



The First Letter of Peter Bible Study Session 5 1 Peter 1:17-21



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Greek NT

17 Καὶ εἰ πατέρα ἐπικαλεῖσθε τὸν ἄπροσωπὸν ἠέμιπτως κρίνοντα κατὰ τὸ ἕκαστου ἔργον, ἐν φόβῳ τὸν τῆς παροικίας ὑμῶν χρόνον ἀναστράφητε· 18 εἰδότες ὅτι οὐ φθαρτοῖς, ἀργυρίῳ ἢ χρυσίῳ, ἐλυτρώθητε ἐκ τῆς ματαίας ὑμῶν ἀναστροφῆς πατροπαράδοτου, 19 ἀλλὰ τιμίῳ αἵματι ὡς ἁμνοῦ ἀμώμου καὶ ἀσπίλου Χριστοῦ, 20 προεγνωσμένου μὲν πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου, φανερωθέντος δὲ ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν χρόνων δι' ὑμᾶς 21 τοῦς δι' αὐτοῦ πιστοῦς εἰς θεὸν τὸν ἐγείραντα αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν καὶ δόξαν αὐτῷ δόντα, ὥστε τὴν πίστιν ὑμῶν καὶ ἐλπίδα εἶναι εἰς θεόν.

La Biblia de las Américas

17 Y si invocáis como Padre a aquel que imparcialmente juzga según la obra de cada uno, conducíos en temor durante el tiempo de vuestra peregrinación; 18 sabiendo que no fuisteis redimidos de vuestra vana manera de vivir heredada de vuestros padres con cosas perecederas como oro o plata, 19 sino con sangre preciosa, como de un cordero sin tacha y sin mancha, la sangre de Cristo. 20 Porque El estaba preparado desde antes de la fundación del mundo, pero se ha manifestado en estos últimos tiempos por amor a nosotros 21 que por medio de El sois creyentes en Dios, que le resucitó de entre los muertos y le dio gloria, de manera que vuestra fe y esperanza sean en Dios.

NRSV

17 If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile. 18 You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish. 20 He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake. 21 Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God.

NLT

17 And remember that the heavenly Father to whom you pray has no favorites when he judges. He will judge or reward you according to what you do. So you must live in reverent fear of him during your time as foreigners here on earth. 18 For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And the ransom he paid was not mere gold or silver. 19 He paid for you with the precious lifeblood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God. 20 God chose him for this purpose long before the world began, but now in these final days, he was sent to the earth for all to see. And he did this for you. 21 Through Christ you have come to trust in God. And because God raised Christ from the dead and gave him great glory, your faith and hope can be placed confidently in God.

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Introduction to Study.

Quite interesting is the variation among the above three translations of the single Greek sentence in vv. 17-21. The German *Die Gute Nachricht Bibel* breaks the one Greek sentence into eight German sentences, while the two English translations use either four sentences (*New Revised Standard Version*) or ten sentences (*New Living Translation*). What this signals is a Greek sentence packed full of ideas that are tightly knitted together in a complex manner in the original language text, as the Block Diagram below visually illustrates. These kinds of Greek sentences are ones that professional Bible translators dread because of the difficulty of bringing the ideas over from Greek into the receptor language correctly and without substantial loss of meaning.

The vast majority of time considerable loss of meaning occurs in such situations, more than is typical in Bible

translation generally, which reaches 80% or higher. The approach of these Bible translators for this passage is to concentrate on the ‘pieces’ of the text in an attempt to communicate the separate ideas individually. The huge loss of meaning in this approach is that the reader has little understanding of how these text ‘pieces’ fit together to present a coherent wholistic picture, something very important to the original writer of these words. In biblical interpretation it is important to examine the trees, even individually, in the forest, but it is just as important to see the pattern of arrangement of all of the trees that create the forest. Both aspects of meaning are essential for proper understanding. Giving proper attention to both aspects of this text is our goal in this study like always.

I. Context and Background¹

Careful consideration of the background issues here is critical, especially the literary aspects of this passage.

a. Historical

External History. The transmission of this passage through the centuries of copying the Greek text reflects a very stable text with no serious variation of reading in the several thousand ancient manuscripts. The UBS 4th revised edition Greek New Testament does not list any text reading variations, thus signaling that no variations that impact meaning in the text are present. To be sure, some variations in wording do exist in these verses,² but nothing that impacts the meaning of the sentence significantly. Thus the transmission of the Greek text here has been stable and consistent over the centuries.

Internal History. The time markers play a significant role in this text, while spatial markers are very secondary and stand in the background. The core admonition, couched in the Greek Aorist passive imperative form, addresses the present and immediate future times. A decisive decision is demanded of believers to adopt a distinct approach to living. The two expansion elements push the time frame in different directions. The appeal to God as Divine Judge is framed in the present tense participle underscoring that judgment is an ongoing process that climaxes in eschatological judgment at the end of time. The realization of God as constantly judging should motivate one to this life style. The second expansion element, following the core admonition in vv. 18-21, affirms a contemporary knowledge of how our ‘redemption’ (ἐλυτρώθητε) took place in the past. The Aorist verb here alludes both to the moment of conversion and is based upon the sacrificial offering of Christ on the cross. Thus the urgency of decision in the present grows out of a present-into-the- future reality about divine judgment and the past action of divine redemption. Such framing of ethical admonitions is not uncommon in the New Testament. What lies ahead and what has happened in the past often serve to provoke decision in the present.

b. Literary

The literary features of this passage play the more important background role for interpreting the meaning of the text.

Literary Form (Genre). At the broad genre level, vv. 17-21 are a part of the letter body, and contribute to the idea expression of Peter to his ancient readers as a substitute visit.

At the narrow genre level the issues become more complex. Clearly the sentence with the core admoni-

¹Serious study of the Bible requires careful analysis of the background and setting of the scripture passage. Failure to do this leads to interpretive garbage and possibly to heresy. Detailed study of the background doesn’t always answer all the questions, but it certainly gets us further along toward correct understanding of both the historical and contemporary meanings of a text. This serious examination of both the historical and literary background of every passage will be presented in summary form with each of the studies.

²The critical apparatus of the Nestle-Aland 27th revised edition lists six places where differing wording can be found in some manuscripts. But these are much later copies and most address stylistic variations in the Greek language. As an example, note the variation in verse 20, as described in the *Word Biblical Commentary*:

The best ancient MSS (א² A C and others) have “last” (singular: ἐσχάτου) and “ages” (plural: τῶν χρόνων). The majority (including p72 and P) make both plural, while א* and Ψ make both singular. Scribes who overlooked the substantival use of ἐσχάτου here (BDF §264.5) would tend to make the noun and its apparent adjective modifier agree. The consistently plural rendering had been an option to LXX translators (e.g., Gen 49:1; Hos 3:5) for the Hebrew מִיָּמֵינוּ תִּהְיֶה אֵיבָהּ, and for the consistently singular rendering, cf. Jude 18.

[J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 52.]

In the core expression two extensions of the verb are found, in addition to the two sets of modifiers discussed below. The Aorist passive imperative form of the verb is difficult to express in English and German, because neither modern language thinks like this. Literally the idea is ‘let yourself be caused to live...’. The concept is demanding a deliberate decision to allow the Christian principle of living to be implemented into one’s own lifestyle as determining one’s pattern of behavior. This way of living comes from outside us, not from within us. We as believers are to accept it and adopt it as our own.

τὸν τῆς παροικίας ὑμῶν χρόνον. The direct object of the verb is ‘the...time.’ Here Peter admonishes his readers to spend the remainder of their earthly life living by this standard. And that time has a special character to it: τῆς παροικίας. For, as Peter alluded to in the Adscriptio of verse 1, believers are πάροικοι and παρεπιδήμιοι, ‘foreigners,’ on the earth. The noun παροικία specifies living as a foreigner.⁵ Most likely the background image in mind is that of the Israelites in their stay in Egypt as παρεπιδήμιοι.⁶ This earthly life for believers is comparable to the stay of the Israelites in Egypt before the Exodus.

The implications of this characterization are substantial. Believers should never become overly attached to this world, because it isn’t their permanent home. We will always live with a certain level of uncomfortableness in this world because it is different from home. Also, as foreigners and aliens in this world we will always carry a certain social stigma of being ‘undesirables’ who don’t fit and belong. When one has lived as a foreigner in a country other than his/her homeland, the meaning and implications of being a foreigner take on real meaning, rather than hypothetical meaning.

ἐν φόβῳ. To behave ourselves ‘in fear’ has several implications. It doesn’t mean to live in apprehension about life and its uncertainties. Rather, to live ἐν φόβῳ means living in overwhelming awe of the power and total authority of God in our world. This picture of God as Judge should motivate fear in the hearts of every person. The images of God as Father and impartial Judge serve to remind us to not take God for granted, nor to treat Him lightly. Accountability to God is inescapable and His fatherly love for us will not hesitate to impose severe discipline in order to motivate us to clean up our living. Realizing that a day of final accounting of our life to this divine Judge is coming should be considerable motive to live in fear and awe of His power τῷ κόσμῳ we have conducted ourselves in the world in sincerity before God, not w. earthly wisdom, but in the grace of God 2 Cor 1:12.—Somewhat as the phrase ἂ. ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ above—i.e. not in the active sense of practicing something—οὕτως ἂ. Hb 10:33 to live in such a way (i.e. amid reproach and affliction) means to be treated in such a way.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 72-73.]

⁵1. the state of being in a strange locality without citizenship, *sojourn, stay*, also in transf. sense of the foreign country itself.

a. lit. (2 Esdr 8:35; prolog. to Sir In. 34; 3 Macc 7:19) of the stay of the Israelites in Egypt (Wsd 19:10) ἐν τῇ παροικίᾳ ἐν γῆ Αἰγύπτου Ac 13:17 (ἐν γῆ Βαβυλῶνος Theoph. Ant. 3, 28 [p. 264, 9]).

b. fig., of a Christian’s earthly life, far fr. the heavenly home (Ps 118:54; 119:5; cp. παροικέω 1) ὁ τῆς π. ὑμῶν χρόνος **the time of your stay here in a strange land 1 Pt 1:17**. καταλείπειν τὴν π. τοῦ κόσμου τούτου give up their stay in the strange land of this world 2 Cl 5:1 (cp. CIG 9474; IG XIV, 531, 7 τούτου τοῦ βίου τὴν παροικίαν; Philo, Conf. Lingu. 80 ἢ ἐν σώματι παροικία).

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 779.]

⁶“The classic biblical example of a παροικία (‘the stay or sojourn of one who is not a citizen in a strange place,’ BGD, 629.1a) was that of Israel in Egypt (e.g., Wisd Sol 19:10; Acts 13:17), and it is likely that Peter has this precedent conspicuously in mind, yet even in Greek inscriptions the term has become a metaphor for human life on earth (e.g., CIG 9474; IG 14 [Sic. It.] 531.7: τούτου τοῦ βίου τὴν παροικίαν cited in BGD, 629.1b; cf. also Philo, Conf. 80). Bauer’s interpretation of παροικία in our passage as a figurative expression for ‘the Christian’s earthly life, far from his heavenly home’ (BGD, 629; cf. also 2 Clem 5.1) is supported in part by the use of χρόνος in 4:2–3 for ‘the rest of your time in the flesh’ in contrast to ‘time enough spent in the past doing what the Gentiles wanted’ (cf. Selwyn, 144). J. H. Elliott (*A Home for the Homeless*, 41–49) has warned against spiritualizing the notion of παροικία in this way, rightly emphasizing instead the readers’ sociological status as πάροικοι (‘aliens’) and παρεπιδήμιοι (‘strangers’) in the cities and provinces where they live (2:11; cf. 1:1). Yet their παροικία in Roman society will one day come to an end, and in referring to its time or duration (χρόνος) Peter has that end implicitly in view, just as he does in 4:2 in referring to ‘the rest of your time in the flesh’ (i.e., the rest of your lives).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 62.]

⁷“Since God is impartial, he does not have favorites, but judges ‘according to each one’s deeds,’ which is also a biblical cliché (e.g., Rom. 2:6; Rev. 20:12–13; 22:12; cf. Isa. 40:10; 62:11; Ezek. 18; Matt. 16:27; 1 Cor. 3:13; Gal. 6:4). Therefore one should live in ‘fear,’ or reverential awe of God. This use of fear is characteristic of Peter (2:18; 3:2, 14, 15), but it is found as well in Paul (2 Cor. 5:11; 7:1; Eph. 5:21; Phil. 2:12) and Jesus (Matt. 10:28). And like so many other concepts in Peter, it comes from the OT (e.g., Prov. 1:7). It reminds his readers that it is not their persecutors who need to be feared, but God, who is not to be trifled with nor presumed upon, for his judgment is ultimate.” [Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 70-71.]

and authority.

b. Calling upon God, v. 17a.

If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds,
Καὶ εἰ πατέρα ἐπικαλεῖσθε τὸν ἀπροσωπολήμπτως κρίνοντα κατὰ τὸ ἐκάστου ἔργον

Notes:

Several important aspects of this first major expansion element merit consideration, which we will give in the comments that follow.

Καὶ. Although this connector, ‘and,’ might be taken to link this sentence with the preceding sentence, it is best understood to link this sentence with the preceding text of vv. 13-16. As such it introduces a second concept for discipleship responsibility in vv. 17-21.

εἰ πατέρα ἐπικαλεῖσθε. The first class conditional protasis nature of this dependent clause in Greek doesn’t raise the possibility of praying to God. Rather, it assumes that believers regularly and consistently pray to God as the present tense Greek verb implies. The better translation of the introductory conjunction εἰ is not ‘if’ but ‘since.’ Both Jesus and the apostles assume that believers engage in a consistent prayer life.

The verb ἐπικαλεῖσθε carries the meaning here of ‘making an appeal to.’⁸ Often taking a ‘double accusive’ object as here, the expression juxtaposes the Divine Judge against the Heavenly Father. That is, we call upon the Judge as our Father. Thus two images of God are placed side-by-side. The Judge administers divine law with impartiality and without favoritism, while the Father is inclined to show mercy and compassion. To be sure, a certain tension exists between these two images of God, but both are valid and the tension must be maintained without over-emphasizing one to the neglect of the other. For Peter both understandings of God are critical, and heighten the motivation for distinctive Christian behavior.

Understanding God as Father, although present in the Old Testament, is a distinct contribution of Jesus to the world.⁹ Christ ‘fleshed out’ the concept of Father in new and creative ways distinct from other ancient views. But against the backdrop of the ancient patriarchal view of father, one should never assume the image implies an indulgent father uninterested in disciplining his children. With the emphasis on God as ἀββᾶ (a transliterated loanword from Aramaic ‘abbā’) in Mark 14:36, Rom. 8:15, and Gal. 4:6, Christian understanding sees God as compassionate and deeply interested in the welfare of His children. But this is the image of God as the ultimate picture of father.¹⁰ His love for His children is the perfect balance between caring and

⁸**1. to call upon deity for any purpose** (‘invoke’ Hdt. 2, 39; 3, 8) **to call upon, call out** 1 Cl 39:7 (Job 5:1). In the mid. to call on, invoke for someth. (ἐ. τοὺς θεοὺς Hdt. et al.; X., Cyr. 7, 1, 35; Pla., Tim. 27c; Polyb. 15, 1, 13; Diod S 5, 49, 5 calling on the gods by the initiates; Epict. 2, 7, 12; 3, 21, 12 al.; Herm. Wr. 16, 3; OGI 194, 18 [I.B.C.]; prayers for vengeance fr. Rheneia 1 [Dssm., LO 352ff/LAE 424ff; SIG 1181]; POxy 1380, 153 [early II A.D.]; 886, 10 [III A.D.]; PGM 3, 8; 43; 4, 1182; 1217; 1345; 13, 138; 270; LXX; PsSol 2:36 al.; JosAs 25:7; EpArist 17; 193; 226; Jos., Ant. 4, 222 al.) ἐπικαλεῖσθαι τ. κύριον (1 Km 12:17f; 2 Km 22:7; PsSol 9:6) Ro 10:12; 2 Ti 2:22; 1 Cl 52:3 (Ps 49:15); 57:5 (Pr 1:28); 60:4. Also ἐπικαλεῖσθαι τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου (Gen 13:4; 21:33 al.; Jos., Bell. 5, 438; PGM 1, 161; 4, 1209; 1609; 1811; 13, 871) Ac 2:21 (Jo 3:5); 9:14, 21; 22:16; Ro 10:13 (Jo 3:5); 1 Cor 1:2; 1 Cl 64:1. Abs. (Ps 4:2) Ro 10:14; Ac 7:59. **εἰ πατέρα ἐπικαλεῖσθέ τινα if you invoke someone as Father 1 Pt 1:17** (P72 καλεῖτε, which may be classed under 2).—JTyner, JTS 25, 1924, 139–50; reply by RConnolly, ibid. 337–68; FNötscher, Epiklese, Biblica 30, ‘49, 401–4=Vom A zum NT, ‘62, 221–25.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 373.]

⁹“The Jesus movement, like Israel and the ancients in general, conceptualized and called upon God as ‘father’ (patera) in accord with the prevailing patriarchal world view of their male-dominated, patriarchal culture (Schrenk 1967; Hamerton-Kelly 1979; Reese 1978; Krentz 1989). Applied to God, the metaphor implied God’s progenerating or bringing his human ‘children’ into existence (Isa 45:9–10; 64:8; 2 Sam 7:14; Pss 2:7; 89:26), his authority over them (Deut 14:1), his paternal affection, protection, and care for them (Ps 103:13; Isa 63:16; Jer 3:19; Hos 11:1), and his function as the ‘father of the fatherless’ (Ps 68:5). Jesus characteristically thought of Yahweh as ‘father’ (Matt 6:1–18, 25–34; 10:33; 18:10–14; 23:9; Mark 14:36 par.; Luke 10:21; John 5:18, cf. 19:7), and his followers thought of him as God’s particularly favored son (Mark 1:11 par.; 9:7 par.; Rom 1:3–4; 8), who had made the Father known (John 1:18; 14:9). Jesus taught his followers to pray to God as ‘father’ (abba, patēr; Matt 6:9; Luke 11:1), and this practice was continued after his death (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6; 1 Pet 1:17). The Israelite Kaddish prayer and the Shemoneh Esreh illustrate the similar Israelite invocation of God as father. [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 364.]

¹⁰Different cultures picture ‘father’ differently, and thus the image may carry different meanings, as is reflected in this African based commentary: “References to God as a father can present some problems, for African Traditional Religions do not think of the Supreme Being as either male or female. It is therefore important to present the notion of fatherhood carefully, recognizing that it is a metaphor that God has given us to help us understand him better. We also need to make it clear that while God is the creator, and is in this sense the father of all, believers have the special honour of being adopted into his close family, and so can call him Father in a more intimate sense. Yet while believers are adopted children, Jesus Christ has always been God’s Son, in a unique and eternal

disciplining. Thus, believers have special motive for reaching out to God for help and guidance.

τὸν ἀπροσωπολήμπτως κρίνοντα κατὰ τὸ ἐκάστου ἔργον. The other image of God as Judge has several aspects in this participle phrase description. God ‘is judging’ (τὸν...κρίνοντα) everyone. The present tense Greek participle underscores continuous evaluation by God, not just final eschatological judgment at the end of time. God, both as Judge and Father, assesses the behavior of His children continuously and responds appropriately. But the clear implication of the traditional terminology alludes to final judgment.¹¹

Peter stresses two qualities of this judging action of God. First, it is ἀπροσωπολήμπτως.¹² No favorites, no loopholes, equal treatment for all -- all these traits and more are captured by this word. Believers receive no special consideration or exemption from the requirements of God. The divine requirements will be equally applied to all. Second, it is κατὰ τὸ ἐκάστου ἔργον. The focus of divine judgment is upon each individual’s actions, not his profession or verbal claims, just as Jesus declared in Matthew 7:16-23.¹³ In other words, our actions reflect the true condition of our heart before God and these will be used to evaluate us.

Consequently, this first major expansion of the core admonition motivates us to live correctly because of who God is and how He relates to us both as Father and as Judge. We reach out to Him consistently in prayer for His help and direction in life.



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c. **Knowing how you were ransomed, vv. 18-21.**

18 You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish. 20 He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake. 21 Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God.

18 εἰδότες ὅτι οὐ φθαρτοῖς, ἀργυρίῳ ἢ χρυσίῳ, ἐλυτρώθητε ἐκ τῆς ματαίας ὑμῶν ἀναστροφῆς πατροπαραδότου, 19 ἀλλὰ τιμίῳ αἵματι ὡς ἀμνοῦ ἀμώμου καὶ ἀσπίλου Χριστοῦ, 20 προεγνωσμένου μὲν πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου, φανερωθέντος δὲ ἐπ’ ἐσχάτου τῶν χρόνων δι’ ὑμᾶς 21 τοὺς δι’ αὐτοῦ πιστοὺς εἰς θεὸν τὸν ἐγείραντα αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν καὶ δόξαν αὐτῷ δόντα, ὥστε τὴν πίστιν ὑμῶν καὶ ἐλπίδα εἶναι εἰς θεόν.

Notes:

The second expansion element to the admonition to live properly as believers is more detailed and incorporates substantial traditional Christian expression in circulation by the middle of the first Christian relationship with God the Father. We also need to be aware that not all images of fatherhood are positive. Children of single mothers may never have known a caring father. Others may have suffered violence at the hand of their fathers or have seen their mothers molested by father figures. We must help people understand what the term ‘father’ means when used to describe the relationship between God and believers.” [Tokunboh Adeyemo, *Africa Bible Commentary* (Nairobi, Kenya; Grand Rapids, MI.: Word Alive Publishers; Zondervan, 2006), 1545.]

¹¹“Judgment according to works is a pervasive theme in Jewish literature (cf. Pss 28:4; 62:12; Prov 24:12; Jer 17:10; 25:14; 32:19; 51:24; Ezek 33:20; 1QS 10:16–18; Pss. Sol. 2:15–17, 33–35; 9:4–5; 2 Apoc. Bar. 13:8; 44; 4; 54:21). Such a theme is common in the New Testament as well and regularly refers to God’s assessment of people, both believers and unbelievers, at the final judgment (Matt 16:27; Rom 2:6, 11, 28–29; 14:12; 1 Cor 3:13; 2 Cor 5:10; 2 Tim 4:14; Rev 2:23; 20:12–13; 22:14). It is doubtful that Peter said anything different here, especially since he referred in this paragraph to many other themes that are common in Christian tradition.” [Thomas R. Schreiner, vol. 37, 1, 2 *Peter, Jude*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2007), 83.]

¹²“ἀπροσωπολήμπτως (on the form-λήμπ-σ. W-S. §5, 30; Reinhold §7) adv. fr. ἀπροσωπόλημπτος (ἀπροσωπόληπτος TestJob 4:8; Cos. and Dam. 1, 17; Psellus p. 163, 8 ἄ. δικαστήσ) **impartially**, i.e. without ref. to rank or status κρίνειν **1 Pt 1:17**; B 4:12; ἄ. πάντα ποιεῖν 1 Cl 1:3. Cp. προσωπολημπτέω, -λήμπτης, -λήμπτης, πρόσωπον λαμβάνειν.—DELG s.v. λαμβάνω. M-M. TW.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 126.]

¹³“16 You will know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles? 17 In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus you will know them by their fruits. 21 Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many deeds of power in your name?’ 23 Then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers.’”

century. It was something Peter assumed his readers already knew, and needed reminding of. The heart of this knowledge was ἐλυτρώθητε, i.e., their redemption.¹⁴ In beautifully eloquent words, Peter elaborates on this spiritual liberation of believers, as a major motivation for living properly.¹⁵

εἰδότες ὅτι. This participle stresses accumulated knowledge from teaching and underscores that such knowledge of what God did for His children in Christ's sacrifice on the cross stands as a major motivation to Christian behavior.

οὐ φθαρτοῖς, ἀργυρίῳ ἢ χρυσίῳ, ἐλυτρώθητε. The first segment of that knowledge states how God didn't work for our redemption. The spiritual liberation of believers in Christ could not be accomplished with material things, like silver or gold, Peter declares. One can't buy salvation! This initial negative perspective is prompted in part because the core verb λυτρῶ in ancient Greek and in the LXX of the Old Testament often referred to the payment of money to ransom the freedom of slaves and prisoners of war.¹⁶ Here the idea is a spiritual liberation, not a physical one. Thus, spiritual means to effect the ransom are required, not material means. The OT background of the powerful action of God in redeeming Israel from Egyptian bondage stands behind the use here. Thus God has set His new Israel, believers in Christ, free through a dramatic spiritual action, that achieved what money could never accomplish.

The Aorist tense form of the verb refers to a specific point of action in the past. Here it has a double reference, first to the sacrificial offering of Christ on the cross, and to the moment of conversion to Christianity by the readers.

ἐκ τῆς ματαίας ὑμῶν ἀναστροφῆς πατροπαράδοτου. What is it that believers have been liberated from? Peter's answer is distinct from the other use of this verb in the New Testament where the imprisoning reality is specified. Titus 2:14, "He it is who gave himself for us **that he might redeem us from all iniquity** [λυτρώσθαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἀνομίας] and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds." Because of the implicit movement in the verb ἐλυτρώθητε, Peter declares that we have been taken out of the inherited futile lifestyle of the past, and placed in a brand new lifestyle.¹⁷ Note the use of ἀναστροφή (lifestyle) here and the

¹⁴“λυτρώω (s. prec. entry; Pla.+) in our lit. only mid. (and pass.) λυτρώομαι (Demosth.+) fut. mid. λυτρώσομαι LXX; 1 aor. mid. ἐλυτρώσάμην, impv. λύτρωσαι. Pass.: 1fut. λυτρωθήσομαι (LXX); 1 aor. ἐλυτρώθην; pf. 3 sg. λελύτρωται, ptc. λελυτρωμένος LXX.—DELG s.v. λύω.

1. to free by paying a ransom, redeem

a. lit. (Demosth. 19, 170) of prisoners (Diod S 5, 17, 3; Jos., Ant. 14, 371) 1 Cl 55:2.

b. fig. λύτρωσαι τ. δεσμίους ἡμῶν (in a prayer) 1 Cl 59:4.—Pass. ἀργυρίῳ ἢ χρυσίῳ λυτρωθῆναι ἐκ τῆς ματαίας ὑμῶν ἀναστροφῆς be ransomed with silver or gold from your futile way of life **1 Pt 1:18** (on λ. ἐκ τινος s. 2 below.—WvanUnnik, De verlossing **1 Pt 1:18, 19** en het probleem van den 1 Pt '42).

2. to liberate from an oppressive situation, set free, rescue, redeem, fig. ext. of mng. 1 (Ps.-Callisth. 2, 7, 4 τὴν Ἑλλάδα λυτρώσασθαι; 3, 19, 10; LXX; Philo) τινά someone (Iren. 5, 1, 1 [Harv. II 315, 1]) B 14:8. Of Christ in his coming again λυτρώσεται ἡμᾶς he will redeem us 2 Cl 17:4. Of the Messiah ὁ μέλλων λυτροῦσθαι τὸν Ἰσραὴλ **Lk 24:21** (cp. Is 44:22–4; 1 Macc 4:11; PsSol 8:30; 9:1). τινὰ ἀπὸ τινος someone fr. someth. (Ps 118:134; cp. the ancient Christian prayer: CSchmidt, Heinrici Festschr. 1914, p. 69, 32f) λ. ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἀνομίας **Tit 2:14** (TestJos 18:2 ἀπὸ παντὸς κακοῦ). Also τινὰ ἐκ τινος (non-bibl. ins in CB I/2 566f ἐλυτρώσατο πολλοὺς ἐκ κακῶν βασάνων; Dt 13:6; Ps 106:2; Sir 51:2; Mel., P. 67, 475 ἐκ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου λατρείας) someone fr. a monster Hv 4, 1, 7. ἐξ ἀναγκῶν m 8:10. ἐκ τοῦ σκότους B 14:5f; cp. vs. 7. ἐκ θανάτου (Hos 13:14) 19:2. τ. ψυχῆν ἐκ θανάτου **Ac 28:19** v.l. ἐκ τοσοῦτων κακῶν AcPl Ha 3, 10.—Pass. (Aristot., EN 10, 2 [1164b, 34]; LXX; TestJos 18:2; Just., D. 131, 3; Iren. 1, 21, 4 [Harv. I 186, 12]) be redeemed ἐν τῇ χάριτι by grace IPHld 11:1 (on λ. ἐν cp. 2 Esdr 11:10 ἐν τ. δυνάμει; Ps 76:16; Sir 48:20). γινώσκομεν οὖν πόθεν ἐλυτρώθημεν we know, then, the source of our redemption B 14:7.—New Docs 3, 72–75. DELG s.v. λύω. M-M. TW. Spicq. Sv.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 606.]

¹⁵A church father, Clement of Rome, at the end of the first Christian century captured the essence of this point with his warning in 1 Clement 21:1, “Take care, dear friends, lest his many benefits turn into a judgment upon all of us, as will happen if we fail to live worthily of him, and to do harmoniously those things which are good and well-pleasing in his sight.” [Michael William Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, Updated ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1999), 53.]

¹⁶“In non-biblical language, *λυτροῦ* refers to the payment of a certain sum of money in order to secure the freedom of slaves or of prisoners of war. In the Old Testament, the word is used also for the redemption of property (for example, Exo 13:12, 13; Lev 25:26, 48, 49; etc.). In theological usage, the word is used to describe the powerful act of God in setting the Israelites free from slavery in the land of Egypt. This last meaning seems to have been the immediate background of the usage of this word here and in the rest of the New Testament, so that basically it means God's powerful way of setting people free from the power of sin and evil.” [Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the First Letter from Peter*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 40.]

¹⁷“The realm from which the readers were ransomed is from the futile ways inherited from your fathers. From (ek) is not simply ‘away from’ but ‘out of’, giving the vivid image of people being physically removed from one ‘place’ (the sphere of sinful patterns of life) to another (the sphere of obedience to God). Ways is once again *anastrophē*, ‘pattern of life’ (see notes at v. 15). This pattern

verb ἀναστρέφω with identical meaning in the core admonition. Redemption has dramatically changed lifestyles, and placed upon us the responsibility for living our lives by the new lifestyle. This old lifestyle is both ματαίας and πατροπαραδότου.¹⁸ This is, it is empty and worthless first of all. Then it is inherited. This could allude to Judaism for the Jewish Christian readers, but for the non-Jewish readers in these churches it stood as an allusion to the paganism inherited from their parents. Peter includes both in this inclusive reference.

One's redemption has already taken place and has been life changing. A dramatic shift in lifestyle has occurred. Life will never again be the same.

ἀλλὰ τιμίῳ αἵματι ὡς ἀμνοῦ ἀμώμου καὶ ἀσπίλου Χριστοῦ. With strong contrast (= ἀλλὰ) this redemption was accomplished instead by means of blood being poured out in sacrifice. It was lamb's blood, but not of one of the sacrificial lambs slaughtered in the Jerusalem temple. Instead, it was Christ's blood, poured out as a sacrificial lamb on the cross outside the city of Jerusalem.¹⁹ Clearly the heritage of the temple sacrificial system lies in the background, but serves only to highlight the superior sacrifice of Christ's crucifixion on the cross. That superiority of Christ is stressed by the remaining expansion elements that refer to Christ. The Passover lamb had to be ἀμώμου καὶ ἀσπίλου, before its blood was acceptable in the temple (cf. Lev. 1:10). So also the blood of Christ, and it was totally free of sin or contamination when offered up on the cross.



προεγνωσμένου μὲν πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου. This phrase, along with the subsequent ones, focus on Christ, and how He was superior to the sacrificial lambs in the Jerusalem temple system.

First, Christ was predestined to this sacrifice before God created the world.²⁰ The redeeming work of

of life was futile—empty, worthless, having no meaningful or lasting results (compare this word in 1 Cor. 15:17; Titus 3:9; and the cognate noun thirteen times in the LXX of Eccl. 1–2). The remarkable change brought about by conversion to Christ is seen in the fact that these abandoned sinful patterns of life had been inherited from your fathers, an influence made weighty by the accumulation of generations of tradition in a society that valued such ancestral wisdom. The ancient tradition of home and nation is broken ... because of the work of Jesus Christ who had set them free.²⁶ A similar purpose for redemption is affirmed in Ephesians 2:10; Titus 2:14. The hereditary chain of sin is broken by Christ (cf. Exod. 20:5, 6).” [Wayne A. Grudem, vol. 17, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 88-89.]

^{18c}“This radical break with previous loyalties and revered traditions undoubtedly contributed to the animosity that Christian converts experienced from their former cronies and prompted Gentile pressures urging social conformity (Talbert 1986, 145). Conservative antipathy to the forsaking of ancestral custom is reflected in the advice given by “Maecenas” to “Augustus” in Cassius Dio’s Roman History:

Therefore, if you desire to become in very truth immortal, act as I advise; and furthermore both yourself worship the Divine Power everywhere and in every way in accordance with the traditions of our fathers and compel all others to honor it. Those who attempt to distort our religion with strange rites you should abhor and punish, not merely for the sake of the gods, but because such men, by bringing in new divinities in place of the old, persuade many to adopt foreign practices, from which spring up conspiracies, factions and cabals, which are far from profitable to a monarchy. Do not, therefore, permit anybody to be an atheist or a sorcerer. (52.36)

The text is from the early third century CE but reflects long-standing sentiments. It was these conservative sensibilities that Christianity, in the period after 1 Peter, eventually would be charged with violating. Our author reckons with the problem that the renouncing of these customs poses for the addressees (cf. 2:11; 4:2–4) and therefore reminds them of the still more ancient pedigree of their redeemer: he ‘was known before the foundation of the world’ (v 20a).” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 371.]

^{19c}“This blood was given by the Lamb of God, who was without blemish and without spot. He is the fulfillment of the Passover lamb which was to be without spot or blemish, the very best of the flock. The Passover lamb was sacrificed and its blood was placed over the door posts of the people of Israel to protect the life of the firstborn son and all who dwelled within the house (Ex. 12). John the Baptist came introducing Jesus in the following manner, ‘Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world’ (John 1:29). Indeed, we have been redeemed by the very blood of the Lamb of God—Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord.” [Paul A. Cedar and Lloyd J. Ogilvie, vol. 34, *The Preacher’s Commentary Series: James / 1 & 2 Peter / Jude*, The Preacher’s Commentary series (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Inc, 1984), 127.]

^{20c}“προεγνωσμένου μὲν πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου, ‘who was foreknown before the creation of the world.’ The μὲν ... δέ construc-

Christ was not some after thought of God. To the contrary, before He even created the world, He already knew that His Son would have to pour out His life on the cross as a sacrifice for sinful humanity. And already understanding this, God went ahead and created the world! This is truly amazing, and goes beyond human wisdom.

The particle μὲν sets up a contrasting pair when used with δὲ, ‘on the one hand...on the other hand.’ The extent of the contrast is seen dramatically in the two time references πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου and ἐπ’ ἐσχάτου τῶν χρόνων. Before the world was created, Christ was destined to make this sacrifice. Now at the end of human history He made this sacrifice. God’s plan covers the entire scope of human existence in the created order of things.

φανερωθέντος δὲ ἐπ’ ἐσχάτου τῶν χρόνων δι’ ἡμᾶς. The other half of this contrast underscores the revelation of Christ on the earth.²¹ The Aorist passive participle denotes completed action prior to the occurrence of the admonition to live one’s life. The implication of this is to allude to the first coming of Christ to the earth, rather than the second coming of Christ at the end of human history (cf. 1 John 2:28; 3:2). In His birth, Christ took on human flesh as the divine Son of God. Yet while human, he died as a sacrificial Lamb offered for the sins of the world. This makes Him so much more than a temple lamb offered upon on the Great Altar inside the temple in Jerusalem.

The time of this subsequent ‘revelation’ is ἐπ’ ἐσχάτου τῶν χρόνων.²² In ancient apocalyptic Jewish understanding of time, human history divided itself into periods of time. The time of the Messiah’s appearance would come in the last of those periods. Peter shares that perspective and sees the coming of Christ to the world as the beginning of that last era of time. Christ’s coming and death has moved the world one step closer to the gigantic climax of the end of time.

tion sets off this clause and the following one as a contrasting pair: ‘foreknown’ in contrast to ‘appeared,’ and ‘before the world was made’ in contrast to ‘in the last of the ages.’ προεγνωσμένου recalls the κατὰ πρόγνωσιν θεοῦ πατρός of v 2, except that here the foreknowledge (i.e., election, or ‘previous designation to a position or function’ [Hort, 80]; see on v 2) refers to Christ rather than Christian believers (cf. ἐκλεκτόν in 2:4, 6). The perfect passive participle προεγνωσμένου, like the τετηρημένον of v 4, points to the action of God on behalf of his people, in this case the designation of one to be their redeemer. What is decided from all eternity is not simply that Jesus Christ should come into the world, but that he should fulfill a certain role, the role intimated already in v 19.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 66-67.]

²¹“The participle implies more than a simple contrast with the preceding clause might suggest. φανερωθέντος presupposes not only Christ’s designation in advance to be the redeemer of God’s people, but his actual preexistence (cf. the ‘spirit of Christ,’ v 11). There is no direct link between this notion of preexistence and the metaphor of Jesus Christ as the Lamb, apart from the fact that Peter has placed the two side by side. Although there is in Gen 22 the intimation that ‘God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt offering ...’ (22:8, RSV; cf. Melito, Fragment 9; [SC 123.234]), and although φανεροῦν is used in John 1:31 in connection with the presentation of Jesus as ‘Lamb of God’ (1:29; cf. 1 John 3:5), the emphasis on God’s foreknowledge and the pattern of ‘once hidden but now revealed’ is far wider in its application than the cycle of ideas surrounding the imagery of sacrifice or the Passover. In apocalyptic literature, the Messiah (however understood) was often depicted as existing already in heaven, waiting to be revealed (cf., e.g., 1 Enoch 48.6: ‘he was concealed in the presence of [the Lord of the Spirits] prior to the creation of the world, and for eternity’; 62.7: ‘For the Son of Man was concealed from the beginning, and the Most High One preserved him in the presence of his power; then he revealed him to the holy and elect ones’ (OTP, 1.35, 43; cf. 4 Ezra 12:32; 13:52; in early Christianity, cf. Magn. 6.1; 2 Clem 14.2, Herm. Sim. 12.2–3). What is said of the Jewish Messiah or of Jesus Christ can be said also of the ‘mystery’ of the plan of salvation realized in him (Rom 16:25–26; Eph 3:5 [9–10]). Peter does not emphasize here the factor of prior concealment, possibly because he has made the point already that the reality of Jesus Christ was only dimly seen by the prophets of the past (vv 10–12). Nor can he be understood as affirming that Christ ‘appeared’ or ‘became visible’ in any final or definitive sense. He and his readers have not seen Jesus in that sense (v 8), for they still await the day ‘when Jesus Christ is revealed’ (vv 7, 13). As in 1 John, the verb φανεροῦν can be used either of Jesus’ redemptive work in history or his future coming in glory (cf. φανερωθέντος in 1 Pet 5:4; in 1 John, cf. 1:2; 3:5; and 3:8 with 2:28 and 3:2). The latter is the more typical of Peter’s usage, while the former is more likely to be traditional. Yet the two can stand almost side by side because of Peter’s conviction that ‘the last of the ages’ has now come.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 67-68.]

²²“ἐπ’ ἐσχάτου τῶν χρόνων is not to be equated with the ἐν καιρῷ ἐσχάτῳ of v 5. Rather it defines the ‘now’ (cf. Rom 16:26) that stands in contrast to the time ‘before the beginning of the world.’ χρόνοι, to Peter, are periods of time, like a person’s lifetime (4:2) or an extended stay in a foreign country (v 17). The phrase ἐπ’ ἐσχάτου τῶν χρόνων assumes a series of these time periods or ‘ages’ spanning the world’s history, and affirms that the last of these has begun with the appearing of Christ. The grammatical construction is probably derived from the ἐπ’ ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν of the LXX (Hebrew: עַתָּה תִּירָצָה; e.g., Num 24:14; Jer 23:20; 25:19 [49:39]; Dan 10:14; in the NT, cf. Heb 1:2; in 9:26 the author of Hebrews uses a similar grammatical construction with different vocabulary to much the same effect).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 68.]

The amazing aspect of this revelation is that it was δι' ὑμᾶς. The sacrificial death of Christ as a divine revelation took place for the sake of Peter's readers. They, both Jewish and Gentile believers, were the beneficiaries of this sacrifice. In traditional ancient Judaism this would have been labeled rank heresy, for their view was that the Messiah would redeem only covenant - Torah obedient Israel, and those non-Jews who had converted to Judaism. Thus the sacrificial death of Christ had much wider implications for all of humanity than ever imagined in the ancient world.

τοὺς δι' αὐτοῦ πιστοὺς εἰς θεόν. This modifying phrase plays off of ὑμᾶς, and defines the beneficiaries of Christ's death as those who believe in God through Christ. This very Christian language underscores that belief in God must come through Jesus Christ, if it is to be legitimate faith.²³ Traditional Jewish faith in God, apart from, and in rejection of, Christ has no validity before God.

τὸν ἐγείραντα αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν καὶ δόξαν αὐτῷ δόντα. The close connection of the Father to the Son is affirmed by this expression of traditional Christian belief.²⁴ God brought a lifeless corpse back to life on Easter Sunday morning in the greatest miracle of human history. This resurrecting of Christ back to life was the divine affirmation of Christ as the Son of God.²⁵ The ascension of Christ back into Heaven forty days after His resurrection was His glorification. But the resurrection and ascension are typically considered by early Christians as two aspects of one grand action by God. It is this affirmation of Christ by God that stands as a pillar of Christian faith in eternal life.

ὥστε τὴν πίστιν ὑμῶν καὶ ἐλπίδα εἶναι εἰς θεόν. Christ's great sacrifice followed by His resurrection and ascension had a specific goal: to bring humanity to faith and hope in God. Jewish claims of exclusive devotion to God no longer have validity. All humanity is called to faith and hope in God through Jesus Christ.

What a motivation we have for living our lives in awe of God! He is our Father and Judge. He has provided redemption from a worthless life of paganism through the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son. We have been called to faith and hope in Him. Now our challenge is to live out our lives on earth in proper respect and reverence of Him.

²³“Their faith has been mediated through Christ (a) because He has revealed the Father (Mt. 11:27; Jn. 1:18; 17:6), but (b), more importantly, because as God's instrument for reconciling the world to Himself (2 Cor. 5:19) Christ by His redemptive work has once for all opened up man's approach to God (3:18; Rom. 5:1). Peter's words in Acts 3:16 ('the faith which is through Jesus') provide a striking parallel.” [J. N. D. Kelly, *Black's New Testament Commentary: The Epistles of Peter and of Jude* (London: Continuum, 1969), 77.]

²⁴ “Those benefits of personal salvation have been bestowed upon believers solely on account of what God has done in Christ in raising him from the dead and giving him glory. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is referred to thirty times in the NT as God's decisive work, frequently in Peter's speeches in Acts. The event of the resurrection is fundamental to the whole of Christian belief and life.” [Norman Hillyer, *New International Biblical Commentary: 1 and 2 Peter, Jude* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1992), 50.]

²⁵ “However, this formulation of 1 Peter, which combines who raised him from the dead with and gave him glory, is unique in the NT, though it succinctly formulates similar words by Peter in Acts: '(God) glorified his servant Jesus ... whom God raised from the dead' (3:13, 15, recalling Isa 52:13 LXX: 'Behold, my servant shall prosper and shall be exalted and greatly glorified' [doxasthēsetai]). Emphasis upon 'glory' (doxa) and 'glorify' (doxazō) is a hallmark of 1 Peter (Selwyn 1947, 253–58, and the NOTE on 2:11), as is the combined mention of 'suffering(s)' and 'glory (glories) of Christ' (1:11; 4:13; 5:1; see NOTE on 1:11). Likewise in 1 Peter, Jesus' resurrection and glorification is a demonstration of his acceptance, honoring, and vindication by God despite human rejection (cf. 2:4, 6–8; 3:18, 22). This honor and glory of the suffering Christ is thus a surety of the glory and honor in store for believers who remain faithful in adversity (1:7; 4:13–16; 5:1; cf. 2:4–5, 7a). On the traditions behind 1:18–19, 20, see Shimada 1966; on their relation to the theme of suffering in general see Cervantes Gabarrón 1991b, 328–39.” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 378–79.]