

The Act of Peter

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Translated by James Brashler and Douglas M. Parrott

Now on the first (day) of the week, which is the Lord's day, a crowd gathered and brought to Peter many who were sick, in order that he might heal them. And a person from the crowd made bold to say to Peter, "Peter, behold, in our presence you have caused many blind to see, and you have caused the deaf to hear, and you have caused the lame to walk. And you have helped the weak and have given them strength. But your virgin daughter, who has grown up to be beautiful and who has believed in the name of God, why have you not helped her? For behold, one side of her is completely paralyzed and she lies crippled there in the corner. Those whom you have healed are seen (about us); but your daughter you have neglected."

Then Peter smiled and said to him, "My son, it is apparent to God alone why her body is not healthy. Know, then, that God was not weak or unable to give his gift to my daughter. But so that your soul may be persuaded and those who are here may have more faith - ." Then he looked at his daughter and said to her, "Arise from your place! Let nobody help you except Jesus alone, and walk restored in the presence of all these (people)! Come to me!" And she arose and went over to him. The crowd rejoiced on account of what happened. Peter said to them, "Behold, your hearts have been persuaded that God is not powerless regarding anything we ask of him." Then they rejoiced even more and praised God.

Peter said to his daughter, "Go to your place, sit down, and become an invalid again. For this is beneficial for you and me." The girl went back again, sat down in her place, and became again as she was before. The whole crowd wept and begged Peter to make her healthy. Peter said to them, "As the Lord lives, this is beneficial for her and me. For on the day she was born to me I saw a vision and the Lord said to me, 'Peter, there has been born to you today a great trial. For this (daughter) will wound many souls if her body remains healthy.' But I thought the vision was mocking me.

"When the girl became ten years old, many were tempted by her. And a man rich in property, Ptolemy, after he had seen the girl bathing with her mother, sent for her so that he might take her for his wife. Her mother was not persuaded. He sent for her many times. He could not cease [...].

(Two pages are missing here. What is probably a reference to this story in Augustine's refutation of Adimantus suggests that Peter's daughter is paralyzed as a result of Peter's prayers. The translators of this text (Brashler and Parrott) read from this that Ptolemy must have abducted Peter's daughter. Then, responding to Peter's prayers, God preserved her purity by miraculously disabling her before Ptolemy could have his way.)

"[The men-servants of] Ptolemy [returned] the girl, and put her down before the house, and departed. And when I and her mother realized it, we went down and found the girl with one whole side of her body, from her toes to her head, paralyzed and withered. We picked her up, praising the Lord who had saved his servant from defilement, [and] pollution, and [destruction]. This is the cause of [the fact] that the girl [remains] thus to this day.

"Now then, it is fitting for you to know the (subsequent) deeds of Ptolemy. He was smitten in his heart and grieved night and day on account of what happened to him. And because of (the) many tears he shed he became blind. He intended to go and hang himself. And behold in the ninth hour of that day, and when he was alone in his bedroom, [he] saw a great light shining in the whole house, and heard a voice saying to him, 'Ptolemy, God did not give his vessels for corruption and pollution. But it was necessary for you, since you believed in me, that you not defile my virgin, whom you should have recognized as your sister, since I have become one Spirit for you both. But arise and go quickly to the house of Peter the apostle and you will see my glory. He will explain the matter to you.'

"And Ptolemy did not hesitate. He commanded his men-servants to lead him and to bring him to me. And when he had come to me he narrated everything that had happened to him in the power of Jesus Christ our Lord. Then

he saw with the eyes of his flesh and the eyes of his soul. And many hoped in Christ. He did good things for them and he gave them the gift of God. '

Afterwards Ptolemy died. He departed from life and went to his Lord. And [when he made] his will, he wrote in a piece of land in the name of my daughter, since because of her he believed in God and was saved. I myself took care of the administration entrusted to me most carefully. I sold the land. And God alone knows, neither I, nor my daughter, {I sold the land} kept anything back from the price of the land. But I sent the entire sum of money to the poor. '

"Know, then, O servant of Christ Jesus, that God [watches over those who] are his and he prepares what is good for each one. But we think that God has forgotten us. Now then, brothers, let us be penitent and watchful, and pray. And the goodness of God will look down upon us - and we wait for it." And {all} other teachings Peter spoke in the presence of them all. Praising the name of the Lord Christ, he gave them all bread. When he had distributed it, he arose and went into his house.

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from James M. Robinson, ed., *The Nag Hammadi Library*, revised edition. HarperCollins, San Francisco, 1990.