 PETER.2

LAY ASIDE MALICE.

HILARY OF ARLES: AS you have been born again by the Word of the living God, lay aside all malice, for an infant has no malice in him. INTRODUCTORY COMMENTARY ON 1 PETER.³

BORN TO AN INCORRUPTIBLE LIFE.

OECUMENIUS: These few words say a great deal, for it is unworthy of those who have been born again to an incorruptible life to be ensnared by evil and to prefer things which have no existence to that which truly exists. For evil is not a substance but merely clings to substances as if it were part of them. Peter says that believers ought to be immune to all deceit, pretense, envy and disparagement. Deceit and pretence are the exact opposite of the truth which was preached to you. If envy and disparagement find a home inside you, who are bound by the tie of brotherly love, how will you be able to bear the attacks of the heretics? COMMENTARY ON 1 PETER.⁵

2:2 Newborn Babies

LONG FOR SPIRITUAL MILK.

HILARY OF ARLES: Milk has three forms which can be compared to doctrine, that is, the liquid, cheese and butter. Liquid milk is the literal sense of Scripture, cheese is the moral sense, and butter is the spiritual sense. Find a good teacher and you will soon learn these things. INTRODUCTORY COMMENTARY ON 1 PETER.⁶

NEWBORN BABIES DRINK MILK.

ANDREAS: The divine law wants us to be perfect, but on the way toward perfection it has us first drink milk, as if we were newborn babies, and by that milk we shall grow toward salvation. Paul spoke to the same effect when he said: "Do not be children in understanding, but be innocent in wrongdoing. In understanding be adults." ⁷ For it is not possible to advance toward purity, or toward maturity in understanding, or toward adulthood as a worker approved by God, unless you renounce evil and become like an innocent child. CATENA.⁸

2:3 You Have Tasted the Kindness of the Lord

TASTE THE BREAD OF LIFE.

BASIL THE GREAT: Everywhere we notice that the various facets of the soul are designated by outward things. Thus when our Lord is described as the true bread and his flesh as the true food, we must understand this as meaning that the pleasure of right reason is like the taste of bread. Just as it is impossible for someone to know what honey is like simply by being told about it, because he must taste it in order to find out, so too the goodness of the heavenly bread is not properly communicated by teaching alone. We must taste the goodness of the Lord by our own experience. CATENA.¹⁰

2:4 That Living Stone

COME TO HIM.

DIDYMUS THE BLIND: Those who have accepted the gospel and who have been born again of incorruptible seed are an elect and approved race. At the same time they have been made living stones, built on top of the living Stone, who is chosen and honored, the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, in order to build a spiritual house for God toward whom they are being led and to whom spiritual sacrifices are offered. COMMENTARY ON 1 PETER.¹²

THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE.

ANDREAS: This refers to the scribes and the Pharisees and the whole body of the Sanhedrin, about whom it was said: "The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone." ¹³ CATENA.¹⁴

2:5a Built into a Spiritual House

CEMENTED BY CHARITY.

AUGUSTINE: The Lord will repay his faithful followers who are so lovingly, so cheerfully, so devotedly carrying out these works, to the effect that he includes them in the construction of his own building, into which they hasten to fit as living stones, fashioned by faith, made solidly firm by hope, cemented together by charity. SERMONS 337.¹⁵

2:5b To Be a Holy Priesthood

FASHIONED INTO A LIVING STONE.

ORIGEN: Even though a man may have departed out of this life insufficiently instructed but with a record of acceptable works, he can be instructed in that Jerusalem, the city of the saints, that is, he can be taught and informed and fashioned into a “living stone,” a stone precious and elect, because he has borne with courage and endurance the trials of life and the struggle for piety. ON FIRST PRINCIPLES 2.11.3.17

A HOUSE OF GOD.

ORIGEN: We learn from Peter that the church is a body and a house of God built from living stones. COMMENTARY ON JOHN 10.266.18

BUILT ON A GOOD FOUNDATION.

HILARY OF ARLES: You have been built on a good foundation, that of the apostles, prophets and patriarchs. INTRODUCTORY COMMENTARY ON 1 PETER.19

2:6 The Cornerstone in Zion

NO BUILDING WITHOUT CORNERSTONE.

AUGUSTINE: Without the cornerstone which is Christ, I do not see how men can be built into a house of God, to contain God dwelling in them, without being born again, which cannot happen before they are born the first time. LETTERS 187.31.21

BELIEVERS OF ALL CULTURES.

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA: Peter calls our Lord Jesus Christ a chosen and precious stone, fashioned by the glory and splendor of divinity. He calls it the cornerstone, because through one faith it binds together in unity the two peoples, Israel and the Gentiles. CATENA.22

ONLY ONE CORNERSTONE.

HILARY OF ARLES: Everything in this prophecy is written about Christ. There are many living stones in God’s temple, but here we are contemplating only the One. INTRODUCTORY COMMENTARY ON 1 PETER.23