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The Gospel of Peter

*A translation by Kathleen Arbogast, Victoria Ydens, and Rubén Dupertuis
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Some early editions divided the *Gospel of Peter* into fourteen chapters following the numbering system created by A. Harnack, while others divided it into sixty verses following the system devised by J.A. Robinson. Scholars have followed the practice of using both, or more recently, use only Robinson's numbering. In our translation we follow both. The translation below uses the Greek text in Bart D. Ehrman and Zlatko Pleše, *The Apocryphal Gospels: Texts and Translations* (Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 378-386.

For a brief introduction to the *Gospel of Peter*, please visit <https://romanworldlab.wordpress.com/gospel-of-peter/>

1 (1) ...but none of the Jews washed his hands, neither Herod nor any of his judges. And because they did not wish to wash their hands, Pilate stood up. (2) Then King Herod ordered the Lord to be taken, saying to them, "Do everything I ordered you to do to him."

2 (3) But Joseph, a friend of Pilate and the Lord, was standing there. Because he knew that they intended to crucify him, he came to Pilate and asked for the body of the Lord for burial. (4) And Pilate sent word to Herod and asked for his body. (5) And Herod said, "Brother Pilate, even if no one had asked for him, we would have buried him because the Sabbath is dawning. For it is written in the law that the sun shall not set on one who has been killed." And he delivered him to the people one day before their Feast of Unleavened Bread.

3 (6) Those who took the Lord were running and pushing him along, saying, "Now that we have power over him, let us drag around the Son of God." (7) And they clothed him in purple, and sat him on a judgment seat, saying, "Judge rightly, King of Israel." (8) And one of them brought a crown of thorns and placed it upon the head of the Lord. (9) And some who were standing there were spitting in his face, others struck his cheeks, others were stabbing him with a reed, and still others were whipping him while they said, "This is how we should honor the Son of God."

4 (10) They brought two criminals and crucified the Lord between them. And he himself was silent, as if not having pain at all. (11) And when they raised the cross, they wrote upon

it, "This is the King of Israel." (12) After they placed his clothes in front of him, they divided them up and threw lots for them. (13) One of those criminals rebuked them by saying, "We have suffered in this way on account of our crimes. But this man, who is a savior of men, how has he wronged you?" (14) They became angry at him and ordered that his legs not be broken, so that he would be tortured until he died.

5 (15) It was noon, and darkness covered all Judea. And they were troubled, and they agonized that the sun was setting while he still lived. For it is written to them that the sun shall not set on one who has been killed. (16) And one of them said, "Give him gall with vinegar to drink." And after mixing the drink, they gave it to him." (17) Thus they fulfilled everything, and were responsible for their sins.

(18) Many people wandered around with lamps and stumbled, thinking that it was night. (19) And the Lord cried out saying, "My power, my power, you have forsaken me." And after saying this, he was taken up. (20) At the same time, the curtain of the Temple of Jerusalem was torn in two. **6** (21) Then they pulled the nails from the Lord's hands and placed him on the ground. The whole earth was shaken, and there was great fear. (22) But then the sun shone, and it was found to be the ninth hour.

(23) And the Jews rejoiced and gave his body to Joseph so that he might bury it, since he had seen how much good he had done. (24) And he took the Lord, washed him, wrapped him in a linen cloth, and brought him into his own grave, which was called Joseph's Garden. **7** (25) Then the Jews, and the elders, and the priests—after realizing the kind of evil they had done to themselves—began to beat their breasts and say, "Woe for our sins, the judgment and end of Jerusalem have come near.

(26) But I was grieving with my companions, and we were hiding, heartbroken. For we were being sought by them, as if we were criminals who wished to set the Temple on fire. (27) During all these things, we were fasting, and we sat, mourning and weeping, night and day, until the Sabbath.

8 (28) The scribes, the Pharisees, and the elders gathered with one another, and they heard that all the people were grumbling and beating their chests. They were saying, "If these very great signs happened at his death, you can see how righteous he must have been." (29) So the elders became afraid and went to Pilate, begging him and saying, (30) "Give soldiers to us so that they might guard his tomb for three days in order that his disciples may not come steal him and then the people will do harm to us because they suppose he rose from the dead."

(31) So Pilate gave them the centurion Petronius with soldiers to guard the grave. And the elders and scribes came with them to the tomb. (32) Everyone who was there, together

with the centurion and the soldiers, rolled a great stone and placed it over the door of the tomb. (33) They sealed the tomb with seven seals, and after pitching a tent there, they stood guard.

9 (34) In the morning, as the Sabbath dawned, a crowd came from Jerusalem and the surrounding region in order to see the sealed tomb. (35) And during the night on which the Lord's Day dawned, as the soldiers stood guard in pairs according to their watch rotation, there was a loud sound in the sky. (36) They saw the skies open. Two men who were shining brightly descended from there and approached the grave. (37) And that stone which had been placed against the entrance, rolling by itself gave way to one side. The grave was opened and both the young men entered.

10 (38) Then, after seeing these things, those soldiers woke the centurion and elders because they were also present and on guard. (39) As they were explaining what they had seen, they looked again and saw three men emerging from the grave, with the two supporting the one and a cross following them. (40) The heads of the two reached up to the sky, and the head of the one they were leading reached above the skies. (41) And they heard a voice from the skies saying, "Did you preach to the ones who are sleeping?" (42) And a response was heard from the cross, "Yes."

11 (43) Then they planned with one another to depart and inform Pilate of what happened. (44) And while they were still deliberating, it appeared that the skies opened again and a man came down and entered the tomb. (45) After seeing these things, those who were around the centurion during the night hurried to Pilate, abandoning the grave which they were guarding. They explained everything just as they had seen it, agonizing greatly, and saying, "Truly, he was the Son of God!" (46) In answer, Pilate said, "I am clean of the blood of the Son of God. You alone thought this was good."

(47) Then everyone who approached him was asking and urging him to order the centurion and the soldiers to tell no one what they had seen. (48) "For it is better," they said, "for us to be liable for a very great sin before God, than for us to fall into the hands of the Jewish people and be stoned." (49) So Pilate ordered the centurion and the soldiers to say nothing.

12 (50) Mary Magdalene, a disciple of the Lord, had not done at the tomb of the Lord the things which women customarily did for their loved ones when they died because she was afraid of the Jews who burned with anger. So, early in the morning on the Lord's day, (51) she took her friends with her and went to the tomb where he was laid. (52.) They were afraid that the Jews would see them, and they said, "Although we were not able to weep and mourn on the day of his crucifixion, let us now do these things at his tomb. (53) But who will roll away the stone which was placed over the entrance of the tomb, so that we can enter, sit beside him, and do what we need to do? (54) For the stone was large and we

fear someone may see us. Even if we are not able to move the stone, let us place what we are bringing at the door for the sake of his remembrance; let us weep and beat our breasts until we return to our house.”

13 (55) And having departed, they found the grave had been opened. They came forward and looked inside, and there they saw a young man, who was beautiful and wore a very bright robe, sitting in the middle of the tomb. He said to them, (56) “Why did you come? Whom are you seeking? Not the one who was crucified? He has risen and departed. If you do not believe, then look and see the place where he was lying; he is not there. For he has risen and departed to the place from which he was sent.” (57) Then the women fled because they were afraid.

14 (58) And it was the last day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and many people were leaving to return to their homes after the festival had ended. (59) And we, the twelve disciples of the Lord, were weeping and grieving, and each one went to his house, grieving because of what had happened. (60) I, Simon Peter, and my brother Andrew, took our nets and went away to the sea, and with us was Levi, the son of Alphaeus, whom the Lord....