



The First Letter of Peter
Bible Study Session 16
1 Peter 4:1-6
“Understand Suffering”



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Greek NT

4.1 Χριστοῦ οὖν παθόντος σαρκί καὶ ὑμεῖς τὴν αὐτὴν ἔννοιαν ὀπλίσασθε, ὅτι ὁ παθὼν σαρκὶ πέπαυται ἁμαρτίας, 2 εἰς τὸ μηκέτι ἀνθρώπων ἐπιθυμίαις ἀλλὰ θελήματι θεοῦ τὸν ἐπίλοιπον ἐν σαρκὶ βιώσαι χρόνον. 3 ἄρκετὸς γὰρ ὁ παρεληλυθὼς χρόνος τὸ βούλημα τῶν ἐθνῶν κατειργάσθαι, πεπορευμένους ἐν ἀσελείαις, ἐπιθυμίαις, οἰνοφλυγίαις, κώμοις, πότοις, καὶ ἀθεμίτοις εἰδωλολατρίαις. 4 ἐν ᾧ ξενίζονται μὴ συντρεχόντων ὑμῶν εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν τῆς ἀσωτίας ἀνάχυσιν, βλασφημοῦντες· 5 οἱ ἀποδώσουσιν λόγον τῷ ἐτοίμως ἔχοντι κρῖναι ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς· 6 εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ νεκροῖς εὐηγγελίσθη ἵνα κριθῶσι μὲν κατὰ ἀνθρώπους σαρκὶ ζῶσι δὲ κατὰ θεὸν πνεύματι.

La Biblia de las Américas

1 Por tanto, puesto que Cristo ha padecido en la carne, armaos también vosotros con el mismo propósito, pues quien ha padecido en la carne ha terminado con el pecado, 2 para vivir el tiempo que le queda en la carne, no ya para las pasiones humanas, sino para la voluntad de Dios. 3 Porque el tiempo ya pasado os es suficiente para haber hecho lo que agrada a los gentiles, habiendo andado en sensualidad, lujurias, borracheras, orgías, embriagueces y abominables idolatrías. 4 Y en todo esto, se sorprenden de que no corráis con ellos en el mismo desenfreno de disolución, y os ultrajan; 5 pero ellos darán cuenta a aquel que está preparado para juzgar a los vivos y a los muertos. 6 Porque con este fin fue predicado el evangelio aun a los muertos, para que aunque sean juzgados en la carne como hombres, vivan en el espíritu conforme a la voluntad de Dios.

NRSV

1 Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same intention (for whoever has suffered in the flesh has finished with sin), 2 so as to live for the rest of your earthly life no longer by human desires but by the will of God. 3 You have already spent enough time in doing what the Gentiles like to do, living in licentiousness, passions, drunkenness, revels, carousing, and lawless idolatry. 4 They are surprised that you no longer join them in the same excesses of dissipation, and so they blaspheme. 5 But they will have to give an accounting to him who stands ready to judge the living and the dead. 6 For this is the reason the gospel was proclaimed even to the dead, so that, though they had been judged in the flesh as everyone is judged, they might live in the spirit as God does.

NLT

1 So then, since Christ suffered physical pain, you must arm yourselves with the same attitude he had, and be ready to suffer, too. For if you are willing to suffer for Christ, you have decided to stop sinning. 2 And you won’t spend the rest of your life chasing after evil desires, but you will be anxious to do the will of God. 3 You have had enough in the past of the evil things that godless people enjoy -- their immorality and lust, their feasting and drunkenness and wild parties, and their terrible worship of idols. 4 Of course, your former friends are very surprised when you no longer join them in the wicked things they do, and they say evil things about you. 5 But just remember that they will have to face God, who will judge everyone, both the living and the dead. 6 That is why the Good News was preached even to those who have died -- so that although their bodies were punished with death, they could still live in the spirit as God does.

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Introduction to Study.

As Peter continues to encourage his readers to endure unjust suffering, he adds a new dimension to the concept given in 4:1-6. One that modern Christianity has difficulty accepting: Willingness to suffer unjustly is clear indication of genuine faith commitment to Christ. Where is 'righteous indignation' when you need it? Peter, however, has another perspective. To western culture generally obsessed about personal rights and privileges, the language of Peter sounds strange and difficult. Could it be that we in modern western culture have missed something vitally important? And by being blinded by our culture, we believers fail to experience the blessing that Peter talks about in this passage.

There is something very important in this insight of the apostle Peter about Christians suffering because of their religious faith. We need to gain this insight in order to live more as Christ desires us to live.

I. Context and Background¹

The historical and literary background play an important role in understanding this text.

a. Historical

Both the history of the copying of the text for the first eight centuries and the internal references to time and place are important to understand.

External History. The UBS 4th revised edition Greek text lists only one text variation considered important enough to impact the translation of this text into other language. The Nestle-Aland 27th revised edition text lists thirteen places where variations of wording surface.

In the UBS 4th rev. edition text the variation surfaces in verse one. The printed text παθόντος σαρκί, "having suffered in the flesh," is extended in a personalizing manner by later copyists to read παθόντος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν σαρκί ("having suffered for us in the flesh"), or παθόντος ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν σαρκί ("having suffered for you in the flesh"), or ἀποθάνοντος ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν σαρκί ("having died for you in the flesh").² The decisive weight of evidence, both internal and external, favors the shorter reading παθόντος σαρκί, as is reflected in the {A} rating in the UBS text.

The additional variants, as listed in the N-A 27th rev. ed. text are mainly stylistic variations in efforts to update the Greek style of Peter's -- i.e., Silas' -- writing to more contemporary patterns later on.³ No substantial

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.

²"The reading that best explains the origin of the others is παθόντος, which is strongly supported by P⁷² B C Ψ 330 1739 it⁶⁵ vg cop^{sa} al. In order to express the idea more fully some copyists added ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν (so the Textus Receptus, following κ^c A K P 33 81 614 Byz Lect syr^h cop^{bo} arm eth al) while others added ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν (κ 1505 2495 syr^p al). Had either of the latter readings been the original, no adequate reason can account for the absence of the prepositional phrase from the best representatives of both the Alexandrian and the Western types of text." [Bruce Manning Metzger and United Bible Societies, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, Second Edition a Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (4th Rev. Ed.) (London; New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 624.]

³1. Petrus 4,1

- * π. υπερ ημων σ. κ^c A P M sy^h bo; Did Augpt Cyr
- | π. υπερ υμων σ. 69. 1505 pc (vgms) sy^p
- | π. εν σ. 049(c) (z) vg sa?
- | αποθανοντος υπερ υμων σ. κ^{*}
- | txt P72 B C Ψ 0285. 323. 1739 pc sa?; Nic
- * εν K P 69 m z vgmss
- * -ταις κ^c B Ψ pc lat^t
- | απο -ταις 049. 1881 pc; Hier
- | txt P⁷² κ^{*} A C P 1739 M

1. Petrus 4,2

- * 2 1 C; Hier
- | ανθ. αμαρτιας Ψ
- * ανθρωπου κ^{*}
- * σωσαι P⁷²

1. Petrus 4,3

- * υμιν κ^{*} 630 p^m bo; Augpt
- | ημιν C K L P 049. 69. 623^c. 2298 p^m; Hier
- | txt P72 κ^c A B Ψ 81. 323. 614. 945. 1241. 1505. 1739 al lat^t sy sa; Cl (33 illeg.)
- * του βιου P 049 M
- | txt P72 κ^c A B C Ψ 33. 81. 323. 614. 630. 1241. 1505. 1739 al latt sy co; Cl
- * θελημα P M
- | txt P⁷² κ^c A B C Ψ 81. 323. 630. 945. 1241. 1739 al; Cl
- * πορευομενους κ 1881 pc co?; Aug^{pt}

1. Petrus 4,4

- * και βλασφημουσιν κ^{*} C* 81. 323. 945. 1241. 1739 al
- | txt P⁷² κ^c A B C² P Ψ 049 m lat^t sy^h

1. Petrus 4,5

- * 1 2 P⁷²
- | - κ^{*}
- | txt κ^c A B C P Ψ 33. 1739 M lat^t sy co; Clat
- * ετ. κρινοντι B (C*vid) Ψ (81). 614. 630. 1852 al sy^h

shift in meaning occurs with any of these variations. Thus the conclusion can be reached once more that our passage has been preserved in its original form without serious variation.

Internal History. The shifts in time references are important to note in this text. The core admonition in the beginning sentence (vv. 1-2) affirms a stance needed in the present with the core admonition: “arm yourselves also with the same intention.” But the admonition is based on the past suffering of Christ on the cross as the model. The purpose expression in verse 2 anticipates the future with the remaining life of the believers.

The justifying declarations in verses three through six reach back into the pre-Christian past of the readers in contact of their present life to that before salvation. The unwillingness of believers in the present to indulge in sinful living with their pagan neighbors prompts a reference to eschatological judgment of these pagans in the future.

Charted out the time references surface this way:

Past:	Present:	Future:
Christ’s suffering (v. 1a)	Adopt same intention (v. 1b)	live life by God’s will (v. 2)
Life in paganism before Christ (v. 3)	Pagans surprised by you (v. 4)	They will be judged (v. 5)

These shifts in time designation play an important role in how Peter develops his points with his readers. Being sensitive to them will help make understanding the passage easier.

Peter also alludes to his readers having spent their pre-Christian lives “doing what the Gentiles like to do, living in licentiousness, passions, drunkenness, revels, carousing, and lawless idolatry.” Does this imply a Gentile readership for the letter? At first glance, it might seem so. But careful reading of the text will suggest otherwise. At best, the implication here is that a considerable element of the readership were Gentiles, but not all of them. Both Jewish and Gentile oriented allusions are scattered throughout the letter, leading to the better conclusion that the congregations being addressed by the letter were made up of both Jews and non-Jews, not one or the other.

b. Literary

Literary Form (Genre). At *the broad genre* level, this text continues the discussion in the letter body, as the outline below illustrates. The occasional nature of the letter means this passage reflects actual circumstances present in the lives of the readers of this letter. Peter is attempting to address these.

At *the small genre* level, the text is basically paraenesis of the general type with no subdivision category that can be identified. Peter continues to admonish his readers to adopt a distinct lifestyle. Here he picks again the admonitions about unjust suffering begun in 3:13. Additionally, the issue of the axiomatic nature of the causal clause ὅτι ὁ παθῶν σαρκὶ πέπταιται ἀμαρτίας surfaces, not just as a genre issue but as a theological declaration. At first glance it does seem to be a generic principle of Christian teaching, but not everyone agrees. This will be explored in greater detail in the exegesis below.

Literary Context. The outline chart to the right illustrates the location of 4:1-6 in the scheme of things in the letter body. First, the passage stands as a continuation of the theme of unjust suffering that Peter begun in 3:13 with the rhetorical question, “Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good?” He has developed this motif in a variety of ways in 3:13-22. Unjust suffering is not God’s will, but it will happen to believers, just as it did to Christ. In response to unjust suffering believers, need to be prepared to explain their faith commitment out of their having made Christ absolute Lord in their lives. On this basis then, Christ’s example of enduring unjust suffering on the cross is inspiring and encouraging. In it, we see

Outline of Contents in First Peter:

- Praescriptio: 1:1-2**
- **Superscriptio, 1:1a**
- **Adscriptio, 1:1b-2a**
- **Salutatio, 1:2b**
- Proem: 1:3-12**
- **Core, 1:3a**
- **Expansion, 1:3b-12**
- Body: 1:13-5:11**
- **Holy living 1:13-2:10**
 - **Ideals 1:13-25**
 - **Privileges 2:1-10**
- **Obligations 2:11-3:12**
 - **Civic 2:11-17**
 - **Haustafeln 2:18-3:7**
 - **Social 3:8-12**
- **Persecution 3:13-5:11**
 - **Encouragement 3:13-4:11**
 - **Explanation 4:12-19**
 - **Proper Conduct 5:1-11**
- Conclusio: 5:12-14**
- **Sender Verification, 5:12**
- **Greetings, 5:13-14a**
- **Benedictio, 5:14b**

| ετοιμω κριναι P⁷² 945. 1241. 1739. 1881 pc co?
| txt κ A C² P M

[Eberhard Nestle, Erwin Nestle, Kurt Aland et al., *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27. Aufl., rev. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1993), 605-06.]

God's acknowledgment and affirmation of Christ in his resurrection and ascension to Heaven.

Peter follows this with the admonition to adopt Christ's *ἐννοίαν* (=insight, intention, motivation) in unjust suffering (4:1-6). Actually, the verb *ὀπλίσασθε* that he uses has more the sense of "arm yourselves with," "equip yourselves with." Christ's intention in unjust suffering was to entrust Himself into God's hands with the conviction that God would use such suffering to accomplish something good from it. He gives two reasons (vv. 3-6) for the admonition.

Peter will close out his encouragement to endure unjust suffering in 4:7-11 with an emphasis on the nearness of eschatological judgment and its implications for daily living.

Literary Structure. The block diagram below illustrates the core ideas and how they are put together into a progression of thought.

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4:1      Therefore
         because Christ suffered in the flesh
         also
50  you equip yourselves with the same insight
         because the one having suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,
4:2      so that you no longer live out the remaining time in the flesh
         in human cravings
         but
         in the will of God.

4:3      For
51  enough is the time that has passed
         to do the intent of the Gentiles
         having gone
         into licentiousness,
         cravings,
         drunkenness,
         carousal,
         drinking parties,
         and
         disgusting idolatry,
4:4      in which time they are surprised
         |      when you don't run with them
         |      in the same stream of debauchery
         |      while blaspheming;
         /-----|
4:5      who will give account to the One prepared to judge the living and the dead;
4:6      for
         into this reason
         also
52  to the dead was preached the gospel
         so that they might be judged
         according to humans in the flesh
         but
         they might live
         according to God in the spirit.
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Essentially the text is built around an admonition (# 50) and two reasons (#s 51 & 52) for it. The admonition encompasses verses one and two and centers on an exhortation from Peter to adopt Christ's intention about suffering. Unusual language is used by Peter here, and gives a certain distinct tone to the sentence. He justifies this admonition initially (ὅτι) by an axiomatic saying that the person suffering has stopped dealing with sin.

The primary two reasons (ὅρα) for the admonition (#s 51 - 52) are based on the religious transformation of the readers (#51) and a strange declaration about the preaching of the gospel to the dead (#52). The first

reason is easy to understand, but the second one will take careful analysis before we can grasp what Peter is alluding to here.

II. Message

The exegesis of the passage will be structured around the above understanding of the organization of the ideas in the text: an admonition with two reasons for it.

a. Adopt Christ's intention in suffering, vv. 1-2

1 Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same intention (for whoever has suffered in the flesh has finished with sin), 2 so as to live for the rest of your earthly life no longer by human desires but by the will of God.

4.1 Χριστοῦ οὖν παθόντος σαρκί καὶ ὑμεῖς τὴν αὐτὴν ἔννοιαν ὀπλίσασθε, ὅτι ὁ παθὼν σαρκί πέπταται ἀμαρτίας, 2 εἰς τὸ μηκέτι ἀνθρώπων ἐπιθυμίαις ἀλλὰ θελήματι θεοῦ τὸν ἐπίλοιπον ἐν σαρκί βιώσαι χρόνον.

Notes:

In continuing the emphasis on enduring unjust suffering with Christ as the model (cf. 3:13-22), Peter adds a distinctive element with his admonition here. The core admonition is expanded in three ways: 1) example of Christ's suffering; 2) a causal basis for admonition; and 3) a purpose expression of consequence.

Core admonition: καὶ ὑμεῖς τὴν αὐτὴν ἔννοιαν ὀπλίσασθε, "arm yourselves also with the same intention." How does one endure unjust suffering? Peter's answer is for us to embrace τὴν αὐτὴν ἔννοιαν⁴ that Jesus had in His suffering. The point of ἔννοια is "a way of thinking."⁵ In order to tolerate the injustice being done against us, we have to find a way of thinking about it that supplies the necessary coping abilities. Otherwise, human anger and frustration dominate and produce actions that may only lead to worse troubles. Peter underscores that only Christ's way of thinking about unjust suffering is adequate.

The admonition encourages us to ὀπλίσασθε with Christ's thinking. The idea of ὀπλίζω is to equip or arm oneself with something.⁶ The frequent used military image presented is more than just adopting or accepting

⁴ἔννοια, ας, ἡ the content of mental processing, thought, knowledge, insight, (so esp. in the philosophers: Pla., Phd. 73c; Aristot., EN 9, 11, 1171a, 31f; 10, 10, 1179b, 13f; Epict. 2, 11, 2 and 3 al.; Plut., Mor. 900a; Diog. L. 3, 79; T. Kellis 22, 4; Herm. Wr. 1, 1; Philo; but also outside philosophic contexts: X., An. 3, 1, 13; Diod S 20, 34, 6; PRein 7, 15 [II B.C.]; UPZ 19, 111; 110, 32 [all II B.C.]; Pr 1:4; 2:11 al.; Jos., Bell. 2, 517 and Ant. 14, 481; Test12Patr; TestSol 20:5 εἰς ἔννοιαν ἐλθεῖν; Just. Tat.; Ath.; ἔ. ἔχειν τοῦ θεοῦ Orig., C. Cels. 4, 96, 3; περὶ τοῦ δημιουργοῦ ἔ. 4, 26, 46; ἔ. τῶν νόμων Did., Gen. 113, 1) κ. ὑμεῖς τ. αὐτὴν ἔννοιαν ὀπλίσασθε *arm yourselves also w. the same way of thinking* **1 Pt 4:1**; ἐννοεῖν ἔ. Dg 8:9. ἐδόκει γ[ὰρ] ἐτε]ερογνωμονεῖν τῇ ἐκ[ε]ίν[ου] ἐν]νοίᾳ (what was said) *appeared to differ in sense from what he (the Redeemer) had in mind* GMary 463, 9–11.—αὐτὴ ἡ ἀπό[ρ]οια τῆ[ς] ἐ]ννοίας, *this emanation of the (divine) mind* Ox 1081, 30f=SJCh 90, 7f; cp. Just., A I, 64, 5 πρῶτην ἔννοιαν ἔφασαν τὴν Ἀθηνᾶν 'they called Athena the first thought [of Zeus]', sim. Helen as wife of Simon Magus 26, 3. Pl. (Jos., Ant. 6, 37; Just., D. 93, 1; Tat., Ath.) w. διαλογισμοί 1 Cl 21:3. W. ἐνθυμήσεις (Job 21:27 Sym.) **Hb 4:12**; 1 Cl 21:9. W. λογισμοί Pol 4:3.—B. 1212. DELG s.v. νόος. M-M. TW. 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), 337.]

⁵Note the variations in translating τὴν αὐτὴν ἔννοιαν:

English: "the same intention," (NRSV); "the same attitude," (NLT; NIV; TNIV); "the same mind," (KJV; ASV; BBE; NKJV); "the same way of thinking," (ESV; TEV; LEB; NCV); "the same resolve," (HCSB); "the same purpose," (NASB); "think in the same way Christ did," (NIRV); "the same thought," (RSV); "think like him," (Message);

German: "demselben Sinne," (Elberfelder 1905); "demselben Sinn," (Luther Bibel 1912, 1984); "derselben Gesinnung," (Elberfelder 2006; Schlachter Bibel); "seiner Gesinnung," (GNB); "der gleichen Gesinnung," (Menge Bibel; Zürcher Bibel); "seine Haltung," (Basis Bibel); "diesem Gedanken," (Einheitsübersetzung); "seine Einstellung," (Neue Genfer); "diese Haltung," (Neues Leben Bibel);

Spanish: "el mismo propósito," (BdLA); "del mismo pensamiento," (Reina-Valera Antigua, 1960, 1995); "el mismo propósito," (Nueva Biblia Latinoamericana de Hoy); "siguiendo su ejemplo," (Castilian); "igual disposición," (Dios Habla Hoy); "la misma actitud," (Nueva Traducción Viviente; Nueva Versión Internacional); "esa misma actitud," (Reina Valera Contemporánea);

French: "de la même pensée," (La bible du Semeur; Louis Segond); "de cette même pensée," (Ostervald).

⁶ὀπλίζω (ὀπλον) 1 aor. mid. ὀπλισάμην (gener. 'to get someth. ready', or 'equip w. someth.', freq. in contexts indicating military preparation; Hom. et al.; Jer 52:25 Sym.; Jos., Vi. 45; SibOr 2, 119) **to get ready, esp. by equipping, equip, arm**, mid. *prepare or equip oneself*, in our lit. only fig. τὴν αὐτὴν ἔννοιαν *equip oneself with the same insight* **1 Pt 4:1** (cp. Soph., Electra 996 τοιοῦτον θράσος αὐτῆ θ' ὀπλίξει='you arm yourself with such rashness'; Anth. Pal. 5, 93, 1 ὀπλισμαὶ πρὸς Ἐρωτα περὶ στέρνοισι λογισμὸν='I have armed myself against Love with reason about my breast'; Jos., Ant. 6, 187 τ. θεὸν ὀπλισμαὶ David faces Goliath). Military imagery is not so evident here (s. next entry 1) as in the next pass. W. the dat. τινὶ *with*

a way of thinking.⁷ The incorporating of this way of thinking into our life serves to prepare us to face conflict.⁸ This way of thinking then has power to help us cope with the difficulties of unjust suffering.

Christ's example: Χριστοῦ οὖν παθόντος σαρκί, "Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh."⁹ What is the way of thinking? The causal function of the genitive absolute construction underscores Christ's suffering as the basis for the believers' suffering. There was something about His suffering that exemplifies a way of thinking crucial for believers to incorporate into their thinking.¹⁰ From what Peter has already indicated, this mind set of Christ at least included **1)** submission of God's will, cf. 1:2c; 2:21-23¹¹; **2)** conviction that good would come

someth. (Eur., Andr. 1118; X., Cyr. 6, 4, 4 w. specific reference to armor; Cornutus 31 p. 63, 17) τοῖς ὅπλοις τῆς δικαιοσύνης Pol 4:1. Here the accompanying dat. establishes a military metaphor.—DELG s.v. ὅπλον. M-M. s.v. ὀπλιζομαι. 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), 716.]

⁷"The verb *hoplistas* ('arm yourselves with') occurs only here in the NT; it is the verbal counterpart of 'hoplite,' an arms-bearing foot soldier in the Greek army. The expression is used here metaphorically to describe the struggle of the moral life, as is the verb *strateuō* ('war against') employed in 2:11b (see the NOTE on 2:11). Such figurative use of military language in moral contexts was common among the Greek and Roman philosophers⁴²⁵ and occurs frequently in the NT as well.⁴²⁶" [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 712.]

⁸Not all translations adequately communicate this image in their rendering.

Some do: "arm yourselves," (NRSV; ESV; HCSB; KJV; NASB; NIV; TNIV; NKJV; RSV); "arm ye yourselves," (ASV); "you must arm yourselves," (NLT; WNT); "you also equip yourselves," (LEB); "so wappnet euch auch," (Luther Bibel 1545, 1912, 1984); "so wappnet auch ihr euch," (Menge Bibel; Einheitsübersetzung); "so waffnet auch ihr euch," (Elberfelder 1905); "dann sollt auch ihr euch...wappnen," (Zürcher Bibel); "Darum rüstet auch ihr euch," (GNB); "armaos también vosotros," (La Biblia de las Américas); "vosotros también armaos," (Reina-Valera 1960, 1995); "vosotros también estad armados," (La Biblia Reina-Valera Antigua); "ármense también ustedes," (Nueva Biblia Latinoamericana de Hoy); "asuman también ustedes," (Nueva Versión Internacional); "vous aussi, armez-vous," (Ostervald); "vous aussi armez-vous," (Louis Segond); "armez-vous aussi," (La Bible du Semeur);

Others don't: "do you yourselves be," (BBE); "you too must strengthen yourselves," (TEV); "strengthen yourselves," (NCV); "prepare yourselves," (NIRV); "learn to think," (Message); "sollt auch ihr bereit sein," (Hoffnung für Alle); "también vosotros, siguiendo su ejemplo," (Castilian); "adopten también ustedes," (Dios Habla Hoy); "ustedes prepárense, adoptando," (Nueva Traducción Viviente); "también ustedes deben adoptar," (Reina Valera Contemporánea);

⁹"since Christ suffered in the flesh (*Christou ... pathontos sarki*). Christ, who suffered innocently (cf. 3:18ab), is now presented as the model according to whom the believers are to view their own suffering, repeating the pattern of 2:18–20, 21–25. The phrase is unique in the NT, though close in language to such texts as Acts 1:3; 3:18; 17:3; Heb 13:12, as well as to previous formulations in our letter (cf. 2:21, 23; 3:18a). As in the case of 2:21 and 3:18, the several textual variants, including the substitution of 'died' for 'suffered,' reflect the influence of familiar traditional formulation on the scribal tradition.⁴²³ The simple *pathontos sarki* (supported by P⁷² B C Ψ 323 1739 a few other MSS, cop^{sm?}; Nic.) best explains the origin of the variants and is preferred as the likely original reading. The participle *pathontos*, moreover, echoes the *epathen* of 3:18a, although now, as v 1b indicates, it is not the expiatory nature of Christ's suffering but its paradigmatic character that once again is stressed (cf. 2:21–23).

"The phrase, a further genitive absolute construction (cf. 3:20, 22c), combines in one formulation the terms 'suffer' and 'flesh' appearing in v 18a and v 18d, respectively. As in 3:18d, the dative of *sarx* modifies its foregoing participle as a dative of respect (lit., 'with respect to the flesh') and denotes the human, mortal frame in which Christ underwent suffering, the same sense *sarx* has in 4:1c, 2, and 6. This qualification thus prepares for what follows.⁴²⁴ Altogether, 'flesh' is used four times in vv 1–6, with its appearances in vv 1 and 6 forming part of the inclusion framing the unit." [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 711–12.]

¹⁰"Since v 1a, however, speaks not of an 'understanding' of Christ but of his 'act' of having suffered, 'same understanding' must refer to the attitude of mind and commitment that the author believed prompted Christ to endure suffering. From what the author has already stated, this mind-set could have involved Christ's subordination to the divine will during his innocent suffering (1:2c; 2:21–23 [as God's servant]; 3:17–18), his resistance to wrongdoing and retaliation (2:22–23b), and his trusting commitment of his cause to God (2:23c). These features of Christ's attitude and behavior have already been held up as paradigmatic for the believers and therefore may be implied here as well. The invoking of Christ as model is typical of NT instruction, particularly on the subject of discipleship.⁴²⁹" [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 713.]

¹¹**1 Peter 1:2c** (NRSV): "to be obedient to Jesus Christ"

2:21–23 (NRSV): "21 For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps. 22 'He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.' 23 When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly."

from his suffering, cf. 3:17-18¹²; **3**) refusal to retaliate against His persecutors, cf. 2:22-23b¹³; **4**) entrusting His cause to God, cf. 2:23c.¹⁴ Here is the heart of Christ's way of thinking, *ἔννοιαν*, about unjust suffering that believers need to incorporate into their thinking. Perhaps even more is implied in Peter's words, since Peter will mention Christ's sufferings again after our text. Note the following:

4:13-14, 13 ἀλλὰ καθὼ κοινωνεῖτε τοῖς τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθήμασιν χαίρετε, ἵνα καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀποκαλύψει τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ χαρῆτε ἀγαλλιώμενοι. εἰ ὀνειδίζεσθε ἐν ὀνόματι Χριστοῦ, μακάριοι, ὅτι τὸ τῆς δόξης καὶ τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πνεῦμα ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἀναπαύεται,

"13 But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. 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."

Here we don't see signals of motivation for suffering by Christ so much as a declaration of divine blessing on those who suffer. And this blessing is defined as the Spirit of God resting on the believer in their suffering.

5:1, Πρεσβυτέρους οὖν ἐν ὑμῖν παρακαλῶ ὁ συμπρεσβύτερος καὶ μάρτυς τῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθημάτων, ὁ καὶ τῆς μελλούσης ἀποκαλύπτεσθαι δόξης κοινωνός,

"Now as an elder myself and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory to be revealed,..."

Here Peter affirms the credibility of Christ's sufferings as one who saw them happen and clearly understands now what was happening to Christ during that time. Beyond this, Peter has learned how to participate in those sufferings through spiritual union with the risen Christ, and can thus share out of his own experience.

Peter has come to understand that for believers to effectively turn aside from their old 'fleshly self' and to live out the will of God they must approach unjust suffering the exact same way that Christ did when He died on the cross.

Why: ὅτι ὁ παθὼν σαρκὶ πέπαυται ἀμαρτίας, "(for whoever has suffered in the flesh has finished with sin)." This subordinate clause has produced considerable diversity of opinion about its role in the sentence, as well as the precise meaning of its content.¹⁵ The possible functions in the sentence revolve around two legitimate meanings of the conjunction ὅτι that introduces the clause. The two legitimate possibilities in this usage are: 1) the conjunction introduces the definition of the content of τὴν αὐτὴν ἔννοιαν, "the same way of thinking."¹⁶ Or, 2) the conjunction introduces a reason for the admonition.¹⁷ Most translations and commentators adopt the second understanding in rejection of the first, largely because of substantial problems attached to the first understanding.¹⁸

Clearly the statement in the ὅτι-clause is axiomatic in nature, and doesn't just refer to Christ suffering in the flesh.¹⁹ It is inclusive for those suffering unjustly in their physical existence. But the model in the context

¹²**1 Peter 3:17-18** (NRSV): "18 For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God."

¹³**1 Peter 2:22-23b** (NRSV): "22 'He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.' 23 When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten;"

¹⁴**1 Peter 2:23c** (NRSV): "but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly."

¹⁵"A number of explanations have been offered for this phrase: (1) when a person identifies with Christ's death at baptism, he has finished with sin and its power over him (with Rom. 6:1-12 and 1 John 5:18-19 as parallel ideas);⁴ (2) when a person suffers, he breaks the power of sin (which is rooted in his flesh) over his life or atones for the sin in his life;⁵ (3) when a person decides to suffer, he has chosen decisively to break with sin;⁶ (4) when Christ suffered, he finished with sin (i.e., the phrase does not refer to the Christian at all);⁷ or (5) when a Christian suffers (dies), he will, like Christ (3:18), be freed from sin."⁸ [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), 148-49.]

¹⁶Cf. Achtemeier and Epp for illustration of the translation: "Since, then, Christ suffered in the flesh, you also must arm yourselves with the same thought, namely, that the one who suffered in the flesh ceased from sin,..."

[Paul J. Achtemeier and Eldon Jay Epp, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter*, Hermeneia--a critical and historical commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1996), 275.]

¹⁷Cf. NRSV: "arm yourselves also with the same intention (for whoever has suffered in the flesh has finished with sin),..."

¹⁸These problems are both grammatical and theological: 1) the grammar doesn't work right for the conjunction to be epexegetical (A-G lexicon; as a 'marker of explanatory clauses' ὅτι needs to go back to a demonstrative pronoun as its antecedent, which it doesn't do here); 2) how did Christ 'cease sinning' with His unjust suffering? This raises huge theological issues, explicitly denied by other texts in the New Testament, i.e., 2:22, "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." Attempts to 'explain around' this are unconvincing.

¹⁹The subject statement ὁ παθὼν σαρκὶ is generic in nature, not specific.

clearly is Christ and His sufferings as an example for believers.

What then did Peter mean by this statement in regard to Christ? Important clues exist in similar language already used in this letter:

3:18a, “For Christ also suffered for sins once for all,” και Χριστὸς ἅπαξ περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἔπαθεν. Christ’s connection with sin was that his sufferings were ‘for sins,’ that is, intended to solve the problem of human sinning.

2:24, “He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed,” ὃς τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν αὐτὸς ἀνήνεγκεν ἐν τῷ σώματι αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον, ἵνα ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ἀπογενόμενοι τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ ζήσωμεν, οὗ τῷ μύλωπι ἰάθητε. His dying on the cross was to free us from sin in order to live in righteousness.

This is similar to a statement in Heb. 9:28:

so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, *not to deal with sin*, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

Christ’s suffering on the cross then was intended to deal with the sin problem once for all, which Christ effectively did. His earthly life was completed by solving the human sin problem completely.

Now, how does that apply to believers as an example? Most likely in this way. Christ’s sufferings allowed Him to put the issue of sin completely behind Him and to look forward to the exaltation and glorification of the Father: “who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him” (3:22). When believers experience unjust suffering, we should be better able to ‘put it behind us’ in order to live in righteousness because we have identified ourselves with the same way of thinking that Christ had. We also entrust ourselves into the hands of a righteous God and depend on Him for justice. We refuse to take revenge and strike back at those inflicting suffering on us, just as Christ did. We are convinced, as was Christ, that good will come out of our suffering. So we move forward in the experience of unjust suffering, not backward!

Impact: εἰς τὸ μηκέτι ἀνθρώπων ἐπιθυμίαις ἀλλὰ θελήματι θεοῦ τὸν ἐπίλοιπον ἐν σαρκὶ βιώσαι χρόνον, “so as to live for the rest of your earthly life no longer by human desires but by the will of God.” The purpose of ‘arming ourselves’ is now stated, and it is the forward look that comes out of thinking the same way of Jesus. *Each experience of suffering enables us to look ahead on how to live after suffering:* τὸν ἐπίλοιπον ἐν σαρκὶ βιώσαι χρόνον.²⁰ Such a stance is not natural to human nature. Unjust suffering tempts us to look back at the suffering for plotting how to get revenge on our tormentor. But the ‘mind of Christ’ that we have incorporated into our thinking will not allow us to do this. Rather, it insists that we look forward.²¹

The backward look is ἀνθρώπων ἐπιθυμίαις, ‘with the passions of men.’ This is a general label for what Peter will describe in detail in verses three and four. This was the lifestyle of his readers before coming to Christ. Earlier he described such passions as “the desires that you formerly had in ignorance” (ταῖς πρότερον ἐν τῇ ἀγνοίᾳ ὑμῶν ἐπιθυμίαις, 1:14); and “the desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul,” (τῶν σαρκικῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν αἵτινες στρατεύονται κατὰ τῆς ψυχῆς, 2:11). Peter is encouraging them to put that way of living completely behind them and to no longer do those things.

The forward look is θελήματι θεοῦ, ‘the will of God.’ In the letter, Peter speaks of God’s will in terms of doing good (“God’s will that by doing right”, τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ ἀγαθοποιούντας, 2:15); “to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God’s will,” ἀγαθοποιούντας, εἰ θέλοι τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, 3:17; and “suffering in accordance with God’s will,” οἱ πάσχοντες κατὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, 4:19. Clearly God’s will centers on actions done by believers guided by God’s leadership that may very well produce a persecution based suffering.

²⁰“One’s ‘remaining time in the flesh’ is not the relatively short time remaining for everyone until Christ’s return (cf. 4:7), but rather the individual’s lifetime on earth, whether short or long. This χρόνος, or span of time, is the same as the ‘allotted time’ believers enjoy in whatever places or circumstances they find themselves (lit., ‘time of your sojourn,’ 1:17). βιώσαι, ‘live out,’ in contrast to ζῆν, ‘live’ (e.g., v 6; 2:24), refers to the natural course of human existence rather than to ‘live’ as a supreme value or a divine gift. It refers to one’s ἀναστροφή, or ‘conduct,’ day by day (cf. the cognate verb ἀναστράφητε, understood similarly as ‘live out’ in 1:17). Both ‘course of life’ and ‘conduct’ in this sense are ethically neutral. Only the context indicates whether one’s course of life is good or bad; note that ἀναστροφή is always characterized, either as ‘holy’ (1:15), ‘empty’ (1:18), ‘good’ (2:12; 3:16), or ‘pure’ (3:1–2).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 229.]

²¹“The phrases defining the course of life appropriate for Christ’s followers are set in contrast in a way characteristic of Peter’s style: i.e., ‘not this, but that’ (cf. 1:12, 14–15, 18, 23; 2:23; 3:3–4, 9, 21; 4:15–16; 5:2–3; cf. 2:18, 20).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 229.]

Thus believers experiencing unjust suffering focus in the time of suffering, and beyond it, on how to continue doing what God directs even though such actions will likely produce repeated sufferings. This indeed is Christ's way of thinking, and believers are to have the very same stance all through their Christian pilgrimage in this life.

b. Two reasons to do so, vv. 3-6

3 You have already spent enough time in doing what the Gentiles like to do, living in licentiousness, passions, drunkenness, revels, carousing, and lawless idolatry. 4 They are surprised that you no longer join them in the same excesses of dissipation, and so they blaspheme. 5 But they will have to give an accounting to him who stands ready to judge the living and the dead. 6 For this is the reason the gospel was proclaimed even to the dead, so that, though they had been judged in the flesh as everyone is judged, they might live in the spirit as God does.

3 ἀρκετὸς γὰρ ὁ παρεληλυθὼς χρόνος τὸ βούλημα τῶν ἐθνῶν κατειργάσθαι, πεπορευμένους ἐν ἀσελγείαις, ἐπιθυμίαις, οἰνοφλυγίαις, κώμοις, πότοις, καὶ ἀθεμίτοις εἰδωλολατρίαις. 4 ἐν ᾧ ξενίζονται μὴ συντρεχόντων ὑμῶν εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν τῆς ἀσωτίας ἀνάχυσιν, βλασφημοῦντες· 5 οἱ ἀποδώσουσιν λόγον τῷ ἐτοιμῶς ἔχοντι κρῖναι ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς· 6 εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ νεκροῖς εὐηγγελίσθη ἵνα κριθῶσι μὲν κατὰ ἀνθρώπους σαρκὶ ζῶσι δὲ κατὰ θεὸν πνεύματι.

Notes:

The casual conjunction γὰρ ('for') in verses three and six introduce two foundations upon which the admonition rests. One is looking back and the other is looking ahead. Both center on a godless Gentile way of living. The past immoral lifestyle of many of these believers prior to conversion that their non-Christian friends continue in poses a challenge now for the initial readers of this letter. Peter affirms what they were experiencing after becoming believers. With the dramatic change in their life in Christian conversion, they no longer continued living this immoral lifestyle. And this was surprising to their non-Christian friends who considered such living as normal and desirable. In response to their Christian friends, these people engaged in slanderous misrepresentations of their Christian friends (v. 4). Peter looks forward in vv. 5-6 to eschatological judgment of these non-believers. In final judgment God will hold them accountable for their slanderous lies about their Christian friends who were no longer willing to join them in immoral living. Verse six poses another puzzling issue for interpretation, just like the Noah passage in 3:19-21. Volumes of speculative guessing at the meaning have been written over the centuries.

Adopting the same way of thinking that Christ followed (τὴν αὐτὴν ἔννοιαν) is based first on the dramatic move away from a pagan way of living (vv. 3-5). Peter stresses two aspects here: a summary depiction of that lifestyle, and the reaction of non-Christian friends to the believers' rejection of that way of living.

The readers are reminded that they have spent plenty of time doing what pagans like to do, and then he specifies *six categories of actions* in that pagan lifestyle: ἀσελγείαις (licentiousness), ἐπιθυμίαις (passions), οἰνοφλυγίαις (drunkennesses), κώμοις (revels), πότοις (carousings) καὶ ἀθεμίτοις εἰδωλολατρίαις (lawless idolatries). We need to see clearly the depiction of that lifestyle. Then we can better understand the previous involvement of the first readers in that way of living.

Some common patterns to this listing are important. First, this list constitutes a 'vice list' in its genre.²²

²²For a detailed listing of all these in the New Testament see Lorin L. Cranford, "New Testament Vice Lists," *cranfordville.com*: <http://cranfordville.com/NTViceLists.html>. For a background of how these 'catalogs' were used in the ancient Greco-Roman world, see J.D. Charles, "Vice and Virtue Lists," in *Dictionary of New Testament Background*. Ancient philosophers developed such lists of 'rights' and 'wrongs' largely as a teaching device to educate people, especially young people, on proper and improper behavior in a stable society. These lists grew out of differing philosophies of ethics developed by various philosophers, and sought to 'concretize' the abstract idea of ethical behavior by specifying correct behavior from bad behavior. Zeno (340-265 BCE) was the founder of Stoicism that was the most influential philosophy at the beginning of the Christian era. He pioneered the development of these catalogues of vices and virtues, that became very popular and widely used over the subsequent centuries. Hellenistic Judaism beginning with the Jewish philosopher Philo incorporates a modified version of these listings, so that by the beginning of the Christian era such thinking was quite extensive in Diaspora Judaism.

This impacted apostolic Christianity with the result that some 23 vice listings and 13 virtue listings are found in the pages of the New Testament. Considerable overlapping between the Greco-Roman, the Jewish, and early Christian listings is present; they often define the same things as either good or bad behavior. But substantial differences in the listings also exist. And more importantly, the motivating dynamic for ethical behavior is very different. In the Greco-Roman systems, the achieving of a successful life and the building of stable society motivate ethical behavior. Among the Jewish philosophers, obeying the Torah of God to achieve eternal acceptance by God is the motivation. For Christian writers, ethical behavior flows out of relationship with Christ and represents

Such lists specified patterns of behavior considered wrong and immoral in Christianity. Some 23 such listings appear in the New Testament.²³ For a reasonably comprehensive picture of unacceptable conduct one should examine all of these listings. No single listing should be taken as comprehensive; each one touches only on those vices or types of vices considered particularly relevant to the individual situation the NT writer was addressing in his writing. Sometimes these listings will specify individual actions, but at other times -- as is the case here -- categories of actions will be the focus of emphasis.²⁴

Also common to this listing is the use of the plural form of each of the six ethical categories. This is in contrast to the singular form of each of these six Greek nouns, which would specify abstract concepts. Peter's use of the plural form instead emphasizes specific expressions of these vices. The stress is functional, rather than theoretical. Peter had no concern to theorize philosophically. Rather he was interested in concrete actions that represented destructive behavior.

ἀσελγείαις (*licentiousness*). The noun ἀσέλγεια is used some ten times in the New Testament, and basically means 'self-abandonment' into completely immoral behavior.²⁵ In the first century Roman world, the lifestyle of many of the aristocrats and government leaders served as a visual example of what Peter was talking about. Unbridled excess in physical pleasures typified their way of living. These out of control urges can go in a variety to directions as motivated by greed and quests for power and control. In 2 Peter 2:2, Peter will contend that such behavior will be taught by false Christian teachers as completely acceptable religiously.²⁶ Deviate sexual behavior is but one direction that ἀσέλγεια will take a person. It can encompass a complete lifestyle as ἐν ἀσελγείᾳ ἀναστροφῆς in 2 Peter 2:7 defines. The origin of such actions lie in the 'flesh' as 2 Peter 2:18 asserts: ἐν ἐπιθυμίαις σαρκὸς ἀσελγείαις. An ancient synonym of ἀσέλγεια was 'Κορινθιοῖς', *Corinthian*, because the ancient city of Corinth gained the reputation of being the center of licentiousness in the Roman empire. Peter urged his readers to abandon completely this way of living, since it had no legitimate place in the life of a follower of Jesus Christ. Such a move was not easy for Peter's readers, who had been brought up in a culture that prompted this carnal instinct of human nature.

ἐπιθυμίαις (*passions*). The noun ἐπιθυμία is closely related to ἀσέλγεια, and the two sometimes show up as a pair of terms with almost interchangeable meaning, as ἐν ἐπιθυμίαις σαρκὸς ἀσελγείαις in 2 Peter 2:18 illustrates. Here in 4:3, they seem to be expressing distinguishably different ideas. While ἀσέλγεια is a mental turning loose of all moral restraints, ἐπιθυμία is a controlling power that takes over the decision process to

the guidance of God's Spirit in the life of the believer. This is dramatically different from either the Greco-Roman or the Jewish approaches.

²³Matthew 15:19; Mark 7:21–22; Romans 1:29–31; 13:13; 1 Corinthians 5:10–11; 6:9–10; 2 Corinthians 6:9–10; 12:20–21; Galatians 5:19–21; Ephesians 4:31; 5:3–5; Colossians 3:5, 8; 1 Timothy 1:9–10; 2 Timothy 3:2–5; Titus 3:3; James 3:15; 1 Peter 2:1; 4:3, 15; Revelation 9:21; 21:8; 22:15.

²⁴The Roman and Greek catalogues tended to be elaborate systems with multiple layers of listings. The systematizing of hundreds of 'improper' actions into the multi-layered catalogues was one of the points of debate and difference by the various philosophers. The NT never engages in such efforts in large part because of its very different view of the motivation for such behavior. Systematization grows out of legalistic motives for self achievement, either religiously or socially. Christian denied the validity of any such legalism.

²⁵ἀσέλγεια, ας, ἡ (ἀσελγής; Pla., Isaeus et al.; Polyb. 1, 6, 5; 5, 28, 9 al.; Plut., Alcib. 8, 2 [195]; Lucian, Gall. 32; BGU 1578, 15 [II/III A.D.]; PMagd 24, 2; PLond V, 1711, 34; Wsd 14:26; 3 Macc 2:26; Jos., Ant. 4, 151; 8, 252; 318; 20, 112; TestJud 23:1; Ar.; Just., A II, 2, 3; Tat.; Mel., P. 50, 364) **lack of self-constraint which involves one in conduct that violates all bounds of what is socially acceptable, self-abandonment.** In sg. and pl. ἐαυτὸν παραδίδόναι τῇ ἁ. *give oneself over to licentiousness* Eph 4:19; πορεύεσθαι ἐν ἀσελγείαις *live licentiously* **1 Pt 4:3**; cp. Hm 12, 4, 6. τὴν χάριτα μετατιθέναι εἰς ἁ. *pervert favor into licentiousness* (i.e. they interpret divine goodness as an opportunity to ignore God and do what they please) **Jd 4** (cp. Diod S 16, 87, 1, where ἁ. is used of the insolence of a scoffer); πολλοὶ ἐξακολουθήσουσιν ταῖς ἁ. *many will follow in their licentious tracks* **2 Pt 2:2**. Cp. Hv 2, 2, 2. Esp. of sexual excesses (Philo, Mos. 1, 305; Hippol., Ref. 9, 13, 4) w. κοῖται **Ro 13:13**; w. ἀκαθαρσία (cp. **Eph 4:19**) and πορνεία **2 Cor 12:21**; **Gal 5:19**, in a long catalogue of vices, like **Mk 7:22**; Hs 9, 15, 3. ἡ ἐν ἁ. ἀναστροφή *indecent conduct* **2 Pt 2:7**; cp. vs. **18**. αἱ ἐπιθυμίαι τῆς ἁ. *licentious desires* Hv 3, 7, 2 (cp. Polyb. 36, 15, 4 ἁ. περὶ τ. σωματικῆς ἐπιθυμίας).—DELG s.v. ἀσελγής. 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), 141.]

²⁶2 Peter 2:1-3a, NRSV: **1** But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive opinions. They will even deny the Master who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. **2** Even so, *many will follow their licentious ways*, and because of these teachers the way of truth will be maligned. **3** And in their greed they will exploit you with deceptive words.

dictate choices of behavior based on physical appetites.²⁷ Peter often alludes to the dangers of ἐπιθυμία in both his letters.²⁸ A quick survey of his use of ἐπιθυμία makes it clear that such passions are lodged in carnal, sinful human nature and stand opposed to God and create serious danger to the spiritual health of individuals.

οἰνοφλυγίαις (*drunkennesses*). This is the only use of this word in the New Testament and refers to excessive drinking.²⁹ It belongs to a group of words describing excessive drinking that causes improper behavior.³⁰ The beverages implied here were not distilled alcoholic drinks, but rather fermented fruit juices with alcoholic content.³¹ The Bible does not condemn drinking wine etc. but does strongly condemn excessive consumption of drinks that can lead to drunkenness.

In the often dismal day to day grind of living in the ancient world, drunkenness was a major problem because it was widely



Ancient wine press in Israel with the pressing area in the center and the collection vat off to the bottom left.

²⁷Also related are the verb ἐπιθυμέω and the personal noun ἐπιθυμητής. All three words come from the root word θυμός, heat, and suggest intense burning for something as a figurative expression for highly focused desire. These words have a connection also to ἡδονή, passion, in ancient Greek. “The words denote the direct impulse towards food, sexual satisfaction etc., and also desire in general.” [“ἐπιθυμία, ἐπιθυμέω,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 3:168.]

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

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

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

2 Peter 1:4, NRSV: Thus he has given us, through these things, his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of *lust*, and may become participants of the divine nature.

2 Peter 2:10, NRSV: especially those who indulge their flesh in depraved *lust*, and who despise authority. Bold and willful, they are not afraid to slander the glorious ones,

2 Peter 2:18, NRSV: For they speak bombastic nonsense, and with licentious *desires of the flesh* they entice people who have just escaped from those who live in error.

2 Peter 3:3, NRSV: First of all you must understand this, that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and indulging *their own lusts*

His single use of the verb ἐπιθυμέω in both letters is in 1 Peter 1:12 with a positive tone: “things into which angels *long* to look.”

²⁹“οἰνοφλυγία, ας, ἡ (οἶνος, φλύω ‘bubble up’; X.; Aristot., EN 3, 5, 15; Stoic. III 397 οἰνοφλυγία δὲ ἐπιθυμία οἴνου ἄπληστος) *drunkenness* pl. (X., Oec. 1, 22; Polyb. 2, 19, 4; Musonius p. 14, 15 H.; Philo, Mos. 2, 185, Spec. Leg. 4, 91) w. ἀσέλγεια, κῶμοι, πότοι et al., of the individual occurrences of drunkenness **1 Pt 4:3**.—DELG s.v. φλύω. M-M.” [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), 701.]

³⁰For detailed description see topics 88.283–88.288 in the Louw-Nida Greek Lexicon. These terms are:

88.283 μεθύω; μέθη, ης f: to become drunk on alcoholic beverages—‘to be drunk, drunkenness.’

88.284 οἰνοφλυγία, ας f: drunkenness, implying the consumption of a large quantity of wine—‘drunkenness.’

88.285 μεθύσκομαι: to become intoxicated—‘to get drunk.’

88.286 κραιπάλη, ης f: drunken behavior which is completely without moral restraint—‘drunken dissipation.’

88.287 κῶμος, ου m; πότος, ου m: drinking parties involving unrestrained indulgence in alcoholic beverages and accompanying immoral behavior—‘orgy, revelling, carousing.’

88.288 μέθυσος, ου m; οἰνοπότης, ου m; πάροινος, ου m: a person who habitually drinks too much and thus becomes a drunkard—‘drunkard, heavy drinker.’

[Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, vol. 1, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament : Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. (New York: United Bible societies, 1996), 772.]

³¹“People in the ancient Mediterranean world were not acquainted with the distillation of alcoholic beverages; their alcohol-containing drinks involved fermented fruit juice (primarily of grapes) and grain.” [Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament : Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. (New York: United Bible societies, 1996), 1:772].

practiced throughout the Roman empire.³² Drunkenness in the Semitic cultures of the eastern Mediterranean region was also problematic, but not to the extent as among the Romans. Jewish tradition both in inside and outside of the Hebrew Bible frowned severely on drunkenness while not prohibiting drinking in moderate amounts. Thus excessive drinking was not the problem for Jews to the degree it was for other cultural groups of people in the Roman empire.

Peter does identify drunkenness with a pagan lifestyle that has no proper place in the life of believers. One would assume from the occasional nature of ancient letters that this issue did pose potential problems in the various congregations that the letter was addressed to.

κῶμοις (*revels*). This term κῶμος, only used three times in the New Testament, is closely identified with οἰνοφλυγία above.³³ It assumes excessive drinking and centers on the wild, immoral conduct that comes out of drunkenness, especially in festive celebrations. Banqueting and festive meals, especially in the evening, were common place in the Roman empire. Because ‘social networking’ was so very critical to one’s status in society and to business success, the major way of connecting up to the ‘right’ people was through entertaining select guests at large parties in your home. The various trade unions always conducted their meetings in connection with banquets in the evenings and on holidays. Many times the temples to the various deities served as the gathering place for these meals. For everyone but the poorest of the poor partying was a way of life in Peter’s world. With enough wine etc. to drink, these gatherings would often turn into immoral orgies.

For believers in Christ during that time, such behavior was an ongoing temptation, simply because of the social pressure from others to blend in. Refusal to engage in conduct considered normative by almost everyone around you could trigger severe criticism and condemnation of the conviction to not participate. Again, Peter makes it clear that such conduct is paganism and has no place in the life of a Christian.

πότοις (*carousing*). Also a single usage word in the New Testament, πότος is almost a synonym of κῶμος.³⁴ The term in secular Greek usually referred to a κῶμος type banquet, but where intellectuals gathered to drink and debate some designated topic. Often female dancers and prostitutes were present at such gatherings for entertainment purposes. With too much to drink and after lots of discussion on the topic of the evening, it was time for entertainment to let off steam. Drunken orgies usually climaxed the gatherings. It’s not certain whether Peter had such sophisticated gatherings in mind, or whether he was alluding to something similar but much less sophisticated. Whatever his specific intent, such activity is clearly out of bounds for followers of Christ.

ἄθεμίτοις εἰδωλολατρίαις (*lawless idolatry*). This final category of pagan living puts together two seemingly unrelated words.³⁵ The adjective ἄθεμιτος, ον is used only twice in the New Testament and specifies something

³²Whereas the Greeks limited the drinking of wine in their culture, the Romans aggressively promoted widespread use of wine in territories under their control. The Roman god Bacchius (Greek name = Dionysus) was the god of wine and devotion to him was widespread.

³³κῶμος, ον, ὁ (Hom. Hymns, Hdt. et al.; SIG 1078 κῶμοι τῷ Διονύσῳ; APF 5, 1913, 180 no. 38, 5; LXX) orig. a festal procession in honor of Dionysus (cp. our festival of Mardi Gras), then a joyous meal or banquet, in the NT (as Polyb. 10, 26, 3; in the only two LXX pass. [Wsd 14:23; 2 Macc 6:4] and in Philo; Jos., Ant. 17, 65; SibOr 8, 118) *only in a bad sense excessive feasting*, w. μέθαι (cp. Philo, Cher. 92; Polyaeus 2, 2, 7 μεθύειν καὶ κωμάζειν) *carousing, revelry* **Ro 13:13; Gal 5:21**. Likew. w. πότοι (Epicurus in Diog. L. 10, 132; Plut., Mor. 12b; Appian, Bell. Civ. 1, 113 §526) **1 Pt 4:3**.—DELG. M-M. Spicq.” [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), 580.]

³⁴πότος, ον, ὁ (X., Pla. et al.; Sb 7452, 21 [III A.D.?]; LXX; JosAs 21:6 [cod. A p. 71, 25 Bat.]; EpArist 262; Philo, Vi. Cont. 46; Jos., Ant. 5, 289; TestJud 8:2) **a social gathering at which wine was served, drinking party** (X., Symp. 8, 41, as synonym of κλήσις ‘banquet’ 1, 7) pl. (Aristoph., Pla. et al.; Pr 23:30) w. κῶμοι (q.v. and Synes., Providence 1, 14 p. 107c) **1 Pt 4:3** here prob. in the sense of ‘carousal’. In the Gr-Rom. world it was customary for literati to hold banquets at which topical discussions were featured, with participants well lubricated with wine (s. the dialogues of Pl. and esp. X., Symp.). These would not properly be rendered ‘carousals’. It is prob. that the Petrine pass. has less sophisticated participants in mind.—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), 857.]

³⁵Peter’s Jewish heritage comes to its clearest expression in this last and most emphatic item in his list of vices (the plural, ‘idoltrous acts,’ occurs only here in the NT). The mention of ‘idolatry’ is what betrays the primarily religious (rather than ethical) nature of the list of vices in this verse. The fact that the list culminates in ‘acts of idolatry’ strongly suggests that the preceding ‘acts of immorality and lust’ as well as the ‘drunken orgies, feasts, and revelries’ are Peter’s own generalized characterization of pagan religious practices based more on Jewish and Christian traditions than on first-hand observation (cf. Paul’s association of pagan religious meals with idolatry in 1 Cor 10:14–22). ‘Idolatry’ had a central place in Jewish and Christian vice lists because of the first

as either ‘forbidden’ or as something ‘violating canons of decency.’³⁶ Expressions of idolatry, εἰδωλολατρίας,³⁷ clearly stood outside the boundaries of legitimate activity for Christians.³⁸ Because virtually all the pagan religions of the ancient made absolutely no connection between religious devotion and ethical standards of conduct,³⁹ the above listed patterns of immoral behavior could easily be linked up to religious devotion to the various pagan dieties of that time, and often were deeply tied together.⁴⁰

This vice list is introduced by the participle πεπορευμένους ἐν..., ‘having gone into...’. This stresses a deep involvement into these kinds of immoral behavioral patterns that enveloped the life of the non-believing pagans. By such an introduction, Peter stresses the potential danger involved in lapsing back into some of these behaviors by believers. Trying to engage in such conduct spasmodically or just momentarily is playing with spiritual fire. These behaviors seek to dominate and control; an occasional lapse is opening the door to something far more deadly.

Peter has indicated to his readers that “You have already spent enough time in doing what the Gentiles like to do...” (ἀρκετὸς γὰρ ὁ παρεληλυθὼς χρόνος τὸ βούλημα τῶν ἐθνῶν κατειργάσθαι). His allusion here to their pre-conversion life is intended to call them to reflect back on that life and what a disaster it was. They would know out of their past experience that such patterns of behavior as specified in the vice list were wrong and

commandment of the Decalogue (in NT lists, cf. Gal 5:20; Col 3:5; also ‘idolater’ in 1 Cor 5:10–11; 6:9; Eph 5:5; Rev 21:8; 22:15). For warnings against ‘idolatry’ in particular, cf. T. Jud. 19.1; 1 Cor 10:14; Did. 3.4, 5.1; Barn. 16.7, 20.1; and the general sentiments expressed in many other passages (e.g., Acts 15:20; 2 Cor 6:14–16; 1 John 5:21; and especially Rom 1:18–25). Almost redundantly from a Jewish perspective—but perhaps not for his Gentile readers—Peter characterizes such idolatrous acts as ἀθέμιτοι, ‘lawless’ or ‘wanton’ (BGD, 20; obviously he does not imply by the adjective that other idolatrous acts exist, or can be imagined, that are not ‘lawless’). ἀθεμίτοις is probably not used with reference to the Jewish law (e.g., the Decalogue) in particular (cf. Acts 10:28; Josephus, Vit. 26; J. W. 1.650) but in the broader sense of something utterly inappropriate and repugnant to God (cf., e.g., 2 Macc 10:34; Josephus, J. W. 4.562; 1 Clem 63.2; Did. 16.4; Diogn. 4.2)” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 232.]

³⁶“ἀθέμιτος, ον (Hom. and other early wr. ἀθέμιστος; since Antiphon, more and more commonly in the Koine, incl. LXX; TestSol 10:2 P; 20:4 and Jos. [e.g. Bell. 4, 562, Vi. 26]; Just., A I, 9, 5; UPZ 162 II, 22 [117 B.C.] ἀθέμιτος). This term refers prim. not to what is forbidden by ordinance but to violation of tradition or common recognition of what is seemly or proper.

“1. **pert. to not being sanctioned, not allowed, forbidden** ἀθεμίτων ἐστὶν ἰς τὸ ἀθέμιτον ἐστὶν ἰς τὸ ἀθέμιτον w. inf. foll. (Plut., Mor. 150f; Jos., Bell. 1, 650) **Ac 10:28**.

“2. **pert. to violating canons of decency, wanton, disgusting, unseemly**, εἰδωλολατρία 1 Pt 4:3. ὀργή 1 Cl 63:2. πῶς οὐκ ἀθέμιστον; Dg 4:2.—Subst. ἄ. ποιεῖν (X., Mem. 1, 1, 9) commit lawless acts D 16:4.—DELG s.v. θέμις. 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), 24.]

³⁷The term εἰδωλολατρία (abstract noun, ‘idolatry’) is linked to εἰδωλολάτρης (personal noun, ‘idolater’), εἰδωλεῖον (noun, ‘idol’s temple’), εἰδωλόθυτος, ον (adjective, ‘something offered to an idol’), εἰδωλον (noun, ‘idol’), and εἰδωλολατρεῖω (verb, ‘to worship idols’).

³⁸“εἰδωλολατρία, ας, ἡ (on the sp.-εία s. B-D-F §23; 119, 2; TestJud 19:1; GrBar 8:5; Just., Orig.) derogatory term **image-worship, idolatry** D 3:4. In a catalogue of vices **Gal 5:20**; B 20:1; D 5:1. Of greed **Col 3:5** (cp. **Eph 5:5**; Pol 11:2 and s. HWeinell, D. Wirkungen des Geistes u. der Geister 1899, 14f). The unregenerate heart is πλήρης εἰδωλολατρίας full of idolatry B 16:7; φεύγειν ἀπὸ τῆς εἰ. **1 Cor 10:14** (cp. κινεῖσθαι ἀπὸ τῆς εἰ. Did., Gen. 210, 12). Pl. πορεύεσθαι ἐν ἀθεμίτοις εἰ. walk in unlawful idolatry, i.e. commit unlawful deeds connected w. polytheistic worship **1 Pt 4:3**.—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), 280.]

³⁹The only exceptions were Christianity, Judaism, and Mithraism.

⁴⁰“and lawless idolatries (*kai athemitois eidōlōlatriais*). This concluding phrase, an apparently Christian formulation found only here and in subsequent Christian writings, reveals the Christian perspective according to which this enumeration of vices is presented. By the word ‘idolatries’ (*eidōlōlatriais*), the author could have in mind the libations made to Dionysus/Bacchius, the god of wine, in the context of meals and drinking bouts (cf. 1 Cor 8:4–13 and 10:14–22 for idolatry in conjunction with meals). For Christians, as for the House of Israel, idolatry was the chief mark of the outsider alienated from God (1 Cor 5:11–12; 1 Thess 1:9–10) and for Paul (Rom 1:18–32), as for the author of the Wisdom of Solomon (14:27), the source of all other vices.⁴⁶⁹ In its present final and emphatic position here in v 3, ‘idolatries’ serves to summarize in one condemning expression the futility and fatuity of life lived in opposition to God. The modifier *athemitois* (‘lawless,’ ‘abominable,’ ‘grossly wicked’),⁴⁷⁰ Beare (1970, 180) notes, ‘means not so much ‘illegal’ as ‘unholy’—violating the divine ordering of life (contrary not to *nomos* [law], but to the more fundamental *themis*).’ In Peter’s remark to the Gentile Cornelius in Acts, it seems to imply both: ‘You yourselves know how unlawful/unholy it is for a Judean to associate with or to visit anyone of another people’ (Acts 10:28; cf. also 2 Macc 6:5–6; 7:1; 10:34).” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 724.]

a spiritual catastrophe. Such a negative way of living stood in stark contrast to the wholesome and beautiful way of living they now had as Christians. Realizing this should help them adopt τὴν αὐτὴν ἔννοιαν, Christ's way of thinking about unjust suffering.

This would help them resist the urging of unbelieving friends to continue living in this moral cesspool: ἐν ᾧ ξενίζονται μὴ συντρεχόντων ὑμῶν εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν τῆς ἀσωτίας ἀνάχυσιν βλασφημοῦντες, "They are surprised that you no longer join them in the same excesses of dissipation, and so they blaspheme." Peter's characterization is more vivid than the NRSV above suggests. Literally, these Gentile friends are shocked⁴¹ when the believers are not willing to "run with them into the same wide stream of debauchery." This is Peter's collective label for the vice list: a wide stream of debauchery, εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν τῆς ἀσωτίας ἀνάχυσιν.⁴² Their response to the urgings being rejected⁴³ is to slander the Christians. The NRSV translation 'blaspheme' is not correct in the way the English sentence is structured, and thus its footnote alternative translation is preferable: "they malign you."⁴⁴ The term alludes back to 3:16 where Peter indicated "when you are maligned," ἐν ᾧ καταλαϊσθε.

What Peter suggests here is not surprising, since contemporary pagans will quickly turn on believer friends who refuse to join them in immoral behavior. It happened in the first century world, and hasn't changed any down to the twenty-first century world.

Additionally Peter points his readers to the future accountability before God by these pagans who lived out their lives in immoral conduct: οἱ ἀποδώσουσιν λόγον τῷ ἐτοίμῳ ἔχοντι κρῖναι ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς, "they will have to give an accounting to him who stands ready to judge the living and the dead." These people opted to reject the God of the believers, but their choice has responsibilities. This God, unlike the capricious gods of the Greeks and Romans, is real and is pure righteousness and holiness. As Creator of everything, He holds creation accountable for its actions. And the time for giving account is the Day of Judgment at the end of human history. What these pagans will have to do is described as οἱ ἀποδώσουσιν λόγον τῷ..., which literally means "who will give back a word to..."⁴⁵ The language of Peter echoes the words of Jesus in Mt. 12:36, λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι πᾶν ῥῆμα ἄργον ὃ λαλήσουσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι, ἀποδώσουσιν περὶ αὐτοῦ λόγον ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κρίσεως.⁴⁶ The sense of the expression is to give to God a justifying basis for having said what the individual had spoken earlier. The clear implication of the expression is that such will be impossible to do, and thus the individuals will incur the awesome wrath of God coming down on them; cf. Rev. 20:11-15.⁴⁷ They are similar also to Paul's words

⁴¹In the active voice, *xenizō* means to 'entertain a stranger [*xenos*]' as a guest. But in the passive voice, as here, it means 'to be surprised,' 'astonished,' or shocked at something because of its unusual or unexpected nature, with the possible overtone of anger and resentment. The verb is used again in 4:12 in connection with the believers, who are told not to be surprised or upset at the fiery ordeal coming upon them. The verb's present tense, like that of the accompanying participle, 'malign,' and the expression 'you no longer join them,' conveys the sense of an ongoing situation." [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 725-26.]

⁴²ἀσωτία, ας, ἡ (s. σφζω; Pla. et al.; Polyb. 32, 11, 10; 39, 7, 7; PFay 12, 24 [103 B.C.]; Pr 28:7; 2 Macc 6:4; TestJud 16:1; TestAsh 5:1 v.1.) the verb σφζω refers to preservation, hence ἀσωτία gener. denotes 'wastefulness' (for a detailed discussion of the topic Aristot., EN 4, 1-45), then reckless abandon, debauchery, dissipation, profligacy, esp. exhibited in convivial gatherings (Athen. 11, 485a ἀπὸ τῶν εἰς τ. μέθας κ. τ. ἀσωτίας πολλὰ ἀναλισκόντων) debauchery Eph 5:18; wild living Tit 1:6; flood of dissipation τῆς ἀ. ἀνάχυσιν 1 Pt 4:4.—DELG s.v. σῶς. M-M. TW. Spicq." [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), 148.]

⁴³Interestingly, Peter characterizes these urgings by non-believing Gentiles as ξενίζονται, that is, efforts by them to show their Christian friends 'hospitality.' Both here and later in 4:12 Peter will use this verb with a negative meaning of shock and surprise that implies disappointment. It is similar in thrust to either θαυμάζειν, 'marvel,' or to σκανδαλίζειν, 'be scandalized.'

⁴⁴Even though the Greek verb βλασφημέω covers both, in English only deity is blasphemed while people are slandered.

⁴⁵Selwyn (213) raises the further possibility of the influence on Peter of a saying of Jesus recorded in Matt 12:36 ('I tell you, on the day of judgment [ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κρίσεως] people will give account [ἀποδώσουσιν ... λόγον] concerning every idle word that they speak'), with the remark that 'The mockings of the heathen were likely to have been 'idle' enough.' The language is that of legal obligation (cf. Luke 16:2) or even of the courtroom (cf. Acts 19:40), and the saying of Jesus is one of several in which he is represented as transferring that language to the issue of a person's ultimate accountability before God (cf. e.g., Matt 5:25-26// Luke 12:57-59//Matt 18:34-35). This use of the expression—usually without explicit development of the courtroom metaphor—continues in early Christian literature, whether in reference to accountability for oneself (Herm. Man. 2.5; cf. Rom 14:12) or a kind of pastoral accountability for others (Heb 13:17; Herm Vis. 3.9.10; cf. Clem. Alex. Quis Dives 42)." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 234.]

⁴⁶NLT, And I tell you this, that you must give an account on judgment day of every idle word you speak.

⁴⁷NRSV, 11 Then I saw a great white throne and the one who sat on it; the earth and the heaven fled from his presence, and no

to the Roman Christians, ἄρα ἕκαστος ἡμῶν περὶ ἑαυτοῦ **λόγον δώσει** (Rom. 14:12).⁴⁸

Peter depicts the Day of Judgment⁴⁹ in terms of God⁵⁰ who is τῷ ἐτοίμῳ⁵¹ ἔχοντι κρῖναι ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς, “the one ready to judge the living and the dead.”⁵² The phrase ‘the living and the dead’ shows up several times in the New Testament (see Acts 10:42; Rom. 14:9; 2 Tim. 4:1; 1 Pet. 4:5) in the context of final judgment, as a standard designation of all humanity.⁵³ Absolutely no one will be exempted from facing God in final judgment to give an accounting for their life.

Thus in this rather elaborate depiction Peter provides the first reason for thinking the same way that Christ did toward unjust suffering. The heart of the reason is that believers now live a dramatically different life than their non-believing neighbors and will not indulge themselves in that immoral lifestyle. Why? Mostly because they have been changed in conversion, and also because they are keenly aware of every person’s accountability to God in final judgment for the way life was lived out. In this awareness, they adopt the stance of Christ toward unjust suffering, realizing its superiority.

The second reason (γὰρ) given by Peter in verse six is more difficult to understand: εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ νεκροῖς εὐηγγελίσθη, ἵνα κριθῶσι μὲν κατὰ ἀνθρώπους σαρκὶ ζῶσι δὲ κατὰ θεὸν πνεύματι, “For this is the reason the gospel was proclaimed even to the dead, so that, though they had been judged in the flesh as everyone is judged, they might live in the spirit as God does.”⁵⁴ The complexities of this statement by Peter are enormous, as well as

place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Also another book was opened, the book of life. And the dead were judged according to their works, as recorded in the books. 13 And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and all were judged according to what they had done. 14 Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire; 15 and anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

⁴⁸NRSV, So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

⁴⁹For a detailed discussion see Leon Morris, “Judgment, Day of,” *Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* online at <http://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/bakers-evangelical-dictionary/judgment-day-of.html>.

⁵⁰“The identity of the judge is not stated and could be either God or Jesus Christ. Christ is the subject of 3:18–22 (cf. also 4:1a) and elsewhere in the NT is described as ‘judge of the living and the dead’ (Acts 10:42 [speech of Peter]; Pol. Phil 2:1; 2 Clem. 1:1) or as the one ‘about to judge the living and the dead’ (2 Tim 4:1; cf. Barn. 7:2).⁴⁸¹ However, the more traditional Israelite view of God as judge also occurs in the NT⁴⁸² and is reflected elsewhere in 1 Peter (1:17 and implied in 2:23 and 4:17–19), while Jesus nowhere is depicted as judge but rather as the one who submits to God’s will as his servant (2:21–24; cf. 1:2c). Thus God appears to be the implied subject here as well.” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 729–30.]

⁵¹“Some manuscripts (B [C] Ψ [81] 614 630 1852 others syth) read *hetoimōs krinonti* (‘readily judging’). In place of the adverb *hetoimōs* found in the superior textual witnesses (⋈ A C 2 P M), other manuscripts read *hetoimōi krinai* (‘to him who is ready to judge’) (P⁷² 945 1241 1739 1881 a few others cop?). Because it creates a smoother text, this reading is probably secondary but nevertheless captures the original sense intended.” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 729.]

⁵²“Judgment day may be referred to in any one of a number of ways. It may be spoken of strictly as ‘the day of judgment’ (Matt 10:15; 1 John 4:17), or with reference to its chronological place as ‘the last day’ (John 6:39). Mostly John’s references to this day refer to Jesus’ raising of people but he also tells us that Jesus said that the word that he spoke would on the last day judge anyone who despised him and refused to hear his words (John 12:48). The most common way of referring to it appears to be simply ‘that day’ (Luke 21:34); the day of judgment was so outstanding that nothing more was needed to draw attention to it. Indeed, it may be called ‘the great Day’ (Jude 6), or simply ‘the Day’ (Heb 10:25; 2 Peter 1:19).

“Some times the day is characterized by the outcome of it all. Thus it is ‘the day of redemption’ (Eph4:30). In one sense redemption is accomplished here and now when the sinner comes to trust Christ, but in another sense the Day of Judgment seals it all. And, of course, for the finally impenitent sinner it is ‘the great day of his wrath’ (Rev 6:17), ‘the day of God’s wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed’ (Rom 2:5).

“There are other ways of putting it; this list is not exhaustive. The point of it all is that the day in question is the decisive day. What happens then is the culmination of the history of the world. A judgment will take place from which there is no appeal.”

[Leon Morris, “Judgment, Day of,” *Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* online at <http://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/bakers-evangelical-dictionary/judgment-day-of.html>]

⁵³“This stock expression refers to all humanity, the totality of those physically alive or physically dead (Acts 10:42; 2 Tim 4:1; Barn. 7:2; Pol. Phil 2:1; 2 Clem. 1:1; cf. Rom 14:9). Here it expresses the universality of God’s judgment, from which none are exempt, including the nonbelievers of vv 3–4.” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 730.]

⁵⁴“Verse 6, which concludes this unit, presents the interpreter with several notoriously difficult problems: (1) the subject and content of the verb ‘proclaim’; (2) the identity of the ‘dead’; (3) the relation of 4:6 to 3:19; and (4) the sense of the antithesis of v

being very obscure. At minimal, any interpretation of the verse can only be put forth as tentative, never as dogmatically certain. Let's then try to make some sense of the statement.

1) εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ..., “for for this reason”: The two causal expressions must be clearly understood. The γὰρ, ‘for’, introduces a second reason for the main clause admonition to adopt the mind of Christ. But it closely links this reason to the first reason in verses 3-5, becoming somewhat ‘a reason for the reason.’ Why should we adopt Christ’s way of thinking about unjust suffering? Because there is a positive affirmation (verse 6) in relation to divine judgment on the last day (vv. 3-5). The prepositional phrase εἰς τοῦτο, ‘for this reason,’ introduces a sub-purpose intention also as a reason.⁵⁵ It anticipates the ἵνα clause (‘so that ...’) at the end of verse six. Thus verse six introduces a second reason for adopting the mind of Christ, because in connection with Final Judgment there is something positive to anticipate.

2) καὶ νεκροῖς εὐηγγελίσθη..., “also to the dead it was proclaimed”: This construction is very rare and different from the normal pattern found in the New Testament. The very uncommon passive voice verb εὐηγγελίσθη, “it was proclaimed,” does not state who did the proclaiming. Some contend that Christ did the proclaiming, based on a linking of 4:6 to 3:19. But ἐκήρυξεν, “he preached,” in 3:19 is not the same idea as εὐηγγελίσθη, “it was evangelized,” in 4:6. And elsewhere in First Peter (1:12, 25; 4:6) -- as also in the New Testament in general -- only humans ‘evangelize’ and Christ is always the object of this verb εὐαγγελίζω, never its subject. Thus the most likely allusion here is that Christian evangelists did the proclamation of the Gospel message.

Then, who are νεκροῖς, “the dead”? Here is where the issue of the connection of 4:6 to 3:19 becomes critical. In general, those linking the two verses do so on the assumption that the νεκροῖς, “the dead,” here are the same individuals as τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν, “the spirits in prison,” in 3:19. At first glance, this seems appealing, but it brings with it a huge bag of unsolvable problems and contradictions. The alternative view in not linking the two verses has the advantage of enabling νεκροῖς in 4:6 to allude back to νεκρούς at the end of verse five. Clearly there it refers to those humans who have physically died. It’s meaning is also impacted 6b. Scholarly opinion on these issues is divided, with one school of thought seeking to interpret 4:6 in the light of 3:19 (and 3:19 in the light of 4:6)⁴⁸³ and another rejecting any relationship between the two verses.⁴⁸⁴ [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 730.]

Those listed by Elliott as seeing a close connection between 3:19 and 4:6 (footnote 483) include Bigg 1902, 171; Gunkel 1917, 284; Reicke 1946, 204–10; and 1964, 119; Jeremias 1949, 196–97; Windisch 1951, 75; Hauck 1957, 73; E. Schweizer 1952, 152–54; Cranfield 1960, 110; S. E. Johnson 1960; Spicq 1966a, 138, 146; Michl 1968, 144; Beare 1970, 173, 182; Schrage 1973, 108; Schelkle 1976, 116; Vogels 1976, 81, 142–59; Frankemölle 1987, 62–63; Goppelt 1993, 289.

But those rejecting any connection between these two verses (footnote 484) include: Spitta 1890, 63–66; Gschwind 1911, 23–144; Selwyn 1947, 214, 337; J. N. D. Kelly 1969, 173; France 1977, 269; Elliott and Martin 1982, 95–101; Michaels 1988, 235–38; Dalton 1989, 57–60, 149–50, 225–26; Davids 1990, 153; Hillyer 1992, 122. For a survey of interpretation, see Dalton 1989, 51–66; see also pp. 225–41.

This part of the discussion centers on whether the individuals referenced by “the spirits in prison” in 3:19 refers to the same individuals defined as “the dead” in 4:6. Further, the issue becomes hermeneutically, Which one explains the meaning of the other? A basic principle of biblical interpretation is that the ‘clear’ should explain the ‘obscure.’ But scholars differ on which one is which in this instance, assuming a connection between the two verses is present (fn 483 group). If it isn’t, then each verse goes its own different direction in meaning (fn 484 group).

Elliott critiques the first view severely as being motivated primarily by dogmatics more than by honest, careful exegesis of the two texts. By this he means, dogmatics prompts some scholars to see in the linking of these two passages a ‘second chance’ theology in which pagans -- both in the OT era and now in the church era -- will have a second opportunity to repent after their physical death. Thus ultimately everyone will be saved and make Heaven, in the final analysis.

The incorrectness of such thinking is clearly obvious in both First Peter holistically and in the New Testament generally. Such a view runs directly counter to Peter’s admonitions to live properly in this world while anticipating a thorough judging of our life by God in Final Judgment. This judgment includes risk of eternal damnation. His words in 4:17-18 make this very clear: “17 For the time has come for judgment to begin with the household of God; if it begins with us, what will be the end for those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 And ‘If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinners?’” Obviously, then, any concept of ‘second chance’ theology is clearly false and contradicted by scripture itself.

⁵⁵In 2:21a is the same introductory expression: εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ ἐκλήθητε. The ‘this’ (τοῦτο) demonstrative pronoun in 2:21 refers back to what was said in 2:20, “it is better to suffer for doing good than for doing bad.” But here in 4:6 the ‘this’ (τοῦτο) pronoun points forward to the ἵνα purpose clause at the end of verse six: “so that, though they had been judged in the flesh as everyone is judged, they might live in the spirit as God does.” Such patterns of pointing either backward or forward are very common in ancient Greek. When pointing forward, virtually always another purpose statement will be contained in the sentence and usually in a prominent position at the end of the sentence, such as here in 4:6. Thus the antecedent of the demonstrative pronoun ‘this’ -- almost always at the very beginning of the sentence -- anticipates what will be stated at the end of the sentence.

by the ἵνα clause at the end of verse six as well. When consideration is given to both these immediate contextual influences, καὶ νεκροῖς points to deceased believers along with those still living (καὶ, “also”) who were a part of the congregations that the letter is addressed to in ancient Anatolia.⁵⁶ Peter’s encouraging message to his readers was that their fellow believers who had passed away prior to the writing of this letter, although having been judged by ‘men’ while still living (negatively), would be judged by God spiritually (positively). So the ultimate verdict on these deceased brethren would be positive because it would come from God and not be based on the negative human judgment rendered by critics of the Christian faith in this world, which Peter has already mentioned in his letter. These deceased brethren had had the gospel preached to them, had accepted it, had been baptized, and then lived by it the remainder of their earthly journey. The Day of Judgment for them would be a day of vindication of the correctness of their faith commitment to Christ. Final Judgment becomes a vindication of the saints of God, despite criticism and condemnation by non-believers in this world.

3) ἵνα κριθῶσι μὲν κατὰ ἀνθρώπους σαρκὶ ζῶσι δὲ κατὰ θεὸν πνεύματι, “so that, though they had been judged in the flesh as everyone is judged, they might live in the spirit as God does.” Many of the translations really do strange things translating this clause.⁵⁷ Of the eight translations listed only the Holman Christian Standard Bible “gets it right” and with basic clarity: “so that, although they might be judged by men in the fleshly realm, they might live by God in the spiritual realm.” But even it misses an important point between the two verbs: κριθῶσι is Aorist passive subjunctive, while ζῶσι is present active subjunctive. Treating both verbs the same way misses an important point by Peter: “they may have been judged by men, but they will live by God.” The plus of the HCSB, along with some others, is that they correctly understood κατὰ ἀνθρώπους and κατὰ θεὸν as direct opposite parallels, and functioning as agency expressions: “by men,” and “by God.”⁵⁸ God has the final authority to render a verdict, and Peter’s point is that this verdict is “life in the spirit.”

In summary, Peter in 4:1-6 admonishes his readers to equip themselves for unjust suffering by incorporating the same mind-set about it that Christ exhibited in His *passio* on earth. Such a stance means that the believer is putting the old life of sin completely behind him in order to live out his life by the will of God. Two incentives motivate such a stance. First, and most importantly, is the transformed life of the believer that no longer is the life of paganism. Non-believing friends will tempt the believer to continue living this old life and will likely turn on the believer when he refuses to do so. But God’s holding all humanity accountable in final judgment is a reminder of the disaster such a life of paganism will bring about. Second, Peter sees in this final judgment a vindication of the Christian way because those who have already died in Christ among the churches in this letter will find eternal spiritual life from God despite having been condemned as worthless by human judgments in this life. No wonder we should look at unjust suffering the way Christ did!

⁵⁶“Taking the ‘dead’ of v 6a in connection with both v 5 and the remainder of v 6, however, provides a satisfactory solution. In this case, the ‘dead’ of v 6 refers to a portion of those now deceased (cf. v 5), namely the deceased among the letter’s addressees. The fact that the author stressed earlier that the addressees themselves were the privileged recipients of the good news (*euaggelisamenōn hymas*, 1:12, and *euaggelisthen eis hymas*, 1:25) makes it likely that the entire statement in 4:6 also pertains to the addressees, but here to those among the addressees who, once having heard and accepted the good news, are at present among the dead. This view was first advanced by Spitta (1890, 63–66) and subsequently was adopted by several other scholars.⁴⁸⁷ [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 733-34.]

⁵⁷BBE: so that they might be judged as men in the flesh, but might be living before God in the spirit.

NLT: so that although their bodies were punished with death, they could still live in the spirit as God does.

ESV: that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does.

TEV: to those who had been judged in their physical existence as everyone is judged; it was preached to them so that in their spiritual existence they may live as God lives.

*HCSB: so that, although they might be judged by men in the fleshly realm, they might live by God in the spiritual realm.

KJV: that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

NIV: so that they might be judged according to men in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit.

RSV: that though judged in the flesh like men, they might live in the spirit like God.

⁵⁸“marker of norm of similarity or homogeneity, according to, in accordance with, in conformity with, according to. a) to introduce the norm which governs someth.” [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), 512.]

The translation pattern reflected by the BBE, NLT etc. above falsely links σαρκὶ and πνεύματι to the nouns ἀνθρώπους and θεὸν. Not only is this impossible Greek grammar, it reflects badly on the supposed knowledge of Greek by the translators. The two terms σαρκὶ and πνεύματι are “locative of time” or “temporal datives” (perhaps, locative of sphere / spatial datives) with the simple meaning of during physical life and during spiritual life and are attached to the verbs κριθῶσι and ζῶσι, as is correctly rendered by the HCSB.